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The Audio-Visuality of

Transcendental Style in Film

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PhD - Music

Declaration

I, Adam Scovell, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my

own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Date:

<u>Abstract</u>

Transcendental style in film is an expression of spiritual, ineffable and even holy subjects, often conveyed via a reduction of cinematic aesthetics and further aided by narratives of hardship. In audio-visual studies, the concept of the transcendental has been a consistent presence, especially in descriptive language concerned with the use of music in film, due in part to music's abstract, ineffable form. Film studies, on the other hand, have been more concerned with the notion of the transcendental as a reception effect, linked to an aesthetic style rather than simply a formal outcome. In this thesis, the various aspects of a transcendental style will be addressed within a cinematic context with two aims:

- To highlight a neglect of aural analysis within the cinematic realm of transcendental studies.
- To critique the etymological and philosophical assumptions regarding the transcendental elements found in the language of audio-visual scholarship.

The labelling of something as transcendental is simultaneously distinctive and vague. This duality allows writers to identify aspects of audio-visual work that are ultimately beyond the reach of language-based communication. The word has complex connotations within a variety of different philosophical and theological movements, and the use within cinematic academia - as a descriptor of an aesthetic style - is equally as complex.

In his 1972 work, *Transcendental Style in Film*, Paul Schrader suggested a transcendental potential within cinema through discussing a number of temporal

means and aesthetics. Music is mostly absent from his analysis, however. Film supposedly needs to move from "abundance" to "stasis" and this is often suggested by the reduction of the general cinematic style and the removal of music due to its editorial intonation.

I argue, on the contrary, that music and sound used in specific ways *can* inform the viewer of transcendental qualities and create both old and new ways of expressing transcendence. What my thesis will show is how this is achieved by a number of different filmmakers with emphasis on their aural character as well as the aural potential already found within previous theorisations of the style.

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Introduction:

Transcendental Style and Philosophy

When discussed in cinematic contexts, transcendental style in film denotes an expression of spiritual, ineffable and even holy subjects via the reduction of aesthetics, often aided further by narratives of hardship. The synonymic implications of "transcendental" have been present in the discussion of cinema for many years now. It is attributed with many potential meanings and possibilities but, on closer examination of its use within audio-visual scholarship, it becomes clear that there are no set agreements within its use between fields of media. This complexity can be attributed to both its historical usage and the very thematic qualities within the word, both of which share resonances with the formal problems of musical and audio-visual analysis.

My thesis addresses two points of question. The first is that any descriptor used in audio-visual analysis that implies some ineffable nature within the discussion of music's role must be given more contextual parameters before being accepted so readily. The second is that such a qualification of language can occur by assessing cinematic transcendental scholarship with an audio-visual context, reemphasising film's multimedia form in a field that actively denies music's role in the medium. In 1972, the film director and writer Paul Schrader attempted to identify what he perceived to be a transcendental style of visual and thematic filmmaking. Like any other style, he presented a creative cause to a received effect, the aesthetic choices of certain directors leading to a cinematic expression of ineffability and specifically the presence of the transcendent. In analysing film in

such a way, Schrader came upon the first real problem of using such terminology and what this expression of the transcendent actually meant within a cinematic realisation:

> The transcendent is beyond normal sense experience, and that which it transcends is, by definition, the immanent. Beyond this truism there is little agreement about the nature of the transcendental in life and art. (1972, p.5).

Schrader is assessing the problem of defining such material as transcendental. The word is ambiguous and with so little agreement over its teleological destination that it is surprising to find it used so ubiquitously in many forms of cultural analysis.

Though Schrader's is the most all encompassing of analyses available, he was by no means the first to attempt a transcendental reading of cinema. Five years before Schrader, Susan Sontag assessed the films of French filmmaker Robert Bresson with a transcendental reasoning in her essay, "Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson". She writes that the creation of such cinema is "To conceive of style as a decorative encumbrance on the matter revealed; or to vary the metaphor slightly, that the curtain could be rendered transparent..." (1967, p.17). She further elaborates that Bresson's films achieved a sort of "transparence" through their aesthetic realisation which could potentially provide more spiritual readings and experiences.

Many years before Sontag, the critic André Bazin was attempting to get to this very heart of cinema in his writing, eventually collected in the volumes named *What Is Cinema?* some years after. Bazin wrote especially of the presence of the divine in the photographed image in the essay "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (1960). In *André Bazin and Italian Neorealism* (2011), Bert Cardullo suggests the effect of Bazin's analysis on potential future assessments of transcendental

cinematic style: "While the merest rumour of the transcendent is enough to scandalize most film theorists, it helps to explain Bazin's enduring appeal among those at least open to the possibility of the divine. Reading Bazin, one never has the sense of a professional flogging of his secular academic speciality in return for institutional preferment. Instead, one comes into contact with a person - or, more correctly, a soul - bound by a sacred charge to inquire after truth." (2011, p.4). It is telling that Schrader's analysis moves swiftly away from such transcendental problems to define his other more manageable term: "style".

While this suggests a problematic quality within the terminology, it also provides a potential framework to begin the reconsideration of an audio-visual equivalent; something that has been suggested regularly through the language of audio-visual analysis but rarely explored because of the contradiction between codified film music functionality and a transient form of aesthetic that is difficult to assess. The cinematic realisation of the transcendental style is one of aesthetic austerity in every respect which explains both its potential invisibility as an audio-visual style and the underestimation of music and sound's power within the cinematic scholarship. This reduction of aesthetic style also masks its perception in contrast to more overt cinematic aesthetics. The transcendental style in its Schraderian form requires this strict aesthetic reduction on all fronts.

Sheila J. Nayar, a scholar of theological cinema, correctly questions this in her critique of Schrader's parameters for the style: "But then, what should I, as a spectator, be looking *at* or *for* in moments where presence is being manifest primarily as absence?" (2012, p.115). For Schrader, this means that music must be discarded entirely. I will, therefore, argue for two audio-visual ideals, both of which

pivot around such cinematic transcendental theories. On the one hand is the audio-visual potential within such arguments of reduction, where a deprivation in the ease of consumption can be achieved *with* musical and aural techniques rather than simply through their removal. On the other hand, with music having been argued as being the most transcendental of art forms since the nineteenth century and earlier, the second audio-visual aesthetic will use these arguments to present a case for music retaining some of this power in film, creating cultural and thematic clashes that suggest transcendental elements. Through arguing these points and defining a multimedia-based transcendental style, the visual bias of previous cinematic analysis is realigned and the language of earlier audio-visual analysis is naturally questioned and critiqued as a consequence.

The Language of Audio-Visual Scholarship

Through its use of language, film music analysis has regularly suggested specific qualities of transcendental style. Use of the term and words with similar effect and meaning often mark an end to communicative analysis because of the limitations within the context of the written form. This can be seen in a range of examples. In K.J. Donnelly's assessment of the band Popol Vuh and their music for Werner Herzog's *Aguirre: Wrath Of God* (1972), he argues that:

> The transcendental character of Popol Vuh's music also provides a crucial experiential dimension to the films, marking out the very singular status of Herzog's films as exceptional objects concerned with both philosophy and feeling. (2006, p.128).

What is Donnelly suggesting by the "transcendental character"? Is it the form of the music, the context of music, feelings that arose for the writer during viewing of the film or something else entirely? Such language is common within audio-visual

analysis and is arguably derived from much older traditions found in general musicology. In an assessment of the theological power of modern Hollywood scoring, Cutter Callaway suggests that "...film music is capable of indicating the presence of an immanent transcendence..." (2013, p.174) whilst Elizabeth Fairweather believes that the Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky "...consistently uses sound... as a means of transcending whatever mundane reality is suggested by his visual imagery..." (2012, p.43). These are only three examples out of many, but the point that can be drawn from them is that discussion of sound and music in film regularly implies some sort of inexpressible destination. This is conveyed through the transcendental language even when discussing immanent audio-visual aesthetics, immanent referring to more tangible aspects of some ineffable presence and, in a cinematic context, the realised *mise-en-scène*. This is in spite of early audio-visual analysis establishing such grounded, codified frameworks in texts including Hans Eisler and Theodor Adorno's *Composing for the Films* (1947) to Claudia Gorbman's *Unheard Melodies*: *Narrative Film Music* (1987).

Questioning of the field's etymological choices is now potentially fruitful and a natural outcome of assessing transcendental style through a musical prism. That is not to say, however, that film music scholars have not been questioning such assumptions beforehand or that my chief mode of exploration is purely etymological. It is best described as a study of style and aesthetics that highlights certain etymological assumptions as a side-effect. Writers such as Caryl Flinn, Kathryn Kalinak and Anahid Kassabian have already questioned the gap between language and affect in audio-visual analysis. Flinn especially argued in her 1992 work *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia and Hollywood Film Music* that "...we are

still bombarded with the idea of music as transcendent phenomenon." (1992, p.9).

This is arguably due to her work emphasising the links between film music and the

practices/traditions of nineteenth-century art music in post-war Hollywood cinema.

In such earlier analyses, film music scholars slowly linked such a "transcendent

phenomenon" - music's formal ability to reach an inexpressible place or

conveyance - with a variety of codified cinematic trends and aesthetics.

This problem of contradiction between codified music and its ineffable

qualities sits within the many elements of audio-visual analysis in Gorbman's

Unheard Melodies too. She states that:

> Clearly music consists of a discourse - an organized series of units understood (in some way or other) by human beings, and involving the transfer or circulation of energy, of tension and release. But it is a discourse without a clear referent, and certainly a nonrepresentational discourse; consequently, its affective powers and its association with pleasure have remained elusive. (1989, p.60).

Gorbman concludes that such nonrepresentational discourse is one of the many

reasons why nondiegetic scoring survived after the technological innovations that

allowed diegetic sound to enter the cinematic realm.[1] Modern audio-visual analysis

is, however, more dominantly driven by technological innovations rather than

simply cinematic aesthetic uses, many of whose film examples actively deny

transcendental aesthetics through excessive sound and music content.[2]

This drive towards technological contexts was to be expected as Carol

Vernallis argued at the turn of the digital age, writing "Do technological changes in

the musical or the visual realm affect one another? And are these effects seamless

or disjunctive? Some technical effects influence stylistic trends across media - from

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[1] Diegesis has been problematised since Gorbman's writing and the nuances left behind by a rigid application of the term have been regularly evaluated in works by Michel Chion and Ben Winters.
[2] They are built on the sort of abundant aesthetic relationships and interactions that Schrader sees as essential for the transcendental style to avoid.

music to image to lyrics and back." (2004, p.288). Parts of audio-visual analysis

have been extensively questioned through such contextualisation within new

media though the very language that is still used even when discussing

contemporary forms of media remains ambiguous.

Consider Ben Winters' critique of the theory of diegesis through the context

of new media forms:

> In the same way that the gameplay of video games (as opposed to narrative inserts)
> suggests that diegetic effect is independent of narrative, the manner in which music
> functions in these situations is comparable to its place in "narrative" cinema: that is, its role
> may often have less to do with 'narrating' as such, and be seen more as an indicator of
> narrative space. Evidently, film musicology has been reluctant to consider the possibility of
> music functioning in this way, and one reason for this may be the general acceptance of
> Eisler and Adorno's assertion that film "seeks to depict reality". (2010, p.9).

Winters has been the most consistent in his questioning of previous audio-visual

scholarship but the consequences of his recontextualisation of Gorbman's initial

theorisation upon the transcendental arguments and its language ultimately are

not addressed. Grounding or accounting for film music in such an immanent way

(that it is psychologically working as a signifier of cinematic space) is unhelpful to

the audio-visual transcendental argument as it does fully account for audience

reception or interpretation.

Robynn Stilwell was also questioning diegetic relationships, technology and

meaning during the digital revolution and it is poignant that she was writing during

the turbulent supplanting of digital technology within the mass production and

consumption of audio-visual media. She writes of the act of treading interpretative

boundaries as being one filled with meaning, relevant to the transcendental style

as its many mechanisms can be seen as creating gaps between work and reception

in which new, ineffable meanings reside:

> When that boundary between diegetic and nondiegetic is traversed, it does always *mean*. It is also hardly ever a single moment - one moment we're in the diegetic realm and in the blink of an eye, like walking through Alice's mirror, we are in the nondiegetic looking-glass world... That these transitions are *sometimes* transgressions only heightens that liminality. (2007, p.186).

Whether a film's aesthetics are affected by different formal rules of genre or by new technology, the language of its subsequent audio-visual analysis never quite escapes the potential transcendental reasoning behind it, especially when discussing cinema whose affective response is built upon atypical audio-visual techniques. This is an element in need of analysis in later chapters as this thesis has two essential problems: the removal of music from the cinematic arguments surrounding the transcendental and the use of transcendental language to describe non-transcendental examples in audio-visual analysis.

Miguel Mera's analysis of the music used by Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos highlights such restrictions within certain forms of analysis which can also explain the presence of such language when assessing transcendental cinematic phenomena: "Whilst there is a great deal of merit in the comments of these scholars, the concept of music as an exclusively narrational force can be problematic when we examine films that do not subscribe to traditional narrative structures." (2006, p.135). Mera later provides a useful summation of both Angelopoulos' musical style and certain examples of the transcendental style as a whole:

> The music does not aim to anaesthetize the audience helping them to suspend disbelief, it requires them instead to engage with the content at the heart of the film. (2006, p.140).

When scholars begin to engage with these complex practices, the clash between audio-visual theories derived from popular cinematic aesthetics and the complexities outside of this context present certain contradictions. Yet the

problems of terminology and choice of examples seems to always have been

present in film music analysis generally, regardless of genre, technology or form.

In Kalinak's *Settling The Score; Music and the Classical Hollywood Film*

(1992), this problem shares a surprising parallel to the problems addressed in this

thesis in spite of her analysis concerning Hollywood and more populist forms of

cinema:

> A conceptual model in which music and image share power in shaping perception has a
> number of important implications for the study of film music as well as the study of film
> itself. Among them is the necessity of confronting reliance upon the terminology that
> perpetuates, wittingly and sometimes unwittingly, an earlier paradigm. (1992, p.30).

Like most works in the new wave of film music analysis, Kalinak has to first address

the problematic areas from previous work, namely in her case the work of Adorno

and Eisler. The problem is still prescient even today with various elements

continually present in analysis whose context renders them problematic. But what

does the modern context of the post-digital age do to these audio-visual ideas in

the cinematic realm when many of the examples in question are made in an

analogue era?

In many ways, modern audio-visual criticism shifts between a distancing

from these paradigms due to talking about new technology (i.e. technology that

simply had no comparison during earlier analyses) and critiquing these paradigms

because of their undeniable lack of ability to talk about many new aesthetic

practices (Gorbman and diegesis, for example). The new contexts must, therefore,

be held to account if modern audio-visual theory is to be given any sort of context

in the transcendental form. This is not about the contradictions within examining

codified music practices but assessing how transcendental language may begin the

process of highlighting etymological assumptions often relied upon in such analysis.

For an example of this type of language, consider Donnelly's descriptions again when relating the music practices of that most-codified of audio-visual film genres, the horror film:

> The transcendent and the mystical are common aspects of the supernatural horror film, and thus there is a correspondingly strong religious (as well as ritualistic) strain in horror film music. (2005, p.89).

Are the "transcendent" and the "mystical" really "common aspects" of any popular cinematic practice? Donnelly is writing this within the era of the digital revolution and yet the assumptions of transcendence are still persistent. The etymological assumptions of the past, derived partly from nineteenth-century musicology's awe of music's perceived ineffability, are still in use in spite of their obvious, even increased, problematic nature. I agree that *some* complex audio-visual practice can be denotative of these ineffable aspects but tangentially I argue that the broad use of such descriptive language has hampered any detailed arguments or attempts to actually assess such aesthetic relationships so far.

The problem with addressing intangible issues through such terminology itself is that the form and medium so often *is* heavily codified, at least in industrial terms. The irony is that the links between the represented real and the represented ineffable in film (and film music) actually share some similarities. Rick Altman suggests this in his summation of the problems surrounding film sound analysis in particular:

> The real can never be represented; representation alone can be represented. For in order to be represented, the real must be known, and knowledge is always already a form of representation. (1992, p.46)

Audio-visual contextualisation, however, does not account for (and directly contradicts by its very nature) the complexities surrounding the ways of reading music as a form with a natural abstractness and power to express the inexpressible.

I will tread the line between the natural powers inherent within music's form and the austerity of the cinematically defined transcendental style by therefore looking at musical uses that draw upon elements outside of its formal structure. The combination of music and image in the following case studies is more than simply an aesthetic outcome but a deliberate pathway that hints towards something beyond exact representation, something that music has often been shown to address regularly through its form but rarely explained within audio-visual relationships, only hinted at.

As will be shown, music's character is already in possession of many aspects of the ineffable. As Philip Tagg suggests, music's contextual structures are initially outside of any world except their own:

> In fact, musical structures often seem to be objectively related to (a) nothing outside themselves, (b) their occurrence in similar guise in other music, or (c) their own contextual position in the piece of music in which they (already) occur. (1999, p.18).

What then, is the effect upon music's self-contained form when applied to a moving image and (in most cases) a narrative? This point raises a number of questions to be explored. First and foremost, however, the main task is to show how, through a variety of different audio-visual methods, music and sound can help attain a transcendental style in cinema. Audio-visual scholar Nicolas Cook suggests a potentially useful premise in regards to this multimedia theory in *Analysing Musical Multimedia*: "But whatever music's contribution to cross-media interaction, what is involved is a dynamic process: the reciprocal transfer of attributes that gives rise to a meaning constructed, not just reproduced by multimedia." (1998, p.97). Transcendental audio-visuality works upon this premise because it is still within the reciprocal "dynamic process," rendering relationships

of difference and recontextualisation essential to the analysis as they also require

shared aspects of multimedia and its processes. Vernallis usefully questions some

of Cook's segmentation, writing:

> He enumerates types of connections, from conformance (based on similarity and congruence, but not metaphoric play - a rare occurrence, he claims), to complementarity (exhibiting neither consistency nor contradiction), to contest (foregrounding collision). Cook does not make clear whether these terms work best for describing momentary sync points or larger sections of material... (2004, p.194).

Aptly, the problem of discussing either "sync points" or "larger sections of material"

is a viable criticism of Schrader's stylistic parameters too as his analysis often

discusses both individual scenes and overall cinematic styles.

Now consider Cook's theory of film music practice in its most codified of

forms and, specifically, its relation to the passing of time:

> After all, words and pictures in the cinema almost invariably supply the gross emotional identifications; the role of the music is generally to structure and inflect the emotion, and in particular to give greater definition to its passage through time. (1998, p.95).

Aural equivalents of transcendental style *can* be argued as bypassing the inflecting

and structuring of emotion, the former through increased emphasis due to a lack of

a typical score, the latter through a complete lack of emotional inflection

altogether. The removal of any other musical device that allows the viewer the

comfort of narrative reassurance is key as the presence of music in certain

examples deliberately highlights (and slows) the perception of time passing without

its presence presenting any emotional identification. As will be shown, the

philosophies surrounding such aesthetic austerity have strong links with a stricter

form of transcendental aesthetic and must logically have an aural potential too.

This will be shown through two specific aural traits: the construction of musically

repetitive soundtracks and the complete absence of scored soundtrack all together forcing an emphasis upon the natural soundscape.[3]

In the first section of my analysis, however, music's natural formal power will be shown to help access transcendental potential through one particular audio-visual technique: the use of pre-existing music within narrative cinema through both popular and classical iterations. Both forms of pre-existing music can be shown to create a thematic barrier that a viewer must, because of certain elements clashing between the music and the film, in some way cognise through a higher understanding of the filmic experience. Through this, I argue that certain scenarios fit within some sense of the transcendental style through the implication of meanings derived from outside of the film and of a higher form of expression than typical film scores.

Both forms have within their aesthetic make-up potential mechanisms for creating an audio-visual transcendental aesthetic, traits which are derived from what Gorbman calls music's "privileged access to the 'soul.' " (1989, p.60). It is an aspect which she does not address, instead opting to highlight its potential alone by analysing normalised aesthetic practices as purely narrative tools. More recently, scholars have begun to account for this natural power in the realms of audio-visual media. Though Donnelly does use some assumptive language in his analysis, he also acknowledges the role that music's formal power can play within cinema even if such ideas are tied to the thematic content of his (often supernatural and occult) case-study films:

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[3] See Chapter 3 for the former and Chapter 4 for the latter of these aspects.

> Music should not always be conceived as merely a secondary aspect to film images, and in the case of very obtrusive "foreground" music, such an approach is at best folly and at worst a radical underestimation of the power of music. (2005, p.43).

This recognition of underestimation is gradually coming to the fore within cinematic film music analysis even though many audio-visual scholars are focussing on the aforementioned technological innovations that dominate current interest in the field. Vernallis has questioned the effects of reception and music's multimedia power through the technology-heavy concept of the "audiovisual turn", whereby a departure from previous cinematic techniques led to new moments of what she later called "sublime" reception.[4]

She suggests that this "post-classical" cinema (a term notably examined by David Bordwell) is built from a range of new techniques which, through their likenesses with various forms of new media, become overtly musical in form and structure. She writes the following:

> Post-classical film possesses a range of features, including disorientating storytelling devices like puzzle plots; forking-path, draft, and database narratives; a dazzling surface made up of shots with changing lens-lengths, wipe-bys, and handheld camera movements; and - what I hope to add to the description - audiovisual passages, musical numbers, and striking audiovisual effects, all of which further distort classical Hollywood narrative filmmaking. (2013, p.42).

When describing the distortion of narrative filmmaking, Vernallis could almost be talking about transcendental style at an unconscious perceptive level.[5] However, the techniques she lists are so far beyond any notion or description of "sublime" - a word that is never contextualised - that it begs the question as to why such a word is used when discussing a technology-based, accelerated aesthetic evolution.

Greg Redner, in his book *Deleuze and Film Music* opens early on with a parallel questioning of more specific and complex film music practices without the

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[4] This is another example of a descriptor used to avoid the examination of a final teleological goal.
[5] Many of the examples, albeit in more reduced aesthetic forms, later on rely on such a distortion even at an unconscious level of reception.

need for contextualisation with newer models of audio-visual aesthetic or technology:

> Yet what of the film score that plays itself closer to the vest? What of the score that does not immediately fall into the easily-understood school of the leitmotif? It is these scores which require us to go deeper. It is these scores which do not so easily yield their treasures. (2010, p.16).

All of the case-studies in question use music and sound in similarly nuanced and complex ways, leading to some form of transcendental expression of ineffable information, conveyed to the viewer via aesthetics. It is these scores that are not "easily-understood" and lean towards this affective endpoint. In spite of Redner not looking at almost any examples that could be defined as exhibiting an audio-visual transcendental style (with the exception of his excellent analysis of the music in Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Three Colours: Blue* (1993)), he requires the complexities of Deleuzian thinking to analyse such audio-visual examples. This suggests a basic methodology in determining a transcendental style and why it requires various forms of philosophical reasoning from outside of musicology. Such aesthetic complexity requires equally complex philosophical investigation.

In an article for *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*, Winters also suggests a particularly pertinent and interesting methodology for cinematic audio-visual analysis:

> Music in film, I argue, rarely narrates but is instead normally unscrolling (to use Carolyn Abbate's term) alongside the rest of the narrative; in mostly being attributable to the same agency that is responsible for other elements in the narrative (such as set design), music might be productively considered alongside rather than "above" or "apart from" these elements. (2012, p.5).

The notion of an above suggests a higher nature that film music is often attributed with but one that is rarely thoroughly analysed. Within the analysis here, there will be a broaching of Winters' ideas; that music can be considered "above" in some

way but not strictly in a narrational sense, so as to be considered "alongside" and even outside as well. These methodologies will be outlined separately within each chapter because generalising on some form here would undermine the differences between the aesthetic practices in my examples and the requirements of their subsequent analysis. For instance, there is little point in arguing for the general merit of any broad form of score analysis throughout - a common tool of audio-visual analysis - when one particular chapter focuses on diegetic sound emphasis and a total absence of score.

The Schraderian cinematic transcendental style and the power of music's form must be contextualised within more defined areas of audio-visual analysis by contesting the codified typicality of film music analysis. As much contemporary audio-visual works codify meaning against transcendental affect and whilst its analysis conveys the presence of such affect through its language, both of these areas must be scrutinised. Film music is represented as defined, characterised and imbued with emphasised meaning.[6] Can it, however, be deployed in ways other than in these general forms? These conceptual areas are required consistently throughout this thesis but, before such aesthetic analysis can begin, a rigorous examination of the relevant philosophical terminology is required if the elusive body of audio-visual transcendental works are to be properly defined and not falter through the same decontextualised language found in previous audio-visual scholarship.

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[6] Such affect is conveyed and suggested through the language of audio-visual analysis as argued earlier though rarely explored as an aesthetic ideal.

Transcendental Terminology in Philosophy

> Yet, so long as the personal pressure does not gain the upper hand, but we continue in aesthetic contemplation... through that picture of the broken will, and quietly comprehends the Ideas even of those objects which are threatening and terrible to the will. In this contrast lies the sense of the sublime. - Arthur Schopenhauer (1995, p.265).

A problem that has plagued many studies connected with the transcendental is its inherent ambiguity. This has been coupled with philosophers, scholars and critics using a range of descriptions that suggests a variety of different beliefs and aesthetic assessments connected with the term. How vast are the differences between the transcendental, transcendence and the transcendent? The volume of contexts applicable to the word allows its meaning to fluctuate heavily between subjects. This intangibility allows scholars from many different fields to apply the term generally to emotional events that cannot easily be explained or considered (the transcendental) though sometimes with the implication of the holy nearby (the presence of the transcendent). Most consistently, this occurs in the responses to the aesthetics of art, especially that which contains theological relevance. The aim of this section is to succinctly outline the word in several contexts and agree upon its use in some aesthetic sense, in order to ground it in a set of immanent mechanisms that will eventually frame later audio-visual analysis. Firstly, some distinction must be made between the transcendent as it is used by Schrader and other theologically inclined scholars, and the transcendental as it is used in the context of cognitive perception in metaphysical philosophy. Both play a role in the cinematic context.

Dictionary definitions of the transcendental highlight its already unfathomable characteristics. Definitions range from something "...relating to a spiritual realm…" to the Kantian suggestion of something "…presupposed in and

necessary to experience: a prior…" (1998, p.1872). In the context of Schrader's film theories, the word is touching more upon its suggestion of a divine presence, created through immanence; a visitation of the theologically divine made briefly manifest in reception terms. This suggests that something pertaining to the transcendental is still fathomable in spite of being (by its own logic) beyond most forms of communicative conveyance. The audio-visual examples throughout, therefore, present only a transcendental expression rather than a recreation; this being the only possibility for the ineffable as its pure recreation is impossible. Any recreation is within the being of viewer.

Even if the writing on the metaphysical transcendental by Immanuel Kant - a scholar who has become synonymous with the word - is discussing an entirely differing mechanism to the divine transcendental in question, it still provides a substantial amount of theoretical criticism that can be of genuine application to audio-visual studies, even outside of our field of interest. This is somewhat surprising at first as even Kant's treatment of the very term "aesthetic" in his writing is not strictly applied to art theory unlike, for example, his writing on natural beauty in *Observations On The Feelings Of The Beautiful And The Sublime* (1764). "Sublime" is yet another potential synonym for "transcendental" used in arts scholarship and this thesis as seen earlier in the writing of Vernallis. In Kant's writing, transcendental reason is discussing knowledge gained through non-experiential means, through deduction rather than observation. In normal film music scenarios, I believe this process is mimicked by an act of forgetting, where repeated contact with codified film music combined with an act of forgetting, allows viewers to react to music emotionally in spite of its desire to manipulate

being incredibly clear. This is, of course, of little use in transcendental style as the music does not function in this way in my examples though Kant's theories clearly have further potential for audio-visual application outside of this thesis.

In his commentary on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), a work that uses transcendental descriptions throughout to discuss the very cognitive perception of objects, A.C. Ewing suggests a key bridge between the aesthetics of art and the transcendental aesthetic in Kant's view: "Aesthetic must be understood strictly in its etymological sense as derived from the Greek word - (sense-perception). It has nothing to do with the theory of beauty but should rather be understood as 'theory of perception,' though it does deal with the problems with which we are familiar under that heading today." (1938, p.28). However, as Gilles Deleuze suggests, some elements of the divine transcendent do appear in Kant's work and, though he avoids questioning why this is, it is telling as to why confusion often grows between objects that exhibit the expression of the divine transcendent and the Kantian transcendental perception conceived of what is taken *a priori* (i.e. knowledge gained through non-experiential means):

> It is in this sense that the *Critique of the Pure Reason* deserves its title: Kant exposes the speculative illusions of Reason, the false problems into which it leads us concerning the soul, the world and God. (1984, p.25).

My arguments surrounding the transcendental are, however, not grounded strictly within this phenomenological reading for the perception is only a framework and a small part of the question surrounding the transcendental.

What is really at the heart of the question is the relationship to the transcendent itself (at least in Schrader's context) and its relation to its aesthetic immanence. In other words, Kant's analysis and use of the word have a

metaphorical application to audio-visual art generally rather than a genuine, classical aestheticist use. Deleuze also conveys a useful breakdown of the transcendental idea which, even if not being applied literally, still has much that can be applied to aesthetic media: "Every representation is related to something other than itself; both to an object and to a subject." (1984, p.3). Such a move towards recognition of the transcendental in aesthetic media can also be found in the writing of Arthur Schopenhauer whose theories bear a great deal of weight upon the ideas of musical ineffability in particular and its natural power to touch some divine plane given unto it by its intrinsic form. This is an idea most purported by nineteenth-century scholars and, though I will not debate the merits or problems of the term "Romanticism" (a term that seems coupled with several relevant thinkers such as Schopenhauer and the divine transcendental too), there is simply no escaping the parallels in aesthetic and philosophical values that writers and artists linked with the term have.

The reason for returning to thematic content of the nineteenth century is because it has specific parallels with the definitions and themes of the transcendental being addressed here. They could even be said to act as a cultural dyad; two aspects with enough shared material to be paired together. This is not to say that the artwork in question is Romantic, but that several ideas purported to be used by artists and philosophers often associated with the Romantic arts share an essence of the transcendental, especially in regards to music.[7] This, therefore, has some potential in its application towards assessing some form of transcendental

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[7] In fact, all of the examples resist such definition even within the most broad and vaguest application of the term.

audio-visual aesthetic. The idea that is most relevant is one of a lofty sense of the divine asserting its presence.

This loftiness is reviewed most succinctly in the writing of Arnold Whittall, specifically in his book *Romantic Music; A Concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* (1987). Whittall calls upon a number of nineteenth-century critics and writers in order to pin down the ideas of a general Romanticism. But his choice of quotations could just as well be discussing a transcendental aesthetic in a metaphorical sense. For example, Whittall discusses Romanticism by using the writing of Novalis and Karl Wilhelm Schlegel:

> ... Novalis in 1798: "By endowing the commonplace with a lofty significance, the ordinary with a mysterious aspect, the familiar with the merit of the unfamiliar, the finite with the appearance of infinity, I am Romanticizing"; and K.W.F. Schlegel, also in 1798, writing about Romantic poetry: "It alone is infinite. It alone is free. Its overriding principle is that the poet's fantasy is subject to no agreed principles." (1987, p.10).

These ideas have potential crossover regarding the audio-visual transcendental and not simply because the quotes in question are discussing half of the aesthetic form of the relevant media (that of music). All of the cinematic musical examples are, in some way, "...endowing the commonplace with a lofty significance...", or have "...the familiar with the merit of the unfamiliar...". Even stretching Schlegel's argument to a metaphorical level, several of the following case studies have a sense of the "infinite"; ironic considering many of the narratives in my case-studies purport to be about the enclosed and the finite.

In Flinn's *Strains of Utopia*, she assesses musical techniques brought over from this era to Classical Hollywood films of the 1940s, producing similar ideals through derivation from this period of thinking: "The first is Romanticism's belief that music's immaterial nature lends it a transcendent, mystical quality, a point

that then makes it difficult for music to speak of realities." (1992, p.7). Though she

later questions such logic, the idea that music's form in such a context can achieve

the expression of the transcendental presence suggests that there is at least

potential for some aspect of this power to be retained in audio-visual media, even

if it is an uncommon practice. This, however, only accounts philosophically for half

of the examples, those more musically inclined, to be examined in this thesis.

If one aspect is taken from the discourse on Romantic art and philosophy,

putting aside the problematic nature of the term and simply looking at its shared

thematic criteria, it is the transcendental affective response to artwork in general.

Another useful fragment to contextualise this parallel strain comes once again in

Whittall's initial analysis and concerns the contextualisation of a line of John Keats

by the analyst, Mario Praz:

> Mario Praz, in his book *The Romantic Agony*, used Keats's famous line "Heard melodies are
> sweet, but those unheard are sweeter" to promote his view that the essence of
> Romanticism is "that which cannot be described"; and a musician may retort that, if
> unheard melodies are sweeter than heard ones, undescribed unheard melodies are
> perhaps the sweetest - and most Romantic - of all. (1987, p.9).

Both Praz and Whittall use the line from Keats' *Ode On A Grecian Urn* (1819) as an

early basis for their analytical positions. Whilst these veer off into territory that is

of little relevance to audio-visual analysis, it could be said that some of the

aesthetics being sought here stems from various audio-visual equivalents of Keats'

notion, especially in the latter two analytical chapters of this thesis which focus on

aesthetic reduction. For example, the use of harsh musical forms in already harsh

narratives creates a gap between basic engagement with the film and the viewer,

using music already imbued with a sense of the "unheard" (sparse and non-leading

musical soundtracks); or, perhaps most clearly, the complete absence of any score

whatsoever as will be seen in Chapter 4. All have potential metaphorical applications of the "unheard" because film music's power is unconscious and can create friction leading to the need for increased reading from the viewer.

Moving away from the indescribable ideas of Romanticism and into the more codified practices most commonly assessed in audio-visual academia, it becomes clear that the two areas have greatly differing outcomes in spite of both using an apparently transcendental form of media. The liminal area between these extremes is often where a transcendental audio-visual style resides. For arguments surrounding film music have worked from a position of codified and industrialised norms, where music and its presence explicitly signposts specifics: the opposite of aesthetic transcendental style within the arts and especially cinema. Adorno in particular has attacked cinema in the past for this simplification of communicative spirituality in art. In "The Culture Industry" (1944) he suggests that "As far as mass culture is concerned reification is no metaphor: it makes the human beings that it reproduces resemble things even when their teeth do not represent toothpaste and their care-worn wrinkles do not evoke cosmetics." (1991, p.95). Clearly, he is suspicious of the general codified potential of mass media towards Capitalism and exploitative commerce but it works as an interesting symbol for how more general forms of film music work. The trade-off, however, is not for the purchase of objects but regularly for the purchase of emotional leading and narrative reinforcement that denies transcendental moments.

Another issue to address is again born from this clash. I suggest that the very formal qualities of music (and its ineffable content) act as a potentially transcendental artefact and plays some role in the creation of an audio-visual

transcendental aesthetic at least in half of the examples of this thesis. Yet the

combination of an image or narrative with music (in spite of the production

relationship often happening vice-versa in reality) grounds the form and codifies it,

removing a sense of its existence within its own, indefinable world, and using only

its basic communicative power to create audience affect. I wish, therefore, to tie in

the ideas of Schopenhauer, a great advocate of music's higher formal powers,

within this grounded methodology of film music practice and analysis.

When devoting the final section of analysis to the arts in volume three of

The World As Will And Idea (1891), Schopenhauer sets up the hierarchy of art forms

with music being crucially at the top:

> It stands alone, quite cut off from all the other arts. In it we do not recognise the copy or
> repetition of any Idea of existence in the world. Yet it is such a great and exceedingly noble
> art, its effect on the inmost nature of man is so powerful, and it is so entirely and deeply
> understood by him in his inmost consciousness as a perfectly universal language, the
> distinctness of which surpasses even that of the perceptible world itself... (1995, p.330).

Reoccurring themes are now be observable in such analysis of art: themes of

infiniteness, of the ability to enter into and away from ourselves (again at an

infinite capacity), and themes of power, hinting towards the teleological reactions

of certain arts being accounted for through higher realms. Schopenhauer is not

alone in his thoughts for many writers have since expressed admiration for music's

formal power. None, however, have done so as succinctly as Aldous Huxley:

> In a different mode, on another plane of being, music is the equivalent of some of man's
> most significant and inexpressible experiences. By mysterious analogy, it evokes in the
> mind of the listener, sometimes the phantom of these experiences, sometimes the
> experiences themselves in their full force of life - it is a question of intensity; the phantom
> is dim, the reality, near and burning. (1960, p.318).

Perhaps this is why the analysis is drawn to such transcendental readings.

Nineteenth-century creative practices are built around a methodology that not only

accepts the impossibility of conveying fully the transcendental but positively builds

and exaggerates its "mysterious analogy".

Malcolm Budd writes of this ineffable starting point being used to account

for a number of related areas in his musicological analysis. These areas also need

some mention, not only because they provide healthy criticism of the gushing

nature of Schopenhauer's musical ideas but also because it balances the position of

music's form - which Budd labels as "abstract" - with the knowledge that modern

audio-visual culture heavily weighs down the form with meaning through a variety

of cinematic mechanisms. Budd addresses this succinctly in *Values of Art* by

accepting a contradiction between formal abstractness and a perceived "intrinsic

value":

> The source of the puzzlement is undoubtedly music's abstract nature. Of course, not all music is abstract; but it is the evidently merited claim to high artistic status of abstract music, or music in so far as it is abstract, that poses the problem. The difficulty is to provide an account of the nature of music which both recognizes the abstractness integral to it and does justice to its artistic achievements by rendering intelligible music's capacity to generate products of exceptional intrinsic value. (1995, pp.125-126).

It is simple for many writers to argue more strongly for the Buddian, "intrinsically

valued" side of film music relations as opposed to the resisting abstraction of

music. I do not wish to argue against these notions as an aesthetic or production

norm, but instead seek to show that, in spite of its rarity, cinema does use the

"enigma", the "unheard melodies" and the aesthetically austere for more than

simply a codified, industrialised reaction from the audience.[8]

Music and sound used in specific ways can inform the viewer of a

highlighted immanent and, through some form of audio visual counterpoint, "re-

abstract" the music to create a Roland Barthes-like new meaning. The audio-visual

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[8] This argument is unlike the position of Cutter Callaway who believes that this very form of film music naturally induces some theologically defined expression of the transcendental.

transcendental could be called the fourth meaning, one that is built on the "symbolic" and the "informational" meanings as Barthes writes in his essay, "The Third Meaning" (1970).[9] Barthes's argument requires a repeated reengagement with a text, which the analysis of the transcendental style is also built on, but its receptive viewing audience does not have this same relationship.[10] As Winters suggests, Barthes' textual engagement also finds purchase in the qualities of that initial experience but actually suggests that such a primary position does not necessarily even exist:

> Barthes argues that the position which suggests that the first reading (or hearing) is a primary, naive, phenomenal reading that we afterwards intellectualize is specious because there *is* no first reading. (2014, p.72).

As the chapters that engage with pre-existing music will suggest, this is an apt point when considering certain forms of audio-visual transcendentalism as viewers may have already come into contact with the music in question before seeing the film. The meaning, the communication and the signification are thematically *and* aesthetically inseparable in the most overt examples of transcendental cinema very much because of this.

Cook adds more detail to this, where the two forms of media (visual and aural) are shown to be fluid rather than hierarchical as has been typically assumed:

> If words and images can denote in one context and connote in another, then it is obvious that denotation and connotation are not attributes of one medium or another, but functions which one medium or another may fulfil in any given context. (1997, p.120).

Yet, with the presence of music being so drawn towards more connotative goals in cinema, it is sometimes forgotten that music as a form is isolated by a general lack

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[9] Barthes is relevant in spite of discussing the more static meaning within film stills. More detail can be found in Chapter 3.

[10] It could be argued that the reception potential for films using music in the transcendental style potentially decreases with repeat viewings, the anticipation and engagement with the mechanisms of the film becoming more and more apparent.

of real-world, thematic adhesion.[11] Budd highlights this in Schopenhauerian fashion

with the questioning of music's ability to be representational:

> Music seems to be a paradise essentially unrelated to the world we live our ordinary lives
> in, deriving its import and sustenance from itself alone; and its effects on us appear
> unaccountable or out of all proportion to their cause and object. That, at least, is how
> music has commonly been seen by those who find its value theoretically problematic and
> its capacity to enrapture us mysterious. (1995, p.126).

Budd's language hints at a definite transcendental potential. Whilst the codification

of music has become a normal outcome in cinema, I'm interested in moments

when music's presence still hints towards the enigmatic and what Budd calls

music's "capacity to enrapture". As will be argued in subsequent chapters,

cinematic examples achieve this through a variety of different musical and sound-

based mechanisms, the combination of which do not simply reduce the affective

content of one or the other to a base codification but instead creates an ineffable

heightening of the transcendental elements within both forms.

Codified Music as Contextual Backdrop for Transcendental Style

Considering an aesthetic opposite to the transcendental audio-visual style is

necessary in order to portray its formal requirements. Whilst many audio-visual

scholars use the language of the transcendental to convey the affective power of

their examples, they are still often codified in some aesthetic way, ultimately

removing their work from the position of the transcendental and subsequently

rendering the language questionable. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson have

related the very codification of film to its reception response, suggesting:

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[11] The film's image is arguably some attempt to recreate some recognisable simulacrum of reality.

> Once many film scholars were captivated by the idea that our responses to a movie were coded, we might say, all the way down. Here, code means something like a way of assigning meaning that is both arbitrary and relative to time and place. The code is arbitrary in that it might just as easily have been otherwise. A code is relative because in different circumstances it might vary. (2015).

The earlier quote from Flinn regarding music's transcendental character highlights how audio-visual scholars equally approach such problems in relation to codified audio-visual texts. If all cinematic aesthetics are geared towards the Bordwellian assignment of meaning, how does one, therefore, analyse the codification of a form whose communicative expression is rarely tied to any real world aspects? It is worth assessing the criticism of such ideas because not everything within such a lofty sense of music's importance is of use when looking at what is retained in the transcendental audio-visual style.[12]

Many analyses of work which could fit into an audio-visual transcendental argument are often flawed and stuck within various parameters. The detailed analysis coupled with an initial codified standpoint creates a variety of contradictions. We can in light of this begin with the theories of Gorbman who has analysed the very basic principles of film music and meaning. Whilst these ideas work for a large body of cinematic aesthetics, to take their position within defining a transcendental style would be fruitless, though they are necessary to relate due to their wide-scale adoption in later audio-visual analysis. In *Unheard Melodies* she suggests that:

> The bath of affect in which music immerses the spectator is like easy-listening, or the hypnotist's voice, in that it rounds off the sharp edges, masks contradictions, and lessens spatial and temporal discontinuities with its own melodic and harmonic continuity. (1987, p.6).

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[12] It could also be argued that such a sense of interpretative importance has been exaggerated in the earliest forms of film music writing because it was required to argue for its very legitimacy after many years of almost total dismissal as a form.

In many examples to be examined, the opposite of this smoothing process occurs and for very deliberate reasons. The "contradictions", the "sharp edges", and the "spatial and temporal discontinuities" are all aspects that are highlighted within audio-visual transcendentalism, the idea being that the aesthetic creates some form of difficulty or complexity for the viewer's sense of meaning, forcing them either to work in gaining some understanding or to simply rise above a passive and comfortable cinematic experience.

Hardship, therefore, occurs within several narratives and within the viewing process of the film itself. Yet, even moving this thematic material aside, the more solidified, theoretically-industrialised practices of analysis often dismiss potentially transcendental readings as sensationalism. Flinn in particular disregarded such readings and, looking at her case study examples, it is unsurprising to see why:

> For... most film music criticism has remained largely unconcerned with music's place in social and institutional contexts, and so, like the object it studies, it cloaks itself in the illusion of apparent transcendence. (1992, p.14).

To apply transcendental readings to Hollywood is difficult because of the inherent codified traditions which the studio systems did ultimately develop. However, to apply such explanations and theories to non-linear narrative cinema, especially those that seek the more complex responses from the viewer, is not so farfetched a possibility. When considering the ways in which film music as a globalised practice has been assessed and theorised, it becomes steadily apparent that, very much like the philosophies surrounding music itself, cultural differences are often by-passed by arguments surrounding multimedia's universality. In reality, many of the theories put forward are based on Anglo-American traditions, at most moving outwards to Western European cinematic practices. It is telling that, even in

Schrader's examples of transcendental cinema derived from such strict parameters, he jumps earnestly between France, Denmark and Japan, a huge cultural leap at the time of his writing though perhaps still biased through a Western eye.[13]

Such European practices often, however, present complex uses of music and sound and usually require in depth contextualisation. Jon Paxman's analysis of the musical score used by Krzysztof Kieślowski is a good example of this as he makes the link between the director's complex use of music and a sense of the profound:

> It is this agenda that inspired Kieślowski to downplay surface narrative in order to avoid facile and superficial treatment of what is often mysterious, irrational and complex. At the same time, this approach invites the audience to look deeper within the film's subtexts, and it is predominantly here that the most profound themes and ideas are contemplated. (2006, p.146).

Paxman reads Kieślowski as wanting to at the very least avoid the parallelism effect that Kalinak described and critiqued in the 1990s. It must also be said that the music is neither in counterpoint, asynchronous, opposed to the image or even independent enough to be considered fully contrapuntal. It is essentially in some new position: the transcendental position of film music usage where it is connected back to the original, ineffable source that created the rest of the film (whether this be the emotional ideas of the director or something else). This film's score is even more noteworthy considering Nicholas Reyland's in-depth analysis of Zbigniew Preisner's musical scores where "...his contribution fashions enigmatic reverberations that leave one wondering how so little music can suggest so much." (2012, p.47). In other words, the score is far from a typical film music position even if its musical relationships bear some likeness to several previous mechanisms.

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[13] With all of the directors of interest to Schrader, many were being given Western critical approval through festival appearances from the 1950s onwards.

If this raises questions surrounding this director in particular and whether his cinema fits into some form of transcendental style, Paxman does go on to suggest in regards to the use of music that:

> ...what is categorical is the fact that the second theme, appreciably infused with religious/mystical qualities, steers our interpretation of events away from a materialistic perspective to one inclined towards mystical and incorporeal realms. (2006, p.154).

Other forms of modern film music analysis also assert Kieślowski's transcendental style with an emphasis on his use of music and sound. For example, in J.G. Kickasola's essay, "Kieślowski's Musique Concrete", he suggests the following:

> With Kieślowski, the concrete technique moves in a transcendent sort of direction, one that illuminates his entire aesthetic and supports his central, abiding concern: the existential question of whether or not reality is shot through with higher significance. (2012, p.62).

This is the natural outcome of assessing and attempting to define an audio-visual transcendental style which begins with a setting of this contextual concern with higher significance. Some audio-visual scholars, by looking at more popular examples, define the opposite to any notion of transcendental style with its codified immanent grounding.[14]

Arthouse cinema, the description that many of these films are listed under academically and journalistically, resists generalised readings. Redner himself provides a useful analysis of the pitfalls of such analytical positions. These criticisms of general analysis also mirror Mera's earlier points:

> The reason that musicology's privileging of thematic development presents trouble for the analysis of film music is because film music does not operate under the same musical paradigm that art music does. Film music's primary purpose is to accompany and, by virtue of this, the importance of thematic development is subverted. (2016, p.19).

This differing paradigm of musical functioning must be contextualised with the earlier models put forward by Cook because there is often a sharing of formal

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[14] Gorbman especially seems to identify a practice of film music that, if used within a scene or film, automatically negates its role as a transcendental object because of how grounded its desired is.

attributes. Cook argues that multimedia shares a large variety attributes, some of which will work against traditional musical ideal. This is contrary to Lawrence Kramer's idea of the "semiotic gate" (1987, p.14) where multimedia has to supposedly cross if they wish to confront one another.[15] Cook responds to this idea:

> But there is a problem here. According to montage theory, meaning arises directly from the juxtaposition of sound and picture; according to the metaphor model (which aims to provide a general explanatory framework for such effects of juxtaposition), it arises from the intersection between sound and picture and the corresponding transfer of attributes. (1998, p.85).

Finding an analytical model that accounts for this "transfer of attributes" and avoids the "privileging of thematic development" is a vital stepping stone in the analysis of films that have a transcendental potential.[16] Transcendental audio-visual style finds a very natural balance in this by both requiring more context than general musical development (if there's music at all) and by using the attributes of the audio-visual form to achieve the highest possible level of ineffable expression.

Many essays in the volume *Music, Sound and Filmmakers* (2012) highlight this difference as well as the extra dimension of complexity in more experimental forms of narrative cinema. In his essay on the music in the films of Ingmar Bergman, P.F. Broman suggests that the director has a "...Schopenhauerian understanding of music as the elevated art that can raise even the naive to the sublime..." (2012, p.25) whilst the aforementioned Fairweather quotes the following from Tarkovsky (from his volume *Sculpting In Time*) which denies and resists the codified model of film music use:

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[15] This crossing of an interpretative gate ties heavily to the cross-cultural transcendental affect of the example in the following chapter.

[16] It could be said that many films have a transcendental potential through their aesthetics but very few see the potential to its full conclusion and undermine it through a variety of aesthetic choices already mentioned.

I find music in film most acceptable when it is used like a refrain... Music does more than intensify the impression of the visual image by providing a parallel illustration of the same idea; it opens up the possibility of a *new*, transfigured impression of the same material: something different in kind. (2010, p.158).

These ideas have started to find their way into the practicalities of more popular Western cinema. In the only work in the current *Oxford Handbook of Audio-Visual Aesthetics* by a composer working within the industry, Carter Burwell states that "Today a film without music may offer a more special experience than one with it." (2013, p.169), having earlier questioned the role of music in popular film: "Imagine for a moment that the shower scene in *Psycho* had been left without music, as Hitchcock intended. It would be uncomfortable, even painful, to watch, but would it lack something?" (2013, p.168). Though Burwell's actual musical work for Joel and Ethan Cohen is still typified by a relatively codified practice, his writing at least hints at a questioning of these norms within the most commercialised parts of the industry. In other words, several of the questions raised so far have a definite practical application, one that is only just beginning to be acknowledged by the more popular end of film music composition.

With this contextualisation, the elements highlighted in this section show two things. The first is that traditional audio-visual scholarship has highlighted an equivalent opposite to the type of aesthetics found in the audio-visual transcendental style through analysis of codified practices yet whilst using language that is arguably more suited to transcendental artwork. The second is that more recent audio-visual scholarship has, by looking at more complex forms of cinema and its audio-visual relationships, begun to touch upon genuine moments of audio-visual transcendental style through the wider analysis required in discussing such

cinema.[17] To conclude this introduction, it is essential to look at analysis which knowingly addresses the transcendental style as a whole, the relationships it assigns to film music and the aural potential found within its aesthetic ideas.

Previous Analysis of Cinematic Transcendental Style and Film Music

To summarise, it is essential to explore analyses that overtly considered artwork, and especially cinema, as within a transcendental style in order to see how music has previously sat within such analysis. In Schrader's work on the transcendental cinematic style, he suggests a sense of the "beyond" in his opening definition: "The Transcendent is beyond normal sense experience, and that which it transcends is, by definition, the immanent." (1972, p.5). The theological aspect of the transcendental and its thematic strain within cinema has one overall tie: that of a shared sense of the unreachable. It is a common problem that ultimately comes down to one inexpressible common denominator, but one in which Deleuze in particular finds useful traction, especially in his analysis of the Kantian transcendental reason:

> We explain the universality of aesthetic pleasure or the communicability of higher feeling by the free accord of the faculties. But is it sufficient to assume this free accord, to suppose it *a priori*? Must it not be, on the contrary, *produced* in us? That is to say: should aesthetic common sense not be the object of a *genesis*, of a properly transcendental genesis? (1984, p.50).

Deleuze is expressing a surprisingly reception-based ideal, useful for the critique of audio-visual readings in emphasising the importance of reception to the analysis.

If the idea were to be applied to the writing of Cutter Callaway - the only scholar so far to assess the transcendental position of film music in spite of being a

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[17] It must be noted that the analysis has almost always raised such questions by pure accident rather than through deliberate assessment of cinematic examples in the context of a transcendental style.

theological scholar rather than an audio-visual musicologist - it works as an ultimate deconstruction of his idea of the cinema as a simple mediator between people and some concept of God.[18] Even though the transcendental can only ever be expressed rather than recreated, the almost totem-like position of art allows for such expression through the aesthetic relationships found in the perceivable object. To apply this idea to the cinema and in particular to the soundworld of cinema in relation to the viewer, there are several areas of crossover that can be perceived. For Callaway, there is a comparison to be made between the cinematic experience and a modern day religious event:

> And so the theological question I want to explore in the pages that follow is not simply how and why individuals derive meaning from their experience of the music they hear in a film, but what it means for God to converse with human beings in and through the images we hear. (2013, p.11).

Though the idea is general, it does highlight the potential of a transcendental experience through a popular, mechanised medium. For Callaway, the cinema *is* a religious zone emphasising personal connotations that speak so accurately to his own life that his experiences reaffirm the cogs of his own dogmatic belief system.

To apply this line of thinking to more complex forms of cinema may at first seem difficult. After all, very few of the examples have the sort of large scale audiences that Callaway requires for his teleological outcomes.[19] Yet the possibility for some form of spirituality to manifest as an extension of an aesthetic Other, (rather than through a strictly specific theological prism) is entirely possible within many forms of media, especially non-commercial delineations of cinema. In his writing on the artist Georges Rouault, Peter Fuller suggests a way that more plastic

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[18] In spite of coming from a secular direction of analysis, I do not wish to overtly remove any potential theological character within the reception of my case-study films.

[19] He uses the most populist examples of cinema of the 2000s, from Pixar animations to musicals.

forms of artwork can achieve such a manifestation of Otherness in *Images Of God:*

The Consolations of Lost Illusions (1985): "Rouault was not, of course, by any means

alone in believing that, in the absence of a living tradition of religious iconography,

the 'spiritual' could be expressed in art through new formal means." (1985, p.46).

Because of the increasingly secular world surrounding art, the transcendental

aesthetic has moved into a different realm, one based very specifically on harsher

diegetic realities. Fuller would further explore this thematic position in his

description of Rouault's work:

> One of Rouault's biographers once called him "the painter of inwardness, of the
> supernatural light that glows from the profoundest depths". This wasn't just hagiography;
> Rouault was a seer in both senses of the word. And the literal "transformations" of
> appearance he brought about through the act of painting reflected the *spiritual* vision he
> wished to bear. (1985, p.45).

If Rouault was not seeking to recreate some aesthetic appearance, what exactly

was it that he was conveying? The "*spiritual* vision" as Fuller calls it, seems to be

yet another way to suggest a more abstract realisation of transcendental style.

The subject of Rouault's work and why he chose it is also of great value to

later analysis of cinema which seems to mimic both his practice and his

transcendental results, as will be especially seen in the cinema of Pier Paolo

Pasolini in particular. The connections between them become clearer if

contextualised in the cinematic transcendental style of Schrader who puts great

emphasis on the suffering of the characters within the narrative and a certain form

of suffering in the viewer's very experience. For example, Schrader uses the

adjective "sparse" to account for a number of aspects, equally, the lives of the

characters within the films and the uncomfortable aesthetic means with which they

are represented:

> The ratio of abundant and sparse means there can be a measure of the "spirituality" of a work of art. The more a work of art can successfully incorporate sparse means within an abundant society, the nearer it approaches its transcendental "end." (1972, p.155).

A "sparse" narrative is one often devoid of a projected comfort for the audience and is instead built on monotony and a confrontation that questions the very basis of the cinematic world.

In a tangential way, Schopenhauer had also begun to tie this sense of suffering alongside transcendental expressions. By asserting that this particular form of beauty was only accessible through a clash between the aesthetics and the "will" of the viewer, he is one of the earliest writers to recognise why artwork that is aesthetically confrontational is still effective. In his writing on this relationship he suggests the following:

> It is in the main identical with that of the beautiful, with pure will-less knowing, and the knowledge, that necessarily accompanies it of Ideas out of all relation determined by the principle of sufficient reason, and it is distinguished from the sense of the beautiful only by the additional quality that it rises above the known hostile relation of the object contemplated to the will in general. (1872, p.262).

In arguing that these harsher aesthetics make the viewer access a raised quality above a "hostile relation of the object", Schopenhauer is actually defining an early form of the transcendental aesthetic. Cook usefully assesses Schopenhauer's position on music which has potential application to audio-visual contexts, suggesting that "In other words, music embodies pure meaning; the culmination of the migration from lexical to semantic conformance, then, establishes the primacy of music and consequently the subordinate status of the text." (1998, p.108). The form embodies meaning as much as its thematic expression.

When looking in more detail at the case studies, it will be perceived that the audio-visual choices are earnestly made in order to question the viewer in some way (the "hostile relation of the object"), creating either an aesthetic that is

unbearable to the impatient viewer or an aesthetic that literally transcends its

position as an object and creates something far more spiritual than is initially

perceived. Schopenhauer's position on music is of help in contextualising these

ideas but also suggests a middle ground between the two key transcendental

cinematic readings. A balance between these two ideals is desirable because their

arguments are so contradictory. Both Schrader's *Transcendental Style In Film* and

Callaway's *Scoring Transcendence* have been mentioned several times already but

rarely together and these represent the two potential ideals.

By positioning the two works as oppositional, a middle ground opens up the

possibilities explored in later analysis. The context of Schrader's work must be

taken into account, especially as the research of this thesis progresses. The (digital)

hyperactivity of aesthetics that Callaway emphasises was yet to become popular in

cinema when Schrader was writing. Schrader's view of the transcendental aesthetic

is far stricter than Callaway's and is overly strict in many regards. This is most

apparent when he puts forward the parameters for his definition:

> Transcendental style is not a vague label like "religious film" which can be attached to films
> which feature certain religious themes and evoke appropriate emotions; it is not a
> catchbasin for all the sniffles, sobs and goosebumps one has experienced at religious films.
> (1972, p.2).

From this deduction, it can be ascertained that his conception of the

transcendental aesthetic is not simply a mechanised emotional norm but

something else entirely. He later asserts that:

> Although transcendental style, like any form of transcendental art, strives toward the
> ineffable and invisible, it is neither ineffable or invisible itself. Transcendental style uses
> precise temporal means - camera angles, dialogue, editing - for predetermined
> transcendental ends. (1972, p.2).

This outline suggests why an aesthetically driven methodology in analysis of the transcendental style is required. This transcendental is "ineffable and invisible" yet it is achieved through "temporal means" meaning that it is very much perceivable.

This is a position I take throughout the analysis. The chief disagreement arises from whether music and sound are one of these temporal means. Therefore, contextualising this with Schopenhauer's argument of music's hierarchy over plastic arts explains, at least in part, the position I take on the use of music even if that music is never allowed the sort of unmediated position it has when outside of multimedia. In fact, the previous descriptions of Callaway's heavily resemble Schopenhauer's lofty perception of the musical form and, though this evolves and changes when recontextualised in the cinematic medium, there is surely some basic retention of this power.

Unlike the strictness of Schrader's aesthetic austerity, Callaway's theories have the potential to refer to almost all cinematic experiences as transcendental. Far from being a rare aesthetic, Callaway instead sees transcendental style in film as something that derives from film music's power for providing an "invitation to feel".[20] For example, this segment of Callaway's analysis highlights the point:

> Yet... the music is uniquely able to address these realities by opening the audience out into something larger than themselves, something that lies beyond representational capacities of moving images. It signifies an ineffable presence that pervades the Immanent frame of the cinematic world - a delicate yet distinctive beauty that somehow exists in the midst of the pain and the chaos. (2013, p.57).

It is tempting to suggest that Callaway's arguments are the ultimate embodiment of Schopenhauer's musical exaltation in that music's natural form has the ability to express things beyond representational means and does so by its sheer formal existence (and presence) alone. But throughout Callaway's book, this idea and its

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[20] This invitation is really something arguably found in the majority of music used in popular film.

natural ambiguity is used to argue for a very specific point: that the Christian God is

literally present and speaking to the cinematic viewers when music creates affect.

Take, for further example, this earlier quoted segment during his audio-

visual analysis of Pixar's animated films:

> And so the theological question I want to explore in the pages that follow is not simply how and why individuals derive meaning from their experience of the music they hear in a film, but what it means for God to converse with human beings in and through the images we hear. (2013, p.11).

Music's form is being appropriated to account for something of the writer's own

belief. The very concept of the "invitation to feel" does, in Schrader's terms, argue

for the aesthetics of the "sniffs and feels" to be noted as transcendental. Both

Schrader and I attest such a notion. Furthermore, as already stated, Schrader

negates film music entirely from the transcendental argument, suggesting that

transcendental style in art forces the viewer to confront a harsher, inescapable

reality. If music is present, then Schrader's argument accounts for it as a Bressonian

"screen" that is counter-productive to attaining some expression of the

transcendent:

> Almost any music artificially induced into the everyday would be a screen; every piece of music carries with it certain emotional/editorial intonations which would interpret the scene. (1972, p.69).

If this was accepted without question, it would still leave two areas of audio-visual

study open to analysis even before opening out the argument's rigidity.

The first would be the complete lack of musical scoring in film and how this

creates some expressed form of transcendental style. The other would be the very

few ("Almost any music...") examples where music's presence deliberately

highlights "editorial intonations" to break apart the ease of viewing reception.

Whilst it is true that such examples are uncommon, I argue that there are far more

occurrences of such transcendental aesthetics in cinema than suggested. Therefore, neither the openness of Callaway nor the rigidness of Schrader should be completely adhered to in exemplifying audio-visual transcendental style.

When accounting for the use of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart by Robert Bresson in the film *A Man Escaped* (1956), Schrader suggests that "When Bresson uses music as a decisive action, like the use of Mozart's Mass in C Minor in A Man Escaped, it is not editorializing but like Ozu's coda music is a blast of emotional music within a cold context." (1972, p.69). In so doing, Schrader is already suggesting that an aural absence or even discomfort conforms in some way to the transcendental cinematic style. The period Schrader was writing in and its natural bias against the importance of music in film must, however, be taken into account. In spite of this, other writers had accepted music's power in the audio-visual form well before film analysis had properly entered the academic realm.

In contrast to Schrader's view, Huxley recognises exactly the relationship and aesthetic being sought with music (against Schrader) and without music (in line with Schrader) though he finds it unusually within the historical accounts of William Shakespeare's plays:

> When the inexpressible had to be expressed, Shakespeare laid down his pen and called for music. And if music should also fail? Well, there was always silence to fall back on. For always, always and everywhere, the rest is silence. (1960, p.320).

If this idea is accepted, it highlights that Schrader's musical stance is not one that believes its presence to be always detrimental but only in certain scenarios. Even Schrader would agree that there are audio-visual possibilities that reflect the thematic aspects of the transcendental style. The point to contextualise here is that, when looking over the audio-visual field, many critics see music itself as

similarly hinting towards such higher realms, to the ineffable and the transcendental.

In Kramer's essay, "Classical Music For The Posthuman Condition", he finds a transcendental audio-visual emphasis in the most uncommon of places, in 1940s *film noir* (specifically Billy Wilder's film, *Double Indemnity* (1944)):

> From this radiant centre come the sounds of Schubert's music, which continue throughout the scene. Its presence is strange. The movie's characters otherwise show no interest in classical music, nor do Neff and Lola even acknowledge hearing music as they talk. But the point of the music is precisely its incongruity. It seems to be emanating from another world. (2013, p.47).

This could be argued as working in contrapuntal way, emanating from a position which is neither parallel or in counterpoint. In a similar fashion, Callaway stumbles upon the Schopenhauerian argument in regards to the sheer power of music as a medium and how it retains such power when recontextualised in audio-visual media:

> ...music, more so than any other filmic element, points to that which is not present or that which cannot be contained by the image. That is, music addresses the ineffable—that which our language and conceptual frameworks are unable to contain but, which, nevertheless, yields a categorical power over our lives. (2013, p.73).

If the element of music's natural ineffability were to be combined with the aural sense of truth within a Schraderian concept of film music, then a new framework of transcendental audio-visual style can be argued for.

This is the balance achieved in several of the following case-study films; where an absence of typical emotional leading through music, combined with the elements of transcendental style that Schrader describes in narrative and aesthetic terms, leads to potential higher realms of possibility within cinematic teleology. This is what transcendental cinema can do and music is capable of adding such questioning to the overall audio-visual experience. If we consider the case study

films of later analysis, many exhibit this same framework and potential audience relation. To gain meaning from these films, a meaning which ultimately leans towards a higher realm outside of their unremitting aesthetics and narrative, requires the viewer to resist.

Their gaze must be unshaken but equally so must their listening for, as will be shown, these films reflect a desire for discomfort through unusual audio-visual aesthetics. Even when music expresses this Other, we can only draw a perimeter around it through its immanent elements in order to assess what is transcendental. Schrader defines a useful position in this regard by suggesting that "Although a critic cannot analyze the Transcendent, he can describe the immanent and the manner in which it is transcended. He can discover how the immanent is expressive of the Transcendent." (1972, p.8). Therefore, unlike in Callaway's analysis which very earnestly separates its aesthetic analysis from the created affect, study of the immanent allows a perception of the transcendent (its presence denoting a work as transcendental), even if the overall character of such a phenomena is still indefinable.

Callaway labels this scenario as a "paradox" when analysing the music in the films of Paul Thomas Anderson, perhaps out of frustration in not being able to fully convey his cinematic theological experiences through mere words: "That is, in a seeming paradox, while the music in Anderson's films functions to indicate the presence of a transcendent Other, it does so through purely immanent means." (2013, p.139). But it is only a paradox if there is some agenda behind sharing its expression on a wider level. His theories are based on his own theological reception of the work combined with the reception of public reviewers on the website

Internet Movie Database, not upon the relationship with the aesthetics of the work itself. This avoids philosophical analysis, something essential as such analysis of the temporal/immanent forms are key to deducing a transcendental presence in the first place.

In the context of this thesis, Callaway's examples are as far from the transcendental cinematic style as can possibly be conceived. Take, for example, the following of Callaway's arguments concerning music's shifting of potential theological meaning:

> Music effects this theological shift in three unique but related ways. First, music expresses that which lies "outside" or "beyond" representation; it imbues film with a "suprareality," granting the audience an "insight" not obtainable through the image's natural mode of representation. (2013, p.72).

Music has the power to do what Callaway is suggesting. In the context of a cinematic transcendental style, however, the music and scenarios in question are expressing something relatively obvious. An emotional trajectory presented to the viewer acts as both a creative expression and has a desired effect upon the reception. As suggested earlier, there's a potential parallel to Barthes' "third meaning". This is perhaps what could be called a fourth meaning where the *mise-en-scène* within a moving image combined with such aural aesthetics tap into a multitude of contexts.

Whilst Schopenhauer's stance on music's place as in contact with higher realms weighs heavy over several of the audio-visual techniques to be addressed, it seems a little too easy to simply account for all cinematic transcendental styles through using it. The effect that Callaway seemingly stumbles upon is an exaggeration of music's natural connection with the emotional discourse of film narrative and not something that is inexpressible in terms of the narrative medium.

His linking between an emotional response and transcendental style requires great caution if only because it generalises the entire cinematic experience across whole cultures and eras of cinema through such a dogmatic prism.

So far, few cinematic examples and film scores have been assessed. While the ideas behind the following chapters have been laid out thematically, the conclusions of this thesis will ultimately come down to the strength and analysis of a variety of aesthetic relationships. I propose an analysis based on the contexts denoted as outside of the cinematic world; analysing moments where audio-visual choices touch upon and highlight the cinematic process/experience in itself as an object and not purely as an immersion within a narrative world.[21] This will be shown to be achieved through a variety of complex methods which require the situating of aural aesthetics *within* the context of the narrative world but only in order to contrast the elements that such aural techniques are drawing upon from *outside* of the cinematic world. The analysis here, therefore, touches upon the cultural, the historical and the philosophical. All of the techniques and relationships to be examined draw upon this reception potential and its subsequent implications through a variety of techniques.

The analytical tools to be used vary in accordance with the material and context that the aesthetics are drawing upon. Summarising the key points raised in this introduction, and again highlighting the aims of this thesis, two problems will ultimately be answered through questioning the aesthetic relationships within each case study. Whilst this introduction has asked the question "What is transcendental style?", and highlighted several implications of its parameters upon film music and

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[21] This sense of outside the filmic work is with the exception of Chapter 3 which functions through bringing the viewer back within the film through first distancing them from the experience.

its subsequent analysis, the conclusion of this thesis will attempt to answer the following questions:

1.   How does sound and music work within a multimedia conception of cinematic transcendental style?

and, ergo:

2.   What do these various workings and arguments tell us about the analytical positions and language used in previous audio-visual scholarship?

Chapter 1:

Pre-existing Music and Religious Style

> Since music is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is being comparable to the gods, and music itself the supreme mystery of the science of man. - Claude Levi-Strauss (1970, p.18).

In order to formulate a multimedia-based understanding of transcendental cinematic style, it is essential to first explore the emphasis on the power of music's form and how the undervaluing of such power has undermined previous aesthetic understandings of cinematic transcendental style. In Chapters 1 and 2, the aesthetic power derived from music's form will be explored in order to outline an unavoidable transfer between forms; where instead of negating a cinematic transcendental style as Schrader and others argue, music's form is in actuality its ally in the shaping of aesthetic reception. To do this, I will adopt certain angles and viewpoints which are directly contrary to Schrader's general arguments in order to highlight, even in the most explicit cases, how a form of aesthetic transcendental style can be attained within the cinematic form.

In so doing, I argue against the need of aesthetic reduction within transcendental cinema considered in the Introduction (or at least against those arguments which suggest that a reduced aesthetic holds the sole monopoly within the transcendental style). The following analysis proposes the total opposite in terms of thematic and aesthetic relationships. Through emphasis upon the relationship between music, narrative and visuals, as well as the contextual relationships produced through cinematically edited pre-existing music, these two chapters will highlight the flaws within previous transcendental parameters. In

order to progress with the analysis of transcendental style, a cinematic form will be analysed which uses previously existing music conceived with transcendental ideals in mind. In other words, I am asking in the following two chapters if music that is theologically, mythologically and transcendentally conceived loses or keeps (and thus shares) these attributes when applied to a visual narrative. Are such qualities retained when music is recontextualised within the cinematic form? This is not to say that all of the music in question is conceived uniquely for theological worship; the description could be equally attributed to music as an expression of hardship, tragedy and other recognised transcendental themes. Nor am I suggesting that the transcendental style is fully on display because of this music. It is momentary, more of an undercurrent of transcendental style similar to Schrader's examples which share ideals but never quite fully realise its transcendental potential.

This chapter's purpose is to show how the use of pre-existing music can create a cross-cultural disjoint in cinema through highlighting thematic material to the viewer (through both reception and the language of its own form) that, whilst being contrary to various aspects of the narrative and, in a thematic sense, creates a form of disunity between the music and the diegetic world, also creates an overall sense of connectivity. It is through this connectivity that a universality and recognisability to the scenarios on show creates the moment or expresses short bursts of transcendental style. For the analysis of this chapter, this will be explored in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According To St. Matthew* (1964) which uses the combination of African worship music, the *Missa Luba*, the soul music of the singer, Odetta, and the blues music of singer and guitarist, Blind Willie Johnson, to express and even comment upon some form of aesthetic and thematic transcendental

style.[22] The pre-existing music is far from simply adding abundance by its presence but is rather mirroring transcendental aesthetics through its own formal language and thematic character.

Pre-existing music allows a number of potential transcendental moments to occur by virtue of a specific cross-cultural amalgamation, using the history, aesthetics and thematic content of music that is overtly perceived as from another culture (and not necessarily always, but often theological) to that portrayed within the film. As Ronald Rodman suggests (albeit discussing popular music) pre-existing music plays on a level of "audience competence" which is essentially an idea that cross-cultural transcendentalism builds upon: "However, in these and other films, the popular song leitmotif draws upon levels of audience competence different from that of the classical film score." (2006, p.123). Aesthetic ties will be made later within the analysis of the case study but the point in question is one of emphasis, a differing relationship to the unconscious workings of an original film score.

This relationship can be seen as a far more dialectical coupling than the classical audio-visual view of music "heightening the visual" as suggested by Claudia Gorbman in the 1980s though rarely deployed as a reading since. As Mike Cormack suggests when discussing Gorbman's audio-visual musical codes in pre-existing nineteenth-century art music, the presence of pre-existing music in film can activate even the more traditional (and questionable) relationships assessed from this period of audio-visual scholarship:

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[22] *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo.*

> To put this another way, following Claudia Gorbman's contrast of "pure musical codes" with "cultural musical codes" and "cinematic musical codes'"(Gorbman, 1987, p.13), the use of pre-existing classical music can engage with all three types of code, thus increasing the music's polysemic range, particularly since Shepherd's argument suggests that Gorbman's "purely musical codes" are themselves profoundly social and historical in application. (2006, p.21).

Gorbman herself suggests that the use of pre-existing music adds to the "ambiguity" of a film in a number of ways which are worth briefly contextualising with regard to this example. Her fourth argument is that "...the awareness that the music was not originally written for a specific film scene puts distance between the music and any straightforward interpretation of it in the manner of conventional film scores." (2006, p.30). he complexity of the example in question problematises this idea insofar as the music and the film are both constructed around the same scenario (the Christian Gospel) and are logically drawing upon the same thematic content, at least in terms of assumed or desired affective response. Yet the distance is still created, arguably through aesthetic differences instead.

There is little ambiguity as to its affective qualities though there is a sense of jubilant mystery created through such music. A sense that the event being depicted had a global resonance, which is explicitly highlighted and perhaps even celebrated, is created. The role of such a compilation score effect - the patchwork of musical choices in one given film - has had several noted effects too. The one effect of interest here concerns a "liberation" of the soundtrack from the film's image, as discussed by Annette Davison during her analysis of the partly pre-existing soundtrack in Derek Jarman's film, *The Garden* (1990). The film has a soundtrack equally weaved with a variety of differing music including recontextualised forms of pre-existing music in the same mould as the case study.

Davison believes that through this, the soundtrack is liberated from the image and provides voice to the silenced communities Jarman is speaking from.[23] She suggests that "In its possible liberation from the image, the soundtrack of *The Garden* presents the potential for the reparation of these communities' voices..." (2004, p.136). In our case study, this liberation from the image will be shown to have a different role: to distance itself from the burden the image has of being forced to attempt to recreate a visual transcendental presence. Unlike Jarman, Pasolini uses this distance of liberation, created through a cross-cultural emphasis between the pre-existing music and the visual to break the simplistic aesthetic multimedia unity in order to avoid the negation of the spiritual ineffability that naturally occurs when there is an attempt to earnestly recreate the transcendental style.

To scrutinise what is borrowed within the audio-visual form from the purely musical form, the aspects present within the music itself must first be identified outside of such multimedia practices. This shared material is of course extended with the use of pre-existing music and is essential to the accumulation of meaning required through its use in the case study. It is vital at this point then to reiterate Nicholas Cook's multimedia arguments from the introduction to help contextualise these theories of pre-existing music. Cook suggests more than was quoted in respect to the relationships between music and images in a variety of multimedia. The following quote is informative even though it relates to album covers as the visual cue rather than the moving image of a narrative film:

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[23] In Jarman's case this is the LGBT community of the late 1980s after the AIDS epidemic.

> In other words, the coupling of image and sound contextualizes, clarifies, and in a sense analyses the music. It instigates a new, or at any rate a deepened, experience of the music, and it is because of the effect of image upon sound - because of the interaction between the two - that record sleeves are, as I put it, at least next door to multimedia (the more so, of course, when you consider the words as well). (1998, p.74).

It is clear that the addition of any music to any visual (or vice-versa for that matter) will produce a third and new relationship whether it is considered to work or not.[24] Roland Barthes, in spite of writing in a different era and about a different medium, suggests in the most unintentionally transcendental of ways the potential of a new third meaning and a similar symbiotic relationship between differing media: "The third meaning - theoretically locatable but not describable - can now be seen as the *passage* from language to significance and the founding act of the filmic itself." (1982, p.330). Cook argues for something more nuanced but along parallel lines within a more audio-visual context: that contrary to the negative Adornian posture, this new context or significance can have positive effects on the music as well as on the image.

This was point raised by Rodman who uses Barthes' angle of analysis to discuss the differing connotative and denotative effects of musical leitmotif, proof if needed as to why Barthes' theories are relevant:

> However, connotation also occurs when music foreshadows or contradicts the image on the screen. Denotation and connotation have been expressed semiotically in works by Roland Barthes. Borrowing from Hjelmslev, Barthes saw denotation as a primary sign consisting of expression (signifier) in relation to a content (signified) (Barthes, 1957 and 1967). The primary sign could become the expression of a more comprehensive, or secondary, sign. The primary sign is denotative, while the secondary sign becomes a semantic extension of the denotative sign, or a connotative sign. (2006, p.124).

As will be seen later on, the use of music balances this same binary, where it can perform as both a primary and secondary sign/signifier and this can be explicitly shown to be through this context because of its pre-existing status. Transcendental

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[24] This is referring to "work" in the sense of aesthetic, receptive, economic and any other factor applied to cinema and commercial mass art as a whole.

style in cinema is always a combination of sound and vision, even if that sound is often still bare, reduced or unusual. It still retains the potential to be both connotative and denotative. In audio-visual terms, this means that pre-existing music can simultaneously perform more typical music-to-image relationships and speak of other forms of third meaning that suggest more ineffable moments to the viewer.

Hagiographic Cinema and the Transcendental Style

The use of pre-existing music to create a transcendental style has a further context that must be discussed. This context is how such music sits in relation to the religious content and form of a film. This is necessary to address because of Schrader's positioning of the purely religious film (that of the genre of films that present theological narratives) as against the transcendental style, whilst my first example of an attempt at creating an audio-visual transcendental style arguably sits in some ways within this cinematic spectrum. Pamela Grace, a scholar of theological cinema, uses theories of the scholar Ernst Vatter to usefully explain the more typical position of cinematic transcendental style:

> It is a type of art that represents *a way to approach* the Transcendent, which is unknowable and beyond sense experience. Transcendental art has an affinity with primitive art in that both have, in Ernst Vatter's words, "a world view which encloses mankind and the All in a deeply felt unity." Films made in the transcendental style aim to maximize the mystery of existence, eschewing conventional interpretations of reality such as psychology. (2009, p.128).

The use of music in a "hagiopic" picture is, in most cases, the epitome of the anti-Schraderian transcendental. I agree that, on the whole, the genre - which is a mixture of theological and biographical film - fails to elicit transcendental expression in most cases because of its sheer aesthetic abundance. Sheila J. Nayar,

another theological film scholar who refreshingly assesses such a style with reference to both Schrader and to film music, believes that the abundant aesthetics of the hagiopic are actually *conducive* to such a style, perhaps even more so. As mentioned in the Introduction, her importance to this thesis lies is that she is arguably only one of two scholars to explicitly place music within the mechanisms of a cinematic transcendental style. She questions the reduction approach to film aesthetics, writing that "We might counter that their shared austerity of vision was activating or reflecting that 'hidden' dimension which the critics perceived as synonymous with God or the numinous, or as providing an aperture to a cosmic whole." (2012, p.52). I share this questioning of aesthetic austerity, though by no means go to Nayar's lengths of labelling excited, general reactions to abundant cinematic aesthetics as a transcendental reception.

This is not to say, however, that there are no exceptions and it is fitting that one such exception - the case study of this chapter - achieves its undercurrents of transcendental style through the choice and use of music. In her book, *The Religious Film: Christianity and the Hagiopic*, Grace describes the hagiopic genre as comprising of those films which are:

> ...concerned with its hero's relationship to the divine; and the world the conventional hagiopic portrays is a place found in no other genre of films, a place where miracles occur, celestial beings speak to humans and events are controlled by a benevolent God, who lives somewhere beyond the clouds. (2009, pp.1-2).

Tim Cawkwell, yet another film scholar whose work addresses the relationship between cinema aesthetics and the portrayal of God, briefly assesses the same, typical aesthetic journey that the transcendental narrative takes, suggesting the following framework:

> ...the "transcendental film" moves from "abundance" to "stasis". This occurs when it achieves the release for the main character from a set of circumstances: the audience, carefully channelled and nurtured to this point, experience the moment as one of transcendence. (2004, pp.70-71).

The movement being described is a narrative one but also an aesthetic one which logically suggests that the more aesthetically "abundant" a film is, the less chance it has of moving to "stasis". In terms of musical language, the dynamic levels will not sufficiently differentiate for the transcendental gap to be created.

Apart from ignoring the potential for music and sound to actually partake in the negation of cinematic aesthetic abundance, it is equally underestimating of music to simply situate its presence as excessive or crass. This is most obvious in Grace's analysis, where it is the presence of "emotional music" that works against this transcendental style:

> A major difference between transcendental film, which does not confine itself to traditional religious topics, and conventional religious film, which does, concerns the film's use of "sparse" versus "abundant" means. Motion pictures can offer a large array of expressive techniques: rich color, elaborate sets and costumes, emotional music, dramatic action, and special effects. Commercial religious films tend to make use of "overabundant means" as they aim to fulfil the viewer's fantasy of achieving spirituality vicariously, through identification with a character. (2009, p.128).

Schrader and others cast film music aside in relation to Hollywood's biblical form of the hagiopic and its Romantic-infused scoring, though rarely is the regular presence of pre-existing music and its transcendental forms addressed. Does music really negate the same effects when incorporated within the audio-visual form? Even considering the question at a simplistic level, the logic suggests a complexity that is rarely ever portrayed and analysed. This is even more surprising given that, in terms of the filmmakers analysed by previous scholars, many of their films use pre-existing music that one could argue was created with an expression of the transcendental at its core.

Schrader argues that "The proper function of transcendental art is, therefore, to express the Holy itself (the Transcendent), and not to express or illustrate holy feelings." (1972, p.7); but then, when looking briefly at the use of pre-existing music in the films of Robert Bresson, he simply refers to it as "coda music", as discussed in the introduction. The analysis is simplistic considering the theological nature of Bresson's musical choices as Cawkwell outlines in regard to the use of music in creating "mood":

> For the latter, he uses music more extensively than in subsequent work and in the 1950s it seems to have been the one area of his film style that remained for him to purge. After this film, he used only snatches from the classical composers, Mozart, Schubert, Monteverdi etc., and then for his last four films dropped music altogether. (2004, p.9).

Cawkwell's area of analysis is the relationship between God, religion and cinema and yet even he assigns the music of Bresson's films to the category of "mood" music, which is only slightly more descriptive than Schrader's "coda" music. In terms of aesthetic use, Bresson is not the most useful director to assess with regards to transcendental scoring and so the choice for my analysis must be shown to be overly concerned with the contextualisation and placement of transcendentally conceived music, in addition to its role in relation to Grace's hagiopic cinema.[25]

Before further elucidation on the case study, however, more context must be given to the power of shared aesthetic attributes since, if this argument cannot be grounded and convincingly put forward, then there is little point in further analysing the aesthetic and thematic power of music within the audio-visual spectrum; there must be the potential for something to be shared in the first place

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[25] Though, on closer inspection to Cawkwell's analysis, Bresson's last four films and their use of silence clearly is of interest to Chapter 4 even though music is still present in many ways in the diegesis.

before discussing what is being shared and, eventually, what is being culturally amalgamated and set against one another.

The chief difference between the typical notion of cinematic transcendental style and the hagiopic film is their relationship to abundant or reduced aesthetics. Ironically, the one aspect that examples of the two forms of cinema could be said to have in common is the regular use of pre-existing musical scores. When discussing research into the psychological cognition of music in cinema by S.K. Marshall and A.J. Cohen (1988), Cook suggests a dynamic between different forms of media and their aesthetic attributes that examines a flow which could be said to destabilise a film's sense of abundance or reduction. He writes that "Another way of expressing this is that if the respective attributes of the two media intersect then some or all of the remaining attributes of the one become available as attributes of the other." (1998, p.69). Cook is referring to a Venn diagram where, not only the shared area of aesthetic power is available but arguably the entirety of each individual sphere is now available as well; that the middle ground of shared area is not some sort of cut-off liminal vector but in actuality an aesthetic gateway through which the content of the other areas can pass whenever desired by their creator. This is an argument for a far more dialectical relationship between visuals and music which is fitting for the transcendental style for a number of reasons.

The most basic descriptions of film music as the final aspect in a film's production, one which finishes the film and raises its visuals beyond the ghostliness that Theodor Adorno and Hans Eisler perceived within the blank images of silent cinema, is itself open to a metaphorical interpretation of some transcendental nature (specifically the obvious etymological link between transcending and

raising). This most famously occurred in a more industrial rather than academic relationship when the composer, Bernard Herrmann, suggested in an interview with Royal S. Brown regarding his work that Alfred Hitchcock "...only finishes a picture 60 per cent. I finish it for him." (1994, p.290). This has been mostly disregarded along with the general influence of film production methods in more modern, reception-based analysis, especially in writing by the likes of Anahid Kassabian and Kay Dickinson but also in the analytical positioning of Caryl Flinn and Gorbman.

The theories of Levi-Strauss are also surprisingly useful here too - surprising in that the context of his era and subject is far removed from the audio-visual field - in setting up the binaries with which to interpret a media that manages to share aspects and attributes of spiritual character whilst aesthetically showcasing a cultural divide which must be crossed. He suggests that "To justify the difference, it is sometimes said that music is not normally imitative or, more accurately, that it never imitates anything but itself; whereas the first question that springs to the mind of someone looking at a picture: what does it represent?" (1970, p.19). Can music resist the burden of imitating the diegetic world presented, whilst very obviously, in the audio-visual realm, playing a part in the representation of something immanent and tangible (such as a narrative)?[26]

The question becomes even more complex when looking at a film such as *The Gospel According To St. Matthew* in that the immanence of the film's visual aesthetics are already seeking to express transcendental happenings and present literal miracles. This relationship between immanence and transcendence has been

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[26] Can such aesthetic seek higher questions of a transcendental nature through its abstraction?

a regular problem when discussing the general philosophy of arts, both temporal and plastic. It must be stated that immanence is here referring to the tangible aspects of phenomenological perception. In an audio-visual sense, this means the basic perceptive aesthetics used to create the work but which also express some Other.[27] Reiterating the previous suggestion as to how these binaries sit within a transcendental artwork, it could be argued that in something so dynamically rich and changeable as a film is capable of realising a transcendental style as a work of both encounter and recognition; a work where the immanence that is recognised leads to a transcendental pathway.

This pathway is even present when the stasis is achieved through a diminished abundance and still confirms and enlightens the viewer's being. Arguing for a heightened abundant aesthetic to be considered as part of the style is, therefore, contrary since its initial parameters argue for a doctrine of aesthetic rigidness and reduction. Grace conveys the rigidity of the transcendental style, writing that:

> On the other hand, transcendental films, like Byzantine images, operate by means of confrontation rather than identification. They deliberately rob the medium of much of its expressive potential by toning down acting, minimizing sets, costumes, and other material elements. (2009, p.128).

Unlike Cook's sharing of attributes, previous analysis of the transcendental style has focussed upon an aesthetic reduction. It is a "confrontation" brought about through the removal of expressive material to which music supposedly fell victim. And yet, as argued previously, this simply cannot always be the case, since no film can be said to be explicitly devoid of the entirety of its expressive potential. Even in

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[27] Music sits within these aesthetics when codified but its own immanent nature is bypassed regularly by music's form communicating ineffable but understandable information beyond pure communicative language.

an extreme cinematic example such as *Blue* (1993) by Derek Jarman, a film where there is one single blue image for the entire running time, it still relies on the expressive means within its aural realm to convey affect and literal objects to the viewer.

What these aspects highlight is the inflexibility of Schrader's framework once the aural realm of the medium is taken fully into account. Within the audio-visual form, music itself seems essential to what is in essence a duality of media.[28] Whilst other forms of transcendental art such as painting or music have been self-contained (with music being the most overt in this sense), cinema is far more of an amalgamation of pre-existing sensory forms and should be assessed as such. However, my arguments here reinstate music's significance within the transcendental style and do so by means of such a multimedia emphasis. The work of painter, Georges Rouault, was mentioned in the previous chapter, and his work presents an interesting fixed point against which to compare the different forms of media and how they work in their expression of the transcendental style. Peter Fuller recalls Rouault's "spiritual vision" in far more detail than was previously mentioned in the introduction:

> Nonetheless, Rouault remains one of this century's finest draughtsmen: he *does* look intensely at the object, face or figure in the world. He did not, however, seek to reproduce its appearance. One of Rouault's biographers once called him "the painter of inwardness, of the supernatural light that glows from the profoundest depths". This wasn't just hagiography; Rouault was a seer in both senses of the word. And the literal "transformations" of appearance he brought about through the act of painting reflected the *spiritual* vision he wished to bring to bear. (1985. p.45).

From Grace's earlier definition of the hagiopic, the link between our case study and Rouault's style of painting is already apparent. This highlights further how Rouault and, more importantly, transcendental cinema differentiates itself from the more

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[28] This sense of created by the etymological description of the form's name: multimedia.

populist forms of hagiographic artwork: neither seek simply to reproduce aesthetic appearance but something more indefinable.

The Gospel According To St. Matthew in particular references Rouault's paintings, and they are a fitting pair for capturing the essence of the "inwardness" that Rouault's biographer describes. This is in spite of the film containing examples of both a failure and only partial success in achieving a transcendental style through the use of music. The style is more of an undercurrent than a fully realised example. It is the mechanism of this undercurrent that is of interest, however. Fuller describes both a lack of desire in seeking to simply (and impossibly) reproduce the transcendental and also a sense of transformation, each of which can be read as attributes of the Schraderian move from abundance to sparse means. Application of transcendental parameters could be expressed, therefore, with the following metaphorical idea: Rouault could, according to art theorists such as Fuller, produce such an aesthetic effect in two dimensions and without the help an aural third, and so the cinematic equivalent must in some way be aesthetically similar.

This forgets that the music in question, both here and in Schrader's case studies, was often conceived of similar means: these forms of music (either music created to express theology or music to express hardship) do not simply wish to reproduce the appearance of dogma but actually evoke the pure affect of the transcendent that inspired the creation of such dogma in the first instance. The argument could be framed as follows: would playing Odetta's song, *Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child*, a song which Pasolini uses variously in his film to elicit a transcendental notion, burden the viewing of a painting of Rouault's with too

much cultural context and remove its intense transcendental transformation? Or, as I argue in this chapter, would it actually create an even greater array of meaning because of the sheer aesthetic (and not simply thematic) relationships and contrasts built between the senses and the forms? With experience of the power of music within the cinematic form, the latter is clearly a more considered option that takes into account how both forms work, lacking the visual bias that undermines the previous cinematic theories.

A final point to note before the analysis of the case study is the need to consider where the transcendental style fits within the construction of the medium itself, and also how pre-existing music fits into this model. Whilst Schrader sought to define a style by reference to whole films, my analysis will move away from this *gesamkunstwerk* framework. Instead, instances where smaller segments briefly attain a transcendental style will be of more interest. This is contrary to the parameters set out so far by scholars since the logic of a bite-size moment of the transcendental implies a disregard for the difficult journey towards stasis and the eventual (but always only temporary) release of the characters from suffering and hardship. Because of the onus that this chapter places on the power of music - a form which can attempt to express the transcendental in short amounts of time - its argument is based on the same formal ideal; that this power can be tapped within the cinematic form, and is so in the hands of certain directors who are able to create short bursts of transcendental style with the assistance of music and sound.

It seems fitting, therefore, to conclude this introduction with the words of Levi-Strauss whose theories opened its analysis. In his discussion of music's place

within the arts, he follows Schopenhauer's pathway in accepting that it is

unburdened by the representational semiotics that governs the reception of purely

visual work. He suggests the following:

> Music follows exactly the opposite course: culture is already present in it, but in the form of sense experience, even before it organizes it intellectually by means of nature. It is because the field of operation of music is cultural that music comes into being, free from those representational links that keep painting in a state of subjection to the world of sense experience and its organization in the form of objects. (1970, p.22).

It is this "already present" culture that this chapter is built upon. Levi-Strauss is

talking about a very natural, perhaps even Kantian *a priori* relationship to music,

whereby the reception of its formal structure is simply tapping into a ubiquitous

physical and spiritual relationship, a reaction to which has always in some way

existed. However, instead of being merely affective signals often abstractly read

into musical forms, it is the formal amalgamation and interconnectivity of such

cultural material that provides the first routes into arguing for an audio-visual

transcendental style; where the use of music conceived for the expression of

hardship or theology does not simply act as a symbol or a short hand for some

inexpressible moment but itself *becomes* part of a new audio-visual ineffability.

Pier Paolo Pasolini and Cross-Cultural Transcendence

> Recently I saw an exhibition of Rouault's work with some paintings of Christ where he had exactly the same face as my Christ. Anyway there are numerous references. And that goes for the music as well: the music in *Il vangelo* is a mixture of different styles and techniques. - Pier Paolo Pasolini (1969).

The cinema of Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini is perhaps one of the most

complex bodies of work produced in the medium's first century. In the hands of

Pasolini, film becomes not merely a form of entertainment or even an extension of

previous forms of narrative expression, but one that can represent deeply

philosophical treatises on poetry, theology and politics. The director's previous work as a writer, poet and essayist has a great deal to do with the aesthetic and thematic complexity that his work embodies, though this is further complicated by the complexity of the man himself and his ability to imbue his films with layers of his own social and political identity. The transcendental plays an unusual and unstable role in many of Pasolini's films, whether theologically or secularly conceived, and this is down to the director's own relationship with theological material in particular, a relationship which must be considered in some detail in order to provide the backdrop for arguments surrounding the transcendental undercurrents of his cinema.

Pasolini's role in the audio-visual transcendental style may at first seem surprising if only because of his fluctuating relationships with religion and cinema.[29] Peter Bondanella suggests that "His basic contention was that the cinema expressed reality with reality itself (not with separate semiotic codes, symbols, allegories, or metaphors), and that film's reproduction of physical objects was an essentially poetic and metonymic operation." (2003, p.179). This makes the director an even more surprising choice in the context of the transcendental. The description seems to favour an overtly immanent filmic style - one where the narrative must be portrayed with a purity that is devoid of overt symbolism and allegory. Although Bondanella is right in terms of how Pasolini saw his own practice methodologically, he fails to account for the final cinematic output which seems contrary to this assertion in its obsession with semiotic codes and a desire to re-mythologize narrative cinema.

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[29] Pasolini's transcendental style is reflected in the momentary nature of the transcendental in his films rather than a fully realised sense of transcendental style.

The transcendental is also of interest in the context of this director because of his own theological beliefs. Pasolini's atheism makes his use of transcendental thematic content and aesthetics even more intriguing in that he clearly understands the power that is potentially tapped when working in such a form in spite of not believing himself in the realms that his work implies. This relationship and its almost contradictory form is best summarised by Cawkwell who suggests that "...he was a 'religious atheist' if ever there was one." (2004, p.145). This recalls the arguments of the Introduction which looked at the possibilities of a secular transcendental style. Pasolini's cinematic style suggests that the transcendental, as expressed via a secular reading, is inevitable element within his cinema and not simply a possibility, putting emphasis on such ideas through sheer aesthetic modes of production.

Pasolini understands the aesthetic power of the form, especially that which is available through both the musical and the audio-visual. Consider the director's own words on his cinematic style and how they seem to balance a politically infused secularism with an aesthetically orientated theologism:

> Already in *Accattone* my style was religious - I thought it was (although I prefer the word "reverential" [*sacrale*]), and all the critics thought it was, though they called it "Catholic" rather than "religious", which was wrong. But it was religious in the style rather than the content: it is possible to cheat the content, but you can't cheat in the style. (1969).

Pasolini himself arguably summarises one of this chapter's chief points of contextual analysis: that something can be created in a religious style, with all of the subtle power and expression that such a style can command, but still ultimately be devoid of actual religious content per se. This argument becomes slightly more

complex when dealing with *The Gospel* as an example.[30] However, as a whole,

Pasolini's style of filmmaking is accurately situated within this form insofar as he

effectively does cheat the content in many ways. The transcendental potential of

such a style of filmmaking is significant, and Pasolini varies a harnessing of the

transcendental in accordance with the themes and narratives he wishes to portray.

This ultimately positions itself in opposition to the framework put forward

by André Bazin in which it was the choice of extending and removing the human

hand from editing that allowed the spiritual realm to enter the form. Danijela

Kulezic-Wilson explains Bazin's position thus:

> The aesthetics of contemplative cinema and its spiritual underpinnings, similar to those of
> minimalist music, were most famously advocated by André Bazin whose main theoretical
> and aesthetic concerns were founded on the belief that a film image is able to convey the
> presence of the divine existing in the real world if that image is facilitated by a sustained
> gaze uninterrupted by editing (Harvey, 1996, p.230). According to Bazin, if long takes with
> deep focus unfold in the synchrony of screen time and story time, they can create a mise-
> en-scéne which can provide not only the most telling insight into the style of the director
> who shot it, but also an insight into life itself. (2015, p.100).

Although Bazin is correct in identifying the stylistic choices of slower forms of

cinema as conducive to spiritual material, there is a sense of a strict binary

whereby there appears to be only one method of gaining such insight and any

deviation from this puritanical pathway instantly drags a film back down into non-

spiritual immanence. Pasolini is an excellent example of a filmmaker whose

personality and spirituality shines through *in spite of* (and ironically *because of*) the

clear aesthetic interruption of his cinematic techniques rather than deriving from a

style which requires the strict removal of himself from the process (and, ergo,

general aesthetic reduction. This interruption essentially manifests in overt

references to the world outside of the diegetic film. The idea of such a defined

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[30] Pasolini's film effectively succumbs to the theological pressure of his own country and is filled
with religious miracles whilst simultaneously politicising the narrative.

artist as Pasolini being able to achieve an aesthetic feat of disappearance is virtually inconceivable at any rate.

Of all of the expressive techniques that Pasolini comes to rely upon throughout his filmmaking, music and its varied uses can be seen as his most idiosyncratic of aesthetic tools. In spite of his films falling very clearly into an Arthouse category, the music of his films comes from a variety of areas, genres and nationalities. In other words, Pasolini seems to understand an underlying (and potential) universality in music as a communicative form and is unafraid to exploit its multiple thematic connotations when using it in his films. Cormack suggests this to be a flaw of using pre-existing music, arguing that "The chief disadvantage is that it has an artistic vitality independent of the film." (2006, p.75). In fact, this is often part of the very reasoning behind such a use of music, with the form being powerful enough to provoke simultaneously cognitive reactions (to its cultural connotations) and ineffability in respect of its spiritual and perhaps even emotional aspects.

This combination also ties in to Gorbman's notion of the musical auteur where, through there being a single creative focus, music in film is informed by the director's (potentially ineffable) intentions: "More and more, music-loving directors treat music not as something to farm out to the composer or even to the music supervisor, but rather as a key thematic element and a marker of authorial style." (2007, p.149). Pasolini is one such director and the explanation for his idiosyncratic musicality derives from the form's untranslatable attributes. This means that the director calls upon a wide range of musical examples for varying (and admittedly mostly non-transcendental) uses. These have ranged from original scores by the

composer, Ennio Morricone (*Hawks and Sparrows*, *Theorem*), different forms of popular music (*Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, *Hawks and Sparrows*), pre-existing art music (*Accattone*, *The Gospel According To St. Matthew*) and music from ethnographic folk traditions (*Medea*, *The Gospel According To St. Matthew*).

For this section, it is the latter that is of most interest since it is their contextualisation that allows moments of audio-visual transcendental to underscore scenes most effectively. Another intriguing point is that these different forms often occur within the same films and with very little screen time between them. There seems to be no worry on Pasolini's part with regards to continuity and even in regards to potential anachronisms, especially with the constant reappearance of certain pieces of music. For Pasolini, it is the style and the mood that governs aesthetic cinematic practices rather than the strict necessity of such elements conforming to a period or narrative. As will be shown, *The Gospel* is the most extreme example of this form of aesthetics-before-logic approach and it is from this relationship that the transcendental emerges; whereby music must (and does) cross boundaries, temporal and cultural, in order to realise its full effect. The concept appears superficially similar to Deleuze's concept of the "world-image", which Felicity Coleman discusses in a cinematic context:

> While its closest medium allies may be found in music and photography, the cinema is a moving surface of intersecting components - things and ideas - that create images that dominate all other modes of communication. These images produce forces (which Deleuze describes as "affects"), complex notions about time and space, the organization of things in the world, the politics of thought as it is produced by the cinema. In short, Deleuze questions how the cinema can affect the organization of the world, by altering perception of that operation. Thus Deleuze introduces terms such as "worldization" (*mondialization*) and the "world-image" in order to describe moments where films produce constructed sound/images (c2:59). (2011, p.19).

Although Deleuze is opposed to most forms of transcendental arguments within artistic forms, the logic of his thoughts on "mondialization" is fitting for the cross-cultural amalgamations to be discussed.

However, unlike Deleuze, who sees the ideas as creating "...images that dominate all other modes of communication...", I argue that the constructed multimedia and its thematic dialectic has just as much (if not more) power to engage with philosophy, politics and spirituality (and alter the perception of the thematic operation itself). Of course, Deleuze's theorisation of cinema is of use to the natural extenuation found within the transcendental style. In his books, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1985), he tracked the evolution after the 1940s of cinematic aesthetics that moved generally from images that tracked motion to images that measured the passing of time. He writes the following of cinema's first evolution towards a potentially transcendental movement, Italian neo-realism:

> In neo-realism, the sensory-motor connections are now valid only by virtue of the upsets that affect, loosen, unbalance, or uncouple them: the crisis of the action-image. No longer being induced by an action, any more than it is extended into one, the optical and sound situation is, therefore, neither an index nor a synsign. (2013, p.6).

The ways in which cinema did this Deleuze suggests is both the change in the aesthetic realisation of the image and the very choice of action (or more accurately inaction) that a filmmaker decided to shoot, referring to a scene in particular from Vittorio de Sica's *Umberto D* (1952) where a seemingly unnecessary scene of a woman repeatedly trying and failing to strike a match on a wall to light her cooker marks a shift in cinematic emphasis. It is a move away from purely motion-based narrative intent and towards a more time-based sense of the everyday. This forms the basis of what can then evolve into the parameters of transcendental style

(though Schrader's theorising came over a decade before Deleuze). Deleuze cites the elements in images of "…everyday banality…" (1986, p.6), where the act of filming seems to slow down the perception of time. Music, in the logic of Schrader's formulation will always aid the removal of this sense of slowness, making meaning more readily available to the viewer but Pasolini avoids this problem in a number of ways.

In fact, by emphasising music, there is the suggestion that the "movement-image" - the supposedly dominating and affecting force within the medium before the Second World War - is itself affected by an outside force (and evolves into the "time-image" in the period of cinema in discussion). Pasolini's cinematic output is far from being a totally transcendental body of work yet a number of aesthetic arguments, as discussed in both this chapter and others, are present in a variety of his films and music aids rather than removes the transcendental or the slowing of time. Looking at Pasolini's cinema and its complex relationship with music, I am concerned here with transcendental moments of style in which music is aiding the creation of this form of affect, even if only briefly attained.

Cross-Cultural Amalgamations in *The Gospel According To St. Matthew*

> As Pasolini remarks, "my view of the world is always at the bottom of an epical-religious nature: therefore even, in fact above all, in misery-ridden characters, characters who live outside of a historical consciousness, these epical-religious elements play a very important role." - Bondanella quoting Pasolini (1983, p.181).

Pasolini's retelling of *The Gospel According To St. Matthew* functions in a didactic way by simultaneously channelling genuine affective elements of transcendental alongside failed attempts to fully recreate the transcendental at the core of the gospel. In terms of the hagiopic, it is at once differentiated by its aesthetic choices

but also by the very grain of Pasolini's artistic mentality. There is clearly more

behind the director's desire to tell such a story than simply playing to the strong,

theological popularity that such material easily garnered in his native Italy in this

period. *The Gospel* is the third feature film by the director, after *Accattone* and

Mamma Roma (1962), and in some ways the film is a culmination of Pasolini's

desire to harness religious styles of storytelling in order to generate a wider,

affective response to his Marxist ideas and beliefs.

Pasolini's initial thematic practice of highlighting ordinariness is a good

place to begin in terms of looking at what this thesis calls cross-cultural

transcendental style: where distinctive, cultural aesthetics are brought together in

a very deliberate clash, which has such an impact that readings have little choice

but to acknowledge the moments as being part of some wider Other. In other

words, the cross-cultural aesthetic raises enough reception questions as to allow

both a disjoint from the cinematic experience whilst still being affected by its

aesthetic realisation. It could even be read as some sort of theologically-imbued

colonialism with the difference being a desire to adopt the belief systems and

subsequent reception-to-aesthetics of lesser developed communities, with such

communities being perceived (by the director) as being closer to the

transcendental. Because of this, Pasolini desired (in most of his films) to use non-

professional actors and to film in locations where more modern forms of social

development had yet to take place.

Through this emphasis, *The Gospel* is what Grace calls an "alternative

hagiopic" and a "...film that eschews almost all hagiopic conventions, embedding

the sacred into the everyday." (2009, p.105). This emphasis on the everyday is,

according to Pasolini's logic, almost impossible to find in modern, petit-bourgeois

capitalist society. In light of this, *The Gospel* "...comes as close as any film to

capturing the spirit and structure of the gospel on which it is based." (2009, p.105).

Pasolini powerfully summarises his own reasoning on this aspect when, in his

essay, *Apology*, he suggests the following:

> Because the bourgeoisie is triumphing, it's making the workers bourgeois, on one side, and the peasants ex-colonials on the other. In brief, through neo-capitalism, the bourgeoisie is becoming the human condition. Whoever was born into this entropy can't be, metaphysically, outside it. It's over. (2010, p.94).

Here, Pasolini is discussing his dissatisfaction with the left-wing youth of Italy but,

in actuality, it accounts for a strong theme running through his cinematic practice.

As very few (if any) can escape from these aspects of bourgeois ideology, he opts

almost always for a use of actors, places and many other general creative aspects

within his cinema as an antidote to this idea by deriving them from lesser

developed parts of world.

If evidence of this be further needed, one might consider that, for *The*

Gospel, he initially planned for the filming to occur in Palestine, only to find that

the country had developed too far to be of use for his film.[31] Because of this,

Pasolini eventually opted to film in an undeveloped part of southern Italy near

Cabiria. If this is the ideology simply behind the choice of filming locations, then

what eventual effect might this have on the choice and use of music? Consider

Cormack's analysis of using pre-existing music and how his reasoning in some ways

mimics Pasolini's deployment of such music:

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[31] The film *Sopralluoghi in Palestina/A Visit To Palestine* (1963) chronicles his journey and location scout in Palestine.

> First, the music's original meaning may be indeterminate, particularly if it is non-representational concert music. Second, the process of extracting items from their original contexts (both musical and historical) and recontextualizing them in a film increases ambiguity. (2006, pp.29-30).

Whilst Pasolini's use does increase certain aspects of narrative ambiguity, this ambiguity is better described as an otherness which, when working to a gradually accumulative effect, eventually raises transcendental questions. As a strict, methodological rule, music has the potential to produce many examples of cross-cultural transcendental style through an idiosyncratic variety of musical uses from less bourgeois/capitalist cultures. Pasolini, therefore, chooses to use music produced outside of such bourgeois practices, even when it is anachronistically challenging in terms of the filmic world itself.

Les Troubadours du Roi Baudoin's *Missa Luba* (1958)

> I knew I would remake the Gospel by analogy. - Pasolini (1969).

The Gospel's soundtrack is a mixture of musical ideas that balances what could be described as traditional theological forms with cross-cultural influences. This manifests itself in three distinct uses of music which reoccur throughout the film and distinctively mark a desired contrast in the scenarios insofar as they are juxtaposed with music by the likes of Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.[32] Pasolini sets out this distinction in his opening titles where he opens the film with the music of the first example of cross-cultural intent, the African Catholic worship music *Missa Luba*; a Congolese reworking of the Latin Mass performed by Les Troubadours du Roi Baudoin in 1958. The music is largely vocal based with a call and response built in between a lead male vocal and a large

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[32] The use of western art music could be argued as being more traditionally in line with more general theological films.

choir, mixed and structured with African drumming. The titles themselves have no specific cultural ties and are starkly blank, such that the music is the only cultural connection available to the viewer at this point in the film. This music slowly fades into something more recognisably Western approximately half way through the title credits, morphing from the vocals and drums in a slow fade to a rendition of the final chorus of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion (BWV 224)* (1727).

The first musical excerpt commences straight away and eventually fades out, almost mixed in the fashion of a DJ; the only connection being their theological content rather than anything musical such as tempo, key or texture. Here, Pasolini presents two different perspectives that are balanced throughout the film. On the one hand, he has the music of a society removed from petite-bourgeois trappings whilst on the other, he has music which suggests a society of organised Western worship. In reality, the film uses elements of both, deriving whatever is needed from either aspect as and when required. The musical expression from both cultures speaks of a universal quality to the narrative about to be portrayed. In this particular example, however, it is strictly music in the vein of the former tradition that attains some sense of transcendental audio-visual style through the building of a cross-cultural reception potential.

Considering that both forms of music are pre-existing, Cormack raises a number of interesting points which are worth contextualising in relation to this example. He suggests the following in respect to the various reasons for using pre-existing music:

> ...it is likely to be cheaper, and it can be used to marshal particular connotations of culture and class. It may also appeal to producers and directors as a way of having a full orchestral score while retaining direct control over its content. But the music might also be chosen because of the way that such music conveys meaning when taken out of its original context and given the new context of a narrative film. To put the question another way, what difference does it make to the audience's understanding of the film? (2006, p.19).

The latter question seems to be addressing the first point about the connotations of culture and class. In Cormack's examples, the implication of using orchestral music over other pre-existing forms (such as popular or traditional music) is the sort of social hierarchy that Pasolini himself despised. [33] The director is still using music's varied connotations but from a very different end of the social spectrum and pertaining to a society that is more untouched by capitalist ideals; and more conducive to producing his desired "religious style" of filmmaking. *The Gospel*'s narrative is given an interesting initial twist by Pasolini, perhaps through a desire to afford the story a more earthly, mundane resonance. When Mary (Margherita Caruso) is initially shown to be pregnant, Joseph (Marcello Morante) suspects adultery and walks off into the landscape. It is during this wandering that the first transcendental undercurrent occurs. The scenario feels uniquely kitchen-sink in its set-up. The visuals are stark and bare, hinting at a *cinéma vérité* style with shaking cameras and un-dramatic facial reactions. Joseph meets the angel of God (Rossana Di Rocco) who informs him of his baby's true father and its future role in the world. It is in this brief moment that a section of the *Missa Luba* erupts in the soundtrack.

The moment has an obvious transcendental barrier to contend with: the genuinely fantastical nature of an angel and the immanence from attempting to

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[33] Analysis of pre-existing music that refers to financial aspects typically refers to more famous examples such as Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

depict a transcendental presence.[34] However, through Pasolini's deliberate reduction of general visual style, it is only the music that is aesthetically channelling the implication of something higher through emphasising cultural material clearly made outside of the diegesis, ergo creating the gap in the reception often required for transcendental readings. Though the positioning of the music generally touches upon this aspect, its anachronistic character is rarely perceived. This is not a typical conception of the transcendental, but something more impressionable, albeit the end results are arguably similar if not the same. The natural otherness in the scene overcomes a multitude of clashes between the material that Pasolini is adapting and how he is choosing to stylistically show it. The angel is simply another person on the screen with no obvious fantastical costume or any of the typical abundant aesthetics associated with the miraculous.

The cuts are abrasive but not overly stylised as is typical for the director. The dialogue is the only other aspect that suggests that Joseph is witnessing the transcendental since, in terms of the visual aesthetics at least, the scene is simply showing a meeting between two people on the dusty streets of southern Italy. For the music to broach both transnational and trans-temporal barriers without burdening the scene with an aesthetic overabundance begs the question as to how it achieves such an undercurrent of otherness. From looking at the music's other uses throughout the film, a pattern begins to emerge between the musicality of the *Missa Luba* and the moments in which Pasolini chooses to use it.

In some ways, Pasolini uses the *Missa Luba* to combat the problem of actually showing the miracles presented within *The Gospel*'s narrative. In

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[34] The moment of the angel appearing is not transcendental visually in that it can be represented and is, therefore, not ineffable in its creation of affect.

attempting to show such miracles, Pasolini undermines his general aesthetic

arguments surrounding the style and feel of religiosity, though he seems to have

been aware of such problems whilst making the film, and the *Missa Luba* music is

evidence of this. It is worth, at this point, providing some historical and cultural

context for this piece of music so that its position in the film as an othered aspect is

clear. The *Missa Luba* comes from an aurally evolved tradition and is the Latin Mass

sung in the improvised musical traditions of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The musicality's improvised vocal arrangements, organised by Father Guido

Haazen, was eventually recorded in 1958, almost definitely from one of the live

performances which Les Troubadours du Roi Baudoin toured with during the same

year. Pasolini uses a number of sections from the music, using the various

improvised material from the piece built from certain musical elements found in

songs from general Bantu culture, and was the first of a number of filmmakers to

use this music in this period.[35]

The film uses several musical ideas to get around the tangibility that

showing miracles gives but the use of the *Missa Luba* is the most overt. It stands

out in respect of its celebratory tone within this context, adding a human element

to what is still fantastical. In other words, it is not the miracle that is

transcendental, to both the viewer and the characters, but the reaction to it. Two

examples of this occur and each presents a short, transcendental fragment due to

this use of music. Pasolini's comes close to harnessing the transcendental style in

these moments but never quite extends it beyond a glimpse. Later on in the film,

Jesus (Enrique Irazoqui) is shown a sufferer of leprosy whose body has been

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[35] Arguably the most famous use of the *Sanctus* section of the *Missa Luba* is in Lindsay Anderson's *If....* (1968) which resulted in the *Sanctus* being released as a single to coincide with the film.

deformed by the illness. The miracle is their instantaneous and "impossible" curing, which is represented aesthetically with a simple cross-cut. The *Missa Luba* could be interpreted as an aural reaction to such a sensational happening because of the narrative context (a miracle) requiring further elucidation as it is juxtaposed to the visual aesthetics. However, Pasolini does not dwell upon the mechanics of the event. Rather, the music seems more to represent the reception of the event. The emphasis is on the "miracalee" so to speak rather than on the power of the miracle worker or the miracle itself. This raises the question regarding what perspective the music is from or, more precisely, whose? If the music is positioned as a reception to the event then ultimately it is Pasolini who is arguably conveyed most here, his awe at the hope in his narrative being represented musically.[36]

The music shows the transition from suffering to a form of post-stasis; where the character (and perhaps the viewer) is given an opening into a very particular hardship through such an aesthetic juxtaposition as well as providing further thematic context through the joyous celebration of the music. Pasolini uses music in the opposite way later when using the blues music of the next section to heighten the hardship through reference to social tragedies from different periods in history.[37] It is perhaps problematic to use the earlier moment of angelic visitation as an example in terms of the arguments surrounding the transcendental as its elements are presented alongside aspects that are the total opposite of a successful transcendental style. For example, Pasolini virtually bookends the changes in mood of the character of Joseph through earnestly choosing the score

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[36] It is perhaps ironic to consider the spiritual recreations of the gospel considering the director's atheism though the audience is unlikely to be aware of this.

[37] Specifically the slave trade of Europe and America is referenced through such uses of music.

for his scenes based on his perceived emotions.[38] Musically, however, their close

proximity allows the easy identification of a more aurally based transcendental

potential. The scene may be laboured but its brief sense of transcendental style is

conveyed most fully by its musical curation and signposted by its cultural shifts,

aiding the quiet accumulation that renders the rest of the film feeling more and

more transcendental as each musical use appears. The transcendental comes from

an evolution of this musical shift, leaving the viewers either to be removed from

the cinematic world and alienated or forced to confront some potential higher

reading of the moment in question.

This use of music is again present in the film's closing scenes, after Jesus has

died on the cross and is about to be reborn in the cave. His death has already

resulted in the fantastical happening of the city crumbling around him, as if his

death were creating an earthquake. His subsequent resurrection is accompanied by

the city's jubilant population and the *Missa Luba* music, which paradigmatically

finishes the film. The final moment again recreates that contrast wherein the music

seems to represent some form of gestalt reaction on the part of the followers

rather than act as a leitmotif for the miracle itself - in spite of the musical sound

seeming to literally blow away the rock covering the burial cave. The characters

have just been through hardship. The contrast is presented by a musical opposite,

thereby ending the film with a moment of optimistic transcendental potential; one

that has gained more receptive power because of the resonance and meaning that

the music has accumulated throughout its various uses in the film.

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[38] Experimenting with the choice of aesthetic perception is another method that Pasolini resorts to in his filmmaking, the pre-existing musical choices seeming to reflect many inner feelings of characters.

In discussing the *Missa Luba* as a whole, Otto Karoyli's genealogy of this particular religious form serves to explain some of its affective attributes: "When a minority religion, a 'traditional faith', is superimposed on by a large-scale Messianic and imperialistic religion, what often happens is not so much the abandonment of the old indigenous religion, but rather that the two coexist, albeit in a modified way. This is what is called 'syncretism' or 'mixed religion'." (1998, p.46). Karoyli calls the *Missa Luba* "...a fine example of 'syncretism'..." where "...the Christian Mass sung in Latin is mixed with the traditional musical idioms of the Congo. In the context of tribal existence, life is linked in the continuous realization of rituals; life itself becomes largely a ritual, both in the sacred and secular meanings of these terms." (1998, pp.46-47). The ineffable universality of the music's formal language is given a possible explanation, at least in terms of its origins as an artefact of syncretism. Pasolini's use of the music itself could be described as syncretic in that it is the coming together of two forms, coexisting side by side perhaps even symbiotically but (through each other's presence) in a modified way.

Syncretic forms could be read as relating to the relationships between differing media forms too (image and sound) as well as thematic forms (the differing theological material). This audio-visual conglomeration is a marker, signifying a transcendental reception and conveying a brief moment where a character's feelings are beyond words, yet communicated to the audience by virtue of the music being sympathetic. The repeated use of this piece of music also lends some credence to Karoyli's notion of ritual within such syncretic identities. There is little doubt that, in some ways similar (but still essentially differing through expressive content) to the recognition of the audio-visual signifier, the final use of

the *Missa Luba* has a more powerful effect than its first appearance, perhaps through some ritualistic relationship generated through its use in the various brief transcendental moments earlier on. Though discussing a theoretical repetition rather than an aesthetic one, Deleuze presents a parallel view as to why such repetition works:

> Does not the paradox of repetition lie in the fact that one can speak of repetition only by virtue of the change or difference that it introduces into the mind which contemplates it? By virtue of a difference that the mind *draws from* repetition? (2004, p.90).

Equally, we can speak of such a repetition in the musical scores of films, especially the case study here, chiefly by the virtue of its changing meaning and accumulative effect built up throughout.

Pre-existing music especially plays well to repetitive effect given it has the potential to already have accumulated some meaning, general or personal, outside of its cinematic recontextualisation. This repetition and latent choice of popular music could be suggested to be industrial in its role as well as creative but this undermines its powerful presence and its natural enhancing of the multimedia. It is arguably incorrect for scholars such as Bondanella to attribute Pasolini's own wording on general aesthetic choices to this audio-visual style (specifically that of calling much of his early work "pastiche"). The following summation of his early musical choices suggests a mixture of useful keynotes and simplistic analytical binaries:

> Pasolini effects this stylistic transformation of his neorealist heritage in his early works by adopting what he calls a "pastiche" construction, mixing the most disparate stylistic and thematic materials in unusual combinations. Thus, in *Accatone* and *The Gospel*, for instance, the most sublime examples of official culture are set against humble elements from popular culture: the music of Bach and Mozart accompanies pimps and beggars... (2003, p.181).

Bondanella's reading does not account for this contrast or the teleology of such an aesthetic. It is also a mistake to suggest that the elements of popular culture (especially in the context of the music) are used simply as a contrast to "official culture".

Yet Pasolini seems to neither satisfy cinematically secular or theological commentators. Nayar writes of the film's flawed distraction through Pasolini's interest in Marxism where *The Gospel* is described as "…a transcendental film which gives way to Marxist realism..." (2012, p.45). She later critiques such theological narratives for being treated in any way other than as aesthetically sacred: "Even when addressed in the discipline, religion is often handled with ideological discomfort, amidst a flurry of enlightenment caveats and, sometimes even, secularist disdain." (2012, p.47). Yet, through the cross-cultural transcendental style being achieved through the amalgamating process of syncretism (which creates a gap in the reception), *The Gospel* does portray its transcendental thematic content successfully in spite of the clear "ideological discomfort" that Pasolini is burdened with personally. The significance of his musical choices is far more complex than suggested in either writer's analysis. It is the supposedly less sophisticated music that Pasolini uses to channel and express the transcendental; whereby cross-cultural amalgamations, whilst incongruent in many ways to the film, are used to imply universality. The *Missa Luba* is not the only music, however, that Pasolini uses to achieve this and it is arguably through other musical means that the director consistently creates moments of transcendental style.

<u>The Blues of Odetta and Blind Willie Johnson</u>

Whilst the *Missa Luba* affords an obvious cultural and aesthetic contrast within the *mise-en-scène* that Pasolini creates, the temporal incongruence is subtle and perhaps not as obvious to those unfamiliar with the music. This equally applies to the art music as will be seen in the next chapter. The same, however, cannot be said for Pasolini's most overtly idiosyncratic musical choices in *The Gospel*, which are so contrary to the idea of continuity and so openly anachronistic in their obvious modernity, that their presence automatically raises more questions about the scenarios in the film: chiefly, what does Pasolini gain in terms of dramatic effect and philosophical implication from using music that was only a few years old at the time of the film's production for a narrative supposedly set almost 2000 years in the past? The answer is again complex, but speaks of an oddly unique form of transcendental theme.

The most surprising musical choices in *The Gospel* come in the form of twentieth-century Afro-American music. It is not so much the music itself that is intriguing - both pieces in question have a relatively distinguished history in cinematic use outside of *The Gospel* - but it is the decision to use such music in this narrative and in such a way that is at first puzzling. In spite of the obvious hardship on display throughout the narrative of *The Gospel*, few would second guess that Pasolini would decide upon Blues and Soul music, alongside the already distinctive *Missa Luba* as a soundtrack. The main task here is to suggest how such music actually implies a transcendental reading. Both pieces of music in question use the human voice to convey hardship and use vocal performances to express both lyrics and melodies. This mixture of natural human empathy and a channelling through

the prism of the human voice can be shown to greatly expand upon a scenario's transcendental potential even if Pasolini still labours them in various ways. Adding further complexity is the first piece of music's sung lyrics. If the human voice appears in other music in the film it is in a style where the lyrics are either indistinguishable or absent entirely.

Odetta's *Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child* presents an aural shock when it first appears in the film. The song is a ballad, a mixture between Soul, Blues and Gospel, charting the feeling of isolation from the comfort of parental life. Other more political readings of the song are also potentially viable when looking into the lyrical ambiguity and the persona presented by the singer. The lyrics of the song appear as follows:

> Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
> Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
> Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
> A long way from home, a long way from home.
>
> Sometimes I feel like I'm almost done,
> Sometimes I feel like I'm almost done,
> Sometimes I feel like I'm almost done,
> And a long, long way from home, a long way from home.
>
> True believer,
> True believer,
> A long, long way from home,
> A long, long way from home. (William E. Barton & Odetta).[39]

The song has its roots in traditional spirituals, composed during the period of the slave trade with the lyrics explicitly referring to the common practice of separating children from their parents in order to be sold separately. Pasolini is also arguably gendering the tragedy with the performance of a definitive female context thanks

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[39] This reference refers to both the composition's original arranger, William E. Barton, and the singer, Odetta, due to some of the changes made by the latter for the recorded version in question.

to the various voices in the piece. In the context of the song's use when Mary is in the film's frame, this is poignant as the transcendental is essentially given an immanent perspective but still manages to be attained and suggested. The song is expressing the tragedy of that common situation in the slavery era, and its various performances in later years cannot help but also evoke the racial persecutions still apparent in America in the mid-twentieth century. Alongside the harsh situation, the lyrics also evoke theological qualities - the suffering happening to be a "true believer".

Faith is the only other constant in the lyrics and the lives it discusses, a theological reaction to a harsh reality. In other words, it is exactly the form of transcendental process of interest here too. Odetta's version is a live recording found on the 1960 album *Odetta At Carnegie Hall* which instantly adds further complexity to its use in that a very definite link to the present decade is made, but is still effectively bypassed by the thematic content of the film's narrative. The aural space of the recording is not quite perceivable due to its mixing into the film's aural world and so, this element is somewhat removed as a problematic feature for the audience's reception of the music in the most part.

The textures of the song are entirely vocal, Odetta's lead voice accompanied by a choir humming the progression behind the lead. This could also be argued as aiding the sense of the transcendental with the human voice in the backing vocals being rendered with a similar transcendental form; where, in spite of not singing lyrics to convey meaning, other emotional meaning is derived from the tonalities and musical progression *because* of the associations derived from a voice's natural, communicative function. However, Odetta's voice still dominates and the lyrics

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further add transcendental contexts. Through the repetition inherent within the lyrics, it is clear that the mourning aspect being portrayed has no fixed conclusion. In transcendental cinema, the escape from stasis is rarely a genuine escape for the characters, more often a moment of respite; a metaphysical escape achieved in a singular moment. Here, the very act of performing the song represents that moment, an expression as a release from the stasis of mourning - a feeling arguably both universal and beyond words - but one that fails to conclude or end the static psychological form.

In *The Gospel*, Odetta's song is used only twice which automatically heightens the specificity of its placement and use as opposed to that of Bach's music which is faded in and out far more haphazardly. The first instance of Odetta's song being used is when Mary has given birth to Jesus, whose presence has brought a crowd. The birth is not a Romantic presentation as in many traditional retellings but one that is aesthetically defined through the jagged rocks and dust of the hillside on which the scene takes place. In spite of this hardship, the scene is obviously one of celebration, with many of the characters shown to be in awe of the baby, while Mary is shown to be content. It is this aspect that allows the transcendental undercurrent of the scene.

Mary is shown in close-up while Odetta's music plays and the contrast between the two forms (the music and the visual scenario) creates a peculiar bond in spite of suggesting two separate states. Many potential readings of the audio-visual relationships on show fall easily into the category of the transcendental because of this. By using this music in the scene after Jesus' initial birth, Pasolini is creating a pathos that is sufficiently powerful enough to attain a transcendental

aesthetic. Consider Grace's summation of the transcendental and how this scenario moves the emphasis out of the typical diegetic realm described:

> Eventually, the agonizing, unresolved tension within the protagonist, or between the inner world of the protagonist and an alien environment, leads to a "decisive action": an outpouring of overwhelming compassion. The moment of intense understanding is a connection with a deep ground of compassion and awareness, which human beings can touch intermittently. This, says Schrader, is the Transcendent. (2009, p.129).

In a sense, the tension is created musically and the release often derives from the use of the cross-cultural music (especially if the film, as a whole, is considered as an emotional arc). This tension, however, is due to the burden of foreknowledge since the viewer's likely awareness of the fate of the baby is reflected more in the aural realm rather than within the visual realm; the hardship hinted at in the music - in spite of being derived from a historically differing tragedy - provides a temporal shift, a pathos that even some of the characters seem to occasionally gain access to. It is this contrast that creates the brief moment of transcendental style, where the stasis is not one that is achieved in the diegetic realm but one pre-empted in an outer realm through the music, due to the lyrics and the style in which they are sung.

The lyrics refer to a tragedy from a child's perspective and this touches upon the narrative of *The Gospel* which, with hindsight of the fate of Jesus, can be seen to be sung to Mary as both condolence and as an expression of her hardship. When the lyric "Sometimes I feel like motherless child..." is presented when Mary is within the visual, it can be construed as a temporal shift as well as a comment on the future of her own child. This use of music is part of a wider aesthetic framework often used by Pasolini, where his directorial hand is clearly on show and is yet bypassed by the thematic weight of what his films are suggesting. The scene,

therefore, has an otherness to it in that the trans-temporal elements are used to create a transcendental style by virtue of the viewer's own foreknowledge of the suffering to come, heightened specifically by the fact that the person who will ultimately suffer is currently shown as a baby.

Odetta's music is used again later on during scenes in which John The Baptist (Mario Socrate) is baptising people in the river, only to recognise the adult Jesus amongst the queue. He is then subsequently baptised. The scene and music acts more to heighten the previous use of Odetta's voice, bringing the temporal elements full circle to now show that the baby has grown. This is one of the earliest scenes in which the viewer witnesses Jesus as an adult and, by again using the music that signified his birth, Pasolini makes a subtle aural connection between the baby and the adult. The aesthetics here generate a notion of hardship by connecting the baby *to* the adult, showing them to be one and the same. Once connected, during the film's later presentation of hardship, this bridge can subtly substitute the image of the suffering man with that of an innocent child. In doing this, the tragedy of Jesus' future is confirmed and Odetta's music takes on a new foreshadowing of the hardship that is approaching; a hardship that vouchsafes a more typical transcendental aesthetic and with music providing its core pivot. It matters little that it is the supposed son of God in the narrative. It is instead the audio-visual aesthetics which interconnect his journey to the cross and a connection to the more recent hardship of the slave trade, that are most essential to the aural transcendental style.

The use of the blues music of Blind Willie Johnson plays a very similar role in this sense and effectively confirms the thinking behind such a musical use. The

piece in question is *Dark Was The Night, Cold Was The Ground* recorded in 1927.

The musicality is a mixture of Gospel and Blues with no lyrics but instead a

combination of vocal melodies accompanying an acoustic slide guitar. Its history is

varied within film scores because of the numerous versions recorded by artists over

the years. Ry Cooder, who recorded two versions used in film scores, called the

song "...the most soulful, transcendent piece in all American music." (2013, p.23).[40]

The piece is again potentially transcendental in itself, conveying much sorrow and

hardship in spite of having no lyrical content. The piece carries the weight of a

potential transcendental import through its bare repetition conveying the affect.

The version Pasolini opts for is the original recorded version and, given the analysis

of the Odetta piece, it is not difficult to understand why the original was chosen

over its varying covers. In this version, the linking of the voice with the guitar

continues the effect created by the backing vocals in Odetta's song where human

communication is heightened but with reduced detail. Again Pasolini opts only to

use the piece twice, signifying the importance of its placement alongside the

thematic content that it already brings to the film.

The song has the distinction of being one of the twenty-seven examples of

music put together and launched into space on the Voyager spacecraft in 1977.

This is especially poignant in respect to Pasolini's use of the music, since the song

was chosen to represent the human characteristic of "loneliness". It is an aspect

that plays easily into the creation of short bursts of transcendental aesthetics

because of its mixture of aesthetically simple recreation and its power of universal

empathy. The first instance of its use comes when a man crippled by illness is

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[40]Ry Cooder's versions appear in the *Powis Square* theme from Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg's
Performance (1970) and the main theme in Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984).

shown to be cured by Jesus. The scene is interesting in that Pasolini drops the blues

music during the moment of miracle in favour of a more obvious musical

accompaniment in the form of Bach. Cawkwell describes the music's chief role here

as to "...exaggerate the shuffling gait of the cripple as he approaches Jesus..."

(2004, p.147), showing how it has formed the character who is to be effected by

change. The character of the man is given little background and so the music has to

do the thematic work to enhance his already obvious suffering such that the

transition from illness to health takes on a sense of the miraculous.[41]

Pasolini here gives an example of how music has the power to both create

and undermine a transcendental aesthetic. In Cook's terms, the music has the

quick-fire ability to call upon the material that went into its composition, namely

the theological power of the hymn which the song is named after along with the

hardship that was ubiquitous when it was composed. But the moment is lost as

soon it is replaced by music with a more traditional theological weight (in Western

terms). This is an aspect to be discussed in the second chapter analysing such pre-

existing forms, but the example here presents the most obvious clash between

transcendental and immanent uses of music. The scenario begins with an almost

serendipitous attainment of a transcendental moment but falls into the fallacy of

an aesthetic tautology, removing the Blues music and replacing it with orchestral

music which can only mimic the visual that is suggesting a transcendental moment

but no more. It is a thematic tautology in the sense that the doubling up of the

theological narrative with the more recognisably Western theological music

essentially cancels out the sharing of the media's attributes. Although the

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[41] In terms of the film's miracles, this example is relatively restrained.

orchestral form will be shown to also have the potential to create transcendental

moments in the next chapter, it requires a different context to that of *The Gospel*;

where the power of the music lies purely in outer elements rather than as an

immanent reinforcement. The second instance of Blues use in *The Gospel* is more

directly transcendental in its links to suffering and, in parallel with Odetta's music,

is used to call upon a more recent tragedy in order to be linked with the ultimate

tragedy of *The Gospel*.

During Jesus' trial following the betrayal by Judas Iscariot (Otello Sestili),

Pasolini opts for an almost crescendo-like representation of the transcendental by

means of music. He first uses a more orchestral-based piece - taken from Bach

again and mixed to a far louder volume than is traditional for such a piece of music

to be experienced - but, as the outcome of the trial becomes apparent, the music

changes. In the moment of Jesus' final sentencing to death on the cross, *Dark Is The

Night* comes to the fore in a transcendental moment of mixed forms.[42] The music

plays over the image of Jesus' acceptance of his fate, of similar character to many

of Schrader's moments of escape from stasis due to its strange contentment and

respite before the hardship to come. With the addition of this music, the scene can

be perceived from a variety of angles, all with a general theme of dismay at the

events unfolding.

The hardship and injustice are combined with the sheer aesthetic

incongruence of the music, where both suffering and hardship becomes universal,

to the point where the temporal differences and anachronisms are overcome. This

scenario is not simply the injustice that befalls Jesus Christ but conveys the

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[42] The music is abruptly mixed into the scenario, further allowing it to stand out.

emotional suffering of Judas - as a result of his guilt - and Jesus' followers through their sorrow. It is again a short moment of transcendental style created through the musical (and historical) dissonance being matched by a thematic pairing; a crossing of cultural and temporal aesthetics. But its music is key in connecting this ancient event to one that can speak in a more modern, aesthetically understandable language; that of the racial persecutions that inspired the arrangement of the original song.

Cross-Cultural Affect

To gather some final thoughts upon the analysis of popular pre-existing music and its shared thematic and historical material in Pasolini's film, it is worth summarising the key reasons underlying such affective means. This is required in order to not only conclude the arguments surrounding Pasolini's use of cross-cultural amalgamations in the aural world of *The Gospel*, but also to lay some basic groundwork for what may potentially *not* be happening in the initial examples of the following chapter. How does the use of such cross-cultural forms work in a wider context? Firstly, in spite of the arguments here attempting to show that the final outcome of such musical use is some form of audio-visual transcendental style, it is still one explicitly built overtly from immanence and from a framework of subtle association.

Transcendental style needs to move from abundance to stasis and this is often suggested as being achieved through the paring down of general cinematic aesthetics. Yet in what other ways can this relationship manifest itself? The unnamed cog within this mechanism is the space or gap between the two states;

one that implies a dramatic change that is at the heart of achieving this cinematic style. This is not necessarily to say that the relationship could work in reverse and still achieve such an effective outcome. Yet there appears to be some element within this formula which is traversed by virtue of such aesthetic change. The shift from an aural absence to, for example, the *Missa Luba*, presents this same negotiation of the third area, providing the transcendental aesthetic by virtue of the narrative power's ability (and perhaps universality) to fit well with music that is both from a different culture and from different era to that of the film's setting.

It is worth suggesting at this point that, in spite of the many examples of art music used also being produced far beyond the era of the film's setting, the natural relationships formed with such textural music through general cinematic encounters means that it is unlikely to appear as incongruent to a non-musicological fluent viewer. This is a common relationship that is bypassed in general cinematic experiences but something else is happening here. The sheer cultural weight and clear aesthetic clash between the scenario of the film and the music does not allow the typical audience assumptions to occur. Instead, the music forces them to accept their role as a viewer rather than attempt to draw them solely into the drama's diegetic world. Through this, the viewer is primed to read scenarios as being more than just an aesthetic recreation, creating a sensitive reception position that allows scenes to express more than their original material can when isolated from the multimedia form.

Such musical associations, building upon the themes of hardship specifically implied by differing racial and cultural practices, do not reduce a film's aesthetics

but do provide a further barrier in the film's ease of reception.[43] At the beginning

of this chapter, Cook's arguments surrounding the sharing of attributes were given

precedence and this was partly to explain and contextualise the transcendental

affect created here. But one aspect has not been discussed and that is the reliance

on there being two distinct areas between which aspects can be shared in the first

place. The point in stating such obvious logic is that this form of aural

transcendental style works within the medium as part of a dualistic relationship

and not simply because the music alone has acquired some sort of transcendental

aesthetic, either through its formal make-up or thematic material (as questioned

earlier).

Cook's critique of this relationship via specific binaries is a key cornerstone

of this entire thesis even if his point is extended by virtue of such contrary musical

and visual combinations. He argues that:

> The existing literature of multimedia suffers, as I see it, from two associated problems: the terminological impoverishment epitomized by film criticism's traditional categorization of all music-picture relationships as either parallel or contrapuntal, and a largely unconscious (and certainly uncritical) assumption that such relationships are to be understood in terms of hegemony or hierarchy rather than interaction. (1998, p.107).

The example of *The Gospel* would be analytically undermined if its music was

attributed as existing in such simplistic terms. The transcendental affect is a

complex mixture of attributes shared between the aural and the visual which are in

a constant state of aesthetic and temporal flux. It is an affect created by the

relationships between two forms but one also touching upon the thematic material

contained within them as well. With a thematic strain required in the reading as

such, this moves away from Cook's purely aesthetic attributes and requires other

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[43] Essentially what the paring down of a film's aesthetics is meant to achieve is a similar gap or distancing effect.

contextualisation. In the example here, this relationship is created through a clash of cultural material, whereby the viewer must unconsciously accept the overtly anachronistic aspects in terms of both aesthetics and narrative. In compelling the viewer to do so, Pasolini also provides them with a means to a more transcendental interpretation of certain scenes, allowing short fragments of ineffability to be often bookended by the aesthetically immanent, as if propped up by the more typical audio-visual scenarios and relationships, earnestly weighed down by the fantastical nature of the many narrative events. In *The Gospel*, the transcendental nature, when it arises, is not always undermined by the music but is often indebted to it.

The narrative of Christ could be read as containing the required release from dire circumstances but it feels too clichéd to suggest that it is this relationship alone that provides any form of transcendental elements in the film. On the contrary, the film occults its transcendental style in many regards because it presents such a narrative that is both fantastical and also one that easily succumbs to the aesthetic means required to tell it, as will be analysed in Chapter 2. The film, outside of the instances outlined, falls into many of the aesthetic trappings typical of attempting an immanent response to the transcendental; the final outcome of such an attempt being always impossible and trapped in a circular argument that undermines itself. It is only the shift in musical style and choice, juxtaposed against the visual and thematic narrative that ironically allows access to the affect that is at the very heart of the original narrative.

In the context of Cook's multimedia form, it is worth noting that the removal of rigid binaries does not necessarily lead to a natural outcome once music is set against another action. It must be called upon through a shared thematic

power for such a relationship to form. It is also an aesthetic ideal that is difficult to

attain, even when portraying a narrative of such theological weight. In Schrader's

terms, this arguably makes it *more* difficult since there is simply too much that can

succumb to "abundance". *The Gospel*'s popular music does at times convey this

hidden spirituality through the implication of other forms of hardship and is clearly

the reasoning behind such an aesthetic use on Pasolini's part.

This chapter will end where it began, with the philosophy of Levi-Strauss.

His discussion of music's capacity to work on both the mind and the senses is the

final point to raise in regards to how such cross-cultural audio-visual forms create a

transcendental aesthetic. It is this ability, especially within an audio-visual context,

where it explicitly works around both forms of media (even if at an unconscious

level). He outlines the following relationship:

> This explains the principle (though not the genesis and functioning, both of which, as I have already said, remain the great mysteries of the science of man) of music's extraordinary power to act simultaneously on the mind and the senses, stimulating both ideas and emotions and blending them in a common flow, so that they cease to exist side by side, except insofar as they correspond to, and are witness to, each other. (1970, p.28).

Although this analysis has not solved the ultimate mystery of why music's

placement in cinema has such power, in this instance it has provided an argument

for its thematic and aesthetic potential towards the transcendental style. It is the

actuality of music's power and influence over an audience's reception that is

equally as key. On the perceptive side of this, the popular music that Pasolini uses

in his film provides a wealth of thematic weight which is required in order to

suggest a wider universal context for narrative causation and development. The

cognitive element of this builds on the narrative causation and provides an

ineffable quality within the context of the film's diegetic world. The transcendental

style derives from the ability to touch upon this context with a view to audience affect; one where the transcendental is generated by an immanent awareness of history and the viewer's individual place within the moral and social communities of the world.

Chapter 2:

Pre-existing Music and Derridian Contrast

A loose idiomatic identification - that sounds like classical music - will lead to a particular response; the more particular the identification, the more complex and interesting the effects that can be traced. - Dean Duncan (2003, p.141).

The analysis of the use of pre-existing popular music in Chapter 1 may appear at first to have been somewhat incomplete. The film that was subject to the musical and socio-historical analysis, Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According To. St Matthew* (1964), has a score of such shifting aesthetics that to analyse all of the music in one go would have undermined the argument of the chapter. For as was made clear, not all of the music used in Pasolini's film creates a transcendental effect or undercurrent. In fact, it is the music that at first logically seemed to be the least likely to express transcendental effects that eventually produced such moments. The "classical" (often) theologically conceived music of Bach and Mozart removed such transcendental potential. This was not, however, further elucidated upon as to why such combination of sound and vision removed its transcendental potential. After all, there was arguably just as much difference aesthetically and historically between this music and the film's contents as there was between the popular music and the cinematic world (which was the basis of my theoretical mechanism concerning the use of popular music).

The analysis of this chapter is going to address such an imbalance by firstly scrutinising the reasons why use of this music in Pasolini's film failed to fully evoke transcendental expressions even with theological material being within the shared thematic criteria. This must also be qualified and contextualised within the use of pre-existing "classical" or art music in cinema as a whole, especially the use of

those musical forms that were designed and conceived specifically for theological worship. This is because the multimedia combination can in some aesthetic way remove or shut off the transcendental elements present within the music. This section will refer to this as a transcendental contradiction, if only to make clear that the initial examples and musical uses in question, found again in Pasolini's film, are not fully part of a transcendental aesthetic. Their contradiction in a sense proves the transcendental potential by highlighting an opposite, and Pasolini's aesthetic fallacies represent a general norm in such use of pre-existing art music.

Perhaps this is an unfair assessment of Pasolini within an example that gave transcendental content in its other musical forms but there is another context to this. The arguments in the first section of this chapter will begin to reframe the mechanisms surrounding the dialectic between the cultural content of the film (visuals, aesthetic, themes, narrative) and the musical content (aesthetic, themes, narrative, theology) and how it is within the interrelations between the two where the transcendental style can be perceived. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that this relationship is analysed with reference to how the differing aesthetics function *together* and around each other. The failure of the use of Bach's music in *The Gospel* to create a transcendental aesthetic must be explained in its overall causational effect, and can be furthered as a point with the context of Pasolini's others uses of such music as in his debut film, *Accattone* (1961). It is the difference between the frameworks provided within these films that will yield initial groundwork for looking at the use of pre-existing Western art music in the creation of transcendental audio-visuality.

This suggests a potentially stronger, more overtly aesthetic form of musical transcendental style to be possible. The work of Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky will be the case study to build this argument upon. Tarkovsky's intensely complex methodology, filmmaking style, and use of music will be contextualised within the framework of a transcendental style of pre-existing musical uses; one where it is the chief desire to imbue universal notions of transcendental expression into the dreamlike memory-slips within his films. Tarkovsky sought this aesthetic outcome also through the use of the music of Bach (as well as several others), even using the same pieces in question that are of focus in Pasolini's films. Using Bach's music was a common practice in such forms of arthouse cinema of this period as Tobias Pontera has pointed out: "Bach was sometimes used to signify moments of revelation and intense emotionality, often in a way that was closely tied to the personal convictions, experiences, and worldviews of the filmmaker." (2014, p.7). The difference in context between the two filmmakers in question - who, when using the same music, create differing and varying levels of transcendental style - presents a gap in which certain arguments can reside.

More so than the previous chapter, this analysis will show how two differing uses of the same music can create and negate the transcendental style. The latter is initially considered as a contextual backdrop for some of the assumptions made during the previous chapter regarding the use of Bach's music by Pasolini, whilst the former will be used to highlight how such music can be used to successfully convey a transcendental audio-visuality. A shift from artefact to style, hinting at aspects even beyond discourse, is essential in understanding how the use of Bach's music essentially aids the transcendental style in some examples whilst burdening

it in others. Because a sense of difference and contrast is at the centre of transcendental creation in some way within all of the examples so far, it must also have some academic context outside of musicology.

The concept of difference as a philosophical position will be the pivot on which this chapter will turn and the examples will be assessed through the framework of the theories of grammatologist, linguist and aesthetic philosopher Jacques Derrida as well as within the more typical musicological contexts. Arguably, the musicological (and audio-visual) analysis is simply another language being decoded through subjective frameworks and so several of Derrida's ideas will be pertinent in assessing how the examples work and how the analysis of the examples works as well. This will be most fruitful in the application of the Derrida dictum of "The signifier of the signifier" or, as he put it more haphazardly in his work, *Of Grammatology*, "...a sign signifying a signifier itself signifying eternal verity, eternally thought and spoken in the proximity of a present logos." (1976, p.15): an idea initially discussing the relationship between writing and oral/aural communication and one that has great potential in the audio-visual analysis of film too. To begin this chapter, some detail is required addressing this theory of difference as well as a general situating of the argument in the debates surrounding the use of pre-existing art music in film.

Audio-Visual *Différance*

Derrida's theories and an audio-visual aesthetic such as the transcendental style are both routed in a gap of difference or *différance*. Difference is a mixed word speaking of actual difference and a deferral of meaning. It speaks of a gap between

meaning subject created between spoken and written forms of communication. Music in film has a parallel system to that of the language and grammar of general communication, and Derrida's theory is a deconstruction through analysis of the nature between a text and meaning. The context may be different but the application of Derrida's ideas to the audio-visual form highlights the unique difference created in particular by the use of pre-existing music, the difference that eventually taps into ineffable, transcendental notions.[44] Derrida suggests a potential hierarchy between aural and visual communication, writing that "In all senses of the word, writing thus *comprehends* language." (1976, p.7), going further to argue that "And thus we say 'writing' for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural 'writing.' "(1976, p.9). The signifier of the written word is the comprehended and the communicator (this order is essential) of the idea which, according to Derrida, can be found in such likenesses as "cinematography" and "music". This hints at the potential application of his ideas to other communicative forms.

A simplistic interpretation of this in regards to audio-visual media could be that the form is merely a conglomeration of signifiers of signifiers, all working to convey and communicate some idea, often of narrational content. This, however, excludes the actuality of the cinematic form as a dialectical relationship and the hierarchies that the two forms shift between when in flow. What, therefore, can

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[44] The difference in contexts is that, in examples of audio-visual art, the two forms of communication occur simultaneously whilst the difference between the written word and aural word can be both separate *and* simultaneous.

formalistic difference in its various guises actually say and communicate when the

signifiers are produced from differing initiators but remain in constant

communication with each other? In his analysis of Derrida, Leslie Hill writes of an

ineffable quality, perhaps what could even be described as a potential within

communication that Derrida recognised: "To read any text is to recognise there is

always an unreadable, uninterruptable, untranslatable remainder, which is what

makes reading at one and the same time possible and impossible." (2007, p.101).

What if a medium, any medium for that matter, took advantage of this, perhaps

highlighting and emphasising this remainder? In a sense, poetry is created by this

process (and forms that are already abstract in their formal make-up such as music)

and has a huge advantage in being touched by this very ideal.[45] Perhaps this is

simplifying Derrida's *différance* too heavily but, with even greater detail of

Derrida's reading, it becomes a natural and inevitable outcome.

The theory of *différance* is in itself permeable because of the grammatical

play that Derrida put into the choice of the term; mixing the potential transitive

and intransitive forms of the word in French to ironic effect whereby the portal to

the infinite potential he sees in the written form of language is already opened by

the very word used to denote it. Hill schematises this idea as follows:

> Since it came from a verb that was both transitive and intransitive, *différance* could be used
> to indicate a movement that was itself neither active nor passive, but prior to that
> opposition, just as it preceded, too, numerous other similar binary oppositions: presence
> and absence, sensible and intelligible, nature and culture, subject and object, and so on.
> (2007, p.16).

This, therefore, has great potential in its application to even the most general

audio-visual arguments, especially those of the more transcendental variety of

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[45] Poetry is apt in the context of Tarkovsky who, as the son of the poet Arseny Tarkovsky, seems to
have always seen himself as a poet of the cinematic form.

music and sound theories, because the problem of analysing and breaking down musical forms is to dissect their inner workings and is almost always in a sustained conflict with the inability of description outside of mere technicalities.[46] Kantian transcendental notions bear some weight again on this, the overlapping of differing transcendental natures being natural but almost instantly in need of defence against arguments of misunderstanding the term and perhaps the subconscious connecting of differing ideas because of the endless homonymic character of the word. That any creative form affects us, once lowered to its base potential, is essentially *a priori*. As T.K. Seung suggests "The a priori elements are space and time. They belong not to the physical world, but to human sensibility." (2007, p.2). It is, therefore, not a leap of great lengths to see such character in time-based media forms and our perception of them in a similar light.

Returning to Derridian *différance*, the relationship between written and aural/oral communication has more bearing on the audio-visual form. Derrida writes that "By definition, *différance* is never in itself a sensible plenitude. Therefore, its necessity contradicts the allegation of a naturally phonic essence of language. It contests by the same token the professed natural dependence of the graphic signifier." (1976, p.53). To reveal how Derridian *différance* can be applied to audio-visual forms, the framework set here by Derrida need only be aligned with the common, more assumptive arguments surrounding the relationship between

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[46] As further context for this particular letter play, Derrida wrote that "The activity or productivity connoted by the *a* in *diff*é*rance* refers to the generative movement in the play of differences. The latter are neither fallen from the sky nor inscribed once and for all in a closed system, a static structure that a synchronic and taxonomic operation could exhaust. Differences are the effects of transformations, and from this vantage the theme of diff*é*rance is incompatible with the static, synchronic, taxonomic, ahistoric motifs in the concept of structure." (1987, p.27).

film music and the image for the parallel to be perceived. In linguistic analysis, the common assumption that Derrida wishes to undermine is "...the professed natural dependence of the graphic signifier". Many audio-visual scholars are alerted to the same relationship in their field between the sound and visual hierarchies in film: that, as was common in the most industrialised (and codified) forms of cinematic examples, the music was seen and argued as being *added*, it was an additional element, it finished the picture and so forth.

Like Derrida, audio-visual scholarship has since moved on from this basic, industry-assumed argument, if only because the scope of global cinematic musical use (replacing the largely Hollywood-grounded analysis) has rendered many such frameworks as too specific. Derrida even (perhaps surprisingly) finds analysis that accounts for what this thesis calls the codified anti-transcendental uses of music by writing that "A signifier is from the very beginning the possibility of its own repetition, of its own image or resemblance." (1976, p.91). Nicholas Royle writes on the same point when discussing Derrida and cinema, suggesting that "Deconstruction is not only about *acknowledging* difference. It is also about being open to *being altered* in one's encounter with difference. And it is about making a difference, changing the ways we think and what we think, altering the world. Film offers a powerful way of projecting these issues." (2005, p.13). The emotional guiding of spectators through such a musical and audio-visual concept as the leitmotif - the very musical practices that almost always negate transcendental style - are all finding some likeness in Derrida's linguistic analysis.

Furthermore and contrary to this pathway, Derrida sees this notion of *différance* as a key to acknowledging the infinite potential in what is often a

quantified form. In the context of music analysis, a practice governed by the almost mathematical logic of musical notation and texts, this is especially relevant; there is naivety in how divining the affective power of music through the mechanisms of its cogs alone somehow yields its overall meaning. Considering cinema as a time-period in itself as opposed to simply a creative medium, allows the character of this construction of meaning to flow unimpeded. However, analysing cinema within this framework as one concise whole is against the methodology of my thesis; the form is multivalent because it is multimedia, perhaps even fitting the description of multi-causational in its affect. The written word is the visual, the hieroglyphic, the sign and a signifier in Derrida's terms, whilst the spoken (which is the aural/oral) is the original signifier of the idea of which words convey. The former is removed twice from its potentially Kantian transcendental source rather than simply once within latter (music being included in this) being closer to some sense of source. As film is built of these two forms, the aural and visual - the audio-visual - then what does Derridian *différance* say about cinematic arguments framed through similar mechanisms? In essence it can put forward a framework which, as will be shown in later case-study analysis, is essentially an audio-visual transcendental form where associative, as well as the propagatory character of aesthetic *différance*, builds links to higher meanings, opening the gateway to the infinite and the ineffable.

Music is considered to heighten the visual form and narrative of a film but what if it took on wholeheartedly the character of the Derridian *différance* instead, whereby the music was not actually communicating specifically to the pure source of narrative meaning as conveyed in the visual elements of the cinematic world, but was effectively drawing its affect from somewhere else because of its

character, its pre-existing nature and because of the thematic questioning raised by its place in the film at the hands of the director? Such musical choices are resistant to the negative connotations that Derrida draws. For example, Derrida writes that "If art operates through the sign and is effective through imitation, it can only take place within the system of a culture, and the theory of art is a theory of mores." (1976, p.207). This ties the potential codified (the signified) practice of creative forms (in cinema, let's say, for example a Max Steiner score) to the Adornian culture industry. It is commodified, producing a subsequent analysis of "mores" rather than transcendental/theological critiques. Transcendental audio-visual examples resist this too, operating through a mode of aesthetic reproduction that clashes together the new with the already existing, the overall output producing affective responses that have no potential for imitation purely derived from signs because its desired expression is beyond pure representation.

The aural communication within cinema can act to both communicate the central idea and, as in these examples of transcendental style, add questioning elements whose presence shifts the potential reading. Derrida predicted the latter outcome because of the potentiality within this communicating/questioning binary, Hill summarising it as follows:

> Thus, whether or not it is "signified" or "expressed," whether or not it is "interwoven" with a process of signification, "meaning" is an intelligible or spiritual *ideality* which eventually can be united to the sensible aspect of a signifier that in itself it does not need. Its presence, meaning, or essence of meaning, is conceivable outside of this interweaving as soon as the phenomenologist, like the semiotician, allegedly refers to a pure unity, a rigorously identifiable aspect of meaning or of the signified. (1987, p.31).

It is fitting that Derrida finds a connection between intelligible meaning and a spiritual character of ideality as this is exactly the gap that certain pre-existing musical uses in film takes advantage of. It is also of interest to consider Hill's point

on its lack of "need"; the lack of necessity for intelligible meaning made sensible

through a signifier. It seems an almost ironic point when considering creative

media, not simply because of its consistent multivalence, but because meaning is

now at the forefront of art theories generally.

This has had negative effects for certain scholars, most notably Susan

Sontag who writes in her essay "Against Interpretation" that "In a culture whose

already classical dilemma is the hypertrophy of the intellect at the expense of

energy and sensual capability, interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon

art." (1967, p.7). She instead highlights an opposite to art made in the context of

this era that actually requires meaning, suggesting that:

> *Transparence* is the highest, most liberating value in art - and in criticism - today.
> Transparance means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being
> what they are. This is the greatness of, for example, the films of Bresson and Ozu and
> Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*. (1967, p.13).

Sontag is discussing a key element of the transcendental style, where the

conceptual object in itself is unmarred by the weight of its subject but which

(because of a lack of perceived subject) can evoke reception that is pure in

character. In other words, the work is not entirely dependent upon its subject for

the creation of affect. Though pre-existing music suggests a potential post-modern

slant, one that would logically go against this reading, the examples retain the

essence of Sontag's value by confidently but subtly extrapolating such ineffable

elements and expression from music. This isn't interpretation or reading but,

especially in the examples she cites, a far more subjective, personal, emotional and

even spiritual teleology present.

In a sense, films that use pre-existing music to achieve transcendental ends

actually combine elements of both Derridian and Sontag-like thinking. The

transparency is created unconsciously and contradictorily by association and contrast (or *différance*). Sontag mourns more primitive forms of art reception, though in some ways transcendental film style can still attain to its purity. She writes of how "The earliest experience of art must have been that it was incantatory, magical; art was an instrument of ritual." (1967, p.3) but descriptions of certain films and their effects seem to share these same elements. Through Derridian *différance* between cinematic signifiers, the examples within this chapter also retain some of this magical, ritualistic element as music often goes through several processes and scenes before fully attaining a cumulative transcendental effect.

Still, Derrida too sees some elements of Sontag's argument in the very act of writing itself. In his essay "Force and Signification" (1978) from the volume *Writing And Difference*, he speaks of the pivotal starting point of the creative act and the pathway traversed if reducing creative work down to pacifying the notions that Sontag suggested:

> If creation were not revelation, what would happen to the finitude of the writer and to the solitude of his hand abandoned by God? Divine creativity, in this case, would be reappropriated by a hypocritical humanism. (1990, p.12).

He summarises the relationship further when discussing the writing of Marcel Proust where "Teleology here is not a product of the critic's projection, but is the author's own theme." (1990, p.22). This is true of transcendental cinema as well where the creator has imparted a number of signifiers, hints and other aesthetic relationships which, in the hands of the right viewer or critic, become something higher but, if in the hands of a general viewer, will most probably seem at the very least odd and intriguing (perhaps hinting at a subconscious level of transcendental

understanding) or at the most being uncomfortable and difficult to consume

passively.

Derrida saw this inherent mechanism in the works of Antonin Artaud too,

calling it the "Subjectile" where the dual functionality of a work was always present

but the function of which depended upon the reception of the viewer actually

perceiving it:

> The subjectile: itself between two places. It has two situations. As the support of a
> representation, it's the subject which has become a *gisant*, spread out, stretched out, inert,
> neutral (*ci-gît*). But it doesn't fall out like this, if it is not abandoned to this downfall or this
> dejection, it can still be of interest for itself and not for its representation, for *what* it
> represents or for the representation it bears. (2004, p.134).

In terms of cinematic subjectiles, the examples in question contain a narrative the

aesthetics of which are that very subjectile. The narratives in question are often

simple when broken down; the haunting by a lost loved one or the downward

spiral of street pimp. These narratives require little reading to understand and to

perhaps enjoy their linear progression, but the music, and to an extent some other

cinematic functions, provide it with the dual characteristics of the subjectile. It has

the potential to convey another dimension to the situation because of the

aesthetic difference or *différance* created. In the case of the examples here, the

dimension is not simply metaphorical but essentially expressive of ineffable forms;

higher feelings and places, the presence of something Other and aspects that are

beyond typical aesthetic representation for conveyance alone.

It is now essential to contextualise this theoretical framework within the

actuality of pre-existing art music in film and its various analyses. Dean Duncan,

whose quote opens this chapter, is one of the few audio-visual scholars to move

the analysis of pre-existing art music away from the usual, industrialised (and

admittedly often negative) readings. If the *différance* created is to be shown to

derive readings beyond such pure representation, then the very use of art music

must be reassessed. Duncan suggests that "Though one can argue about more or

less successful music, my contention is that all music enhances, if we take enhance

to mean that it inflects and affects, whether for unity or multiplicity." (2003, p.21)

and this must be the first analytical position to be taken if transcendental readings

of the examples are to be attained.

Adorno and Horkenheimer are two of the many scholars that Duncan lists

as being reactive to such musical uses, due in part to the political and social era in

which they lived. In *Dialects of Enlightenment*, they give numerous examples of

recontextualisation of work for mass culture, the effects of which are in their view

dangerously negative:

> If one branch of art follows the same formula as one with a very different medium and
> content; if dramatic intrigue of broadcast soap operas becomes no more than useful
> material for showing how to master technical problems at both ends of the scale of musical
> experience - real jazz or a cheap imitation; or if a movement of a Beethoven symphony is
> crudely 'adapted' for a film sound-track in the same way as a Tolstoy novel is garbled for a
> film script: then the claim is done to satisfy the spontaneous wishes of the public is no
> more than hot air. (1969, p.122).

They question the role of such art forms being mass marketed by their editing,

linking such ideas to the very removal of the questioning of the human condition.

Yet they lived through an era where examples of pre-existing music in film often

are there for more commercial reasons than creative reasons, before such a

practice would become more expensive due to the rising costs of copyright usages.

It is also an analysis conducted in an era which was arguably only just beginning to

fully convey the thematic potential of using particular pieces of art music, not just

for transcendental means, but for other intellectual agendas too.[47] So often, however, such uses are not expressed through the sheer thematic means alone but within the model of form. It is a certain combination in the framework and the context of the *gesamtkunstwerk* that allows such examples of transcendental cinema to arise.

Sontag writes along similar lines in her essay on this more ineffable style of cinema, "Spiritual Style In The Films Of Robert Bresson" (1967). She suggests that an emphasis on form is where both affect and its subsequent analysis lies, writing:

> Ultimately, the greatest source of emotional power in art lies not in any particular subject-matter, however passionate, however universal. It lies in form. The detachment and retarding of the emotions, through the consciousness of form, makes them far stronger and more intense in the end. (1967, p.181).

Analysing pre-existing musical use forces the analyst to confront two other key areas outside of these challenges of analysis. The first and more obvious element is the contextual baggage that the music brings with it, whether historical, technical or perhaps even personal. But the second and more relevant area is the position in which the music sits as well as the audio-visual form that the combination itself creates. The differences between such pre-existing uses and originally composed scores are of form rather than simply context. The whole process of thinking is different and has to account for thematic content that is far less malleable.

Duncan accounts for this difference by suggesting that "The fact is that music resists semiotic elaboration more than most modes of communication. In music the link between the signifier and the signified is not direct or causal, as in many other systems... This is not to say that music is not a signifying system." (2003, p.86). This brings the argument back to Derrida and to earlier arguments

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[47] For examples of pre-existing music used intellectually, see any number of films by Jean-Luc Godard and many directors of various "new waves" of European cinema in the early 1960s.

surrounding music's abstract form. The logic for using an element that is in itself an ineffable entity rather than a purely "signifying system" to signify objects and subjects in cinema is flawed. And yet, through industrial practices and cinematic normalisation, perhaps even in musical forms such as operatic and programmatic music before it, it does work on many receptive levels in a practical sense.

Derrida argues, and in a sense finalises, this point of a fixed dialectic that cannot be ignored or simply reduced within analysis:

> According to a general rule which is important for us, attention to the signifier has the paradoxical effect of reducing it. Unlike the concept of the supplement which, of course, *signifies* nothing, simply replaces a lack, the signifier, as it is indicated in the grammatical form of this word and the logical form of the concept, signifies the signified. (1976, p.208).

In other words, the analysis of the music alone is pointless (and would drift solely into the area of classical musicological analysis) as it is within the context of a signifying relationship where its whole content is being amalgamated into a form that also requires analysis of its whole; that the difference or *différance* perceived in the examples within these first two chapters - differences of themes, culture, history and other such elements - are only different as such when in an overtly dialectical form as audio-visual media. By reading such musical uses as working through differing methods, evidence of which is provided within the frame of the "signifier of the signified", areas can be opened up whereby thematic content can be seen to be produced through collisions. In communicative art forms, this can only be described properly through Derridian *différance* and seen to be a form that explicitly creates a number of transcendental audio-visual aesthetics when apparent in cinema.

Pasolini's Transcendental Contradictions

Pasolini's use of Bach's music rarely elicits a transcendental moment in *The Gospel According To St. Matthew* in spite of still retaining some difference to the visual core of the film. This difference is one of temporality where, even if the viewer is unaware of music history, the instrumentation (yet alone the musicality of any number of Bach's pieces) is anachronistic in the context of the film's period setting. Normal audiences will not register this and it is a common occurrence in any number of historical films. In terms of Pasolini's own creative oeuvre, this would have little consideration at any rate and the presence of the other forms of music analysed in the last chapter should highlight how little Pasolini cared in regards to historical accuracy. His emphasis was instead on intuited feeling, reaction and emotion more than the sheer technicalities of storytelling. And yet, with hindsight of the examples to be analysed, it is not strictly the fact that it is Bach's music that removes the transcendental aspect but the context that it sits within; that of the audio-visual form.

To account for these moments where transcendental potential was not fulfilled, analysis alone of the use of Bach's music in this film is not enough. Therefore, a comparison must be made between the uses of Bach's music and other classical examples in *The Gospel*, to the use of Bach's music in another of Pasolini's films as it can highlight the music's position without becoming muddled by the theological tautology found specifically in this film. The film in question is *Accattone* (1961) and the comparison between the two films should highlight some basic methodological likenesses in regards to thematic and aesthetic content, where it is not simply cross-cultural difference or even a general *différance* which is

absent and contradicts the ineffable being expressed, but rather a genuine, almost avant-garde shift of the material in regards to wider cultural issues within Pasolini's filmmaking. By concentrating on this audio-visual example, it also removes the problematic theological elements which muddy the account of the transcendental style. Though *The Gospel* appears to have been the culmination of the first cycle of the director's filmmaking towards attaining some sort of "religious style", *Accattone* is where the director started to probe gritty narratives with theological content rather than vice-versa as in *The Gospel*.

Accattone follows the life of a pimp (Franco Citti) living in the poorer areas of Rome whose reliance on his prostitute (Silvana Corsini) for an income becomes the undoing of him. She is put in jail for a year after being beaten by a group of her pimp's rivals and subsequently arrested and sent to jail. With no money to buy food and no desire to work, Accattone roams the streets, watching his social and emotional life gradually disintegrate. He meets another woman (Franca Pasut) who offers to sell her body for him but he instead opts to attempt to work, failing in various, laborious jobs before finally stealing a motorbike and crashing it whilst trying to escape its owner. From this description alone, it is clear that the narrative tendencies in this film are far removed from the magical, but still equally hardship-ridden, world of *The Gospel*. Pasolini is clearly attempting to create moments of transcendental style (not least with the various symbolism of the main character as a Jesus figure), both in terms of the thematic nuances in the film and, most importantly, through the oddly stifled use of music. It is this latter aspect that acts as the control for how such musical usage can stumble.

In discussing the filmmaking process of Bresson, Sontag suggests that the spiritual character of his drama derives from conflict, suggesting the following: "The nature of drama being conflict, the real drama of Bresson's stories is interior conflict: the fight against oneself. And all the static and formal qualities of his films work to that end." (1967, p.187). Though Pasolini neglects the more formal qualities that Bresson uses, *Accattone* does immerse itself in various conflicts, both inner and outer. The various tragedies that we see befall the main character sit alongside the tragedies hinted to have already happened to him such as the loss of his first wife and child to another man. But in regards to the inner conflicts, Pasolini opts for an audio-visual method of conveying this ineffable aspect, one that is both musical and an attempt at the transcendental in terms of affect. The majority of the music used in *Accattone* is again a segment from Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, specifically cutting around the final C Minor chorus, "We Lay Ourselves With Weeping". The cutting of the short fragment of music is as harsh as the visual aesthetics of the film, sometimes cutting midway for very specific effects such as when it plays consistently in the background during a long take following the pimp and a recent lover along a street. Once the walking has begun, the scene does not cut visually until the characters separate, and Pasolini follows the pair as the pimp chastises her for various (and pointless) misdemeanours. What is the director attempting to say by putting such music in the background? The music has a thematic gap but is cut too abruptly to be of genuine effect. The scene is not transcendental but, in the clear attempt to highlight the more tragic background of the scene - the main character's self-destructive qualities, for example - Pasolini's use of the music at least betrays an attempt to create such an effect.

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That such a liturgical piece of music should be used for a story regarding a down-and-out pimp in modern day Rome is in itself an audacious exercise, but the use also varies in its own transcendental output for many scenarios of the film's soundtrack suggests a release from an (admittedly self-induced) diegetic stasis for the character with a theological escape implied by the music (and ultimately the character's death). This glaze did not work in the transcendental sense for *The Gospel* as its narrative was already tied to an immanent theology and so the addition of such a recognisably aural theology was unnecessary and removed any potential transcendental character by falling into aesthetic and thematic overabundance. *Accattone* contradicts itself on another, more basic level. The music becomes the sort of shorthand in the vein that leads Schrader to initially discard it as a transcendental aspect of cinema.

Duncan suggests that the music actually balances out the very rawness of *Accattone*'s subject matter writing, "Similarly, it is the religious nature of the *St. Matthew's Passion* that allows its closing chorale to frame and then (apparently) redeem the naturalisms of Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961)..." (2003, p.138). Bach's music is most overt in the film's scenes of violence where street scuffles between groups of pimps are contrasted with the overt sacredness of their soundtrack. In the examples of cross-cultural transcendence, it was the cultural aesthetic difference belying a communicative universality rather than the thematic difference that created the transcendental moments in *The Gospel*. In *Accattone*, the opposite is the case, where a thematic difference in regards to the film's and the music's subject attempts to create a gap for potential transcendental readings. In the films of Tarkovsky, this is the gap where transcendental moments find

success, whereas Pasolini is too assumptive of music's power and conveyance of thematic theology. He can, to use his own ideology against him, no longer cheat the content. The fact that the character of the music is itself theological aids his attempt at receptive deception in some ways but it is in the overall contrast between the use of the same music over the differing subject matters (and how those subject matters are realised) where the transcendental *différance* can be perceived, at least in its potential though not in its overall outcome.

When Duncan talks of redeeming the naturalism of the film, it is an analysis discussed from a perspective of class; that there is a spiritual difference between the classes of the thematic content of the music (i.e. the transcendent is beyond class) and the thematic content of the film (which is explicitly highlighting class in the tradition of the Italian neo-realist style). Pasolini, however, is a director who has always sought to blur the lines in this regard, finding spiritual interest in more grounded ethnographies and using traditional aesthetics to argue against their negation from society and from artistic culture as a whole. In doing this in such a musical way, he also attempts a musical transcendental creation through the assumed sharing of Cookian attributes.[48] When the music clashes with such moments as in several fight scenes or, even more surprisingly, when Accattone has fallen for a woman and is following her down the street, the moment is clearly some attempt to realise transcendental elements (through musical scoring) because of the emotional frame of the scenario, where hardship is almost sacrificial to Pasolini's overall narrative drive.

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[48] For more detail of Cook's theories, see the Introduction for greater detail.

Therefore, the difference between *The Gospel*'s and *Accattone*'s use of the same piece of music is built around two concepts. The first is that there is a thematic gap present in *Accattone* which does not call for transcendental justification and the film attempts to access deeper levels of drama where the everyday mundane is treated as sacred. This also ties in with Pasolini's previously aired views on social classes from the last chapter and gives weight to the director's own political stance on the working class. The second difference is that *Accattone*'s narrative does not require a transcendental expression in the first place unlike *The Gospel* which naturally attempts some sort of ineffable expression because of its source text. Yet, in spite of Pasolini's predominate interest in theological styles of filmmaking, his haphazard methodology usually muddies his brief moments of transcendental expression with his other more overtly immanent thematic interests, often political in nature.

The divinity of his films must also fulfil his other more immanent criteria and it is in his use of music where such a dual mixture of transcendental and modernist approaches to his cinema is most apparent. His style is not transcendental overall because the theology he wishes to access is one grounded in the sociology and politics of the everyday, even when he is filming the theological story that is most relevant to his own country and set two-thousand years in the past. Pasolini's transcendental contradictions are not in themselves a failure to tap into the ineffable (or to do so through music which has been previously shown to occur at several points) but to sustain itself over his narratives. The mechanism is there (hence why it included within this thesis), its affect is simply not sustained. Pasolini's cinematic output is largely one of an unrealised transcendental style (one

that has many of its elements but is laboured by too many grounding elements)

rather than a fully realised one but the fact that it is largely attempted through

musical assumptions and audio-visuality makes it important to the framework of

the audio-visual transcendental argument.

Bach scholarship in general has touched upon a number of these similar

themes in the music before its recontextualisation has occurred. It is equally

essential to discuss this to begin the groundwork for the analysis of Tarkovsky's

cinema. In more traditional analyses, Wilfred Mellers' for example, Bach's creative

practice is read as suggesting that the transcendental nature of the composer's

music actually derives, not from people, but from expressing the very divinity of

nature itself. Mellers writes that "With Bach the celebration of Nature's creativity is

a manifestation of the divine." (1980, p.27); Pasolini's attempts are too grounded in

humanity by comparison. This is also in the context of Mellers' treatment of Bach

with an almost God-like reverence. Other scholars are more objective in their

reasoning but still conclude upon some sort of transcendental potential in Bach's

music. When assessing the influence of Lutherian thinking and belief upon Bach's

work, Robin Leaver suggests that the treatment of music as a transcendental

artefact is incredibly prescient when considering the assumptive treatment and

power that belies Pasolini's use of the music:

> Unlike other Reformers of the sixteenth century, who were rather cautious and
> circumspect with regard to music, Luther understood music as a *donum Dei*, a gift from
> God, rather than a human invention, and made frequent references to the
> interconnections between music and theology. (1997, p.40).

This natural interconnection is what has been assumed when picking out the music

to use in the films.

John Butt accounts for a transcendental reasoning also, highlighting the parallel between cinematic and musical teleology, suggesting of Bach's treatment of music that he "...saw the very substance of music as a constituting a religious reality, that the more perfectly the task of composition (and, indeed, performance) is realised, the more God is immanent in music." (1997, p.46). Wendy Heller also puts forward a useful reception potential for the thematic content of Bach's music and again shows why it is difficult to automatically tap into its material when recontextualising it in film. She suggests that "Bach's cantatas pose something of a puzzle to the modern listener, who is likely not to be familiar with their function and meaning within the Lutherian service." (2014, p.257). This absence of function and meaning to the cinematic listener may also be present in Bach's Passions and essentially could be what undermines Pasolini's use of the music. The music is cut abrasively in such a casual manner as to render it a mere aesthetic component rather than an ineffable presence.[49] However, its mystery combined with its obvious affective power may also account for the success in achieving such transcendental moments found in the examples of the next section.

It is here where the movement away from Pasolini's transcendental contradictions to more successful uses of accessing such attributes within Bach's music is essential. Such a feat is always a potential but it takes a director of another kind to achieve it. Its balance between the theology of the music and not creating an overabundance (the creation of cross-media *différance*) through its narrative is immensely important. When discussing the use of Bach's music by the Swedish director, Ingmar Bergman, Per Broman hints at more successful uses of the

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[49] The ineffable presence is something that Sontag in particular would read positively as it would aid a potential transparency.

composer's music, suggesting that Bergman has a "...Schopenhauerian understanding of music as the elevated art that can raise even the naive to the sublime." (2012, p.25). To finalise his point, he seeks to contextualise Bergman with other directors, suggesting that he differs from the Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni, but has a musical/theological likeness with two other directors who are said to have "...utilized Bach in several films..." (2012, p.16). One is Pasolini who does indeed utilise Bach as has been shown but to very little transcendental effect. The other director Broman mentions is Tarkovsky and it is in his films where Bach's transcendental material can be shown to be tapped and used to create some of the most effective and complex transcendental moments in cinema; where *différance* created in the audio-visual relationships forces the viewer to confront the ineffable.

Transcendental Use of Bach's Music in the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky

> Through the image is sustained an awareness of the infinite: the eternal within the finite, the spiritual within matter, the limitless given form. - Tarkovsky (1986, p.37).

Tarkovsky's relationship with the cinematic medium was of a theological and spiritual character. For the director, the form was not simply one that conveyed a narrative or even expressed ineffable emotions, but one that explored the ideas of memory and time itself. The latter aspect was specifically the element he most sought to define in his films, calling the practice of filmmaking "*Sculpting in Time*", the name of his own 1986 book analysing the process of his work and methodology. The opening quote of this section hints towards the potential of treating time as the raw material of cinema and audio-visual media. It is the formalisation of the infinite, the spiritual and the inexpressible. In other words, it is

ripe for producing transcendental style, where aesthetic forms and relationships are born of an immanence suggesting more ineffable notions and ideals.

Tarkovsky made seven feature films in total over a period of less than 25 years, often being critically acclaimed and winning various festival prizes. The fact of his limited number of examples made over such a period of time should suggest the mentality of the director and his overall cultural aims, at least in simplistic terms. His films are not the Adornian commodified products typically assumed of the medium. They are not put together at speed and commercialised but constructed slowly over a number of intervening years where there is planning for every scenario and concern for detail and philosophy. In regards to the artistic image - a cross-media ideal that he often slips into in his writing, using poetry, painting and other forms to frame his own work - Tarkovsky writes that such a form has the capacity to enable interaction and engagement with the infinite, itself an overtly transcendental and ineffable concept. He suggests that:

> And so there opens up before us the possibility of interaction with infinity, for the great function of the artistic image is to be a kind of detector of infinity... towards which our reason and our feelings go soaring, with joyful, thrilling haste. (1986, p.108).

With such an engagement at the very core of his creative endeavours, it is of no surprise to find Tarkovsky's own filmmaking producing varying and powerful moments of transcendental style.

These moments take on both the character of theology and emotion, where there is often a link built between such emotional anguish and a Schraderian escape from stasis, the torrent of emotional turmoil being a key moment in many of his films. But in spite of this being an overtly narrative phenomena, the moments are again within the context of the cinematic time-tapestry where their affect is

augmented by Tarkovsky's temporal-based practical emphasis. Elizabeth

Fairweather makes the connection between this theoretical position and the

transcendental effect that it has on the overall cinematic product aesthetically,

writing that:

> One of Tarkovsky's contributions to film scholarship was his development of a structuralizing theory of cinema that he called "sculpting in time." This refers to the idea that the audience's sense of time and place is subject to manipulation, and the resulting illusion in a way amounts to a means of artistic expression in and of itself. The theory of "sculpting in time" acknowledges that human feeling and emotion are timeless and, ultimately, transcendental. (2012, p.32).

Theoretical concepts here have the potential to link ineffable human feeling with a

cinematic formalism; a conjoining that seems almost unique when considering the

various attitudes towards film as a codified form built by commercial powers.

Consider for example, Adorno's early critical definition of any potential

transcendental elements within mass culture: "The tremor lives off the excess

power which technology as a whole, along with the capital that stands behind it,

exercises over every individual thing. This is what transcendence is in mass

culture." (1991, p.63). Tarkovsky works around this by actually building his

methodology upon both musical and poetic forms where each action is, in a sense,

a mapped-out stretch of time. In doing this, he has the potential ability to augment

the viewer's awareness of time passing and, through doing so, holds long shots of

images in oneiric cascades which hint towards the ineffable through their aesthetic

form being in total and harmonious control of the thematic essence driving the

films forward.

By "sculpting in time", Tarkovsky brings together ideas of memory -

especially those built from emotional occurrences - and manages to translate them

into a language that is understandable, at least in the sense that an underlying

intuitive, perhaps even uncanny, character is perceivable. A parallel can be

perceived in T.K. Seung's writing on Kant's conception of beauty: "Aesthetic Ideas

are not transcendent, but immanent because they belong to the aesthetic

imagination and sensibility. They are created by articulating the transcendent Idea

of Beauty for the phenomenal world." (2007, p.*xv*). It is an articulation through

immanent materials that is the key point with Seung further outlining that "Space is

outer sense, time is inner sense." (2007, p.14). This is an apt point when discussing

Tarkovsky's emotional time sculptures where inner emotion is channelled through

aesthetic relationships with time.

There is also a Derridian side to this element too. After all, Derrida does

suggest that "*Différance* is articulation." (1976, p.66). This language is, of course,

not simply visual but quintessentially audio-visual and Tarkovsky is one of the few

directors working within a transcendental audio-visual framework to acknowledge

and write about his various and idiosyncratic relationships with sound and music in

detail. In *Sculpting In Time*, he dedicates a whole, if brief, chapter to the subject:

> Furthermore, music can bring to the material filmed a lyrical note born of the author's
> experience. In the autobiographical *Mirror*, for instance, music is often introduced as part
> of the material of life, of the author's spiritual experience, and this is a vital element in the
> world of the film's lyrical hero. (1986, p.158).

Here, Tarkovsky is suggesting the potential Derridian character in music when

applied in his films. There is a clear difference in thematic content creating

différance, not purely from the music's theological slant, but from the director's

own experiential material commenting upon the film's narrative.[50] This is another

form of audio-visual *différance* creating transcendental style, one that might be

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[50] Applied is the wrong word in some senses as it is clear that Tarkovsky built and edited several of
the transcendental scenarios around the pieces of music and didn't simply "apply" them to a
finished image and narrative.

called a Personalised *Différance* as opposed to the cross-cultural transcendence of the previous chapter.

Even when in an overtly autobiographical film of Tarkovsky's such as *Mirror* (1975) - a film that follows three generations of women, starting with his mother then leading to his grandmother and great grandmother (albeit played by the same performer) - the director's presence is felt through its music being recontextualised via its placement and scenario, almost always creating some ineffable and transcendental affect by implication as the examples will later show. Tarkovsky looks to the music of Bach again (as well as others) to build these links. Such a creation of difference leads ultimately to a spatio-temporal permeability within his films, even resulting in such intriguing aesthetics as differing time-scales between the aural and the visual world. In his analysis of Tarkovsky, Nariman Skakov suggests this to be one of the director's key tools in his cinematic output: "Space and time intersect and form a complex spatio-temporal web. Tarkovsky refines this artistic device throughout his career, and perfects it in later works such as *Mirror*, *Nostalghia* and *Sacrifice*." (2012, p.21). It is fitting that all three examples mentioned use pre-existing music throughout, especially music by Bach, to achieve such a complex spatio-temporal structure. The former two films even opt to use Bach in their climactic scenes, usually then slipping into a quiet moment of aural absence to end the film.[51]

Skakov does not, however, go into detail regarding the affective quality or result of such a "web", one that is often created by a unique emphasis on the soundworld built from an idiosyncratic relationship with diegesis that rarely follows

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[51] The emphasis on natural sound will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 5.

the formal rules associated with its typical binaries. Tarkovsky's Personalised *Différance* comes largely from a hyper-specificity in regards to his musical choices which rarely change even when his films switch between genres such as War, Science-Fiction and Family Drama.[52] This aspect is highlighted further when Tarkovsky dismisses most uses of music in other films, where he suggests that "I have to say in my heart of hearts I don't believe films need music at all." (1986, p.159). Previously, he had argued against the simple tagging-on of music to film (specifically in film before the coming of sound), which is useful in that it highlights his own distance from the typical codified forms of film music, whether it be especially composed or pre-existing: "It was a pretty mechanical and arbitrary way of tagging music onto the picture, a facile system of illustration, with the object of intensifying the impression made by each episode." (1986, p.155). Whilst Tarkovsky himself seeks to intensify his own personal cinematic impressions, his specificity within the music and the difference it creates in his films means he almost never falls into his own critique of simple illustration.

Furthermore, Tarkovsky treats music in films often as a refrain which, when looking at his own description of the term, bears some similarity, albeit with marked differences, to the leitmotif:

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[52] These genres are listed for pendency as it is clear to any viewers of Tarkovsky that they rarely conform to the genres in question but often use them as a starting point for higher questions and personal exploration.

I find music in film most acceptable when it is used like a refrain. When we come across a refrain in poetry we return, already in possession of what we have read, to the first cause which prompted the poet to write the lines originally. The refrain brings us back to our first experience of entering that poetic world, making it immediate and at the same time renewing it. We return, as it were, to its sources.

Used in this way, music does more than intensify the impression of the visual image by providing a parallel illustration of the same idea; it opens up the possibility of a *new*, transfigured impression of the same material: something different in kind. Plunging into the musical element which the refrain brings into being, we return again and again to the emotions the film has given us, with our experiences deepened each time by new impressions. With the introduction of the musical progression, the life recorded in the frame can change its colour and sometimes even its essence. (1986, p.158).

There are, however, several differences which mark out why the music in Tarkovsky's films expresses more transcendental means than the form of the leitmotif (and work outside of being purely a refrain). The first is that rather than being a reference to something specific such as a character or a mood, its meaning through its repetition undergoes a transformation of the transcendental kind.

Whereas a leitmotif is often used for specific ties, if only to build an accumulated awareness for easy characterisation for the viewer, Tarkovsky's music is in effect different between its various uses throughout his films even when it is the exact same piece of music; the music's fixed status providing comment and context upon the progress of the narrative. This static recontextualisation recalls Philip Tagg's very conception of music's semiotic character:

In fact, musical structures often seem to be objectively related to (a) nothing outside themselves, (b) their occurrence in similar guise in other music, or (c) their own contextual position in the piece of music in which they (already) occur. At the same time, it is absurd to treat music as a self-contained system of sound combinations because changes in musical style are historically found in conjunction with (accompanying, preceding, following) change in the society and culture of which the music is part. (1999, p.18).

His three elements related to musical structure seem to fortuitously present a potential process through which this use of music initiates the augmentation of meaning. From its own ineffable language, through to meaning built up through repetition to finally an immanent context (provided in film through visuals and

narrative), this is in some sense the process that is typical in normal films and in flux in Tarkovsky's films. Tarkovsky's music refers to the whole filmic world he has created through an aesthetic and thematic difference rather than one with reference to one specific aspect; the music often overarches a character's emotional and spiritual journey. Robynn J. Stilwell in her essay "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic", writes of a "difference" created by the delineated gap in audience reception: "My objection to the latter is simple: because the border between diegetic and nondiegetic is crossed so often does not invalidate the separation. If anything, it calls attention to the act of crossing and therefore reinforces difference." (2007, p.184).Stilwell later in the essay writes of such a gap leaning towards the fantastical and even the sublime:

> The phrase "fantastical gap" seemed particularly apt for this liminal space because it captured both its magic and its danger, the sense of unreality that always obtains as we leap from one solid edge toward another at some unknown distance and some uncertain stability - and sometimes we're in the air before we know we've left the ground. (2007, p.187).

The sense of the unknowable and the unstable are key aspects of both Stilwell's argument and a general audio-visual transcendence. Yet Tarkovsky still refers to his use of music as a refrain. This may suggest some mechanical, anti-transcendental codifying process that the music goes through but it is the context in which this sits that ultimately forces the viewer to confront the ineffable, especially when such themes are at the core of his films in the first place.

Tarkovsky also refers to the layering effect through such a musical use which bears some resemblance to Pasolini's use of Blues music in *The Gospel*; where the music goes through a process of transfiguration as the context of the film evolves and progresses, often towards a greater sense of emotional and

physical hardship. The "parallel illustration of the same idea" that the director earlier referred to could also hint at the theological character of the music he chooses. There's little doubt that the majority of Tarkovsky's films are dealing with theological, spiritual and sacred subject matters and his description of the music working in parallel (not parallelism as traditionally known in audio-visual media) is most likely discussing the delicate process of theologising human emotion, turmoil, and travesty.

To bring this back to Derridian territory, it could be said that he is inverting the typical "signifier of the signifier" relationship that film music normally has within cinema, and where the music is very much outside of the narrative world in the sound hierarchy but is still attached to some connected aspect, being that of the director and his own spiritual association with the music and the scene in question. The argument could be summarised as follows. Derridian difference suggests a gap between spoken and written communication. Written words are twice removed from the subject/object whereas spoken words are only once removed. Consider film music through this framework. Film is arguably a collection of ineffable ideas first realised by the director and others. Like spoken language, visuals are the first response to these ideas of narrative/thematic points. In typical audio-visual relations, however, music is arguably twice removed as it is connected more to this secondary visual response than to the primary original subject/object. Tarkovsky's music, therefore, subverts this by being less attached to the secondary visual response to the subject/object and more connected to the original ineffable elements via its accumulated meaning, its personal inference to the director, and its overall aesthetic difference in the context of the overall film.

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Duncan refers to similar musical uses as anempathetic music, a term coined by Michel Chion, which "…allows us to do more than simply support and oppose, but rather to see, and hear, how music shifts and confounds in the ways it relates to meaning." (2003, p.29). This is considered to be one of the key intellectual positions which pre-existing music can be posited within when used in film, where its presence (and, in the terms of this chapter's arguments, its *différance*) filters any potential meaning through its sheer placement rendering it far more complex and far more uncannily ethereal. This could potentially fall into Sontag's interpretative trap where "Only a bad intellectual end is served when we blur all boundaries and call it religious, too..." (1967, p.255) but there is a specific drive in Tarkovsky's cinema that ultimately forces readings of aesthetic realisations to be more than just immanent renderings of something Other but actually directed to connected to it. Music builds heavily into this relationship.

Tarkovsky's use of music as a refrain has the potential to do this. For, being in dialect with the spiritual expression of a scene, the music need only be built in earlier to either have its meaning expanded upon or to tie the visual happenings of a later scene to an earlier, more overtly ineffable one. Again it is contrast and difference at work within the recapitulation of the transcendental. For example, in *Solaris*, the case-study film of the next section, the mixture of Bach's music, an aesthetically pulp narrative, thematic material from other visual high art and the emotional turmoil of that narrative expand this gap to move beyond pure aesthetics. Through this, Tarkovsky uses music to rise above the world of mere aesthetic appearances. This is discussing his visuals, thematic content and his aural worlds (and is not simply rewriting the typical "music raises the image" dictum).

Kant's noumenal ideas have some relation to this because they relay certain ideals that Tarkovsky is himself exploring.

Seung suggests that "The world of phenomena is the sensible world; it is accessible to our sensibility. The world of noumena is the super-sensible world; it transcends our sensibility." (2007, p.3). The point in framing the argument within this is almost from a fantastical position especially. As Pontera has pointed out, Slavoj Žižek, another philosopher to analyse Tarkovsky, suggests that the scene in question requires the very phenomena at the heart of the film to resemble a Kantian subject: "In fact, Žižek comprehends the 'Solaris-Thing' as something akin to the Kantian transcendental subject in that it shares with this subject both its constituting powers and the impossibility of coming to know or grasp it." (2014, p.11). Yet Tarkovsky's overall relationship with the use of any music in his films is one of both positive and negative potential. He sees the necessity for it in a general cinematic sense but also the potential to discard it completely, stating that:

> In every instance, music in cinema, is for me a natural part of our resonant world, a part of human life. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that in a sound film that is realised with complete theoretical consistency, there will be no place for music: it will be replaced by sounds in which cinema constantly discovers new levels of meaning. (1986, p.159).

He never had the opportunity to explore this idea completely though, even looking at his final film, *The Sacrifice* (1986) - a film that is framed by a piece of Bach and then uses traditional Japanese music to convey the differing paths between two possible dimensions - music is still explicitly key. This binary of music occurs throughout the film.

In the scene before the main character Alexander (Erland Josephson) burns his house down as a sacrifice to prevent a nuclear holocaust which he has already witnessed happening, the traditional Japanese music plays diegetically before

becoming more ambiguous in its source. After this scene has occurred and Alexander has been rushed to hospital for such a seemingly unhinged action, the final moment of the film shows the young boy at the heart of the film's Nietzchean eternal return watering a tree which has come to symbolise a life force (the Japanese music is briefly heard at the beginning of this scene though its source is a mystery). To finalise the film with this moment, Tarkovsky then uses Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* - specifically the aria, "*Erbarme dich, mein Gott*" - to highlight both the ineffable nature of his own narrative; one that is both fantastical but also spiritual in character. The slow crane shot moves from the boy to the tree with the music and the image concluding the film.

The music is key in providing a gap of difference and allowing for the borrowing the Bach's thematic material. It appears to be a theoretical purity with which Tarkovsky seeks to explore, one often contrary to his own practical methodologies. Perhaps his suspicions surrounding music in film are because of music's form being on tap for whomever may want to use it and for whatever (potentially crass) means in cinema are desired. Malcolm Budd outlines this construct:

> Music is fundamentally abstract in the sense that, whatever other kinds of "meaning" it may have - semantic, representational, expressive - it has them only in virtue of its intramusical meaning; and only if this meaning is understood. (1995, p.127).

Tarkovsky also takes advantage of this abstract construct, using the aesthetic and (inbuilt) thematic differences of music in a number of scenarios where such difference and context creates a palpable otherness. Though the tools are still immanent leaning (abstract forms lie in immanence, awaiting such semiotic application), they are the only ones capable of expressing the ideals, feelings and

impressions that the director has felt in his life. These attempts to recreate such

ineffable (and ultimately transcendental) moments are the real driving forces

within his profound cinematic career and they require detailed analysis and reading

to understand how such transcendental moments occur. As Tarkovsky writes "We

cannot comprehend the totality of the universe, but the poetic image is able to

express that totality." (1986, p.106).

Musical Transcendence Through Bach's Music in *Solaris*

> For Tarkovsky, Bach's music discloses the truth within us. - Pontera (2014, p.7).

The above quotation regarding Tarkovsky is a useful way to begin the exploration

of his practical application and methodologies surrounding the use of pre-existing

music in his films and their potential spiritual goals. This is because the director is

highlighting, if only by accident, a common theoretical position in the analysis of

music in film; that in spite of several similarities in regards to form, the

amalgamating of the two separate media (the moving visual image and the aural

kineticism of music) can and has been seen in the past as theoretically problematic.

Even Tarkovsky himself qualified this point, writing that "For strictly speaking the

world as transformed by cinema and the world as transformed by music are

parallel, and conflict with each other." (1986, p.159). In other words, in spite of its

obvious industrialised success (and the subsequent normalisation of viewer

reactions to music in film) there is potential conflict enacted on a number of core

thematic levels in audio-visual media. Some of these conflicts, by analysing some

scenes from Tarkovsky's films, can be shown in contrary to the negative criticism of

pre-existing musical scores, to access transcendental realms. It is a conflict that also

shares some parallel roots theoretically with Derridian *différance* in its

mechanisms.

      Duncan begins the rehabilitation of analysing pre-existing art music arguing

that "A loose idiomatic identification - that sounds like classical music - will lead to

a particular response; the more particular the identification, the more complex and

interesting the effects that can be traced." (2003, p.141). Tarkovsky is an excellent

example of this as, with the context of detailed musicological and cultural/historical

analysis, complex effects of a transcendental character - an overtly difficult

aesthetic aspect to define - can quintessentially be argued for. J.G. Kickasola comes

upon a similar point when discussing the use of music in Krzysztof Kieślowski's

cinema (and apt considering he details a likeness between him and Tarkovsky)

suggesting that "...the consistent technique of surprise and de-familiarization,

which results in a constant expansion of time and space in the mind of the

audience, has the aggregate effect of generating a 'cosmic' or 'transcendent' sort of

feeling throughout the film." (2012, p.67). Caryl Flinn also saw this potential when

writing in the pre-digital era though, perhaps still under the shadow of the

Frankfurt school and its connotative negativity, saw it as the reason for music's

appropriation by the industrialised side of the form: "Indeed music is a lot of things,

so many that one might conclude it is bereft of any imprint of its own or that it

passively awaits meaning to be imposed upon it." (1992, p.8). Tarkovsky leans more

towards Duncan's idiom of musical use than Flinn's though perhaps the two

positions are not so much binaries but instead causational in their relationship to

each other, where transcendental difference is created and perceived through

complex forms of identification with the music used in cinema, but is also itself produced by its multivalent relationships with meaning in the first place.

The transcendental difference works in Tarkovsky's films through this process of identification evolving into meaning, sharing music's pre-existing, cultural/thematic content, the personal inflection or the meta-diegetic position achieved and discussed earlier, and the overall aesthetic difference within its initial recontextualisation in the film. Though virtually all of Tarkovsky's uses of classical music work through this trio of interpretative building blocks, there is one example in particular that highlights the point more overtly and more transcendentally than the others: the 1972 science-fiction film, *Solaris*. Because the transcendental moments occur through the conflicts of context, the film's narrative and aesthetic qualities need to be addressed before placing its idiosyncratic musicality within a general, transcendental framework.

Solaris is based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem and concerns the fate of a psychologist Kris Kelvin (Donatas Banionis) who is sent to investigate strange events occurring on a research facility situated on the planet of the film's title. One of the three scientists working there has committed suicide whilst the other two are clearly hiding information from the psychologist, especially as there appears to be more than two people roaming around the station's corridors. The planet turns out to have mysterious, almost sentient powers to work upon the memory of humans resulting in Kelvin being at first haunted and then reunited with the spirit of his dead wife Harri (Natalya Bondarchuk) who died at a young age. He becomes obsessed with the return of his lost loved one, initially trying to send her away but failing and embracing the facsimile. His obsession with her naturally grows and he

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contemplates remaining on the base just to be with her as it is apparent that it is the planet which is producing the phenomena and is one that cannot be moved to elsewhere.

As the film progresses, it becomes clear that the newly sentient Harri relies on Kelvin being in close proximity for her to exist and to not suffer a painful, recurring death which he is forced to witness every time he is apart from her for a brief period of time. The happening has theological and spiritual connotations, explained by Skakov who labels the director's take on more fantastical elements as subversive: "It is clear that Tarkovsky attempts to subvert the miraculous quality of science fiction." (2012, p.83). She eventually leaves due to the strain that she knows her presence is putting upon the scientist and he supposedly returns home back to his parents' house where the film opened. He breaks down upon seeing his father. The film ends with it revealing that Kelvin is still in fact on the planet, living and even trapped in another rekindled memory. Perhaps even the whole of the film itself has been a fantasy produced by the planet with Kelvin never having left there.

Solaris' soundtrack is mixed in terms of its sources and produces a wide range of effects, not simply those of a transcendental nature. The soundworld of the film includes a hyper-sensitive emphasis on natural sound, electronic scoring by the composer Edward Artemiev and, most interestingly, the use of a single piece of Bach in the form of the F minor Chorale prelude, *BWV 639* from *The Orgelbüchlein* (The Little Organ Book). The piece in question occurs a number of times and its transcendental thematic character is affected greatly by two specific aspects: its placement in the film and how this version of Bach is actually created and

produced. Both hint at Derrdian *différance* in several interesting creative choices.

When the piece appears in the film's opening sequence, its character (like in

Pasolini's *The Gospel*) is not transcendental in the audio-visual sense. Its use

appears to be bringing out direct, spiritual connotations within the fantastical

happenings about to occur but this is not strictly the mechanism behind a

transcendental style. Instead, this is further enhanced later when the music is

linked directly with the notion of being lost in personal and deeply affecting

memories.

In a momentary flashback sequence, Kelvin is confronted with a montage of

memories; montage in the sense that many years of life are shown to be

interacting around the area of his parents' house but subtly and with very few

typical cuts and montage techniques. Even though the scene is outside in a place

that was previously shown to have an excessively loud variety of natural sounds,

the aural world is replaced entirely with the piece of Bach in the soundtrack. This

hints towards the link between the piece of music and the film's narrative

suggesting that, for whatever reason, Bach's music represents the main character's

past and his potential to return to it (as well as the desire behind such a notion).

The film opens with Kelvin's return to the house and the soundtrack is deliberately

split between the music in the titles and the cut to natural sound as soon as Kelvin

comes into the picture. As the natural landscape around the house is shown

visually in great detail, Kelvin's presence seems to continue the perspective of

human perception initially instigated by the music as if it is continuing in silence

through the visual of the man contrasted with the natural environment.

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In the nostalgia sequence, however, the music now dominates which allows a progression to be discerned in regards to Kelvin's own emotional journey, where he is gradually becoming more and more lost in his own nostalgic visions. This nostalgia sequence attains a brief transcendental character in that it highlights the ineffable feeling that Kelvin must be experiencing but it is not fully formed thematically. This seems to be quite deliberate on Tarkovsky's part as he is clearly aware that it is building to a far more integral moment of transcendental expression later on. Instead, the main scene of interest appears in the latter part of the film some way into its narrative and after much emotional turmoil. The scene in question may be the only scene in the film that uses music to create a transcendental moment in the purest, musical essence (sound often plays more of a role as will be described in Chapter 4) but it is one of immense aesthetic power produced through an incredibly complex and patient methodology.

Some way into the film, the station changes its position/orbit leading to thirty seconds of zero gravity. As levitation is a common visual occurrence in Tarkovsky's cinema (and one never properly explained within any other narrative), this moment of weightlessness cannot be put down to the science-fiction-based narrative alone but instead down to a continuation of the director's thematic (i.e. spiritual) interest. After being told that such a phenomenon is about to occur, Kelvin rushes back to Harri who is sat in the study. The room is period rather than futuristic, decorated by paraphernalia of an older time including artwork by the painter Pieter Brueghel. He embraces Harri as they begin to float gently around the room, sharing the levitation with a variety of objects in a subtle use of visual and aural slow-motion. The scene cuts between Brueghel's painting *Hunters In The*

Snow (1565), a clear visual reference point for the earlier nostalgia scenes which lapsed into a similarly snowy vista, and the emotional moment shared by the couple. The soundtrack is at first sparse, making the most of the hypnotically slowed sound of the chandelier shaken by the orbital shift. Tarkovsky then cuts the sound to incorporate a varied interpretation of Bach's *F Minor Chorale Prelude* into the mix and the scene plays with the music augmenting its perception and affect.

The thematic relationships that fluctuate within this segment are incredibly complex. The main character has been repeatedly told that this relationship with the ghost of his wife will not last forever. Yet the station and the planet have given him the chance of a moment beyond expression, floating around a room of art built on the nostalgic memories of his past, whilst in the arms of a dead loved one. The scenario itself is already of a transcendental nature simply through its happenings and, more accurately, the emotional weight that is undoubtedly conveyed by the character as such a fantastical moment occurs. Pain and pleasure of impossible emotional quantities are balanced and expressed but it is the music which finally conveys these feelings of the overwhelming and impossible spiritual reaction over to the audience. Fairweather argues that sound in Tarkovsky's films is used to define notably ineffable elements, the explanation for which can be easily stretched to include such uses of music as in *Solaris* where "...a sound is used to personify and define an extra dimension of expression that is not immediately apparent." (2012, p.43). The music comes from no source within the room in

question contrary to several of Tarkovsky's other musical moments and so plays into this extra-dimensional quality with overtly transcendental results.[53]

Artemiev has augmented the music so that its top line melody in particular has an electronic tone that becomes more overt as the scene and the music progresses. The clash of difference is arguably already present in the music; the tonality of Bach's original music and the technology through which it is being recreated creating tension and highlighting the hand of a creator. Tarkovsky has expressed concern over music's illustrative nature before and perhaps this reimagining of the piece texturally is one of the ways to combat this: "Instrumental music is artistically so autonomous that it is far harder for it to dissolve into the film to the point where it becomes an organic part of it. Therefore its use will always involve some measure of compromise, because it is always illustrative." (1986, p.163). The fact that this is further enhanced by being in, at least in basic terms, nondiegetic placement within the scene means that the music is as alien a force in the moment as the very events unfolding for the character on the screen.

Some readings could explain away aesthetic differences within the music by the station and its technology. After all, the majority of the music within the film has either been Artemiev's own *musique concrète*-like electronic compositions (built from the sound effects but trying to be its own creation) which blend easily into the Science-Fiction soundscape, or purely experimentation with diegetic sound. But Artemiev's sound augmentation of Bach does not just occupy some space-age vision of how its characters would interpret or receive art music from the past. It is more thematically weighted by the emotional and spiritual

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[53] Harri and Kelvin are, however, seen at another point in the film listening to the record of the piece.

connotations of the scene in which it is most overtly used, whereby it is connecting

a number of threads built throughout the film and is theologising them whilst

maintaining a distinct difference between the diegetic world of the scene and

Tarkovsky's/the viewer's subsequent reaction and perception. Pontera quotes

Jeremy Barham and the problematic position of a reading relying on the

relationship between these soundworlds:

> As Jeremy Barham has pointed out "[t]he problem of interpreting this ending [of *Solaris*] is embodied in its sound: has the humanist Bach been appropriated by Artemiev's technological score, or vice versa? Or has rapprochement been reached between the twin poles? Does the final gesture suggest merely the pessimism of Tarkovsky's outlook, or the redemption of technology in some transcendent metaphysical realm?" (2009: 267-68). (2014, p.14).

The scene may be potentially laboured in its reading as being a very literal

transcendence (where characters earnestly transcend gravity) but the symbolic

nature of this movement combined with the difference within the music creates a

moment of transcendental expression. Tarkovsky blends the nostalgia of the earlier

sequence with the emotional turmoil of Kelvin's present predicament but, by

including the tonal theologies of Bach's music, the director also implies some

escape from stasis, perhaps the stasis of mourning or grief but equally the stasis of

the dramatised happenings presented in the film.

As Pontera further writes, Bach's music relates the inexpressible of Kelvin's

attempts to inject feeling and emotion into his relationship with his facsimile ghost

wife:

> Again, we can understand this scene as Kelvin's attempt to resurrect the emotional reality or "feel" of his earlier life. And just like the first attempt, this second staging of intimacy and reconciliation will fail because the Solaris-derived Harri, however much Kelvin wants her to be the real Harri, is precisely not that: she is and remains a phantom of the protagonist's guilt-ridden past. The important point here, however, is that, just as we did with the earlier scene, we may construct the present scene as one in which Kelvin is hearing, in the sense of in some way experiencing the import of, Bach's music. (2014, p.13).

The moment is theologised by the music's augmentation which suggests something beyond Bach's theology is being accessed. It feels odd because of the textural quality of Artemiev's synthesisers and its forcing of the viewer to leap over several boundaries before properly engaging in the scene; boundaries such as the very source of the music which is heightened as a question by the augmentations applied to it. It becomes what Derrida would call an "imprint" in linguistic terms which is also quintessentially a type of "form": "Difference is therefore the formation of form. But it is *on the other hand* the being-imprinted of the imprint." (1976, p.63). Tarkovsky, therefore, instantly has the potential to draw from Bach's music both its traditional theology (from its imprint) and an otherness (from its form) which, in the realm of the film, can only be properly described as an inexpressible transcendental notion.

When this aesthetic idea is tied to the thematic content of the scene itself - that of an inexpressible moment for the character channelled over and through to the viewer - the scene can only end up being read as some sort of expressive transcendence. Perhaps the point would be less laboured if the scene in question did not feature the literal levitation of characters transcending gravity itself but the scenario would be equally effective if they were simply sat in silence as the music played, the cuts switching between their acceptance of their emotional situation and the painting. In fact, it could be argued that this would increase its transcendental character as the music would be forced to provide more of the textural content and to draw more succinctly upon its previous uses within the earlier scenes of nostalgia for family life back on Earth.

Sontag surmises why this transcendental character is already there within many works of art, arguing that all inward expressions are in some way ineffable and that the subsequent creation of immanent work must take this facet into account. This can account for some of this scene's sense of balance:

> In the strictest sense, all the contents of consciousness are ineffable. Even the simplest sensation is, in its totality, indescribable. Every work of art, therefore, needs to be understood not only as something rendered, but also as a certain handling of the ineffable. In the greatest art, one is always aware of things that cannot be said (rules of "decorum"), of the contradiction between expression and the presence of the inexpressible. (1967, p.36).

Tarkovsky seeks to balance this contradiction, especially within the scene in question, by supplanting the aesthetic world of each cultural artefact (the filmic content and the musical content) within each form; the classical sense of "high art" present in the scene through the painting, and the technological setting of the film present in the music through its electronic augmentation by Artemiev. The scene is most definitely a "certain handling of the ineffable" and seems to be built explicitly on the "contradiction" or difference of expression whereby Tarkovsky is performing some expressive attempt through the use of aesthetic forms that are in themselves abstract (at least in their formal conception, not in their actual application). The scene in *Solaris* provides evidence that there is a spiritual potential within the recontextualisation of music being used and placed carefully within the axiomatic world of the film and narrative; where its presence seems at first to have no say upon the self-realising narrative but changes the scenario's thematic leaning entirely.

<u>Potential for Pre-existing Music</u>

> For art could almost be said to be religious in that it is inspired by commitment to a higher goal. Devoid of spirituality, art carries its own tragedy within it. For even to recognise the spiritual vacuum of the times in which he lives, the artist must have specific qualities of wisdom and understanding. - Tarkovsky (1986, p.168).

Looking at the differences in teleological potential of both Pasolini's and Tarkovsky's use of Bach's music – that of invoking some sense of profound reception - the mechanisms by which music from the same composer has been adjusted should have given some indication in regards to both the production and negation of the transcendental as a reception potential. Though both directors have been shown to have explicit interest in theological and spiritual matters, the perceived lack of transcendental affect through an aesthetic overabundance in comparison to an overwhelming sense of the transcendental in the other raises several key points surrounding the use of pre-existing music in audio-visual transcendental style. The first concerns whether or not the cultural status of the music in question being that of an already religious/theological character and quality has had any effect on the transcendental nature and the scenes in which the music is used. Fairweather suggests this to be so in the case of Tarkovsky where, in his film *Mirror* (1975), Bach's music is used for precisely this effect (and arguably again achieves a transcendental character):

> *Mirror* is also significant for its use of J.S. Bach's Chorale Prelude in D minor, "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist," heard first just after a speech therapist attempts to cure a young man of the debilitating effects of a stammer. The metaphorical effect here is on a higher spiritual plane, negating the need for dialogue as the young man at last - figuratively as well as literally - masters the phrase "I can speak." (2012, p.37).

Bach's music in *Mirror* again has personal connotations with it being the director's most autobiographical film; the recording being a more typical rendition of the piece than the Artemiev variations found in *Solaris*.

Fairweather's point is a valid one in the context of concluding the analysis of pre-existing music as it highlights one of the key arguments developed earlier regarding the Cookian transfer of cultural material. However, it must be said that this music does not automatically cloak such scenes with transcendental expression simply by virtue of its presence. The piece by Bach in *Mirror* arguably builds to greater and greater effect as the film progresses towards it use of music in the final scenario. Whereas Pasolini failed to realise the unnecessary nature of sharing certain attributes in an already theological narrative, Tarkovsky achieves more transcendental ends when applying and accessing such cultural and theological material against the backdrop of addressing a deeply humanistic and immanent narrative. *Solaris* may falter if described purely as an immanent narrative but its own goals are at least fantastical to begin with before the subversion of the genre's conventions, described earlier by Skakov, occurs. If such a thematic subversion was avoided, perhaps Tarkovsky's use of this music in the film would have been caught within the same problems as Pasolini in *The Gospel*; that of a failed attempt to earnestly recreate the transcendental through a tautology. Whether using art or popular music, this and the previous chapter should have shown that there must be *some* clash of material, some barrier placed in front of the viewer before the narrative world becomes accessible again at some, higher perceptive realm. As stated earlier, transcendental difference is created through complex identification with the music and by its multivalent relationships with meaning.

This, in the context of my earlier arguments, should be finally contextualised once again in aesthetic theory, especially that of Derrida but others too. Derrida writes that "...the signified is originally and essentially (and not only for

a finite and created spirit) trace, that it is *always already* in the *position of the signifier*, is the apparently innocent proposition within the metaphysics of the logos, of presence and consciousness, must reflect upon writing as its death and its resource." (1976, p.73) and this is useful in the sense that it argues for the same point regarding the combination between the sound and the image: that meaning and the signification of meaning are already there within the combination but also ready in their potential to relate to one another and express another form of signification if need be. This is the basic idea behind the most general forms of music in film, that there will be signification of some form whether intended by the creators of the work or, in the case of pre-existing music especially, received through individual connotations brought to the work by the audience. Derrida may be discussing a more general notion - that writing is itself always already twice distanced from its signifying idea rather than once unlike speech - but when applied to film music and an audience's relationship to it, the theory can open up questions surrounding how pre-existing music in particular works through its own variety of multivalent characterisations.

How such transcendental moments are created from the use of music is a complex process to map in that the feeling of brief access to the transcendental through a scene may be palpable but the number of factors working with the associations built up within the audience member and the thematic content of the film is ultimately infinite and beyond analysis within the artwork alone. Yet in the examples within this chapter, an attempt has been made to argue that, because of both directors' interest in such an ideal - in religious and sacred themes and material - they have attempted to (even unconsciously) second guess the audience

and provide several moments of empathetic ineffability. David Code, when

analysing the pre-existing music in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), uses an

idea of Cook's that, whilst contrary to the previous ideas of his used in the chapters

so far, may potentially explain the effectiveness of such a gap of difference. Code

quotes Cook as writing that "...attempts to force media into close superficial

alignment (for instance, by cutting film to music) have the paradoxical effect of

emphasizing the difference between the two media." (2010, p.136). Tarkovsky's

use of music here recalls both of Cook's theories, where there is a sharing of

thematic material between media but also a difference highlighted through their

very presence as a multimedia form.

Tarkovsky's creation of this through his Personalised Difference is

undoubtedly the most effective as he draws on the power of his own experience,

the power of the aesthetic realisation of his narratives, and the power of his choice

of music which have a dual character of being both theologically transcendental in

the first place and personally transcendental in regards to its placement and

significance. Tarkovsky allows an emotional, and even spiritual, directness that also

asks for interpretation from the viewer. Often, this chapter has referred to

aesthetic barriers being put in front of the viewer (and usually through

musical/visual clashes) that require questioning in order to actually gain some

reaction (or perhaps even narrative or emotional meaning). These barriers ask the

viewer to interpret (albeit rhetorically as no strict sense of meaning can be

suggested) the audio-visual relationships on show. Of course, this is deliberate for

both directors know that the answers to such questions are of an ineffable and

impossible recreation. If the viewer could access this knowledge it would logically

remove its transcendental character.

Tarkovsky's Personalised Difference - the audio-visual relationship that

often falls into the meta-diegetic realm as discussed earlier - means that such

issues are at the very least outlined in spite of not being answered.[54] Stilwell writes

of the "sublime" potential of this area whereby:

> If we were to follow the Romantic idealistic line of philosophy, music could surpass the
> voice/verbal into a sort of metadiegetic sublime soaring above the diegesis. This theoretical
> positioning might seem tenuous, subjective, but then that would also resonate with the
> emotional impact produced by that positioning. (2007, p.197).

This seems in some ways polar to Tarkovsky's reasoning, especially surrounding his

desire to actually remove music entirely and rely on sound but it does discuss with

some accuracy the director's use of music; where, when words were not enough to

express the ineffable ideals he sought to relay, he looked to music and the

relationships built through particular pieces within the film and his own life to

express such transcendental ideas.

It must be suggested that Pontera's reading of the use of Bach hinges

largely on this meta-diegetic position:

> Maybe it is an instance of what film music scholars call *metadiegetic* music: music heard,
> remembered, or otherwise imagined by a character within the diegesis. As such, Bach's
> music would perhaps most obviously be understood as an integral part of the male
> protagonist's experience, something that he feels, undergoes, perceives, and engages with.
> (2014, p.3).

Stilwell writes of such a musical positioning and its power over the interpretation

and reception of a filmic scenario contained within the audio-visual form through

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[54] Stilwell's definition of a meta-diegetic is necessary to outline so that its nondiegetic equivalent
can be understood. She writes of the meta-diegetic that "The trajectory between diegetic music and
nondiegetic music that might more precisely be called metadiegetic is not an uncommon trope in
modern movies, and is often used as a way of drawing the audience into the subjectivity of a
character." (2007, p.194).

its multivalent position: "It is the multiplicity of possibilities that make the gap both observable and fantastical because it changes the state, not only of the filmic moment, but also of the observer's relationship to it." (2007, p.200). This is a rather longwinded way around forming ideas that, throughout this chapter, have been denoted as Derridian; where difference gives way to infinity and impossibility. Tarkovsky himself writes of such themes being key to the very act of making art, one which has been shown to overtly affect his aesthetic and musical choices:

> In the case of someone who is spiritually receptive, it is therefore possible to talk of an analogy between the impact made by a work of art and that of a purely religious experience. Art acts above all on the soul, shaping its spiritual structure. (1986, p.41).

Through difference, the conflict of cultural themes and aesthetic clashes, Tarkovsky builds the essence of the transcendental into his films like a thread.

This force is one explicitly enhanced by the music of Bach and its placement within *Solaris*, where the inexpressible comes briefly within the perceptible reach of the viewer before it fades back again into the obscurity of a Science-Fiction narrative, just like Kelvin's wife fading back into the ether of the planet. It is in these moments that the director is building his cinematic practice, a spirituality smuggled in by a unique and deeply theological relationship with the very expressive, human form of audio-visual media. As Tarkovsky himself suggests, "The artist, too, is driven by a kind of instinct, and his work furthers man's search for what is eternal, transcendent, divine - often in spite of the sinfulness of the poet himself." (1986, p.239).

Chapter 3:

Repetitive Music and Alienation

In the previous two chapters, the case has been made for music playing a key role in cinematic transcendental aesthetics. The context of those arguments was in direct opposition to the previous parameters set for transcendental style. The argument has been made repeatedly that Paul Schrader's various assertions surrounding music's role in creating this ineffable style - one that states that the reception teleology is, according to Cutter Callaway, "beyond representation" (2013, p.57) - is flawed, and music's form has been shown to help attain such a style. Moving on, the following two chapters present the argument from a different analytical position. Chapters 3 and 4 can be said to put forward one general argument: that earlier transcendental parameters already had a potential to realise the transcendental within them in the aural realm. In other words, rather than putting a film's auditory realm in opposition to such a style, certain directors have used the aural potential in the reduced audio-visual medium to enhance and create the difficult aesthetic elements.

Sheila J. Nayar, analyst of the spiritual in theological cinema, highlights the opposition between the previous chapters and the following two (one leaning towards abundance and the other leading towards reduction) in her critique of earlier transcendental assessments:

> When it comes to what critically constitutes the "genuinely" religious film, rejection of ornamentation of the supernatural has pretty much been the norm since the time of André Bazin. Exoteric spectacularity finds itself repeatedly swapped out for quiet interiority, and films that wear their religion on their sleeve are dismissed in favour of ones whose touch of the holy arises, paradoxically enough, from the holy's utter concealment. (2012, p.95).

Chapters 1 and 2 recapitulated Nayar's arguments with their emphasis being upon overt and abundant cinema styles, albeit without looking at the populist cinematic forms that she assesses.[55] Her emphasis on such an opposition is reactionary to the previous texts, especially Schrader's, whereby the dismissal of hagiographic films feeds into her choice of examples. This chapter looks to the opposite potential; the aural qualities already there in reduced, "concealed" cinema. The reduced vision of the style's many aesthetic facets can be shown to have aural equivalents, where music and sound design actually mimics the type of aesthetic and thematic relationships examined in Schrader's original trio of filmmakers. Schrader famously writes of the style that "The proper function of transcendental art is, therefore, to express the Holy itself (the Transcendent), and not to express or illustrate holy feelings." (1972, p.7). The examples in the following chapters are an attempt to follow this reduced transcendental style, with its expressive rather than illustrative qualities, more earnestly in order to highlight the complex aural potential put aside in earlier definitions.

The case study of this chapter is the last to examine musical examples and this will be through the cinematic oeuvre of the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr and, specifically, the work with his musical collaborator Mihály Vig. András Kovacs, the most prominent critical writer on Tarr's work, writes that "His films are like variations on a number of basic themes and formal motifs where the themes themselves become intertwined, or absorbed, in one another. We can best approach his films by learning how they relate to each other, how they vary these elements." (2013, p.1). It is also within these interrelationships between elements

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[55] Nayar's thesis is based around the analysis of Hollywood and Bollywood hagiographic films.

where such a musically transcendental argument can be pieced together, the stricter, harsher elements vital to earlier ideological frameworks finding an audio-visual equivalent.

The search for such musical potential can begin in Callaway's previously mentioned text, albeit without the reactionary evangelicalism of his analysis. He writes of music's role in film that "...rather than telling the audience how to interpret the film, the music urges us to contribute something of our own to the interpretive process." (2013, p.51). Callaway's argument is general but the dialectical aspect he presents is extremely applicable to the aural designs within this chapter's examples, where transcendental style's more difficult aesthetic relationships - ones that arguably mimic and aim to recreate the diegetic hardship being lived through by the characters - is created through music and sound forcing the viewer to constantly interpret in order to find coherence and reasoning. They are far from Callaway's blockbuster examples whose narratives are already laboured with everything a viewer would need for an enjoyable interpretation and emotional leading. He writes further that:

> ...music's affective power is not a hurdle that we must overcome, but rather is the very means by which filmgoers are able to derive a kind of "spiritual" significance from their encounters with film. (2013, p.93).

In the examples of this chapter, the transcendental audio-visual style will be shown to be a hurdle in terms of music's affective power but still a key element with which a viewer is able to derive higher meanings or, in Callaway's terms, a "spiritual" significance within narratives that are explicit in their expression of the "Holy" rather than a removed illustration of "holy feelings" à la Schrader.

Nayar writes of the key point within Schrader's thesis which leads to the quintessential cinematic stasis, created through a "*non*expressive" aesthetic ideal, summarising his work as follows:

> Schrader believes that the key elements of the transcendental style are *non*expressive. Thus, clues which routinely help a viewer to interpret an event - plot, camerawork, dialogue, and so forth are reduced to stasis: The transcendental style *stylizes* reality, in other words, and it does so "by eliminating (or nearly eliminating) those elements which are primarily expressive of human experience..." (2012, p.45).

Music is a key element that becomes reduced and discarded in Schrader's vision but the argument presented here consists primarily of one idea and its subsequent potential: that music used in film can in itself achieve some sort of nonexpression, a reduced presence wherein its effects move beyond more typical musical functions and towards something more challenging. It can arguably aid such a desire for a nonexpressive *mise-en-scène* in order to create the cinematic stasis mentioned as being essential to the Schraderian conception. With the addition of music to film being considered as an expressive act, this may seem to be an unusual argument.

Numerous examples can be used to highlight its opposite and some analytical examples find such a stance within more relevant forms of cinema too. Gregg Redner, when applying Deleuzian theory to film music, suggests a usefully similar ideal within the cinema of Krzysztof Kieślowski, writing that: "It was Kieślowski's belief that the most important thoughts and primary internal emotions of a film's actors should be expressed metaphysically through music and not through acting. It was the ability of music to express the internal that made it so very important to Kieślowski." (2009, p.109). Could music be used to achieve the same teleological goal highlighted here but with aesthetic mechanisms arguably aiding through a more nonexpressive role? I argue in this chapter that music which

attempts to avoid such expression, specifically through repetition and harsher aesthetic ploys, achieves similar reception goals.

It must be stated that by nonexpression, this chapter does not mean to say that the music fails to produce expressive reception effects. On the contrary, nonexpressive qualities leave a gap for audience reception, one that must be filled with higher interpretations in order for a transcendental reaction to occur. Examples such as Redner's are far more commonplace. However, it is an argument that has already been examined and made in this thesis. Music in film within this chapter will be shown to conform to what I label an aesthetic alienation - a term soon to be examined in more depth - within an overall cinematic style through actually mimicking the sparse means with which various narratives of hardship and toil are relayed. Consider Daniel Goldmark, Larry Kramer and Richard Leppert's position on film music's expressive capacity: "Music is not functional but substantive. It can express virtually any meaning, but alters any meaning it expresses." (2007, p.7). It has already been suggested that music can, almost uniquely, convey inexpressible meanings through its form. This chapter, on the other hand, argues that because of this substantive position, music can also alter such meanings through a nonexpressive aesthetic. Though a total nonexpression in music is impossible, this sense of nonexpression is within the wider film music context.[56]

Some have argued that film music's position within the form already invites interpretation, where the presence of music suggests a further interpretative potential. Callaway makes this point, writing that "Rather than simply telling the

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[56] Any number of audio-visual relationships outlined in the Introduction showcases the wider, more expressive norms of film music practice.

audience what the image means, the music urges audience members to discern

and discover that meaning for themselves." (2013, p.32). The music in question

works through alternative aesthetic techniques to many of the popular examples

that he is discussing, whereby its mix within the soundworld is often fluid and

questionable; its presence becoming unpleasant and monotonous, creating a

repetition outside of the typical repetitive techniques in film music. This is taken to

an agonising level that earnestly attempts to recreate the diegetic unpleasantness

being lived through by a film's characters. The music in question aligns with

Schrader's dictum that "Transcendental style, like the mass, transforms experience

into a repeatable ritual which can be repeatedly transcended." (1972, p.11). This

idea is traversable in both directions where the repetition, ritualistic or otherwise,

leads back to inducing the ineffable thematic content of the transcendental style by

reflecting the banal, harsh worlds of the diegesis. There is no better example of this

than in the use of repetitive in music by Tarr but, before assessing why such an

aesthetic is chosen, the argument must be made for what this repetition is actually

doing in the receptive sense before such aesthetic guises and their teleological

outcomes can be explored.

Repetition and Brechtian Alienation

> The classical *Verfremdungseffekt* produces heightened understanding. - Brecht (2001,
> p.10).

The key cinematic aspect examined in this chapter is the use of repetitive musical

motifs. A basic link can be made between reception and aesthetically difficult

cinema through an analytical framework that suggests a crossover between the

spaces and scenarios within the film and the perception of them. To do this, the

theories of Bertolt Brecht have a significant impact upon the analysis. Aligning

Brechtian theory with traditional transcendental aesthetic theory is a surprisingly

fluid amalgamation, almost as if the two theories were attempting to explain the

same receptive ineffability through aesthetic means, albeit in differing forms of

art.[57] In Brecht's case, this manifests most clearly in the theories surrounding the

Verfremdungseffekt, or the "alienation" effect as it is sometimes translated. This is

the scenario where certain aesthetic choices complicates narrative distance for a

theatre audience becoming aware of the viewing process, to the extent of

eventually producing a heightened understanding by highlighting the act of the

perceiving the work *as a viewer*. Though this idea slightly differs to Tarr's

mechanisms, the same distancing is still initially required in his films, created to

disturb the viewer's position of viewing by reducing all aesthetic leading to

excruciating levels. This section will briefly outline this alienation effect with a view

to showing its transcendental potential in the cinematic form and how music can

subtly aid its creation in the audio-visual dialectic.

Brecht first considered the concept of alienation as a mechanism in the

acting style of certain Chinese theatres. Siegfried Mews writes of its detailed

history but essentially relates the philosophical positions inherent within it:

> On its simplest level, the *Verfremdungseffekt* means "gaining new insights into the world
> around us by glimpsing it in a different and previously unfamiliar light" (Willett, "Brecht"
> 218). There is no unanimity among critics as to whether the *Verfremdungseffekt* should be
> seen in the philosophical-historical context of the Hegelian-Marxist concept of
> *Entfremdung*, correctly as "alienation," or simply as a staging device, a formal technique in
> the service of conveying a message. (1997, pp.9-10).

The transcendental potential is palpable within this description but is essentially

one that is created quite simply as a "staging device" and a "formal technique". In

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[57] Brecht is far removed from the period of Schrader's writing and this chapter's case-study films.

other words, a form that functions through its aesthetic effect upon narrative interpretation but not weighed down by its immanent creation. What does alienation actually mean in regards to narrative reception? Reinhold Grimm has summarised this, suggesting that "Brechtian alienation is an aesthetic device to make us aware, by means of a philosophical method, of our sociological and historical condition and situation. The act of alienation or estrangement produces, dialectically, a bewildered insight into the state of alienation." (1997, p.43). Though he is discussing theatre as opposed to cinema, there is a definite cinematic potential in which where Brechtian formal alienation finds traction within the audio-visual medium.

This is where such an aesthetic stance asks stark questions about cinematic diegesis. The cinematic bewilderment, whilst functioning in this way to some extent, primarily forces the viewer to confront the cinematic medium as the content itself through various, often laborious means of heightening the perception of time spent with the artwork, the most effective of which is through the use of music. Yet it is also in this slippage where eventually the opposite occurs when such distancing begins to mimic the actual diegetic world, folding the Brechtian ideal in upon itself, as if the distancing is a trap that actually leads *further* into the narrative world in spite of that portal being opened by highlighting the very viewing process. The transcendental element comes from an escape from this enveloping, sometimes by a change or cut allowing the build up of monotony to seep away.

Through such repetition, cinema has the capability to speak multiple thematic languages but this becomes far more ineffable when such a repetition is created through a musical potential if only because of how stark its questioning can

be of a film's diegesis. Is there a more pertinent cinematic aspect that can challenge and rupture such notions of what is situated outside and inside the film's framing than its music? It is through this position that music can be used for far more subversive and transcendental effects. Consider John Belton's assessment of the phenomenology of music in Robert Bresson's films. Music's role here is removed from being simply commentative but is quintessentially part of the cinematic reality's core:

> Nondiegetic music is generally commentative in nature - it speaks from the space of the narration and conveys, from outside of the diegesis, an attitude toward what is seen. But in terms of its relationship to the film's images, Bresson's use of Mozart's Mass problematizes traditional distinctions between diegetic and nondiegetic. Here, those distinctions break down and become useless. The music reveals the essence of the images - the truth that lies beneath their surface. In this sense, it is diegetic. In other words, the music is not a *filter* through which we perceive the action but a core reality within the images themselves. (2008, pp.25-26).

Though Bresson's music is not of the repetitive type - in fact, his use and placement of pre-existing music is again prescient for the previous chapter's assertions - it is the relationship that is produced that is key: music becomes the absolute of the reality of the film rather than a narrational presence.

Bresson sought this through the use of more overtly theological pre-existing music but a filmmaker like Tarr found equal potential in original musical reflections of his narratives, realities that are harsh in their repetitive, endless monotony. Brecht himself has written on this phenomena and he even writes of the traditional use of music in film (as opposed to theatre) that "The accompanying music is consequently situational music. In other words it expresses the feelings of the dramaturg. His 'Oh, how sad!' and 'Oh, how exciting!' is transformed into music. Since there are no characters, there is an awful void for this dramaturgical music." (2001, p.13). His criticism appropriately resembles several previous arguments yet

the examples here show an attempt to create a feeling through mimicking the narrative situation for the audience by actually first distancing them from it first via music.

This transcendental repetition must be qualified away from music's more recognisable repeated forms. Transcendental style in this case does not derive from an overall cinematic experience but from particular scenes and scenarios as in previous chapters highlighted through such an overall experience. These scenes are not of a normal aesthetic or formal construct and music is stretched over long periods of time through repetition though does not end up creating effects of montage or leitmotif. Whereas the use of music in a sequence of montage aids in the constriction of diegetic time and eases its reception, the music's elongated form here works in the opposite way, dragging harsher scenarios out until the viewer is forced to either grasp some higher meaning from them or to simply take the scenarios as a dose of aesthetic discomfort.

On writing about Brecht's rebellion against the Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk*, Vera Stegman writes of this potential gap of reception and comfort through the separation of formal elements: "While the fusion of the elements of Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* can turn the spectator into a passive receiver, their separation, resulting in contrasts and internal breaks, should allow for a more critical and rational audience." (1997, p.251). Applying this idea to multimedia again results in the break being of cinematic diegesis more than anything else. This break requires a new audio-visual description. From henceforth, the notion will be described as an audio-visual alienation, portraying the distancing effect created upon audience reception through the forced sharing of the

atmosphere of the diegetic scenario but that, in some sense of paradox, envelops the viewer in the film's scenarios too.

Though Tarr uses music from various sources to achieve transcendental aesthetics and audio-visual alienation, the effect is the same: that of slowing an already depressed temporal sense to a virtual, agonising standstill, at least in terms of reception. It is a circular progression to nowhere and the escape from this in Tarr's films creates some sense of the profound. This is not to say that every temporal reduction creates a transcendental aesthetic but it does have the potential to aid such a style (and Tarr's film achieve this through a mixture of aesthetic style and thematic concerns). To finalise these thoughts, it is essential to draw a final parallel between the teleological goals of these aesthetics and the transcendental potential. Grimm has written extensively of Brechtian alienation's potential to remythologise the everyday and the ordinary, rendering them extraordinary. He writes the following detailed summation of the theory:

> Brecht's concept and device of alienation are essentially based on the assumption that the world in general and society and its workings in particular are too familiar to be really understood. In other words, we take too many things for granted and do not question them any more, or we do not question them sufficiently. What we therefore need, Brecht argues, is a method, or procedure, that makes us see the world afresh, that virtually forces on us a process or experience of understanding. In order to achieve this goal, he proceeds along dialectical lines. (1997, p.41).

Several parallels already arise between these ideas and the audio-visual transcendental aesthetic. Both use dialectical, aesthetic means to achieve their higher reasoning; both are a reaction to the assumptive reception position of the viewer; and both add ineffable uncertainty to essentially familiar elements.

Yet this is not necessarily an effect but more a form of reception persuasion as Todd Cronan has argued: "Brecht fundamentally differentiated effects of suggestion from effects of influence—two different kinds of artistic consequence—

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in ways that have yet to be considered. In Brecht's finely tuned hypnotic terminology, the estrangement effect was a mode of influence but not of suggestion. It is upon this distinction that Brecht's aesthetics turn." (2013). Compare Grimm's earlier description of Brechtian ideals to Nayar's discussion upon the sacred elements found in hagiographic films: "But if images and auditory encounters that are noncliché estrange us, it is because they *don't* come from our collective social memory or storehouse. Audiences are consequently forced to conjecture - indeed, have no recourse but to conjecture..." (2012, p.104). The connections are multitudinous, especially as a form of reception persuasion, whether it be in the very language used, the collective experience of such alienation or even the very conclusion of an audience forced into some form of conjecture.

In typical Schraderian analysis, this occurs in transcendental style through a reduction in aesthetic forms but such a reduction in regards to music should not simply mean its removal. In order to show this, repetitive music in film must finally be contextualised in a wider aesthetic argument, that of the description of a cinema of extended duration, commonly known as "slow cinema"; audio-visual forms which "...evacuate eventfulness, in the pursuit of dedramatised scenarios in which incident replaces event, and sheer profilmic happening challenges structures of legible or discrete causality." (2016, p.124) as Elena Gorfinkel writes.

<u>Slow Cinema and the Transcendental</u>

> Slowness of narration is clearly accentuated and radicalised in the second-period films, and it comes to represent a cornerstone of the Tarr style. It is one of the main ingredients of the circular structure, a structure producing the feeling that the return is inevitable. - Kovacs (2013, p.118).

Repetition in all aspects of cinematic aesthetics often suggests the elongation of some form of perceived time. This elongation has been further heightened, especially since the dawn of digital technology in filmmaking, and has become a defined movement of cinema of which Tarr's films sit firmly within. Before analysing the repetition behind such transcendental effects, these aesthetics must be contextualised within this wider movement of analyses. As suggested, these aesthetics now come under the banner of slow cinema, a global movement of film that extends cinema's length through a variety of means in order to achieve a reactionary state of slowness against the increased general hyperactivity within digital multimedia and culture. As Tiago De Luca and Nuno Jorge suggest, "Slow cinema is, then, a rather recent phenomenon in conceptual terms, and one that furthermore shares its discursive genesis with a much larger socio-cultural movement whose aim is to rescue extended temporal structures from the accelerated tempo of late capitalism..." (2016, p.3). The transcendental style has many parallels with this and my final form of contextualisation aims to amalgamate such phenomena with both an audio-visual alienation and a transcendental style.

Song-Hwee Lim has written of slow cinema's potential in terms of reception, significantly in the reduction of perceived film time and comfort through aesthetic choices: "By formulating a different relationship between film images and the audience through the use of long takes, extended duration, and the trope of waiting, this cinema comprises aesthetic acts that promote new modes of temporal

experience, new ways of seeing, and new subjectivities that are politically

committed to an ethos of slowness." (2016, p.91). Consideration should be given to

the concept of "temporal experience" with regards to cinema and the arguments of

the previous section; cinematic choices are aiming to recreate diegetic discomfort

through aesthetic challenges to the audience. Slow cinema causes the same

difficulty as it is a form that refuses, for various socio-economic and political

reasons, to conform to a more kinetic editing style and ease of consumption. Gilles

Deleuze has written extensively on this in *Cinema II* (1986) but his theories are now

contextualised within wider formal arguments in film studies (see the Conclusion

for further Deleuzian analysis). De Luca and Jorge write further that "Durational

slowness, then, can be variously moulded according to a given object of attention

and specific formal and narrative strategies as a means to ponder over the co-

existence of multiple temporalities." (2016, p.15). What exactly is defined as

"multiple temporalities" is never quite asserted within their writing, yet the very

act of an audience being given little direction in regards to a thematic or narrative

reading already suggests a transcendental potential.

Slow cinema is characterised by an almost obsessive attention to more

precise, almost mathematical analyses, namely the analysis and development of a

film's average shot length (usually known under the acronym of ASL). De Luca and

Jorge do, however, characterise the form through more than just modern, digital

examples with incredibly long ASL: "At the other end of the spectrum we have

directors, such as Robert Bresson and Yasujiro Ozu, who, while often invoked as

precursors of cinematic slowness, made films that were entirely reliant on montage

and short-length shots..." (2016, p.6). The connection between slow cinema and

transcendental style is obvious here with two examples - directors who do not conform to the form's more typical approaches but still achieve similar results - also being two of the three examples analysed by Schrader in his conception of the transcendental form. Even the work of Carl T. Dreyer, Schrader's third exponent of transcendental style, finds some linkage to the form in C.C. Thompson's essay "The Slow Pulse Of The Era", where "Dreyer obliges us to take the time we need to grasp the impulse that unites him with today's directors of "slow": to render palpable, in stillness, the human pulse of time." (2016, p.57). There is clearly an overt link between the forms, a link that is maintained in the aural essence of the movements.

In Jacques Rancière's contextualisation of Tarr within the slow cinema movement, he suggests a link between the very structure of music and the aesthetic principle behind slow cinema. He writes that:

> Music then has a structural role instead of being an illustration of the story. But there is something more: cinema itself takes on the power of music, the power of condensing the global affect that exceeds the identification of feelings and emotions in the traditional narrative logic. But the condensation, itself, can be perceived only by way of a distension of time. (2016, p.249).

Rancière's argument can be simplified with some context of the earlier chapter's sense of music's ineffability, albeit this form is actually creating a "distension of time" alongside such transcendental elements. What Rancière does not quite manage to link together is how the music creates such a temporal augmentation in terms of reception and how this augmentation leads back to such global affect. This begins to question one of the contradictions inherent in the form and how this creates affect of the transcendental variety. Can thematic and aesthetically reduced cinematic principles rise to more than mere sense reduction?

The use of music in Tarr's films implement reduction through an emphasis on repetition, creating such a harsh parallel for the viewing audience to experience that a universality of sorts becomes inevitable. Lim, however, has addressed this point as a criticism often aimed at the form in regard to whether such a reduction combined with an extension of time is actually necessary in creating the transcendental affect:

> At the same time, the duration accorded to filming a narratorial subject deemed as "nothing happening" features prominently in the debate on slow cinema, raising the corresponding question about the justification not just for representing so-called "nothingness" but, perhaps more crucially and controversially, for representing it over a long (and for some, longer than "necessary") duration. (2016, p.90).

Within almost all cinematic aspects, repetition is at the core, the extended duration is either created literally by repeating events or by extending the perception of cinematic time through repetitive aesthetics. The audio-visual alienation could be said to be a by-product of this but many of the arguments presented surrounding slow cinema already have suggested some likeness in receptive response, albeit one that differs in what could be described as spiritual aims. This is considering slow cinema's obsession with the ordinary day-to-day rituals of its narratives, including those found in Tarr's films.

So often the transcendental style turns this sense of the ordinary into a form of the extraordinary. Nayar writes contrary to this, suggesting that "In the context of human experience, the sacred, we might propose, implies a perceptual and affective set-apartness from everyday or ordinary experience." (2012, p.17). She earlier asserts a problem with such mundane narratives and aesthetics whereby there is a contradiction between the puritanical character of the sacred and its arguable sources:

Slow cinema and Tarr's films automatically imply the presence of a "hidden God" through their very form. Unlike music, as Rancière suggested earlier, it is not because of the sheer impasse between communicative language and the form, but because of the extensions applied to that form in contrast to what it is typically expected of the audio-visual medium.

Nayar saw this sacred potential in the action of duration augmentation, writing that "By slowing down movement, we ostensibly become conscious of movement, which coerces us out of being passive viewers who seek merely to 'forget the passing of time' or who, in slightly harsher terminology, want to 'dispose of time rather than gain experience.' " (2012, pp.107-108). This consciousness of creative time's movement ties back with Brechtian ideas. If cinema has a Brechtian equivalent in terms of his *Verfremdung*, then the aesthetics of slow cinema are undoubtedly the closest to achieving his desired effects of "heightened understanding" through the most quietly intensive of means. Due to their sometimes laborious lengths and editing styles, the act of the viewing is ultimately highlighted. However, the trapdoor that Tarr in particular hides within this process, in order to push the viewer further into his narrative worlds, is not generally present in most forms of slow cinema.

Philippa Lovatt is one of the few slow cinema analysts to broach the subject of music alongside Rancière, writing of its general disposal and the reduction of musical score: "In slow cinema, soundscapes composed of location sound recording, field recordings and an absence (or minimal use) of musical score,

foreground the material and sensory nature of matter on-screen thus enabling a sense of 'connectedness' between the acoustic space of reception and that of the diegesis." (2016, p.192). Interestingly, Lovatt's sense of the created "connectedness" possesses precisely the same logic as the audio-visual alienation, where there is an attempted sharing of aspects of the diegetic world with the audience. The sense here is that this is a gentler attribute. In Tarr's films this will be shown to be far more visceral and generally trying for the audience.

This sees an overt link between the Schraderian transcendental style's approach to cinematic soundscapes and slow cinema's extended duration, the latter uses the former to enhance and achieve its effect. Schrader wrote of the transcendental style's aesthetics within the context of the society it sat within, whereby it could be seen as a reaction to a voraciously "abundant" cultural backdrop: "The ratio of abundant and sparse means can be a measure of the 'spirituality' of a work of art. The more a work of art can successfully incorporate sparse means within an abundant society, the nearer it approaches its transcendental 'end.' " (1972, p.155). Perhaps, to stretch the point, music in its various forms could be considered another facet of the more consumerist side of filmmaking.

And yet such a position undermines its overall potential, both in form and usage. If other cinematic aesthetics can be edited and extended as a reactionary opposition to the commodified, speed-driven tropes of a more populist cinema, then musical scores also have such an opposite. This is the final connection within the argument to make before analysing some examples where this potential is fully realised. After all, Tarr's overall aesthetic uses have been considered as both a

reaction to the increase in cinematic speed of various forms and an attempt at some sort of revelation. Within this section and the previous, three separate but interconnected arguments have been made. The first is that, in contrary to the previous two chapters, an aural potential is already contained within traditional transcendental arguments. The second argument presents a general mechanism through which music can be deployed in this way.

By looking into the arguments of Brechtian alienation, a new explanation is perceivable for how music remains present in transcendental examples whilst still avoiding the natural abundance that such a presence traditionally suggests, creating a cinematic equivalent of the *Verfremdung* through audio-visual alienation. In other words, it confirms some of Schrader's ideas of aesthetic reduction regarding how the transcendental style can augment reception outcomes but suggests that music can aid this process. Finally, with this mechanism in place, contextualisation within the movement of slow cinema has questioned the role of cinematic time in the reception of transcendental cinema. This has been the final connection to make as its arguments bring Schraderian transcendental style back upon itself through audio-visual alienation, showing a number of reactionary qualities and reception outcomes. With this trilogy of ideas compacted together, the analysis of the case studies can now occur.

<u>Béla Tarr's Cinema and Repetition</u>

> The basic theme of all of Tarr's films is *entrapment*. Each film shows a situation which the characters are incapable of getting out of, however hard they try. They remain hopeless captives in their miserable situation, whether or not they are responsible for their own suffering. - Kovacs (2013, p.99).

So far, this chapter has yet to fully outline Tarr as a filmmaker or to express how his work fits into the many conceptual ideas so far presented. In this second section of the chapter, two differing audio-visual forms will be shown to create the alienation needed in the slow cinema iteration of the transcendental, namely the use music in the portrayal of social spaces in Tarr's films and the musical scores of Mihály Vig, both occurring in a number of scenes and films from Tarr's oeuvre. Both aspects will be shown to use repetition at their core. As Tarr has had little contextualisation so far, this brief section will provide some minor details in regards to his working methods, his cinematic history and his general thematic outlook before the detail of the scene-specific analysis will take place.

Though Tarr started making films much earlier than the examples examined here, it is in his later examples where such themes of transcendental style, repetition and alienation find fruition. Kovacs suggests that Tarr's filmography should be considered in two separate parts, his "second period" - starting with *Damnation* (1988) and finishing with his self-proclaimed final film, *The Turin Horse* (2011) - being the most conducive and relevant to transcendental aesthetic arguments. It is in this period where Tarr, whose initial background was in radical and political documentary movements, seeks to present social and political themes with a definitive slowing down of experiential time. Also worth noting is that, in his last three features, of which the last is one our case studies, his partner and editor Ágnes Hranitzky is co-credited as director. This will be assumed, however, as being

part of Tarr's wider practice rather than trying account for who takes credit and for what. In this second period, Kovacs believes that Tarr uses four basic techniques to slow his narratives down, some of which have a clear implications and effects upon the music and soundworld. He writes the following:

> There are basically four ways of slowing down a narrative. The first is showing monotonous movements for a long time. The second is showing insignificant or everyday details of a process. The third is representing extended periods of time between two events, called *temps mort*. And the fourth is repetition of the same event. (2013, p.114).

Consideration should be given to the first and last of these aspects as they most define the musical direction of Tarr's films and Vig's scores within them. No matter what the source of the music is, Vig will have played a part in its creation, with Tarr being said to have had a closer relationship to him than with anyone else inside his filmic process.

Tarr himself relates such a process which highlights the freedom the composer has: "Without the composer the films wouldn't be what they are. He goes into the studio a month before the actual shooting takes place, composes the music, gives it to us and then we use the music during the shoot. So the music plays an equal role to the actors or the scenes of the story." (2013, p.18).[58] For a director infamous for being incredibly precise in every other aspect of his films, this freedom in regards to the music should give some indication of both its importance but also how the narrative/visual world of his films are matched perfectly by Vig's music.

Tarr is one of the few directors who confirms the audio-visual nature of the transcendental in its strictest form. Nayar writes of a relevant potential within cinematic stasis to occupy the aural realm, suggesting the following:

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[58] This practice of shooting scenes whilst playing music will be addressed in more detail later on.

> Although visuality is an indispensible, if not *the* indispensible, constituent of film viewing, it is important to recognize that there are two levels of stasis that may, or may not, be called upon: (1) the stasis inherent in an image that one sees; and (2) the stasis inherent in the sound that one *doesn't* hear (silence, in other words). (2012, p.68).

In Tarr's films both are called upon in the most dialectical of ways; an element largely lacking in Nayar's argument (that the overall stasis relies on a fluctuation between the two aspects). This is highlighted further in Tarr's films by the transcendental functioning across cinematic diegesis. Vig's music manifests in the world of the film and the world of the viewer, acting as a reception portal whose job is more than to merely create affect. It has a very literal transportative function and end goal that defies normal cinematic conventions. It is one of a number of confrontations. In Tarr's films, there is less of a smooth flow of emotive ideas but instead a shared desire to create the vital circularity required in the narratives.

Kovacs writes of Tarr's circular narratives that "Circularity expresses the trap situation, slowness gives birth to something I would call *the time of hope*, hope that after all there is a way out of the circle when there is not." (2013, p.5). In doing this, Tarr slips between the diegesis and, through such a questioning, potentially alienates the inattentive viewer while at the same time asks questions of higher significance to the patient viewer. This begins within the very diegetic sound and music of his films so is the most basic aspect to analyse in his aesthetic and thematic output. Diegesis creates the initial harshness to achieve a transcendental aesthetic.

Repetition and Alienation in Diegetic Social Spaces

Tarr's diegetic soundscapes are defined by two predominant aspects: the heightened emphasis upon natural sounds such as walking and footsteps, wind,

leaves, glasses and other "real" sources, and upon the diegetic performance of music almost always occurring in social spaces. It is the latter that is of interest here though the former does also plays its role in some essence of transcendental arguments as will be seen in the next chapter. This music comes in a variety of styles and is present in a number of films but they have a series of interconnected outcomes, namely:

1.   The music's repetition over a set period of time, creating a gradually suspenseful and grating aesthetic for the viewer to experience.

2.   The endlessness within the music, created by repeated motifs, leading to the sense of temporal stasis within the diegesis.

3.   This temporal stasis, through Tarr's direction (and the reduced editing of Hranitzky), eventually leads to the affective response of being confronted with such a diegetic space; being one of mimicked discomfort and alienation on the part of the viewer.

4.   And through this alienation, the viewer is forced to confront the implication of a heightened meaning through the shared stasis between the characters, the scenario of the film and the very act of viewing it (especially because the music is repeating whilst the visual is more obviously differentiated through a slow progression).

To assess this aesthetic ploy and to argue for its overall effect being that of a transcendental variety, two scenes from two different films will be analysed. The first is a scenario in the first film of his purported second period, *Damnation* (1988), and the second is a scenario from his longest film *Sátántangó* (1994). Both contain

scenarios which take place in bars, using diegetic music to convey a heightened

sense of temporal stasis for the characters and the audience, but they also

essentially have different and complex attributes due to channelling the inflections

of differing narratives which must also be contextualised. These scenes provide

pivot points for highly social, political and spiritual narratives that require their

circularity to be fully explored. As Daniel Fairfax points out in regards to Tarr's usual

narrative ploys, these scenes are common to almost all of the second period films:

> Virtually every one of Tarr's films is punctuated by one or more extensive dance sequences,
> in which a drunken populace, gathered in a drab bar or dance-hall, traces the same few
> steps over and over again, to the accompaniment of a droning accordion, cycling through a
> simple series of chords to maddening infinity... (2006, p.10).

The description of "maddening infinity" needs little argument as to where it sits

within the transcendental style; the maddening aspect tying into Brechtian ideals,

the infinity aspect hinting towards an unavoidable ineffability even if not always

spiritual in character. When Michael Palmer discusses the reception of religious

experience itself, he suggests that it "...has a two-fold character; it is the reception

of something that is given; it is, as we have noted before, the perceptible effect of

an imperceptible cause." (1997, p.137). These scenarios work through the same

mechanism in regards to audience reception, albeit their teleology is not some

specific moment of dogmatic realisation but a far more ineffable and unnerving

form of the transcendental style caused by an ineffable circularity creating the

desire to escape.

Damnation

In 1988, Tarr began a process of extension that would continue right up until his

final film in 2013. This experimentation with form is said to pivot on *Damnation*.

Rancière writes of Tarr's general oeuvre that "...his films deal with the end of the faith in the historical advent of a new world of freedom and equality and with the disenchantment regarding the capitalist promise following the collapse of the socialist one." (2016, p.246). This, however, is generally started within *Damnation*, at least in an attempt to deal with these themes. The film follows the hopeless Karrer (Miklós B. Székely) as he attempts to win over the woman he loves (Vali Kerekes) who is the singer at a local bar called The Titanic.[59] Because she is married and full of regrets due to the past affair she had with the man, she is spiteful towards him for his continued advances.

She also believes that the affair with him could affect her goal of being a famous singer, a desire which is shown to eventually be more important to her than any of her relationships. Karrer is offered a chance to work on a smuggling racket organised by the bar's owner Willarksy (Gyula Pauer). Knowing it to be an extremely risky proposition, however, he instead persuades the singer's financially struggling husband Sebestyén (György Cserhalmi) that it would be worthwhile. This leaves the wife alone and allows Karrer to make some progress towards having her back. Several betrayals, however, foil his plan to live happily with the singer - Sebestyén is killed during the smuggling operation due to Karrer - and he is eventually left alone and isolated from the local community, barking in madness at a local dog, reduced to the level of a beast.

Damnation's overall narrative causality is not explicitly essential to the film's transcendental elements. Moreover it is the emotional turmoil of the characters and how Tarr portrays their protracted torment that is the key marker for his

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[59] The singer is never given a name.

future cinematic style. It is in this portrayal where the transcendental elements

align together. The first facet of this movement of audio-visual alienation comes,

not in the actual diegetic use of music, but in how the score (regardless of its

source) earnestly mimics the harsh, industrial soundscape of the film's setting,

arguably blurring certain diegetic binaries.[60] Vig's score, which opens the film,

deliberately blurs this line. It mixes with the sounds of the heavy industry, which is

portrayed in the opening visual of a system of machinery moving material on an

outdoor pulley.

This shot begins the process of Tarr's extension and alienation of the

cinematic world as a form of escapism, creating a long take whose movement is

slow enough for the shot to give the false impression of a static moment. In

blurring this boundary between diegetic layers, Vig then has the potential later on

in the film to highlight inner realms for the main character and to have the option

to imbue his diegetic sound and music with much weightier thematic content. A

parallel can be perceived between the musical and visual creation of Tarr's worlds

which Kovacs describes as follows:

> One can best characterise this style as the wedding of two extremes: concrete
> representation of poverty, of moral and psychic misery in the social and physical
> environment on the one hand, and poetry of dreams and desires in the representation of
> the individual characters on the other. (2013, p.21).

By tying the emotionality of characters to the literal aesthetics of their

environment, Tarr and Vig open up the potential for the heightened thematic

importance of diegetic sound within the whole of film. It is a potential that is also

explored within all of his films that followed *Damnation*.

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[60] The analysis of the sound mix lies within this section because of its arguably meta-diegetic status.

As suggested earlier, this potential occurs most frequently in the creation of specific diegetic spaces within the narrative world - spaces which are deliberately enclosed through both the inability of Tarr's camera to move or cut at any great speed when within them - where the music which haunts these realms again questions the diegesis (ultimately creating an audio-visual alienation within the reception). The circularity of Tarr's films are built from painful, claustrophobic engagement with these spatial zones with the music making them appear hopeless, forcing the viewer to confront some possibility of an escape. The transcendental here is the effect created by a shared hope of a break from the circularity of the socially and aesthetically alienated space. The transcendental character is an escape, a profound release from the dire situation of both the scenario and the viewing of it. In *Damnation*, this occurs specifically around several scenes within The Titanic bar and other social drinking spaces where many of the film's key scenes occur. The Titanic space also seems to hold more significance than others within the film musically because of the singer's obvious musical connection to the space.

To create the space of the bar aurally, Tarr opts for a technique in which, because of his camera's incredibly slow movements in mapping the space, blurs the presence and the source of the music, revealed later and creating a moment of higher meaning where it implies or is a deacousmaticisation of some sense of escape. It is eventually given a real-life potential to humanly end, something which is surprisingly harder to conceive when the music is potentially within some form of scored realm and away from the grounded rigours of a narrative's portrayal of physical performance. In the first instance of this effect, the music of a harmonium

is used and this sets the general precedence for the musical character of these

social spaces for the majority of Tarr's later films, both in terms of the increasingly

irritating texture of the instrument and its ability to build music almost entirely

around repetitive arpeggios that have little or no intention of progressing or

resolving.

In this scene, the camera lingers deliberately on the glasses at the bar as the

music (which at this point is still denied a visual source), slowly tracks left even

denying the human voice a firm source. With the music essentially moving as

slowly as the camera, the sense of wanting the camera to quicken or for the music

to stop builds.[61] When the voice is eventually given its source (or at least a

potential source, as it is still kept somewhat vague through the composition of the

shot), a slight respite is given though only for a brief period before the music's

repetition continues to alienate the viewer from the scene. There's a play between

Chion-like modes of perception, where the viewer goes through process of first

"listening" and then "comprehending" (2009, p.20), switching between these

modes at the will of the director using the visual elements to force perceptive

readings of the sound and music sources.[62]

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[61] There could be said to be a correlation between what the music and what the camera is doing.
[62] Chion writes the following descriptions for the four modes of perceiving sound in his *Guide To Sound Objects*: "In sector 1 - Listening, means listening to someone, to something; and through the intermediary of sound, aiming to identify the source, the event, the cause, it means treating the sound as a sign of this source, this event (Concrete/Objective). In sector 2 - Perceiving, means perceiving by ear, being struck by sounds, the crudest, most elementary level of perception; so we 'hear', passively, lots of things which we are not trying to listen to or understand (Concrete/Subjective). In sector 3 - Hearing, here, according to its etymology, means showing an intention to listen, choosing from what we perceive what particularly interests us, in order to make a 'description' of it (Abstract/Subjective). In sector 4 - Comprehending, means grasping a meaning, values, by treating the sound as a sign, referring to this meaning through a language, a code (semantic listening; Abstract/Objective)." (2009, p.20).

Once this melody is cognised, which isn't too difficult as it is mixed to an unnatural sound level, escape from its repetitive circularity is virtually impossible for the viewer. They are within the characters' social space sharing the slowness of their emotional and social desperation. The music almost becomes noise in the sense of the word ascribed to it by Paul Hegarty: "Noise is then something we are forced to react to, and this reaction, certainly for humans, is a judgement, even if only physical." (2009, p.3). After some minutes of this melody, the moment of transcendental recognition for the viewer is prepared. In this case, like many other examples in Tarr's filmography, it comes through a sharp cut away from the social space causing a drop in volume and texture.

Through this cut, the visual emphasis and soundscape changes entirely to something akin to white noise. In the example of this scene, the cut moves outside of The Titanic bar with a torrential downpour occurring. The blanket sound of this rain is the moment of escape from the circularity and is the brief moment of transcendental realisation. Even though the scene that is cut to is equally harsh in terms of the diegetic narrative, its difference in sound creates such a contrast as to be able to convey a sense of escape, a revelatory moment after minutes of a slow camera moving against the grating music of the harmonium within the confined, grey walls of a rundown bar. It is a contrast significantly built from the accumulative elements collecting as the scenes progress.[63] This same idea is extended further in a later scene at the same bar with the harmonium music being endlessly played and deliberately denied a source until the camera has had an

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[63] Bad weather plays a prominent role in continuing the ideas of harshness and alienation to some degree and throughout Tarr's filmmaking.

excessive amount of time to slowly track around the whole of the bar, fittingly in a circular movement, before finally again cutting away.

The sense of the music being extended is palpable in these scenes. As Kovacs suggests, Tarr's shooting of each individual scene is treated like a continuous sequence in itself and not simply as a collection of cuts which accounts for this music's obvious extension: "Tarr treats each shot as an individual sequence, rather than as a sequence functioning in a narrative flow." (2013, p.17). Narrative flow is earnestly curtailed in favour of a lack of cutting, and the music reflects this by adding to the effect of extension and alienation. Another variation on this idea occurs in between these two scenes and, though it is built around the same mechanism, it performs a slightly differing narrative task; that of extending duration and keeping the viewer in a state of ambiguous diegetic reception through repetitive music, only to break away from it for a moment of release that is representative of both audience *and* diegetic escape. The scene in question is also more complex because of the narrative and thematic content added to the scenario by playing on a main character's relationship with music.

The female character at the centre of *Damnation*'s narrative is also a singer whose aspirations to be a famous performer arguably create the essential desperation and hardship for the male characters. The scene in question is in the Titanic Bar again but the potential endlessness of the musical content is actually broken by a character. Once inside the social space, Tarr begins a long, slow track around the bar's various inhabitants, all motionless and downtrodden at their tables. The music consists this time of a honky-tonk textured piano playing an alternating set of arpeggios that often resolve back to the key tonality at

unexpected moments. Over this is a saxophone occasionally improvising, but the arpeggios dominate the soundtrack in terms of mixing. As the tracking shot continues, the camera focuses on the main character sat at a table. With the camera in close proximity to him, the female voice finally enters with a final few feet of tracking revealing the stage on which she is singing. In many ways the scene could be read as a subtly private dialogue between the two characters but effectively without any speech. She is then shown performing the mournful song with lyrics about a lost love, the character expressing a sense of despair.

After again tracking to show the elusive visual of the musicians (and even then only the saxophonist rather than pianist who remains effectively acousmatic), the scene cuts abruptly to a later point slightly further on into the evening. The music, however, has yet to suggest progression, again seeming to mimic relationships to noise, holding cinematic progression back through a circular potential. This new scene is one of a violent confrontation as the character, previously shown to be slumped at the table, now accosts someone in the back passageway of the club. Again, the contrast is still bleak but the escape from the loud, arpeggiated music cannot be understated as an effect.

This ties in to Schrader's sense of release from stasis, one that is not an actual release from the narrative of hardship but simply a brief respite of realisation at surviving such monotony. The moment may be devoid of theological implication but its otherness is still there. This monotony is very deliberately conceived through a variety of aural techniques in the scene, not simply melodic techniques, as Rancière discusses in his analysis:

Music here shifts from its usual status of "illustration" to a structural function. On a first level, the desperate song of the singer, telling the end of love, the end of illusions and so on, epitomises the desolation of the environment. But those desperate words were already anticipated by the six notes that are obsessively repeated and even accompanied by a metronome which reduces them to a mere tick-tock: the noise of the rain inside, of the rain in the bodies and the souls. (2016, p.249).

The shift of the music from an illustrative diegetic function to what Rancière calls a "structural" function is a common occurrence in many of the previous transcendental examples of musical use. As suggested, the music is almost removed from any typical function by emphasising the repetitive nature of its new structural position, the metronome being an obvious example whereby the soundscape of the scene is measuring out time's passing for the viewer. This is another extenuation of the temporality of the scene which makes the cut seem like a release.

The transcendental as a feeling arises from this contrasting aesthetic relationship, one that heavily builds alienation between the audience and the film. The vital point to make is that, by distancing the viewer initially from the experience, they come to share the diegetic experience of the characters, ironically putting them further within the film. Escape from this scenario, combined with spiritual thematic elements (which are still present in many of Tarr's films even if not overtly as in Pasolini's or Tarkovsky's films), creates an incredibly transcendental experience. Tarr could even be said to be toying with the audience by providing such a moment of alienated transcendental style, offering a false escape. This point is further heightened in that the music can still be heard in the background after the cut, albeit with consideration to the different position in the space. Tarr would push this ideal to its most extreme conclusion, not in *Damnation*,

but in a later film. In *Sátántangó*, this mechanism becomes extreme so to reflect

the hyper-extension of virtually every aspect of his aesthetic ploys.

Sátántangó

> The takes get longer and longer to go along with my thinking. I don't know how my takes
> are getting longer and longer... When you shoot a movie, you can only shoot the reality,
> something that definitely exists. - Tarr (2012).

When making the jump between *Damnation* and *Sátántangó* even Tarr himself

accepts that something dramatically changes in his filmmaking as the above quote

suggests. Though he made one short film and a documentary in between the two

films, his need to extend the cinematic process becomes abundantly clear. Why

this occurs is never truly explained other than as a logical continuation of the

aesthetic and narrative experiments began in *Damnation*, where a cycle of

aesthetic ideas continues to be expanded until it can no longer conceivably go

further as in his last film, *The Turin Horse*. As Kovacs suggests, Tarr follows his

thematic points through, whereby his "...narrative minimalism reaches a point

which is very difficult to develop any further." (2012, p.145). Perhaps because of

this, *Sátántangó* has the most complex form of diegetic musical alienation. The film

is a further collaboration with the writer László Krasznahorkai, *Damnation* being

the first, and this may begin to suggest these forms of audio-visual alienation to be

of a collaborative narrative experiment. Of greater prescience in regards to

Sátántangó is the role that Vig has within the film as composer, writer and even

playing the lead character. This makes the musical choices of the film seem

incredibly intertwined and necessary to examine in a number of contexts, hence

why it is an example that cuts across different positions of music within this chapter.

When Gilles Deleuze discusses the relationship between conceptual difference and repetition, his analysis could equally be applied to the aesthetic techniques that Tarr himself deploys to excruciating effect in *Sátántangó*. Deleuze writes that "In every case repetition is difference without a concept. But in one case, the difference is taken to be only external to the concept; it is a difference between objects represented by the same concept, falling into the indifference of space and time..." (2004, p.26). Tarr could be said to be removing some conceptual element from cinema in order for any difference perceived within his narratives to still create a grating repetition. By using the term cinematic conceptualism, it is not a reference to any form of general cinematic concept but an encapsulation of the drive at the heart of the form as a whole; a narrative moulding an aesthetic ideal or vice versa. Tarr and slow cinema as a whole degrade this to the point of sometimes removing such conceptual elements entirely. One aspect loses almost all power over the other, leaving the alienated gap which is ripe for transcendental readings and appraisals.

Sátántangó is a complex film but its narrative is on a small logistical scale compared to its realisation. t follows the fate of a small village community whose shared farm, of which they depended on to live, has collapsed. The village is desolate and in the middle of nowhere. The film follows various counter-strands of narrative as the occupants are shown variously to betray each other or be duped by each other, often for financial gain. The main bulk of the characters are co-opting their money together thanks to the charismatic argument of Irimiás (Vig), a

villager who was thought dead but who has somehow returned. His ruse is to have the villagers killed by officials though the financial reasoning behind this is never truly explored. Elsewhere, a local worker Schmidt (László feLugossy) also had plans to steal the money but eventually loses out when Irimiás convinces the populace to leave, and when the local barman Futaki (Miklós B. Székely) discovers the plan. Watching over all of this is a reclusive drunken Doctor (Peter Berling) who notes down the events as he sees them from his window. He ventures out for more drink, only to discover an upset young girl (Erika Bók) who he chastises before attempting to apologise. She runs off into the night and this upset causes him to have a stroke.

This young girl is also fooled into losing her money by being tricked into burying it in the ground for it to be later taken on. She kills herself and her cat with rat poison. When the Doctor came across her, she was standing in the rain and staring into the local bar where much of the planning for various narrative scenarios occurs. At this point, her torment was unnoticed by the occupants of the bar who were dancing repetitively to music, eventually evolving into a tango, giving the film its English translated title of *Satan's Tango*. When the villagers leave the area, they are told by Irimiás that the plan for a new communal farm - the reason why he has supposedly taken their money - has had to be postponed for mysterious reasons, meaning that all of the villagers will have to split up and head to different parts of the country.

Futaki, whose affair with Schmidt's wife opened the film, is the only one who resists Irimiás and heads away from the group looking for work. From the opening of the film, the mysterious sound of bells has been heard alongside the score. This music is noted by many of the characters who are intrigued by the fact

that there were apparently no church bells around (the local church having recently been destroyed). After all of the occupants have left, the Doctor eventually returns from hospital to an entirely empty village. On hearing the bells again, he ventures out into the muddy countryside only to find a hidden church in a forest with a mad solitary ringing its bell incessantly. He goes back home, perturbed by what he has found as the bells chime on and he isolates himself further in his study, the film fading to black.

In a similar fashion to *Damnation*, it is the key relationships between the characters and the emotional fallout presented under aesthetic pressure that is essential. This is all realised within the framework of Tarr's extended and alienating cinematic effects. The main difference with *Sátántangó* and the majority of his other films is how far these effects are willing to go and how much of a role they play within the actual, diegetic breakdown of the characters. This comes from the movement of the music's position in the film from simple illustrative to a definitive structural ideal. Building on *Damnation*'s circular social spaces and repetitive music, several scenes in *Sátántangó* draw upon the same elements, heightening them to a great level of receptive difficulty for the viewer. These scenes explore elements first conceived in *Damnation* and again have a complex relationship with the temporal elements of the cinematic experience, viewer alienation and transcendental teleology.

The scene to question is again a scenario that has characters reacting to diegetic music. Unlike the characters in *Damnation*, these people react to the music by dancing, almost out of control and possessed by its rhythms. The characters are celebrating, many are drunk and in the town's only bar dancing to the music of an

accordion player who is almost always on screen. The first time the viewer comes

upon this scene, it is not from the perspective of inside the bar but outside. The

young girl who later commits suicide, watches the occupants from a window. She

stands in the rain, the accordion music being mixed so as to be placed inside and

away from her perspective. She is later disturbed by the doctor of the film and runs

off into a nearby forest. This earlier context is essential to the scene when it is

finally returned to from another perspective later on because otherwise it has no

thematic context and is simply aesthetically grating. Tarr exercises such patience

with his camera that the scene becomes one of the longest he ever shot. The

camera moves backwards through the bar in a straight line as the characters

chaotically dance to the music. This camera eventually comes to a standstill and

simply watches the characters perform, the music repeating the same progression

over and over again.

Jonathan Romney describes the scene from a usefully musical perspective

to highlight its difficult nature:

> The theme goes round and round, consistently frantic, neither pausing nor reaching
> resolution at any point: again, it threatens to burn out before it ends... the music's forced
> jollity ironically underpinning the world's - and the foolish dancers' - indifference to the
> fate of the young girl looking in through the window from out in the rainy night. (2014,
> pp.56-57).

Romney highlights several interesting points in regards to how this music works.

Firstly, he spots how repetitive it is, the point being that the music does not require

a musically fluent audience to understand what is happening in the aural world of

the film. Music has the ability to communicate to all. But the second point of the

context of this music is important as to the ontology of the scene. Whilst this dance

is occurring, a young girl is suffering great hardship. The audience will be aware of

this pathos as Tarr deliberately highlighted her position outside of the building in an earlier segment.[64] The music's "jollity" and its own desire to repeat, almost to distract from the torment outside, makes the scene incredibly trying on a number of aesthetic levels. Tarr could even be said to implicate the viewer in the scenario by attempting to alienate them from the morality of the film's society. The transcendental elements align through these aspects coming to comment upon each other where a desire to escape from the scene on the audience's part is as inevitable as the characters' distraction from the plight of the young girl.

The aesthetics of this scene succumb to the musical power of the sound mix and the music composed by Vig, denying an easy experience of what is a strangely pleasurable scene for the characters. Consider the potential position of this music in the film. The scene is arguably its pivot point, returning to an earlier temporal moment in the narrative but adding the final context necessary for the audience to understand the trouble that the town is facing. Though it would be incorrect to describe it as a revelatory moment, there is some essence of ineffable escape implied by the conclusion of the scene. Before this happens, however, Tarr does actually cut the segment effectively in two, cutting to another angle in the bar. This time the music does change as one character has demanded to partake in a tango dance. The music reflects this and yet also aids this moment being far more transcendental because of its instant differentiation from the previous moment, similar to the escape in *Damnation*.

By alienating the audience for a segment of time, Tarr allows virtually any escape to feel like a revelation. In analysing the scene from *Sátántangó*, Kovacs

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[64] The structure of film means that the first few chapters show the exact same point in the temporal chronology of the film but from different character's perspectives.

suggests there to be a key audio-visual mismatch between the diegetic sound and the subsequent reaction to it. He argues that:

> Through the mismatch of sound and image, the two segments of the space give the impression of being slightly disconnected. This mismatch is continued later on all through the scene. Sometimes there is a slight discordance between the rhythm of the music and the movement of the dancers or the musicians. It is minimal, yet noticeable enough to provide a feeling of disturbance. The movements are not entirely different from the rhythm of the music, but do not follow it entirely either. This diegetic music becomes a somewhat disturbing sound accompanying the images. (2013, p.67).

The suggestion of the sound's very mix creating a "disturbing" effect is another way of addressing the audio-visual alienation that Tarr is creating. The discordance is not simply between the characters and their world but the audience and that world too. Though there is a subtlety here suggested by Kovacs that is inaccurate in regards to the genuine effects created by such aesthetic choices, the level of alienation and the aesthetic choices used to create them are essentially immaterial. They are creating the effect through diegetic means and that is the essential point.

This is an aspect commonly associated with scoring but Tarr's films show the potential to achieve such goals through diegetic methods, perhaps belying his leaning towards a certain aesthetic inherited from his earlier documentary work. In his analysis of the use of music in the films of Robert Bresson, John Belton suggests that music can be largely responsible for such receptive action: "In other words, it marks moments of divine intervention, where the course of events is determined, and marks points of human contact, where one man communes with another." (2008, p.30). This scene in *Sátántangó* creates the same effect only through diegetic music and where the "points of human contact" are far more pessimistic than in Bresson's brief moment of narrative respite.

In spite of overt symbolism often negating transcendental potential, Tarr's use of audio-visual relationships leads to a higher significance, even if that

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significance is simply the implication of what he is not showing on screen and subsequently an escape from alienating aesthetic choices. When Tarr was interviewed for *The Guardian* in 2001, Romney summarised the potential outcome of a film like *Sátántangó* and backs up his assertion with an unquoted answer from the director himself. He suggests the following:

> In the intensity of its ritual-like pacing, Sátántangó is as close as cinema comes to nightmare. It concerns a rural community torn apart by a trickster messiah, but the narrative is less important than the tableaux that compose it... The drunk scenes, however, were as realistic as they look - shot, Tarr says, with the entire cast tanked up to the gills. (2001).

Perhaps the symbolism of the scene is watered down, at least in terms of transcendental negation, by it being earnestly shot and improvised. Even the music has elements of this where the drunkenness of the scene leads the player to make genuine mistakes and trips whilst playing the repeated melody. This leads on to the final question of how diegetic music can be used to create an audio-visual alienation: where does the true transcendental mechanism within such scenarios really lie? In a sense, because audio-visual alienation is a process (and the scenes in question are part of this process), the transcendental moment of realisation is arguably more perceivable in the scenes immediately following these moments; the music's function as a mechanism in the non-illustrative position that it holds is not the overall transcendental teleology but the gateway for the viewer towards this teleology. So the mechanism is built throughout via music and images addressing particular thematic concerns but only comes to the fore in several moments, segments or scenes.

Nayar writes of the complexity of the transcendental "moment" perceived within the style and the problems that accompany the context of such moments.

She writes that "The paradoxical implication, of course, is that a moment that phenomenologically constitutes the sacred - born of viewing a film narrative, let's say - is one in which the participant *transcends* the ordinariness of that narrative." (2012, p.18). This is fitting for the context of the diegetic transcendental mechanism here as the social spaces of the film are exactly what the viewer should wish to escape from. The ordinariness produced in these scenes is not merely of a dull or laboured quality but of a phenomenologically trying test for the viewer. They are effectively led into the moment of transcendental realisation by being alienated from the cinematic experience which locks them into the diegetic space simultaneously. Watching the film is like being in the film and this feeling is created by the music. The "moment" is therefore after the diegetic mechanism has been built into the viewing experience, explaining again why slow cinema is conducive to this type of transcendental style, because the mechanism requires an extenuation of time that ordinary filmic styles dare not attempt.

The Transcendental and the Sound of Bells

The other recurring musical element in the diegetic soundworld of *Sátántangó* is the persistent sound/music of church bells. This is not a simplistic repeated occurrence whereby the scenario that requires such sound is revisited, but one where the sound hints towards higher realms through its mysterious positioning, one that is only partly explained towards the very end of the seven hour film. It is the first and last sound that the viewer hears in the film and is even the subject of the film's last piece of dialogue. If the denial of a source for the music in *Damnation* seemed initially elongated, *Sátántangó* by contrast heightens the relationship to

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extreme realms. But, as Kovacs suggests, Tarr (and Vig) emphasises each element of the audio-visual composition with equal importance: "Sounds, noises and music are almost equally important factors of the aesthetic composition of the visual style." (2013, p.72). This can, therefore, explain why the source blurs.

The bells differ from the more obvious repetitive music and how they achieve a transcendental moment. Unlike the accordion music, the lack of explanation and source is one that is constantly hinted at representing some sort of diegetic revelatory moment as well as the obvious aesthetic difference through their overtly drone-like structure. This facet is eventually shared with the audience thanks to the film's incredibly long running time coalescing with a sparsely realised narrative. Such a combination allows for the previously mentioned interpretative gap which is less alienating than the previous musical uses but still works through a conspicuous presence in the film. Later on, the sound becomes more overtly diegetic but within earlier moments, the transcendental elements are more palpable because of the natural mystery of its source.

The position of the bells is rendered mysterious, created clearly by a hand outside of the film's world yet accepted diegetically by the characters, bringing to mind the field of Daniel Frampton's "Film Mind" with particular reference to subjective minds within the diegesis: "If a film has a person in it then an immediate possibility offers itself in the guise of that person's indicated thoughts and perceptions." (2006, p.20). Tarr turns this potential into a gateway that can be traversed in both directions, slipping the viewer to and from this inner world in order to extenuate the sense of time further. Is this Tarr's vision as the director (a creative act) or some view into the inner sense of a character? Either vision is

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undermined by various choices throughout the film and quite deliberately: Tarr will

not be academised so easily. In contrast to the previous diegetic musical scenarios,

the mechanism differs.

Rather than forcing the viewer into a corner, this sound is far more

palatable and almost the antithesis of the alienating human music of the accordion

players. But its repetition throughout the film accumulates meaning, almost like a

leitmotif but with a far more intangible quality. *Sátántangó*'s opening long track

through a muddy yard of farm animals sets the tone for the film but mixes a visual

harshness with this strangely ambient soundscape. The camera tracks slowly as the

bells gently fade in. At this point in the film, the viewer has no choice but to accept

them as outside of the narrative world but, because of the gradually diminishing

solidity of this position, the process becomes one of a transcendental aesthetic;

creating a quiet but gradual sense of something beyond representation, channelled

and contrasted with the most immanent of visual material. Fairfax's analysis of this

opening suggests it to be typical and almost defining of the director's overall shift in

style during this period but the aural elements displayed here makes the analysis

seem oversimplified:

> Not only do Tarr's films contain radically sparse storylines, in which the minimal amount of narrative progression is interspersed with long periods of temps mort, but his formal system, too, rests on a prodigious use of the long-take, stretching the bounds of cinematic duration. Totemic of this tendency would be the 7½-minute opening shot of Sátántangó (Tarr 1994) – in which the camera circles around a desolate rural village, whose only signs of life are a herd of cows plodding aimlessly around the muddy fields – but this is only a more extreme version of the aesthetic principle governing the entirety of his late work. (2016, p.4).

This opening segment is incredibly important in regards to the transcendental

reception of the film. It sets out an initial mystery which even when finally revealed

later in the film, still retains a sense of the sacred (the church that no one knew was there) and ineffability (from the sound of the bells).

Is it accurate then to describe this as one of the film's periods of *temps mort*/dead time? The music is working through a complex range of hurdles in order to eventually build a transcendental framework into its uses later and so the description seems isolated. The bells could be described as more congruent than the accordion music, though only because of the ambiguous diegetic position. More usefully, the music created here is gradually denoted by the effect it has on the characters, combined with the length of the overall filmic experience: the sparseness combined with length forces for the viewer to grasp on to any meaning in order to comprehend the overall experience. Therefore, when a character is wordlessly overcome by this sound and its unspoken implications, the potential is there for the viewer to also grasp onto this diegetic experience.

This effect is more potent in the film's later scenarios, working in a similar fashion to the evolution of meaning in the music of the last two chapters. Its repetition adds more and more layers to the affective meaning of its presence. This must be acknowledged as being achieved with a medium that has repetition at its core. As Chris Otchy has written, not only has repetition been key to music as a whole but it has been one of the forms that openly requires it:

> No other art form so passionately embraces repetition as music. If a writer were to repeat a phrase or a paragraph over and over throughout an essay, one might think he was either mad, or he was trying to create a type of poetic/musical resonance. If a painter or sculptor were to repeat a work over and over, critics might have the same reaction to her work. Yet in music, repetition is expected — encouraged even. (2017).

In these later moments, repetition is more than encouraged but used almost entirely to create the aural structure. Once the plan to deceive the villagers has

been set in motion, the narrative turns into purely one of journey, a pointless one though repetition is not quite there in the visual or narrative elements at this point.

On their way to the building in which they plan to blow-up the villagers, the three men involved in the plot, including the character played by Vig, come across a house. At this moment (and in spite of being some way from where the bells are eventually situated spatially within the film) the sound overwhelms the soundtrack and the characters. Vig's character drops to his knees as if witnessing some revelation. The composition of the scene also suggests this, a moody fog coming slowly down to reveal the house as an almost theological entity. Once the moment has passed, the music fades and the fog thins to properly reveal the house. The other two characters are somewhat unaware of this moment, asking the other "What's the matter, never seen fog before?" (1994). He could equally be talking about the filmic mechanism yet it hints at things beyond even the director's control (some potential transcendental force) that has resulted in his creation, playing on Frampton's "Ghostly beings" where "...some simply called on *invisible* beings to explain film's twists and turns." (2006, p.31). Perhaps all of these films are dictated by such ghostly beings; ineffable influencers subconsciously moulding reception to the point of drawing characters into their designs.

When the film concludes, the presence of this sound conveys the sense of transcendental realisation, the knowledge of something that has happened being gained in spite of its meaning still being totally incomprehensible in basic communicative terms. Romney has suggested generally of Vig's scores that they have a "Haunting" quality because of their relation to the "devastation" of the film's social scenarios. He writes the following: "Haunting - in the properly

unearthly sense of the word - and devastation are certainly words that come to mind when you think of Vig's scores for Tarr's work." (2014, p.56). Consider this aspect coupled with a Deleuzian ideal of conceptual repetition: "In every case, repetition is the power of difference and differentiation: because it condenses the singularities, or because it accelerates or deaccelerates time, or because it alters space." (2004, p.273). The repetition of the bells is different because, in a cinematic sense, it does condense the "singularities" of the film, marking and drawing together a seven hour experience in order to move back and forth between temporal periods and to heighten affect beyond the comprehensive expression of meaning. The position of this music as the only congruent aesthetic force in the whole film renders it almost unique in Tarr's own filmography because of its transfer of transcendental style into some new sense of escape, a respite between the moments of hardship that can't help but be grasped by the viewer.

Repetition and Alienation

Assessing audio-visual alienation caused through the use of scoring is perhaps the most complex argument to be made here. Whereas musical occurrences given a source within the film have a logical potential in regards to dragging a viewer into a scenario by paradoxically alienating them from the cinematic experience, musical scoring outside of this has several other factors to contend with. These consist of the following:

1.	The score's position of being already detached and perhaps unquestioned as part of a general audio-visual/cinematic experience (it is the most ephemeral cinematic aspect).

2.	Retaining the connection with the world of the film in spite of aesthetically attempting to strain the viewer with the urge to escape it and to resist the overall cinematic experience.

These are both factors that feed into the problems surrounding the use of Vig's seemingly causeless music which, in spite of aesthetically replicating the music composed for diegetic scenarios (repeated arpeggio motifs, consistent drones, very little tonal progression), still aims to detach the viewer to the point of highlighting an unseen, ineffable quality in such scenarios. Tarr's relationship with Vig's music is a unique one whose process itself goes some way to explaining its importance in Tarr's cinema. Consider Kovacs assessment of their relationship which is one that is equally informed by the analyst's experience of working closely with Tarr:

> Not unrelated to this effect is the considerable increase in the importance of music and other noises in the film. Repetitive music, the constant roar of the wind and several other sounds accompany the images, creating a more lugubrious atmosphere than in any preceding Tarr film. (2013, p.90).

Kovacs highlights throughout his text the importance of Vig's input to the cinematic process which suggests that the music's role is multitudinous. He suggests two intriguing anomalies within this process that suggest how the audio-visual alienation occurs through outer means, eventually leading to the transcendental moment.

He firstly indicates the unusual production order between music and film. Vig often composes the music before Tarr has even started shooting, at the very

most working from a written treatment of the film. Secondly the music becomes an

integral part of the shooting process itself, the compositions played during filming.

The actors and everyone else involved in the process of creating the narrative and

image are subjected to the music, perhaps even unconsciously channelling its

atmosphere into whichever aspect of the film they are working on. This is

extremely effective in regards to creators whose response is one of temporal

positioning; the movement of the cameraman or the tempo of the actors'

performances for example. With this in place, music (through an ironic meta-

diegetic positioning within the film's making), starts the process of the audio-visual

alienation, again building into Frampton's potentialities surrounding the conceptual

film mind suggested earlier.

When being interviewed about the use of music in another second period

film *The Man From London* (2008) Tarr entered into this exchange with interviewer,

Geoff Andrew:

> It often feels like you were trying to make a bizarre musical: the policeman's speeches are
> synchronised with Mihály Vig's music; dialogue may rise to a crescendo or feel like a
> scherzo.
>
> We always used the music track during shooting so we could get the rhythm right in terms
> of camera movements. But it's true there's nothing naturalistic about the soundtrack: I
> hate realism. I prefer things to be dirtier or more elegant than "reality". (2007).

Vig's scores play a major role in this rejection of "realism" though Tarr never quite

expands upon what he means by the term. Transcendental style also generally

rejects traits associated with realism though ironically its techniques (a general

aesthetic reduction) are often also associated with the term.[65] Essentially, the

scores have to work within their own placement in the films. The music in question

is usually one or two pieces used repeatedly throughout each film. This may

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[65] Realism could be used in terms of many forms such as Social Realism, Soviet Realism etc.

perhaps explain why Tarr is able to use them throughout filming, because their

repetition builds on a continuity of atmosphere from the shoot.[66] Many moments

of Vig's scores could be argued to aid a transcendental style and this section is

looking at his strongest example: the musical score of *The Turin Horse*. The music is

complex because every facet of Tarr's filmmaking is pushed to its final teleology as

he accepts the conclusion of his overall thematic goal; that of an initial alienation

from the cinematic experience through a contradictory entrapment, circularity and,

eventually, through a release of transcendental expression.

The Turin Horse

> He found Mihály Vig's music appealing, as it is minimalist, slow, sad and sentimental. It is also very simply orchestrated, mainly based on piano and accordion, and so is a mixture of cheap traditional pub music and sophisticated contemporary repetitive music. - Kovacs (2013, p.67).

The Turin Horse is the end point in Tarr's many methods of extension. In spite of

being shorter than several earlier films, there are fewer cuts and longer takes

throughout, perhaps influenced again by the increased role of his editor Hranitzky

who now has a co-directing credit. When considering the film, the first aspect to

assess is the shift in the musical perspective. Unlike almost every other film before

it, diegetic music of the kind examined in previous sections has virtually vanished.

Such a presence could perhaps be seen as actual evidence of optimism within the

narrative, of which there is actually none. Its characters are not even afforded a

release through diegetic music in social spaces as the key element of the film is

that, for various reasons, its characters are increasingly trapped within their

decrepit property (and arguably in the final days of civilisation). Repetition and

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[66] The "rhythm" that Tarr refers to is far more vague and fluid as a concept to the filmmaker generally than this interview quote implies.

audio-visual alienation play key roles in the film but through an obvious aesthetic presence. For the effects created through diegetic scoring is now moved to Vig's musical score.

Repetition in Vig's music has been discussed by several analysts but it becomes a constant point of interest when assessing the music for *The Turin Horse*. Romney suggests that "Vig's themes transcend the generic through their repetitive intensity and the sheer weight that he gives his sounds." (2014, p.57), later writing of its role as a transcendental entity within the very stasis of the film's ending which suggests "...laboriousness, decrepitude, cosmic wheels that might roll on pitilessly for eternity (even through the enforced stasis that emerges as the film's theme)." (2014, p.57). Kovacs also notices the music's reflection of the film's formal structure, writing the following: "There are no individual numbers in the music. We hear a repetitive minimalist music constituted of variations on a single three-note musical motif using different instruments, orchestration and harmonies." (2013, p.149). This musical structure will be returned to shortly as it contains an essential element of the reasoning behind the audio-visual transcendental style.

The Turin Horse opens with a contextualising voice-over spoken upon a blank visual image. This introduction tells of a horse that the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche saw being flogged by its owner. It is the image that caused Nietzsche's final breakdown. The film then purports to loosely follow the fate of that horse after Nietzsche had left it. The horse is shown to be owned by a driver (János Derzsi) and his daughter (Erika Bók) as they increasingly struggle to survive in their barren landscape, partly because of the horse's refusal to walk and partly because

of the strangely dramatic increase in weather conditions.[67] The film opens with the

horse being driven back to the house where they live before Tarr goes into detail

about the pair's daily routine. The driver is partly crippled and so requires constant

aid from his daughter. The film is built around several repeated rituals, from the

undressing and dressing of the father to the cooking and eating of boiled potatoes.

As the weather worsens, the pair makes several attempts to leave but in vain. They

eventually bed down in the house against the weather, attempting but failing to

continue to live out their routine. The light of the film begins to fade until it is

implied that all of the light in the world has been extinguished in a quiet

apocalypse.

When Kovacs, Rancière and others discuss the narrative progress of the film

in comparison to Tarr's other films, their reference is often to this repetitive ritual

structure. Fairfax summarises it most effectively:

> The Turin Horse, therefore, represents the infinite endpoint of the regressive spiral of
> Tarr's œuvre. A curious thing happens when this point is reached: no more movement
> occurs, and yet the body continues to rotate around a point. The distinctions between
> mobility and rest, change and stasis, progression and regression all collapse. (2016, p.15).

In terms of audio-visual effects caused by this heightened structure, it could be said

that *The Turin Horse* ultimately reflects the repetitive structures of Tarr's general

aesthetic means, from his visuals and editing to Vig's musical structures. For the

first time, the cinematic structure is totally in line with the music's structure,

creating an incredibly powerful experience that draws upon similar thematic

content as discussed in the previous section (alienation, repetition, escape,

circularity) and addresses it overtly.

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[67] The weather is strange in the context of the film rather than in Tarr's general cinematic worlds
which are all inhabited with a generally unpleasant set of weather conditions.

Erzsebet Bori writes of this structural evolution being one that is evolved from the initial extenuations of *Sátántangó*:

> The recurrent, concentric structure creates the form of the film. The edifice is similar to the structure that held audiences captive in Satan's Tango, but there it became apparent only retrospectively, whereas in The Turin Horse it unfolds throughout the film. As a temporal process, it makes use of devices employed in musical composition; the constant elements give the ostinato, and the theme returns in a range of variations interwoven with new elements... (2011, pp.158-159).

Perhaps some likeness can be perceived in the musical evolution as well. *The Turin Horse* "...makes use of devices employed in musical composition..." where techniques such as "ostinato" can be recognised within its structure even when the writer is not a musicologist. The reason for emphasising this final jump - the structure of the film to a more musical form - is because the transcendental elements eventually align together within the temporal process through this shift. By analysing the music, the film's structure is also highlighted in its effects and this belies the connection to more Schraderian principles of the transcendental style. Logically, with the music and the narrative structure linked, two arguments can be put forward: first, that a transcendental form (the music) is being reflected within a cinematic form; and second, that the narrative is not simply reflecting a general musicality but a very specific one which taps into elements already discussed in regards to the diegetic music.

The two arguments are interlinked but there are several specific aspects that need to be noted before simply accepting them. These aspects are best assessed in the music of the opening scenario and how this structural motif (as a form of what could be described as anti-leitmotif) functions, carving a powerful vein of transcendental expression through the rest of the film. This scene is the first visual and narrative moment after the blank screen with its contextualising voice-

over. Once the viewer has been told about the context of the horse, its flogging and its connection to Nietzsche, Tarr opts for an opening that follows the horse and owner along a windswept road (the conditions clearly causing them difficulty). The scene does not cut and shows the simple process of the horse pulling the cart and owner along the road.

The diegetic sound of the scene is reduced, especially in context of Tarr's general use of natural sound, and Vig's music plays over it, starting as the only sound the viewer can hear before gradually fading in the natural sounds of the scenario. This fluctuation between traditional sound and musical roles is key to Tarr's aural character, rendering the designations moot.[68] This is the only piece of music heard throughout the film, brought over as another structural device whose positioning would be labelled as having a coda effect upon the film and its scenarios in the Schraderian conception of film music's position. Its structure is essentially similar to the diegetic music in the last section with extra layers of instrumentation. Some form of organ along with a cello is responsible for a repeated arpeggiated motif that mostly builds upon the same chord, barely progressing just like the accordion music that plays in the other films' bar scenarios. Over the top of this is an elongated melody on strings of two different three note melodies which structurally plays two of the first melody and then two of the second melody. This structure is then repeated over and over until the end of the scene, occasionally allowing a tremolo violin to rise and fall in the mix. This also

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[68] The fluctuation between sound and music positioning is why elements of what officially could be called sound analysis is being included in a chapter predominantly about overtly musical ideas and content.

occurs when the scene allows more diegetic sound to enter towards the end, the tremolo seeming to heighten the agony of the animal.

A number of contexts are being played out within this scene. The first is the thematic context already applied through the opening voice-over. The viewer is aware that the horse is going to be suffering great hardship. The transcendental nature of this narrative subject can be shown to share likenesses with that of Bresson's *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966). The suffering of animals in film is always beyond language because simple communicative language is already beyond possibility. Such a scenario, therefore, is required to be communicated through more aesthetic means.[69] Music plays its role in this and, by also aiding the structure throughout the whole of the film, Vig's score alienates the viewer from the scene by attempting to recreate the repetition and monotony suffered by the horse. This also brings to mind the problematic nature of conceptual diegesis in itself and where the viewer is placed in the experience. Goldmark, Kramer and Leppert write most effectively on this, suggesting the following:

> The diegetic - extradiegetic (or source-underscore) split maintains a more basic and far less tenable distinction between reproducing reality and signifying it. This is the familiar opposition of mimesis verses symbolization, of fact versus value, that is also basic to the idea of "realism" in representation. (2007, p.4).

Is Vig's music reproducing or signifying the reality of Tarr's films and how is this affecting a transcendental reading?

It must be stated that, like the diegetic music of previous examples, the moment of transcendental expression comes from the music contextualising the scenario in order to create an eventual escape for the viewer and that the repetition of the music throughout the narrative highlights further the circularity of

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[69] Robert Bresson's film is about the suffering of an overworked donkey.

the situation.[70] The effect is created through audio-visual alienation, a slippery

alienation between viewer and film brought about through aesthetics which

initially highlights the process of viewing but one that, unlike purely Brechtian

alienation, eventually leads the viewer *deeper* into the film's schemata rather than

away from the illusions of the diegesis. Similarly, Brecht touched upon this

potential well before it was fully realised in feature length films. He writes of

music's ability to change the very nature of how much the viewer works to

interpret and comprehend a filmic narrative, writing that "Expressed differently,

the film's scriptwriter can portray the course of events much more dialectically, i.e.

in their real contradictoriness and disjointedness, if the music places the public in

the constructive attitude of 'collecting details'. " (2001, p.16). Vig's music is a

brilliant example of this as it genuinely forces the viewer to confront the reality of

the film's diegesis and narrative but through the highlighting of the medium. The

endless repetition of hardship and toil means the viewer is allowed only a brief

aesthetic respite from the harsh world of the film, manifesting in a moment of a

pure understanding when the music variously fades out.

However, the music *must* create this alienation for its secondary moments

to appear within the transcendental realm. The Schraderian stasis cannot even be

remotely attributed to the film's various post-music scenarios without the droning

context of Vig's arpeggios. In other words, Tarr's trapdoor can only be opened upon

such a stasis if the music highlights the unpleasant process before the viewer

ultimately feels a kinship with the characters and their own narrative worlds. And

even with this structure, the film is still arguably reducing its aesthetic means to a

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[70]*The Turin Horse*'s aesthetic choices literally grind down the cinematic medium into nothing, the
ultimate transcendental aspect of the void.

bare minimum as required by Schrader and others as a necessity of the style. Kovacs suggests *The Turin Horse* to be the ultimate distillation in such a reduction of aesthetic means, even in the whole of Tarr's filmography, which suggests that the film is the most conducive to the style: "However, within the realm of the Tarr style, and with regard to Tarr's moral attitude, this film is the one that is reduced to its minimal essential ingredients." (2013, p.145). It is fitting that Tarr ends his entire cinematic career subverting this same mechanism, the only escape left being a total end in both the diegesis of the film and in the real world with Tarr giving up filmmaking.

Romney recognises poignancy of his retirement: "But if it's possible to imagine such a film containing a note of hope, it perhaps lies in this: at the end of *The Turin Horse*, the light goes out, seemingly in the entire universe. On screen, everything turns to blackness - and yet, in the dark, Vig's music goes on playing." (2014, p.57). Even after the diegetic world fades completely away (and this is perhaps reflecting a potential narrative apocalypse) the music still plays, proving Deleuze's dictum of the ultimate "groundlessness" created by conceptual repetition as a whole: "Representation, especially when it becomes infinite, is imbued with a presentiment of groundlessness." (2004, p.346). Tarr can be seen to create one final moment of transcendental style, one that subverts diegesis by occurring after the film has concluded, one final escape from his narrative worlds before finally coming up for air in the real world, now viewed with a greater and ineffable understanding. The alienation, first caused to the viewing process by the elongation and repetition of a huge variety of slow cinematic aesthetics and ideas becomes a gateway into understanding and comprehending the toil that Tarr's

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characters live through. The repetition within the films escapes into the viewing

world and ensnares those who choose to share in the endless arpeggios and the

mysterious bells. What initially distances the viewer from the experience now

draws the cinematic world in around them using music to recreate the cinematic

spaces and worlds that the characters are forced to inhabit again and again. By

taking part in such a repetition, the viewer shares in the hardship of such worlds,

leading back to a most Schraderian of transcendental receptions: repetition,

alienation, circularity and eventually a transcendental expression through release.

Chapter 4:

Ambient Sound and Emersonian Transcendence

> The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. - Ralph Waldo Emerson (2008, pp.3-4).

Within this thesis so far, musical scoring has sat at the heart of the aesthetic analysis. Music has been positioned through its thematic contrast to the narrative, its thematic and aesthetic difference to the film world, and its repetitive structures breaking out of an affective narrative world position. Yet, with all of these hierarchies and creative decisions, there has been an unspoken element present, or perhaps it is better described as a side-effect which the examples of this final analytical chapter deliberately build upon: the emphasis on natural sound when music is removed or reduced. This effect most often occurs through contrast, like many of the examples already discussed, but it is attuned to non-musical matters. A concise way to express the ideal of this chapter is by asking an initially simple question: what does positioning music in a film do to its contrasting soundworld and design? As I argue in this chapter, the musical choices of these films and others emphasises soundscape, and the soundscape of the natural world in particular, creating a contrast whereby such emphasis feels and is, by all accounts, an ambient realisation of transcendental style.

Through such a contrast, this ambience of soundscape can be heightened and emphasised to create a number of intriguing effects which all reflect to some extent the philosophy and previously-set parameters of transcendental style. As has been stated numerous times so far, Paul Schrader suggested that the removal of scoring was the only real choice to allow a transcendental style to be achieved in

aural terms. This chapter in part conforms to this logic, if only to show that such a negation actually contains a number of aural and audio-visual potentials itself (and does so by often creating a contrast with the presence of music). As James Wierzbicki writes "The real world teems with sounds that have meaning in and of themselves and at the same time potentially have meaning as elements in a shared or private semiotic system." (2016, p.153). These relationships will be shown to create an emphasised natural soundscape, reflecting upon some of the repetitive and elongating effects found in the previous chapter, but also showing how such a sound design chimes with a number of transcendental characteristics. For this chapter, the ideal in question will henceforth be described as a naturescape; a natural soundworld derived from rural landscapes that imply a number of narrative and philosophical ideals from spiritual revelation to contentment and solitude.

In the opening chapter of this thesis, the analysis was described as etymological because of the cascading and homonymic meanings within the word "transcendental". Sound scholars such as Wierzbicki (and also Jeff Smith) have found potential in this gap of meaning. The former in particular labels such effects as "sound affect" and writes that "Relative to the entirety of information that a film offers its audience, affective sound/noise - sound effect that results in sound affect - is often deeply meaningful." (2016, p.156). Again, within this chapter the character of the transcendental finds an accidental but apt tie between the audio-visual aesthetics of interest and a transcendentally relevant area of philosophy, therefore differing from Wierzbicki's theory through the specificity of its relation to landscape and natural sound. In summary, this link is between the created naturescapes in film and the philosophical/theological belief system derived in the

nineteenth century by the "transcendentalists", an American group of writers and theologians whose various moral and philosophical beliefs were also based on a personal reemphasis upon the natural world. Through this link, the soundscapes and naturescapes of the case studies will be argued as conforming to both cinematic and philosophical transcendental theories.

When Schrader discussed the lack of music in transcendental cinema, he spoke of such an aspect as if some sort of cinematic silence was somehow achieved. As this is the only chapter whose soundtracks are mostly barren (with music almost always being given some diegetic source when present, if present at all), there is a logic to this description of "silence," albeit a flawed conception of it. Again the problems arise from language. As Sheila J. Nayar has suggested, the reduction of cinematic aesthetics supposedly required for transcendental cinema, hints towards a form of aesthetic silence being the key to the traditional formulation of the style: "Indeed, when mapped against the transcendentally styled films, what this immediately brings to the fore is the transcendental film's reliance on *silence* no less than stasis." (2012, p.108). She further highlights the very mechanism essential to my examples, summarising as follows:

> Through silences and stillnesses, and similar sorts of "distances" worked into a text, viewers are pushed evermore from a *feeling* relationship with a film to a *thinking* relationship; they are forced to *work* during the movie... (2012, p.120).

The work-inducing silence discussed by Nayar and by others is quite clearly not silence but instead an absence of scored music creating a "*feeling* relationship".

The fact that it is often described as a form of silence conveys both the powerful role of scoring in general but also the sort of reception relationship that relying on a soundscape or sound design creates for the viewer. They are "forced to

work" which is essentially the effect of all of the musical relationships so far

analysed. This is thematically where this chapter sits in relation to the other

chapters too though, as will be stated whenever the descriptor of silence is used, it

is referred to through a cinematic context; that silence as used here will almost

always mean the presence of a complex, nuanced and perhaps unconsciously

perceived soundtrack rather than an aural void (but one essentially absent of

music's influence upon meaning).

To coincide with the shift of emphasis within the analysis from music to

sound, a number of different theorists will now play a crucial role in constructing

the arguments relevant and will address an essential problem in the visual-heavy

analysis: that absence of scored music is treated as a silence and with an almost

puritanical admiration. The theories of Michel Chion hold a great deal of influence

over potential analysis of transcendental soundscapes, beginning with the idea that

"...there is no image track and no soundtrack in the cinema, but a *place* of images,

plus sound..." (1994, p.40). In some ways, the problematic character of the

conceptual silence needs to be addressed here simply because, through this

contrast, some sense of quietude and absence of music is, in the context of a film,

punctuated by a contrasted silence.

This isn't a literal silence but a silence in the nondiegetic realm as discussed

by Chion in his analysis of Robert Bresson; apt as well due to Bresson's

canonisation by Schrader as a transcendental filmmaker. Chion writes the following

on this paradigm of cinematic silence:

> In a well-known aphorism Bresson reminded us that the sound film made silence possible. This statement illuminates a paradox: it was necessary to have sounds and voices so that the *interruption* of them could probe more deeply into this so called silence. (In the silent cinema, everything just suggested sounds.) (1994, pp.56-57).

Even a transcendental filmmaker like Bresson, whose work clearly channelled some absence akin to cinematic silence, is aware that such pure moments are almost unobtainable and yet are ironically *more* possible due to the coming of sound. It is clear that, more than other aspects within Bresson's own filmmaking, Chion is referring to an absence of lavish musical scoring; a choice which ultimately leads to a more readable and complex role for a film's soundscape. The analysis of this chapter deals with the extraordinary finding its expression through the ordinary. The naturescape being the most recognisable collection of sounds out of all of the aural techniques analysed within this thesis.

K.J. Donnelly has written of the symbolic potential of sound design which is essential to the exploration here due to the reading of such ubiquitous aesthetics that occurs later on. He writes that:

> Similarly, sound effects in films are regularly more than simply an emanation from the illusory diegetic world constructed by the film. They often have symbolic or emotional valences that outweigh their representational status. (2014, p.129).

As in Donnelly's analysis, the soundscapes here contain meaning and potential that is far beyond their role as merely a representational presence in the films. Of course, the divided usage (that is assumed usage of film music and film sound with one as comment and the other as anchorage) has been steadily questioned by scholars. Martine Huvenne writes extensively of the "intertwining" of music and sound (rather than a pure attempt at synchronisation) and its effects in the work of Hildegard Westerkamp. Westerkamp comes from a background of sound installations and compositions that already use natural sound as a textural ideal.

Though the context of a lack of visual/narrative grounding must be taken into account, the effect is still poignant in that the cinema in question uses a remarkably similar balance of compositional form and natural soundscape:

> ...the situatedness of the listening in the auditory space and an embodied listening are transmitted. This enables an exceptional intertwining of music and sound in film: the situatedness of the listener in Westerkamp's music is sustained in the experience of the felt sound, even when some sounds find their place in relation to the visual image and can be interpreted as off-screen sound, revealing a source and meaning. (2016, p.134).

This fluid state between sound and music is heightened but the contrast is also subtly inverted by the examples in this chapter which requires a new theoretical backdrop. With the help of nineteenth-century transcendental theorists and ideas, this can be shown to be the starkest example of immanent objects leading to a more ineffable affect. Susan Sontag writes usefully on this idea, suggesting that "...works of art (with the important exception of music) refer to the real world - to our knowledge, to our experience, to our values..." (1967, p.21) and this is incredibly relevant for the shift in emphasis within this chapter. Sontag is discussing what she sees as the highest level that artwork can achieve – those with transparency – where work is constructed as enclosed. She suggests music to differ from this, echoing Schrader's reasoning for the discarding of soundtrack and scored music in transcendental cinema. So this chapter addresses the audio-visual potential in such a philosophical position, suggesting several ways in which an emphasis on sound artefacts is equally capable (through context and contrast) of expressing ineffable, transcendental notions.

But more importantly, there's a definite logic to the emphasis on natural sound in the philosophical content of the transcendental. Sound and noise scholar Paul Hegarty writes of this from a Kantian point of view: "For Kant, music can be

pure or 'free beauty' (*Critique of Judgement*, 76-7), but nature will always offer a better version. Music always runs the risk of being as if it were natural, either through imitation, which is cheating... of being 'only an agreeable noise'..." (2009, pp.7-8). The natural soundscape will, therefore, always be more conducive to transcendental ideals. Whether such soundscapes also fall into arguments surrounding imitation is debatable. Further into this thinking, the concept of sound rather than noise begins to figure heavily, especially as the presence of sound for long periods of time in these cinematic examples may sometimes be testing the patience of the viewer. As Hegarty notes, the evolution from sound becoming noise in a musical context is one of a value judgement: "Noise is not an objective fact, it occurs in relation to perception - both direct (sensory) and according to presumptions made by an individual..." (2009, p.1). So if these soundscapes are, at times, uncomfortable in the overall cinematic mechanism, are they (in spite of lacking the harshness associated with the term) now occupying the role of noise, soundscape, music or a mixture of all three?

Greg Hainge has also examined the potential of noise in all forms of media and he interestingly situates it, on a conceptual level across various multimedia, as disturbing any potential stasis (the key element of traditional transcendental style). He writes that: "Noise *obsists* - since it is fundamentally anathema to stasis and thus opposes all illusions of fixity, pulling form beyond itself through expression and bringing about the collapse of meaning." (2013, p.23). Yet the sound here aids stasis and perhaps only fluctuates into noise through the assumptive relationships viewers have built up regarding *how* films should lead the interpretation of narrative events aurally. As Wierzbicki has already noted, "Every sound has

meaning." (2016, p.153). Even an uncomfortable sound scenario will still contain meaning *and* obsist. Liz Greene writes of this contrast in the context of the soundtrack, conforming in some way to silence and creating an ambiguous potential reception simultaneously. She refers to them as "atmos tracks" and gives the following detailed summary:

> Silence can have great emotive and narrative ramifications in the cinema. It is one method used by sound designers to create ambiguity in film. These silent or atmos tracks offer the filmgoer the opportunity to hear the environment in which the film is set. It is rare in Hollywood film for the sound to get to a point of silence or relative silence for a protracted period of time. (2016, p.28).

This is essentially the sound structure of the naturescape, built from sounds of the cinematic environment and allowed to grow without the interruption of music for unusually long periods of time.

It is built from material that could be construed as noise but the teleology is far from the disruption that Hainge and Hegarty identify in more purely musical forms. It is only the specificity of the examples here that differentiates from Greene's examples, where the use of the natural landscape is essentially part of the various thematic interests rather than merely the setting for drama detached from their topography and surroundings. The sound could also be said to undergo a change due to this new emphasis which, in sound and noise scholarship, is one that converts noise to a more overtly contained expression as Hainge suggests:

> It is, however, impossible for the content of expression to separate itself from an immanent plane out of which it is formed and the differential process through which it comes to be - "meaningful" expression becoming such only by contracting noise into a form that no longer seems noisy. (2013, p.18).

Essentially, this chapter will detail a series of effects that, whilst created by music and music's placement, have a mechanism within the noise and sound of these films. These naturescapes play upon the diegetic spirituality of the characters

within the films, inviting the viewer not to feel as Cutter Calloway suggests of film music's general presence, but to experience a deeper knowing of the world through sound.

The filmmakers in question here - Ben Rivers, Gideon Koppel and Pat Collins - all use this varying aural structure to highlight an ineffable quality to the emotions of the characters, especially in the context of rekindled memories and longing, perhaps even nostalgia. It is worth noting that all three examples play on the blurred line between fictional film and documentary, rendering their forms already complex through using elements found in both but never becoming one more than the other. None of the examples are documentary films in the traditional sense but all effectively blur the line between fiction and reality, marking them as different in form from all of the films examined so far. This balance of form must also take into account their differing sound frameworks. In his essay on the role of time and meaning in the sound of documentary film, John Corner writes that:

> Documentaries, even when fully dramatised, do not usually invite us to *immerse* ourselves in the worlds they portray in the same way that feature fiction typically does. Although their discourse may be richly imaginative, the dynamics of *understanding* something in relation to specific *realities* finally take priority, whatever the complexities and ambiguities involved and whatever the affective as well as cognitive depth of our engagement. (2015, p.135).

Equally, these films follow constructed narratives on the whole and do not, therefore, need to follow Corner's idea against potentially immersive cinematic qualities.

All three of the films subvert documentary traditions whilst still using some of their recognisable qualities, but essentially they do so through complex sound designs, especially in relation to the isolated qualities found in their sporadic use of music and the subsequent emphasis this puts upon the rural soundscape. Jeffery K.

Ruoff writes of the difference between typical audio-visual aesthetics found in documentary as compared to Hollywood cinema, pointing out an essential contrast of relationships in regards to such sound designs. He writes that "One of the major stylistic characteristics of documentaries that use sounds recorded on location is the lack of clarity of the sound track. Ambient sounds compete with dialogue in ways commonly deemed unacceptable in conventional Hollywood practice." (1992, p.221). Because of this fluctuation of form and its effects on sound, this chapter is split into a number of sections.

Firstly I will highlight the already-present naturescapes in the examples of previous chapters, in films by Béla Tarr and Andrei Tarkovsky. Again such an aspect has already been of interest to scholars but, similarly to the transcendental language that oversimplifies the scholarship of film music, it has been too readily accepted without deeper philosophical investigation. This reassessment will then highlight a need to link the philosophies of the transcendental film with that of the presence of an emphasised natural landscape. As suggested earlier, this will be found in the writing of the nineteenth-century transcendentalists who similarly evoked spiritual becoming through an emphasis on the place of nature and the natural landscape within their beliefs and ideals. By highlighting similarities with the writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson in particular, this should show the transcendental potential within the aesthetic realisation of emphasis upon the natural world and its various audio-visual qualities; that such an emphasis when recreated in a film and contrasted with a more typical audio-visual relationship raises reception questions surrounding what is being expressed.

With this mechanism set, this chapter will conclude with the in-depth

analyses of three films: *sleep furiously* (2008) by Koppel, *Two Years At Sea* (2011)

by Rivers and *Silence* (2012) by Collins. Koppel's and Collins' films will be analysed

in conjunction with each other due to their aesthetic similarities but Rivers' film will

make up the main body of analysis due to its long-form attempt at the naturescape

form. With this analysis complete, this chapter will highlight both the aural

potential within adhering to the very basic principles of transcendental cinema but

will also finalise all avenues of potential meaning that come with using

"transcendental" as a descriptor for audio-visual media. To begin, however,

analysis of the aural naturescapes in the examples of the previous two chapters will

raise questions surrounding the structural decisions of soundscape design and its

philosophical implications.

Early Implications of Naturescapes in Tarkovsky and Tarr

> And if music should also fail? Well, there was always silence to fall back on. For always,
> always and everywhere, the rest is silence. - Aldous Huxley (1960, p.320).

In *Solaris* by Tarkovsky and both *Sátántangó* and *The Turin Horse* by Tarr, their

musical moments took precedence within the previous analysis. Yet this fails to

give a full picture of their aural character, both of which emphasised naturescapes

through the positioning of music. The role of this brief section is to show some

examples of how the naturescape can work in more musically minded films and to

provide further aural detail of the already-assessed transcendental examples. In

doing so, the groundwork can be laid for questions surrounding what is being

expressed with a heightened soundscape as opposed to moments containing

musical score. It is through serendipity that the films already argued as containing

musical expressions f transcendental style also contain aural elements and sound

designs that reflect a thematically similar soundscape, even building on some of the

thematic strains discussed in previous chapter. This suggests that certain types of

soundscape can reflect the same teleology as the musical functions within

transcendental cinema; in this case reflecting the quiet difference in Tarkovsky's

film and the monotonous repetition in Tarr's film.

When discussing the extenuation of time in both Tarkovsky's and Tarr's

cinema, Danijela Kulezic-Wilson questions the relationship between cinematic

rhythm and the role of sound in its production:

> If Tarkovsky wanted to allow the "pressure of time to run through the shot" in order to create a particular rhythm, Tarr seems to be aiming for a sense of temporal limbo. The gaze of his camera is so unwavering, the experience of the present tense so heightened, that the audio-spectator's submersion into vertical temporality seems inevitable, its pulse profoundly affected by sound. (2015, p.44).

Such a style of cinema, arguably conforming to ideas of slow cinema as addressed

in the previous chapter, seems to equally rely on its sound design to create this

pressured sense of time. The music analysed in Tarkovsky's film does not do this

but its sound design does. Tarkovsky is known as a director who would over-

emphasise natural sound for a number of thematic reasons.

This would consist of running or dripping water, the wind rustling through

the trees, various sounds of animals (especially the barking of dogs) and the

crackling of fire. The sounds produced through water are especially prescient in

Solaris, taking up the majority of the soundscape for the many sections that are set

on Earth. The sound in the film is credited as being by Semyon Litvinov, an engineer

who also worked on Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975); a film noted for the detailed

meaning hidden within its soundscape. Yet the presence of Edward Artemiev as

composer, and his previously explored use of various electronic sound effects and synthesisers (including the ANS synthesiser), implies that the soundscape is a mixture of the two men's work, the boundaries between music and sound heavily blurred through most of the film outside of the use of Bach's music.

The film opens after its rendition of Bach with a naturescape occupying the visual and sound world, detailing the lake that surrounds the main character's childhood house. Even when the camera eventually reveals Kelvin's presence – hence why the viewer is being shown these visuals – the soundscape still mixes a range of running water effects to unusual volumes and even occasionally with hints of reverb. These sounds can be seen in the context of the film's overall narrative arc which explicitly questions the presence of Kelvin's world as actually being a dreamt illusion within the sentience of another planet. When the viewer is first introduced to this concept moments before the film ends, it is through an unusual scene where it appears to be raining inside the house where Kelvin grew up. The viewer hears the sound more than they acknowledge the visual as the happening is treated as quite normal but the sound heightens an awareness of something more transcendental occurring. This circle is completed when Kelvin's emotions cause him to drop to his knees, clutching his father with a reawakened mourning for his lost wife. The film then relies on Artemiev's more electronic elements to finalise the moment of mourning and self-realisation, suggested as being beyond words.

Yet the natural soundscape heightens this moment as much as the complicated presence of Bach in the opening heightens the holy quietude of the film's first scenes. This is an argument already put forward to some extent by

Elizabeth Fairweather who reads the sound of water in *Solaris* as being an element that is "othered" by its mixing and aural processing:

> In *Solaris*, water sounds are comparably filtered. Tarkovsky asked Artemyev to orchestrate natural, ambient sounds, and in response Artemyev created a collage that depends strongly on the multi-timbral combination of acoustic and synthetic sounds. Used in this manner, sound suggests the sense of "otherness" that surrounds the titular planet, but the idea is set up at the very start of the film by the foregrounding of such "earthly" sounds as the trickle of a brook, the songs of birds, the whinnies of a horse, and the barking of a dog. This emphasis on the sounds of both worlds is, in itself, suggestive of "otherness" in the filtered sounds of raindrops edited so that their echoes resemble continuous pitch sung with shifting vowels. (2012, p.42).

Through emphasising these sounds early on, Tarkovsky plays upon the contrast and even the slowness that such a sound design (and lack of scoring) provides. The fact that this explicitly connects to the narrative's transcendental material and themes makes it a perfect, early example of how such naturescapes can potentially work.

Fairweather quotes Andrea Truppin in another useful assessment of the director's sound design where the emphasis upon the natural soundscape of the film is even described directly as operating on a transcendental level: "Andrea Truppin argues that the privileging of ordinary sound in Tarkovsky's films operates on a transcendental level in which it surpasses logic and reason and speaks with unspoken intuition and immediacy. Meaning is generated from these sonic fingerprints not just in individual films but across the totality of Tarkovsky's output." (2012, p.35). This could be read as suggesting that the natural sounds are in fact not natural in the sense that their emphasis removes some essence of problematic questioning of authenticity, a forever vague and unobtainable goal. They obsist as in Hainge's conception of noise, balancing reality with falsity and creating an unconscious distance in traditional reception.

But it is this mixture of the ordinary and the extraordinary, using something general in such a subtly heightened way, which makes the naturescape so effective.

Even when it is at its most powerful and compelling, it is still essentially difficult to

grasp that something other than a common aesthetic grounding is happening in the

film. The music may heighten these moments by providing a contrast but the

soundscape in itself contains its own complexities and potential thematic outcomes

bringing the analysis back to Tarr. The chief purpose of sound in Tarr's films very

much reflects the role of music and repetition as analysed in the previous chapter.

In order to extend the cinematic experience to excruciating levels for the viewer,

the sound follows the extended pathway opened up by having incredibly long shots

and scenes with very few cuts.

This was already touched upon by Kulezic-Wilson in that such a decision

within the visual world of the film means that the diegetic sound design has to

adjust in some way to compensate for the long, winding shots. This adjustment is

often a heightened form of pessimistic naturescape, one that reflects the tough life

and hardship of the characters, even becoming a factor in the very reasoning

behind a shot's elongation. By this, I am referring to the many perambulatory shots

that occupy Tarr's films in between the long scenarios in the many rooms and bars

of his worlds. These walking scenes deploy a heightened naturescape – especially

with the inclusion of a strong breeze which the characters are almost always

walking against – in order to justify the very logic of the scene's longevity. The

sounds present within the diegesis actually show the viewer *why* the characters are

walking so slowly and reflects the difficulties within their lives.

Bori suggests this to be a pivotal thematic aspect of *The Turin Horse*

especially where the sounds of the wind highlight the trapped and isolated nature

of the characters: "In A torinói ló (*The Turin Horse*), the wind is constant,

unflagging, like the bora, the cold north wind of the eastern Adriatic. There is

nothing one can do to counter its hurricane force except close one's eyes, draw

one's head in, batten down the hatches, and take cover..." (2011, p.158). This

speaks suggests more than simply a diegetic realisation as it provides an equally

difficult viewing experience for the audience. With only the monotonous music of

Mihály Vig as a scored accompaniment, the wind becomes an ever-pervasive and

uncomfortable presence to experience. It grates in the exact same way as Vig's

music does and, coupled with the incredibly long shots – some of the longest Tarr

ever shot – the naturescape becomes a pessimistic aid to the cinematic stasis that

simply refuses to give the viewer any instance of escape or break from the diegetic

world.

As András Bálint Kovacs was quoted in the last chapter as suggesting,

"Repetitive music, the constant roar of the wind and several other sounds

accompany the images, creating a more lugubrious atmosphere than in any

preceding Tarr film." (2013, p.90). The sound is put on an equal plain to the music

in its creation of the lugubrious elongation in Tarr's most transcendental film. It

could be argued that Vig's music functions in a Hegartian sense of noise, especially

as its diegetic source of performed music is less problematic to tie in than a

soundscape with its incredibly differing contexts. Yet with Kovacs linking the music

in Tarr's films with very specific natural sounds, it can be argued that the

naturescape here is once more functioning along a parallel route to more musical

forms of noise even if the discomfort - the rebellious disruption of noise as

characterised by Hainge in a variety of multimedia - is still achieved through stasis.

Whilst Tarkovsky and Tarr use naturescapes and a general emphasised sound design in interesting and potentially transcendental ways, their examples only begin to hint at the potential of a full reduction of leading content and a reemphasis upon the natural sounds of a landscape within a film. As the examples later will show, containing and even restricting all such content within the diegetic realm creates a surprisingly more powerful realisation of transcendental style in film, both through the emphasised naturescape and through its own form of elongating of temporal perception. However, the emphasis and teleology of a natural soundscape must be realigned with a more optimistic philosophy to account for the change in tone of this chapter's cinematic examples. To do this, the emphasis on the aesthetics of the natural landscape, both visual and aural, must be contextualised within the philosophy and writing of the nineteenth-century transcendental movement. By doing this, not only are all potential meanings of the word "transcendental" assessed within an audio-visual aesthetic framework, but an argument can be made regarding the spiritual character that is being tapped into and expressed from the natural landscapes of the films.

Audio-visual Application of Emersonian Transcendentalism

In nineteenth-century America, "transcendental" became a far more specific descriptor and signifier of belief system. Thanks to writers such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the transcendental became associated with the movement of the transcendentalists whose ideology and philosophy was based chiefly on reconsidering man's place in the natural landscape. As David M. Robinson, a scholar on Emerson's work, suggests:

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> Transcendentalism was thus a moment in history containing both expansive hope and a sense of strife and embattlement, and marked by emergence of new intellectual categories, new relations among persons and classes, and new ethical and political imperatives. (1999, p.13).

These new relations were for Emerson a recontextualisation of moral philosophy as seen through the prism of the natural landscape and all that was associated with it. This brief section is here to convey the philosophy of the transcendental in this context in order to show the potential crossover between its philosophies and the readings of our audio-visual examples; a crossover whose bridge is contained within the use of the naturescape and the reasoning behind it.

Emerson famously wrote of this reemphasis on nature in his manifesto-esque work *Nature* (1836) suggesting that "Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only material, but is also the process and the result." (2008, p.7). By this, Emerson meant that the natural landscape and the ecosystem all around us was potentially always the lowest common denominator no matter what theology or philosophy attempted to cognise it. He wrote in detail of this relationship, suggesting the following:

> Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us, by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? (2008, p.1).

Through taking notice of nature, Emerson seems to say that an invitation to a higher reasoning is gifted upon the transcendentalist. The likeness between this idea and the reception of the aesthetic relationships being assessed is clear. This original relation to the perceptive world is considered a more likely pathway to experiencing some (still theological) sense of the transcendental.

This relationship also reflects some essence of Kant's transcendental reasoning in its status as *a priori* or knowledge gained via nonexperiential means. In fact, it is the ultimate in *a priori* parameters of lived experience because it is highlighting the absolute basic perception of knowledge gained via non-experiential means. As Robinson writes, Emerson probably already drew this aspect from Kant, further conflating (or perhaps providing the crossover between) the different meanings of the word: "He also recognized the importance of Immanuel Kant and the German Idealist philosophical tradition to his own work and that of his contemporaries." (1999, p.19). If this final potential of the transcendental is considered as an audio-visual style or form, then all of the potential possibilities derived from using such a word can be shown to have been broached in this thesis. Hegarty writes that noise's situatedness in place becomes essential in the initial disjunction from a search for conscious meaning in listening. The Kantian elements here are touching upon both aspects of the transcendental (the perceptive and the spiritual) where the space formed through such sound allows meaning to enter *a priori*, the soundscapes here actually inviting both meaning *and* placement: "The attention that loosens listening from a search for meaning restores extra capacity for situatedness, of listener and sound, such that space is formed, audibly." (2009, p.198).

Robert D. Richardson, another scholar of Emerson's work, highlights an interesting problem when discussing Emerson, one which also relates to this area of audio-visual potential. In assessing Emerson, Richardson suggests that nature as a concept is often considered too vague by many scholars and philosophers and itself requires greater explanation and discussion. He writes the following:

> Emerson's definition of nature is a broad one. Nature is the way things are. Philosophically, Emerson says, the universe is made up of nature and the soul, or nature and consciousness. Everything that is *not me* is nature; nature thus includes nature (in the common sense of the green world), art, all persons, and my own body. (1999, p.97).

How can this philosophy be applied to an audio-visual context? If we assume that "the way things are" is in some way applicable to a basic, diegetic soundworld, then the rest of Emerson's potential philosophy fits nicely into place.

For the removal of scoring (and the subsequent emphasis this puts on the natural soundscape in the examples of the next section) highlights the "not me" aspect for the viewer. On a psychological level of sound, through experience of previous cinema, the reemphasised naturescape could be read as separating the viewer from a forced meaning for the happenings in the cinematic world, in a similar (if more optimistic and gentler) way to the subverted Brechtian alienation of the previous chapter's scores. Emerson believes in the constitution of the universe being, in Richardson's words, the "...nature and the soul, or nature and consciousness...", and these two strands can be metaphorically split to be seen as a contrast in audio-visual media that uses such naturescapes. By removing scoring, this contrast is heightened and essentially only gives one of the two components of the universe in Emerson's terms. The viewer must input more of their own unconscious reading into the viewing experience, one which initially may seem to be devoid of meaning, spiritual or otherwise, because of this very aesthetic reduction.

From this alone, the potential for applying Emersonian theories of transcendentalism to the pared down audio-visual aesthetic is clear. Richardson even expands on this idea to show a parallel to this audio-visual potential, especially if treating such theories in terms of reception. He writes that:

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> The most daring, and to a modern reader, the most challenging aspect of Emerson's nature, is his argument that nature teaches him to look beyond nature. To put it more carefully, he says that the beauty and interrelatedness of physical, outward nature leads him to inquire into the inner laws of nature which determine the outer appearances. (1999, p.101).

This relationship is exactly replicated in terms of audio-visual aesthetics. That an outward and seemingly normal relationship to a diegetic world (or, in Emerson's case, the actual world) can lead to higher, more transcendental questions regarding perception and spiritual placement in the world is a natural extension of Emerson's theories. In the same way, the naturescapes of these films ask the viewer to look beyond the representational qualities which they traditionally function through, suggesting through such emphasis that their presence is far more complex, especially in relation to the inexpressible elements of the characters in the film (elements which, traditionally, would have been conveyed through scoring and music's naturally ineffable potential). In the films of the following section, Emerson's ideas find a genuine aesthetic realisation in the creation of the diegetic world and in the expression of the lone individuals who usually occupy them.

Again, Richardson's summation of Emerson's belief and the logical mechanism behind it, suggests a great potential in the reading of natural soundscapes in cinema. He writes the following:

> Perhaps Emerson's greatest contribution was his own account of how these two aspects of nature are interrelated. His lifelong endeavour was to show how the laws and processes of nature are part of the mind, and to work out the relation between mind and external nature. (1999, p.101).

This bridge between the inner mind and outer nature seems to be one aesthetically represented by relations to the rural world more than any other aspect of human experience. Though this marks Emerson's theories as somewhat skewed, it also explains the heightened precision with which a nineteenth-century belief system

can be applied to twenty-first-century audio-visual media. Consider the following

two points raised by the sound theorist, Andrea Truppin, in relation to outward

perception (when made up of the aesthetics of nature) and its ability to discuss

more inner (and, therefore, transcendental) concerns in Tarkovsky's sound design.

The first point raises the gap between the sound, its source and its meaning:

> In Tarkovsky's use of sound, meaning is produced as much through the synergism of narrative and formal elements, both aural and visual, as through the audience's efforts to establish coherence among these elements… In these films, the use of ambiguous sound plunges the audience into a never fully resolved struggle to believe in the diegesis, much as the films' characters struggle with their own ability to have faith. (1992, p.235).

With this point, Truppin is highlighting how the heightening of such a naturescape

(in her case, specifically the sounds of water dripping) actually becomes something

for the viewer to bypass; in her own words, it requires "faith" from the viewer

which mimics the thematic characteristics of the people within Tarkovsky's own

diegesis.

Now consider Truppin's other point about the thematic potential within

Tarkovsky's naturescapes:

> Tarkovsky uses sound to embody this internal process by drawing a parallel between two "leaps of faith": that of accepting that a sound proves the existence of an unseen object and that believing in the existence of an invisible spiritual world…. This persuasive quality allows sound to function, for Tarkovsky, as material with which to represent the numinous realm. The spiritual is mysterious, inaccessible to sensual experience. It becomes perceivable only through phenomenological representation. (1992, p.236).

In one sense, Truppin is reflecting, albeit by chance, the logic of Emerson's own

belief system, or is at least suggesting the same mechanism to be responsible for

the transcendental qualities in Tarkovsky's sound design. The numinous realm in

Truppin's sense leads to the transcendental experience in a phenomenological

sense because sound can explore the potential between the definite visual material

and the qualities that the viewer will ultimately bring to the experience of viewing.

Emerson found this bridge to be an essential part of his own belief which is why, as

Richardson suggests, "Nature was Emerson's starting point for a new theology." (1999, p.103). Richardson even likens the spiritual state of Emerson to a potential reception viewpoint, where the transcendentalist's sense of perception becomes so heightened as to gain access to higher, inexpressible truths. He writes that:

> When we are in this state of heightened awareness, of enthusiasm, of ecstasy, we come as close to the secret heart of nature as we can get. The important thing about your enthusiasm for nature - or for Emerson - is the enthusiasm in you. This is the highest and most valuable teaching of that nature we all agree we cannot do without. (1999, p.104).

Again there is a great deal to unpack in how this potentially reads in an audio-visual sense.

As stated throughout this thesis, many of the films will fail to create the right effect if the viewer is unwilling to accept the requirements put to them by the film and director. This is an interesting point in the context of Marion Leonard and Robert Strachan's summation of Chion's arguments where such natural sound sits within the cinematic frame. It is also worth noting that Leonard and Strachan are discussing two of the three films to be analysed in the next section and that the point raised is initially contrary to the questioning of the aesthetics that are discussed in their essay and in this chapter. They suggest that:

> Traditionally, the use of environmental sound has been seen as a sonic background. For Michel Chion, ambient (or territory) sound "envelopes a scene, inhabits the space without raising the question of the location of its specific source(s) in the image". (2015, p.166).

Emersonian spiritualism requires the devotee to bring their own desire for such a heightened awareness which hints at the potential placebo that both the transcendental theology and the transcendental cinematic style work in terms of reception.

Whereas I will not comment on the theological aspect of this, in terms of cinema this is entirely true as the viewer of any film will, in some sense, give in to

the fictionalised elements of the story in order to gain some experience from it, spiritual or otherwise. In cinematic aesthetics, this heightened awareness is only achieved when the viewer is forced to work in some way, meaning closer attention is paid to the viewing experience if only because a film is doing so much to reduce its presence and its ability to convey to the viewer a very strict meaning. In the previous chapter, this relationship was taken advantage of as the music's repetition forced a subverted alienation. As the examples of the next section show, however, such an adaptation of Emersonian thinking leads to a far gentler form of transcendental audio-visual style.

Transcendental Naturescapes

The three films to be discussed in the context of transcendental naturescapes require some introduction as to their general idiosyncrasies in order to understand both their inclusion in the analysis and why such analysis reveals transcendental aesthetics. All three films – *sleep furiously*, *Two Years At Sea* and *Silence* – are relatively recent and made in the digital age. Yet the three films all deal with some pre-digital ideas through analogue aesthetics, with *sleep furiously* and *Two Years At Sea* shot on old film stock rather than digital, and *Silence* including a variety of archive analogue material, visually and aurally. Another aspect of all three films, as stated earlier, is that they blur the line between fiction and documentary. It is an intriguing problem in that none conform to either form's parameters completely. This mixture has interesting effects upon the use of sound in all of the films, but especially in *Two Years At Sea*. For the analysis required here, the films and their portrayal of a constructed reality will be considered in constant flux.

The films all deal with some sense of rural isolation or landscape, allowing

the naturescape to be a natural part of (and perhaps even a requirement of) their

aesthetic construction. Yet sound is more than the ambient effect described by

Chion in the previous section as the blurred line between (some sense of) reality

and fiction opens up a great deal of transcendental potential specifically through a

mechanism that reflects the theological teleology of Emerson's belief system.

Silence especially, in part deducible from its title alone, is *about* naturescapes and

specifically how the desire to capture it by a character in the diegesis leads to an

incredibly effective expression of ineffable nostalgia.

The analysis here is split into two sections. The first is dealing with *Silence*

and *sleep furiously,* analysed together because they still use music interspersed

throughout. This means that the transcendental effect is again far more

momentary as in the previously analysed films than seen from the perspective of

the g*esamtkunstwerk* and is not quite as pure in its affective creation as the second

example. The second section deals with *Two Years At Sea* quite specifically because

it follows Emersonian ideas all of the way through its running time, reducing more

typical cinematic aesthetics to a bare minimum with music only playing a negligible

role in the aural design of the film. Through both of these analyses, a sense of how

the naturescape – questioned through Emersonian philosophy, Schraderian audio-

visual aesthetics and even the blurred line between documentary and fiction –

should highlight how emphasis upon the natural landscape can lead to such

expressions of ineffable notions.

Pairing *Silence* and *sleep furiously* together may at first seem an unusual

proposition considering the difference in their structures. Yet this pairing has

already been part of the analysis of sound design in Leonard and Strachan's paper

which suggests that there is something that links both the films and their

respective sound design. Collins' *Silence* is a digital film that focuses on a real

person, Eoghan Mac Giolla Bhride, who lives in the bustling city of Berlin. He is a

sound-recordist who ventures back to his native Ireland on a recording job which is

apparently an attempt to capture some form of "silence" on audio. Already, the

transcendental possibilities within this idea should be clear with hindsight of

Emerson's transcendentalist ideas. Making a number of attempts at recording in

the wilderness and in a differing range of landscapes, he finds such "silence" to be

ultimately impossible to capture.

 However, through the journey and because of the impossibility of the task,

what Eoghan is looking for changes as he gets closer and closer to his old family

home on Tory Island. The search for "silence" eventually becomes a search for the

memory of a home long since left, a stark contrast to his current location in Berlin.

The soundscape of both of these environments comes to comment on the mental

state of the man, the naturescape especially becoming entwined with a sense of

nostalgia that grows as he gets further and further away from the urban and closer

to his abandoned rural home. *Silence* is essentially a film *about* sound and, more

importantly, how that sound can signify things beyond basic communicative

expression. It also links the journey towards these sounds with the journey towards

a very personal sense of self-exploration and breaks down the assumptions

surrounding memories of home as well as urban/rural divides (especially in terms of aesthetics).

On the other hand, Koppel's *sleep furiously* is in many ways a nondiegetic, visual version of the narrative of *Silence*, where the director visits his own community in rural Wales in order to document the lives and ways of living that he remembers and cherishes in his memory. By capturing the day-to-day life of the village (including the life of his mother), Koppel expresses his own ineffable affection for the place that he left behind, very much in the same way as Eoghan does. How both films use the naturescape to access such ineffable content is essentially through transcendental audio-visual ideas.

The naturescapes in both films are interspersed with various uses of music, and, therefore, require some further contextualisation. Because *Silence* is about the philosophical nature of sound, it is mostly built up of differing naturescapes. In many ways, *Silence* is the only film to be assessed that is about the notion of spiritual potential found within the action of concentrated sound. The film's narrative is permeated by a rural/urban divide, created the character's journey and by the aesthetics which Collins initially uses to frame the film. Collins deliberately portrays the reasoning for the character's leaving of his new home in Berlin through sound which highlights an aesthetic underpinning of the film's thematic content. In scenes early within the film, Eohgan is seen recording several audio sounds in the city before telling his partner that he is going away to Ireland on the recording job.

When this scene occurs, the sound presents the possibility of an anti-transcendental potential by drowning out what the couple discuss through a range

of urban sounds, specifically that of cars on the road and a train passing underneath the bridge on which they stand. In the traditional context of film sound, this is unusual as it is assumed that the dialogue would be of relevance and necessary for the viewer to hear. But this aesthetic actually examines the man's ulterior motive for his trip, rendering his half-heard words exactly as hollow as the reasons he is giving to his partner. It could be seen as tapping into a sense of noise, distorting and muddying information in the way described by Hainge earlier on, but a closer reading suggests it is actually getting closer to the truth behind the character's actions, the sound belying his need to succumb to his nostalgia rather than simply being an uncomfortable subversion of sound hierarchies *à la* Chion and Claudia Gorbman. The scene is presented in one static take, similar to that found in films of the slow cinema movement, clearly attempting to remove the cinematic editorial hand in a similar fashion to the character removing the presence of people in his sound recordings.

Leonard and Strachan hint at the film's potential likeness to the slow cinema movement, writing that "The very fact that sections without dialogue or music are long (and frequent) by normative cinematic standards engenders an experience in which the environmental soundscape is inescapable." (2015, p.170). As already stated, the likeness between the desired effects of the sound design in these films and the music of the previous section's films is clear in that both rely on an increased length of visual shot and respond accordingly with interesting and equally extenuated aural designs. Where these examples differ is in their optimism. They are far easier to experience than the worlds created in Tarr's films which trap the viewer in the more typically transcendental narratives of hardship. Here, the

narratives are not about hardship but about other potentially transcendental ideas such as memory, nostalgia and loss. Only when Eohgan ventures to Ireland does *Silence* begin to access transcendental realms. In between long shots of the character walking out into the landscape and recording, diegetic music plays from his car stereo system (although mixed to nondiegetic levels so that one song especially, Rory Gallagher's *I Fall Apart*, can act as the title music over the film's opening credits). This provides a grammatical punctuation for the scenes which I argue here as being potentially transcendental.

Silence's structure is built from Eohgan's largely failed attempts to record the sounds of differing landscapes, often following the structure of showing the character entering a landscape, setting up his recording equipment and then showing the recording to be disrupted in some way (almost always by the presence of some man-made source) in order to follow the disruption and meander into side-narratives following the characters and the (sometimes genuine) people that he meets on his travels. In using this as a basic narrative structure, Collins sets up a potential audio-visual structure which often results in a moment of personal realisation for the character. It is in these moments where the audio reflects such a realisation – that he is equally in search of his ineffable memories of place – where the transcendental potential is realised. This is aside from the fact that the journeys to such places are interspersed with car stereo music, further contrasting their silence. On the character's third attempt to record sound, this is exemplified perfectly.

Collins frames the sequence with very few cuts, creating several long shots of the landscape and the character acting within them. The naturescape of the film

is at first typically presented, the sound corresponding to the visuals at least in

some basic sense or matching. It seems to at first follow Rick Altman's ideas

discussing Joseph P. Maxfield's idea that sound can carry its thematic information

within itself, devoid of confirmation of the visual content of the film. He writes the

following:

> According to the theory elaborated by Maxfield and followed by many early sound men, the sound track must carry, independently from the image, all the information necessary to reconstruct the "real" space of the scene (that is, the one represented by the image). In this approach we easily recognize the technique of a representational system with a decade's experience in creating sound space. (1992, p.55).

Altman writes further of sound being used as the "point-of-intersection" where

"…sound thus constitutes the perfect interpellation, for it inserts us into the

narrative at the very intersection of two spaces which the image alone is incapable

of linking, thus giving us the sensation of controlling the relationship between

those spaces." (1992, p.61). Collins deliberately plays upon this and almost

uniquely subverts it through using the visual to shift the emphasis on how the

sound is being interpreted by both the viewer and the main character.[71]

As Eohgan sets up his apparatus in several scenes (presented with minimal

cuts and with very little aesthetic hand of the director on show), the soundscape is

more emphasised as it becomes clear that the film is presenting the sound from his

perspective (through the emphasised listening the headphones that the character

is wearing). With this shift in perspective, there is transcendental potential present,

finally activated when the character arrives home. The viewer, by the time the film

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[71] Two other films that deal with the shifting of sound perception to some extent are Brian De Palma's *Blow Out* (1981) and Peter Strickland's *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012) which are good examples of this subversion, albeit for more pulp and suspense effects rather than transcendental effects.

has reached its final scenes of Eohagn's return home, should be used to reading the soundscape of the film.

It forces such a reading by rarely leading the viewer in scenes which are of clear importance to the narrative. As Holly Rogers suggests, there is potential in such a mechanism within the sound design through a forced concentration of listening leading to ambient soundscapes gaining wider thematic (and eventually transcendental) meaning: "Such concentrated listening allows real-world, ambient sound to become a signifier of emotional and thematic intent in a way similar to a nondiegetic score." (2015, p.17). But in this sequence, and in every sequence when the character tries to find silence, the relationship between his listening and the viewer's listening is repeatedly shared and built on. It follows Greene's formulation of cinematic silence especially whereby "...what we talk about, in screen media terms, is relative silence, which is determined in relation to sound that comes before or after silence." (2016, p.27). This is where the film's line between being fictional and real becomes more blurred, referring once again to the unusual, problematic position and refusal to conform to categorisation.

The transcendental moments of the film occur within these segments when the viewer is quietly forced into sharing the experience of the character's recording attempts. There is no music and very few cuts, creating a sense of audio-visual ambience. With the temporal effects of this reduction being a slowing of the viewing experience, the disruption of this by human forces in the film (in this particular instance quite literally by a man walking into the shot and scenario) coerces the viewer into asking what was happening moments before and why it was still in some way effective when there was very little aesthetically to interpret.

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The absence is a ploy that opens up suggestive readings of the impossibility of a total perceptive reduction of aesthetics, in cinema and in lived experience. Consider Chion's notion of why certain "silent" moments are used in the grounding of cinematic worlds, but also consider them in relation to this scene:

> Every place has its own unique silence, and it is for this reason that for sound recording on exterior locations, in a studio, or in an auditorium, care is taken to record several seconds of the "silence" specific to that place. This ambient silence can be used later if needed behind dialogue, and will create the desired feeling that the space of the action is temporarily silent. (1994, p.57).

In Chion's terms, the naturescape is acknowledged as some form of silence in that it has no overt or obvious role to play for the viewer (though clearly *does* play several vital roles in the creation of the cinematic world).

Collins' film examines this relationship and, because the actual narrative of the film is dealing with this as its chief diegetic concept, its examination accesses the potentially ineffable qualities that such a relationship means for the main character. The naturescape, which in the film varies between the sounds of wildlife, the sounds of wind (almost always present), rain, rivers and the sea, continually hints towards Eohagn's inner nostalgia, something which meta-diegetic music could potentially also relate but in far less subtle and purely transcendental ways. It reflects Richardson's view of Emerson's philosophy when he writes that "He understood nature to be a process rather than a thing." (1999, p.102). Collins presents sound not as some background element to be forgotten about once the landscape or location of a scene is set but a constant process that gains accumulative meaning both as individual scenes continue (when the recording is interrupted or spoiled by some manmade factor) and as the film continues as a whole.

Chion further highlights what this cinematic quietude really means, suggesting the scope for imbuing such a typical and necessary audio-visual presence with more functions and meaning:

> However, the impression of silence in a film scene does not simply come from an absence of noise. It can only be produced as a result of context and preparation. The simplest of cases consists in preceding it with a noise-filled sequence. So silence is never a neutral emptiness. (1994, p.57).

Chion recognises the lack of neutrality in such naturescapes, where they raise questions about the positioning of perspective that the viewer is experiencing and what that perspective suggests if considered as functioning outside of the grounding of place and location. As Leonard and Strachan suggest, this particular form of naturescape in *Silence* "...is used as both an experiential trigger and an invocation to reflect upon issues such as memory, loss and identity." (2015, p.168). All of these elements would be incredibly difficult to evoke with such equal subtlety through music. These scenes of recording in *Silence* work around the problems of addressing memory by using the most basic and ubiquitous element of sound film – the background sound of the diegetic world – as an opening into an inner realm which is arguably impossible to convey fully. The contrast, therefore, between the vast landscapes of Ireland and the microcosm of the character's memory evokes a startling but idiosyncratically transcendental revelation, in both the theological and Emersonian sense.

sleep furiously does something slightly different to *Silence* in that its own naturescape is often perceived through a contrast built with an overt musical score. Whereas *Silence* is explicitly narrative driven, *sleep furiously* is far more cyclic and more typical in terms of documentary. The film follows the community of a Welsh village where the director charts one year of life there. This ranges from life on the

local sheep farms, the monthly trips of the local travelling library (a man in a van who loans out books to the locals), and the quiet fight against the closure of a local school which is treated as the centre of the community. The name of the film, though a reference to a quote by Noam Chomsky, could equally be referring to the sense of frustration surrounding the structure of the community; that its draw as an isolated place is equally what will potentially undermine and eventually be its downfall. Koppel could have opted for a soundtrack equal to that of *Silence* as the film is shot largely in rural locations, but instead he opts for a musical score by Aphex Twin to play alongside the naturescapes. The score is almost entirely piano led only using pre-existing electronic tracks by Aphex Twin in two moments (a sequence revolving around a celebration at night and in the film's closing credits). The music, whilst working through a slightly differing mechanism to *Silence*, still retains some Emersonian transcendental aesthetics, and this element is arguably more overt because its fragmentary quality is so contrasted.

With its position being more obviously that of a documentary, *sleep furiously* has the further context of such a form's relationship(s) with music. Corner writes the following of how music (in its scored position) sits within the documentary form as whole:

> Music performs some of the referential and formal tasks that it does in fictional narratives but its play upon and beneath the record of the real, as an agency both of expansion and focus, gives its use in documentary accounts a distinctive role. (2015, p.135).

The music of Aphex Twin fulfils this role in the sense that its position is subverted and becomes considered "underneath" in terms of the film's soundscape. Through this, the moments that use music (which seem to be mostly interludes of landscape throughout the film) automatically act more to highlight the absence of music

directly after it has stopped than to highlight its own presence when played. It need not be suggested that what is highlighted after it has ceased playing is the natural soundscape of the film.

Leonard and Strachan argue, in terms of s*leep furiously* and *Silence*, that "...soundscape is clearly used in order to invite reflection upon the spatial, aesthetic and thematic concerns of a given work in parity with the visual." (2015, p.168). Consider then Anahid Kassabian's summation of their argument in which "...the soundtrack both heightens realism while at the same time creates an uncanny distanciation effect for listener/viewers." (2015, p.195). Describing it as some form of distancing effect (or at least describing the formers' reading as concluding upon an effect of estrangement) seems too strong in the context of these films, especially in regards to *sleep furiously*, but this conveyance does rightly mirror the mechanism of the previous chapter. For what essentially happens is that the music pushes the spectator away from the viewing experience, allowing it to guide some reading but, through abrupt cuts, then allowing this false sense of leading to fall away, asking the viewer to consider the absence of music in a more heightened fashion. This occurs in the film a number of times, using music as a framing for the naturescape.

A piece of landscape in the film is continually returned to, usually to show the effects of the changing seasons. The same tree is referred to several times as well as various pathways that lead up the hills surrounding it. Early into the film, this pathway is shown to have meaning for the director and the film's chief figure of interest, the director's mother. This is because the director's father is buried on the hillside and the first sequence shows his mother going to place a rock upon his

grave. Music played on a piano, though differing in every segment, seems to reoccur when this landscape comes into the focus and a sequence later on uses music to frame its naturescape in an incredibly effective, transcendental way. The segment is filmed in high winter, the landscape now covered in snow. It opens with the same tree in a snowy landscape, cutting to distant shots of the general hillside – the only difference between this section and earlier ones being the inclusion of someone sledging down the hillside. When the scene cuts from the main tree to the far away hillside, the music begins to play.

The shot is held, showing someone far away – almost definitely the director's mother – walking once again along the hillside to the grave (though the grave is not shown in this case, instead ultimately ending on a town meeting to decide the fate of the school which suggests an overt symbolism at play). The piano music comes in after the shot has cut between the tree and the wide-shot, playing over the few fragments of the distant view until cutting again as the camera shows a close-up of the mother walking with her dog up the hill. For such a short segment, the music seems oddly placed at first. In typical cinematic language, it would have started as soon as the winter segment began and played through the whole sequence up until the film moved into the town meeting, creating a montage for the winter setting. But the music does not do this: it breathes into the segment but cuts without any real logic.

The next section after the music stops is overtly out of the diegesis in many regards with spots of snow on the lens breaking any sense of illusion, but its soundscape is even more heightened. With another cut, the visual is back to the tree with less snow now around it. Time has passed and in this moment there is a

sense of the profound, the music creating a drop in the reception with no place for the viewer to go except to read further into the image. It is telling that music is then used to connect this naturescape to the following scene. The drop needs this reconnection to continue further into the narrative following the closure of the school but the moment before gains a sense of the profound created explicitly through absence. The absence is, of course, naturally highlighted by the lone presence of the naturescape in the aural realm.

Though music like this occurs throughout the film, it seems to be set within the soundtrack as a marker to highlight the soundscape around it. Only twice does it move away from this ideal – once when the diegetic music of a Welsh choir is intercut with scenes of the landscape, and the earlier mentioned electronic music in a night segment – and so it must be considered that the placement of the music is not as a bridge between cuts or as some guide for the viewer. Instead, it is clear that the music is there to build a contrast in order to emphasise the quietude that heightens its absence. By creating such a relationship, the naturescapes that directly follow take on a transcendental quality, as if the director has asked the viewer to consider something that is beyond words or verbal expression. If the music of Aphex Twin can be considered as Koppel asking the viewer to simply *watch*, the scenes with the emphasised naturescapes are the moments that the director is really asking the viewer to *consider*.

It should be noted that, because of the lack of music (and often visual thematic material to guide specific pathways of meaning too), Koppel is not essentially suggesting "This is…" with such a ploy. This is the chief point in analysing the film: that the naturescape is still an abstract form in that the viewer can piece

together information to build some logical relationship between what is happening in the visual realm and what is happening in the aural realm. Ultimately, such a use of sound plays on the very basic principle that Chion suggested soundscapes to function through. He writes the following:

> For another thing, when the spectator hears so-called realistic sound, he is not in a position to compare it with the real sound he might hear if he were standing in that actual place. Rather, in order to judge its "truth," the spectator refers to his memory of this type of sound, a memory resynthesized from data that are not solely acoustical, and that is itself influenced by films. (1994, p.108).

How fitting it is for Chion to consider such an aspect of cinema, dealing with the ineffable qualities of memory. Whilst this ultimately explains why directors have used such an emphasis on naturescapes in their films, either when about or produced through their relationship with the memory of a landscape, the naturescape can function in even more reduced ways in order to fully convey the Emersonian transcendental.

Essentially, it is this reduction in the typical nature of the aural cinematic world that leads further into transcendental realms even when such a reduction is still bookended in some way by the presence of music. This is the key point of the analysis thus far: that the reduction has been segmented and inconsistently applied in a similar way to the segmented use of music in Chapters 1 and 2. To assess this ultimate reduction in typical audio-visual aesthetics and to highlight the multifaceted role of naturescapes, this chapter will conclude with an in-depth assessment of the film that uses the naturescape most effectively and without the overt need of grammatical uses of music, *Two Years At Sea*.

Two Years At Sea

Out of the three films assessed here, *Two Years At Sea* is the most complex and contains the purest Emersonian essence of the naturescape. Its complexity derives from a heightened idea seen also in *Silence*, where the form fluctuates almost imperceptibly between documentary and fiction. Rivers' ethnographic-based film practice is often built on such a blurring, where he uses numerous real elements – real people, real dwellings and real behaviours – to tell a more fictionalised story. The soundscapes of his films follow suit, rarely containing music that does not have some diegetic grounding or positioning though, because of the communities and individuals he sometimes portrays, music can be ramshackle or absent entirely. Rivers mostly relies on the sounds of the (usually rural) landscapes. Though he often travels far to lesser developed parts of the world in order to capture a certain sense of landscape – recalling Pier Paolo Pasolini's logic in initially desiring to film *The Gospel According To St. Matthew* in Palestine – *Two Years At Sea* is filmed in the vast landscapes of Scotland and draws upon the wealth of rural and meteorological sounds to express more inner, transcendental notions and ideas.

The film is arguably an ethnographic document of a hermit who lives in an isolated house in the woods of a Scottish mountain side. Jake Williams (who plays himself), has supposedly spent "two years at sea" saving money in order to become a hermit who subsists by the land. The film is built from showing Jake's daily rituals, whether it be simple tasks such as washing and cooking, to more interesting habits such as taking long walks (for both pleasure and to gather wood) or going fishing on a homemade raft. Alongside this daily sense of ritual, Rivers documents the landscape and abode that Jake lives in, hinting at more esoteric elements being

present around him, manifesting most obviously in a scene of literal

transcendentalism where a caravan that Jake is sleeping in floats to the top of a

tree. The film concludes with Jake watching a fireside slowly burn itself out before

it fades to black. All the scenes in question use natural sound and naturescapes to

add ineffable meaning to the seemingly simple moments and, therefore, require

analysis in order to show how the naturescape can evoke more transcendental

ideas.

In a scene late into the film, Jake decides to go fishing. So far, the character

has been followed going on pleasurable walks into the forest and the landscape,

Rivers' camera deliberately emphasising Jake's contentment in doing nothing. He

has no real ties to any sort of system of work other than his own subsistence which

is in itself an idea similar to those of Thoreau's where the whole model of living was

remoulded by being dependant and sustainable within rural landscapes. The scene

is relatively easy to relate but the affect is difficult to convey and understand. Jake

is seen putting together his homemade raft made of wood and small plastic barrels.

He has what appears to be a makeshift fishing rod though Rivers makes sure that

we see it as a pointless presence, an excuse for doing nothing. There are minimal

cuts as Jake is seen finishing adjustments to the raft before putting it onto the lake,

embarking on it and floating slowly into the middle of the water. The scene then

refuses to cut as the raft moves achingly slowly from one end of the lake to the

other. Rivers' lack of cutting in this incredibly long scene recalls many of the

aesthetic aspects of slow cinema but the key element here is what effect this has

on the naturescape and the shifts it has on the thematic elements of the scene.

Chion relates the effects of static long takes (or the lack of "temporal… vectorization") have on the soundworld, writing:

First case: *the image itself has no temporal animation or vectorization in itself*. This is the case for a static shot, or one whose movement consists only of a general fluctuating, with no indication of possible resolution - for example, rippling water. In this instance, sound can bring the image into a temporality that it introduces entirely on its own. (1994, p.14).

In some ways, the scene is a subtle take on this idea where the sound is latched onto by the viewer in search of some explanation. The sound here, as in much of the film, is incredibly low in volume and derived from the actual recorded sound of the moment. There is no leading within this sound, no perceivable repetition of melody that would come with a musical score. The fact that the camera is locked off some distance from the source of the sound means that the whole image – through lack of cutting and its naturescape – gradually gains a sense of the profound, even if that transcendental element is ultimately deriving from the character's clear sense of freedom and pleasure away from any sort of manmade system outside of his own.

As the raft drifts, the splash of water from Jake's occasional movements can be briefly heard alongside some bird song, but the naturescape is essentially reduced even further as an aesthetic element. There is no forced emphasis or heightening of any aspect of the film as it sits in a position of ambience. Leonard and Strachan pointed to a similar potential when discussing *Silence* and *sleep furiously* where:

… ambient sound at times works as an indicator of realism, providing an (albeit constructed) sense of actuality; at others, it is used to evoke a sense of the uncanny or to create a distancing effect for the viewer. (2015, p.167).

With a context of ambience, it could be construed that this is working typically in the background, in a role more akin to the ideas of documentary sound earlier.

Even though it is less augmented than the ideas surrounding Pierre Schaeffer's *musique concrète*, for example, its desire towards a more extended affect means it requires some context here even if the naturescapes overtly reject musical form and are still tied to their existence as sound rather than music.

Usefully Hainge has tied this idea into conceptual noise, writing of the underlying difference between recording noise for documentary techniques and recording noise for more affective goals:

> As we have noted previously, however, *musique concrete* does not content itself only with recording all possible sounds in the interests of some kind of anthropological or documentary function, it also arranges these sounds in (non-natural or non-realistic) relation to each other. This, indeed, is what converts sound into music, for again, in all music from all times and traditions, the common denominator that unites all musical expression is that sound is organised via a particular kind of expressive event, a musical act. (2013, p.253).

The sound of interest here blurs the line between both of these potentials. It is a use of documentary elements (the natural sounds) yet mixed and contextualised in such a way as to heighten its affective response. There are a number of theoretical differences of course, one of these being how a piece of *musique concrète* would earnestly fit natural sounds around an evidently musical framework, removing it entirely from its source of sound (or at least aiming to break its tie to more overt sound contexts). The sound here is instead heightened as both a source and an inner world of a character through an avoidance of musical presence, framework or form which is so pivotal to *musique concrète*.

Rivers' use of sound in this scene, a use that sometimes comes close to a genuine cinematic silence because of its low volume and unobtrusive content, arguably creates a sense of distancing but *through* its role as an indicator of attempted reality. Rivers' sound aesthetic is as close to the genuine sound of the landscape of the film as a cinematic example can be. By quietly forcing the viewer

to accept that the scenario is going to be pared down, the viewer's input to it must be far greater than it would be if Rivers was cutting the scene, similarly to how the reception of noise is often intellectualised (in itself a reversal of Hegarty's value judgement) to account for its subversion of reception norms as suggested earlier.

Through such a distancing effect, the viewer is free to read the scene in far more detailed ways, recognising the link between the character's moment of contentment and his place in the landscape. The link is relatively clear between the absence of almost all aesthetic content and the character's ease of living. It should be stated that Rivers' aesthetic has other aspects to contend with in regards to editorial hand at least. Though working prominently in the age of digital filmmaking, Rivers' work stands out due to being filmed on 16mm film stock which is then hand processed. The resulting effect is something that is more artisan in its visual qualities but one that presents a clear distancing effect of its own from any potential drama that the director shoots through aspects such as scratches or natural imperfections on the celluloid image.

Again, combining his choice for ambient soundscapes with this aesthetic raises some intriguing transcendental questions, especially surrounding the blurring of the line between documentary and fiction. Rogers has discussed this at length, in particular regards to what effect it has previously had upon the use of sound and music. She writes the following:

> A great deal of critical attention has been paid to the fragile boundaries between fiction and nonfiction cinema. But attempts to identify a clear and consistent documentary aesthetic have often been thwarted by the porous nature of the borders that distinguish films that document real-world events from those whose imagined landscapes promise fictional escapism… (2015, p.1).

She later writes what effect this has had on the use of music which is the most relevant aspect to discuss in relation to *Two Years At Sea*. She poses the question of what role music actually has in a documentary format, concluding that "For many filmmakers, the answer is simple: it has no role." (2015, p.2). Rivers' film conforms with this to some degree but then subverts it through the relationships found in its naturescape. As Rogers concludes, "…once music is taken into account, in other words, the radical and much theorised divide between documentary and fiction film needs to be revisited." (2015, p.15). How does Rivers' soundscape fit within these schemata?

Though several very short snippets of music do appear, it is the previously mentioned naturescape that builds towards the film's most transcendental moments. Music appears in a handful of car journeys and also in an intriguing scene in a forest walk. But this music, with hindsight of Rivers' prelude film to *Two Years At Sea*, *This Is My Land*, is actually music produced by Jake himself.[72] This hindsight may not be afforded to the casual viewer but knowledge of this renders the music, in spite of its scored position, still part of the diegesis and, therefore, an anomaly in the context of the film which does, in the majority, use the naturescape for most of the soundworld.

The viewer must look to the constant but subtle presence of the naturescape and are at the very least affected more by its presence than by the few snippets of music. The relationship between this aesthetic, its transcendental teleology and the extenuation of cinematic time as experienced by the viewer

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[72] *This Is My Land* actually shows him producing the unusual music from a homemade instrument.

cannot be understated. Chion has suggested this to be one potential effect of a more soundscape-reliant film, writing a detailed analysis as follows:

> Nevertheless it can have on the dramatic perception of time exactly the same effect of concentrating attention and making us sensitive to the smallest quivering on the screen, as does the tremolo in the orchestra. Sound editors and mixers frequently do utilize such nocturnal ambient sounds, and parcel out the effect like orchestra conductors, by their choices of certain sound-effects recordings and the ways they blend these to create an overall sound. (1994, p.21).

The relationship in Rivers' film can be summarised as follows: that by reducing all typical audio-visual aesthetic modes, the viewer becomes more sensitive to any change in the scenario, perhaps even anticipating and reading into scenes that, with the presence of music, would have been largely cast aside or treated as extraneous to the required narrative interaction. Even considering *Two Years At Sea* within such a framework, it still comes out as a quietly subversive use of aesthetics. This is almost always down to the contrast between the sometimes fantastical qualities in the visual, the documentary nature of the film's general thematic content, and how its soundscape playfully conforms to Ruoff's ideas of traditional documentary sound mentioned earlier and Rogers' ideas of typical sound hierarchies in documentary cinema. It is simply a more reduced vision of these frameworks.

The most overt example of this comes in the film's only obvious moment of fiction, the contrast heightened because of Rivers' breaking out of the documentary form through the obvious flexibility of his narrative world. Jake has been shown to enjoy pottering about in a caravan next to his house. It sits next to the edge of the woodland which was shown earlier as his source of firewood and is a constant presence throughout the film. Jake is shown to fall asleep in the caravan before it begins to float to the top of the trees. The way it is shot suggests that

nothing particularly unusual is happening because Rivers deliberately opens the frame of the shot by not showing the camera's lower vision. Only as the shot continues (and with no cuts) does the viewer realise that the caravan is floating up into the air. Rivers only cuts when the caravan is sat at the top of the tree, showing the inside with its new, higher view as Jake awakens. This is clearly only a logistical cut, unsurprising for a film with a relatively low budget. Jake opens the door and sees that he is inexplicably now looking out over the forest yet does not react to this as a fantastical event. If anything, it's a mere curiosity rather than something beyond reason. The way the naturescape works hints at the potentially transcendental nature of this scene, both in terms of affect and symbolism.

The latter point is obvious when considering the literal transcending of a character whose peace of mind could easily be read as being reflected through this moment. But it is in the contrast between sound and vision where some essence of the type of transcendental affect, expressed as being present throughout this thesis, resides. For, unlike in a typical scenario where such a moment would be accompanied by some elaborate sound effect, a lesser version of "Mickey Mousing", Rivers chooses to shoot the moment in the tradition of the documentary sound hierarchy. The naturescape is composed of an incredibly low volume soundworld with particular details of the breeze through the trees, hinting that what is happening, if it *is* happening or caused by anything within the film, is caused by the trees themselves.

By not elaborating on the fact that something fantastical is happening within the narrative, Rivers arguably avoids the accusation levelled at some forms of attempted transcendental style where the resulting effect is grounded through

an attempt at visualisation, rendering it immanent and ultimately a signifier rather than a purely expressed transcendental moment. This scene balances the fantastical nature through an aesthetic framework that cannot help but render what is happening as some uncanny moment beyond understanding.

The viewer knows something extraordinary is happening on screen yet it is clear that something else is being expressed. With the aesthetics built around the naturescape (and a general presentation of the natural environment in the visuals) it seems that *Two Years At Sea* is equally about a reengagement with natural landscapes and places. In the context of Emerson's theories, this automatically aligns it with his view of transcendental in the theological sense and in the very basis of his belief in gaining closer proximity to the transcendent itself. As Richardson writes of Emerson's beliefs, "Explicit or implicit in nearly everything Emerson wrote is the conviction that nature bats last, that nature is the law, the final word, the supreme court." (1999, p.97). For an aesthetic entirely in the framework of the Schraderian model of transcendental, however, the final scene from *Two Years At Sea* presents perhaps the ultimate example of a reductionist audio-visual ideal. Because of its use of the naturescape, its complete removal of any sort of editing and its position as the final moment of contentment for the character in the film, the scene presents the most effective example of any sort of audio-visual context of cinematic transcendental style.

This final shot is at night and shows Jake lit up by a fireside. Though the fire is not shown initially, the soundscape and the flickering of the light upon Jake's face makes the viewer aware of the character's position. The scene is shot with the least amount of editorial intonation. The only lighting provided for the shot is the natural

light provided by the fire (which even then fails to light up anything outside of Jake's face), the sound is exactly "as it is" so to speak, and the scenario only ends when the natural element providing the light has genuinely extinguished creating a natural fade. In this moment, the very structure of the scene is explicitly transcendental in the reductionist sense and the viewer should begin to feel aware that, as the scene progresses and nothing is happening (in basic terms), they are watching the film in the sense that they are being removed slowly from the processes of the narrative world. It is a stark irony that it is the gradual failing of one of these processes that the screen eventually fades to black. Leaving the visual editing in terms of cutting to the unpredictable reactions of a natural phenomena is in itself an unusual ploy that is rife with potential meaning, in terms of reading the scene and in terms of its relation to the diegesis.

Donnelly has argued that the perception of sound in the most basic terms of its task has been to uphold and solidify the narrative reality of any given film. He writes that:

> Some theorize that we perceive the diegetic world on-screen as an unproblematic reality (on some level), and sound is one of the principle elements that convinces us that the space on-screen is real. After all, one might argue that most sounds in films exist essentially to bolster or "make real" the images we see on-screen and the surrounding world we imagine. (2014, p.127).

Rivers is one of the few filmmakers who reduces sound back to a basic "what is there" aesthetic, at least outside of pure documentary-making practice. In fact, it could be argued that this aspect is the chief element brought over from documentary practice and that, with a generally reduced aesthetic pace and narrative, the reduced sound is essentially following the editing reduction. In other words it is still aiding some guise of cinematic reality. But the final scene is more

than the ultimate entailing of audio-visual reduction: it is the most strangely optimistic of transcendental scenes. For, by extending the temporal elements of the scene through the natural sound and temporality, Rivers expresses the character's inner contentment.

Jake is happy to let the fire go down in exactly the same way that he was happy to lie on his raft earlier and not catch any fish. It is in the same relaxed vein as Jake not being too perplexed by his caravan taking him to the top of a tree. Now he is content to simply let all light fade from his reality, to let the fire burn out (even though the film has repeatedly shown that he is surrounded by forest and regularly collects wood). The scene is about acceptance in the most basic sense but expressed through the prism of a genuine and optimistic contentment. The fact that this happens with no scoring or musical guidance, no dialogue (the film is dialogue free) or even cutting on Rivers' part defines this moment as being the most Schraderian form of transcendental style.

Before concluding the analysis of the transcendental elements of the naturescape, this scene should be contextualised with another scene from the previous chapter. In Tarr's *The Turin Horse*, a scene exactly the same in terms of structure and aesthetics occurs where the main character is shown to be watching a fire in his hut, the dying fire gradually fading the film out naturally. Like *Two Years At Sea*, there is no musical accompaniment, no cutting (as typical for Tarr) and little guidance for the viewer to interpret the scene as it stands. Like the rest of Tarr's oeuvre, *The Turin Horse*'s final scene is extended to excruciating levels in order to trap the viewer in the character's hardship-ridden world. However, unlike *Two Years At Sea*, *The Turin Horse* is not optimistic. As quoted in the previous chapter,

the fire going out actually represents the light of whole the world coming to an end, the most pessimistic of conceivable cinematic endings. So what is different between the two films that enables their similar endings – whilst both expressing transcendental feelings – to be so different? In essence, both of the films use the naturescape in differing ways and this is where their character varies.

The naturescape of *The Turin Horse* traps the characters gradually, its emphasised presence leading to their isolation in their hut, watching their last fire diminish to nothing. In *Two Years At Sea*, the naturescape has functioned to emphasise the character's inner contentment rather than torture, even if the viewer is expected to sit through an equally extended and perhaps difficult cinematic aesthetic. The fact that virtually the same visual and narrative scenario can create two very differing affective responses through the nuanced differences in context of the films' naturescape, suggests an even greater potential in the use of natural sound to create transcendental expressions than this chapter can ultimately detail. These differences in aesthetics hint towards such further potential and perhaps ultimately suggests an infinite array of aesthetic choices in sound design, where the most typical and largely ubiquitous of elements in filmmaking today are no longer treated as the bolstering of reality but as a vital tool in the creation and expression of the ineffable.

Beginning with ideas of Emersonion transcendentalism, serendipity was again found in highlighting yet another aspect of the word's multifaceted nature. The line between documentary film and fictional cinema has been blurred in several examples, allowing more complex questions about source and meaning to arise when acknowledging the reduction of typical audio-visual aesthetics. Consider

Fairweather's quote on Tarkovsky's use of sound, quoted in the Introduction as evidence of transcendental language being used in audio-visual analysis. She writes that "Perhaps more than any other director, Tarkovsky consistently uses sound in this way, as a means of transcending whatever mundane reality is suggested by his visual imagery." (2012, p.43). With the analysis of this chapter concluded, how does this idea – something which is generally accepted as a norm in audio-visual analysis – now appear?

Altman hinted at such questions far before Fairweather's essay, writing "As a consummate sound designer and technician, Tarkovsky continually challenges his audience to make meaning(s) out of sound." (1992, p.176). The sound in Tarkovsky's films is not of the sort of reality that exists in Rivers' film but is it really "transcending" some "mundane reality"? The naturescape of these films use ideas of noise, as seen in the contexts presented by Hegarty and Hainge, but through the subversive idea of not seeming at first to distort the reception potential of the work. Instead, through quietude of aesthetic reduction, natural sound becomes a blank canvas that eventually forces the viewer to question what they are being presented with or, more accurately, why the real world seems so bare. Its reduction makes it ironically more noticeable.

In essence, what this chapter has shown is that, by emphasising and allowing a naturescape to flourish and be noticed without forcing it to be a background over which music masks and takes for granted its presence, ineffable elements and expressions derived from the characters become perceivable. With examining another meaning of transcendental - through Emerson and the serendipity of a parallel ideology derived from a reemphasis upon landscape - the

naturescapes presented and analysed here show a wealth of potential transcendental expressions, the inner thoughts and feelings of characters whose state is almost always beyond words and where silence becomes the ultimate symbol of an almost holy presence. It is not the mundane reality of the everyday countryside that is presented but inner reactions that reflect off the prominence *of that reality*. In other words, it is a powerful, audio-visual transcendental expression of outer lands reflecting inner worlds.

Conclusions:

Implications of Sound and Music for

Transcendental Cinematic Style

Throughout this thesis there has been a central question: how does sound and music fit within or against previous notions of transcendental style in cinema? By addressing this question, several others have been broached regarding the effectiveness of earlier analytical models, in particular the role of language in general audio-visual analysis and how the style can be assessed in an age of multimedia. To finalise the study, this concluding chapter will assess the effects of my audio-visual research upon two specific areas. In highlighting these areas, my thesis will be left open for further application in terms of both the practicalities of aural choices in new cinema and in the language with which we analyse audio-visuality more generally.

The first aspect to assess is how the findings of the previous chapters recontextualise the language used in certain analyses of sound and music in cinema. The studies here have highlighted the natural, inexplicable sense of the profound invoked in many studies of audio-visual media, arguably shown in the Introduction to have been brought over from the musicological discourse of previous eras. In regards to this analysis, the teleology implied via the descriptive language - derived from various synonymic implications of the transcendental - has been shown as problematic rather than properly contextualised in its use. The first section of this chapter will reiterate the problems of these assumptions and use the

arguments and findings of the case-study analyses to suggest several potential

alternatives to such descriptors. In so doing, the assumptions made through such

language can be considered more questionable, especially as this language is being

applied to differing and varying aesthetics. With the transcendental style more

acknowledged as an audio-visual form, the language also gains more requirements

and the need for a more coherent contextualisation.

The second section of this chapter highlights further questions regarding

the future of denoting cinema as transcendental or being made within a

transcendental style. As we have seen, the fluctuating nature of its meaning has

rendered many examples problematic. This section contains several areas of

transcendental potential in audio-visual form, realised by a number of directors

working today. Considering the work of these directors allows us to think more

broadly about new aesthetic forms such as slow cinema and the differentiation of

style in the digital age. As a result, the necessity of the descriptor, its potential

relevance today, and its effectiveness as a label can all be reconsidered.

Questions Surrounding the Language of Audio-Visual Studies

If the various aesthetics assessed throughout this thesis are considered to have

some of the potential attributes of the transcendental, what does this suggest

about the future use of the descriptor in analysis? Even when considering the case

studies discussed here, there seems to be little in the way of aesthetic relationships

between films. In fact, some appear to be working in direct opposition to one

another, Pier Paolo Pasolini's use of lavish, pre-existent African music in *The Gospel

According To St. Matthew* compared with the sparse sound design and natural

soundscapes of Ben Rivers' *Two Years At Sea* for example. It is, therefore, worth

taking the term back once again to its basic formulation in order to see if the gap

between these many aesthetic and thematic aspects can be reduced. Sheila J.

Nayar has been a reoccurring presence throughout this thesis because of both her

excellent summation of transcendental ideals and her refreshing (if broad) view of

general theological aesthetics in cinema.

Early in her work she questions the very basics of the theological

implications of the transcendental when considered in the context of a created

artefact rather than as a reception feeling (an aspect we will come to shortly). She

highlights the following in relation to the writing of Saad-Zoy Souria:

> Souria distinguishes between *multiple* levels of existence in the artistic realm: physical,
> phenomenal, "thing-ness," and transcendent - with the transcendent accounting for the
> mystical aura that envelops a work of art because of that work's capacity to evoke ideas
> and feelings which thereby give it a special depth. (2012, p.41).

Though there is a specificity implied by the "transcendent" and its presence (rather

than the more vague "transcendental"), there is also a clear symbiotic relationship

with the aesthetic creation of the artwork in question. It is brought into existence

through a gap between the film and the viewer's reception. It is this gap that has

been touched upon throughout, denoted through descriptions that imply some

sense of work within the viewing experience for the audience at varying levels,

from simply the addition of more questioning elements (in our case studies, the

unusual choices of pre-existing music) to the harsh, minimalistic elements that

elongate and draw out the perception of the viewing experience itself.

The sense of mysticism, tempting in any discussion of the transcendental,

has been avoided within my analysis because of the intangible qualities it has

imbued previous analyses by Paul Schrader, Cutter Callaway and others. Also, it has

been avoided because its sense of intangibility has been used to explain away the effects discussed in previous audio-visual analysis with little explanation or argument.[73] Essentially, this ineffability has often been the reasoning behind the unqualified use of the transcendental as a description as seen in earlier quoted work by K.J. Donnelly and Elizabeth Fairweather among others (in the Introduction and Chapter 1), where its presence is used to denote some profound sense of reception in spite of focussing upon aesthetic mechanisms. Its use suggests the reference to something not actually inherent in the work (even in examples where transcendental aspects are arguably expressed) but rather something that arises in affective responses to that work.

When "transcendental" arose as a description in Schrader's 1972 work, what exactly was being referred to? I believe that it is the teleological reception of the work which ties the descriptor to highly differing aesthetics, and much of the analysis here supports this. But, while this sense of the profound seems to be specific - at least in the natural inability to be properly conveyed because the reaction is often beyond words - the methods and routes that lead to this effect are broad. I have only provided four potential routes of no doubt many - the use of two different forms of pre-existent music in Chapters 1 and 2, the use of repetitive musical scoring in Chapter 3 and the re-emphasis on the natural soundscape via a reduction of musical content in Chapter 4 - perhaps even neglecting methods that may go completely against all previous delineations of the transcendental style suggested by Schrader, Susan Sontag and others. But this section is concerned with

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[73] I return once again in particular to Callaway's suggestion of how music creates a general affect in audiences which is largely argued as being derived from his specific reception through the dogmatic system of his own religious beliefs. The can be applied to Schrader too though it is far less evident in his analysis.

the effect that this research could have on the very language of analysis and is

driven by the following conundrum: does the likeness between the overall

reception of the transcendental moment(s) merit the use of the description in

analysis when the pathways leading to such effects have been shown to be so

drastically varied?

This brings us to a prominent idea in the work of Sontag, one of the key

figures in the early addressing of potential transcendental style and spiritual

reception of cinema. She highlights the potential importance of reception but

specifically through a sense of becoming lost in a work's diegesis:

> The effect of the spectator's being aware of the form is to elongate or to retard the
> emotions. For, to the extent that we are conscious of form in a work of art, we become
> somewhat detached; our emotions do not respond in the same way as they do in real life.
> Awareness of form does two things simultaneously: it gives a sensuous pleasure
> independent of the "content," and it invites the use of intelligence. (1967, p.179).

There seems to be a divide suggested within Sontag's summation but this is the

relationship that has been argued for within each example of this thesis. It is also

worth noting in relation to academic analysis that the transcendental, when

invoked in scholarly contexts (and I must include myself within that), is

automatically formalised due to the viewing position of the analyst as opposed to

that of the casual viewer. The transcendental reception likely did occur when the

analysts watched these and other films, but the point to raise here is that the

inexpressible moment is problematic when using the description in an academic

setting without due context.

The many routes provided by the aesthetic mechanisms analysed highlight

the fallacy in using the term. Its implication, when not properly contextualised as a

reception stance, is that it suggests some aesthetic trend when its emphasis is

overtly upon reception potential rather than a single aesthetic framework operable from the point of creation. Here I have shown the multitude of aesthetic ideals that could potentially come within the description. Although the transcendental is the destination, it is seemingly reached via a large variety of aesthetic routes. Therefore, it must surely be questionable to use the term in such a way, whether describing films, film music and any sort of audio-visual relationship, when it is clear that the parameters that can potentially fit under the term are in a constant state of flux.

One of the elements that could be considered a flaw in my own analysis is the fragmented nature of the moments that I attribute with a sense of the transcendental. All previous analyses of transcendental style, or even theological cinema as a whole, discuss their subjects through an overall aesthetic ideal. Scenes and scenarios are part of a larger framework that though left unstated seem to provide a sense of the profound from the full filmic experience and not from just a handful of scenes as in Schrader and Sontag, all of the way through to more modern scholars such as Callaway and Nayar. I believe that this shift from the *gesamtkunstwerk* model to emphasis upon individual moments has been caused by my formulating of the transcendental in an audio-visual context which automatically brings in specificity in regards to its overall creation of affect. In spite of some examples also relying on the accumulation of meaning, there is still an argument to be made regarding the manifestation of the transcendental being momentary, where earlier sound and musical examples in the first two chapters in particular only gained their transcendental qualities via a wider context of previous uses and the presence of other music. The entirety of these films, whilst aiding

such an aesthetic, is not made up of such transcendental elements, the cinematic form instead resembling a process. This process has no definitive end but contains the potential to realise transcendental style through affect as has been argued through studying the cinema of Pasolini, Andrei Tarkovsky and Béla Tarr.

This raises a further question that is too big to answer fully in this thesis: what are the alternatives for describing and assessing such moments? If the music/audio-visual relationships in a film somehow convey something to an audience that is beyond words, how can one overcome the inherent barriers and paradoxes within the language of representation when analysing and discussing these moments? Though this requires a great deal of depth and perhaps even further research, some ideas can at the least be broached in regards to alternatives. The first is that of consideration of context for the use of "transcendental" as a descriptor. If the use of it can be extemporised and signalled through various thematic analyses before such a word comes into play, this could render its use far less problematic. This could be achieved with an overt emphasis upon the aesthetic relationships being represented as a journey towards its potential meaning and thematic content, the transcendental becoming the goal in the contextualised journey which is stated as beyond the full representation of language.

Almost always, the transcendental character is used to "set the scene" in previous analyses and colours everything after through association rather than through argument. The transcendental is placed as a prism of descriptive language through which the subsequent analysis is seen. Such a structure automatically implies that the content of the word is far from the fluctuating anomaly that this

thesis has gone to great lengths to portray. By opening with suggestions of a work

possessing such transcendental qualities, it implies that it is transcendental

because of the aesthetic analysis that follows.[74] This paradigm cannot work as it

fixes the transcendental as a solid aesthetic point without context, rather than

portraying it as a reception potential connected by varying aesthetic relationships.

As the analysis of sound and music has taken so long to establish itself as a justified

form of critique, the assessment of something *in between* the reception of the

work and the aesthetics of the work can hardly have been of urgent importance

when neither of those aspects was treated with relevance in earlier analytical

contexts.

Yet it is the consideration of this gap, and the intangibility of its overall

reception teleology, that must be signalled if such future analysis is not to be

undermined by the use (and perhaps even invocation) of the word and its

multitudinous ineffability. At the same time, this argument should not be

considered as the typical disjuncture sometimes associated with even the most

traditional of audio-visual analyses (and practice). Michel Chion often spoke of the

connotations of such gaps. In all of the examples, there has been a final absence of

construed meaning caused by the sound and music, requiring input from the

viewer (even sometimes in the most basic and simple of terms): whether this gap is

caused by the disjuncture created through pre-existent music as in Pasolini's and

Tarkovsky's films, repetitive scoring that refuses to prescribe meaning in Tarr's films

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[74] A number of essays cited in the Introduction by the likes of Donnelly, Fairweather and others often use transcendental descriptors early on within their writing but then continue with their analysis with little transcendental context. It is a natural method of portraying the affect created by their examples but is almost always disconnected from the arguments of their case-study analyses.

or the removal of musical content entirely in Rivers', Gideon Koppel's and Pat Collins' films.

Chion in particular highlights one such gap, or in Callaway's terms an invitation, in his own analysis where "Audiovisual counterpoint will be noticed only if it sets up an opposition between sound and image on a precise point of meaning." (1994, p.38). The sense of opposition that haunts such theories all the way back to the original and problematic conception of such a counterpoint, as discussed in the Introduction, is present but should not be confused with the invitation or gap being presented here. More important is the effect it has on the working relationship between the viewer and the film. If the transcendental aesthetic functioned in the same way as such theories of counterpoint (or vertical montage for that matter) then it would certainly not need the level of context that I am arguing for here which requires not simply a relationship of any form with the viewer but one that specifically forces the viewer into a working and even uncomfortable relationship with the film.

The paradox suggested here resembles those assessed recently by Donnelly, a potential process which he argues is "occulted" and, therefore, labels as "occult aesthetics":

> My starting point is that aesthetics *are* occult. The way they work is far from being simple, logical, or easily understood, and, particularly in the case of film, they strive to conceal their processes and foster the impression that something else is going on instead. (2014, p.3).

This element of distraction that Donnelly highlights feels in some ways similar to the transcendental invitation. It is a moving of emphasis away from the aesthetic object towards something else, namely the inexpressible transcendental element. In Donnelly's conception this is simply an avoidance of the recognition of the film

itself which is apparently cloaked, the language of analysis then attempting to

remove this cloaking or at least acknowledge that it is there. There is a sense that

the coming of digital technology also figures into the writer's analysis, suggesting

some links within digital media that further heightens this cloaking.

If aesthetics are striving to both convey and to hide *the process of that*

conveyance then it is the academic's role to reassess such a conveyance as those

aesthetics will always be essential to audio-visual analysis in some way. But if the

language they are ultimately using and portraying as a framework for such

aesthetics *aids that very same process of occulting*, of hiding the process by which

the aesthetics lead to reception, then the hidden nature of the audio-visual form as

a whole will continue to elude reasonable analysis and such assessment will

inevitably be rendered as problematic. The emphasis must be moved towards the

reception and the invitation that influences it. If the destination is assumed and

unqualified by the use of transcendental language within the close reading of filmic

texts, then the analytical journey towards it is arguably undermined through such

assumptions too.

Questions Surrounding the Criteria and Practical Future of Transcendental Style

The research of this thesis has clear implications for questioning the language of

audio-visual analysis as a whole, but what are the questions raised for the practical

production of audio-visual media? By asking this simple question, a further point is

also raised: namely what use, if any, does the descriptor of transcendental cinema

have in the digital age? This section will assess these two points, with the former

essentially leading the latter. To begin, it is worth returning to an idea explored in

Chapter 4, the use of silence and what this means to the cinematic medium.

Nayar writes usefully on this subject, building on Schrader's arguments of

cinematic stasis:

> Indeed, when mapped against the transcendentally styled films, what this immediately brings to the fore is the transcendental film's reliance on *silence* no less than stasis. (2012, p.108).

As already suggested in the previous analysis of *Two Years At Sea*, *Silence* and *sleep furiously*, silence is not to be literally interpreted here as a total and complete lack of sound but quite specifically as an absence of scored music as Ed Hughes has argued, using Claudia Gorbman's theory of "nondiegetic silence" and "diegetic musical silence" and linking the ubiquity of such potential to the coming of sound technology:

> The aural complexity (the simultaneous delivery of a range of musical and non-musical elements) made possible through contemporary technology is both a fascinating and troublesome aspect of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century narrative films. Particularly notable is the widespread exclusion of significant silence, whether literal through muting of soundtrack, or ambient, meaning the aural presence of natural sound. (2007, p.89).

Modern cinema in its more experimental and less commercialised form has reacted

to the increase in aesthetic spectacle of popular cinema and has arguably began to

follow the route to more transcendental ideals.

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, this is a style study and yet genre

has also suggested itself in regards to cinema being conjoined by parameters. The

analysis in the previous chapters has shown that genre would, however, be a

flawed and inaccurate way to perceive all of the films mentioned as the

mechanisms with which the transcendental style has been achieved has been

different in every case. The connecting factor is not fully contained within the films

but interconnected to audience reading and interpretation. It would be inaccurate to link the aesthetics of Pasolini's *The Gospel According To. St. Matthew* and Tarkovsky's *Solaris* simply because their transcendental reception has been argued as similar.[75] There is, therefore, no solid potential for a so-called "transcendental genre."

For a modern film to be considered within a transcendental style, its context within the wider leading aesthetic spectacle often means that it has to reduce the aesthetic (in the Schraderian sense) surprisingly little by comparison to pre-digital cinema.[76] As Schrader himself suggested recently in a talk on the style in the modern day "It's more powerful to be slow now... because everything is moving so fast." (2017). Music can be reduced in the examples that follow with little or no ripples of shock caused by such a choice because so many modern, less commercial directors are also making this choice as the examples of this section show. The reduction in such scored soundtracks has almost become a marker for a film going against commercial forms of soundscape and musical choices.

Alongside Tarr, Rivers and the other directors analysed, modern directors in this less commercialised form of the medium (and on a global scale) can be seen to build upon and normalise this idea of reduction in the musical aspects of a film. The mechanisms and styles analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, of elongating the experience

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[75] This point is worth stating more forcefully because the films are linked by an initial theoretical mechanism of pre-existing musical use. The fact that their narrative "genres" are incredibly different should alone give warning as to the fallacies of linking these films into some sort of genre; the reception and the mechanism is what links them in Chapters 1 and 2, not the overall films themselves.

[76] Though an arena for the debate regarding analogue vs. digital in filmmaking could be broached, it is of little importance as the aesthetics still lead to the required reception. With the arguments surrounding slow cinema in Chapters 3 and 4, further evidence is provided that, in spite of the various changes brought about by digital cinema potentially negating transcendental ideals generally, in the hands of the right director, its own facets (such as the possibility of longer scenarios) has equally proved fruitful for the transcendental style.

of the film through grating musical repetition and unnervingly sparse soundscapes,

dominate the award-winning strand of cinema of this less commercialised arena,

perhaps proving Schrader to be in some ways correct in regards to the ultimate role

of music in such cinematic styles. Filmmakers such as Michael Haneke, Lav Diaz,

Pedro Costa and Michelangelo Frammartino all reduce the nondiegetic elements of

musical score to the sort of levels seen in the films of the previous chapter.[77]

Frammartino's film *Le Quattro Volte* (2010) is similar in aims and aesthetics to the

films of Chapter 4, *Two Years At Sea* in particular, that follows natural and organic

elements in their day-to-day living. The soundtrack conforms to its reduced visual

aesthetic again akin to slow cinema and built via a naturescape. Though the film

has a score by Paolo Benvenuti, Benvenuti is also the film's chief sound editor

which explains the organic mixture of forms.

In terms of Schrader's "coda music" - the use of fragments of pre-existing

music in a similar recontextualisation to the examples from Chapters 1 and 2 - is

especially perceivable in Haneke's filmmaking, where music is itself a thematic

strain and the director, who is openly well-read in musicology (especially the work

of Theodor Adorno), uses such structuring recontextualisation to address particular

themes. For example, the opening scene of his 1997 film *Funny Games* cuts

abruptly from the diegetic presentation of Mozart to a sourceless loud mix of heavy

metal in the form of *Hellraiser* by Naked City.[78] This musical disjuncture, similar in

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[77] Nondiegetic as a term is used here in its basic sense and every aspect from this previously uncontested level in cinema's sound hierarchy is removed. Such terms have, of course, become problematic themselves in recent years. See Anahid Kassabian's chapter "The End of Diegesis As We Know It?" in *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics* (2015) or Ben Winters' essay "The Non-diegetic Fallacy: Film, Music, and Narrative Space" (2010) in the *Music and Letters* journal for more detail.

[78] *The Piano Teacher* (2001) is another film that has examples of this that use a variety of different styles of music.

fashion to Tarkovsky's use of pre-existent music mixed with the discomfort created by the scores in Tarr's films, is one of a number of effects that alienates the viewer from the experience, allowing the harrowing nature of the film's narrative of mental and physical torture to create several moments of release (as well as a stark implication of the viewer's desire to watch the film to the unfolding horror it presents).[79] This may not be the sort of revelation previously discussed by Schrader but the mechanism is incredibly effective and is just as powerful even if not especially spiritual in character.

At the other end of the aesthetic spectrum, Diaz and Costa, both of whom are associated with the slow cinema movement, remove all leading musical elements to extenuate the passing of time in their long-take films such as *Norte, The End Of History* (2014) and *Colossal Youth* (2006), allowing access to transcendental ideals through the forced concentration of typically harsh, sparse narratives (and through the same mechanisms of films analysed in Chapters 3 and 4). Costa's film is somewhat of an urban equivalent to Rivers' film that reflects the reduced architectural designs of the film's spaces.[80]

Of these modern directors harnessing the techniques of the transcendental style, the most overt are the French brothers, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. All but one of their films up to 2011 is entirely devoid of any musical scoring, with the one film that does use scoring (*The Kid With A Bike*, 2011), still conforming almost explicitly to the Scharderian coda music form (with the repetitive use of an excerpt

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[79] Other techniques in *Funny Games* include fourth wall breaks by the characters, implicating the viewer in the violence through their very experience of (and the choice to experience) the film.
[80] These spaces are new-build blocks with little defining features other than their enormous size; they are devoid of human augmentation and, therefore, the sound design is reduced to reflect the coldness of the space in which the characters live.

from Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.5 Op. 73*). This poses a further intriguing problem in that their work is still mostly shot on film in the analogue tradition of previous intellectual cinema whilst mostly being made in the digital age. They have resisted the ease that digital cinema could provide though have also rejected its potential to increase such transcendental elements through the extenuation of length and slowness. The digital revolution has arguably allowed slow cinema to arise as discussed in Chapter 3 even though many examples here were made before digital technology was commercially available.

The coming of digital media and technology has arguably allowed the linking of works, showing previously idiosyncratic creators to no longer stand alone due to the reduction of cost in making longer, slower cinematic forms. Perhaps the slowness emphasised in the last two chapters is not as strongly linked to the style as first considered, with particular regards to music. Even Tarr's examples were all shot on film and his films are far more extenuated and reduced than most forms of digital cinema in spite of the ease for such extenuation when shooting with digital cameras. His work is a forerunner to the digital examples of the following decade. As Lev Manovich wrote, digital production changed the form in most drastic of ways:

> The challenge which digital media poses to cinema extends far beyond the issue of narrative. Digital media redefines the very identity of cinema. (1995, p.1)

This shift also renders the position of analogue filmmakers as increasingly rebellious, even when their films seem to tie in with some sense of formalism. With the Dardennes' success at film festivals being consistent, especially at the Cannes Film Festival, it could be argued that their formalising of the more reduced aesthetic form associated with the transcendental paved the way for its adoption in

the modern cinematic realm.[81] The reduced aesthetic is the dominant mode for

modern cinema made for the art-house with musical scores being abandoned and

only occasionally replaced by the use of pre-existing music (popular or art music). It

could, therefore, be argued that the practical and critical application of the

transcendental style has already happened before the resituating of it in a more

audio-emphasised framework.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide further confirmation of this as the examples

analysed were all made more recently (and after the second wave of audio-visual

analysis typified by Gorbman, Caryl Flinn, Kathryn Kalinak and others assessed in

the Introduction). Whether citing the influence of the filmmakers that Schrader

assessed in his work - Robert Bresson, Yasujirō Ozu and Carl T. Dreyer - or perhaps

even having considered the text as whole, some of his principle ideas have found

their way into the parameters of this form of cinema today. Even if Schrader's

problematic dismissal of the audio-visual nature of cinema is at the heart of the

questions that have been posed in this thesis, the potential aural framework in his

ideas has been more explored and more imbued within the practicalities of

filmmaking than in academic contexts. If one aspect has been explored in parallel

with his work in modern cinema, it is the aural potential within his ideas of

reduction rather than the visual parameters he originally set out.

It could be argued that the amalgamating of the transcendental style with

some sort of recognisable art cinema aesthetic was a natural outcome considering

the proliferation of the style's total opposite in many examples of popular

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[81] Every film made by the Dardennes brothers since their 1999 film *Rosetta* has been nominated for the *Palme d'Or* or some other award at the festival with various wins.

cinema.[82] Where the style moves to from this point could be the direction explored in the first two analytical chapters: the complex use of pre-existing music, not as some form of coda refrain (as already suggested as being partly present in films by the likes of the Dardennes Brothers) but as a transcendental disjoint caused by the thematic implications produced through carefully chosen and contextualised use.

There is also the potential to produce musical scores of original content that somehow tap into this same invitation, perhaps through the referencing of cultural material through quotation or by harnessing the transcendental nature of music itself whilst resisting attempts to allow such musical scoring to lead the immanent interpretation of narrative. How scores could do this, however, is so open to analysis and argument that only its potential can be suggested here. However, the thematic impetus outlined throughout this thesis can act as some form of groundwork, both for recognising musical practices that already attempted to create such an invitation, and setting out future aesthetic paradigms for scores to experiment within.

Essentially these are all areas that have potential for further exploration, both practically and theoretically. With this potential clearly in reach, at the least on a theoretical level, it is then pertinent to ask what the merit and the point of a label such as transcendental style really is. The split in this thesis has been one highlighting several binaries; the recontextualised and the reduced aesthetic, the Schraderian and the anti-Schraderian, the abundant and the sparse. Like Schrader's analysis, my application of transcendental style has been retroactively formed from an already-existing set of parameters. Though it has been suggested that Schrader's

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[82] The transcendental style today can be seen as reactionary.

ideas have been taken on board in some way today, perhaps even accidentally, it is worth noting that few (if any) of the films have been knowingly made with such a label in mind. How, therefore, does this augment the potential accuracy and effectiveness of the term when applied to cinema that, by all accounts, *could* have openly used Schraderian parameters in the making of films? The main point is that, combined with aesthetic choices that are reactionary to the digital age of filmmaking - influenced by television, video games and a huge variety of hyperactive multimedia - the transcendental style has so far occurred naturally and with little overt reference to the style's genesis or theory.

Perhaps such an outcome could render the term redundant in that analysis has been so far unnecessary to produce further examples of this style of cinema. This raises the question of its usefulness as a term though it is normal for such terminology to be of more use to academia than to the industry. Perhaps transcendental style as a whole can be considered, in its inception and in its future analysis, as a form of contextualised hindsight functioning in the way that new genre formulations arise but with an explicit emphasis on the effects of the parameters set as only a part of the form.

The last aspect to note is in regards to Schrader himself who suggested via the social media platform of Facebook that he was considering the publication of a second volume of analysis on transcendental cinema with an emphasis on films made after his first volume was published (2017). A new edition is due to be printed in 2018 by the University of California Press though only with a new introduction by Schrader rather than a completely new examination of the style as a whole. His recent comments suggest a number of intriguing points and positions

that highlight the original necessity for this thesis. He posed the question of where such a style sits today and then, on Facebook, opened it out to public comments. The chief implication of the passing of time between the digital age and his work being, in his view, to find films that have been made since which still fit within his original parameters of reduction. The question highlights a lack of evolution in thought in regards to the new audio-visuality of the medium, where progression has only come from new work fitting older models rather than seeking to at least question how such models sit today in the twenty-first century with all of its technological and analytical progressions in regards to the consumption of cinema.

To further the point, Schrader has this year revisited the text for a number of events. He previewed a new introduction to his work at the *Opening Frames: Cinema and Transcendence* conference organised by a number of film departments and even a theological department (Ryerson University and the IMAGO organisation). Schrader was the keynote speaker (his speech being a summation of this new introduction) with a variety of other more academic speakers whilst a separate filmed question & answer session was uploaded online with Joseph G. Kickasola in May 2017. Various interesting points were raised at this recorded session. When asked what has happened in between the publishing of his book and today, Schrader suggested the following:

> What happened to Transcendental Style? Well Gilles Deleuze happened, then Andrei Tarkovsky happened and then slow cinema happened. (2017).

His reference to Deleuze is the theorisation of the time-image, though he's unsure whether the work of Tarkovsky and slow cinema generally really fits into his own mould of spirituality.

The mention of Deleuze is worth briefly investigating as the concept of the time-image has been mentioned several times in this thesis. Deleuze finalised his thoughts on this evolution of cinematic impetus in *Cinema II* (1985), writing that:

> Time as progression derives from the movement-image or from successive shots. But time as unity or as totality depends on montage which still relates it back to movement or to the succession of shots. This is why the movement-image is fundamentally linked to an indirect representation of time, and does not give us a direct presentation of it, that is, does not give us a time-image. The only direct presentation, then, appears in music. But in modern cinema, by contrast, the time-image is no longer empirical, nor metaphysical; it is "transcendental" in the sense that Kant gives this word: time is out of joint and presents itself in the pure state. The time-image does not imply the absence of movement (even though it often includes its increased scarcity) but it implies the reversal of the subordination; it is no longer time which is subordinate to movement; it is movement which subordinates itself to time. It is no longer time which derives from movement, from its norm and its corrected aberrations; it is movement as false movement, as aberrant movement which now depends on time. The time-image has become direct, just as time has discovered new aspects, as movement has become aberrant in essence and not by accident, as montage has taken on a new sense, and as a so-called modern cinema has been constituted post-war. However close its relations with classical cinema, modern cinema asks the question: what are the new forces at work in the image, and the new signs invading the screen? (2013, p.271).

There is a great deal to unpack here but several relevant points post-Schrader are defined. The first is how, even when time (or slowness of some form) was present in movement-image-orientated cinema, it was still at the mercy of movement techniques (in this case, montage). Of all of the forms that Deleuze mentions as bypassing this to express a direct sense of time, music is poignantly what he suggests. The second interesting point is that Deleuze actually labels time-image-orientated cinema as actually being "transcendental" yet, even more interestingly, suggests this specifically to be in the Kantian sense of the word. This highlights the link suggested earlier in the Introduction whereby there actually is a crossover between the meanings of the word and its potential application. Here, the link between the slowness of the time-image and the direct relation to (ineffable) knowledge - that obtained without experiential reasoning - is made, only missing the potential spiritual character of that knowledge which Schrader, Callaway and

others define. And finally Deleuze highlights the questions raised in modern cinema, the "forces at work" in the actual aesthetics. Bringing these points together marks out exactly why Schrader sees Deleuze as a pivotal moment after his own theorisation and why he is still relevant to this thesis.

Music when mentioned, however, is not treated with the same sense of questioning by Schrader but instead in exactly the way it was in 1972. He suggests that "The same holds true with music. The simplest and most effective way to dictate a viewer's response is underscoring... There is very little underscoring. Or often if there is, it's inappropriate." (2017). The latter point is of note as it briefly touches upon the suggestions of Chapters 1 and 2 though without any sort of detail in regards to what is appropriate or inappropriate in terms of music. More telling is that at the least, he has acknowledged that the removal of scoring has wider aural effects on a film's use of sound:

> ...heightened sound, the wind is too loud... It starts when you remove underscore. The moment you remove underscoring, they're having to figure out what their emotions should be. (2017).

This was the argument that underpinned Chapter 4, and Schrader, with some prompting from Kickasola, mentioned the sound of wind several times, often as an element that aids the "duration" of a film (the elongating process).

However, in the time that has passed, very little seems to have been acknowledged about the musical or aural potential of the transcendental style. The removal of music is still an aspect "at the buffet" of aesthetic choices, to use Schrader's phrase from his talk, that filmmakers can pick and choose from when seeking a more spiritual style or sense of cinema. The key aspect to note is that, even in 2017, the style is still simply not considered from an aural angle or point of

view and with no speakers from any audio-visual departments at the conference. New material, if considered under the banner of transcendental style in some way, is denoted as such because of the parameters being brought forward, not from opening out or questioning the nature of such parameters.

With consideration as to how sound and music has changed since 1972 in cinema - in its use, its production and its academic assessment and analysis - this must surely show an unresolved blind spot with the style being considered almost in its entirety through visual and thematic heavy departments rather than from scholars of an audio-visual angle. The effects of technology on new forms could have multiple effects on transcendental style - in aural and visual contexts, some of which have already been suggested in Chapters 3 and 4 - but the main point to make is that, either way, the transcendental has been augmented by these new technologies in the cinematic form even if subsequent analysis avoids addressing it. As Schrader himself said this year, however, "I think the confinement of the box of the theatre is good for Transcendental Style." (2017), suggesting that new media, with its flexibility in where, when and how it is viewed will still struggle to attain the reception of the style. Sometimes this new technology does allow it to flourish as in the forms argued as slow cinema (by Diaz and Costa as mentioned earlier) but does at other times hamper it (at least in popular cinema with the increase in musical leading and rapid editing).

Writers such as Nayar, Callaway and many others mentioned in this thesis highlight just how essential the acknowledgement of music is to some sense of the transcendental being properly contextualised though this rarely figures such effects of technology. The negation of musical analysis through the inability to denote fully

the centre of musical affect renders the style in the past tense, in an older and arguably more problematic mode of film criticism that needs audio-visuality to evolve and progress further, technologically influenced or otherwise. Though this has been addressed in Chapter 3 especially, there is still more to cover in regards to the transcendental potential found in new media, if such a potential exists and can be theorised at all.

If works produced after the period of Schrader's writing are to be ultimately argued effectively as being made within such a style, then the new evolutions and cinematic frameworks that followed must be taken into account. If the *Opening Frames* conference and the *Rethinking Transcendental Style* conference from the year before has shown anything, it is that transcendental style, even forty-five years after its initial inception, has never really moved on from the visual heavy emphasis that undermined so many of its essential and poignant arguments.[83] By complying earnestly with the original parameters, the conference highlights the necessity of this thesis: its necessity in questioning the transcendental language of audio-visual scholarship, in assessing the practical nature of film music and sound design, and in evaluating the critical cinematic discourse that originally coined the phrase in the first instance.

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[83] Schrader first considered revisiting his work when asked to give a keynote at the *Rethinking Transcendental Style* conference organised by Kickasola in 2016.

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