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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **Towards a theory of multimedia integration in post-minimal music**

Evans, Tristian

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**School of Music**

**Towards a theory of multimedia integration  
in post-minimal music**

**Tristian Evans**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Arts & Humanities  
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## Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between minimalist music and other media as employed in original and revised contexts, taking into account the works of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley and John Adams (together with lesser-known composers who have been influenced by this particular genre). Part I will initially set out to apply Nicholas Cook's 'three basic models of multimedia', together with Rebecca Leydon's typology of minimalist tropes, which forms the basis for subsequent theoretic developments in the thesis. The application of Cook's method will lead to the formation of a more refined framework based on the philosophical premises of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, allowing for a greater understanding of how the notion of 'difference' is mediated when music is pitted against an image or a piece of text. Other additional types of meanings deriving from repetition will further supplement Leydon's typology of extra-musical narratives – narratives that operate in different forms to more traditional examples.

Part II will study Philip Glass's music for film in depth, positing the relationship between his music and the cinematic narrative within intertextual spheres. External influences on his compositional method will be scrutinised with reference to Harold Bloom's theory on the 'anxiety of influence' and Joseph Straus's 'creative misreading'. The employment of common harmonic progressions and intervallic configurations will also be explored, highlighted by the application of set-theoretic and Schenkerian techniques. The latter methodology will uncover Glass's cyclical approach to harmony, illuminating his methods in reaching the dominant chord and the recurrence of certain prime forms. Also, the manifestation of internal references evident in the soundtrack to *The Hours*, and especially *Dracula*, will form a considerable portion of the work, and the viability of re-applying extracts of music in other cinematic contexts will be unpacked.

In light of the anti-dialectical nature of repetitive music, theories relating to existentialism will be highly relevant to this thesis. The viability of applying Eero Tarasti's existential semiology will be examined during a reading of a television commercial employing a soundtrack by Michael Andrews, while the pre-Sartrean philosophies of Karl Jaspers will be discussed in a chapter on Glass's *Naqoyqatsi*, *Book of Longing* and the soundtrack to a recent film, *Watchmen*, which quotes two extracts out of *Koyaanisqatsi*. The final part of the thesis involves the formation of a new model that develops and extrapolates specific elements of the methodologies employed up to this point.

*For my father, Stan,  
and in memory of my mother, Elisabeth*

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## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how post-minimalist music interacts with other media. Central to the investigation will be a study of the interactivity between musical, visual and written texts, and the relationships between re-contextualised uses of these materials. Post-minimalist music is often borrowed and successfully reapplied in new multimedia contexts, including film soundtracks and television commercials, as will be demonstrated in this thesis. Consequently, the ways in which musical meanings can be adopted or adapted will inevitably form a crucial element in this analytical inquiry.

Each chapter will build on certain methodologies that have seldom been employed in studies of either minimalist music or multimedia forms. These approaches will be applied to a selection of relevant case studies, although a greater focus will be placed on the film scores of Philip Glass as the thesis unfolds. Most analyses will be based on aural transcriptions of the music, in the absence of commercially available scores. The opening chapter will set out to contextualise the genre of post-minimalism, setting forth to present and apply the theoretical praxis of Nicholas Cook and Rebecca Leydon. The former method is aimed at offering ‘three basic models of multimedia’ that facilitates the analysis of relationships formed between music, visual and textual dimensions, while the latter proposes a speculative typology of specific extra-musical meanings, or tropes, as evident in specific examples of repetitive music.

Chapter 2 will further unpack these theoretical ideas by formulating a framework based on some of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault’s work. The quotation of film music by Cliff Martinez and Michael Andrews in two car



commercials will form the basis for analysis in this chapter. Applying Deleuze and Foucault's philosophies will therefore bring to light the exchangeability of post-minimalist music in a number of different contexts. One advert used Martinez's music for one of its versions, and an operatic aria for the other. Meanings resulting from the application of these musics in conjunction with the visual account will be teased out and compared with those presented in the post-minimal version. Again from a comparative perspective, Chapter 3 will primarily be concerned with exploring temporal and narrative approaches in non-minimalist music and post-minimal examples. Rebecca Leydon's 'typology of minimalist tropes' as outlined in Chapter 1 will be supplemented further in this chapter, leading to the second part of the thesis.

Part Two will focus on analysing a selection of Glass's recent soundtracks, in continuation of the development towards a theory of multimedia integration in post-minimal music. In Chapter 4, Schenkerian techniques and a set-theoretic methods are used to discuss Glass's use of tonality and voice-leading strategies in films that include *The Illusionist*, *The Hours*, *Roving Mars* and *Notes on a Scandal*. Aspects of self-borrowing also become apparent in this part of the investigation, which merits a more in-depth study in Chapter 5. The fifth chapter first of all examines how Glass's formative years subsequently led to the broad use of self-quotation in his music, particularly in the film scores. Intertextual references will be mapped out in this particular part of the investigation, and an evaluation of whether original meanings are either continued or discontinued in their secondary contexts will be considered.

Chapter 6 offers a close reading of the music for Tod Browning's film *Dracula*, in which internal references are often apparent. This chapter will argue that Glass employs techniques that are reminiscent of Wagner's leitmotivic strategies whose referential aspect promotes a unity to the work. With the exception of the

soundtrack to *The Hours* it would appear that this approach is rarely employed in Glass's film music. Chapter 7 will draw existential associations between three recent case studies, namely the last instalment of the Qatsi trilogy *Naqoyqatsi*, the theatrical song cycle *Book of Longing*, and the soundtrack to the Hollywood feature production *Watchmen*. Aspects of referentiality will again arise from this examination as *Naqoyqatsi*'s opening track ostensibly alludes to Holst's 'Mars' from *The Planets*, while *Watchmen* quotes two extracts from *Koyaanisqatsi*.

The thesis's conclusions will offer a review of analytical concepts and approaches that have been applied to post-minimal music in multimedia contexts. Some of the theories discussed in the preceding chapters will be refined and amalgamated further. This hermeneutical approach will be applied to the study of two television commercials that again quote minimalist music, namely Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* and Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*. Viable areas for future research will also be probed.

In order to contextualise this investigation, a series of pertinent questions must initially be addressed, however. First, what is 'post-minimalism', and how is it integrated within the post-modern interface? Second, what constitutes 'multimedia', and what is its relevance to music relating to minimalism? How have minimalist and multimedia elements been combined? The emergence of such combined applications will need to be outlined in order to evaluate their apparent effectiveness in films and other media. Once such questions have been addressed, Chapter 1 will proceed to offer two theoretical methods that may prove useful when applied to case studies involving the (re)application of Glass's music for film. In conclusion, a critique of these methods will be offered, as will an examination of other possible approaches that might be suitable for this thesis's analytical study.

**Part I: Theory, Analysis and Historiography – Approaches and Overview**

**Chapter One**

## **Analysing Post-minimal Multimedia: Initial Questions and Frameworks**

### **What is Post-minimalism?**

While opinions regarding the definition of minimalist music are by no means unanimous, the term post-minimalism has been the subject of greater debate and disagreement. Scholarly work in this area points towards the mid-1970s as the concluding period for minimalism (Bernard 2003, p. 112), but it falls short of offering a consistent account of how post-minimalism emerged. A standard inventory of its principal characteristics is again unavailable, as is a recognised first piece of post-minimal music. Kyle Gann postulates William Duckworth's *Time Curve Preludes* (1978-79) as the first post-minimal work to have emerged (Gann 1998, unpag.), although others consider the 'post-Romantic' music of John Adams as representative of a new aesthetic (Schwarz 1996, p. 170).<sup>1</sup> Like minimalism, Duckworth's collection of twenty-four pieces is based within a largely tonal framework, employing a constant pulse and making use of additive/subtractive processes (Gann, op. cit). However, what sets it apart from other works according to Gann is the subtlety and mystery surrounding the work (ibid.). This intricacy of detail results inadvertently in a difficulty to identify the music's underlying process at first hearing.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, Gann is considered as the person who coined the term 'post-minimalism', or the non-hyphenated 'postminimalism' (Ross 2008, p. 521). Robert Fink, further builds on this word by offering the term 'post(modern)-minimalism' (Fink 2004, p. 540). Through a conflation of terms, he puts forth the argument that post-modernism and post-minimalism display similar characteristics, as will become more apparent later.

In other words, minimalism appears to have become ‘more complex’ around this time – a statement that is consistent with Jonathan Bernard’s description of the first of four stages in post-minimalism’s development since the early years, outlined as follows:

(1) Pieces became more complicated, which soon provoked (2) a greater concern with sonority in itself; as a result, (3) pieces began sounding more explicitly “harmonic,” that is, chordally oriented, though not, at this point, necessarily *tonal* in any sense. Eventually, however, (4) harmony of an ever more tonal (or neotonal, or quasi-tonal) aspect assumed primary control (Bernard 2003, p. 114).

The complexity of the earliest post-minimal works had ultimately given way to the primacy of tonality, which has since then become one of the main post-minimal characteristics.

But what are the other definitive elements, and who were the composers that were active in this area? Bernard seems to suggest that post-minimalism developed as a reaction by Reich and Glass against the actual term ‘minimalism’, who were often at pains to reject this categorization (ibid., p. 112). Both composers fall into the first of Bernard’s two categories of post-minimalist composers: the founding minimalists, who developed their approach, as opposed to the newer generation of composers emerging after minimalism’s birth, such as Adams and Michael Torke (ibid., p. 127). A similar observation by Gann again alludes to the emergence of music by a younger generation who chose to incorporate minimalist principles into their own approach (Gann 1998, unpag.).<sup>2</sup>

By exchanging the word ‘post-modernism’ for ‘post-minimalism’, Fink appropriates Hal Foster’s often-quoted expressions, the ‘post-modernism of resistance’ and the ‘post-modernism of reaction’ (Fink 2004, pp. 545-9). These terms

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<sup>2</sup> Schwarz writes that Adams ‘inherited the minimalist vocabulary and enriched it with a new expressive power and an important delight in stylistic juxtaposition’ (Schwarz 1996, p. 170).

prove useful in classifying two emerging trends that seemingly developed out of minimalism.<sup>3</sup> On one hand, the ‘post-minimalism of resistance’ composers, including Rhys Chatham, Mikel Rouse, Glenn Branca, Ben Neill, and the Bang on A Can members (Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe) adhered to strict mathematical processes under the branch of totalism.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the reactionary movement displayed the ‘composer as (mass-market) hero’, due to the commercial appeal of their music. These include Glass, Reich, Adams and Torke (Fink 2004, pp. 549-50). In addition to these established post-minimalists, the music of emerging musicians incorporating minimalist principles within their own approach also fits this ‘reactionary’ movement. As Chapter 2 of this thesis will demonstrate, the film music of Cliff Martinez and Michael Andrews can be accommodated within this ‘reactionary’ category due to its accessibility and commercial appeal. Chapter 3 will also discuss the recent output of Welsh composer Karl Jenkins, whose work is again compatible with the ‘reactionary’ trend, although his earlier work as a member of the progressive rock band Soft Machine during the 1970s is perhaps more akin to the ‘resistance’ approach. Nevertheless, the appropriation of rock or ethnic elements is indeed recognised as a general characteristic of post-minimalism (Gann 1998, unpag.), with a frequent crossing-over of stylistic boundaries.

Stylistic diversity is one of the characteristics that forms the inventory in Fig.

1.1. This diagram attempts to unpack some of the main post-minimal features as apparent in the writings of Gann, Bernard, and others such as K. Robert Schwarz, Dmitri Cervo and Alex Ross. From this figure, certain contradictions are immediately

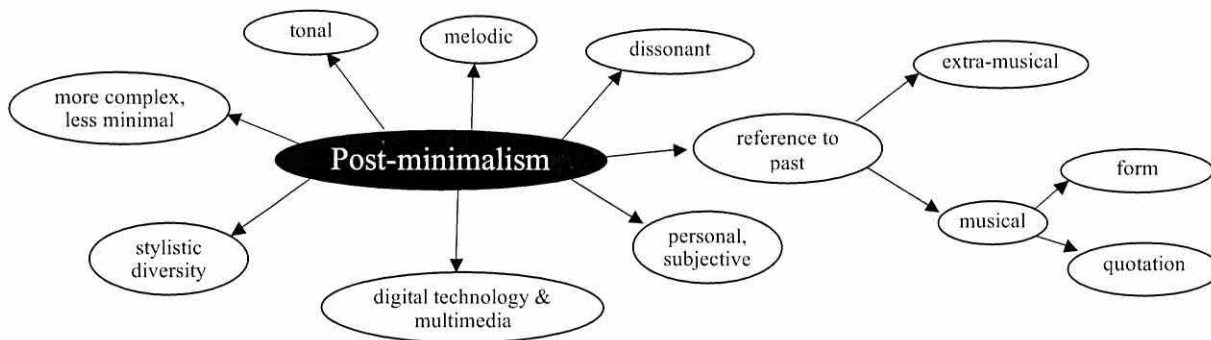
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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 5 will explore Foster’s often-quoted ‘dialectics of post-modernism’ in greater detail. See also Richardson 1999, p. 32 and Hutcheon 2002, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Gann defines ‘totalism’ as ‘a continuum of simultaneous, or sometimes successive, competing tempos’, whereby a rhythm drive (often relating to rock music) is superior to harmonic concerns (Gann 1993). Totalism’s dependence on mathematical processes is based on Joseph Schillinger’s theory of ‘periodicity’ (see Schillinger 1976, pp. 109-57).

apparent; tonality and atonality are both identified as post-minimal features by different writers, and the dichotomy between references to the past (both in musical and in extra-musical terms), against the creative and re-creative employment of digital technology, is another post-minimal paradigm.

**Fig. 1.1 Characteristics of post-minimalism**



So what other elements can be classified ‘post-minimal’? As stated earlier, minimalism had effectively become less minimal and aspired towards a complexity that could, at the same time, be accessible and understood within a tonal framework. Cervo highlights the melodic aspect of this emergent style.<sup>5</sup> While all of these features relate to a ‘post-minimalism of reaction’ due to their accessibility, Gann draws attention to a contrasting example in the complexity and dissonance of Michael Gordon’s *Thou Shalt! / Thou Shalt Not!* (Gann 1998, unpag.), which surely reflects a ‘post-minimalism of resistance’.

While it may be argued that post-minimalism can either offer a reaction or resistance to the past trend, the ‘resurgence of tonality’ described by Bernard (Bernard 2003, pp. 112-33), occurred at the same period as strict minimalist processes became

<sup>5</sup> Cervo writes that in post-minimal music ‘melodic lines may assume a main role in the composition, [or] they may appear alone or with Minimalist elements working as a background accompaniment for them’ (Cervo 1999, p. 42).

more diluted, less audible, and often involved the use of ‘hidden structures’ (Fink 2004, p. 542). In addition to this enigmatic dimension, another stylistic trait may be observed in Adams’s *Phrygian Gates* (1977-78) and *Shaker Loops* (1978) – two pieces that represent a shift towards a more ‘personal’ approach (Schwarz 1996, p. 177). According to Schwarz, Adams had ‘inherited the minimalist vocabulary and enriched it with a new expressive power and an important delight in stylistic juxtaposition’ (ibid., p. 170).<sup>6</sup>

Such stylistic fusion resulted in a twofold effect: minimalism embraced influences from various genres, and at the same time, reached out to affect other styles. Thus minimalist elements could also be found in the rock albums of David Bowie, Sigur Rós’s post-rock music, or in Brian Eno’s ambient compositions. Furthermore, stylistic boundaries were often obliterated by musical performances in this area. The Kronos Quartet, for instance, actively perform the works of minimalist composers, including Glass’s Quartets, Reich’s speech-sample work *Different Trains* (1988) and Riley’s multimedia installation *Sun Rings* (2002), while also engaging in more experimental projects, such as their reworking of Sigur Rós’s ‘Flugufrelsarinn’.<sup>7</sup> In addition to rock, post-rock and ambient categories, minimalism to this day shows an affinity with European techno music (which became known as ‘minimal techno’) and American pop and hip-hop styles, particularly in the US.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cervo also alludes to this eclectic element as a post-minimal trait (Cervo 1999, p. 42.).

<sup>7</sup> This recording was exclusively released on MP3 by Nonesuch in 2007. Further details may be found in the discography.

<sup>8</sup> In a newspaper article, Robert Worby comments on La Monte Young’s influence on popular music (Worby 1997, unpag.), while Susan McClary has written on the stylistic similarities between rap music and minimalism, with references to such artists as PJ Harvey and Prodigy (McClary 1999, pp. 289-98). McClary focuses on the sociological perspective of audiences, as opposed to offering analyses of such similarities in any real detail. More recently, tracks by such music producers as Timbaland and Will.i.am reveal the absorption of minimalist influences in current mainstream pop culture. The latter artist collaborated in 2009 with Cheryl Cole on a track entitled ‘3 Words’, which uses repetitive interlocking patterns on acoustic guitars and piano, coupled with electric guitar riffs and repetitive



Added to this, specific musical quotations are extensively borrowed, sampled and combined with new music that may be considered within the broad spectrum of post-minimalism. Re-mixes by DJ Spooky, The Orb, Alter Echo and Mr Scruff for instance<sup>9</sup> illustrate the applicability of minimalist music in new dance contexts,<sup>10</sup> with the juxtaposition of layers of pre-existing minimalist music with new material reflecting the suitability of combining the old and new. Indeed extra-musical references to the past are often made, which can equally be regarded as yet another characteristic of post-minimal development.

Gann, for instance, draws attention to the political subtexts evident in the works of New York composer Peter Gena,<sup>11</sup> while Reich's *Three Tales* (1998-2002) also carries several socio-political subtexts.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, despite the fact that Reich's opera illustrates the documentation of past events, it equally embraces the future in two ways. Firstly, the subject matter of its final act, 'Dolly', is centred on issues relating to genetic experimentation and cybernetics. Secondly, the use of

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vocal fragments – all of which allude to post-minimal characteristics due to the display of stylistic hybridism.

<sup>9</sup> Several examples can again be listed here, which include a sample of Reich's *City Life* by Paul D Miller (a.k.a. DJ Spooky – that Subliminal Kid), while The Orb quoted *Electric Counterpoint* in their electronic/ambient dance track 'Little Fluffy Clouds' (1990). Alter Echo reworked elements of Riley's *Dorian Reeds*, while Mr Scruff isolates units from Moondog's *Bird's Lament*, and incorporates them in repetitive layers in 'Get a Move On' (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Alex Ross comments on the influence of technology on post-minimal composers in Ross 2008, p. 521. The onset of digital sampling methods inevitably led to intertextual implications, whereby material could seamlessly be merged or edited (Jordan & Miller 2008, pp. 97-108). Gann, for instance, refers to composer Joshua Fried's employment of digital technology as an update to the tape-loop techniques developed by Reich (Gann 1998, unpag.). The use of digital technology in post-minimalism will be discussed shortly in greater detail.

<sup>11</sup> Gena's so-called 'socio-political portraits' include *McKinley* (1983), *Mother Jones* (1985), *John Henry* (1986) and *Joe Hill Fantasy* (1992-93). Each work deals with a specific individual or historic event: the first work listed above, for example, is centred on the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901. See <<http://www.petergena.com/political.html>> (Accessed 10 January 2010). Whether or not the incorporation of such extra-musical theme can be deemed exclusively 'post-minimal' is however open to debate. Two early minimalist works – Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966) – both serve as examples in which a historical or political sub-text is implied. See Reich 2002, pp. 19-22.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to Gordon's music as described by Gann, the use of dissonances (particularly tritones) in Reich's *Three Tales* is yet another example, in which extra-musical connotations are expressed, including the downfall of the Hindenburg airship in Act 1 and the nuclear detonation on Bikini Atoll in Act 2 (See Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion on 'Bikini').

digital sampling methods amalgamates pre-existing sonic, verbal and textual material within his work. Apart from Reich's multimedia efforts, other works include Glass's opera *Monsters of Grace* (1997), which employs CGI animation,<sup>13</sup> while Tod Machover's interdisciplinary opera *Death and the Powers* (2010-11) presents a futuristic theme by the fusion of science and music.<sup>14</sup>

The advent of the Internet also inevitably had implications on post-minimalism, as evident in Duckworth's online collaboration, *Cathedral Project*, which began in 2005 and continues to the present day.<sup>15</sup> Not only does this work demonstrate a considerable degree of global interactivity between musicians, but also an improvisational element that can perhaps be associated with Riley's earlier approach, while Duckworth attributes the random element of the work to the influence of Cage and Satie (Duckworth 2005, p. 90).

So, while the employment of emerging (re)creative technology can veritably be considered a post-minimal trait, writers such as John Richardson and Susan McClary have concluded that the movement concurrently acknowledges the musical past.<sup>16</sup> Somehow contradictory, however, Gann adamantly states that 'postminimalism has nothing to do with the past, least of all with European Romanticism; it builds on minimalism and looks forward' (Gann 1997, pp. 326-7).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Wilson wrote the libretto for *Monsters of Grace*, which also makes use of 13<sup>th</sup> century Islamic poetry. The visual components were designed by Jeff Kleiser and Diana Walczak at Synthespian Studios, who have also worked on such Hollywood productions as *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*. The opera has not been released on DVD, however extracts may be found on the Studio's website at <<http://synthespians.net>> (Last accessed 20 January 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Machover's work, produced in conjunction with MIT's Media Lab, follows on from his earlier *Brain Opera* (1996), which is discussed in Duckworth 2005, pp. 45-58. Interestingly enough, *Death and the Powers* features robotic characters designed by Cynthia Breazeal, who also took part in the final act of Reich's *Three Tales*, together with her robot called Kismet. Further details on the opera may be found at <<http://powers.media.mit.edu>> (Last accessed 20 January 2010).

<sup>15</sup> For more information on Duckworth's *Cathedral*, see Duckworth 2005, pp. 89-101.

<sup>16</sup> See McClary 2000, pp. 139-69 and Richardson 1999, pp. 19-52.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard refers to an article by Tom Johnson in the *Village Voice* written in 1981, which claims that Glass's *Music with Changing Parts* revealed 'an unmistakably Romantic sensibility on Glass's part'

Despite Gann's statement, it is irrefutable that early minimalism's avoidance of Western 'high-art' forms subsequently gave place to an integration of minimalist strategies within pre-existing musical forms.

As the following chapters will attempt to demonstrate, Glass is a prime example of a composer who draws upon the past, using symphonic, string quartet and operatic forms as structural resources for his works. In fact, the emergence of post-minimalist operas, other works for theatre, cinema and television<sup>18</sup> paved the way for a greater interaction between minimalism in multimedia contexts.<sup>19</sup> The application of minimalism and multimedia thus opposed a high-modernist aesthetic in favour of a post-modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* that could also be identified with popular culture.<sup>20</sup> Beryl Korot's employment of multiple feeds in Reich's digital operas, for instance, elicits an overt reference to pop music videos emerging since the dawn of MTV in 1981.

Indeed, while minimalism is increasingly regarded as modernist, the promotion of stylistic plurality and accessibility of post-minimalism is affiliated with post-modernism (Cervo 1999, pp. 40-41). Cervo refers to Jonathan Kramer's writings on the subject, in which he considers Reich's *Tehillim* (1981) as post-modern, in

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(Bernard 2003, p. 136), while Schwarz considers Adams's music as 'post-Romantic' (Schwarz 1996, p. 170).

<sup>18</sup> In the early 1990s, Torke wrote the intertextual television opera *King of Hearts* (1993), commissioned by Channel 4. With a libretto by Chris Rawlence, the opera is based on Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* (1857), and also quotes an extract out of Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835). This work equally illustrates Torke's self-referentiality due to extracts from the opera being re-worked as a suite entitled *Change of Address* (1997). See also Fawkes 2000, p. 202 and Schwarz 1996, unpag.

<sup>19</sup> Jelena Novak proposes the term 'post-opera' for her discussion on post-minimal theatrical works (see Novak 2007). Chapter 7 also refers to her article within the context of multiple narratives in opera.

<sup>20</sup> In his writings on postmodernism, Fredric Jameson considers 'mixed media' as 'the contemporary equivalent of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*', but notes however that it differs from the Wagnerian model as 'the "mix" comes first and redefines the media involved'. This, in Jameson's terms, undermines the autonomy of each media element. Wagner's framework, on the other hand, 'respected the "system" of the various fine arts and paid it tribute in the notion of some vaster overarching synthesis' (see Jameson 2009, pp. 171-2).

comparison with *Glass's Music in Fifths* (1969) as a modernist oeuvre (Kramer 1995, p. 25 in Cervo 1999, p. 40). Despite this fact, Kramer attributes the term 'antimodern' as opposed to 'postmodern' in a later essay to Torke's *Bronze* (1990), due to its 'yearning for the golden age of classicism and romanticism [that] perpetuates the elitism of art music' (Kramer 2002, p. 13). Nevertheless, Kramer considers the post-modern condition as equally 'anti-elitist' (ibid.), and elaborates on this notion by noting that it is characterised by 'fragmentation and discontinuities', 'multiple meanings and multiple temporalities' (ibid., p. 16).

Such features all resonate within the post-minimalist approach to composition. Nowhere is this sense of multiplicity more apparent than in multimedia scenarios, which instantly offer a platform for multiple layers of text, visual images and music. Indeed, multimedia is widely observed as an intrinsic part of post-modernist culture, often employed to represent technological and mechanical developments through artistic means since the late twentieth century and to the present day, in the so-called 'post-industrial' age in which science and technology have overtaken heavy industries (Lyotard 2005, p. 5). The next section of the chapter will investigate the reasons behind the frequent use of multimedia in post-modern and post-minimal contexts.

### **Why Multimedia?**

If the multiplicity of media associations is regarded as forming part of a post-modern aesthetic condition, why does minimalist – or more specifically post-minimal music – often become apparent in multimedia contexts? Who were the individuals that were responsible for this association, and why is it so effective? Post-minimal English composer Michael Nyman highlights John Cage's first 'Happening' at Black

Mountain College as ‘the first post-war mixed-media event’ in 1952 (Nyman 1999, p. 72). Since this event, the path for artistic collaboration between music and other media was soon mapped out. Cage’s happenings, with their roots firmly fixed in Dadaism (Kirby 1995, p. 17), led to the Fluxus movement, as practiced and developed by George Brecht, Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono, La Monte Young and their contemporaries. As Fluxus worked towards ‘the monostructural and nontheatrical qualities of the simple natural event, a game or a gag’ (Nyman 1999, p. 77), the simplicity of this mixed-media movement offers an indication of how the subsequent interaction between minimalism and other media could become possible.

From the 1960s onwards, the close affinity between minimal music and other media was seen in the collaborations between musicians, painters, choreographers, sculptors and filmmakers. Such an intrinsic relationship can best be explained in terms of the situation in which these artists worked. Glass recalls the close-knit nature of the artistic community in New York from the late 1960s onwards:

If we go back to the period of say the early 70s, the late 60s, what we’re talking about is a community of people that were living and working very much together [...] Sol Le Witt [...] Yvonne Rainer [...] Michael Snow, filmmaker [...] we were all at the same stage of our work, sharing actively with each other.<sup>21</sup>

Performances of minimalist music often took place in art galleries as opposed to concert halls, which fostered an inherently close social connection between the composers and other artists. In *Writings on Music*, Reich recalled how his social circle was ‘more involved with painters and sculptors than [...] other composers’ (Reich 2002, p. 220). Both Glass and himself were well acquainted with Richard

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<sup>21</sup> This is a transcript out of Glass’s recorded interview for *Audio Arts Magazine*, 6/i (1983).

Serra for example – Glass worked for a brief period as Serra’s assistant (McGrath 2005, unpag.).<sup>22</sup>

In addition to Serra, Glass collaborated with artist Chuck Close, who was active in the area of minimalism since the late 1960s – a period in which he began to draw several portraits of Glass.<sup>23</sup> Close developed a method of using computer technology to document every minute detail relating to his subjects, and presented the outcomes in pixelated artworks (Weintraub 1996o, pp. 146-51). This effect is illustrated in the most recent portrait of Glass entitled *Phil Spitbite* (1995), as reproduced in Fig. 1.2. Ten years later, in response to Chuck’s representation of the composer, Glass wrote *A Musical Portrait of Chuck Close* (2005). This two-movement piece reveals a distinct parallelism between minimalism in music and art, by the use of a common

method and a philosophy – a kind of minimalism, though that’s not a term that either man cares much for. Both artists work with very small elements, “bricks” Mr. Close sometimes calls them, discrete bits of information that are repeated and carefully varied to create a whole (McGrath 2005, unpag.).

**Fig. 1.2** Close’s ‘Phil Spitbite’



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<sup>22</sup> Further to his work as a sculptor, Serra had also worked on the production of the short film *Television Delivers People* (1973), and takes part in the finale of Reich’s video opera, *The Cave* (1994).

<sup>23</sup> Glass has also appeared in a documentary on Close, entitled *Chuck Close: A Portrait in Progress* (1998). Close’s objective approach to art is particularly related to minimalist music, as Weintraub further writes that ‘his art-making process involves receiving and dispensing visual information. Accuracy is its goal. In this way, his painting submit to the same criterion that guides today’s computer culture’ (Weintraub 1996, p. 147). In this respect, the recognition of technology and its fusion with art resounds with postmodernism.

This observation suitably illustrates the intersection between Close's art and Glass's music, pointing towards the viability of integrating post-minimal music with a static image. However, the next section of this chapter will attempt to answer the question of why is post-minimalism often effective in films and other media?

### **Why Post-minimalism *and* Multimedia?**

Some explanations for the use of post-minimalist music in film have been offered in a limited amount of recent research in this area. In her doctoral dissertation entitled *Unheard Minimalisms: The Functions of the Minimalist Technique in Film Scores* (2008),<sup>24</sup> Rebecca Eaton addresses the issue of meanings in mainstream films that engage with the minimalist music of Glass, Nyman and others, identifying the fact that the relationship between minimalism in film is an under-researched area (Eaton 2008, p. 2). She puts forward the plausible argument that the high rate of occurrence is primarily due to directorial use of temporary pieces of music, known in the industry as 'temp tracks', selected and applied during the production of the film (ibid., p. 90).<sup>25</sup> Such music is also often employed as it offers a 'different' musical style, and due to the fact that it holds a 'high cultural status' (ibid., p. 94). Other writers consider its modular nature as an ideal structure for film music, allowing the possibility for it to

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<sup>24</sup> The initial part of the dissertation's title is an allusion to Claudia Gorbman's publication, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (see Gorbman 1987). Her reference to the 'minimalist technique' takes into account Timothy Johnson's question of whether minimalism is in fact a style, aesthetic or alternatively a technique (Johnson 1994 pp. 742-73 in Eaton 2008, p. 25). In contrast to this present thesis, Eaton eschews the classification of the music discussed in the dissertation as 'post-minimalist', claiming that it causes 'problematic historical distinction of minimal vs. postminimal music' in the light of Bernard's writings, and also in order to avoid giving 'specific musical characteristic of these scores' (ibid.).

<sup>25</sup> The practice of using temp tracks in film soundtracks is also discussed in DesJardins 2006, pp. xvii-xviii.



be curtailed or extended in synchronisation with the visual montage (Tobias 2004, unpag.).

The lack of teleological function that often exists in repetitive music again allows for its syntax to be cut with relative ease. Furthermore, its neutrality or objectivity makes it an effective form of ‘background’ music (ibid.). In contradiction to this argument, however, research undertaken during the course of this thesis will highlight how post-minimalist music often *supports* extra-musical meaning in multimedia contexts. It can also interact on a structural level with visual elements, as the analysis of Glass’s music in *Notes on a Scandal* and *Dracula* for instance will reveal in Chapters 4 and 7 respectively.

While minimalism is duly considered accessible and popular, maintaining Eaton’s proposal of its ‘difference’ confirms its ability as a real alternative to the ubiquitous post-Romantic style often heard in mainstream, or ‘popular’, film music.<sup>26</sup> Glass’s often uncluttered textures and the homogeneity of his orchestrations offer understatement to the cinematic narrative, while instances of symphonic writings provide a more dynamic edge to the film, hence alluding to the techniques of his Hollywood contemporaries in this respect. While Zimmer, Williams, Kamen and other ‘mainstream’ composers tend to underpin drama or action by music in a direct and often stereotypical manner,<sup>27</sup> the pervading nature of repetitive rhythmic figurations in minimalist music can offer emotional content – or a psychological

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<sup>26</sup> The assimilation of Austro-Germanic tonal music by mainstream Hollywood composers, within the category of ‘post-Romanticism’, differs from John Adams’s style, as discussed earlier in this chapter with regard to the writings of Schwarz. Eaton writes on the ‘resurgence of the symphonic, Romantic idiom’, which displays ‘lush orchestral scoring’ since Hollywood’s ‘Golden Age’ in Eaton 2008, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Even Glass in some instances draws on this affective stereotype. In the soundtrack to the *Taking Lives* thriller, certain dramatic points in the film are heightened by overly dramatic music, implying a parody of Hollywood compositional techniques.



dimension – to the overall production. In other words, using minimalist music in film can paradoxically achieve simplicity and complexity at the same time.

Despite the fact that these observations underline an interaction between post-minimal music and other media, a deeper analysis of the interactivity between music, image and text requires the application of established theoretical methodologies. The remainder of this chapter will therefore map out two frameworks that can be employed to analyse specific post-minimal case studies.

### **Methodological Frameworks**

Applying methodologies developed by Nicholas Cook and Rebecca Leydon might effectively lead to gaining some theoretical explanations for the practical relationship between minimalist music and other media.<sup>28</sup> The former approach allows for the study of the relationship between various media, and the meanings formed therein, while the latter approach equips the analysis with resources to study narrativity in repetitive contexts. As of 1998, Cook could rightfully bemoan that ‘there [existed] virtually nothing in the way of a general theory of multimedia [...] for analysis of the various – and diverse – genres’ (Cook 1998, p. v). In the preface to his study on multimedia analysis, the objective to develop a new methodology that ‘seeks to extend the boundaries of music theory to encompass – or at least map the frontier with – words and moving images’ (ibid., p. vi) is set out.

Recent scholarly work by Eaton, Sean Atkinson, and ap Siôn and Evans has sought to apply Cook and Leydon’s theories to their own research, which focuses on

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<sup>28</sup> Sections relating to the theories of Cook and Leydon have been developed out of research undertaken for the first part of my Masters programme; the findings of which were published in ap Siôn and Evans 2007, 2009. The following sections rework part of this research.

various aspects of minimalism and multimedia. Eaton sets out to employ both Cook and Leydon's methodologies in her analysis of the films, although these approaches are not applied rigorously, nor are they further built upon to any real extent.<sup>29</sup>

Atkinson, on the other hand, provides a more theoretically based structure to the work, and again refers to Cook's research, while analysing the music of Reich, Adams and Glass in particular.

In the opening part of his dissertation, Atkinson argues that Cook's methodology 'fails to address the underlying meaning of the composition' (Atkinson 2009, p. xii), and 'fails to allow the analyst to view the work in a new light' (ibid., p. 1).<sup>30</sup> Due to Cook's reliance on binary opposition, Atkinson considers that it is difficult to analyse the tripartite relationship between music, text and image (ibid., p. 10), and he consequently develops a triangular-based model for multimedia analysis.<sup>31</sup> Applying Cook's models to specific case studies, namely two television commercials, can test whether or not Atkinson's criticisms are indeed justified.

### **Cook's 'Three Basic Models of Multimedia'**

During the initial stages of formulating his theoretical models, Cook poses pertinent questions that penetrate deeply into the subject of multimedia analysis. He first seeks to isolate the various media used in a particular work, and examines the interrelationships formed within them in order to evaluate their overall interactive

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<sup>29</sup> An extensive amount of Eaton's dissertation is afforded to contextualise the films, even though the application of Cook and Leydon's approaches is presented as a primary aim of the research. Much of the analyses presented are descriptive as opposed to being based on theoretic methodology.

<sup>30</sup> Atkinson cites ap Siôn and Evans 2007 in Atkinson 2009, p. 9.

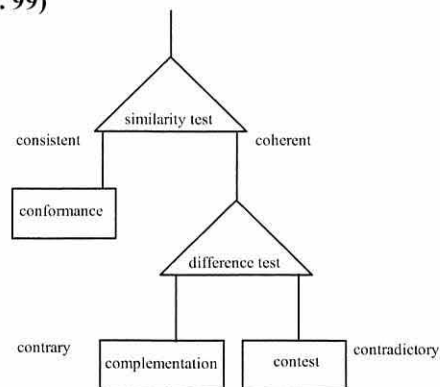
<sup>31</sup> The triangular nature of this model is not related to the semiological tripartition as formulated by Nattiez (Nattiez 1990b).

effect. This procedure might best be explained by a reference to a set of questions that arise:

How far does each medium create the same effect when heard or seen on its own as when experienced in the context of the [instance of multimedia] as a whole? Where it isn't possible to separate the media physically, is it easy to focus on one or the other, or is there a strong perceptual fusion between them? How far does each medium create the effect of being complete and self-sufficient, and how far does it seem to embody a meaning of its own? (Cook 1998, p. 134).

In order to understand how the interaction between media operates, Cook constructed 'three basic models of multimedia', as reproduced in Fig. 1.3, that equips the analyst with a framework based on linguistic metaphors.

**Fig. 1.3** Reproduction of Cook's 'Three Basic Models of Multimedia' (see Cook 1998, p. 99)



According to this flowchart, it appears that the three models of *conformance*, *complementation* and *contest* are dependent on a test of *similarity* or *difference*. Cook distinguishes between *consistency* and *coherency* (which has implications on whether or not the relationship passes the similarity test) by referring to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's description of the metaphor 'Love is a journey'. In their explanation of this metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson offer three phrases that are related, namely 'This relationship is a dead-end street', 'We've gotten off the tracks' and 'Our

marriage is on the rocks' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 45). Cook explains that although these secondary phrases are coherent – being three varied forms of the primary metaphor, they may also be conceived as *consistent*, and thereby open to different interpretations. The phrases 'dead-end street', 'off the tracks' and 'on the rocks' are respectively related to a car, train and boat, therefore being different forms of transport. This demonstrates different levels of meaning between *coherence* and *consistency*: if a multimedia relationship is deemed *consistent*, then it passes the similarity test and therefore belongs to the *conformance* model.

If a multimedia relationship fails to be *consistent*, however, it is subjected to the difference test entailing that the relationship be deemed *contrary* or *contradictory* and ultimately belonging to the *complementation* or *contest* models, respectively.<sup>32</sup> According to Cook, 'contrariety might be glossed as undifferentiated difference; contradiction implies an element of collision or confrontation between the opposed terms' (Cook 1998, p. 102). While the *contest* model requires that 'each medium strives to deconstruct the other, and so create space for itself', the *complementation* model is seen as 'the mid-point' between *conformance* and *contest*, wherein 'different media are seen as occupying the same terrain, but conflict is avoided' (ibid., pp. 103-4).

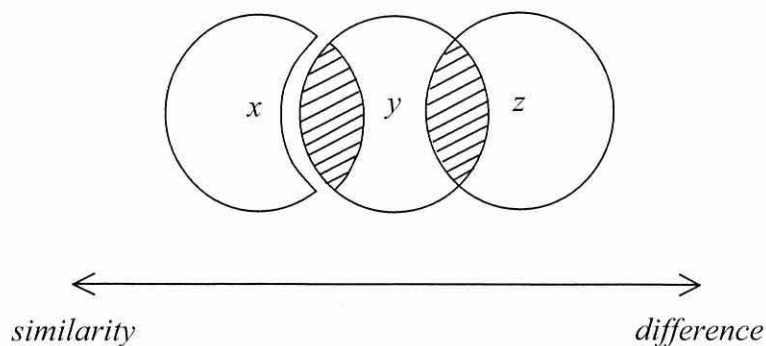
Building on Cook's theoretical models, Fig. 1.4 outlines the relationship between *conformance*, *complementation* and *contest*. As shown below, the *conformance* model (*x*), denoting *similarity* between multimedia elements, is separated from the two models of *difference*. Its relation to the *complementation* model (*y*) is recognised by means of the hatched portion that represents the common

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<sup>32</sup> The formulation of these models were partly based on Algirdas Greimas's theory on narrative grammar and his 'semiotic square', which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

ground, or the ‘same terrain’ in Cook’s terms (Cook 1998, pp. 103-4). At the opposite end of the scale, the *contest* model ( $z$ ) is also connected to ( $y$ ) through the hatched portion; the relationship between ( $y$ ) and ( $z$ ) is understood as being closer than between ( $x$ ) and ( $y$ ) as both are, to a varying degree, forms of *differences*.

**Fig. 1.4 Supplementary explanatory model**



### ***Koyaanisqatsi* and ‘It’s only a car’**

In 2006, the car manufacturer BMW launched a televised campaign entitled ‘It’s only a car’,<sup>33</sup> which includes a quotation from Glass’s soundtrack to a film entitled *Koyaanisqatsi*, specifically the scene entitled ‘Pruit Igoe’. Originally released in 1982, the title of Glass’s work translates from the Hopi language as ‘life out of balance’.<sup>34</sup> As a collaborative project with the director Godfrey Reggio, *Koyaanisqatsi* depicts a non-verbal view of life in the late 1970s and early ’80s. Quintessentially post-modern, the work is centred on visual observations of human

<sup>33</sup> The BMW ‘It’s only a car’ campaign was strategically introduced in different instalments during January 2006. The WCRS Agency received the commission, directed by Daniel Barber and created by Leslie Ali, Yann Jones and Simon Robinson.

<sup>34</sup> Positing Glass’s borrowing of the Hopi language within a broader musical and cultural context, Bruno Lessard notes: ‘The music that Glass writes for the *Qatsi* trilogy emphasizes temporal, repetitive, and rhythmic modes of address and reveals a fundamental awareness of the cultural and philosophical issues central to the Hopi world picture’ (Lessard 2009, p. 497).

intervention with nature. Furthermore, the work reflects late-twentieth-century developments in technology, mechanics and consumerism primarily through the media of music and vision.

Analysis of the BMW commercial's verbal narrative forms the logical starting point to this study of the relationship between Glass's work and its new context. As shown in the transcript of Fig. 1.5, the poetically listed features of the non-specific car model (ranging from the most fundamental elements such as 'nuts and bolts' to the most sophisticated, starting with 'intelligent wipers') are encased within the notion that a BMW 'is only a car'.<sup>35</sup> The technological features of the car are reflected by the use of poetic effects, including the alliterative 'sensors and sound' as well as rhyme; this occurs for the first time in 'mapping ... tracking'. However, the depiction of the car as 'only a car' expresses a degree of false modesty – by applying Cook's theory, this is in *contest* with the underlying meaning of the commercial. The textual slogan revealed in conjunction with the manufacturer's logo at the conclusion of the commercial affirms that the car is 'The Ultimate Driving Machine', clearly *conflicting* with the spoken narrative, and thus an example of reverse psychology by the advertising company. Through an implied message, BMW is, in fact, much more than 'only a car'.

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<sup>35</sup> According to Guy Cook, the textual content of advertisements usually falls into one of the following categories: 'poems', "'borrowed'" and commissioned poems', 'jingles', 'borrowed songs' and 'the prosodic ad' (Cook 1992, pp. 120-27).

**Fig. 1.5 BMW commercial narrative**

Distribution of  
musical material

*A* It's only a car.  
*B* A car is a car is a car.

With nuts and bolts  
and leather and cogs  
and steel and wood  
and glass.

*A* Intelligent wipers  
and head-up displays,  
alloy and oil,  
sensors and sound,  
*A* digital mapping and satellite tracking,  
*C* twists and turns and smiles and miles  
and one little key.

*A* A car.  
It's only a car.

Two fundamental types of images form the basis of the commercial's visual dimension: the atmospheric and descriptive. The atmospheric images mainly consist of moonlit shots of forestry (as shown in the Fig. 1.6 snapshot) as well as bird's-eye cityscape views of, for example, spaghetti junctions and multiple-lane motorways. The descriptive element is the close-up images of the materials used in the construction of the car: these images *conform* to the descriptive text, as the features listed are visually represented in their most basic form: an image of a tree, for example, is visually shown when the narrator informs us that the car contains 'wood'. Furthermore, the fact that the commercial draws attention to the car's use of wood – an organic element in a predominantly mechanised and synthetic metal product – may be perceived as the manufacturer's attempt at combining natural elements with humanity's technological advances, which will later become more apparent in light of post-modern theories.

The use of moonlit scenery *conforms* to the narrator's delivery of the text, whereby a sense of mystery, solemnity and quietude is expressed; this is thus a clear

relationship between the text and the visual images. The commercial's visual dimension expresses a sense of luxury and comfort that the car is able to provide when driving through different driving conditions – either the uninhabited countryside at night-time, or alternatively a city's rush-hour.

Fig. 1.6 BMW commercial screen snapshot



Glass's music *conforms* to the atmospheric scenery employed in the commercial due to its minor tonality and solemn ostinati in the *A* material (alternating *a* and *e* pitches in the bass). The transcription contained in Ex. 1.1 further demonstrate how the chromatic nature of the *B* melody and the rhythmic imbalance also adds to this effect, while the *C* section (not shown) uses tritones.<sup>36</sup> In addition to this aesthetic contribution, the music also interacts at a structural level with the text: the concluding words, 'a car, it's only a car', (being a retrograde and compacted version of the opening text) are in close proximity to the music's concluding *A* strophe, as shown in Fig. 1.5. Structural relations are, however, limited to this coincidence alone as although the music displays strophic tendencies due to its *ABABACA* organisation, the poetry is mainly through-composed.

Ex. 1.1 Aural transcription of 'Pruit Igoe' from *Koyaanisqatsi*



<sup>36</sup> The modular structure of Glass's music in the commercial does not syntactically follow the original pathway in *Koyaanisqatsi*. However Glass explains that as the film 'doesn't have a clear-cut beginning, middle or end' it is possible to 'rearrange its elements in various ways', which in fact had occurred (Berg 1990, p. 136).



The breakthrough of the *C* material towards the commercial's conclusion is of particular significance due to its interrelation with the text. In conjunction with the word 'miles' (as emphasised by the narrator), the onset of a new harmonic progression at this point attempts to lure the prospective purchaser into the image of the open road, and the pleasurable journeys that he/she would be able to make in such a luxurious car. The commercial's conclusion, however, brings the prospective purchaser back to reality, by recapitulating the opening words and repeating the music's *A* strophe. The close relation between the text and the music therefore points towards a conforming relationship.

### **Why *Koyaanisqatsi*?**

In order to identify the reason (if any) for employing this particular musical extract in the campaign, the relationship between the BMW commercial and the origin of its music, *Koyaanisqatsi* needs to be addressed. Establishing the underlying relationship between the commercial and the originating source of the music requires consideration of the general context of *Koyaanisqatsi* as well as the specific scene in which the music is performed, namely 'Pruit Igoe'. The title of the scene derives from the name of an abandoned 'high-modernist' housing complex in Missouri, designed by the architect of the World Trade Center, Minoru Yamasaki (Neveline 1998, pp. 114-8).<sup>37</sup> In Charles Jencks's terms, the demolition of the 'Pruitt-Igoe' apartments in 1972 represented 'the "death" of modern architecture and its ideology

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<sup>37</sup> According to Robert Burns Neveline, the building project symbolised 'the homogenizing, the deadening, power of standardization effective by the cooperation of big ideas with big money' (Neveline 1998, p. 115).

of progress, which offered technical solutions to social problems' (Jencks 1996, p. 30).<sup>38</sup>

A parallel may be drawn between the symbolic destruction of the buildings, and the post-modernity in Glass's music, through its combination of the old and the new, its accessibility and its partial acceptance of tonality and conventional instrumentation. Furthermore, the use of this music in the BMW commercial again reflects its suitability within a late-capitalist era, by focusing on the affluence of the period. The commercial's text is intrinsically post-modern, as it looks both at the past and at the future – firstly by listing the more primitive elements of the car in the first section ('nuts and bolts', 'wood' etc.), and subsequently the more futuristic attributes. Such a technique is also apparent in post-modern architecture, as Jencks comments on 'the combination of modern techniques with something else (usually traditional building) in order for architecture to communicate with the public and a concerned minority, usually architects' (ibid., p. 29). In fact, by referring to the car as 'only a car', this presents an ironic element that is again a post-modern element. Jencks draws attention to uses of irony in architecture, stating that 'all the creators who could be called post-modern keep something of a modern sensibility, some intention which distinguishes their work from that of revivalists, be it irony, parody, displacement, complexity, eclecticism, realism, or any number of contemporary tactics or goals' (ibid., p. 30).

But how does Glass's music operate in its original context? The scene opens with a cityscape scene from afar, followed by close-up shots of skyscrapers. Such a contrast between background and foreground perspectives are relevant to the contrast between the 'atmospheric' and the 'descriptive' scenes of the BMW commercial.

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<sup>38</sup> Graham Allen refers to Jencks's commentary on the Pruitt-Igoe demolition in Allen 2000, pp. 185-6.

Following these brief scenes, the remainder of 'Pruit Igoe' is based on images of destruction, comprising derelict buildings, rubble, poverty and graffiti.

It might strongly be suggested that the solemn and chromatic nature of the music *conforms* to the building complex's demise. Nevelidine describes how it 'crumbles dramatically, along with other architectural failures, in a heap of dust on screen, descending along with Glass's broken scales' (Nevelidine 1998, p. 116). This observation confirms how Glass's music is integrated tightly with Reggio's cinematography (and vice versa). Nevertheless, these visual images *conflict* with the BMW commercial's prosperous cityscape and the lonely forest terrain that represents nature, and furthermore, they bear no relation to the superiority implied in the concluding slogan, 'The Ultimate Driving Machine'. The meaning of the music in *Koyaanisqatsi* therefore differs to its function in this commercial and demonstrates a *contesting* relationship.

Notwithstanding this observation, the proclamation of the car as the 'Ultimate Driving Machine' is indeed relative to the general theme of *Koyaanisqatsi*. It reflects humanity's technological and mechanical advances, and its interaction or intervention with natural life. Such a message is reinforced even further by the use of the word 'machine' as opposed to 'car' in the concluding slogan. The atmospheric visual scenes of the commercial are divisible into images of the forest and images of the city, thereby reflecting a dichotomy between nature and civilisation – a dual theme consistent with the original context, *Koyaanisqatsi*. Furthermore, bird's-eye view of urban life was an intrinsic part of the film's scenery, which serves as a further similarity to the commercial. Consequently, as both the film and the commercial share similar characteristics, yet also displaying differences, it would therefore appear that the relationship is based on *complementation*.

## ***Koyaanisqatsi* and the Carbon Trust**

A different extract out of the soundtrack to the film, namely from the ‘Clouds’ scene, has been employed in an earlier television commercial. In 2005, the Carbon Trust broadcasted an advertising campaign to raise ‘awareness of the effect of climate change and encourage organisations to cut carbon emissions’, commissioned by the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs.<sup>39</sup> On their website, Defra outlines their mission statement behind the commercial, explaining that it comprises archived visual material of J Robert Oppenheimer, the so-called ‘Father of the Atom Bomb’, observing the first ever example of this weapon being tested in 1945. The following text is the narrated statement heard during the commercial:

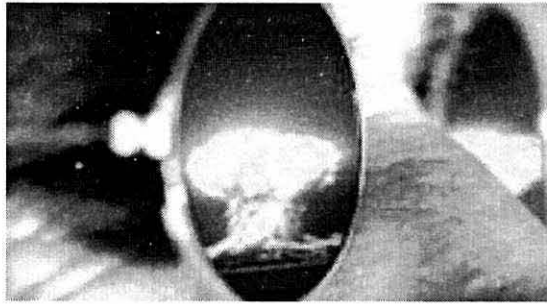
One man has stood where we all are today. When he saw what he had done he said: “I am become the destroyer of worlds”. Now we all have to face up to what we have done.

This statement compares the consequences of humanity’s effect on the environment with that of the destruction caused by Oppenheimer’s creation. Oppenheimer’s actions, i.e. ‘what he has done’, are visually represented by black and white images of an individual observing the bomb test (see Fig. 1.7). This is subsequently followed by colour images of electric grids, commerce and multiple-lane traffic which visually represents the consequences of ‘what we have done’. The commercial’s concluding scenes consist of clouds and the sea that represent nature.

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<sup>39</sup> Defra website <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2005/climate-0616.htm>> (Last accessed 28 February 2006).

Fig. 1.7 Carbon Trust commercial screen snapshot



Not only does this commercial reflect the subtext in Glass and Reggio's work, but also reverberates with the visual scenery and cinematic techniques employed. The testing of an atomic bomb (and the aftermath scene of the rising mushroom-shaped clouds), electricity pylons, cityscapes, clouds and the sea are all omnipresent visual elements in *Koyaanisqatsi*, as in the Carbon Trust commercial. As the title suggests, 'Clouds' focuses on the movement of clouds in the sky – a scene that is also included in the commercial's conclusion.<sup>40</sup> From a musical perspective, oscillating tones and semitones, as well as rapid semiquaver ostinati of a single pitch represent the clouds' fluttering motion.

More specifically, the abrupt harmonic changes – alternating between A minor (2<sup>nd</sup> inversion) and F<sup>#</sup> minor (root position), thereby creating a mixture of *c* and *c*<sup>#</sup> pitches – are unsettling and possibly a reflection of nature's unpredictability. Furthermore, the placement of these oscillating chords as bottom-heavy triads in the brass section contributes with dark undertones that reflect the greyness and density of the brooding clouds.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to this colour is the distinctive material heard in the upper registers of the brass section, comprising the repetition of a descending diatonic

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<sup>40</sup> The concluding musical segment of the commercial derives from the subsequent scene in *Koyaanisqatsi*, entitled 'Resource', where a descending second inversion A minor chord is repeated in triplets and in contrary motion to the bass.

<sup>41</sup> In an interview with Charles Berg, Glass explained how he chose to use brass instruments in the cloudscape scene order to give density to the visual images, in portrayal of the clouds as an 'awesome magnificence of nature' (Berg 1990, p. 138).

scale through a major third ( $c^\# - b - a$ ). This spatial disparity possibly represents the distance between the earth and the sky.

Studying the relationship between the commercial's text, visual images and music would reveal that the environmental repercussion of Oppenheimer's actions as an individual, as well as humanity's effect in general *conforms* to the visual scenery displayed on-screen. Given that the scene from *Koyaanisqatsi* as well as the commercial share similarities in their portrayal of clouds, the visual relationship is therefore *conforming*. Furthermore, it is apparent that the underlying message of human intervention with nature forms the overall subject matter of both works, therefore demonstrate yet another *conforming* relationship. As the music in *Koyaanisqatsi* and the commercial share similar meanings, it may be concluded that the overall relationship is *conformance*.

Cook's three basic models are undoubtedly useful in analysing a diverse range of music in conjunction with other media. Given the intertextual nature of such relationships, whereby several different meanings need to be ascertained, such an approach might be regarded as overly simplistic. In this respect, Atkinson's criticism is justified to a certain extent, although there are no restrictions on combining different models in order to show how a multimedia piece might simultaneously operate in different forms.

Such apparent criticisms of Cook's approach raises the question of what other method can be applied instead? While this method has demonstrated that it can analyse the meanings formed between different media, Leydon's 'typology of minimalist tropes' aims towards studying aspects of temporality and narrativity in minimalist music.

## Repetitive effects in post-minimal music

In her article on minimalist tropes, Leydon discusses how the use of different forms of repetition in minimalist music has different resulting effects upon the listener.

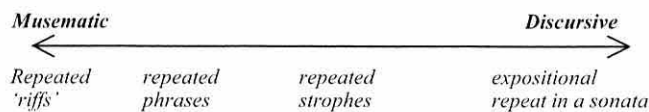
‘Musical syntax’ or the ‘linear trajectory’, according to Leydon, is superseded by ‘obstinate motivic repetition’ that ultimately results in varied subjective interpretations (Leydon 2002, unpag.). With reference to Naomi Cumming’s work on ‘the musical subject’ (Cumming 1997, pp. 129-52), Leydon articulates the three parameters that are attributed to subjectivity as defined by Cumming. Firstly, the *timbre* (the ‘grain of the musical sound’) has an effect upon the listener – an effect that had previously been identified by Roland Barthes, who argued that the ‘grain of the voice’ extends beyond the *timbre* and that ‘the *significance* it opens cannot better be defined, indeed, than by the very friction between the music and something else’ (Barthes 1977, p. 185).

Cumming’s second parameter, *gesture*, allows ‘a listener [to gain] access to a vicarious kinaesthesia: physical gestures of the body serve as interpretants for motivic shapes, rhythms and contours’ (Leydon 2002, unpag.). Thirdly, and finally, *syntax* is related to ‘causality and ‘intentionality’ (ibid.), i.e. the direction of the music, or in Schenkerian analytic terms, goal-orientated motion. While non-minimalist music ‘speaks, moves and intends’, in this particular context, however, ‘syntax is undermined by the obstinate repetition of a single motivic gesture’ (ibid.).

However, as evident in the characteristics outlined in Fig. 1.1, post-minimal music has become more complex: simultaneous uses of repetitive layers of music demonstrate that it offers more than just ‘a single motivic gesture’. Some considerations on the employment of different forms of repetition may be found in

Richard Middleton’s research into popular music, which prove to be equally as relevant to minimalist or post-minimal music (Middleton 1990). Leydon refers to Middleton’s ‘repetition strategies’ in which differentiation is apparent between

**Fig. 1.8** Reproduction of Middleton’s repetition strategies (see Leydon 2002)



‘musematic’ repetitions, i.e. the repetition of ‘short motivic fragments’, and ‘discursive’ repetitions of longer unit lengths. Fig. 1.8 is a reproduction of Leydon’s diagram that represents Middleton’s strategy (Middleton 1990, p. 269). The actual type of repetition employed in a piece has structural implications: ‘musematic’ repetition ‘tends to project a single-levelled formal structure ... while the discursive strategy projects a hierarchically organized discourse – as in “strophic form”’ (Leydon 2002, unpag.).

Building on Middleton’s research, Leydon offers a typology of six minimalist tropes that represent different subjective states. These tropes are listed and described as the *maternal* (a ‘holding environment’); *mantric* (‘a state of mystical transcendence’); *kinetic* (‘a collectivity of dancing bodies’); *totalitarian* (an ‘involuntary state of unfreedom’); *motoric* (‘indifferent mechanized process’) and the *aphasic* (implying ‘notions of cognitive impairment, madness or logical absurdity’) (ibid.).

Such a typology might also be extended or adapted to the present context of post-minimalist multimedia works. The interrelation between the visual and musical elements in Glass’s second instalment of the Qatsi trilogy, *Powaqqatsi* (1988), which depicts ‘life in transformation’, results in different repetitive effects that relate to



Leydon's typology – particularly the *kinetic* and the *motoric* types. The opening scene, 'Serra Pelada' for example, depicts workers in the open air who toil en-masse in harsh working conditions: this clearly points towards the *kinetic* type, or the 'collectivity of dancing bodies' according to Leydon. Although the workers are not dancing, a strong emphasis on collective bodily movement pervades, which is further intensified by the application of slow-motion visual techniques.

*Powaaqatsi*'s eighth scene, 'Train to Sao Paolo', offers the image of a rapidly progressing train that is connected to a seemingly infinite number of cargo carriages passing in the foreground of the screen. This footage is juxtaposed musically with percussive repetition and the imitation of a train's sounding horn. Although the music develops subtly and gradually, a clear lack of goal-orientated motion is apparent; this is visually represented by the camera's locked-off position, as the viewer is oblivious to the origin of the train's overall direction. The resulting effect of repetition in this scenario relates to Leydon's *motoric* type in which an 'indifferent mechanized process' takes place. Applying this trope also reflects the film's overall subject matter, which aims to portray human productivity and mechanisation, and its global repercussions.

This train theme is also omnipresent in Reich's *Different Trains*. Naomi Cumming's article on the work analyses from a listener's perception, observing that the train, as a 'shared sign', evokes different feelings as the music progresses (Cumming 1997). The title of the work is in itself indicative of this feature. Repetition's function, or functions, therefore varies as the composition unfolds, and offers different semiological meanings to the train. On one hand, it can have nostalgic implications that evoke 'positivity and regression in time (like a pleasure

trip on a renovated steam train)' (Cumming 1997, p. 131).<sup>42</sup> In contrast to this somewhat sentimental image of the steam train, Reich's work also carries a sinister undertone in its portrayal of the impending death that faced individuals on their journeys to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Opposition, as apparent in the conflict between the portrayal of the train as a sentimental form of transport in a bygone era and that implying horror, entrapment and death, is characteristically Reichian and is indicative of his philosophical interests. Through musical means, Reich therefore expresses the positive and negative attributes of what Cumming refers to as the 'shared sign' in a manner that resounds with Adorno's negative dialectics.

With reference to Leydon's typology as outlined earlier, the motion of the train – the 'primitive "drive"' according to Cumming – would surely be an instance of *motoric* repetition. Cumming notes that 'in the first movement, an engagement with the motoric rhythm can alternate with the recognition of "a steam train" as a nostalgic object' (ibid., p. 138). This 'nostalgic' element suggests a relation to Leydon's concept of the *maternal* trope – although not reverting as far back to what Leydon describes as 'an imagined state of prelinguistic origins', nostalgia might certainly allude to early childhood memories, or to past times. On the other hand, the sinister connotations of the train are undoubtedly related to the *totalitarian* concept, described by Leydon as evoking 'an involuntary state of unfreedom'.

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<sup>42</sup> An earlier example of this effect may be found in Benjamin Britten's *Night Mail* (1939). In collaboration with the poet, W. H. Auden, Britten was commissioned by the General Post Office to compose music for this short film depicting the motion of a steam train through music, text and monochrome video footage. Britten's music for this documentary is discussed in Wright 1963, pp. 779-80.

## Conclusions

Both Leydon's typology and Cook's models offer viable methods of discussing the relationships between post-minimal music and other media in various contexts. The application of Cook's theory has demonstrated that meanings can in fact be drawn out of the interrelationships formed between media. In this respect, Atkinson's criticism of this approach is disputed. This multifaceted approach does indeed 'allow the analyst to view the work in a new light' (Atkinson 2009, p. 1). Nevertheless, due to the complexity and multiplicity of meanings in post-minimal music, Cook's models might justifiably be considered to be too simplistic. As a result, advancing a post-structural method might be useful. And again, despite its considerable value in a certain amount of scenarios, Leydon's typology is not all-encompassing enough. The use of repetition in the BMW or Carbon Trust commercials, for instance, fails to conform to any of the types, therefore there is scope to build on this typology in future research. Nonetheless, Leydon's approach confirms that extra-musical meanings can be drawn out of repetition, particularly when used in conjunction with other media.

But what other methodologies can be used to study post-minimal multimedia? If attention is returned to the Fig. 1.1 inventory, which outlines the various characteristics of this genre, other analytical approaches might be considered as a result. For instance, given the fact that the music is often based on tonal frameworks, applying more traditional methods of analysis, including Schenker and set theoretic techniques can unveil voice leading strategies and pitch-class commonalities respectively. In addition to the tonal qualities of post-minimal music, Fig. 1.1 also indicates that references to the past, both in musical and extra-musical are often apparent. Given this fact, it would seem logical that an intertextual approach could be

applied to study the internal and external references in the music, as will occur during the course of this thesis.

## **Chapter Two**

## **‘The Satisfaction of a Drive?’**

### **Post-minimalism, (Post-)structuralism and Car Commercials\***

Difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing

(Deleuze 2004, p. 69)

In light of the apparent deficiencies in Cook’s methodology, a key question that might be raised is what other approaches can be taken to discuss media interrelationships? For the first time, some of Gilles Deleuze’s post-structural theories, combined with the premises of his contemporary, Michel Foucault, will be assembled into an analytical framework designed for multimedia analysis.<sup>1</sup> Offered as either an alternative or a supplement to Cook’s ostensibly structuralist approach, theories surrounding this model will initially be presented and explained, followed by its application to a series of case studies from the area of film and media – an area in which Deleuze himself was well informed, as indicated by his research into cinematic experiences (see Deleuze 1989 and 1992). Several writers have taken onboard Deleuze’s approach to film theory: Anna Powell’s research into the expression of ‘altered states’ in film leads to her analysis of such films as *Donnie Darko* (Powell 2007). Incidentally, her discussion about this particular film will tie in with a study of its music within a new context, namely a television commercial.

Over the last two decades, aspects of Deleuze’s post-structural theories have been applied to the study of minimalism only by a few writers, namely Wim Mertens,

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\* This chapter is an expanded version of a conference paper entitled ‘Mediating Differences: Post-structuralism and multimedia analysis’, delivered at the Society for Music Analysis’s TAGS weekend at Durham University on 2 May 2009.

<sup>1</sup> Foucault’s writings on music are equally sparse, although an interview with Pierre Boulez on the subject of contemporary music can be found in *Perspectives of New Music* (Foucault & Boulez 1985).

Robert Burns Neveldeine, Robert Fink and Brian Hulse.<sup>2</sup> Fink's *Repeating Ourselves* (Fink 2005) goes to some length to associate Deleuze's theories with the anti-dialectical qualities of minimalism, while Hulse upholds his premise that repetition can indeed result in different experiences.<sup>3</sup> Minimalism according to Fink is comparable to 'Lacanian tendencies in French thought, turning for an interpretative matrix to the anti-teleological *jouissance* of French feminism and the anti-Oedipal 'libidinal philosophy'' (Fink 2005, p. 5). Suggesting a similarity with disco music, minimalism as the quintessence of libidinal philosophy 'offers liberation through "pure" desire, not dialectical struggle' (ibid., p. 37).<sup>4</sup>

The earliest of the three to refer to this concept, Mertens only briefly touches upon Deleuzian theory in *American Minimal Music* (Mertens 1988), wherein he writes 'the essence of an object [...] results from its difference from other objects. This is contrary to the dialectical method in which an object only exists through its neutralisation of the opposition' (ibid., p. 120). Ten years after Mertens's survey of minimalism as practiced by American composers, Robert Neveldeine brought together Freudian-Lacanian, Foucaultian and Deleuzian-Guattarian theories in his study of romanticism, postmodernism and their effects upon the human body (Neveldeine 1998). These theories are briefly discussed in his fourth chapter, which also posits Glass's *Mishima*, *Akhnaten* and *Koyaanisqatsi* within the context of postmodernism,

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<sup>2</sup> While Deleuze rarely wrote in-depth on music, most references can be found in *A Thousand Plateaus*, co-written with Félix Guattari (see Prieto 2005, pp. 5-6 and Deleuze/Guattari 1988). Michel Delville and Andrew Norris however discusses Deleuze's theory in relation to the maximalism of Frank Zappa's music and Baroque music (Delville & Norris 2004). Ronald Bogue alludes to the relation of Glass's use of 'hyper-regular figure[s]' in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's premises in Bogue 2006, pp. 104-5.

<sup>3</sup> See Brian Hulse's paper entitled 'A Deleuzian Take on Repetition, Difference, and the "Minimal" in Minimalism' (undated) <[http://www.operascore.com/files/Repetition\\_and\\_Minimalism.pdf](http://www.operascore.com/files/Repetition_and_Minimalism.pdf)> (Last accessed 3 February 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Lacan previously argued however that desire is in fact dialectical, while *jouissance* is regarded as being non-dialectical (Braunstein 2003, p. 107).

drawing attention to the effect of minimalist music upon the body (Neveldine 1998, pp. 91-140). In his analysis of *Mishima*, Neveldine draws parallelisms between the music's repetitive drive and the rites performed in the film (ibid., p. 107). His commentary on *Akhmaten* also draws attention to the spiritual aspect of the opera, while *Koyaanisqatsi* offers 'an immanent critique, rather than a postutopian lament' (ibid., p. 114).

One particular weakness of Neveldine's research is the failure to integrate any of Deleuze or Foucault's specific theories to minimalist music. Mertens and Fink on the other hand are more effective in their theoretical applications, and both primarily draw on Deleuze's theories as found in *Anti-Oedipus*, written in 1972, to their studies of minimalism and repetition (Deleuze & Guattari 1984). The present chapter, however, will take Deleuze's slightly earlier thesis, *Difference and Repetition*, written in 1968, into account (Deleuze 2004).<sup>5</sup> Working within the newly founded area of deconstruction, Deleuze's influential theory on difference – or more specifically 'difference in itself' – initiated an alternative philosophy to the predominance of binary opposition as the manifestation of a dialectical argument, as formulated earlier by Hegel and others. Structuralism hinged on the notion that a system is dependent on a pair of opposites in order to achieve an ultimate synthesis (hence satisfying the fulfilment of desire in Lacanian terms (Braunstein 2003, p. 107)). In contrast, Deleuze's pivotal publication brought about a new method of ascertaining and establishing relationships between objects, based on 'asymmetrical difference' (Ellrich 1996, p. 473).

Over a century prior to the formulation of this philosophy, the existentialist Søren Kierkegaard had drawn similar conclusions, suggesting that repetition always

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<sup>5</sup> Brian Hulse also refers to this publication in his paper mentioned earlier.



resulted in difference. In an essay entitled ‘Repetition’ written in 1843, Kierkegaard writes under the pseudonym Constantine Constantius of his revisit to the city of Berlin, wherein he discovered that the repetition of an earlier act in fact resulted in a new experience (Constantius 1960, p. 137). A subsequent experience was inevitably found to be perceptually and existentially different; Kierkegaard had, according to Deleuze, made ‘something new of repetition itself’ (Deleuze 2004, p. 6). This groundbreaking theory therefore offered a subjective alternative to the ‘abstract objectivity’ of the Hegelian approach (ibid., p. 9).

### **Conceptual Constructions**

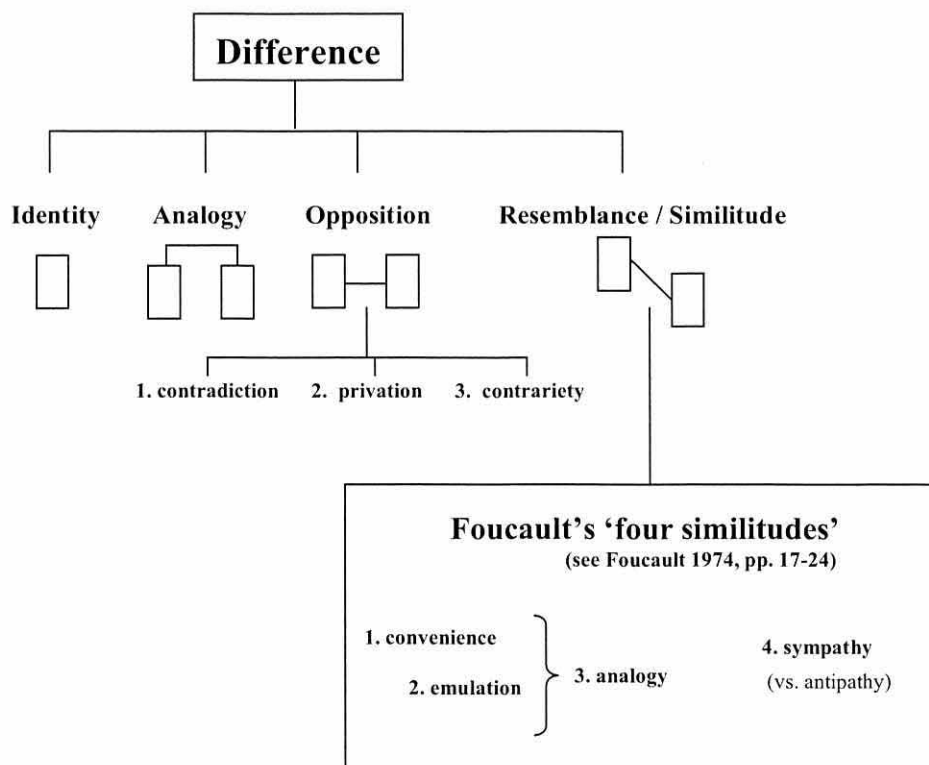
In Cook’s basic models, similarity and difference between media are pitted against each other in a dialectical manner. This binary setup inevitably reveals a semiotic influence, understandably due to its basis upon the Greimasian ‘semiotic square’ (see Cook 1998, p. 102). Greimas’s semiotic square, as explained by Fredric Jameson in his introduction to Greimas’s *On Meaning*, is an extension of the binary oppositional system (e.g. black vs. white), which is considered a contrary relationship (Jameson 1987, p. xiv). A contradictory relationship is forged by the ‘simple negatives of the two dominant terms’ (e.g. non-black vs. non-white), which can therefore be interpreted as forming a more generalised difference than contrariness (ibid.). The final part of the square comprises

the two composed or “synthetic” positions [that] offer greater conceptual enlargements, *S* standing as a complex or utopian term, in which the opposition of “white” and “black” might be transcended (mestizo, for example) whereas *S* stands as the neutral term, in which all of the privations and negations are assembled (“colourless,” for example) (ibid.).

These “synthetic” positions’ might be alluding to a relationship on a dialectically higher level – a height that is arguably contained in Cook’s complementation model, which accommodates a mixture of similarities and differences by its occupation of a largely neutral, or middle ground.

Cook’s conformance model is seemingly incompatible with Deleuze’s premises. As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Deleuze’s philosophy is epitomised by the claim that ‘difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing’ (Deleuze 2004, p. 69). Similarity, it will be argued, is regarded as a resultant product of difference. Furthermore, difference is mediated by one of four means: by *identity*, *analogy*, *opposition* or *resemblance*, which represent the ‘four

**Fig. 2.1 Methodological framework based on Deleuze and Foucault’s theories**  
(see Deleuze 2004, pp. 36-40, 330)



shackles of mediation' (Deleuze 2004, p. 37).<sup>6</sup> Fig. 2.1 offers an overview of these mediating factors in their most basic forms.

The first form of mediation, *identity*, proves to be one of the most influential parts of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* according to Eric Prieto, primarily due to its contradiction of the Aristotlean notion that everything must be classified into two categories – that of *genus* and *species*:

By paying special attention to the taxonomical procedures that characterize Aristotlean thought (where every individual is a member of a conceptual category and every category a member of a still more general category), Deleuze is able to show that Aristotle is unable to conceive of difference on its own terms: individual differences are always conceived of as a function of the categories to which the individuals belong; difference itself is defined as a function of identity (Prieto 2005, p. 7).<sup>7</sup>

Identity (or *ratio cognoscendi* in Foucault's terms) represents 'the *undetermined* concept' (ibid.) and as defined by Mark Currie, can mean one of two things: either 'the property of absolute sameness between separate entities,' or alternatively 'it can also mean the unique characteristics determining the personality and difference of a single entity' (Currie 2004, p. 3). This latter interpretation surely resonates with Prieto's claim that an identity requires a uniqueness in order to function. Fig. 2.1 attempts to address the notion of identity as a single object, which conforms to

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<sup>6</sup> Georgina Born approaches the subject of mediation and the 'negotiation of differences' from an Adornian perspective, drawing on recent examples of twentieth-century music that engage with social or historic factors, and primarily making use of digital technology (see Born 2005, pp. 7-36). Born refers to the work of Max Paddison on this issue, who in his earlier book explains the concept of mediation as 'interactions, interconnections, interchanges, between otherwise different activities, areas, spheres or processes. It can also have the sense of the reflection of one sphere of activity by another, taken together with the idea of a 'middle term' in which this reflection takes place, or which shared characteristics of the different spheres converge or coincide as aspects of a larger totality' (Paddison 1993, p. 109). Paddison's definition of this 'middleground' can be regarded as the counterpart of Cook's complementation model, in addition to Greimas's 'synthetic' position in his semiotic square.

<sup>7</sup> See also Deleuze 2004, p. 71.

Deleuze's theory on 'difference in itself'.<sup>8</sup> Both definitions of identity, according to Currie, involves the combination of similarity and difference (Currie 2004, p. 3).

Does this concept therefore reflect Cook's *complementation* model?

Deleuze explains the second form of mediation, *analogy*, as 'the relation between ultimate determinable concepts,' or as defined in the *Oxford American Dictionary*, 'a comparison between two things, typically on the basis of their structure and for the purpose of explanation or clarification.' The graphical representation in Fig. 2.1 observes an analogical relationship as an external link between twin elements. The concept of analogy however will be discussed in greater detail during the explanation of the second part of the model, when aspects of Foucault's theories on resemblance will be integrated within Deleuze's four shackles (Deleuze 2004, p. 330).

Deleuze describes *opposition* (or *ratio fiendi* in Foucaultian terms) as 'the relation between determinations within concepts'; hence an inner connecting line between both elements has been constructed in Fig. 2.1. As the model shows, opposition is divided into three sub-categories: contradiction, privation and contrariety – the latter of which is defined as 'the capacity of an object to bear opposite while remaining substantially the same (ibid., p. 39). Similar to Cook's model, and equally relevant to Greimas's semiotic square, Deleuze's contradictory opposition is considered greater than contrariness, while privation 'expresses a determinate incapacity on behalf of an existing subject' (ibid., p. 38).

The final category, *resemblance*, leads onto the second part of this Deleuzian-Foucaultian model. Described by Deleuze as 'the determined object of the concept

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, the origin of 'identity' as a single (even anti-dialectical) entity is traceable back to Hegelian and subsequently Adornian thought. According to Paddison, both philosophers considered that 'mediation does not simply refer to the way in which unlike spheres are connected. It is to be seen rather as the *process* of interaction and interconnection itself, whereby subjectivity and objectivity partake of each other perceptually *within* the hermetically sealed-off and monad-like dialectic of musical material' (Paddison 1993, p. 110).

itself”, resemblance is regarded as the product of difference, instead of its antithesis. In analysing Magritte’s paintings, *The Treachery of Images* (1928-9), which include the subtitled statement ‘This is not a pipe’, Michel Foucault in his essay of the same title written in 1968 also attempts to explain the concept of resemblance. Resemblance according to Foucault “presumes a primary reference that prescribes and classes” copies on the basis of the rigor of their mimetic relation to itself. Resemblance serves and is dominated by representation’ (Foucault 1983, pp. 9-10). Foucault further introduces the term ‘similitude’ to his analyses, for which he argues that it is a variant of resemblance due to ‘the reference anchor [being] gone. Things are cast adrift’ (ibid., pp. 9-10.).

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault’s use of both terms, resemblance and similitude, appear to be somewhat more intermingled. Foucault states that four types of similitudes exist: *convenience*, *emulation*, *analogy* and *sympathy* – all of which appear to be primarily concerned with spatial connexions (ibid., pp. 17-24). In this respect, Foucault’s classification can be associated with Roman Jakobson’s theories on metaphor and metonymy: ‘the internal relation of similarity (and contrast) underlines the metaphor; the external relation of contiguity (and remoteness) determines the metonymy’ (Jakobson 1971, p. 41 cited in Dubnick 1980, p. 407). Metonymy, according to Jakobson is concerned with spatial or temporal relationship, which therefore corresponds with Foucault’s *convenient*, *emulative* and *analogical* forms of similitudes (Jakobson 1971, p. 41). Deleuze’s *identity*, *analogy* and *opposition* on the other hand might best be associated with metaphor, which is primarily concerned with the (dis)similarities between objects (Dubnick 1980, p. 407).

Fig. 2.1 shows a *convenient* relationship involving two elements that are near to each other – ‘a resemblance connected with space in the form of a gradual scale of proximity’ (Foucault 1974, p. 18). *Emulation* is considered as its subcategory (not its opposite), and described as ‘a sort of “convenience” that has been freed from the law of place and is able to function without motion, from a distance’ (ibid., p. 19). *Analogy*, as mentioned earlier in relation to Deleuze’s ‘four shackles of mediation’ might well be considered as the asymmetrical synthesis of *convenience* and *emulation*; *analogy* ‘like [*emulation*] makes possible the marvellous confrontation of resemblances across space; but it also speaks, like [*convenience*] of adjacencies, of bonds and joints’ (ibid., p. 21).

Operating on a more independent ground, the final form of similitude, *sympathy* ‘plays through the depths of the universe in a free state [...] Sympathy is an instance of the *same* so strong and so insistent that it will not rest content to be merely one of the forms of likeness; it has the dangerous power of *assimilating*, of rendering things identical to one another’ (ibid., p. 23). This ‘dangerous power of assimilation’ however is limited by *sympathy*’s opposition, *antipathy*, which ‘maintains the isolation of things and prevents their assimilation’ (ibid., p. 24). This final form of similitude thus demonstrates a certain degree of opposition, which differs to the seemingly interconnected forms of *convenience*, *emulation* and *analogy*.

## **Theoretical Application**

Now that the juxtaposed model of Deleuze’s ‘four shackles of mediation’ and Foucault’s four types of similitude have been presented, and partly contextualised within the theories of Greimas, Cook and Adorno, it seems logical at this point to

apply these philosophies to an analysis of multimedia relationships formed in two case studies. Firstly, the relationships formed in a recent television commercial by Volkswagen will be examined, which employs Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* as a spoken text, in addition to pre-existing ambient music by Cliff Martinez from the sci-fi motion picture *Solaris* (2003). Secondly, two versions of a commercial by another car manufacturing company, Ford will be discussed: the first uses Delibes's 'Flower Duet', while the second version quotes Michael Andrews's soundtrack to the apocalyptic cult film *Donnie Darko* (2004).

The remainder of this chapter will therefore seek to elucidate how difference is mediated in each case by examining (con)textual, visual and musical interactivity.<sup>9</sup> Although neither Martinez nor Andrews are recognised as minimalist composers per se, several characteristics in their music point towards an affinity with a post-minimalist style. The following analysis will unpack these elements, while simultaneously discussing how these musical quotations are integrated within re-contextualised multimedia scenarios.

### **Nocturnal Listening?**

In May 2007, the car manufacturer Volkswagen rolled out a multimedia campaign to advertise their Golf model under the title of 'Night Driving'.<sup>10</sup> In addition to a television commercial, the advertising agency DDB London constructed a website

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<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that in January 2008, the French car company Citroën released a national advertising campaign in the British press that comprised an adaptation of Magritte's statement in the form of '*Ceci n'est pas une voiture*'. This campaign included a quote by André Citroën, the founder of the company, stating 'Different is everything', which closely resembles Deleuze's deconstructive observation as cited in his epigrammatic statement, quoted at the very beginning of this chapter (*The Observer Magazine*, 27 January 2008).

<sup>10</sup> See <<http://www.night-driving.com>> (Last accessed 25 September 2007).

encouraging drivers to film and upload movies of their own journeys in a Golf at night. Furthermore, drivers could suggest and upload specific routes deemed pleasurable for a night-time drive around the country. The campaign effectively encouraged pre-existing Golf owners to promote the brand on behalf of the company, as the ultimate aim of the commercial (as always) was to entice new purchasers.

Writing on the discourse of advertising, Eero Tarasti has noted that ‘the only truth criterion [involved in advertising] is whether a customer buys the product being marketed’ (Tarasti 2000, p. 191). Volkswagen’s intention, however, are slightly more subtle than the conventional approach to advertising, as the ‘conative function’ in Roman Jakobson’s terms – explained by Tarasti as ‘the desire to change or control the conduct of the addressee’ (ibid.) – is different in this case. Instead of addressing new purchasers, DDB London’s strategy was aimed towards current owners by posing the question ‘When was the last time you just went for a drive?’

The television commercial was released in three versions (40, 60 and 90 seconds in length); the following analysis will focus on the full-length commercial. In terms of textual/sonic material, ‘Night Driving’ uses two extracts out of Thomas’s nocturnal *Under Milk Wood*, a play that recounts ‘twenty-four hours in the life of a small Welsh seaside town’ (Thomas 1995, p. xiii). Commissioned by the BBC as a radio play, the recording took place in January 1954, two months after Thomas’s death; the voice heard in the commercial is that of the acclaimed actor Richard Burton (ibid., p. xi).

As shown in Fig. 2.2, the texts employed are taken out of the first part of Thomas’s work, which are seamlessly joined together – the original narrative is hence curtailed, as the greyed-out material is omitted in the commercial.



Fig. 2.2 VW Golf commercial narrative (*Under Milk Wood*)

**And all the people of the lulled and dumbfound town are sleeping now. Hush, the babies are sleeping, the farmers, the fishers, the tradesmen and pensioners, cobbler, schoolteacher, postman and publican, the undertaker and the fancy woman, drunkard, dressmaker, preacher, policeman, the webfoot cocklewomen and the tidy wives. Young girls lie bedded soft or glide in their dreams, with rings and trousseaux, bridesmaided by glow-worms down the aisles of the organplaying wood.** The boys are dreaming wicked or of the bucking ranches of the night and the jolly, rodgered sea. And the anthracite statues of the horses sleep in the fields, and the cows in the byres, and the dogs in the wetnosed yards; and the cats nap in the slant corners or lope sly, streaking and needling, on the one cloud of the roofs. **You can hear the dew falling, and the hushed town breathing. Only *your* eyes are unclosed, to see the black and folded town fast, and slow, asleep** (Thomas 1995, p. 3).

The first extract describes the sleeping townspeople by the simple listing of seventeen different members of the society. Then, by adopting a more allegorical language, Thomas refers to the dreams of young girls about weddings, employing such linguistic imagery as of ‘glow-worms [bridesmaiding] down the aisle of the organplaying wood’. While the first extract of Thomas’s poem is atmospherically delivered by Burton from an ‘omniscient’ viewpoint – the poet does not address anyone in particular – the text in the second extract is directed at a sole individual, who is awake and aware of his or her dreamy surroundings. Once more, a metaphoric approach is taken as the awoken person is told of the audibility of the ‘falling dew’ and a ‘breathing town’. The twin sensory elements of hearing and vision are perceptible in this second quotation, thereby increasing the subjectivity of the poetry.

The visual component of the commercial consists of thirty-six scenes as listed in chronological order in Fig. 2.3, and from a sociological perspective, this inventory illustrates a wide cross-section. All of the assembled images are viewed through the eyes of the Golf driver, who is cocooned in the personal haven that the vehicle offers

**Figure 2.3 VW Golf commercial scene inventory**

1. Empty road at night, red traffic lights
2. Close-up of building, red traffic lights
3. Close-up of driver's eyes, lights turn green
4. Close-up of driver's hand on steering wheel
5. Blurred shot, traffic light on green
6. Close-up of road
7. Car in tunnel, 'swoosh' sound
8. Side profile of driver's head
9. Sky and trees \*And all of the...\*
10. Empty school, darkness
11. **Empty snooker room, brightly lit, TV on**
12. Garden sprinkler system in operation
13. Sleeping in bed, car light entering room
14. Barking guard dog (silent)
15. 'Payday loans', garish lights in advertisement
16. Close-up of money lending advertisement – dancing rabbit
17. Row of windows
18. **Tunnel**
19. Person walking on street
20. Close-up of art installation
21. Art installation further away
22. Security guards in café
23. Close-up of tired security guard
24. Upwards shot of skyscraper
25. **Downwards shot of city with car reflecting in glass building**
26. Shot of driver's face
27. City shot
28. Close-up of driver's head
29. Close-up of driver's hand
30. Skyscrapers
31. Silhouetted person walking
32. **Burning van**
33. Skyscrapers
34. Entire car
35. Close-up of driver's eyes \*Only your eyes...\*
36. Car passing from a distance
37. Caption: 'When was the last time you just went for a drive?'

when driving at night. Notable, also, is the apparent correlation between the text and the visual element, as the driver's eyes appear in a close-up shot at the same time as Burton speaks of 'only *your* eyes are unclosed'. The visual narrative of the Golf campaign reveals a lack of an unfolding of events; hence in temporal terms, the visual aspect of the commercial emphasises 'being' as opposed to 'becoming'. Nevertheless, from a textual-visual perspective, the penultimate scene represents the 'becoming' of the driver, who takes on the role of the person addressed in Thomas's text.

But what about the music? How does it contribute towards the aesthetic, temporal and structural dimensions of the commercial? In 'Don't Blow It,' Cliff

Martinez offers an ambient style, approaching minimalism in a similar manner to Brian Eno.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the music of both Eno and Martinez forms the soundtrack to an earlier film by Soderberg, *Traffic* (2000); in fact, Martinez partly attributes his minimalist style in these films to Soderberg's preference for 'a very stark, minimalist style' (DesJardins 2006, p. 160). In *Solaris*, the director required 'an atmospheric ambience that was also organic and orchestral in nature' (ibid.), which Martinez achieved by a 'floating, dreamlike wash of sound and gamelan-like percussiveness' (Jones 2003, unpag.). This fusion of a Javanese sound quality can in fact be attributed as a post-minimal characteristic as it borrows from other styles, while equally recalling Reich's fondness of metallophones and other percussive instruments, in *Music for 18 Musicians* (1974-6) for instance.

Martinez's ambient style in the *Solaris* soundtrack follows on from a similar aesthetic in *Traffic*, also observing the complementation of Martinez's style by the spiritual element of Eno's 'An Ending (Ascent)' from the soundtrack to *Apollo* complementing Martinez's style, although Eno's music offers a contrasting meaning to its original meaning due to its involvement in scenes depicting the harsh reality of drug trafficking. In the Volkswagen commercial, however, the borrowing of Martinez's music from *Solaris* maintains and enhances the dream-like nature of timelessness that the commercial seeks to portray in text, vision and sound. This is achieved by the dulcet timbres generated by the repetitive vibraphones, which gently emit a hypnotic, glacial effect, coupled with the use of oscillating and suspended

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on the minimalist aspect of the music in *Solaris* as employed in its original context, see Eaton 2008, pp. 124-31, which associates minimalism with science fiction. The *Ambient Music Guide* notes that the soundtrack is 'a quiet [and] contemplative work that occupies the same ambivalent space as the film itself', and 'feels as much about inner space as it is about outer space'. See <<http://www.ambientmusicguide.com/pages/M/martinez.php>> (Last accessed 7 January 2010).

harmonies.<sup>12</sup> In temporal terms, like its visual counterpart, the music of ‘Don’t Blow It’ lacks a clear goal. As the commercial uses only the first minute and a half of the soundtrack, this open-endedness represents the possible journey one could take in a Golf at night. Indeed, the a-teleological nature of Martinez’s music shares an affinity with Deleuze’s non-dialectical theories as outlined at the outset of this chapter with reference to Mertens and Fink.

But what exactly are the characteristics of Martinez’s music in this example, and how does its temporal aspect represent a lack of unfolding? Martinez’s ‘Don’t Blow It’ is formed out of several repetitive units that are gradually introduced, with a subtle shift in the use of motivic material, colouristic qualities and the introduction of lower pitches being heard. Fig. 2.4 offers a basic transcription of the most significant materials set in a compound triple metre;<sup>13</sup> Fig. 2.5 illustrates how the material is introduced during the commercial, demonstrating a gradual textural layering. Bold type in the Fig. 2.3 inventory illustrates how the visual narrative interacts with the introduction of new/developed musical material, namely in scenes 11, 18, 25 and 32.

As Fig. 2.4 shows, the first unit (played three times) comprises the repetition of first inversion F major chords, which lead on to a descending-ascending intervallic third between  $e^2$  and  $c^2$ . The distributional diagram found in Fig. 2.5 displays how the second unit is then introduced above the preceding unit, and a new pitch,  $e^3$  is added in conflict with  $f$ -natural<sup>2</sup>, although it is anticipated in the  $e^2$  at bb. 4-5 and 8. The  $e^3$  pitch is suspended until the sixth bar, when it descends by a third before returning to its original position in the eighth bar. After being repeated twice, the third unit presents two four-bar pitches,  $f^2$  and  $e^2$ ; a slight variation of the unit two material is

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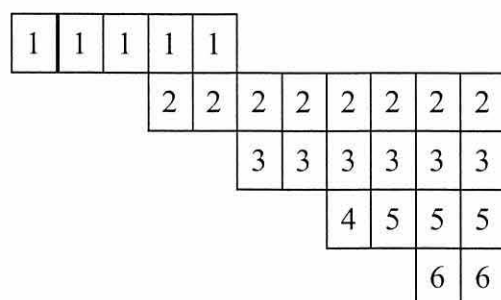
<sup>12</sup> New-York composer Cliff Martinez’s affinity with percussion instruments may be explained by the fact that he used to be a drummer for the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, and had also spent a brief period with Captain Beefheart (see Burk 2003, unpag.).

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A for a sounding version of the transcription.

heard due to the intervallic third being filled in, as shown by the bracketed  $d^{\flat}$ . Also, the presentation of this third unit (which is executed twice) marks the end of the first unit, as visible in Fig. 2.5.

Fig. 2.4 Basic aural transcription of Martinez's 'Don't Blow It' from *Solaris*

Fig. 2.5 Distributional diagram of Martinez's music



The fourth unit offers a filled-in ascending third in the bass, between  $F$  and  $A$ ; the second enactment (i.e. unit five) is slightly varied by the use of quavers for the third degree of the scale, as opposed to the tied  $A$  heard earlier in unit four. In fact,

the emergence of this bass line provides a tonal re-definition as A minor, clearly audible from the fifth bar onwards. It is from this part onwards that the repetition of the VI – i progression occurs. The final part of the process involves two new pitches, as shown in unit six – the alternating fifths between  $b^1$  and  $e^1$  introduces a new harmony, adding another fifth above the dominant.

In formal terms, the extract is loosely based on the Cageian micro-macrocosmic structural principle.<sup>14</sup> At a micro level, it is observed that the first unit comprises a three-bar group, two twin-bar groups and a single bar (thus 3:2:2:1). This ratio is also evident at a macro level in the first four units: the initial unit is repeated three times overall, the second and third units are repeated twice and a single fourth unit is heard. This point marks the end of the process however, as units five and six are not conformant; consequently, Martinez alludes towards a post-experimental, if post-minimal approach to repetition, whereby this structural technique is applied in a less strict manner (in contrast to Cage's fixed rhythmic practices, or Reich's audible processes as apparent in the early works).

### **Musical, Visual and (Con)textual Relations**

While this analysis has demonstrated how Martinez's music works by the use of interlocking repetitive units, their role in the 'Night Driving' campaign is yet to be discussed. Applying Deleuze and Foucault's premises, as earlier outlined, will facilitate an understanding of how music, vision and text interact in the commercial, and also in original context of the music as heard in *Solaris*. Studying the commercial and the film in relation to one another can also lead to fruitful results.

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<sup>14</sup> An explanation of this structural principle may be found in Pritchett 1993, pp. 14-16.

On examining the association between Dylan Thomas's text and the visual narrative, it would appear that the difference between both media is mediated by *similitude*. The text's reference to 'sleeping babies' and 'your eyes' cross the same path as the visual narrative in scenes 13 and 34 respectively, therein forming a *convenient* relationship as both text and image are closely bound together in these instances. Furthermore, the overall representation of two societies by the poet and the videographer again share a similarity, although both societies are divided by over fifty years, thus *emulation* is perhaps apparent in this case. Overall, the relationship between the text and image is *analogous* in Foucault's terms due to the combined use of both *convenient* and *emulative* interactions.

By comparing Thomas's text to the commercial's context, it may be argued that an *identical* relationship is found herein, as both form a single indivisible entity. Both text and context are similar in their nocturnal settings, and even though the poem does not involve a car journey, its narrative represents a poetic 'journey'. The affinity between the visual dimension and the context of the commercial is again arguably mediated by identity, as the images portrayed are identical to the subject matter of the commercial, that is to portray a night-time car journey. Does *identity* in this respect represent a *conforming* relationship in Cook's terms?

A *convenient* form of similitude mediates differences between Martinez's music and Thomas's text. Not only does Burton's delivery of the text enhance the atmospheric effect of the words, but also the metaphoric style of writing used towards the end of the first extract and during the second quote shares similarities with the ambience of the soundtrack. Furthermore, the stellar timbres heard in the music are again closely bound with the night-time setting of both Thomas's text and the commercial's visual dimension. In terms of musico-visual correlation, the

synchronicity of new musical material with new visual scenes (in shots 11, 18, 25 and 31) again suggests a *convenient* relationship due to the close bond between both media in this respect.

### **Introducing Kelvin and Rheya**

While a symbiotic relationship between the commercial and Martinez's music has been determined in this analysis, it seems logical at this point to examine how the music functions in its original context, i.e. in *Solaris*. This psychological sci-fi thriller, featuring a crew on board a space station that orbits the planet Solaris. Most relevant to this present study is the ninth scene, called 'Kelvin and Rheya meet', in which the rather enigmatic female character, Rheya (Natascha McElhone) is introduced to the psychologist Chris Kelvin (George Clooney) during a party. Cliff Martinez's track 'Don't Blow It', as used in the Golf commercial, is heard at this point, designed to accompany the mysterious, dreamy and seductive images portrayed on screen.

As with the Golf car commercial, a reference to Dylan Thomas's play is also made in *Solaris*. In the ninth scene, Kelvin quotes the line 'And death shall have no dominion'. This reference is elaborated even further in the fifteenth scene by Kelvin's off-screen narration of an extensive extract from this particular section of *Under Milk Wood*. Ostensibly, Kelvin's quotation from Thomas's text avoids forming a direct relation to the visual or spoken narrative of the movie. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the commercial's use of Thomas's text has its origins in the movie from which the advert's soundtrack was originally sourced.



### **Shared *Identity* or *Similitude*?**

While the analysis has up to this point examined both the ‘Night Drive’ campaign and *Solaris* as separate entities, the relation between both contexts will now be discussed by outlining how they compare – or differ in Deleuzian terms – from one another.

Furthermore, applying Deleuze and Foucault’s theories will lead to a discussion about the manner in which differences between both contexts are mediated. In other words, is the overall relationship based on *identity*, *analogy*, *opposition* or *resemblance*?

Both the commercial and the scene in *Solaris* involve night-time visual settings. Furthermore, both employ out-of-focus, or soft focus techniques. Dylan Thomas’s *Under Milk Wood* is again a link between both contexts (although different extracts are quoted). Difference is also apparent in the delivery of the text – while the narration is solely non-diegetic in the commercial (being a recording of Richard Burton’s delivery), in *Solaris* Kelvin quotes Thomas’s text both on-screen and off-screen. In both the commercial and the original film, the musico-visual material dominates as the spoken material is overdubbed and uttered by disembodied voices.

Moreover, both involve the impulses of dreams and desire. In *Solaris*, an immediate connection with libidinal philosophy is apparent by Rheyra’s question to Kelvin – ‘do you always resist your urges?’ – a question that ultimately leads to the consummation of their relationship to the backdrop of Martinez’s ‘Don’t Blow it’ track. In the Golf commercial, owning and driving this particular car at night is regarded as the fulfilment of an aspiration, and is literally perceived as achieving the Lacanian ‘satisfaction of a drive’ (Braunstein 2003, p. 104). Building on the theories of Freud, Lacan wrote in his seventh seminar, ‘The Ethics of Psychoanalysis’ that ‘the drive [is] a constant force, an unending requirement imposed on the psyche due to its

link with the body [...] In this sense, the drive is *jouissance*' (Braunstein 2003, p. 105). Lacan however uses 'drive' as in sexual desire here, and this may be inferred subliminally in the commercial too – night-time is usually when sexual drives are awakened for example, although the dream-like music suggests 'fantasy' rather than 'reality'.

With reference to Freud and Deleuze, Anna Powell writes that the 'dream machine', or more specifically the 'desiring machine', circulates images in process of transformation, with potential for 'escaping and causing circulations, of carrying and being carried away'' (Deleuze & Guattari 1984, p. 139 in Powell 2007, p. 21). This dream-like state is particularly relevant to the visual and musical ambience of the Golf commercial, offering a subliminal dimension to the marketing strategy. The inquisitive caption observed at the end of the commercial – 'when was the last time you just went for a drive?' suggests the compulsive nature of a 'drive' in general, which is also replicated in Martinez's repetitive music. Robert Fink, in his writings on the association between libidinal philosophy and minimalism observes that

the discrete 'self' (e.g. the closed musical work) is replaced by momentary shifting assemblages of body parts (e.g., musical processes) that channel an essentially free-flowing libidinal energy through the endless cycling of what Deleuze and Guattari famously dubbed 'desiring-machines' (Fink 2005, p. 37).

The gradual phasing of Martinez's interlocking patterns, singled out in the Fig. 2.5 transcription, are indeed coherent with Fink's comparison of such musical processes with 'momentary shifting assemblages' of motivic material that are constantly yet subtly developing. The infinite nature of the music (thus representing the 'desiring-machine' in Deleuze and Guattari's terms) is further reinforced by the cyclical nature of the ascending scale through a third in the bass parts (units 4 and 5), which fails to resolve. This anti-dialectical motion epitomises the notion of *jouissance*, as according

to Lacan ‘the whole object of the drive is to stress the impossibility of satisfaction [as it] does not point to anything’ (Braunstein 2003, p. 105-6). The music in the commercial remains unresolved as it fades away into the background without any real sense of a tonal conclusion.

Analysing Martinez’s music in this example has consequently revealed post-minimal traits that are compatible with Lacanian principles. But what conclusions can be drawn from the relationship between the music’s original context, i.e. the film, and that of the commercial? The close proximity between both primary and secondary context of Martinez’s music certainly raises the question of whether or not the difference is mediated by identity or a convenient form of similitude. Identity, as earlier defined by Currie can be taken to mean ‘the property of absolute sameness between separate entities’ (Currie 2004, p. 3), which would suggest that the nocturnal aspect of the film and the commercial could be regarded as identical. However, a *convenience* in Foucault’s terms is ‘a resemblance connected with space in the form of a gradual scale of proximity’ (Foucault 1974, p. 18), and would therefore allow a certain degree of intertextual distance. Perhaps this scenario highlights a weakness in the Deleuzian-Foucaultian framework employed. If so, would Cook’s ‘three basic’ models therefore be best applied in this problematic situation by merely referring to the relationship between both contexts as a *conforming* one?

### **Feeling the Difference? ‘Desire’ in the Ford Mondeo Commercial**

The notion and motion of desire, it seems, may be regarded as a common trope in car commercials, or even in commercials generally. Fink writes on the relationship between minimalism and consumer desire, quoting Georges Perec’s epigraph that

“enjoyment [*jouissance*] was confused with owning things” (Perec 1965, p. x, cited in Fink 2005, p. 99). Perhaps minimalist music’s suitability in such a context might also be explained by the fact that, according to Robert Nevelbine, the resulting effect of minimalist music as a reflection of post-modernism ‘can entail new ways of desiring and feeling’ (Nevelbine 1998, p. 102); this again resounds the Lacanian theories on desire as discussed in relation to the Golf commercial. It is therefore not coincidental that the words ‘feel’ and ‘desire’ appear in the above section title, as they are seen in the textual captions of a recent television commercial by Ford to promote their Mondeo car model.

In May 2007, a new campaign was launched to promote the ‘all-new’ Mondeo, with a television commercial entitled ‘Desire’. According to the producers, ‘the advert challenges the viewer’s perception of a typical car commercial, signalling that the arrival of the dynamic new Ford Mondeo will make car owners want their old and uninspiring cars to float away – literally’.<sup>15</sup> In the commercial, Londoners are seen observing several cars floating in the sky, held up by balloons. Towards the conclusion of the commercial, an individual observes a passing Mondeo, after which he decides to join the remainder of the population by discarding his own car in similar fashion. The commercial ends with a panoramic shot of London with a mass of floating cars in the sky, before the textual captions ‘New Mondeo’ and ‘Feel the Difference’ are presented on-screen.

Similar to the Volkswagen’s ‘Night Drive’ campaign, different versions of the ‘Desire’ campaign were released: a standard sixty-second commercial in addition to an extended ninety-second spot. Interestingly enough, different soundtracks have

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<sup>15</sup> See <[http://media.ford.com/print\\_doc.cfm?article\\_id=26051](http://media.ford.com/print_doc.cfm?article_id=26051)> (Last accessed 20 July 2007).

Ex. 2.1 Semiotic distribution of Delibes's 'Flower Duet' from *Lakmé*

The image displays a musical score for the 'Flower Duet' from Delibes's opera *Lakmé*. The score is divided into two main sections, A and B, indicated by large curly braces on the right side.

**Section A:** This section is marked with a large curly brace on the right. It contains two main parts. The first part consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It starts with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The first staff is labeled [a] and the second staff is labeled [b]. The second system also has a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [a] and the second staff is labeled [b']. The second part of Section A is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [a] and the second staff is labeled [b']. The dynamic marking is *p*.

**Section B:** This section is marked with a large curly brace on the right. It contains two main parts. The first part consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. It starts with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte). The first staff is labeled [c] and the second staff is labeled [c']. The second system also has a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [c] and the second staff is labeled [c']. The dynamic marking is *mf*. The second part of Section B is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [d] and the second staff is labeled [d']. The dynamic marking is *f* (forte). The third part of Section B is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [e] and the second staff is labeled [e']. The dynamic marking is *p*. The fourth part of Section B is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [f] and the second staff is labeled [f']. The dynamic marking is *p*. The fifth part of Section B is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [f'] and the second staff is labeled [f'].

**Section A':** This section is marked with a large curly brace on the right. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps. The first staff is labeled [a] and the second staff is labeled [a']. The dynamic marking is *pp* (pianissimo). The second system also has a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [a] and the second staff is labeled [a']. The dynamic marking is *pp*. The third part of Section A' is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [b<sup>2</sup>] and the second staff is labeled [b<sup>2</sup>]. The dynamic marking is *rall* (rallentando). The fourth part of Section A' is a single system of staves with a treble clef and the same key signature. The first staff is labeled [b<sup>3</sup>] and the second staff is labeled [b<sup>3</sup>]. The dynamic marking is *rall*.

Ex. 2.2 Aural transcription of Andrews's 'The Artifact and Living' from *Donnie Darko*

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'The Artifact and Living' from the film *Donnie Darko*. The score is written for piano and is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (measures 1-6) features a melodic line in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The second system (measures 7-10) continues the melodic and bass lines. The third system (measures 11-16) shows a more complex texture with multiple notes in the treble clef. The fourth system (measures 17-21) includes a prominent chordal texture in the treble clef. The fifth system (measures 22-25) concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase in the treble clef and a bass line.

been applied to the commercial: the extended version uses Delibes's often-quoted 'Flower Duet' from his late-nineteenth century opera *Lakmé*, the distilled version uses a minimalist-inspired track out of Michael Andrews's soundtrack to the more recent cult film *Donnie Darko* called 'The Artifact and Living'.<sup>16</sup> Of interest, in this case, will be a study of how different musical extracts function when used in conjunction with the same visual material.

If attention is firstly drawn towards the Delibes example. The *bel canto* aspect of the music immediately forms a connection with the lightness and gracefulness of

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<sup>16</sup> The Los Angeles composer Michael Andrews is probably better known as the composer of a recent pop song called 'Mad World,' sung by Gary Jules. Similarly to 'The Artifact and Living,' 'Mad World' was also originally conceived for the *Donnie Darko* soundtrack; the song offers an immanent critique of modern urban society, which could have complemented the context of the Mondeo commercial. See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Andrews\\_\(musician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Andrews_(musician))> (Last accessed 5 November 2007).

the floating balloons; Gary Schmidgall, writing on Donizettian opera, refers to this vocal technique as the depiction of birdsong, which symbolises the freedom of the Romantic era (Schmidgall 1977, p. 111). Indeed, the aria's text, specifically the reference to bird song and a 'gently floating' motion on a river corresponds to a certain extent at a semantic level with the context of the Mondeo commercial. In terms of structure, the song is employed in its entirety, and is slightly extended by the repetition of the final two notes of the song as a distant echo. In further structural terms, the point at which the Mondeo makes its late entrance in the commercial (in the thirty-sixth shot) is consistent with the recapitulation of the song's opening material (b. 21). The length of the music in the Mondeo advert seemingly determines (or is adjacent to) the length of the commercial.

As the distributional analysis of the song in Ex. 2.1 demonstrates, Delibes's music is inherently repetitive both at a musematic and discursive level, thus sharing a distant relationship with minimalist music in this respect. Repetition, however, is much more apparent in the other musical extract used for the commercial – that is, Andrews's 'The Artifact and Living'. A transcription of the extract is shown in Ex. 2.2; as illustrated in this example, the piece is largely formed out of a one-bar bass ostinato, accompanying a simple melody in the treble clef that is subsequently repeated in parallel octaves. Reminiscent of Satie's pre-minimalist, modal music as heard in the *Gymnopédies* for example, Andrews's 'The Artifact and Living' also makes use of semitonal shifts in harmony, alluding to Philip Glass's style as heard, for instance, in 'Façades' from *Glassworks* (1982).

Some considerations of the music's characteristics from an aesthetic perspective leads to the observation that the grounded stasis of the ostinato, the textural simplicity of the melodic line as performed on a solo piano, and the generally

colourless and muted *timbre* used, evoke a sense of the mundane and one-dimensional, which might be taken to represent the old cars that the people are so desperate to dispose of. By Fink's argument, the use of ostinato as heard in the commercial reflects everyday life: 'as a cultural practice, this excess of repetition is inseparable from the colourful repetitive excess of postindustrial, mass-mediated consumer society' (Fink 2005, p. x). Indeed, the advert represents a world overpopulated with mediocre cars.

Also, the harmonies employed – alternating bottom-heavy B minor and B-flat major triads in the bass – certainly act as contrast to the airborne cars in the sky. The music also evokes a rather sinister, ominous and even supernatural ambience, which suitably reflect the oddity of the scenario as confirmed by the people's perplexed facial expressions – how can a few balloons lift such a dense object as a car? Indeed, the association of Andrews's music with strange phenomena can also be observed in the primary context of the music – in the motion picture, *Donnie Darko*. 'The Artifact and Living' is heard in conjunction with the aftermath of a jet engine that has mysteriously crashed into a house, and is seen being suspended in the air by a crane. While this notion of supernaturalism is exploited in the commercial, Delibes's music on the other hand detracts attention away from the illogical situation portrayed, and instead focuses on the elegance of the floating objects by florid melodic lines that employ elevated tessitura.

Bar 19 of Andrews's music onwards however provides a lifting from the trappings of ordinariness, coinciding with the point at which the 'main' actor of the commercial decides to join the rest of the cast by disposing of his old car (and presumably replace it with a new Mondeo). A G-minor triad in the treble part, followed by a rising melodic line contributes towards a glimmer of light in the



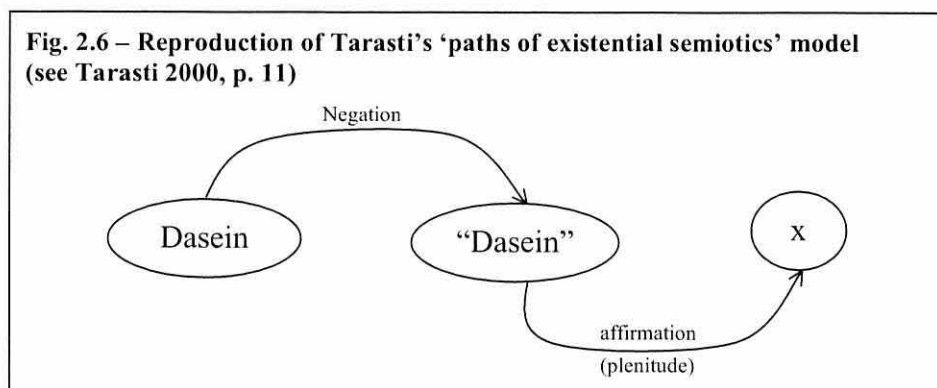
commercial's conclusion, although this recedes in the final twin bars of the extract. Bar 19 onwards also provides a colouristic contrast, as synthesised strings are introduced at this point. These musical changes ultimately aim towards interacting with the visual narrative of the commercial, in which the principal character's thoughts are implied, i.e. his decision to replace his car with a Mondeo.

### **An Existential Process?**

The original context of the music, as the *Donny Darko* soundtrack, is widely regarded as an existential film due to its focus on an individual's enquiry into human existence, within a bleakly surreal environment. Interestingly enough, Anna Powell applied Deleuze's existential philosophy to her reading of this film, particularly from the perspective of cinematic temporality and narrativity, noting that the film 'maps out *'undecidable alternatives between circles of past, inextricable differences between peaks of present'* (Deleuze 1989, p. 105 in Powell 2007, p. 161). In other words, the film contains a mixture of distorted time lines in order to provoke and induce altered states of mind for the benefit of the viewers.

One might argue that *Donnie Darko's* existential attributes are transferred to the secondary context, the Mondeo commercial – both in terms of music and visual dimensions. For instance, the main character of the commercial, a solitary individual who appears approximately midway in the advert's narrative, appears to make a decision to buy the car, when surrounded by the mundane urbanity of his environment. In musical terms, the 'soloistic' element of Andrews's piece arguably represents this individuality, while the chromaticism and unsettling shifts in harmonic content reflects the commercial's ambience.

In fact, one could even observe an existential process in place here. Tarasti's research into existential semiotics is particularly relevant to the post-structural aspect of this present chapter, in its departure from the objectivity of binary oppositions and its focus on an individual subject (Tarasti 2000). In his chapter 'on the paths of existential semiotics', he offers a model which maps out a change in a person's existence based on negative and positive subjective experiences (as reproduced in Fig. 2.6) (ibid., p. 10-11).



So how can Tarasti's theories on existential semiosis be relevant to the present context? This section will henceforth proceed to apply the model to the Mondeco commercial (with Andrews's music), which will demonstrate the relevance of Tarasti's process of existentialism to this example. From the beginning of the commercial, the viewer (acting as the commercial's subject) 'finds himself amidst the objective signs', which Tarasti would call this as being in a state of *Dasein*, in existence (ibid., p. 11). He is unable to ascertain the meaning of the objects that surround him, and later 'recognises the emptiness or nothingness surrounding the existence from which he has come' (ibid.). One could take this to mean the mundane aspect of his urban environment (supported by the bleak and surreal aspect of the harmonies employed), and is therefore in the state of 'nothingness' or 'negation'. The

appearance of the main individual in the commercial represents the point at which the subject returns to a state of existence. The subject at this point is ‘as it were, reborn’, (the melody is also repeated in octaves at this point), and later enters the ‘affirmation’ stage, which ‘radiates a new kind of signification also to the subject dwelling in it’ (Tarasti 2000, p. 11).

This ‘new kind of signification’ represents the point at which the individual decides to discard of his own car. In musical terms, Andrews’s music represents this point of ‘affirmation’ by the onset of the uplifting triad in bar 19 – the musical element supports the existential process depicted in the visual narrative, thereby demonstrating the compatibility between Andrews’s music in the commercial. Delibes’s song, on the other hand, does not co-operate in a similar fashion. Moreover, neither the Golf commercial nor Martinez’s music convey such an existential process (even though the visual narrative focuses on an individual subject’s experience of driving a car). The analysis of a different commercial, namely a Volkswagen Jetta, as discussed in Chapter 3 on the other hand, does display a degree of ‘negation’ vs. ‘affirmation’, while the melody vs. accompaniment texture of a piano piece by Mendelssohn again presents a sense of existentialism by its soloistic nature.

## **Conclusions**

Applying a comparative analytical methods has inevitably led to questions regarding how the relationships formed between media comply with the Deleuzian-Foucaultian framework. It is clear that the use of different musical extracts contributes towards different meanings in the commercial’s narrative. Both extracts interact with different

aspects of the commercial: while the development in Andrews's music seemingly relates to the cognitive state of the actor i.e. the *subject*, the significance of the recapitulation in Delibes's music interacts with the *object* of the commercial – the esteemed Mondeo as it drives past.

If differences therefore do exist, then how effective would the Deleuzian-Foucaultian framework prove to be in ascertaining relationships formed therein? If we firstly consider the use of Delibes's nineteenth-century aria in conjunction with the visual narrative of the commercial, then difference is primarily mediated by *resemblance*: the image of the floating balloons approaches the aria's melody and lightness of texture. However, the textual material of the song does not resemble the actual commercial to a great extent. It may be suggested therefore that musico-visual difference is mediated by an *emulative* form of similitude in Foucault's terms, due to its further distance away from *convenience*. On the other hand, a *convenient* form of similitude is more apparent in the case of the nearly-synchronised shot of a car lifting off towards the sky, seen in close proximity to an ascending arpeggio figuration performed by accompanimental pizzicato strings near to the music's conclusion. Furthermore, the concluding panoramic shot of a mass of floating cars, heard in conjunction with the repeated twin notes of the song as an echo, is yet another example of a *convenient* relationship between sound and image.

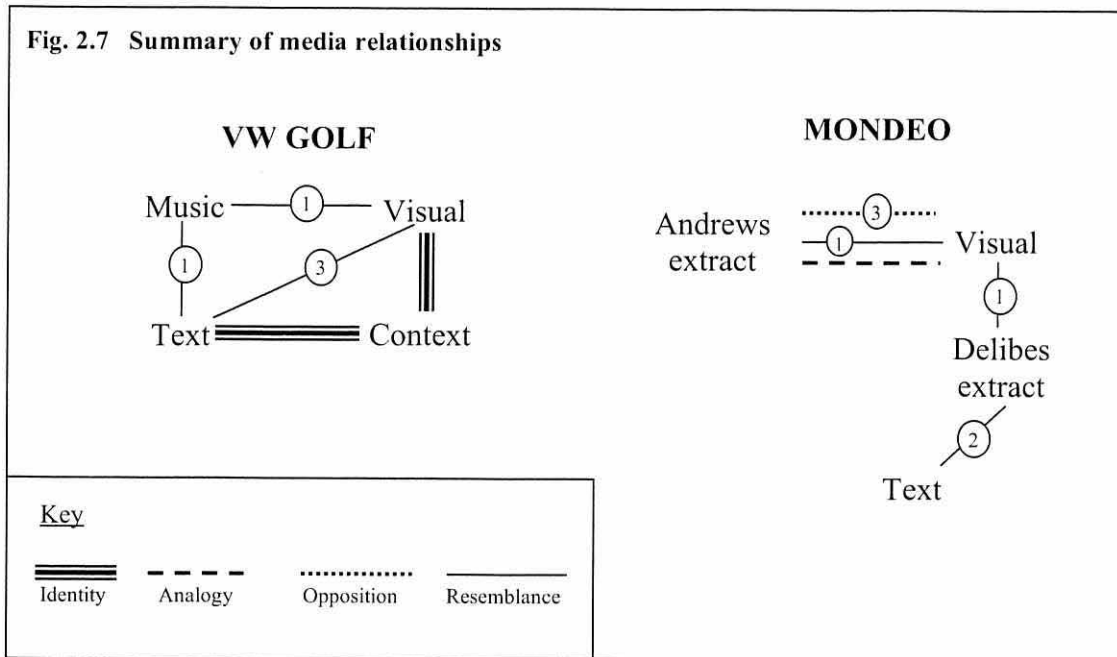
While the relationships formed between Delibes's music and the visual narrative of the commercial is primarily based on *similitude*, difference is mediated by more varied means in the case of Andrews's soundtrack. Consider, for example, the 'breakthrough' point in b. 19. As the music here signifies a change in the actor's cognitive state – a point when he gets the desire to change his car upon seeing a

passing Mondeo – this is surely an example of an *analogy* in Deleuzian terms, an ‘explanation or clarification’ that is achieved through musical not verbal means.

On the other hand, the grounded stasis of the bass clearly opposes the visual element; the paradoxical lightness of the floating cars clearly *contradicts* with the bottom-heavy texture of the music. Yet, when coupled with the unsettling shifts in harmony, this grim musical outlook acts as a *resemblance* of the reality, or even surrealism of the situation depicted on-screen. Moreover, the ascending melody heard between bb. 21-23 relates in synchronisation with the motion of a car being pushed towards the sky by the principal actor; this similitude is most surely a *convenient* form of mediation between sound and vision.

A series of questions arising from the application of this post-structural framework needs to be addressed at this point. Firstly, however, a brief overview of the application of Deleuze’s ‘four shackles of mediation’ will now be provided. Fig. 2.7 outlines how difference is mediated in both the Golf and Mondeo commercials, with the aid of the models presented earlier in Fig. 2.1, with the numbers inserted within the lines being representative of the types defined in Fig. 2.1. It is apparent from this table that relations between media elements in the Golf commercial are mainly reconciled by identity and resemblance (convenient and analogical similitudes), while differences between Andrews’s music and the Mondeo commercial’s visual component are contradictory, convenient and analogical. The Delibes version on the other hand is mediated by convenient and emulative forms of similitude.

Fig. 2.7 Summary of media relationships

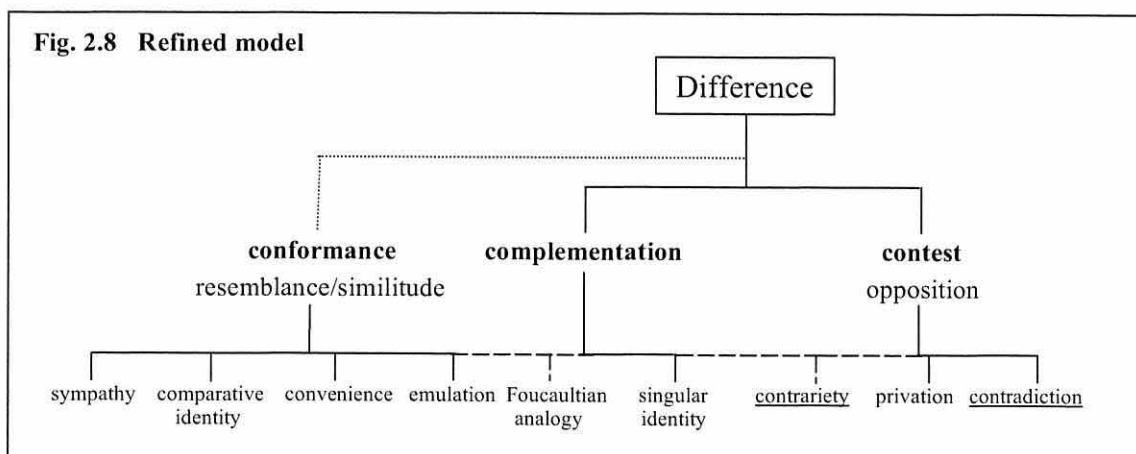


Certain questions arise from the implementation of this model, primarily what exactly does this post-structural approach further offer to the analysis of music and multimedia, and to what extent does it provide a different perspective to Cook’s ‘three basic models of multimedia’? Also, are there other methodologies that can be applied in this scenario? In contrast to Cook’s similarity-difference model, which operates on an either/or basis, the framework presented in Fig. 2.1 focuses on the anti-dialectic. Similarity is considered a product of difference, as according to Deleuze, ‘difference is behind everything’ (Deleuze 2004, p. 69). While Cook’s model only presented one form of similarity – conformance – Foucault presents four types of similitudes that are compatible with the notion of resemblance, i.e. sympathy, convenience, emulation and analogy.

Foucault’s ‘analogy’ however poses a problem – is it a different form of analogy to the one found in Deleuze’s ‘four shackles of mediation’? Furthermore, if the notion of identity is pitted against Cook’s models, is it comparable to a conformance or a complementation? Mark Currie provides two interpretations of the

term: either a single entity that combines similar and different elements, or alternatively ‘the property of absolute sameness between separate entities’ (Currie 2004, p. 3). In the case of the former description, this surely bears resemblance to Cook’s complementation model, while the latter definition points towards conformance due to the ‘property of absolute sameness’ (ibid.). Indeed, the fact that these conclusions pose more questions than provide answers, by uncovering multiple terminological meanings might be regarded as characteristic of the plurality of post-structural thought and the multiplicities of post-modern linguistics.

So what are the alternatives, and is there scope to refine – or combine – Cook’s model with the Deleuzian-Foucaultian framework hereby presented? The Fig. 2.8 framework presents a synthesis of the structural and post-structural theories of Cook, Deleuze and Foucault. Bolded type represents Cook’s terminology while underlined words are applicable to Cook, Deleuze and Foucault. This diagram takes into account the Deleuzian presumption of resemblance being part of difference, although it is distinguished from the other forms of differences (complementation and contest) by the use of a dotted line. Four types of resemblances (or Cook’s conformances) are assembled on a graduating scale of similarity – from sympathy to emulation. The newly coined term ‘comparative identity’ refers to Currie’s description of two entities that are similar. Also, under the complementation model,



‘single identity’ refers to Currie’s definition of a single entity containing similarity and differences.

Foucault’s ‘analogy’ is observed as a bridging factor between conformance and complementation: while it is regarded as one of Foucault’s four similitudes, thereby conforming, its mixture of different forms of similitudes (i.e. a combination of convenience and emulation) can equally be taken to mean a complementation. At the opposite end of the difference spectrum, contest or opposition, contrariety is again observed as a middleground between complementation and contest: while contrariety is a form of complementation in Cook and Greimas’s terms, it is regarded as a (weak?) opposition according to Deleuze’s premises, as he considers that ‘contrariety alone expresses the capacity of a subject to bear opposites while remaining substantially the same’ (Deleuze 2004, p. 39).

The juxtaposition of both structural and post-structural frameworks in Fig. 2.8 has uncovered a blurring of the boundaries between the various forms of mediating difference, which yet again highlights post-modernist, or post-structural multiplicities of meanings. This synthesised framework has therefore attempted to refine both systems through a conflation of the theories: ascertaining relationships between media components cannot be achieved by means of Cook’s ‘three basic models’ alone, nor is the Deleuzian-Foucaultian framework wholly conclusive on its own.

But, apart from both methodologies discussed in this chapter, are there any other techniques that could be applied to the study of multimedia? Anthony Baldry and Paul Thibault’s research into multimodal concordances offers a frame-by-frame approach to the study of commercials, called ‘multimodal transcription’ (Baldry 2004;



Baldry & Thibault 2006).<sup>16</sup> Baldry writes specifically on the analysis of car commercials, in which a sample of sixty adverts has been taken into account. Working within the parameters of a tabular format, a commercial is described in terms of temporality (shot timing), visual, musical and sonic content, a description of movements in the shot ('kinesic action'), and finally a description of 'phases and metafunctions' (Baldry 2004, p. 85). In contrast to the approaches developed by Cook, and the Deleuzian framework presented in this chapter, Baldy and Thibault's multimodal approach falls short in examining the relationships formed between the media elements, focusing more specifically instead on the manifestation of 'phases,' 'sub-phases' and 'transitions' between shots.

In conclusion, by building on Cook's basic models, a more refined methodology has proven to be successful in comparing the relationships formed within and between different media. The viability of applying these concepts to the analysis of two television commercials that employ post- or quasi-minimalist music has been demonstrated, which facilitated a discourse on the various interrelationships formed therein. The synthesised model contained in Fig. 2.8 offered a lucid juxtaposition of Cook and Deleuze's theories in order to highlight several common factors between both frameworks.

Pitting numerous post-structural theories against each other has further uncovered certain similarities in their approaches, for instance between Greimas's 'synthetic' position in the semiotic square and Cook's complementation model. This model has in fact shown to be relevant to several other theorists' approaches, including Adorno and Deleuze's methods of mediating differences. Foucault's

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew Robbie applied this approach to his analysis of pop music videos in his paper entitled 'The structures of music video and multimodal metatheory' delivered at the Fifth International Conference on Music since 1900, at York University on 8 July 2007. This method will be applied to analyse scenes out of Tod Browning's *Dracula* in Chapter 6.

similitude and resemblance yet again builds on Deleuze's perspective, while issues of proximity and remoteness appear to resonate with Jakobson's determination of metaphor and metonymy. Several of these key concepts have been combined in order to examine how musical, textual and visual narratives relate to space. In contrast, the next part of this investigation will study how the combination of post-minimal musical, textual and visual narratives relates to the concept of narrativity and temporality.

## **Chapter Three**

## Postmodern Unfoldings?

### Temporality and (Anti-)narrativity in Recent Film and Media\*

'Some bloke called Mendelssohn did a nice job on the music too'<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

In February 2006, the car manufacturing company Volkswagen quoted Mendelssohn's Song without Words in F-sharp minor Op. 67 No. 2 (1843-5) for their Jetta car campaign entitled 'Ripped Off'. A member of the creative team involved in the commercial light-heartedly commented in an advertising industry blog that 'some bloke called Mendelssohn did a nice job on the music too' – his statement implies that they also 'did a nice job' on the commercial. Indeed, the Jetta commercial serves as a relatively recent example of how the music of the past is often recycled in new contexts. Taking into account the fact that the concept of re-contextualisation is often associated with postmodernism, this commercial is therefore an ideal introduction to this chapter on the unfolding of narratives in postmodern music. This discussion will inevitably consider the meaning of narrative and anti-narrative as a priority, but first, it seems logical to address the issue of how the concept of postmodernism and re-contextualisation is related.

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\* This chapter is an elaborated version of a conference paper entitled 'Postmodern Unfoldings? Temporality and [Anti-]narrativity in Recent Film, Opera and Media', delivered at the Fifth International Conference on Music since 1900 at York University on 8 July 2007.

<sup>1</sup> Nick Alsop left this comment on the Best Ads on TV blog on 15 February 2006. See <<http://www.bestadsonTV.com/news/index.php?cat=@=&date=0&p=416>> (Last accessed 20 December 2009).

Drawing on Barthesian theory, Graham Allen refers to the 'text' as 'the threads of the "already written" and the "already read"' (Allen 2000, p. 6). Allen further writes that

in the Postmodern epoch, theorists often claim [that] it is not possible any longer to speak of originality or the uniqueness of the artistic object [...] since every artistic object is so clearly assembled from bits and pieces of already existent art (ibid., p. 5).

It is clear from this argument, as many have written, that the borrowing and the re-contextualisation of artistic material is a valid sign of postmodernity. Often, such re-contextualisation reflects the practice of *bricolage* – that is, in Genette's terms, the creation of 'a structure out of a previous structure by re-arranging elements which are already arranged within the objects of his or her study' (ibid., p. 96).

Quotations of pre-existing material is often found in post-minimal practices, and it is the relationship between such music and its use in film and media that forms the central part of this analytical inquiry. Firstly, however, a broader context will be given, in order to reflect postmodernism's general tendency to borrow from the past; 'traditional' approaches to the concept of time and narrativity in music when applied to other media will initially be studied, as apparent in a television commercial and a Hollywood blockbuster. Examination of both case studies will then lead to a discussion on several minimalist forms of narratives, with the aid of Leydon's typology of minimalist tropes (Leydon 2002). Leydon's typology will essentially be supplemented with other instances of music providing specific meanings when pitted against a visual narrative.

## Traditional Forms of Narrativity in Postmodern Contexts

The fundamental story of the Volkswagen Jetta commercial involves five scenarios in which an existing owner of the car is being over-priced by vendors who believe, on seeing his car, that he can afford the increased charges. Hence the Jetta's luxuriousness, it would appear, gives the false impression that the owner is wealthy. Swift changes in price leaves the victim increasingly perplexed, which reaches its apex in his most bemused expression at a ferry toll bridge. The commercial concludes with a reaction by the victim that implies his understanding of the fact that he has been 'ripped off'. What makes the Jetta commercial somewhat unconventional is the fact that the story is recounted solely through facial gestures, music and numbers. For this reason, clear parallels are evinced between the choice of music and the visual storyline; neither the commercial or the music contain any verbal narrative, hence they are both literally 'songs without words'. The musico-visual relationship in the commercial reflects the first of Cook's 'three basic models of multimedia', namely a *conforming* relationship.

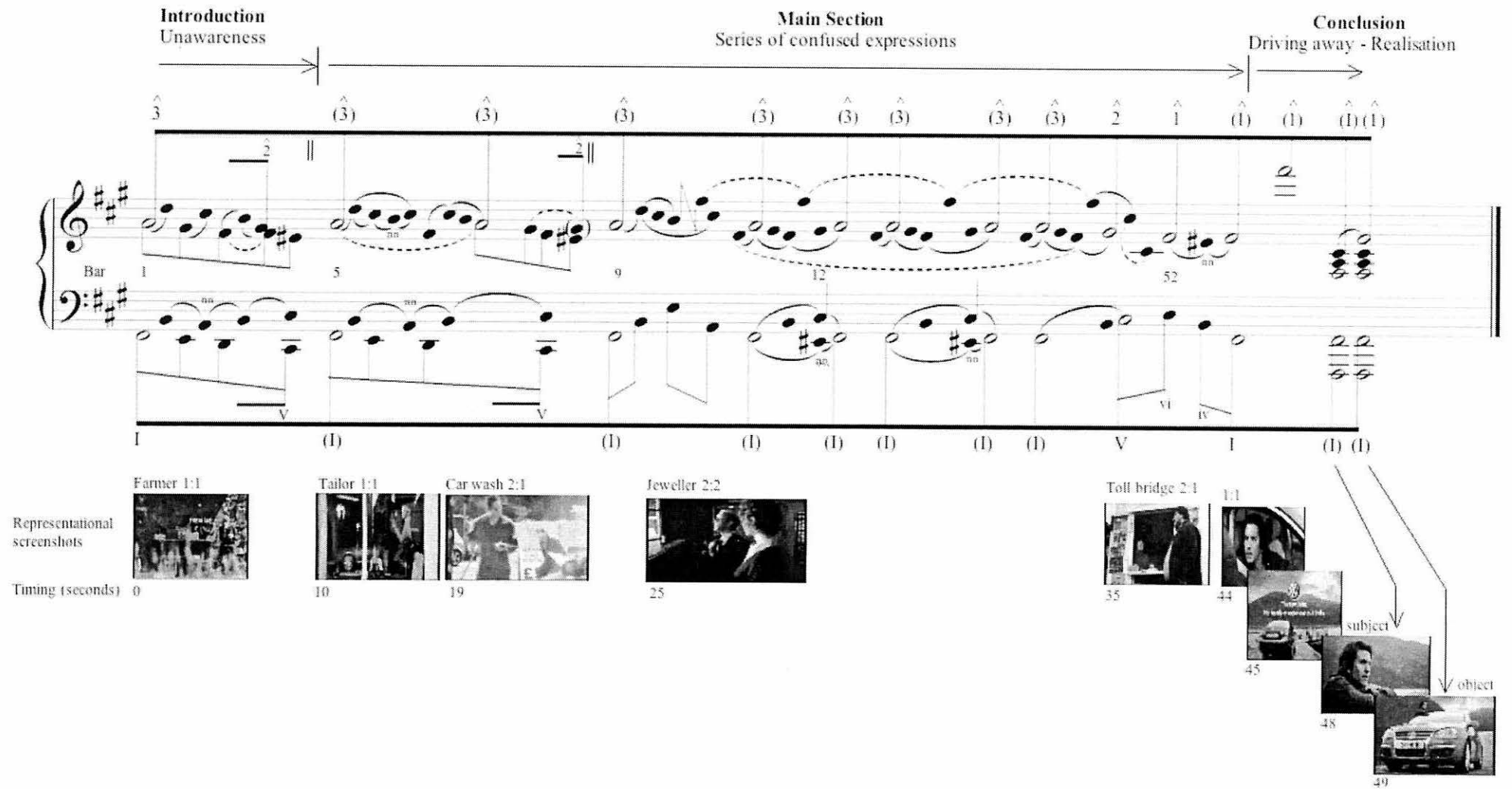
From an aesthetic perspective, the rustic landscape, the use of small-scale businesses, and the general laid-back approach of the commercial share several similarities with Mendelssohn's music, and are therefore *conforming*. The playful nature of the music (supported by the inclusion of the *leggiere* performance direction) at the outset of the piece suitably represents the vendors' mischievous behaviour, as evident by their wry smiles and collusions. Moreover, the employment of a cycle of fifths, creating an ambiguous progression whereby the resolution is prolonged, again supports the visual narrative. Both the original and the present context also share sociological similarities: while the music represents the *hausmusic* of the mid-

nineteenth century *bourgeois*, the Volkswagen Jetta is also aimed at the relatively affluent, being a mid-price saloon. As the final textual caption declares, the car is ‘not nearly as expensive as it looks’.

But what exactly does the temporal aspect involve? Both the music and the non-verbal narrative of the commercial share a linear drive, as a clear sense of musical and visual progression towards a goal is attained. Characteristically of nineteenth-century tonal music, this form of temporality reflects Jonathan Kramer’s description of ‘directed linear time’, whereby a single clear goal is evinced; other forms of linear time, according to Kramer may be distinguished as ‘multiply-directed linear time’, for which more than one goal may operate, and ‘non-directed linear time’, which lacks a goal but motion is heard. Of special interest to minimalist music has been stasis or anti-narrativity, ‘non-linearity’ requires ‘the determination of some characteristic(s) of music in accordance with implications that arise from principles or tendencies governing an entire piece or section’ (Kramer 1988, pp. 20, 46-50). Non-linearity, therefore, assumes a sense of totality.

Most of the middle part of the original version of Mendelssohn’s song has been omitted in the commercial, and the two outer sections effectively and seamlessly spliced together. The Schenkerian graph in Fig. 3.1 illustrates the fact that although the music is curtailed by almost two thirds of its original length, the linear trajectory of the piece is not compromised. In the opening scene, the viewer is introduced to the car owner, who literally drives into the commercial; this introductory scene *conforms* at a structural level to the music’s accompanimental introduction – the end of which is illustrated by the interruption of the fundamental line – i.e. a descent to the second degree of the scale.

Fig. 3.1 Schenkerian graph of the VW Jetta commercial





The commercial subsequently progresses through a series of four scenes (the tailor, car wash, jeweller's shop and the toll bridge). During the jeweller's scene, there is a sense of climax through the use of repetition and dynamic growth, at which point the most serious case of overcharging takes place. The snapshot from the jeweller's scene, displayed underneath the graph, illustrates how the scene comprises a ratio of 2:2 in terms of the amount of characters employed. This is the only scene that uses two people on both sides of the shop window. A symmetrical arch structure can therefore be observed in this respect. The level of musical intensification recedes during the toll-bridge scene, which leads to a full-screen shot of the victim's final perplexed expression, at which point a final closure in Schenkerian terms is heard before he drives over the bridge – a scene that is overlaid with the textual caption. This is followed by two macro subject/object shots (victim/car), which are synchronised with the final two chords of the *Song*, as shown on the graph. The victim's expression in this conclusion implies his (post-caption) realisation of what had previously occurred.

In Cook's terms, a conforming relationship between music and image appears to be strong here, but what can theories about narrativity tell us about the commercial's meaning? In his writings on time and narrative, Paul Ricoeur refers to Aristotle's theory on *muthos*, or emplotment, as articulated in *Poetics* (Ricoeur 1984, p. 31). *Muthos*, defined by Aristotle as 'the organization of the events' (ibid., p. 33) implies a sense of the whole, and according to Aristotle, 'a thing is a whole if it has a beginning, a middle and an end' (ibid., p. 38). As the graph displays, the manipulation of Mendelssohn's music evinces a clear sense of narrative. The distilled version of the music succeeds in expressing an introduction, a main section and a conclusion, and therefore optimises the visual element of the commercial, in which

the viewer observes the victim's unfolding process of understanding the event: the three stages of unawareness, confusion and the concluding realisation. While the visual element is arguably prioritised over the music, the preservation of musical time is clearly audible, as the linear trajectory is maintained, albeit in a curtailed form. Furthermore, the introductory 'accompanimental' section predetermines the length of the opening visual scene, or the first 'event' in Aristotelian terms. Musical structure consequently prevails in this respect. In the conclusion also, the synchronised twin chords are again a deciding factor in the length of the final shots.

### **Unravelling a Musical Code**

If the Jetta commercial demonstrates a postmodern example of a traditional tonal unfolding, a similar type of unfolding may be found in pieces from the soundtrack to Ron Howard's *The Da Vinci Code* motion picture (2006). Although, in contrast to the borrowing of music from a past style as observed in the Volkswagen commercial, Hans Zimmer uses a past compositional technique in order to structure the soundtrack, namely the Wagnerian leitmotiv. Use of such a technique can be identified in Claudia Gorbman's terminology as 'cinematic musical codes', which are explained as the association of characters and situations in the movie with specific musical themes (Gorbman 1980, p. 185).

In order to show how the thematic material of the music is integrated into the film's narrative, it would seem logical at this point to provide some contextual background of Dan Brown's novel. *The Da Vinci Code* is centred on the quest for the motive behind the murder of the Louvre museum curator, Jacques Saunière, a trail that subsequently leads to the quest for the Holy Grail. Similarly designed to the plot

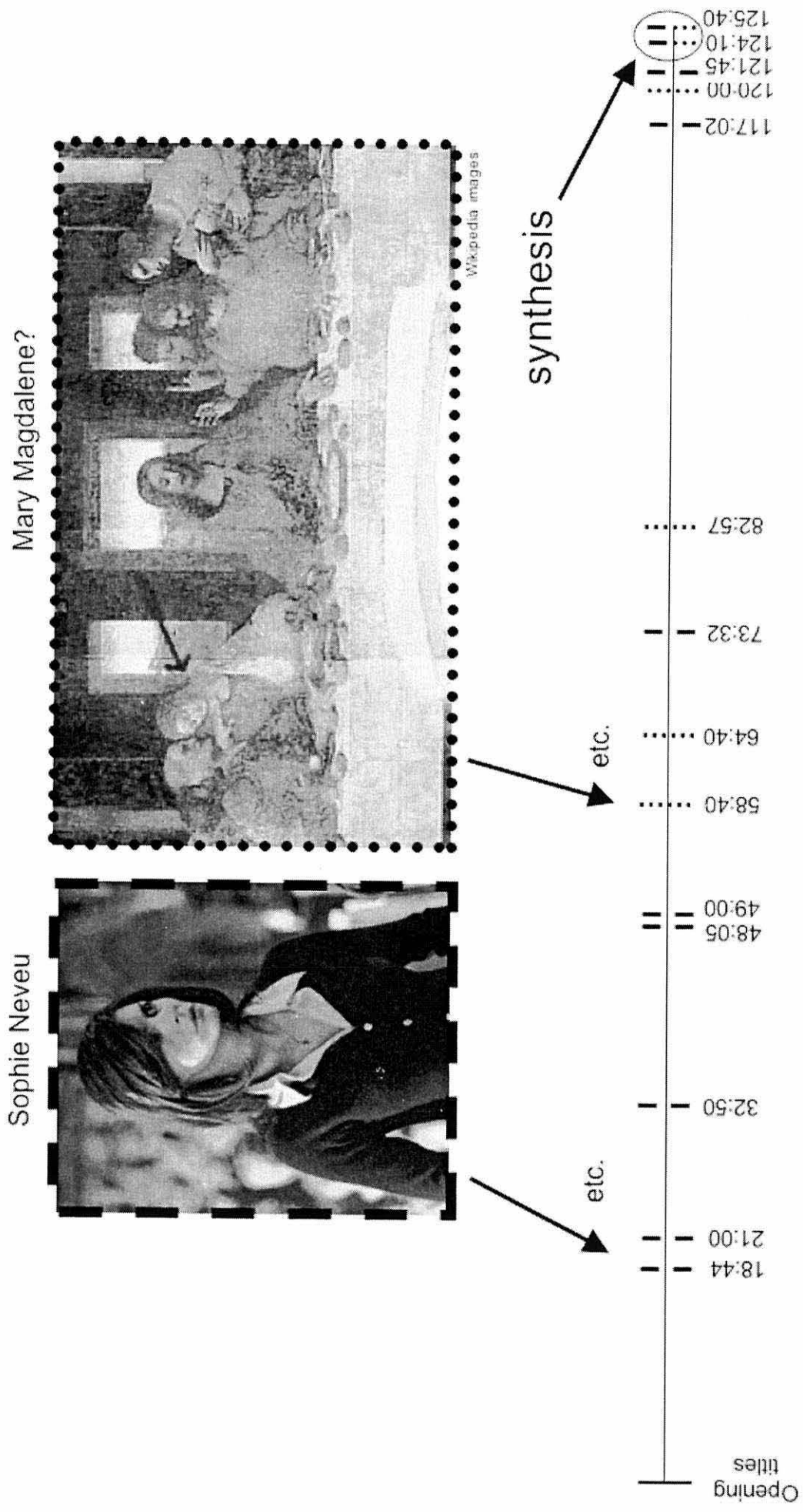
of the Jetta commercial, a series of questions are presented at the outset of movie by its inquisitive opening – particularly relating to the identity of the hooded man that killed Saunière, and the motive behind his murder. In an attempt to solve the mystery, Robert Langdon, played by Tom Hanks as a Harvard professor of Religious Symbolology, and the forensic cryptologist Parisian, Sophie Neveu, played by Audrey Tautou, who is ostensibly the granddaughter of Sauniere, are drafted in by the police.

In contrast to the Volkswagen Jetta commercial, *The Da Vinci Code* is constructed out of a myriad of different storylines; several narrative strands, or subplots intertwine. With reference to Kramer's aforementioned typology of temporalities, one is led to believe that a multiply-directed linear time operates in the movie's plot, as several goals are developed during the course of the storyline. One such narrative strand is the claim (and the diegetic realisation) that Neveu is a descendant of Christ and Mary Magdalene. The musical theme that accompanies this particular thread will now be the focus of the analysis.

The theme, as shown in Ex. 3.1 is briefly introduced in the title sequence, at which point it bears no extra-musical meaning. Its inclusion at this early stage merely serves a 'preparatory function' in Philip Tagg's terms, which is 'to prepare listeners or viewers emotionally with an affective musical description of the kind of general mood found in the subsequent presentation – an indication of "things to come"' (Tagg 2000, p. 93). At this stage, the musical theme therefore represents a premonitory state of being. As the storyline unfolds, this theme is restated, implied or developed several times during the course of the movie, as distributed in Fig. 3.2.

Moreover, this particular strand is associated with two seemingly different contexts: firstly in conjunction with Sophie Neveu (shown by long dotted lines on Fig. 3.2), and particularly the regression to her childhood, presented in grainy-

Fig. 3.2 Distribution of the Neveu-Madalene theme



textured colour footage as captured by an amateur video camera (metonymically representing her memory). The evocative, almost bittersweet attribute of the melody is emotionally well suited to Neveu in her fond recollection of the upbringing that she received in an idyllic rural location by her grandfather, Jacques Saunière, who was brutally murdered at the outset of the film. One might even argue that the Aeolian inflection and subtle ornamentation are quintessentially French, thereby aesthetically

**Ex. 3.1 Aural transcription of the ‘Neveu-Magdalene’ theme from *The Da Vinci Code***



*conforming* to the overall context of the narrative. Furthermore, modality essentially alludes to past times, which is again consistent with Neveu’s psychological regressions to her childhood.

Midway into the movie, this theme is heard in association with a different person, Mary Magdalene (as shown by shorter dotted lines). The music therefore accommodates a seemingly oppositional context, although the grainy effect of the visual image is again employed in order to represent a historical regression. In this instance, the simplicity of Zimmer’s melody alludes to an early French chanson, which also ties in with the story by means of a reference to an ancient past. Subsequent to the first enactment of this new association, the function of the music alternates between representing both contemporary and historic female characters.

Towards the final moments of the film, Langdon informs Neveu (and the viewers of the film) of his discovery at Roslyn Church that Neveu is apparently

related to Jesus. This is the culmination of a dialectical process. Both uses of the same leitmotiv had previously seemed oppositional in meaning (although they were noticeably connected by the visual aesthetic in their regressions to past times).

However, at this final stage, a synthesis has taken place. As shown in Fig. 3.2, the juxtaposition of long and short dotted lines represent this connection in the final twin uses of the musical theme. This theme, in conjunction with the visual element, has created a dialectical process, which is ultimately resolved or reinforced by its association with the verbal narrative. In other words, Langdon's explanation of the alleged connection between Neveu and Mary Magdalene correlates with the listener's identification of the associative musical theme.

In his article, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?' Jean-Jacques Nattiez refers to Leonardo da Vinci's observations that 'the marks on a wall bring it to life and make it able to tell stories' (Nattiez 1990a, p. 246). Furthermore, Nattiez explains how Molino builds upon da Vinci's observation: 'Two words on a wall give rise not to an idea, a concept, an impression, but to a narrative' (ibid.). And by using the analogy of inscribed initials within a tree trunk as representative of a romance novel, Nattiez sets out two prerequisites of what he defines as a narrative 'trace', that is the neutral level of the semiological tripartition:

- (1) a minimum of two objects, of whatever sort, must be provided for us, and
- (2) these two objects must be placed in a linear and temporal dimension in order for us to be encouraged to established a relationship between them (ibid).

Nattiez further writes that 'a narrative emerges, *strictly speaking*, only when a temporal series of objects and events is taken over by a metalinguistic discourse' (ibid., p. 243). In fact, the analysis of the Neveu-Magdalene theme has succeeded in demonstrating how this particular element constitutes a musical narrative that a listener, at an 'esthetic' level can identify and interpret.

## **Post-minimal (Anti-)narrativity**

In the case of the Jetta commercial and the Da Vinci soundtrack, a clear narrative unfolding was demonstrated, displaying how postmodern uses of tonal music can be supported by analysis of such examples with Schenkerian theory or the Hegelian dialectic. Examining unfoldings of tonality within recent examples of post-minimal multimedia works, on the other hand, will give light on how Glass and Reich approach the concept of time in repetitive music. Nowhere is postmodernism's predilection for 'anti-narrativity', or 'non-linearity', more apparent than in minimalism, wherein the linearity of tonal music is replaced by stasis, repetition, or idiosyncratic forms of alternative narrative processes, often with more than one narrative process occurring simultaneously.

But what exactly is anti-narrative, and how does it relate to post-minimal music? Jann Pasler explains anti-narrative music as 'works which rely on the listener's expectations of a narrative, but frustrate it through continual interruption of a work's temporal process and proceed by change without narrative transformation' (Pasler 1993, p. 27). Paul Ricoeur considers aspects of time and narrative to be based on a reciprocal relationship, while narrative is inherently linked to the concept of a plot – 'the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in a story' (Ricoeur 1980, pp. 169-71). The notion of anti-narrativity may in fact bring the opening section of this chapter's title into question: can post-minimal music, which is based on repetition, in fact unfold? As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the main features of post-minimalism is an increased sense of flexibility towards temporal processes and textural multiplicity – a complexity that is supported by the inclusion of more than one approach towards musical time. But is repetition a form of anti-narrative?



According to Ricoeur, repetition ‘implies the “existential deepening” of time, while dechronologization “implies the logical abolition of time”’ (Ricoeur 1980, p. 184).

Tarasti argues that repetitive processes employed in minimalist music halt temporal progress (Tarasti 1994, p. 282-5), while Mertens considers repetitive music as having an a-teleological function – this being a Greek term for lacking in a final purpose, or a goal (Mertens 1988, p. 17). On the other hand, Rebecca Leydon’s typology of six minimalist tropes effectively demonstrates minimalism’s ability to provide different forms of musical narratives or meanings (Leydon 2002). This observation is supported by Ricoeur’s comments that repetition can indeed offer an intensified meaning to time (Ricoeur 1980, p. 184).

Steve Reich and Philip Glass were both acutely aware of time as an inherent, even idiosyncratic, element of their compositional style since the early stages of their careers. Reich’s formative essay, ‘Music as a Gradual Process’ (1968) (Reich 2002, pp. 34-6), articulates his thoughts on musical progression, particularly his formulation of audible process as the basis for his music. As a practicing Buddhist,<sup>2</sup> Philip Glass on the other hand employs a cyclical approach, and has commented that ‘[his] music is not characterised by argument and development. It has disposed of traditional concepts that were closely linked to real time, to clock time’ (Mertens 1988, p. 88).

Certain examples out of Glass’s soundtrack to *Powaqqatsi*, demonstrate his idiosyncratic approach to musical time. For instance in the train scene, ‘Train from Sao Paulo’, both the visual and musical elements lack a clear goal; the viewer is not made privy to the direction of the train, which can be taken as a metaphor for the music’s a-teleological nature. Glass’s characteristic use of the additive/reductive

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of Glass as a practicing Buddhist is reiterated by Keith Potter in Potter 2000, p. 259, however in a later interview, the composer comments: “I don’t know if I know what the Buddhist faith is” (DesJardins 2006, p. 115).



technique however correlates with the slight increase in the visual pace; the music therefore conveys a sense of motion. The repetitive nature of Glass's music in this context is thus indicative of Rebecca Leydon's *motoric* type of repetition, representing an 'indifferent mechanized process' (Leydon 2002). Use of repetition in this context therefore promotes a musico-visual narrative.<sup>3</sup>

While the above example clearly demonstrates how Leydon's typology can be applied to the context of *Powaqqatsi*, it would be interesting to observe how this typology can be appended to other categories accommodating other forms of minimalist narrativity, whereby the inherent uses of repetition evoke different meanings. The remainder of this chapter will proceed to explore the interaction between minimalist music and several historical and social contexts, paying special attention to composers' responses to such events as developments in nuclear science, psychedelia, explorations in space and the expression of urban environments. In other words, how minimalism's inherent repetition can convey or support other such extra-musical narratives.

### **'For [the Benefit / the Progress of] All Mankind'?**

In the introduction to his book *The New Music*, Reginald Smith Brindle proclaims that the dawn of the atomic age and the first expeditions on the moon indirectly changed the course of the avant-garde since 1945 (Smith Brindle 1987, p. 1). Both occurrences were initially encouraged to be in the interest of humanity – while the US Government and its allies presented the testing of an atomic bomb on Bikini Atoll

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<sup>3</sup> This scene, 'Train from Sao Paolo,' was singled out for discussion in my paper delivered at the ICMSN Conference in 2007, and in the 'Parallel Symmetries' chapter in ap Siôn and Evans 2009, p. 678. Rebecca Eaton also refers to this particular scene, again with reference to a motoric form of repetition (see Eaton 2008, pp. 98-100).

Island as ‘for the benefit of all mankind’, the Apollo missions to the moon were conceived ‘for the progress of all mankind’, as declared in John F. Kennedy’s rousing pre-launch speech.

In the case of the former event, however, there has always been opposition to nuclear weapons. Penderecki’s emotive *Threnody to the victims of Hiroshima* (1960) is arguably the only example that makes an explicit reference through music to the devastating effects of nuclear obliteration upon humanity. Since *Threnody*, different aspects of the atomic age have been the subjects of several singular and collaborative responses involving multimedia, particularly by minimalist composers. Indeed the atom bomb has instigated a postmodernist intertext, with the iconic mushroom-shaped cloud evolving as a kind of cultural trope during the last half-century.

Two operas by Glass and John Adams refer to the origin of the atom bomb, and more specifically to the individuals involved in its creation. In *Einstein on the Beach*, the inventor of the theory of relativity takes a central role in the opera; the remainder of the title, ‘on the beach’ refers to Nevil Shute’s namesake novel based on the threat of nuclear annihilation (Shute 1960). In the autobiographical *Opera on the Beach*, Glass alludes to the indirect association with Shute’s novel, as neither himself nor Robert Wilson, the opera’s director, had apparently read it beforehand (Glass 1988, pp. 29-30).

This notion of unintentionality continues in another Glass example, namely his soundtrack to Godfrey Reggio’s *Koyaanisqatsi* (the title literally meaning ‘life out of balance’). As discussed earlier, Reggio’s non-narrated film formed a new association with the atom bomb through its use in a television commercial by the Carbon Trust, wherein the actions of the so-called ‘father of the atom bomb’ J. Robert Oppenheimer metonymically represent mankind’s daily misuse of the planet. Oppenheimer also

features as a central character in John Adams's recent opera *Doctor Atomic*, with a libretto by Peter Sellars. Drawing on several found material, Adams's opera recounts the events leading up to the first detonation of the atomic bomb in 1945, focusing on the preparatory stage and countdown to the event. In an interview with Alex Ross, Sellars commented that 'every second is charged, because it is a new thing in the history of time – this massive pressure behind every minute and every second in a way that never counted before' (Ross 2005). The tension and the impending doom surrounding the detonation of the first atomic bomb in New Mexico in 1945 is musically embodied by gradual pitch ascents combined with the ominous sound of tolling bells. Both the psychological pressure and the physical pressure of the detonation are consequently expressed by Adams's post-minimalist music. This approach contrasts with a different work by Terry Riley, who also responded to the atomic age by collaborating with a relatively unknown artist, Bruce Conner, for the experimental film *Crossroads* (1976).

### ***Crossroads* and 'Bikini'**

Bruce Conner, hailed in the *Los Angeles Times* as being a 'brilliant yet eccentric multimedia pioneer' prolifically assembled over twenty short films comprising found footages from the late 1950s onwards (McKenna 1990, unpag.).<sup>4</sup> Similar to filmmakers including Robert Nelson (who had collaborated with Steve Reich on such

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<sup>4</sup> Similar to *Crossroads*, Conner's first film, *A Movie* (1958) also carried a military subtext that involved nuclear detonation, thereby indicative this subject's prevalence in contemporary artistic responses. Further examples of his assemblages include *Cosmic Ray* (1961), *Report* (1967) that documented Kennedy's assassination, and *Marilyn Five Times* (1973), which featured the actress Marilyn Monroe. See Wees 1993, pp. 5-14.

films as *Plastic Haircut* (1963) and *Oh Dem Watermelons* (1965),<sup>5</sup> Conner also first embarked on a career as an artist – the influence of which seemingly filters through into his films. According to Randal Johnson, Conner’s ‘film work is firmly grounded in the visual arts and here he resembles Michael Snow, another multi-media genius – their best audience being one schooled in the complexities of modern object-making – from cubism to minimalism’ (Johnson 1978, p. 38).

Conner’s political concerns are often expressed in his works, which leads to Johnson’s reference to him as a ‘political activist’ (ibid., p. 41). His 1963 drawing ‘Mushroom Cloud’ is one of many examples of his concerns with nuclear warfare. Continuing on a similar subject matter, the drawing entitled ‘Bombhead’ is a ‘collage depicting an atomic bomb’s mushroom cloud as the head of a military officer. Things atomic are something of a Conner fixation’.<sup>6</sup> Even though no explicit reference of the latter artist’s influence on the former has been found, similarities between Conner’s *Bombhead* (1989) and René Magritte’s earlier work, *The Son of Man* (1964) may be observed in the displacement of the human face in both works. As evident in Fig. 3.3, the former work substitutes a face for a mushroom cloud, and the latter by an apple. Both Magritte and Conner’s works are equally thought-provoking: can the superimposition of an apple be considered a metaphor for the creation of life, while Conner’s replacement of a human head with a mushroom cloud antithetically symbolises the destruction of life at the hands of mankind?

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<sup>5</sup> See Earl Bodien’s article on Nelson’s cinematic works in Bodien 1967 pp. 50-52.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Byrne, ‘Artjournalism,’ *San Francisco Weekly* (13 September 2000) <<http://www.sfweekly.com/2000-09-13/news/artjournalism/>> (Last accessed 14 November 2007).

Fig. 3.3 Conner's 'Bombhead' and Magritte's 'The Son of Man'



Conner: *Bombhead* (1989)



Magritte: *The Son of Man* (1964)

Conner's concerns with atomic development also manifest themselves in his silent movie *Crossroads* (1976), in which declassified National Archive footage of the initial atomic testing programme on Bikini Atoll on Marshall Island, which took place in 1946. Notable is the fact that the director Stanley Kubrick had already used similar footage in *Dr Strangelove: or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1963) – a film that according to Mick Broderick inspired Conner's *Crossroads* (Broderick 1992, unpag.). In contrast to Kubrick's film, however, Conner's assemblage is of particular relevance to this present study, as it makes use of a soundtrack by Terry Riley.<sup>7</sup>

Although Riley claimed that he 'never did have a desire to write film music' (Cowley 2007, unpag.), the composer was fairly active in this area at the time and had already composed tracks for *Music with Balls* (1969) in collaboration with the sculptor Arlo Acton.<sup>8</sup> Riley had also composed music for two 'mainstream' (albeit

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<sup>7</sup> Conner collaborated with Brian Eno and David Byrne, who released the album *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* as a soundtrack to Conner's film *Mea Culpa* (1981). Conner's collaboration with Eno is a further example of his collaboration with a composer associated with minimalist music. See <[http://bushofghosts.wmg.com/watch\\_video.php](http://bushofghosts.wmg.com/watch_video.php)> (Last accessed 25 November 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Gene Youngblood refers to the 'dialectical synthesis of nonverbal energies that strike deep into the inarticulate conscious' in *Music with Balls* (1969) and also describes Riley's musical setup for this multimedia work. See Youngblood 1970, pp. 293-6.

low budget) European films called *Les yeux fermés* (*The Eyes Closed*) (1972) and also *Le secret de la vie* (*Lifespan*) in 1973 (Potter 2000, p. 135).<sup>9</sup> Riley's soundtrack to the former film is considered 'less psychedelically brilliant and a little more homespun than *A Rainbow in Curved Air*', while his soundtrack to *Lifespan* was 'designed to enhance mood [although] not tailored to the visual dimension in a narrowly programmatic way' (Cowley 2007, unpag.). In this respect, a certain amount of spatial distance between sound and vision, which suggest a complementary relationship in Cook's terms between both elements.

Riley's music in *Crossroads* forms the second part of the film's soundtrack, of twenty-four minutes duration. The first part of the film comprises an aural montage by Patrick Gleeson of abstract sounds that attempt to create the effect of an atomic detonation, manipulating such natural sounds as a rolling ball with the aid of electro-acoustic techniques.<sup>10</sup> When Riley's music enters at mid-point, *Crossroads* becomes a silent movie, with repetitive visual footage co-existing with Riley's multi-textural improvisations above a repetitive bass. Conner's selection of declassified National Archive footage, and Riley's transcendental extemporisations, both provide a detachment from the reality of the situation, focusing sequentially on the gradual evolution of the mushroom-shaped cloud as opposed to its violent impact. In contrast to Patrick Gleeson's first half of the soundtrack, Riley's music 'forces us to contemplate the images with an almost unbearable concentration' (Johnson 1978, p. 38).

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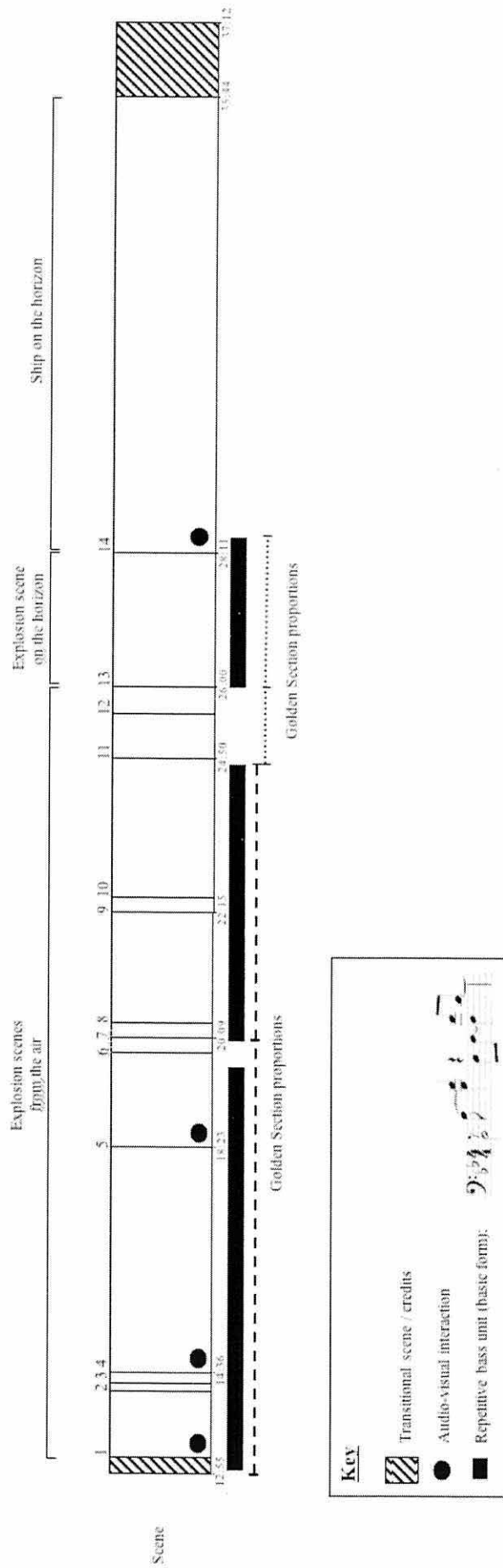
<sup>9</sup> Julian Cowley cites additional films that include Riley's music: Anthony Denny's short film *Polyester Moon* (1958), Michael Polac's *La Chute D'Un Corps* (*The Fall of a Body*) and also most recently Alain Tanner's *No Man's Land* (1984) (see Cowley 2007, unpag.). Indeed, Vincent Caby, writing in the *New York Times* considers Riley's music to be the highlight of Tanner's film (see Caby 1987, unpag.).

<sup>10</sup> Gleeson also collaborated with Conner on the film *Luke* (2004), based on behind-the-scenes footage of the 1967 film, *Cold Hand Luke*, featuring Dennis Hopper. See Stone 2005, unpag.; Perreault 2005, unpag. Gleeson's soundtrack has been partially released on the *Slide* album (2007), which, interestingly enough also includes his 'Variations on a Philip Glass Theme'.

In fact, the gradual progression of Riley's music appears to correspond aesthetically with the slow expansion of the mushroom clouds in Conner's film. Paradoxically, however, this is combined with a visual and musical stasis, due to the recurrent explosions occupying the same ground as the repetitive and syncopated bass: a transcription of this figuration in its basic form is presented in the bottom left corner of Fig. 3.4. This diagram also succeeds in elucidating some of the clear synchronicities between Conner's fourteen-scene visual montage and the music. In Fig. 3.4, the black circles shown in scene one, four and five represent the synchronisation of the detonation with a prominent pitch or pitch field. On a structural level, scenic transitions are often accompanied by sectional changes in the music, for example in the seventh and thirteenth scene where the repetitive bass unit returns after brief interruptions, although their durations are progressively reduced in length.

In aesthetic terms, it is interesting to observe that these scene changes appears to relate proportionally to the Golden Section principle; given the filmmaker's artistic background, the notion of such a principle being used is not an impossibility. The GS proportions are suggested by the dotted lines constructed along the base of the chart; the chart is drawn to a scale that complies with the film's timings. Scene seven for example is shown to represent the first division in the Golden Section formula; not only does this point mark the return of Riley's repetitive unit, but also Conner's transition from the preceding scene is unusual in comparison with the other shots as a simultaneous phase-in/phase-out transition occurs at this specific point. The

Fig. 3.4 Musico-visual proportions in Bruce Conner's *Crossroads*





combination of Riley's music and Conner's visual footage consequently reveals this distinctive structure, as highlighted in Fig. 3.4. Indeed, the possible inclusion of Golden Section proportions is interesting from two perspectives. Firstly, it implies Conner's artistic background, where such principle is commonly employed in pictorial and graphical uses; moreover, the GS principle is often apparent in music, for instance by Mozart, Debussy, Bartók, Satie and even in the minimalist music of Reich.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, and perhaps most pertinent to the present context, is the relationship between the multiplied effect of nuclear fission and the Golden Section – both principles are dependent on the Fibonacci sequence. Does the integration of Riley's music with Conner's filmic structure thus imply a subliminal subtext?

While Conner's visual material is solely based on declassified National Archive footage of the explosion taken from various angles, Reich later employs a diverse range of pre-existing sound and visual material in his response to the same nuclear testing programme. Created in collaboration with his video artist wife Beryl Korot, 'Bikini' is the second act of his 'documentary digital video opera' *Three Tales* (1998-2002), which recounts three significant events of the twentieth century: the Hindenburg disaster in New Jersey, the testing of the atom bomb on Bikini, and the cloning of Dolly the sheep as part of the wider debate on genetic experimentation and cybernetics.<sup>12</sup>

In comparison with the Riley example, whose narrative or in fact anti-narrative is hinged on the repetition of the detonation from a distance, Reich's tale offers deeper insights into the event through the use of both subjective and objective

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<sup>11</sup> For research into Golden Section principles in the music of Bartók and Debussy see Roy Howat's review article in Howat 1983a, pp. 69-95, and Howat 1983b respectively. Courtney Adams offers an account of the GS in the music of Satie in Adams 1996, pp. 242-52, while Linda Garton delineates a plausible account of such proportions in Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* in Garton 2004, pp. 115-22.

<sup>12</sup> Sean Atkinson also discusses Reich's 'Bikini' in Atkinson 2009, pp. 49-64, as does Linda Garton in Garton 2004, p. 41.

textual, sonic and visual material, including eyewitness accounts, newsflashes and technical data. Furthermore, the prophetic choice of quotations from the book of Genesis brings about an implicit criticism of mankind's destructive actions. Fig. 3.5 illustrates the overall multimedia design of this tale, and provides an overview of the main associations between the various elements employed within. This diagram takes into account two analytical frameworks – the semiological tripartition as developed by Molino (Molino 1990) and Nattiez (Nattiez 1990b), and Cook's multimedia models.

From a semiotic perspective, the arrowed lines represent how Reich has neutralised pre-existing sonic and textual materials into his musical score. Found texts are incorporated into the music through vocal settings, while the pitch of the B-29 aircraft drone has been transcribed and built upon by vibraphones and pianos, as shown in the diagram by an arrowed line. The diagram also illustrates how the score is transmitted from performer to audience, with dotted lines on the left part of the diagram representing inherent relationships between vision and text, sound and vision and image and music. In Cook's terms, the dotted lines displayed in Fig. 3.5 represent a *conforming* relationship between the elements: what we see on screen is consistent with what we hear. The image of a ticking metronome, for example, is accompanied by its sound – both sound and image are in this context consistent.

Again in temporal terms, a clear goal is apparent in the expansive countdown from ten; this preparatory stage is subsequently followed by a more imminent countdown ultimately leading to 'zero', at which point the explosion occurs to cataclysmic effect. The structural layout of the act, as outlined in Fig. 3.6, illustrates how the countdown offers a linear direction to the tale, but the atoll and the ship

Fig. 3.5 An overview of the multimedia design of Steve Reich's 'Bikini' out of *Three Tales*

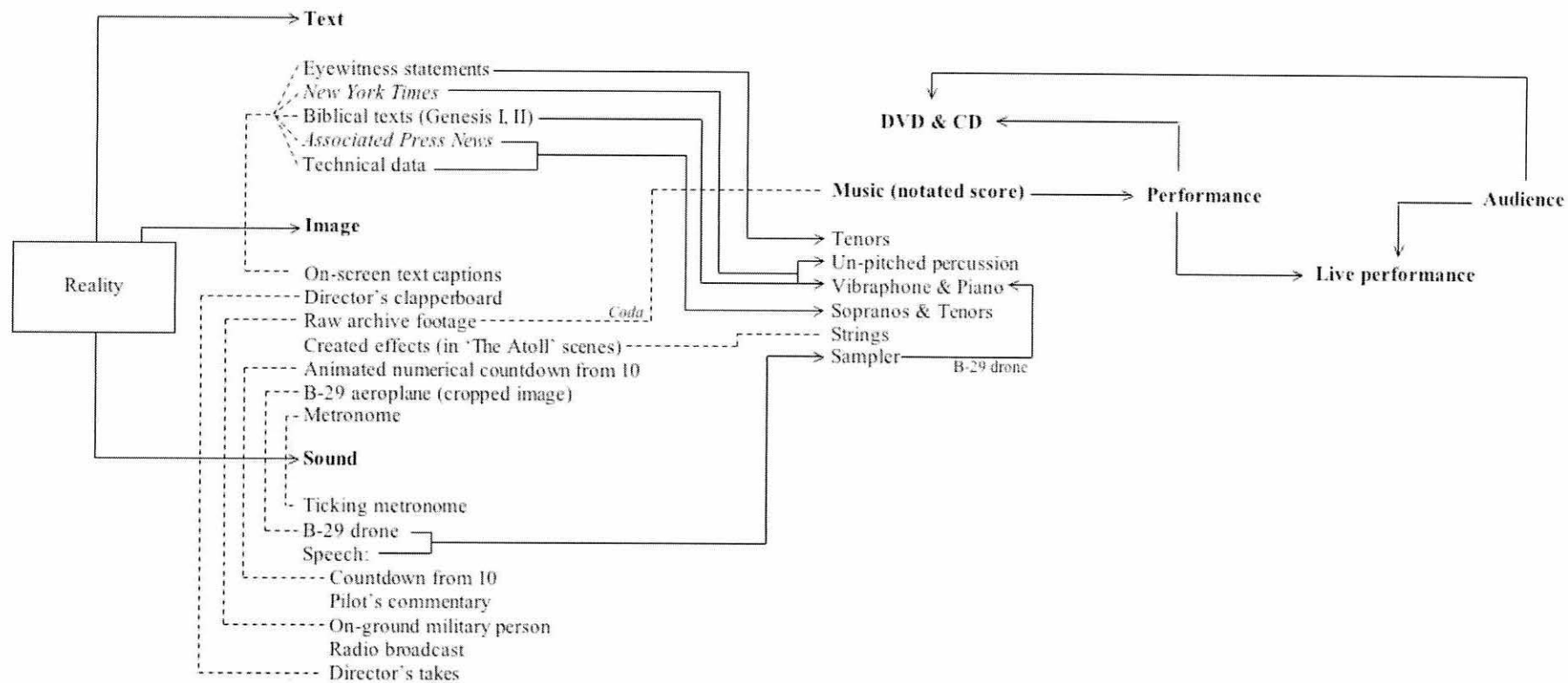
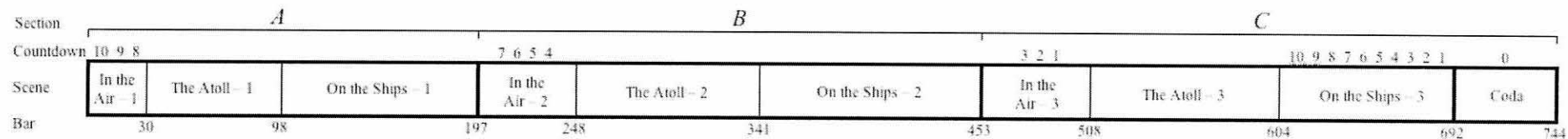


Fig. 3.6 Structural layout of 'Bikini'



scenes interrupt its progress however. Indeed, these recurring scenes are indicative of the multiple temporalities and narrativity in the tale. Applying Kramer's theory on temporality, to Reich's tale would suggest that a 'multiply-directed linear time', or even a combination of 'multiply-directed linear and non-linear time', is in operation. This is in contrast with Riley's music for *Crossroads*, which represents a 'non-directed linear time'.

Fig. 3.7 sets out a semiotic assembly of the textual and spoken materials as employed in Section *A* of the act. For the purposes of this display, the semiotic alignment has been reset in each scene, although the Biblical strand in the second scene is shown as a continuation of its precedent, for reasons that will be discussed later. This chart elucidates Reich's repetitive and cumulative use of textual fragments, and how a combined use of pre- and post-detonation material contributes towards a mixture of tenses within a multi-paradigmatic analytical graph.

Writing on postmodernism, Jonathan Kramer notes that '[t]echnology has made a context of fragmentation, short attention spans leading to constant discontinuities and multiplicity – all characteristic not only of contemporary society but also of postmodern thinking' (Kramer 2002, p. 19). Reich's tale is therefore quintessentially postmodern due to the fragmental attribute of the narratives, as illustrated in Fig. 3.7. And while the narrative strands are indeed discontinuous, they are subsequently regained, for instance by the spoken countdown and the Biblical texts. Ex. 3.2 consolidates the eyewitness's account of the mushroom cloud in the sky as sung in the triple tenor parts, which displays motivic unity even though other fragments interject. Reich's dissonant vocal writing is effective in this example, as articulated by the use of parallel seconds and fourths, causing several instances of tritone intervallic leaps between *b*-flat and *e*-natural; the tritone, as the so-called

Fig. 3.7 Multi-narrativity in 'Bikini' (Scenes 1-3)

**Scene 1 – In the Air (1)**

Atom bomb exploded Ten *I watched it*  
 Atom bomb exploded over Bikini fleet *I watched it climb* AND G\*D  
 Nine *I watched it climb to a height of two miles* CREATED MAN  
 Two ships are sunk nineteen damaged out of seven three  
 Eight *It never stood still* IN G\*D'S IMAGE

**Scene 2 – The Atoll (1)**

'take one' King Judah of Bikini witnessed *Now then James*  
*Now then James, tell them please* MALE AND FEMALE  
 'take two' his one time home *tell them please that the United States government now*  
 G\*D CREATED THEM

**Scene 3 – On the Ships (1)**

THIS TEST (X2)  
 IS DESIGNED (X2)  
 TO MEASURE (X2)  
 THE EFFECT (X2)  
 ON METAL, FLESH  
 METAL FLESH  
 AIR AND WATER (X2)

**Key**  
New York Times (post-detonation)  
 Spoken countdown (pre-detonation)  
Eyewitness statements (post-detonation)  
 BIBLICAL TEXT (GENESIS)  
 Director's take (pre-detonation)  
 Associated Press news (post-detonation)  
 Military person (pre-detonation)  
 TECHNICAL REPORT (PRE-DETONATION)

Ex. 3.2 Semiotic consolidation of the tenors' narrative

The musical notation is in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music. The first line is for the lyric 'I watched it'. The second line is for 'I watched it climb'. The third line is for 'I watched it climb to the height of two miles', with a bracket under 'to the height of two miles' indicating a melodic phrase. The fourth line is for 'It never stood still'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with double slashes indicating the end of a phrase.

‘diabolus in musica’, possibly assumes an extra-musical meaning here, namely the imminent cataclysm.

Reich also employed the tritone interval at a motivic level in the first part of *Three Tales*, ‘Hindenburg’, which again dealt with impending doom (see Evans 2006). Such uses can also be traced back to his earlier works including *The Desert Music* (1984) and *Tehilim*. In his analysis of the former work, K. Robert Schwarz highlights Reich’s employment of tritone substitutions in the bass register against a harmonically-static middle register (Schwarz 1990, p. 249).<sup>13</sup> Such uses of this interval resound with this present study of ‘Bikini’, as both works deal with the issue of nuclear annihilation.

While uses of tritone intervals therefore symbolise an interaction between minimalist music and subject matter in at least two of Reich’s works, how does the music’s temporal aspect correlate with the apocalyptic element of the texts? With the possible exception of Terry Riley’s *A Rainbow in Curved Air* (1966), one might deduct that the subject of nuclear apocalypse had not been associated with minimalist music before 1976. In fact, Ron Rosenbaum has referred to the genre (particularly the works of La Monte Young), as ‘anti-apocalyptic’ due to their infinite qualities and lack of goal-orientated motion (Mertens 1987, pp. 88-89). As this section has discussed, a tendency to focus on either the threat of, or preparation for nuclear use has been observed in, for example, Glass’s *Einstein* and *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982), and also Adams’s *Doctor Atomic* (2005). Both in the Carbon Trust commercial, and in the extract out of Adams’s opera, chromaticism is used to signify impending doom.

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<sup>13</sup> William W. Austin also draws attention to the tritone interval in his review of *Desert Music* (see Austin 1987, pp. 913-14).

Riley and Reich on the other hand have represented the actual explosion with a detached or a dialectically oppositional response to the reality of the situation portrayed. Reich's multimedia construction further allows for the expression of ironic and multiple meanings; this degree of subjectivity demonstrates how *Three Tales* is characteristically post-minimal, in its departure from the objectivity of the early works.

If Leydon's minimalist tropes were applied to the context of Riley's *Crossroads* and Reich's 'Bikini', the typology would fail to offer a specific association with the affects of nuclear annihilation. One might argue however that the 'mantric' trope, defined as 'a state of mystical transcendence' bears some relation to the dialectical hypnosis of Riley and Reich's music at the point of detonation. Reich's coda incorporates a temporal suspension, caused by a mixture of static and alternating chords. This creates a detachment from the reality of the scenario, thereby intensifying the cataclysmic effect through a dialectically opposed, or a *contesting* relationship in Cook's terms, with reality. While Leydon's 'mantric' trope suitably represents certain affects associated with the atomic age, a supplement to her typology may be postulated, namely the 'cataclysmic trope', which may be defined as either the premonitory state of tension caused by an impending apocalyptic scenario, or the dialectical affect of nuclear annihilation.

### **The Psychedelic Trope**

If *Crossroads* focuses on the repetition of an atomic detonation incurring a mushroom cloud effect, Riley's collaboration with Conner on another film, *Looking for Mushrooms* (1967) explores uses of a different form of mushroom, namely magic

mushrooms, and their hallucinogenic effect upon the human mind. The transcendental nature of this effect displays close similarities with Leydon's 'mantric' trope.

Consequently, the psychedelic trope can be regarded as a more refined definition of this affect, or alternative as a sub-category of the 'mantric' trope, as was also the case with the 'cataclysmic' trope postulated earlier.

In *Looking for Mushrooms*, Riley's earlier-released 'Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band' is used as a transcendental soundtrack to Conner's overtly psychedelic film.<sup>14</sup> *Looking for Mushrooms* represents Conner's 'second trend' according to Randal Johnson, which includes 'purely sensuous films like *Breakaway*, lyrical and meditative films like *Looking for Mushrooms* and *Easter Morning Raga*, and simply cosmic films like *Permian Strata*' (Johnson 1978, p. 41). In contrast to the *Crossroads* soundtrack, which was ironically meditative, Riley's music for *Looking for Mushrooms* is a dazzling array of multi-textural repetitive fragments, which suitably conforms to the multiple layering of highly colourful visual material. The music makes use of discrete sectional transitions, drones (open fourths and fifths), which altogether forms a distinct rhythmic attribute towards the end of the film. The blend of music and image in the film is purely mesmerising in its representation of an otherworldly, hypnotic affect.

Riley's music has had a far-reaching influence on musicians and composers around this time. In his book on progressive rock, *Rocking the Classics*, Edward Macan refers to Riley's collaboration with a member of the English band Soft Machine, Daevid Allen, during a brief period in Paris (Macan 1997, pp. 139-40),<sup>15</sup> while a member of the group, the Welsh composer Karl Jenkins, also acknowledged

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<sup>14</sup> Riley's soundtrack was later released on an LP entitled *A Rainbow In a Curved Air* in 1971.

<sup>15</sup> See also Michael Nyman, 'Interconnections', *New Statesman* (16 April 1971), pp. 539-40.



Riley's influence upon them, particularly the seminal work, *In C* (1964).<sup>16</sup> Keith Potter also refers to Riley's effect, drawing attention to such tracks as 'Out-Bloody-Rageous', 'Moon in June' and 'The Soft Weed Factor' (Potter 2000, pp. 149-50). In this latter piece from the album *Six* (1972),<sup>17</sup> Riley's influence is strongly apparent 'in the multiple repetitions of the piano riff', as highlighted in Ex. 3.3 (ibid., p. 149).

Ex. 3.3 Repetitive unit in Soft Machine's 'Soft Weed Factor'



Also on the *Six* album, 'Chloe and the Pirates' opens with hazy ambient chords on keyboards and a faint pulsating sound, which leads to a Mixolydian-based melody on

Ex. 3.4 Aural transcription of Soft Machine's 'Chloe and the Pirates'



oboe (probably performed by Jenkins); Ex. 3.4 offers a transcription of this material in sketch form. The tonally and metrically ambiguous introduction leads to a more 'conventional' jazz style, with a temporal assurance provided by the drums' constant beats. In this section however, greater freedom is afforded to the oboe, which experiments and improvises through the use of chromaticism, microtonal slides and abrupt shifts from high to low tessitura. The conclusion comprises a repeat of the opening material. This cyclical element afforded by the piece's ternary structure implies the influence of an Eastern approach to temporality. Such an approach is

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the author, June 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Soft Machine. *Six*. CBS (1973). In the interview, Jenkins refers to Riley's *In C* as an influence on Soft Machine, particularly the track 'Floating World' (1975), which forms the inaugural part of the recent recording *Floating World Live*. Moonjune Records MJR007 (2006). This album's liner notes include a transcript of an interview with members of the group.

hardly surprising, however, given the preponderance of Eastern influence on such music of this time. On the subsequent album, *Seven*,<sup>18</sup> ‘Snodland’ exudes further non-Western influence due to the meditative and introspective nature of the music, promoted by a drone effect, chimes, and rapid series of notes based on the pentatonic scale. Altogether, these characteristics evoke an atmospheric effect, and in the absence of temporal definition and structural development, a reference to Eastern influences is apparent, as is a resemblance to the minimalist approach to time and narrativity.

### **Glass and Shankar: *Chappaqua***

Unlike the documentary nature of Conner’s *Crossroads*, and the experimental nature of *Looking for Mushrooms*, yet in continuation of the Eastern theme of this chapter’s preceding section, Conrad Rooks’s *Chappaqua* (1966) approaches the genre of film in a slightly more conventional manner in terms of its length (eighty-five minutes) and the presence of talking actors.<sup>19</sup> Other features that promote its mainstream-ness is the fact that the film was considered at the time the ‘most expensive “underground” movie’, costing between a half and one million dollars, and was released by a subdivision of the major film distributor, Universal.<sup>20</sup>

Far from being mainstream however, the highly experimental nature of this ‘acid-head epic’ (Strickland 2000, p. 205) appears in the visual techniques employed, such as the multiple layering of video that seeks to depict the principal character’s

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<sup>18</sup> Soft Machine. *Seven*. Epic/Sony Records ESCA 5419 (1973).

<sup>19</sup> For a review of *Chappaqua*, see Mondo Digital <<http://www.mondo-digital.com/Chappaqua.html>> (Last accessed 16 November 2007). Also see Winkler Film’s press release <[http://www.winklerfilm.com/download/Chappaqua\\_pressbook\\_English.pdf](http://www.winklerfilm.com/download/Chappaqua_pressbook_English.pdf)> (Last accessed 26 November 2007).

<sup>20</sup> *Motion Picture Herald*, 237/xxxxv (8 November 1967), p. 740.

confused state of mind. Like Conner's *Looking for Mushrooms*, *Chappaqua* is centrally based on drug-inspired subject matter. Based on the true story of Conrad Rooks, and played by Rooks himself, *Chappaqua* is based on a drug addict named Russel Harwick who participates in a drug rehabilitation programme at a Parisian clinic. During his time at the clinic, Harwick experiences countless psychological hallucinations that are executed on-screen for the benefit of the viewer.

One element of Ravi Shankar's soundtrack is the performance of his own music – transcriptions of which had been undertaken by Glass, who at the time was a student of Nadia Boulanger in Paris and had been since 1964 (Grimes 1989, p. 317). According to Potter, Glass had started to work on *Chappaqua* before the arrival of Shankar, specifically in order to edit the music of Ornette Coleman, which was initially planned but later rejected as a soundtrack to the film (Potter 2000, p. 258).<sup>21</sup> In addition to producing transcriptions of Shankar's extemporisations, Glass was also obliged to compose 'modern music ... for the scary parts of the film ... psychedelic trips' (ibid.). Notable, therefore, is the fact that Glass's interest in scoring for almost-mainstream films can be identified at this early point in his career. Glass's composition of 'modern music' in *Chappaqua* (specifically the atonal/microtonal harmonies employed) is entirely different to the tonal aspect as one has since become accustomed to the String Quartet No. 1, also composed in 1966 is distinctly serialist and contrasts with the overt tonal (or even modal) aspect heard in his later quartets, for example.

Glass's collaborations with Shankar proved to be his first experience of Indian music, and his 'misunderstanding' of the music led to the use of additive techniques in his own compositional style; his idiosyncratic use of cyclical structures is however

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<sup>21</sup> Coleman's rejected soundtrack was however later released as the *Chappaqua Suite* (1965).

a true indication of the structures often employed in Indian music (Grimes 1989, p. 317-8). Central to the soundtrack are the passages of virtuosic drumming, in addition to Shankar's extemporisations on the sitar. Both elements inherently make use of repetition. In conjunction with the music, a strong dance element pervades throughout the movie; the combination of repetitive music and bodily gestures contribute towards the trance-like states often observed in the central character in the film, Harwick, as he recalls his drug-taking experiences.

What the viewer observes in *Chappaqua*, and what the filmmaker seeks to portray, is how drugs such as LSD affect the human mind and body. Deleuze in his article 'Two Questions on Drugs' observed that 'the Beat Generation in America [...] wanted to know how all drugs involve speeds, modifications of speed, thresholds of perceptions, forms and movements' (Deleuze 2006, p. 152). Indeed, the Beat culture features prominently in *Chappaqua*, with the 1960s anti-war protest band the Fugs playing and acting in the film, as well as cameo roles by novelist William S. Burroughs and poet Allen Ginsberg.<sup>22</sup> Deleuze considers Burroughs an expert in the area of drug perception (ibid., p. 153), and also refers to Glass's commentary on drug experimentation: 'the role of perception, the solicitation of perception in contemporary social systems [...] led to Phil Glass to say that drugs have in any case changed the problem of perception, even for non-users' (ibid., p. 152).

Shankar's music forms a symbiotic relationship with the drug-induced trances depicted on screen – Indian music is after all widely regarded as a predominant influence during this period. Indeed, 'Indian music was a central ingredient in the 1960's magical mythical mix which combined Indian religion and culture and objects

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<sup>22</sup> The contribution of Burroughs and Ginsberg to the Beat Generation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

with hallucinogenic drugs' (Reck 1985, p. 94). However, the music in *Chappaqua* is not restricted to the depiction of trance, as several cases of the psychological deliria experienced by Harwick are also expressed in music.

Two forest scenes, in which it is assumed that Harwick tries to escape from the clinic, involve cat-and-mouse acts between the doctor and himself. These surreal scenarios are accompanied musically by a playful string quartet extract, as well as a Waltz on a piano, that all contribute towards the portrayal of Harwick's psychological fragility. In the second of the forest scenes, wherein Harwick succeeds in escaping to the city of Paris, a playful interplay between flute and cello is characterised by the use of triadic motion in both parts. Furthermore, in a different scene, Harwick envisions himself as a vampire, with music being performed in an ascending sequence on a microtonal sitar and chromatic figurations on an electric organ, which enhances the grotesque/sinister atmosphere portrayed on-screen. In an altogether contrasting scene, the ethereal vision of a woman is shown in conjunction with glissandi-playing harp and a flute, which serves as a clear example of music being orchestrated to suit the visual narrative of the film.

Through the use of music, *Chappaqua* however goes beyond the expression of an individual's hallucinatory experiences. The film offers an insight into other trance-like states that do not involve drug-induction. For example, the transcendental nature of Gospel singing and dancing, coupled with the highly emotive speaking of a Black preacher, explores the notion of religion as a 'drug,' or a psychological influencer. This is also the case in a scene involving a surreal church ritual, in which Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D is juxtaposed with a French song, causing a distorted effect that suitably reflects the visual dimension. Even music itself appears to be considered a drug: during a therapy session at the clinic, Harwick begins to dance to

imaginary rock 'n' roll music, which leads to the clinicians also reacting to the music through bodily gestures.

### **Minimalism and Space – the 'Extra-terrestrial' Trope**

If minimalism is shown to represent an otherworldly affect via the hallucinatory effects of drugs in such films as *Chappaqua* and *Looking for Mushrooms*, it can also support narratives that express the physical sense of other-worldliness, i.e. explorations in space. Humanity's ventures into the unknown have often been expressed through the medium of music and other arts. In this case, Leydon's typology may be supplemented further by the inclusion of an 'extra-terrestrial trope'.<sup>23</sup> Several post-minimal works have referred to planetary or lunar elements, often within the broader category of ambient music – a genre largely developed by Brian Eno, whose *Music for Airports* (1978) served as the first example of such music.<sup>24</sup>

Eno's ethereal soundtrack to Al Reinert's documentary film *For All Mankind* (1989) provides a suitable atmospheric backdrop to the footages of the Apollo missions, and by using Cook's multimedia terminology, Eno's music conforms to the visual images presented in Reinert's delicate capture of the space missions. Mystery, coldness and the remoteness from human civilisation are conveyed in such tracks as 'The Secret Place' and 'Matta,' while 'An Ending (Ascent)' evinces a certain sense of

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<sup>23</sup> Rebecca Leydon has published a chapter on uses of music in science fiction cinema in Leydon 2004, pp. 61-76, though a discussion on minimalist repetition is avoided in this context. Furthermore, Rebecca Eaton discusses the use of minimalist music and science fiction, particularly with reference to the film *Solaris* in Eaton 2008, pp. 124-31.

<sup>24</sup> Eno was largely responsible for developing the ambient music genre, which he conceived 'for particular times and situations with a view to building up a small but versatile catalogue of environmental music suited to a wide variety of moods and atmospheres' (Eno 1996, p. 296).

mystical beauty, tranquillity and stasis, as heard on approaching and departing from the moon. In temporal terms, the static nature of Eno's music again conforms to the astronauts' departure from human civilisation in the absence of life, gravity and 'normal' time.

Ten years after the production of *For All Mankind*, Alvin Lucier presented 'eight short works on tape, based on natural radio waves and other data from the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn,' under the title of *What Day is it Today?* (1999).<sup>25</sup> Using the term 'minimal' in relation to music for one of the first times, Tom Johnson described Lucier's compositional style in the early 1970s as that of 'the minimal, slow-motion approach [which] gives one time to become involved in images in a very personal way' (Johnson 1972). Johnson's remark again alludes to the affinity between minimalist music and other artistic media, and particularly music's ability to heighten the effect of visual images.

Similar to Lucier's *What Day is it Today?* – although serving as a much more recent example – Riley's *Sun Rings* (2002) 'for string quartet, chorus and pre-recorded spacescapes' incorporates sonic materials derived from extra-terrestrial sources. Performed by the Kronos Quartet, the ten pieces of this work were, according to Riley, 'written as separate musical atmospheres with the intention to let the sounds of space influence the string quartet writing and then to there be an interplay between live "string" and recorded "space" sound'.<sup>26</sup> In a pre-concert presentation on the work, the scientist Dr Donald Gurnett at the University of Iowa explained how he had recorded planetary and spacial sounds over an extensive period

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<sup>25</sup> This description is taken from Alvin Lucier's website <<http://alucier.web.wesleyan.edu/works.html>> (Last accessed 30 May 2007). In personal correspondence with the author during May 2007, Lucier remarks that the work was intended for a 'specific occasion', and is not commercially available, nor are there any plans for a release.

<sup>26</sup> See <<http://www.kronosquartet.org/SR/prog2.html>> (Last accessed 8 December 2006).



of time; Riley in turn transcribed a selection of the sounds and incorporated these into his musical score.<sup>27</sup>

Performances of *Sun Rings* take place in front of a backdrop of video-projected images. The video designer, Willie Williams ‘used imagery specific to the source sounds [...] but more often what we are seeing during the performance is an abstraction based more loosely on the mood of the composition as a whole’.<sup>28</sup> The relationship between Riley’s music and Williams’s images may thus be defined as *complementary* in Cook’s terms, as neither image nor sound would appear to be directly similar nor opposed to one another, thereby occupying a more neutral ground.

In contrast to Riley and Lucier’s responses, Glass’s soundtrack to George Butler’s *Roving Mars* (2006) avoids the use of pre-existing sonic materials. Through an orchestral score alone, Glass musically accompanies the Opportunity and Spirit Rovers’ expedition on Mars. Glass’s musical language in the soundtrack includes ostinati figures (for instance the alternating seconds and thirds as heard in the ‘Opening Titles’), and consecutive scalar ascents and descents (often in contrary motion, as in ‘Robot Geologist’). In Kramer’s temporal terms, the non-directed linearity of Glass’s music, as heard in the ‘Opening Titles’ for instance, suitably represents the spacecrafts’ tentative journey to unknown territory.

The *Roving Mars* soundtrack concludes with a song entitled ‘Glosoli’, composed and performed by the Icelandic rock group Sigur Rós; the band’s music is often used in new contexts in both popular and high art – as dubbed music in

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<sup>27</sup> See <<http://www-pw.physics.uiowa.edu/space-audio/sun-rings/Kronos-Lecture/>> (Last accessed 13 September 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Blake Likins, ‘*Sun Rings*’ <<http://www.kronosquartet.org/SR/prog3.html>> (Last accessed 8 December 2006).



television programmes and commercials, and also performed by string quartets.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, parallelisms between their style and minimalist music can be drawn.<sup>30</sup> ‘Glosoli’ might be compared with, for instance, Brian Eno’s music in the *Apollo* soundtrack, particularly the use of ambient sounds and the improvisatory nature of the song – although the harder rock element heard towards the climax of ‘Glosoli’ (with quaver-beat cymbal thrashes) are however contrasting.

Mankind’s expeditions in space have all begun with a countdown in preparation for their launches, and are in this respect similar to the earlier discussed ‘cataclysmic’ trope. However, none of the examples discussed in relation to lunar or planetary subjects have incorporated such a countdown in their works’ structure or subject matter. Instead, composers have instead focused more specifically on expressing the notion of being in space either through an assimilated or appropriated expression of mystical ambience (the stasis of ‘Understars’ in Eno’s *Apollo* soundtrack, or Sigur Rós’s ‘Glossoli’ for example); Glass’s voyage to the unknown in the eyes of two spacecrafts, or by the use of sonic quotation or integration as observed in the case of Lucier and Riley.

Moreover, a dialectical situation often arises: as the astronauts or spacecrafts depart from the Earth (and therefore into the realms of spirituality), the manifestation of a humanistic element emerges – the absence of life heightens its importance. In Eno’s soundtrack, rock and country music is heard in ‘Silver Morning’ and ‘Deep Blue Day’ as a reminder of life back on earth, while the diatonicism of Glass’s ‘Life Itself’ in *Roving Mars* draws upon a different musical style in order to express a sense

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<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia lists the ubiquitous use of Sigur Rós’s music in recent films, television commercials and other programmes. See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigur\\_Rós](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigur_Rós)> (Last accessed 30 May 2007).

<sup>30</sup> In his paper entitled ‘Minimalism and/vs. Pop: Some questions (and maybe some answers)’ delivered at the First International Conference on Music and Minimalism at Bangor University between 31 August and 2 September 2007, Jonathan Bernard referred to this group in his discussion on post-minimalism.

of being. Riley's use of man-made sounds (i.e. the string quartet and choir) and extra-terrestrial recordings serves as a synthesis of human and alien sounds. According to Riley, *Sun Rings* presented a spiritual element in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, which again reinforces the importance of humanism upon this trope: 'I saw that the country was changing, and I knew that the meaning had to be motivated by peaceful intentions – not revenge or patriotism, but real meanings about where we are as human beings, and where we should be going'.<sup>31</sup>

The 'extra-terrestrial' trope can therefore be described as encompassing several different affects, all of which convey a sense of otherworldliness: (1) the expression of ambience, mysticism or spiritualism achieved through assimilation, quotation, or a mixture of both; (2) the predominance of temporal stasis in conformance with a non-gravitational state of being; (3) non-directed linearity as a metaphoric representation of a journey through space; (4) the paradoxical sense of being in the absence of life.

## **Urban Minimalism**

While minimalist music has up to this point shown to be reflecting events and social environments including the detonation of the atomic bomb, psychedelia and explorations in space, the interaction of minimalism with a specific geographical location, the urbane environment of New York City, is again a notable category. Steve Reich's music, for instance, widely regarded as reflecting and embodying the spirit of this American city in such works as *City Life* (which draws heavily on sonic

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<sup>31</sup> Blake Likins, 'Sun Rings' <<http://www.kronosquartet.org/SR/prog3.html>> (Last accessed 8 December 2006).

material recorded in New York),<sup>32</sup> *Eight Lines* and *New York Counterpoint* (the latter two are associated with the city by mood in the former and title in the latter). It may further be argued that Reich's music in general would fit into this 'urban' trope.

Drawing on the influences of Reich's interlocking cells, Karl Jenkins recently assimilated the vibrancy and energy of his music in the piece for harp, *Harpers Bizarre* (2003) as performed by Catrin Finch on the *Crossing the Stone* album,<sup>33</sup> and also broadcasted in conjunction with a performance video on the satellite television channel Classic FM TV. The title of Jenkins's work refers to the name of a Californian sixties pop group, and is also based on the title of the fashion magazine, *Harpers Bazaar*, thereby demonstrating the postmodern recycling of popular culture icons. And although the piece does not directly refer to the pop group or the magazine, the influence of pop music manifests in the piece's three-minute format, in addition to the employment of rhythmic and repetitive layers that are gradually introduced from low to high ranges.

The diagram of Fig. 3.8 illustrates how thematic cells are introduced from a listener's perspective, ranging between low and high registers. Beginning with two seconds of the acousmatic sounds of unit 1, this is shortly built upon with unit 2 – the repetition of an *e* pitch in the bass, which thus initiates a rhythmic drive to the work. This texture, one might argue, is reminiscent of the sound created by electric guitars during the 1970s, in such post-minimal examples as Rhys Chatham's *Guitar Trio*, Glenn Branca's *First Symphony* and Elliott Sharp's *Beatbox* – all of which again juxtapose minimalist tendencies with pop or rock music.

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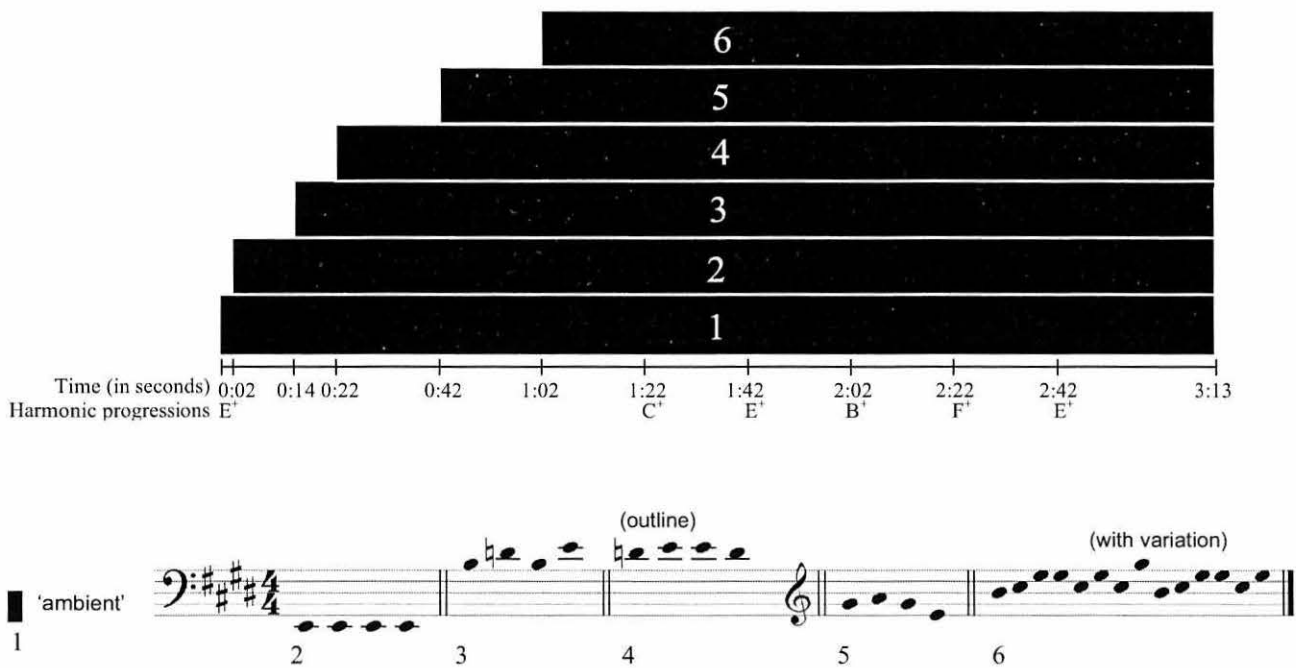
<sup>32</sup> In his own writings, Reich notes that in *City Life* (1995) 'not only samples of speech but also car horns, buoys, and fire and police sirens are part of the fabric of the piece' (Reich 2002, p. 187).

<sup>33</sup> Catrin Finch. *Crossing The Stone*. Sony 87320 (2003).

Other layers of motivic material are subsequently introduced in a gradual manner gradual. The material represented in units 3 and 4 contrasts in metrical terms (3 against 5), and the manner in which the rhythmic patterns interlock to create new sounding patterns are reminiscent of Reich’s audible processes in such early works as *Piano Phase*. The repetition of these patterns allows the listener to interpret new patterns wherein specific pitch classes, such as the dominant, becomes a prominent rhythmic pattern.

Both the material contained in units 3 and 4 demonstrate the employment of flattened sevenths, which imply a jazzy Mixolydian modality. In terms of harmony,

Fig. 3.8 Distributional diagram of Jenkins’s *Harpers Bizarre*



abrupt chordal changes are heard. While approximately the first half of the piece is based on the tonic, Jenkins subsequently progresses to C major, followed by a brief return to the tonic before departing towards the dominant, then F before shifting down a semitone to the tonic. In temporal terms, a pattern can be observed where new

events occur every twenty seconds; in structural terms, a singular form belongs to the piece, which again reflects the minimalist tendency of avoiding sectional contrasts.

On comparing the visual dimension of the work with Jenkins's form of post-minimalism, it would appear that the use of visual editing techniques in the video are equally consistent with popular music videos and post-minimal digital video operas (Reich's *The Cave* and *Three Tales* for instance) alike. Reich, together with his wife, the video artist Beryl Korot, replicates visual materials in different parts of a screen – a technique known as multi-channelling. The video consists of footages from the bustling city of New York; the constant flows of pedestrian and vehicular traffic suitably reflect the continuous momentum of Jenkins's music. These flows are however non-directional – the viewer is unaware where the movement leads onto, hence both the music and the visual narrative avoids clear goals.

If Jonathan Kramer's aforementioned four types of temporality would be applied at this point, one might argue that none of the types are compatible with the conjunction of music and video in *Harpers Bizarre*; instead, what could be described as 'multiple non-directed linear time' is in operation. Several textures are indeed generating harmonic motion, however no single goal can be observed in the work. Furthermore, while the visual narrative depicts the passing of time, with scenes during the day progressing to night, the music however avoids such a trajectory. It is instead dependent on a relentless rhythmic drive that only fades out at the very end. Jenkins's music consequently reflects the twenty-four hour vibrancy of New York, focusing on the present temporal moment, thereby lacking the dialectical quality evident for instance in Zimmer's soundtrack to *The Da Vinci Code*, or the curtailed teleology of Mendelssohn's *Song without Words*, as used in the Jetta commercial.

By examining different approaches to musical time, and the meanings formed as a consequence, the manner in which Glass, Riley, Reich and Jenkins's music promotes narrativity in innovative, if idiosyncratic, forms has been displayed. In comparison, the earlier examples – namely the curtailed re-use of Mendelssohn's music in the Jetta commercial, and the Wagnerian custom of leitmotivic associations in Zimmer's soundtrack, offered more traditional forms of narrative unfoldings.

## **Part II: Philip Glass and Film**

### **Chapter Four**

## Notes on a Soundtrack: Reading Glass's Recent Film Scores

### Introduction

Even though Glass claimed in an interview that he's "not interested in films", does not "particularly like the medium" and even does not "know anything about it" (Morgan 2000, p. 142), his prolific scoring for the cinema over the last thirty years has undoubtedly increased his popularity and established an international recognition by a considerably wide audience. As Scott Timberg writes, 'Glass's film music has helped make him perhaps the best-known classical composer of the last half-century' (Timberg 2009, unpag.). In fact, the late 1970s onwards has seen collaborations with award-winning directors and producers including Godfrey Reggio, Errol Morris, Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen. Furthermore, his music has provided the soundtrack to scenes featuring such ubiquitous actors as Nicole Kidman, Johnny Depp, Ian McKellen, Jim Carey, Judi Dench, Angelina Jolie and Bill Nighy to name but a few. Glass has been highly influential in bringing minimalism to mainstream Hollywood.

A survey of his output, as illustrated in Fig. 4.1,<sup>1</sup> illustrates the inexhaustible range of his film compositions. From this list it is noticeable that Glass's music for cinema has been produced on virtually an annual (or biennial) basis since *North Star*

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<sup>1</sup> Unless asterisked, the data in Fig. 4.1 has been extrapolated from the official website, <<http://www.philipglass.com>> (Last accessed 26 March 2008). José Jiménez Mesa has also compiled an exhaustive list of primary and secondary uses of Glass's music up to 2002, See <<http://www.glasspages.org/films.html>> (Last accessed 6 April 2008). A list of Glass's soundtracks is also compiled in the Internet Movie Database <<http://www.imdb.com>> (Last accessed 25 January 2010).



(otherwise known as *Étoile Polaire*).<sup>2</sup> This film, by François de Menil and the minimal art critic Barbara Rose,<sup>3</sup> documents the life of the abstract expressionist

#### Fig. 4.1 Glass's filmography

(Unless marked by an asterisk, all films appear on Glass's official website)

- Chappaqua* (Conrad Rooks, 1966)\* ●  
*North Star: Mark di Suvero* (François de Menil, 1977) ●  
*Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982) ●◇  
*Four American Composers: Philip Glass* (Peter Greenaway, 1983) ●  
*Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (Paul Schrader, 1984) ●  
*Hamburger Hill* (John Irvin, 1987) ●  
*Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation* (Godfrey Reggio, 1988) ●◇  
*The Thin Blue Line* (Errol Morris, 1988) ●  
*Mindwalk* (Bernt Capra, 1990) ●□  
*A Brief History of Time* (Errol Morris, 1992) ●□  
*Anima Mundi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1992) ●◇  
*Candyman* (Bernard Rose, 1992) ○  
*Compassion in Exile: The Story of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama* (Mickey Lemle, 1992) ●  
*La Belle et la Bête* (Jean Cocteau, 1946/1995) ☒×  
*Candyman II: Farewell to the Flesh* (Bill Condon, 1995) ○  
*Jenipapo* (Monique Gardenberg, 1995) ×  
*The Secret Agent* (Christopher Hampton, 1996) ×  
*The Source* (Chuck Workman, 1996)\* ●  
*Bent* (Sean Mathias, 1997) ●□  
*Kundun* (Martin Scorsese, 1997) ●  
*Chuck Close: A Portrait in Progress* (Marion Cajori, 1998)\* ●  
*The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998) ×  
*Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931/1999) ☒○  
*Satyagraha: An Opera in Three Acts* (2001) ❖  
*The Baroness and the Pig* (Michael Mackenzie, 2002) ×  
*The Hours* (Stephen Daldry, 2002) □×  
*Naqoyqatsi: Life as War* (Godfrey Reggio, 2002) ●◇  
*The Fog of War* (Errol Morris, 2003) ●  
*Going Upriver: The Long War of John Kerry* (George Butler, 2004) ●  
*Secret Window* (David Koepp, 2004) ○  
*Taking Lives* (D. J. Caruso, 2004) □○  
*Looking Glass* (Éric Darmon, 2005) ●  
*NeverWas* (Joshua Michael Stern, 2005) ×  
*A Crude Awakening* (Basil Gelpke, 2006) ●  
*Notes on a Scandal* (Richard Eyre, 2006) □○  
*Roving Mars* (George Butler, 2006) ●□  
*Taiji: Chaotic Harmony* (Sat Hon, 2006) ◇  
*The Illusionist* (Neil Burger, 2006) □×  
*Undertow* (David Gordon Green, 2006) ○  
*Animals in Love* (Laurent Charbonnier, 2007) ●◇  
*Cassandra's Dream* (Woody Allen, 2007) ×  
*Glass: A Portrait of Philip in Twelve Parts* (Scott Hicks, 2007) ●  
*No Reservations* (Scott Hicks, 2007) ×  
*Watchmen* (Zack Snyder, 2009) □×
- Documentary/Docudrama, □ Book-based, ◇ Non-narrated, × Drama (e.g. melodrama, romcom), ☒ Reconstruction, ❖ Televised opera, ○ Horror/Psycho-thriller

<sup>2</sup> In her PhD dissertation, Rebecca Eaton refers to two earlier documentaries than *North Star*, which make use of Glass's music, namely *Inquiring Nuns* (1968) and *Marco* (1970) (see Eaton 2008, p. 60).

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Rose was the author of the seminal article on minimalism and the visual arts entitled 'ABC Art,' first published in the journal *Art in America* in 1965, reproduced in Gregory Battcock (ed.), *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 274-97.

sculptor Mark di Suvero to the backdrop of Glass's music.<sup>4</sup> His work on the film might even be regarded as a turning point in his career: Glass once confided that *North Star* provided him with an entrance to the film music industry 'through a side door' (Russell & Young 2000, p. 121), which subsequently paved the way for several scores for documentaries based on real events and lives;<sup>5</sup> the most noteworthy examples of which are the Errol Morris collaborations (*The Thin Blue Line*, *A Brief History of Time* and *The Fog of War*), Scorsese's *Kundun* based on the life of the Dalai Lama, and most recently Basil Gelpke and Ray McCormak's *A Crude Awakening*, documenting the recent international oil crisis.<sup>6</sup>

The early 1990s however also saw Glass beginning to compose for non-factual films, particularly in horror and psycho-thriller genres – films that were primarily and commercially aimed at an increasingly mainstream audience, which saw in turn a rise in the accessibility of his music. Glass is acutely aware of the fact that the satirical *The Truman Show*, featuring Jim Carey, for instance facilitated the dissemination of his music to a new audience (Maycock 2002, pp. 140-41). *The Truman Show* displays a common tendency amongst a number of Glass's soundtracks to recycle material.

While this has been levelled as a criticism against Glass's methods, in the case of *The*

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<sup>4</sup> Glass remarks that 'basically [he] wrote music for the sculpture. It wasn't really a film score but it was a wonderful compilation of image and music' (Russell & Young 2000, p. 121). In contrast to the later soundtracks, *North Star* uses a similar scoring for electronic instruments and vocals as his non-film works of the same period. Such instrumentation was also used in contemporary rock music; Keith Potter notes that the group Tangerine Dream assisted Glass in obtaining a Virgin Records contract for *Music in Twelve Parts* and *North Star* (Potter 2000, p. 340). It is also worth noting that Mike Oldfield re-worked fragments of Glass's music on his *Platinum* recording (1979) (Mertens 1988, p. 83), particularly the ascending scale through a third heard in 'Etoile Polaire'.

<sup>5</sup> Eleven years prior to *North Star* however, Glass had gained experience in documentary-based films when assisting Ravi Shankar on Conrad Rooks's experimental film *Chappaqua*, based on his own drug-taking life (see Chapter 3).

<sup>6</sup> *A Crude Awakening* is an assemblage of raw interviews, textual captions, archived television material since the 1950s onwards, and time-lapse sequences similarly to *Koyaanisqatsi*. In contrast to the Errol Morris films however, Glass's music forms only a part of the soundtrack, which also contains ambient and percussive music by Daniel Schnyder, Philippe Kuhn and Stefan Faesch. Glass's contribution comprises pre-existing music from his earlier works, including the soundtracks to *A Brief History of Time*, *Mindwalk* and *Compassion in Exile*. *A Crude Awakening* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

*Truman Show* he has countered this by saying it: “doesn’t matter because the point is that most of the people that go to see [it] never went to a concert, never went to an opera anyway. It’s all new to them, they’ve never heard it before” (Maycock 2002, pp. 140-41).

Bernard Rose’s *Candyman* (1992) serves as the first example of a horror soundtrack. Following this film’s sequel, *Candyman II: Farewell to the Flesh*, Glass ventured into the psycho-thriller genre by providing music for *Secret Window* starring Johnny Depp, *Taking Lives* featuring Angelina Jolie, and *Undertow*. As heard in these films, the music often accompanies suspense, twisted minds and mind-twisting plots. However, his output is not solely confined to the realms of documentaries and horror films alone. More recently, several examples exist of his scoring for fantasy-based dramas and romantic films such as *NeverWas*, *No Reservations* and the highly acclaimed adaptation of Michael Cunningham’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Hours* (2002). Other recent book-based films include *The Illusionist* (2006), based on Steven Millhauser’s short story ‘Eisenheim the Illusionist’, George Butler’s *Roving Mars* (2006), and also *Notes on a Scandal* (2006), adapted from Zoë Heller’s short-listed Man Booker novel, to which the title of this chapter alludes.

Glass has equally been involved in non-narrated productions, wherein his music is paired with the moving image alone, including the *Qatsi* trilogy, *Anima Mundi* (1992) and *Animals in Love* (2007).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, by delving into early cinematography, new scores have been produced for Jean Cocteau’s fantasy drama *La Belle et la Bête* (1995) and Tod Browning’s early-Hollywood horror movie *Dracula* (1999) in which the original soundtracks are altogether replaced by a new version

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<sup>7</sup> These non-narrated productions are also essentially documental.

(albeit supplemented as an alternative track on the DVD releases).<sup>8</sup> By the addition of new musical material, new meanings are formed as a result of the films' re-contextualisation.

The objectivity afforded by Glass's minimalism allows it to adapt to a diverse range of extra-musical contexts, for instance documentaries, drama and musico-visual collaborations. His musical language, however, is often associated with subject matters that are sinisterly serious, involve conflict of some kind, or evocative of a foreboding sense of impending doom. None of the films listed in the inventory of Fig. 4.1 are of an overtly comic nature, which is something that Glass has tended to avoid; in an interview with Daniel Schweiger, he commented that comedy is ostensibly a 'high art' as practiced in Shakespeare's tragic dramas (Schweiger 2002, p. 48).<sup>9</sup>

The (non-)intentional avoidance of comedy plots, in films that are 'a little bit offbeat' (Maycock 2002, p. 137), explains how his use of chromaticism, bi-tonality and frequent major-minor alternations, coupled with the anti-dialectical nature of cyclical patterns and the unsettling nature of his additive/reductive patterns, are often compatible with the films' overall subject matters. Often the films penetrate deeply into the disturbed psyche of specific characters or subjects. Hence the objectivity afforded by minimalism is therefore ideally suited for these scenarios.

Indeed, the compatibility of Glass's soundtracks with the aesthetic nature of each film is widely recognised, as demonstrated by a broad survey of listeners' generalised perceptions of his music.<sup>10</sup> Audiences respond to *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) for instance with such terms as 'bleak', 'moody' and 'menacing,' while in

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<sup>8</sup> For a close reading of Glass music in Tod Browning's *Dracula*, see Chapter 6.

<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 6, it becomes apparent however that *Dracula* indeed exhibits some darkly comic elements.

<sup>10</sup> This information has been collected from online reviews by listeners of the soundtracks and viewers of the films cited.

contrast, *The Hours* (2002) evokes somewhat more problematic descriptions as ‘hauntingly beautiful’ music. Certain passages from *Notes on the Scandal* have been coined ‘Herrmannesque’ (as a direct reference to the infamous Psycho soundtrack), while the music in *The Fog of War* (2002) has been attributed to the definitions of ‘pungent’ and ‘frightening’.<sup>11</sup> Such comments underscore a sense of compatibility existing between Glass’s soundtracks on the one hand, and the directors’ images on the other.

But what is *compatibility*? How, and to what extent, is the relationship between the music and the visual/verbal dimensions of the film based on *conformity* or *sameness* (Cook 1998, pp. 98-100). This chapter will set out to examine Glass’s approaches to tonality in a sample of recent works in order to ascertain how the harmonic language employed interacts with the films’ extra-musical content. Selective examples will be taken from five post-millennial productions, namely the screen adaptations of novels entitled *The Hours*,<sup>12</sup> *Notes on a Scandal*, *The Illusionist*, *Roving Mars* and *Taking Lives*, in addition to *No Reservations*. References will also be made to earlier works, both within and outside the film-music domain, such as the seminal work, *Music with Changing Parts* and the soundtrack to Godfrey Reggio’s *Koyaanisqatsi*.<sup>13</sup>

For this investigation, two key analytical methodologies will be employed. First and foremost, the use of Schenkerian techniques will facilitate a discussion on how conventional tonal practices are adopted and adapted by exploring voice leading

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<sup>11</sup> Perhaps of relevance on this note is Anahid Kassabian’s study of contemporary Hollywood film music, in which attention is drawn to Philip Tagg and Robert Clarida’s empiric research into listener subjectivity, meanings and ‘mood music catalogues’ (Kassabian 2001, pp. 18-20).

<sup>12</sup> Categorising *The Hours* as a melodrama, Barry Langford notes that ‘in 2003, two films, *The Hours* and *Far From Heaven*, presented themselves quite explicitly as intertexts of the classic woman’s film’ (Langford 2005, p. 49).

<sup>13</sup> Due to the scarcity of printed scores of Glass’s film music, all examples in this chapter are based on the author’s aural transcriptions, with the exception of those relating to *The Hours* for which a piano reduction score was freely available, and the vocal score of ‘Vessels’ from *Koyaanisqatsi*.

and tonal structures in specific musical extracts. An application of Schenkerian methodology to the study of Glass's music has not taken place to-date,<sup>14</sup> although John Richardson points towards the effectiveness of Schenker's theories in relation to Glass's music, albeit without an employment of graphical representation associated with this methodology. Richardson writes that 'Schenkerian analysis tells us that everything is derived from the triad (preferably major); Glass *shows* us that it is' (Richardson 1999, p. 89). Therefore, according to Richardson, the music is not so much an extrapolation of Schenker's theory, but an embodiment of it.

Even though Glass's music is essentially tonal, Jonathan Bernard argues that it displays an 'appropriation of harmony for purposes that are essentially new and not yet at all well understood' (Bernard 1995, p. 284), which may have their origins in his lessons with Nadia Boulanger.<sup>15</sup> Even the Trilogy operas display according to Bernard 'an utter disregard for canonical principles of voice leading' (Bernard 1998, p. 557). Glass has consequently thrown the theory books out of the window in these instances, and eschews Boulanger's conventional harmonic praxis.

Taking a somewhat negative stance against post-*Einstein* works, Bernard's criticism therefore expresses the fact that the later works contain a mixture of 'an extremely simple tonal structure with vestiges of a minimalist structure' (Bernard 2003, p. 116). In this respect, the conflation of minimalist and tonal practices reflect a post-minimal approach to writing, although the extent to which Glass's rejection of

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<sup>14</sup> A Schenkerian approach has however been taken to analyse other minimalist contexts in the past. Both Robert Fink and Ronald Woodley employ Schenker's graphical representation to demonstrate voice-leading tendencies in the music of Steve Reich (see Fink 1999, pp. 126-8); Woodley 2005, pp. 468-71). Fink, for example, observes 'a rudimentary linear ascent' in Reich's *Piano Phase* from  $d^2$  to  $e^2$  (Fink 1999, p. 125). Though this feature does not necessarily comply with the Schenkerian concept of a descending fundamental line, otherwise known as the *Ursatz*, it indeed uncovers a 'large-scale voice-leading structure' in an early minimalist work (*ibid.*). Rebecca Eaton applies a reductive form of representation to her analysis of Nyman's music for the film *Gattaca*, although this is not ostensibly undertaken within the context of Schenker's premises (see Eaton 2008, p. 223).

<sup>15</sup> See Grimes 1997, pp. 30-36; Potter 2000, pp. 254-5.

tonal practices will prove to be questionable during this chapter's analyses; the employment of Schenker's graphical techniques will demonstrate that there is, in fact, a logic to Glass's voice leadings, albeit a logic that results in an unconventional harmonic movement, often based on cyclical progressions.

This unconventionality is further revealed in John Richardson's analysis of *Akhnaten* (this being the final instalment of Glass's high-minimalist operatic trilogy), particularly by his attribution of the term 'mysterious' to ostensibly voice leading strategies in this work (Richardson 1999, p. 69). Furthermore, Richardson draws attention to frequent uses of parallel motions, 'ambiguous chords', 'fluctuations' between minor and major tonality, and dissonances caused by minor second conflicts, as omnipresent characteristics of the harmonic language employed (ibid., pp. 69-71). Whether or not these observations are equally evident in the recent film works will form the basis for discussion in this chapter, facilitated by the use of a Schenkerian form of representation. This analytical inquiry will essentially address the question of how often generic strategies are employed across a wider spectrum of his works for film and opera.

Further to the employment of Schenker's methods, a set-theoretic method will be applied in order to identify and illuminate general commonalities within samples of intervallic configurations employed in the works. Even though set theory is first and foremost considered relevant to the analysis of atonal music, several analysts have applied this method to the study of tonal music.<sup>16</sup> This method has, to a certain degree, even been made in studies of Glass's tonality in the past. Rob Haskins, in his article on harmonic analysis of early Glass works and *Einstein on the Beach* employs pitch-class theory to examine *Two Pages* and *Music in Similar Motion* (Haskins 2005,

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<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Pople 2004, pp 153-94.



unpag.), in order to identify certain common features in Glass's selection of pitch-class configurations. Haskins draws attention to the prevalence of the pentachord relating to pitch-class set 5-23 in the former work, and the pitch-class set 3-9 (as the subset of both 4-22 and 5-35) in *Music in Similar Motion*. However, this present study will examine the recurrence of two different pitch-class sets, namely 4-19 and 4-20 (12), in the recent film-works, which will in turn be discussed in relation to a frequently used harmonic progression from the tonic to the (often flattened) submediant chord, elucidating a thirds-based relationship.<sup>17</sup>

Examples presented during the course of this chapter will reveal several common characteristics found in Glass's compositional style, which are outlined in the inventory of Fig. 4.2. These characteristics, as listed, include the use of semitone shifts resulting in false relations between voices, which are interconnected with the

**Fig. 4.2 Glass's common characteristics**

- (i) equivocation of the intervallic 2<sup>nd</sup> (false relations) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (causing major-minor alternations)
- (ii) arpeggiative, neighbour-note and (half-)step progressions
- (iii) oscillating dyads and triads, hemiola
- (iv) contrary or parallel figurations
- (v) juxtaposed stasis and progression
- (vi) registral disparities and transfers
- (vii) cyclical and interruptive cadences, cadence avoidance strategies
- (viii) additive and reductive patterns
- (ix) modal inflections
- (x) pitch-class set commonalities and harmonic intratexts

intervallic third creating major/minor alternations between chords. Also, it will become apparent that Glass often employs arpeggiative, neighbour-note and step or half-step progressions as the basis of his harmonic vocabulary. Thirdly, rocking motion between groups of two or three pitch classes, causing hemiola figurations will

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<sup>17</sup> Exs. 10a and 10b in Rob Haskins's article also display this particular progression in the second harmonic cycle of *Einstein on the Beach* (see Haskins 2005, unpag.).



be identified as a prominent feature in the soundtracks discussed, as will the juxtaposition of a minimum of two parts that run either in contrary or parallel motion. The combination of progressive material (such as an ascending-scale melody), which serves a teleological function, may be heard against a static or cyclical use of repetition, while the juxtaposition of high and low pitch classes (causing clear registral contrasts), and the transfer of material from one register to another is apparent in the examples discussed in due course. Glass further makes use of cadences avoidance strategies in his approach, that cause a lack of any real resolution, often by the inclusion of imperfect cadences that are repeated in cycles; the manner in which the dominant chord is reached will form a significant part of this thesis's inquiry.

While this lack of resolution points towards the anti-dialectic, the use of additive and reductive patterns, whereby pitches are added or excluded when used in repetitive figurations, ultimately contribute towards a lack of metrical stability. The penultimate characteristic listed involves the incorporation of modal inflections within a conventional tonal approach – this Gallic influence perhaps alludes to Glass's formative years in Paris. Finally, a significant part of this research will be allocated to identify common intervallic configurations and generic harmonic progressions. It will further be argued that that these characteristics contribute towards compatibility between musical and extra-musical dimension of the films, as mentioned earlier in this chapter's introduction. In other words, these musical characteristics interact with the filmic narrative in order to support specific extra-musical functions.

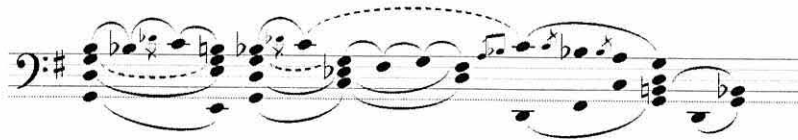
## Tonal Equivocations and Illusions

At first hearing, Glass's score to *The Illusionist* would seem to suggest a rejection of his minimalist style for a more mainstream approach. This shift may be traced back to Glass's symphonic works of the 1980s, but also in his adoption of an expressive language that has been described by many writers as 'Romantic'. Indeed, the symphonic nature of the score is particularly compatible with the nineteenth-century Viennese context of this film, both in terms of subject matter and its visual aesthetic. An interview by Dan Goldwasser reveals Glass's compositional intentions for the music heard in the opening scene of the film – as it is set in a theatre, he consequently writes music of a 'theatrical' nature (Goldwasser 2006, unpag.). Within a more general context however, Jonathan Bernard considers Glass's general oeuvre of late to be 'a caricature of Romanticism' (Bernard 2003, p. 115). Furthermore, Susan McClary's writings specifically on the soundtrack to *The Hours* are also applicable in this context, as Glass's harmonic progressions evoke 'concentrated references to the Romantic signs of hope and yearning, [yet] always [double] back to resignation' (McClary 2007, p. 57). If Glass's soundtracks from the 1990s onwards are broadly symphonic and romantic in scope, this approach is underpinned by his use of tonal motion and direction.

Ex. 4.1 offers a basic Schenkerian reduction of the opening passage of the *Illusionist* soundtrack, from which it is apparent that Glass builds on conventional tonal practices, demonstrating a cadential phrase clearly structured within the key of G and a fundamental line descending from the third degree of the scale. Harmonically, the phrase passes through a I/i – vi – iv – V progression that ultimately leads to the tonic. However the perpetual alternation of *b*-natural and *b*-flat in the tonic chord (as the equivocation of the intervallic third – or a 'mixture' in

Schenkerian terms) invokes a degree of tonal instability, which serves to pre-empt the mysterious persona and actions of the film’s principal lead, the so-called ‘Eisenheim the Illusionist’. At this early stage in the film, Glass’s music serves a premonitory purpose, which may be regarded as a typical Hollywood convention.<sup>18</sup>

**Ex. 4.1 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘The Illusionist’ from *The Illusionist***



From the outset of the film, Glass approaches tonality in a somewhat conventional manner, assimilating to a considerable extent the harmonic practices and symphonic writing of both his Romantic predecessors and his ‘mainstream’ contemporaries working in Hollywood film music. However, though the opening statement assimilates the aesthetic of nineteenth-century music in terms of texture, orchestration and tonality, the onset of oscillating dyads as an ostinato figure heard towards the end of the extract reveals a somewhat typical trait of Glass’s formative technique. A similar dyadic ostinato can also be heard in ‘The History’ from *Notes*

**Ex. 4.2.1 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘The History’ from *Notes on a Scandal***



*on a Scandal*; Ex. 4.2.1 outlines this accompaniment figure, and as shown by the uppermost pitches, *a* and *a*-flat, the occurrence of the half stepwise progression again

<sup>18</sup> As discussed in this thesis’s third chapter in relation to Hans Zimmer’s soundtrack to *The Da Vinci Code*, the opening sequence of a film would serve a ‘preparatory function’ in Philip Tagg’s terms, setting out the context for the remainder of the film (see Tagg 2000, p. 93).

causes an alternation between tonic major and tonic minor, which can be observed as a common tendency in Glass's compositional technique. Later on in the track (b. 13 of the transcript) both pitches are heard simultaneously, causing a conflicting false relation. Also worth noting in the lower voice of the example is another semitonal relation between the dominant and the flattened submediant, as often used in Glass's music.

Ex. 4.2.2 offers a global view of 'Invitation' from *Notes on a Scandal* in its entirety. From this diagram, the use of a descent from tonic to submediant is displayed in the harmonic progression of C minor – A-flat major – D major – G major (i –  $\flat$ VI –  $\sharp$ V of V – I of V). This forms the basis of one of two harmonic groups employed in the piece – the other being i –  $\flat$ II – V as heard in the second half of the example. Other semitonal progressions again are apparent, for instance *c* to *b*-natural and *e*-flat to *d* in the treble register (causing registral disparity when pitted against the bass at the outset of the track).

**Ex. 4.2.2 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Invitation' from *Notes on a Scandal***

The parallel-motion transitional passage (highlighted by a single bracket in the example) contains four groups of four pitches that are each repeated three times. Half steps are again used, which facilitates a terraced development, for instance the upper voice of the initial twin groups contain a leap of a minor third followed by a lower neighbour note figure, while the figuration in the lower voice has altered in the second

group by transposing down a semitone (*b*-flat has descended to *a*-natural). In the third group, both upper and lower voices descend by yet another a semitone, while the final group sees the upper voice remaining identical to the preceding material. The lower voice descends by semitone in the final three pitches, which creates a lower neighbour-note figure on *g*. The passage ultimately rests on a dyadic ostinato of the tonic major, leading to the second part of the piece; this section is of particular rhythmic interest by its use of a hemiola pattern: four groups of semiquaver arpeggio triplets are heard against three crotchet beats in the bass.

From a harmonic-temporal viewpoint, McClary's remarks on the characteristics of the multimedia opera *The Photographer* (1982) and the soundtrack to *Koyaanisqatsi* show some parallelism to the progressions highlighted in this chapter. The final act of *The Photographer*, writes McClary, 'repeatedly gives us a typical Mahlerian buildup-to-cadence, only to loop back at the promised climax to the beginning of the buildup' (McClary 2002, p. 122-3). McClary elaborates by stating listeners expect 'or *desire* violent annihilation through the tonal cadences and our frustration at not attaining the promised catharsis reveals to us the extent to which we are addicts in need of that fix' (ibid., p. 123). In his commentary on McClary's remarks, Fink considers this continual cycling technique to be a 'deliberate parody of *plaisir*' – as a form of *jouissance* – that form 'tight tension-release arcs' (Fink 2005, p. 47).

This form of cadential looping as described by McClary with regard to *The Photographer* is equally apparent in 'Invitation' from *Notes on a Scandal*.<sup>19</sup> As displayed in Ex. 4.2.2, the inner voice ascends through an extensive chromatic

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<sup>19</sup> 'In His Cell' from *Dracula* displays yet another instance of this progression, as discussed in Chapter 6.

progression from *c* to *g*<sup>1</sup> (the final three pitches of this scale are shown in the treble part of the example), while the surrounding material remains static by the repetition of the earlier mentioned harmonic progressions, uncovering an omnipresent half step between *c* and *b*-natural. In terms of the film's subject matter, the repeated 'buildup-to-cadence' heard in 'Invitation' creates an overly heightened sense of expectation, as Barbara prepares to visit the home of Sheba Hart and her family. The repetitive cycle abruptly comes to a caesura on the dominant major chord at the doorstep of the family's home. This lack of tonal resolution consequently represents a prime example of an integrated musico-visual relation, whereby the musical narrative is synchronised and pre-decided by the length of the visual montage.

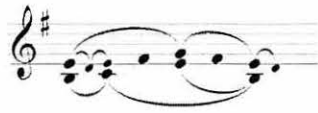
### **Cadence Avoidance Strategies**

While the divergence from resolution is attained in 'Invitation' by cycling the pre-mentioned progression towards the dominant major, cadence avoidance in *No Reservations* (Ex. 4.3.1) is achieved by the use of a cyclical figuration that altogether avoids the dominant.<sup>20</sup> The upper voice passes through an ascending/descending progression through a minor third, while an inner component contains a lower neighbour note figure on the tonic. As the overall phrase is repeated, the *d* pitch forms a connective element between each instance, thereby adding coherence to this cyclical component. In clear contrast to the earlier discussed phrase in *The Illusionist* (Ex. 1.1) and similarly to 'Invitation' from *Notes on a Scandal*, the perpetual nature of the repeated Ex. 4.3.1 is non-dialectical due to its cadential avoidance.

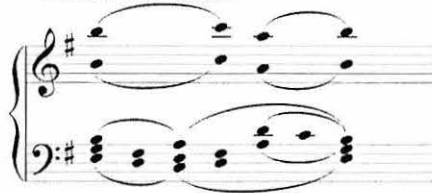
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<sup>20</sup> While Glass's soundtracks usually comprise mainly his own music, his contribution to the *No Reservations* CD (2007) is somewhat subsumed by largely jazz and Italian operatic music by other composers. Glass's cyclical approach, and the use of modal inflections might however be observed as similar to that found in jazz composition.

Ex. 4.3.1  
Basic harmonic reduction of music  
from *No Reservations*



Ex. 4.3.2  
Basic harmonic reduction of music  
from *No Reservations*



Also of interest in the pieces from *No Reservations* is yet another instance of the intervallic configuration involving the submediant. As shown in the lower voice of Ex. 4.3.1, the dominant pitch ascends by a half step to *c*-natural before rising by a minor third to the tonic and subsequently returning to *b* (as the final part of the neighbour-note figuration). The use of the flattened submediant in this instance creates a sense of an Aeolian modality on E.

In Ex. 4.3.2, an inversion of the preceding material of Ex. 4.3.1 takes place in almost perfect form. The uppermost voice in the bass clef passes through an extended neighbour-note figure on the dominant pitch while the lower voice descends and ascends through a parallel third motion from the tonic to a first-inversion subdominant chord. This progression implies a plagal cadence enhancing the solemn nature of Glass's theme, in keeping with the poignancy of the film's subject matter; Kate, a Manhattan-based chef (played by Catherine Zeta-Jones), is left to bring up her young niece, Zoe (Abigail Breslin), following her sister's fatal car crash.<sup>21</sup>

Even though the cyclical nature of Ex. 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 demonstrates the lack of tonal resolution, both examples are clearly tonally- (or modally-) based. The earlier discussed *Notes on a Scandal* soundtrack however exemplifies a much greater degree

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<sup>21</sup> While Glass's music parallels this particular emotion, and the initially strained relationship between the career-driven Kate and her niece, the film's diegetic involvement of Italian opera and jazz is a clear contrast in its representation of Zeta-Jones's sous-chef (Aaron Eckhart), and the ensuing romantic relationship between both characters.

of tonal instability through chromaticism, which ties in with the psychological tension and complexity of the film's subject matter. As Ex. 4.4 from 'Discovery' illustrates (but equally of relevance in 'Someone Has Died' due to its employment of similar material), all pitches within the chromatic series apart from *b*-natural are employed. Alternations between minor and major third in the bass also take place (with yet another half step in the treble register – if centred on G as opposed to E minor, this semitone would represent a progression from the submediant to the dominant). Furthermore, the simultaneous use of *e*-natural and *e*-flat causes a false relation. A juxtaposition of minor and major seconds is also apparent in the soundtrack's opening piece, 'First Day of School', however this track contrasts to 'Discovery' in its employment of a greater degree of goal-directed tonal motion, albeit laden with chromaticism.

**Ex. 4.4 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Discovery' from *Roving Mars***

In addition to the tonal ambiguity of Ex. 4.4 from 'Discovery' is the temporal instability caused by the use of additive and reductive structures that are characteristic of Glass's formative technique. As shown by the dotted boxes in Ex. 4.4, the second motivic group heard in the bass is extended by an extra minor third dyad, while the third and fourth groups are identical to the first. The fifth group shown in the example is the most extensive, as it interpolates new pitches in the bass register (*b*-flat to *a*),



and also assimilates the second group by its inclusion of an additional minor third leap.

Further additive or reductive techniques are apparent in ‘Sheba & Steven’ and ‘Barbara’s House’ (both of which are based on similar melodic material). Ex. 4.5, as a transcript of the latter track, for instance starts with a four-pitch group (containing the pitches of the tonic minor chord in addition to the submediant pitch, *e*-flat). In the subsequent bar, this *e*-flat is removed, creating rhythmic syncopation and the initiation of a five-pitch group with an additional *f*-natural at the end of the third bar. This pattern is subsequently repeated with slight harmonic variation – the tonic second inversion chord that supported the quaver-beat figuration has shifted to the dominant minor. The initial pitch of the upper voice has changed to *a*-natural in b. 4, though the remainder of the figuration is identical to the initial three bars. This form of progression occurs in subsequent bars, which lead to the major/minor alternation from b. 18 onwards.

**Ex. 4.5 Aural transcription of ‘Barbara’s House’  
from *Notes on a Scandal***

The musical score for Ex. 4.5 is presented in four systems. The first system consists of a single staff with a treble clef, showing a four-pitch group in the first bar. The second system consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs), showing the removal of the e-flat and the initiation of a five-pitch group. The third system consists of two staves, showing the progression to the dominant minor. The fourth system consists of two staves, showing the major/minor alternation.

But what does this rhythmic and harmonic ambiguity contribute to the overall filmic narrative? Undoubtedly the major/minor alternations, uses of second inversion chords, described by Richardson as an ‘ambiguous’ and ‘unstable’ harmonic position (Richardson 1999, p. 69), transfer a sense of unease and unpredictability to the perceiver of the film and the music. Furthermore, these characteristics parallel the emotional state of the main character, Barbara Covett (played by Judy Dench). In a recent interview for an online film music journal, Glass articulated his conscious attempt to ‘present Barbara in this rather complicated way – as a rather serene elderly dignified person, but someone who we really didn’t know who she was’ (Goldwasser 2006, unpag.).<sup>22</sup> This character’s unknowable persona, or the ‘feeling of danger about her’ (ibid.), interacts with the often-heard chromatic progressions, semitonal shifts and temporal ambiguity, and although these are all familiar traits of tonality, they are represented in a disassociated or removed manner.

### **Intratextual Harmonies – Employing Set Theory**

Up to this point, this chapter has drawn attention to the thirds-based relationship observed in the frequent harmonic progression from the tonic chord to the submediant. This can also be associated with the intervallic relationship between the dominant pitch and the flattened submediant as heard in several examples. By employing a pitch-class theoretic approach, it becomes increasingly apparent that these pitches belong to pitch-class sets 4-19 and 4-20 (12). In this context, the latter prime form of 4-20 (12) represents a minor triad combined with the flattened

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<sup>22</sup> The purpose of the soundtrack according to Glass is essentially to provide ‘another narrative which [happens and parallels] the music [...], and it reflects the emotional development of the film’ (Goldwasser 2006, unpag.).

submediant, while the former set is slightly different as it contains a major triad instead.

Assuming a hypothetical scenario, wherein an A minor triad with flattened submediant is taken as an example (thus an instance of 4-20 (12)), this would be translated in pitch class terms as [9, 0, 4, 5]. After rotating this series to the normal order of [4, 5, 9, 0] and transposed to 0 as [0, 1, 5, 8], it is evident that this pc-set belongs to the prime form 4-20 (12) as indicated in Allen Forte's inventory.<sup>23</sup>

An A major chord combined with a flattened submediant (representing a 4-19 chord) is somewhat more complex, as it requires to be double mapped (that is, inverted and subsequently transposed) in order to fit any of Forte's possible intervallic configurations. In numerical terms, the pitch classes of *a*, *c*-sharp, *e* and *f*-natural represent [9, 1, 4, 5]. From their normal order of [1, 4, 5, 9] and subsequent transposition to [0, 3, 4, 8], it is apparent that this set does not appear in the inventory of prime forms. Consequently further calculations need to take place: the inversion of the above given normal order of [0, 3, 4, 8] is [0, 9, 8, 4]. Following their rearrangement into the ascending order of [0, 4, 8, 9] and a rotation into their new normal order of [8, 9, 0, 4], the transposition of this set is [0, 1, 4, 8], which ultimately belongs to pitch class set 4-19.

In his discussion on pc-set combinations, Alan Chapman notes eight sets equally belonging to 4-19; the relevant configuration in Glass's music (that is, a major triad with flattened sixth) is indeed apparent in this series (see Chapman 1981, p. 279). Forte, however, would undoubtedly criticise the practice of associating pitch class sets with conventional harmonic terminology (such as 'a major triad'), due to his standpoint that the objectivity of the set theoretic system is somehow impaired if pc-

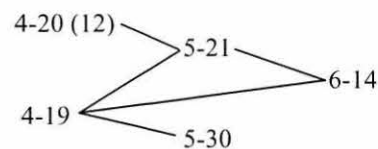
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<sup>23</sup> See Forte 1973, pp. 179-81 for a comprehensive list of all possible prime forms.

sets are associated with such textual descriptions. For instance, he criticises Douglas Jarman’s description of 4-19 as ‘a minor triad with an added major seventh’ (Forte 1985, p. 48 citing Jarman 1979, p. 54). However, for the purposes of this present chapter, it seems logically convenient to imply the association between prime form 4-19 and the recurrent intervallic configurations observed in Glass’s tonal language.<sup>24</sup>

Fig. 4.3 gives an illustrative overview of the manner in which pc-set 4-19 and 4-20 (12) integrate within the complexes apparent in ‘The History’ from *Notes on a Scandal*. As the diagram displays, it is apparent that 4-19 is equally a subset of 5-21 and 5-30. Furthermore, 4-19 and 5-21 are illustrated in Fig. 3 as subsets of 6-14.<sup>25</sup>

**Fig. 4.3 Pitch class set complexes in ‘The History’ from *Notes on a Scandal***



### **Pitch-class Commonalities in *The Hours***

The recurrence of 4-19 and 4-20 (12) consequently exemplifies a self-referential element in several of Glass’s film works. Indeed, this intervallic configuration is also omnipresent in the award-winning soundtrack to *The Hours*.<sup>26</sup> Before exploring uses of this set in detail however, it would seem logical to draw attention to other apparent

<sup>24</sup> Several academics are critical of the double mapping method in order to create equivalence classes (Callender, et al. 2008, p. 348); as Chapman has shown, eight possible configurations all equally apply to prime form 4-19 (Chapman 1981). From an aural perspective therefore, it is questionable whether a listener can perceive all possible pc-sets as equivalent to one another.

<sup>25</sup> The transcript contained in the Appendix details the exact location of each set within ‘The History’.

<sup>26</sup> Glass’s score won a BAFTA Award, and was also nominated for an Academy Award, a Golden Globe and a Grammy Award. McClary notes that Glass’s ‘score works from the same set of harmonic gestures in *Glassworks*’ and as earlier quoted, with ‘concentrated references to the Romantic signs of hope and yearning’ (McClary 2007, p. 57). In her writings, McClary offers a harmonic analysis of the soundtrack (drawing attention to inner-voice semitonal shifts), and interrelates the music with the

internal references in the scores, which aid coherency to the perceiver of the film.<sup>27</sup>

Cunningham's novel, as reflected in the film, layers three distinct periods of time – the portrayal of Virginia Woolf in 1920s London, Laura Brown in Los Angeles during the 1940s and most recent, Clarissa Vaughan in 1990s New York. As the following analyses will demonstrate, Glass's harmonic repetition interacts with the multiplicity of the cinematic narrative and promotes unity when pitted against the film's plot.<sup>28</sup>

As the Schenkerian reductions show respectively (Ex. 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3),

'Morning Passage', 'The Poet Acts' and 'Why Does Someone Have to Die?'

fundamentally comprise a chromatic descent from the tonic to the dominant, followed

by a restatement of the tonic. Each example vary at foreground level however: 'The

Poet Acts' for instance is an elaboration of the more basic framework shown in Ex.

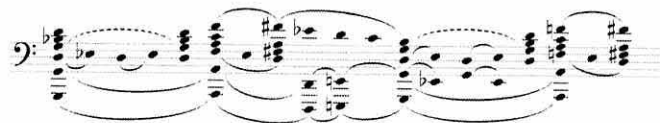
4.6.3's 'Why Does Someone Have to Die?'.  
  

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Ex. 4.6.1 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Morning Passage' from *The Hours*



Ex. 4.6.2 Basic harmonic reduction of 'The Poet Acts' from *The Hours*



Ex. 4.6.3 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Why Does Someone Have to Die' from *The Hours*



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film's dialogic narrative, drawing attention to the chordal progression of G minor to E-flat major, the latter of which offers 'a brief ray of hope' to the otherwise sombre soundtrack (see *ibid.*, pp. 58-9).

<sup>27</sup> Rudy Koppl writes that 'the score becomes the creative focal point that joins everything together, beautifully giving the film the cohesion it needs' (Koppl 2003, p. 19).

<sup>28</sup> This use of multiple temporality, it seems, can be regarded as being Deleuzian. In her writings on Deleuze, Anna Powell notes that multiple temporalities are apparent in *Citizen Kane* and *Donnie Darko*, amongst other examples, though both are 'structured in coexisting sheets of present' (Powell 2007, p. 160). Though not exclusively based in the present tense, Reich's multimedia operas, *The Cave* and *Three Tales* also interweave narratives based on several different time-lines.

As shown in Ex. 4.6.2, ‘The Poet Acts’ functions on an oscillation between the tonic minor and the submediant, occurring as a result of the semitonal shift between *d* and *e*-flat (in pitch-class terms, the prime form 4-20 (12) is consequently in use).<sup>29</sup> The bass pedal notes (in octaves) subsequently rise by a step to *a*, which at first glance would appear to be a first-inversion chord of the seventh (F major), it implies the superimposition of the submediant pitch, *f*, upon the supertonic chord (A minor). An inner voice subsequently descends through a scale of a third, and resting on the root of the dominant major chord (D), while the lowest bass voices ascend by a step to the flattened submediant (*e*-natural) before returning to the tonic and initiating a repeat of the cycle.

The reduction of ‘I’m Going to Make a Cake’ (Ex. 4.6.4) demonstrates a further rocking motion between the second inversion tonic chord and the flattened submediant within an A harmonic minor framework. This cyclical *i* – *VI* – *V*<sup>7</sup> progression is supported by registral transfers and voice exchanges as highlighted on the diagram by arrowed lines; this perpetuity arguably symbolises the psychological trapping of domesticity in this particular scene. In Michael Cunningham’s novel, as

Ex. 4.6.4 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘I’m Going to Make a Cake’ from *The Hours*

The image shows a musical score for 'I'm Going to Make a Cake' from the film 'The Hours'. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The music is in A minor. The treble staff features a melodic line with a dotted rhythm and a final cadence. The bass staff features a bass line with a dotted rhythm and a final cadence. Two arrowed lines indicate voice exchanges: one from the treble staff's second measure to the bass staff's second measure, and another from the bass staff's fourth measure to the treble staff's fourth measure. The score is annotated with various musical symbols, including a sharp sign for the key signature and a 7 for the dominant chord.

represented in Steven Daldry’s cinematic production, Laura Brown is the second female character in *The Hours* – the ‘young wife and mother, broiling in a suburb of

<sup>29</sup> A similar harmonic configuration may be observed in ‘Why Does Someone Have to Die’ (see Ex. 6.3).

1940s Los Angeles’, who ‘mourns her lost possibilities [and] her unexplored talents’ (Cunningham 2006, p.79). This particular piece, ‘I’m Going to Make a Cake’, is heard in conjunction with the scene of the wife and her son baking a cake for her husband’s birthday, in a scene where the character attempts her best to take an optimistic outlook on her life, though entwined in emotional unhappiness. In this respect, the infinite nature of the cyclical progression parallels her psychological state. Moreover, the alternations between tonic minor and major submediant chords are reminiscent of such progressions identified by McClary, which were heard in conjunction with a different character, Clarissa Vaughan; this progression is again a musical representation of shifts between optimal hope and sombre reality (McClary 2007, pp. 58-9).<sup>30</sup>

Ex. 4.6.5, from ‘Dead Things’ demonstrates both an internal harmonic quotation in addition to an external intratextual reference. The progression of I – ♭II – V shown in the example is equally evident in ‘Morning Passage’, and thereby an internal reference within the work; moreover, this progression can be observed in other works, for instance ‘Invitation’ from *Notes on a Scandal*, as discussed previously.

Ex. 4.6.5 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘Dead Things’ from *The Hours*



<sup>30</sup> In fact, as Michael LeBlanc writes, the narrative of *The Hours* does not end, as ‘we are left with Virginia still alive, though we know what should (or will) happen next’ (LeBlanc 2006, pp. 105-7). The anti-dialectical aspect of Glass’s harmonic progressions is therefore in suitably accordance with the overall cinematic narrative of the film.

The second half of Ex. 4.6.5 comprises a descent through a tone in the bass line (with parallel motion in an inner voice) followed by a leap to the dominant. This progression was elaborated in ‘Morning Passage’, however perhaps more significant is the presence of the intervallic configuration of 4-20 (12) whereby the pitches g, b-flat, d and e-flat are executed in a broken chord.<sup>31</sup>

Both pitch class sets are also used in the more recent *Roving Mars* (2006). As Ex. 4.7.1 shows, two instances of 4-19, in addition to a single occurrence of 4-20 (12) are apparent in the initial section of ‘Life Itself’.

Ex. 4.7.1 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘Life Itself’ from *Roving Mars*

Furthermore, a subset of 4-20 (12) is heard in this section’s third group, in the form of 3-4. Pitch-class set 3-4 is also evident in ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’: as illustrated in Ex. 4.7.2, this intervallic configuration lacks the intervallic third in the otherwise tonic minor chord. Instead, the dominant pitch (second inversion of the tonic) ascends through a half-stepwise neighbour note figuration to form the root of the

Ex. 4.7.2 Reductive transcription of ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ from *Roving Mars*

Ex. 4.7.3 Reduction of previous example

<sup>31</sup> This pc-set is again apparent in ‘Tearing Herself Away’.



dominant pitch) before returning to its original formation; this motion is more clearly elucidated in the further reduced Ex. 4.7.3.

Demonstrating yet another instance of a registral disparity between treble and bass registers (and consequently textural sparseness), the uppermost voice articulates a semitonal descent from the flattened submediant to the dominant pitch towards the end of the extract. In this respect, the extract from ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ assimilates passages from ‘Invitation’ and ‘Discovery’ from *Notes on a Scandal* (see previous examples).

While the harmonic configuration of ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ and ‘Life Itself’ borrows practices from other contemporary film works, the inaugural track, ‘Opening Titles’, quotes and re-works a much earlier Glassian work, namely *Music with Changing Parts* (1973).<sup>32</sup> And similar to its precursor, the piece alludes to a Dorian modality on C due to the presence of the flattened third and seventh (the latter is not shown in the example, but occurs in a melodic line that passes through a fourth during the course of the work).

The transcription contained in Ex. 4.8 illustrates four (out of five) groups of contrapuntal dyadic progressions that are repeated extensively. From a pitch-class perspective, the material is based on the diatonic scale, hence belonging to prime form 5-23. In this respect it is similar to *Two Pages*, composed five years earlier, as Rob Haskins noted the prevalence of this particular pc-set in *Two Pages* (Haskins 2005).

Ex. 4.8 Aural transcription of ‘Opening Titles’ from *Roving Mars*



<sup>32</sup> This material is also heard in ‘7 Months After Launch’ and ‘Floating in Space’, although in the former piece, the original first unit is modified.

The complete lack of tonal teleology in favour of repetitive acoustic patterns in the piece contributes towards its quintessentially (early-) minimalist style; within the general context of the film, such deprivation of goal-orientated motion is particularly apt when considering that humanity's exploration of an unknown territory of outer space and the planet Mars is at the heart of *Roving Mars*'s storyline.<sup>33</sup>

As shown in Ex. 4.8 from the first track, the upper pitches comprise an alternation between a descending stepwise progression and a leap of a minor third. From a psycho-acoustic perspective, the lower voice essentially highlights the plagal alternations from *f* to *c*. Apart from the penultimate unit in the example, all units are slightly modified by addition, although no new pitch classes are introduced. Following the repetition of unit 1 (twenty-three times), the second group enters with additive material, namely an extra pair of dyad groups apparent in the centre of the preceding unit. Subsequently, all material contained in unit 1 is then repeated. Altogether, the second unit is repeated eight times, therefore significantly shorter than the first unit. The third unit, repeated six times, starts similarly to unit 1, however the final three groups of pitches are derived from unit 2. Both the second and the fourth unit are identical, though different by other musical material not included in the example, which support this ostinato figuration, namely a semitonal pattern played on brass instruments. Group four is repeated ten times, and therefore different in this respect to the second unit.

Following the presentation of the fourth unit, a return of the unit three material occurs before new material is presented. Unit 5 (not shown in Ex. 4.8) is heard in conjunction with a scallic ascent through a fourth from the dominant (*g* – *a* – *b*-flat –

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<sup>33</sup> As a supplement to Rebecca Leydon's 'typology of minimalist tropes' (Leydon 2002), the use of repetition in this context consequently serves as a further example of an 'extra-terrestrial' trope, as postulated in Chapter 3.

c) on woodwind instruments; this reinforces the Dorian modality of the piece.<sup>34</sup> This ascent from the dominant to the tonic can also be heard in ‘Opportunity vs. Sprit’ in the same soundtrack, further demonstrating the transfer of Glass’s musical ideas from his formative years to this late work. ‘Opening Titles’ concludes with a return of the third unit; in effect, the overall structure is characteristically Glassian in its use of a strophic form,  $A B A C B^1 C^1 D C^2$ .<sup>35</sup>

While the use of 5-23 in the opening track of *Roving Mars* refers to the much earlier work *Music with Changing Parts*, this section has shown how other pieces from the work are coherent with Glass’s intervallic configurations in several recent soundtracks by the use of prime forms 4-19 and 4-20 (12). However, similar uses of these pitch-class sets are also evident in an earlier soundtrack, *Koyaanisqatsi*. Ex. 4.9 offers a sample of the vocal score for ‘Vessels’ in its reduced form; an extraction of Units 1, 3 and 10 from the piece reveals the prevalence of the pc-sets discussed earlier.

Fig. 4.4 offers an overview of the interconnections between pc-sets employed in the three units examined, which will shortly be discussed in greater detail. In the first unit (of four bars’ length), pc-set 4-20 (12) and its superset 5-27 are apparent. While the former set is attributed to an A minor chord with the dominant pitch alternating in a half-stepwise motion with the flattened submediant, the latter set (heard in bars 3 and 4) adds a d-natural pitch in the ascending scale in the lower treble part. Unit 3 is more varied in comparison. The first bar comprises characteristic contrary motion around A minor/C major harmony (yet another thirds-based

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<sup>34</sup> Wim Mertens also draws attention to the Dorian inflections heard in the original context, *Music with Changing Parts*, though he considers that it occurs as a ‘sudden modulation’ forty minutes into the work, which ‘causes a psychological dis-orientation of the listener and contributes also to the feeling of infinity Glass’s music radiates’ (Mertens 1988, p. 77).

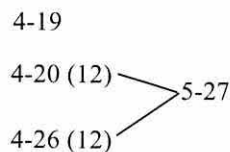
<sup>35</sup> Another instance of a similar modular structure in Glass’s soundtracks may be found in the discussion on ‘Pruit Igoe’ from *Koyaanisqatsi* in Chapter 1.

Ex. 4.9 Reduced score of 'Vessels' from *Koyaanisqatsi*

The image shows a reduced score for three units from the film *Koyaanisqatsi*. Each unit is presented in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a 3/4 time signature. Unit 1 consists of two measures, with the first measure labeled '4-20 (12)' and the second '5-27'. Unit 3 consists of six measures, with labels '4-19' above the first measure, '3-11' above the second measure, '4-20 (12)' above the fifth measure, and '4-26 (12)' above the sixth measure. Unit 10 consists of four measures, with the first measure labeled '4-20 (12)' and the second '5-27'.

relationship) while the subsequent D-flat major chord initiates a chordal progression through a major third towards the F major of b. 4 onwards (D-flat – E-flat – F). The dominant pitch of this D-flat major chord is in conflict with a-natural; hence a false relation is caused. The pitches employed in the D-flat group belong to 4-19 due to the use of a major triad coupled with flattened submediant (or sharpened dominant as

Fig. 4.4 Pitch class set complexes in 'Vessels' from *Koyaanisqatsi*



in this instance). No false relations can be heard in b. 3 – a pure E-flat major triad is conceived via the first inversion of the chord in the bass, and an alternating root position/first inversion pattern in the treble register. The final three bars of unit 3 elucidate the use of pc-set 4-20 (12) in the treble part (comprising alternating triads of F major/A minor), while the bass voices enact an F major triad with the dominant pitch alternating with the (neutral) submediant, hence 4-26 (12) is in use. This prime

form may be observed as a slight variation on 4-19, with *d*-natural replacing *d*-flat as would be the case in 4-19.

If all pitch classes employed in both the treble and bass registers are calculated together, they constitute the superset 5-27, as also used in the final two bars of unit 1. Further resemblances to the initial unit may be observed in terms of rhythmic attributes: the two groups of three quavers heard in bb. 4-5 of Unit 3 compares with bb. 3-4 of unit 1, while the final bar of unit 3 assimilates the initial bar of unit 1, though registral changes have taken place, as the three groups of two quavers are in the bass register as opposed to the upper voice of the treble part.

Unit 10 initiates a rhythmic change by the introduction of a semiquaver figuration. As Ex. 4.9 illustrates, two pitch class sets are in operation in this unit: the set relating to prime form 4-20 (12) is employed in the initial two bars (translated as the tonic triad combined with the flattened supertonic), while the second part of the unit once again based on the superset, 5-27 due to the addition of *d*. In more musical terms, however, unit 10 emphasises the replacement of an A minor triad with flattened submediant, with an F major triad with an added major seventh – a progression that had previously been implied (for instance in unit 1), though not strongly emphasised as in unit 10. Indeed, this harmonic progression effectively displays the inherent connection between both chords through pitch rotation.

### **Generalised Sets and Fuzzy Logic**

Up to this point, the combined use of Schenkerian and set-theoretic methodology has furnished a discussion on similarities between intervallic configurations across a broad range of soundtracks. Attention has been drawn to the prevalence of 4-19, 4-20

(12) and 4-26 (12) – three prime forms that have shown to be closely related in terms of their pitch content. The soundtrack to yet another recent film, *Taking Lives*, displays two additional pc-sets that are of particular interest. Ex. 4.10 is a transcript of an unnamed extract from the film,<sup>36</sup> which initially makes use of 4-17 (12) as shown in the initial rounded rectangle. In non-set theoretic terms, this can be explained as the combination of an alternating B-flat minor/major figure heard in the bass register (thereby displaying an equivocation of the intervallic third). Subsequently, the upper voice initiates a broken tonic minor chord with flattened sixth, identified as the ubiquitous pc-set 4-20 (12).

**Ex. 4.10 Reductive transcription of music from *Taking Lives***

This pattern is subsequently repeated, although the original *b*-flat and *d*-flat pitches are raised by a semitone to *b*-natural and *d*-natural respectively. The combination of *b*-natural, *d*-natural, *f* and *g* represents pitch classes [11, 2, 5, 7], transposed to [0, 3, 6, 7] and subsequently double mapped as [0, 1, 4, 7], which ultimately belongs to the new, but adjacent, prime form 4-18.

This musical extract from the *Taking Lives* soundtrack consequently supplements the inventory of four-pitch configurations with two other prime forms: 4-17 (12) and 4-18, and therefore extends the range of pitch class sets regularly employed by Glass from between 4-17 (12) and 4-20 (12), and with the addition of 4-26 (12). From a listener's perception, this raises the question of how likely is an

<sup>36</sup> In contrast to Glass's film music in general, a recording of the soundtrack for *Taking Lives* has not been commercially released, hence Ex. 4.10 is an aural transcription taken directly from the film.

association between the above pc-sets – that is, how identifiable are they when compared to one another? Fig. 4.5 presents the listed prime forms in their normal order, from which illustration it is apparent that each set contains one variable pitch class when compared to the subsequent, as highlighted in the diagram by bolded and underlined integers.

Fig. 4.5 Prime form inventory	
4-17 (12)	[0, 3, 4, 7]
4-18	[0, <b><u>1</u></b> , 4, 7]
4-19	[0, 1, 4, <b><u>8</u></b> ]
4-20 (12)	[0, 1, <b><u>5</u></b> , 8]
4-26 (12)	[0, <b><u>3</u></b> , 5, 8]

The similarities presented in the five sets contained in Fig. 4.5 raise the question of whether these intervallic configurations can be postulated as belonging subsets of a broader fuzzy logic set – a ‘set whose members belong to it to a certain degree’ (Cádiz 2006, p. 69).<sup>37</sup> According to Rodrigo F. Cádiz, this premise is hinged on the notion that ‘things are not true or false – black or white – anymore, they can be partially true or false or any shade of gray’ (Cádiz 2006, p. 69). In terms of post-structuralism, fuzzy logic can consequently be considered as the mathematical/scientific equivalent of linguistics’ deconstructive theories, as discussed with regard to the philosophical premises of Deleuze and Foucault in this thesis’s second chapter. Glass’ use of the five earlier-listed pc-sets consequently suggests that these intervallic configurations amalgamate into a single – generic – entity, forming an integral part of his harmonic language.

<sup>37</sup> Rodrigo F. Cádiz presents a study of fuzzy logic in relation to multimedia contexts in Cádiz 2006, pp. 67-82. Keith Potter refers to Ian Quinn’s research into contour theory and generalised pitch class spaces, particularly in relation to Reich’s music (Potter 2007; Quinn 1997, 2006).

While fuzzy logic is applicable to study the harmonic similarity vs. difference in respect of the intervallic configurations employed, this approach can equally be effective in comparing melodic similarities between figurations heard in different films. For instance, Exs. 4.11.1 and 4.11.2 are transcripts of two pieces studied earlier: ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ from *Roving Mars* and ‘First Day of School’ from *Notes on a Scandal*. From a listener’s perception, these melodic lines are highly similar; furthermore, both are in the same key of G minor.

Ex. 4.11.1 Aural transcription of ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ from *Roving Mars*



Ex. 4.11.2 Aural transcription of ‘First Day of School’ from *Notes on a Scandal*

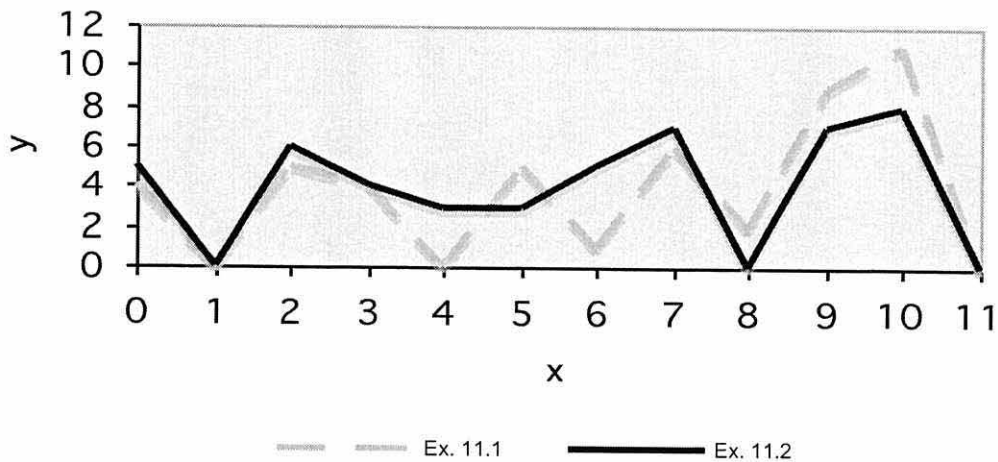


While both extracts display similarities in terms of a listener’s perception (from an esthetic perspective in Nattiez’s semiological narratology), further resemblances are apparent when a set theoretic approach is taken for comparative analysis of the trace material. Fig. 4.6 extrapolates a statistical survey of all pitch classes employed in both extracts in the form of a graphical representation; such a display assimilates to a certain degree illustrations used by Ian Quinn as part of his contour-theory study of Reich’s *Desert Music* (see Quinn 1997, pp. 232-63).

Axis (x) on the graph represents all pitch classes from *c* to *b*-natural (0-11), while the vertical axis (y) denotes the occurrences of each pitch in ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ (Ex. 11.1) and ‘First Day of School’ (Ex. 11.2). As the graph shows, uses of pitch classes 0 to 3 are highly similar between both examples, and pitch classes 7 to 11 (pitches *g* to *b*-natural) display a similar contour on the whole. A greater degree of variation is however apparent for pitch classes 4, 5 and 6 (i.e. *e*, *f* and *f*-sharp).



Fig. 4.6 Contour-theory graph



## Conclusions

In this chapter's introduction, attention was drawn to the fact that a conscious attempt has been made by Glass to interrelate cinematic characters' emotions and psychological states in his music; hence the efficacy of minimalist music in representing psychologically-related subjects. In a somehow Mendelssohnian remark, Glass suggests that in the case of *Notes on a Scandal*, the music goes beyond words in evoking emotion: 'the action is in the words, and the emotion is in the music' (Goldwasser 2006, unpag.). This particular poetic intention has proven to be apparent in a sample of tonal pieces heard in several soundtracks, without focusing on the subjective effect of musematic repetition to a great extent.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the listener's perception at an esthetic level, as generalised in the subjective descriptions extrapolated in the introduction, also interacts with the chromaticism, recombinant harmonies and temporalities employed in the music. Accordingly, Glass's music acts as an affective mediator between screen and sound, the perceiver and the perceived.

<sup>38</sup> 'Musematic' repetition (i.e. note-to-note), as opposed to the 'discursive' form, which repeats larger unit structures, is discussed in Chapter 1, in relation to Richard Middleton's writings.

The examples drawn have demonstrated how the use of abstract musical codes operates across a wide range of soundtracks – use of recurrent harmonic commonalities promote a coherent framework both within (for instance *The Hours*) and across works, wherein the use of generalised pitch class sets as a repetitive figuration was apparent in several examples. Equally so, melodic similarities are ostensibly apparent both at an aurally perceptible level and in a graphical representation (as in the contour chart of Fig. 4.6).

Based on the musico-cinematic elements discussed, and particularly with reference the inventory contained in Fig. 4.2, Fig. 4.7 attempts to reconcile Glass's music with other media. This is achieved by associating ten elements of his characteristic approach to scoring with six cinematic or visual dimensions of any composite film. As shown towards the top of the flowchart, pre-existing musical material by Glass and other artists/composers are fed into some of the composite soundtracks: Glass's early work, *Music with Changing Parts* was apparent in *Roving Mars*, for instance. And in *No Reservations*, *The Hours*, *Taking Lives* and also *Roving Mars*, music by other composers (often stylistically contrasting) were diegetically and non-diegetically involved. Fig. 4.7 demonstrates the interaction between miscellaneous music and the general aesthetic, mood, or the socio-cultural setting of the films.<sup>39</sup> *Taking Lives*, for example, uses Massive Attack's trip-hop track entitled 'Inertia Creeps'.<sup>40</sup> Also, Glass's soundtrack to *Roving Mars* is complemented by the non-diegetic playing of Sigur Ros's music in the final credits, while *No Reservations* is immersed in diegetic enactment of operatic arias (representing both a

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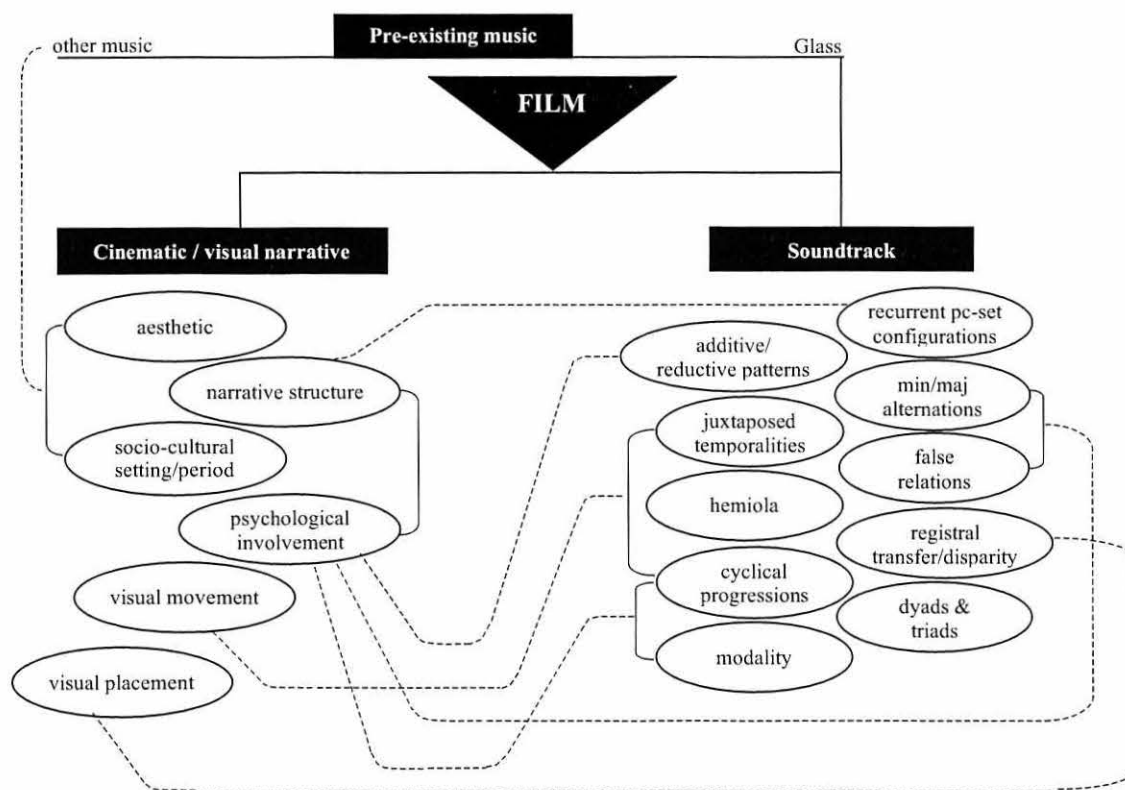
<sup>39</sup> A typology of the functions performed in film music can be found in Chapter 6, particularly in relation to the theories of Claudia Gorbman and Anahid Kassabian.

<sup>40</sup> This track is included on the band's *Collected* album (2006).

light-hearted mood and a specific character). Lastly, McClary draws attention to the ‘luxuriant strains’ of Straussian songs in *The Hours* (McClary 2007, p. 48).

Though Glass’s music often supports the visual aesthetics portrayed on-screen, in comparison his music often goes beyond serving the above functions alone, due to its connection with the films’ psychological dimension and aspects of visual placement and movement. For instance, both minor/major alternations and false relations (representing intervallic mixtures) are shown to be connected to the

**Fig. 4.7 Integration of Glass’s music with other media**



psychological involvement of characters in the film – a mood, or affect that is consequently transmitted to, and interpreted by, the perceiver of the film. Additive or reductive strategies, which create temporal instability, are again related to this aspect,

as indeed are the cadence-avoiding strategies of harmonic cycles (this particular strategy acquired an extra-musical significance in ‘I’m Going to Make a Cake’ from *The Hours* for instance). In fact, Glass’s decision to employ the piano as the main instrument in the soundtrack also relates to the interiority of the music – in his discussion with Rudy Koppl, he commented that the piano ‘can be very intimate and introspective, it’s personal’ (Koppl 2003, p. 21).<sup>41</sup>

As discussed previously, ‘Invitation’ from *Notes on a Scandal* makes use of juxtaposed temporalities, whereby a musical intensification is induced by the mixture of stasis (or cycles) and teleological progression. This combination functions in an overtly non-verbal scene, and as a result of the privation of a dialogic narrative, a focus on musico-visual movement is consequently created. Fig. 4.7 also presents some factors that have not been discussed in any great detail during the course of the chapter up to this point. The concept of registral disparity, whereby a dichotomous relationship occurs between high and low pitches, can be integrated with visual placements – in the case of *Roving Mars*, this particular setup was heard in ‘Opportunity vs. Spirit’ (Ex. 4.7.2), in which case an oppositional contest is at once observed from the title of the piece.

Finally, the focus on recurrent pitch-class sets and other forms of harmonic progressions has revealed an association between this particular element and the narrative/structure of a film, as illustrated by a connecting line on the model. The repetition of patterns and progressions intrinsically create a sense of unity that parallels the cinematic dimension to varying degrees.

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<sup>41</sup> Glass often uses a string quartet configuration as well in order to reflect a sense of psychological interiority via instrumentation that is typically associated with a Romantic idiom – as in the *Dracula* soundtrack and the ‘Company’ String Quartet, for instance.

In conclusion, this analysis of Glass's efforts in mainstream cinema has shown how the objective nature of his music co-exists in a parallel motion with visual and verbal narratives. Glass works differently to his Hollywood contemporaries such as Howard Shore, Michael Kamen and Hans Zimmer, and also to the earlier film composers who all appear to be more dependent on cinematic action by their use of leitmotivic associations. In a newspaper article, Robert Fink recalls Glass's statement 'that older film music is manipulative, like a commercial, with the music telling you how to feel, like propaganda' (Timberg 2009, unpag.). Glass's approach to tonality offers a more refined association with other media, and has 'remained true to a pretty avant-garde idea' (ibid.).

But in spite of this observation, his music can in fact interact on a structural and temporal level with other media, causing visual and musical dimensions and itself to converge on certain occasions. It may also be suggested that the music becomes more apparent – even more effective – when pitted against the visual narrative alone, in the absence of any verbal content, as it allows a greater degree of interpretation by the perceiver. The interactivity between music and image (as first observed in *North Star*) can be regarded as a primary concern in his film music over the last thirty years, which might be explained by the fact that he first entered into film composition by working in close proximity with artists and sculptors during his formative years. Moreover, his proclaimed disinterest in conventional filmic traditions increases further his detachment from the mainstream Hollywood contemporaries.

## **Chapter Five**

## Metamorphic Meanings?

### Exploring Glass's Intertextual Soundtracks

The work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility

(Benjamin 1968, p. 224 in Grimshaw 2002, p. 486)

#### Introduction

The employment of common harmonic progressions and intervallic configurations can be regarded as an intrinsic part of Glass's compositional approach, particularly when writing for film. These elements may, in fact, be posited within a broader intertextual sphere, which require close examination at this point. Two specific aspects of his approach, namely the formation of generic musical devices and the use of self-borrowing methods will be discussed, further inquiring whether these elements can be attributed to any formative influences upon the composer. In turn, a comprehensive study of his film music will examine various instances of music intended (or not) for cinema later manifesting as explicit quotations in other works. Whether or not the meanings contained in his music are either preserved or modified will be questioned, which thereby raises the ultimate question of whether metamorphoses in meaning indeed take place. On this point, Walter Benjamin's notion that certain works of art might sometimes be perceived as being 'designed for reproducibility' is particularly apt, as Glass's music is often easily accommodated in newer contexts (Benjamin 1968, p. 224).

Firstly, however, influences on Glass during his formative years need to be mapped out in order to explore whether his self-borrowing approach was also apparent in the work of his tutors, concentrating firstly on his teachings at the

prestigious Juilliard School in New York. Compared with the rigorous training in harmony and counterpoint received by Nadia Boulanger in Paris, Glass's earlier period at Juilliard, where he studied composition with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti, is credited with fewer recollections of a constructive nature. Such little-known early pieces as *Arioso No. 2* for string orchestra, and the unaccompanied choral works *Spring Grass* and *A Clear Midnight*,<sup>1</sup> indicate a limited amount of his pre-minimalist style. Glass recalls his first compositional attempts as if 'they were written by somebody else' (Church 2007, unpag.). One is therefore led to believe that influences gained at this time had no real lasting effect on his later approach, though Juilliard's pragmatic approach to composition might be seen as a foundation to his subsequent productivity, particularly in the area of film music.<sup>2</sup>

While Glass eventually developed an overtly different style of writing to that fostered at the Juilliard School, certain parallelisms can be observed between his compositional method and particularly that of Persichetti, with whom he studied between 1960-62 (Grimes 1989, p. 20). Postulating a direct association between his self-borrowing techniques and those of Persichetti would be misleading however. Glass came into contact with Darius Milhaud for a brief period during 1960 – a period that indubitably influenced him as a composer despite the brevity of their meeting.<sup>3</sup> Milhaud was much more active in film music composition than Persichetti,<sup>4</sup> whose

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on other early works, including *The Haddock and the Mermaid* (1962/3) and *Haze Gold* (1962), see Potter 2000, pp. 253-4.

<sup>2</sup> In an interview on his training, Glass recounted the practical aspect of his education at this institution; the 'thing that Juilliard emphasized was composers being actively involved in writing music and having it played' (see Grimes 1989, pp. 20-23).

<sup>3</sup> For anecdotal information on Glass's studies with Milhaud, see Grimes 1989, pp. 24-5.

<sup>4</sup> Glass's interest in early French cinema is further apparent in his re-working of Jean Cocteau's films such as the surreal exploration of the Greek tragedy *L'Orphée* and the fantasy drama *La Belle et la Bête*. This interest is also probably through his exposure to French culture in general, particularly through his later studies with Boulanger in Paris. Glass's experiences in Paris are discussed further in Chapter 7.



output was solely limited to a score for Ralph Steiner's *Beyond Niagara* (1969) (Shackelford 1981/2, p. 122).

Nevertheless, a remote connection can be drawn between Persichetti and Glass's work for film: Ralph Steiner had also worked with yet another American composer, Aaron Copland on the film *The City* in 1939 (ibid., p. 122). Alex Ross deems this documentary film as a precursor to Glass's *Koyaanisqatsi*, both in terms of their use of 'vamping repetitive music' and also in their dramatised visualisations of contemporary industrialisms and the environment (Ross 2008, p. 289).

Much of Milhaud's compositional praxis in fact resonates with Glass's approach to writing film music. Milhaud considered that a soundtrack should serve 'as a mood, an addition to the emotions or sentimental or dramatic situation in a moving picture' (Milhaud 1947, p. 27). Also, a composer should ideally strive for simplicity when scoring for film, as the music 'is destined for immense audiences, and directness helps to make it understandable' (ibid.). This 'simplicity' surely resonates with the neutrality of Glass's music when used in conjunction with moving images, which highlights the efficacy of using minimalist music within certain filmic contexts.

Milhaud's opera *Christoph Colombe* (1930) may also be regarded as a precursor to Glass's *La Belle et la Bête* in its incorporation of pre-existing cinematic footages within a live theatre work, 'flashing complementary or conflicting images on a screen' (Salter 1973, p. 483). In terms of subject matter, Glass's futuristic opera *The Voyage* (1992) also builds upon the story of Christopher Columbus within the wider context of exploration. Interestingly enough, the premiere of *The Voyage* in 1992 had occurred in New York at the same time as a performance of Milhaud's work by the Brooklyn College Opera Theater, to commemorate the anniversary of

Columbus's discovery of America in New York in 1992.<sup>5</sup>

Subject matter and performance dates aside, other similarities between both composers' approaches can be observed in structure, narrative and tonality. In fact, Kyle Gann notes that Glass's interest in polytonality was primarily as a result of his brief studies with Milhaud (and not Persichetti), who he considered to have made "'a subtle contribution to 20<sup>th</sup>-century music'" (Gann 1992, p. 33). In structural terms, Barbara Kelly observes how *Christoph Colombe* demonstrates 'Milhaud's liking for self-contained musical units' (Kelly 2003, p. 71). Glass's music in general operates upon a similar modular structure, so Milhaud's approach can be regarded as a kind of 'pre-minimal' influence. Also, Kelly draws attention to the fact that the opera's librettist, Claudel, 'eschews chronological narrative; past, present and future are spanned in random episodes' (ibid.). This observation generally reflects minimalist composers' tendency to write opera using anti-narrative forms – Reich's *Three Tales*, or Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* for instance. In the case of *The Voyage*, the libretto specifically experiments with different time periods. While the prologue offers a scene in which the scientist Steven Hawking is portrayed, the subsequent three acts are set on a modern spaceship travelling fifty thousand years B.C., followed by the story of Columbus during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and finally the year 2092. As in the case of the prologue, the opera's narrative is also disrupted by the epilogue returning back to Columbus's period in 1506.

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<sup>5</sup> Writing in the *New York Times*, Bernard Holland comments that 'Claudel's play and Milhaud's setting of it operate on a scale as large as Glass's, but its premises are perhaps different. *The Voyage*, we have been led to understand, celebrates quest and exploration in general; *Christophe Colomb* examines the ironies of Columbus's success and failure; its vignettes include not only his discoveries but also his penurious end, at the obscure inn where he died, unable to pay the landlord's bill' (Holland 1992, p. 17).

Unlike Milhaud's *Christophe Colomb*, Glass does not employ cinematic material in his opera. Similar to Glass however, Milhaud borrowed music from his pre-existing concert works for use in subsequent cinematic contexts or vice versa.<sup>6</sup> Fragments of Milhaud's soundtrack to Renoir's film based on Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* (1933), were later released as a collection of pieces for piano entitled *L'Album de Madame Bovary*, for voice in *Deux chansons* (both in 1934) and later in the form of his *Trois Valses* for piano (c. 1950).<sup>7</sup> In Glass's case, the *Metamorphosis* suite can be regarded as a similar conversion from screen music to a concert hall work, as will be discussed in due course.

In stylistic terms, Milhaud's late works according to Marion Bauer demonstrate influences of Romanticism; the music for *Madame Bovary* for instance seemingly interact with the era in which the book and film is set (Bauer 1942, p. 159). Bauer notes that 'one was frequently reminded of Schumann' in the piano score (ibid.). In fact, Schumann can also be regarded as an influence on Glass's approach. As Susan McClary notes, the piano repertoire of German nineteenth century composers resonates in Glass's music, particularly in the employment of tonal practices, with *Glassworks* being regarded as referencing the music of Schumann and Brahms but in a post-modern, centertextualised manner (McClary 2000, 141-3).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jeremy Drake, 'Darius Milhaud', *Grove Music Online* <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> (Last accessed 31 December 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Milhaud had also composed music for Alberto Cavalcanti's silent films, including *La P'tit Lili* (1927) and *Actualités* (1928). The score of the latter work, composed in six movements, was intended 'for any newsreel' (Winter 1941, p. 151); in this respect Milhaud's music could be used for several contexts.

<sup>8</sup> Commenting on Glass's early years, John Richardson incidentally notes that his first musical recollection was of Schubert's E-flat Piano Trio (Richardson 1999, p. 19).

## Glass's Romantic Predecessors

Glass's predecessors in the Romantic era, including Schumann and his contemporaries, also elicit examples of self-quotation, demonstrating a high proficiency in the recycling of their own compositions. Ironically, however, the Romantic movement concurrently encouraged the individuality and uniqueness of each work. The aesthetic concept of 'absolute music' seemingly eschewed any external references or influences, resulting in 'musical logic [appearing as] a context that is closed within itself, and neither needs nor tolerates an external crutch' (Dahlhaus 1989, p. 138). Moreover, any artistic works of the period reached 'metaphysical dignity by its very retreat into the "empty inwardness" that Hegel identified as the area of absolute music, of music that had come to itself' (ibid., p. 155).

Nevertheless, despite this attempt to promote musical unity or 'logic', examples of inter-referentiality in the instrumental and vocal music of Schumann and his contemporaries are however in abundance. As illustrated in Ex. 5.1, Schubert for instance re-worked the lied 'Der Wanderer' in his 'Wanderer' Fantasy for piano, with an explicit quotation in the slow second movement. This example shows how internal references are made in the Fantasy (namely a rhythmic motive comprising a crotchet and two quaver beats, as highlighted in boxes),<sup>9</sup> and have developed organically out of the song written six years earlier.

Another case of inter-referentiality is apparent in Schubert's String Quartet in A minor and an Impromptu for piano, whereby an extract out of his *entr'acte* to the theatrical work *Rosamunde* was later employed in both works. Similar to Schubert,

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<sup>9</sup> In the third movement, however, this motive is slightly varied by the use of a dotted rhythm.

Schumann's quotations again ranged from the explicit (or the specific) to the implicit (or generic).<sup>10</sup> As an example, R. Larry Todd refers to Schumann's borrowing of *Papillons* in 'Florestan' from *Carnaval* as an example of the former referential device, while the Second Symphony demonstrates 'an *apparent* allusion to Haydn's last symphony', by the use of fanfares of intervallic fourths and fifths (Todd 1994, pp. 80, 109 n.3).

In contrast to Schubert and Brahms however, Schumann's means of interweaving pre-existing musical texts into new narratives was unsurpassed by his contemporaries (ibid., p. 109). Moreover, 'Schumann's quotations and references are enriching echoes of the musical past – the musical past of Schumann's generation, and of Schumann himself' (ibid.). Equally so, the referential and self-referential practices of Romantic composers resound in Glass's postmodernist self-borrowings, alongside his adoption of generic harmonic and rhythmic devices established by them. In short, Glass's borrowing from earlier composers can also be considered as 'enriching echoes of the musical past' (ibid.), disassociated from their normal contexts through their use within an idiosyncratic manner of writing that is dependent on repetition (McClary 2000, pp. 142-3). These references to the past can suitably be discussed in relation to literary criticism. Building on the Bloomian 'anxiety of influence', Joseph Straus's theory of 'creative misreading' can be applied to Glass's intertextual approach. Straus 'calls works creative misreadings when composers deliberately appropriate elements associated with their predecessors' (Pasler 1993, p. 6). In Straus's terms, such appropriation can take on several guises, 'from quotations

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<sup>10</sup> Both specific and generic types of quotation are explained by Pwyll ap Siôn in his book on the intertextual aspect of Michael Nyman's music. The former type, according to ap Siôn 'deals with the notion that intertextuality often rises to the surface of a composition, or can even become the work itself' (ap Siôn 2007, p. 66), while an implicit reference 'relates to the subconscious movement of generic and schematic types from one text to another' (ibid.).

# Ex. 5.1 Schubert's Der Wanderer and Fantasia in C ('Wanderer')

'Der Wanderer' D. 493 (1816), bb. 22-30

The sun to me seems dim and cold. The flow'rs are pale, and life seems old. Their speech doth seem but empty sound. And strange I on foreign ground

## Fantasia in C (Wanderer) D. 760 (1822)

1<sup>st</sup> mov't

*Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo*

2<sup>nd</sup> mov't

*Adagio*

3<sup>rd</sup> mov't

4<sup>th</sup> mov't

of pitch class sets, textures, or sections of music to triads and conventional forms' (ibid.).

### **'Sections of Music': Glass's Specific Quotations**

With the exception of the 'Low' Symphony (1996) and the 'Heroes' Symphony (1996), both of which borrow song titles and musical material from Brian Eno and David Bowie's eponymous rock albums, both dating from 1977, Glass seldom quotes music by other composers.<sup>11</sup> In fact, a study of these symphonies reveals his different approaches to musical borrowing. Glass's 'Subterraneans' and 'Warszawa' movements of the 'Low' Symphony are closely related in key, content and mood to the original tracks, which were also essentially minimalist in style, albeit within a rock context.<sup>12</sup>

Glass's 'Heroes' symphony also demonstrates instances of a close relationship between text and context, such as in 'Sense of Doubt'. Glass, however, reworks the material by transposition. On the other hand, the opening movement of the symphony, entitled 'Heroes', offers an entirely different take on the original song; Glass's quotation is much more implicit than in the examples earlier mentioned. As the aural transcriptions contained in Ex. 5.2 reveal, the movement is written within an E-flat major tonality, while Bowie's song was based a semitone below, on D major. In melodic terms, a similarity may be observed in both uses of a descending third,

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<sup>11</sup> See Grimshaw 2002.

<sup>12</sup> James o'Callaghan offers a detailed analysis of Bowie's 'art rock' album, *Low*, in which he states that 'Warszawa' 'is guided by [a] steady pulse, reminiscent of the "groove" of minimalist composers', while 'Subterraneans' contains melodies that 'are laid against an ambient "bed" of reversed sounds'. See <<http://www.sfu.ca/~jdo1/low/low.html>> (Last accessed 13 January 2010).

Ex. 5.2

Eno & Bowie's 'Heroes'

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is titled 'Eno & Bowie's 'Heroes'' and is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, C5, and then back down. The bottom staff is titled 'Glass's 'Heroes'' and is in E-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. It features a similar melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, C5, and then back down. Arrows indicate the correspondence between the two melodies.

scallically filled in, while resemblances in rhythm can also be argued in the use of a sustained pitch, followed by notes of shorter rhythmic values. The harmonic context of this material however differs – while Bowie's song shifts between the tonic and the subdominant, Glass's movement rotates between E-flat and B-natural chords, causing the *g*-natural and *b*-flat pitches of the first chord to shift down by a semitone to *f*-sharp and *b*-natural, while the tonic pitch, *e*-flat, enharmonically changes to serve as the third degree of the B-natural chord.

It is also worth noting that Glass's 'Heroes' was re-used in a new context, namely Eurostar's television commercial to publicise the launch of the modernised St Pancras rail station in London,<sup>13</sup> and the high-speed connection it offers between the UK and Europe.<sup>14</sup> Glass's music conveys several different meanings in this new context. On a fundamental level, the music's repetitive element assimilates the motion of a train – a motion earlier conveyed in *Einstein on the Beach* and the soundtrack to *Powaaqatsi*.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, its symphonic nature is compatible with the industrial productivity, splendour and triumph – particularly by the use of chimes and

<sup>13</sup> Eurostar's 'Hello to St Pancras' campaign was launched in November 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Music by yet another minimalist composer, Michael Nyman, had also been written to commemorate the launch of another high-speed train service, the TGV in France – Nyman's *MGV (Musique à Grande Vitesse)* was first performed in 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Chapter 1 relates the motion of a train, as apparent in *Powaaqatsi* and Reich's *Different Trains* to Leydon's 'motoric' trope, thereby offering two examples illustrating repetition's ability to convey such extra-musical functions.



percussion instrumentation. In terms of tonality, the sunshine of the visual footage is reflected in Glass's use of a major tonality that altogether contrasts to the often-employed minor tonality representing a greyness and bleakness often associated with Glass's music. This aesthetic caused Robert T. Jones to write of *Akhmaten* as 'a dauntingly bleak sight, with pages of what seems to be only bare scales and arpeggios; fully assembled, though, magic shines from the sparseness' (Kozinn 1986, p. 177).<sup>16</sup> In the case of Glass's 'Heroes', this 'magic', or otherwise an optimistic element, is carried over from Bowie's original song, both in terms of the triumphant nature of the musical expression and the optimism exuded in the lyrics.

Significant also is the integration of the 'old' and the 'new' depicted in the visual narrative (the station's original architecture versus the technological achievement of the new, rapid train), which is somehow symbolic in its comparison with Glass's post-modern recycling of Bowie's musical material, and also the use of a symphonic context. On referring back to Straus's theory of a 'creative misreading', we see in 'Heroes' an appropriation of pitch-class sets from Bowie's music, and also the 'conventional form' of the symphony, as largely developed by Glass's predecessors from the Classical and Romantic era.

Similar to the implicit nature of the quotation in 'Heroes', the opening track of *Naqoyqatsi* has some reverberations with Holst's 'Mars' from *The Planets*.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, his use of textures and triadic forms indeed point toward other implicit references, or allusions to his musical ancestry in general. Meanwhile his employment of recurrent pitch class sets, rhythmic and structural devices demonstrate

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<sup>16</sup> Jones's comments were made in a programme note on the work for New York City Opera.

<sup>17</sup> Comparisons between Holst and Glass's music will be made in Chapter 7.

an overtly self-referential approach, drawing from a generic collection of musical techniques.<sup>18</sup>

Glass's reference to the musical past, according to McClary, exemplifies one aspect of Hal Foster's dialectic of postmodernism, namely a 'postmodernism of resistance' whereby composers sought to 'deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo' (Foster 1983, p. xii in Pasler 1993, p. 18).<sup>19</sup> The somewhat traditional, if conservative, environment of Juilliard during Glass's period at the institution perhaps nurtured a resistance to the then musical status quo of modernism, namely serialism, whereby its composers-in-residence tended generally to focus instead on a more neo-classical language. In his own words, Juilliard's composition tutors

all wrote in a tonal school derived from the Copland/Harris/Schuman school. ... If you wanted to study European twelve-tone style music, then you had to study at Columbia or Princeton. Juilliard didn't pay any attention to it, or very slightly. [...] Juilliard specialized in what it thought was American music (Grimes 1989, p. 19).

Juilliard's teaching of harmony and counterpoint was according to Glass

'unsystematic' compared to Boulanger's pedagogic approach (Grimes 1989, p. 23).<sup>20</sup>

Notwithstanding this observation, in 1962 Vincent Persichetti published a textbook on this subject, called *Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice*, which presented 'an account of harmonic materials commonly used by

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<sup>18</sup> Interestingly enough, Vincent Persichetti was also regarded by some as a composer who developed 'a personal style from a common technical pot' (Evelt 1955, p. 25). Persichetti's 'technical pot' was in fact laid out in his textbook on twentieth century harmony; this publication will be discussed in greater detail during the course of this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> Pasler is referring here to an unpublished manuscript written in 1988 by McClary, the contents of which have been expanded upon in McClary 2000. Richardson also writes on Foster's dialectical premises, arguing that Glass's music includes an 'urgent political subtext' (Richardson 1999, p. 32), while somewhat in contradiction, Fink in Chapter 1 refers to Glass's post-minimal approach as that of a 'post-minimalism of reaction' due to its commercial appeal and accessibility.

<sup>20</sup> Nadia Boulanger had inherited the artisan tradition of extemporising partimenti; Glass's interest in harmonic patterns is probably a result of this teaching. Robert Gjerdingen writes that Boulanger 'was one of the last French teachers in an unbroken partimento tradition, including both her father and her grandfather, that extended back to the first years of the Paris Conservatory in the 1790s' (Gjerdingen 2007, p. 480). Philip Glass most probably became acquainted with Theodore Dubois's 1921 treatise, *Traité d'harmonie théorique et pratique* (Paris: Heugel, 1921) during his studies, as Boulanger often employed this textbook in her lessons (ibid., p. 500).

twentieth century composers' (Shackelford 1981/2, p. 128). While it is uncertain whether or not Glass had read this book, it is highly likely that its subject matter fed into teachings delivered at Juilliard; according to its author, the book had in fact evolved out of his 'years of giving classes on contemporary music' (ibid.). Therefore Glass was most probably aware of its contents.

In his role as a theorist, Persichetti proclaimed the influence of Heinrich Schenker upon his approach, and greatly admired the German theorist's method of analysis in its demonstration of 'comprehensiveness and clarity' (ibid.). Therefore, somewhat unsurprisingly, Persichetti himself (and consequently Glass) were particularly adept at working within a chiefly tonal framework.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Persichetti's workmanlike methods in his own theoretical textbook resemble Schenker's approach to harmony, counterpoint and free composition. Despite working in different musical periods, both writers' all-encompassing perspective on music provided lucid explanations of intervals, scales, chords, goal-orientated motion and so forth. Moreover, references are made to pre-existing musical works in order to reinforce theoretical explanations, though Persichetti obviously differs in his focus on a wide range of tonal and atonal examples from the twentieth century alone.

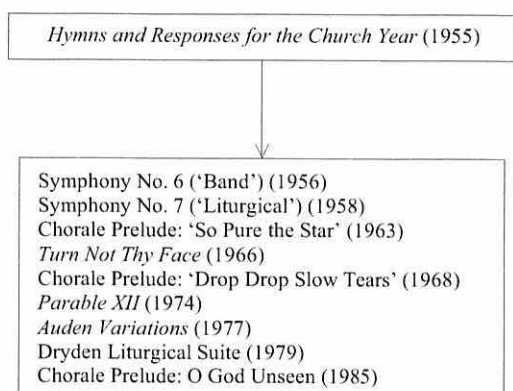
While Schenker's writings subsequently formulated the pioneering concept of the fundamental structure, or *Ursatz*, which he claimed to be at the root of all musical 'masterpieces' within the Austro-Germanic canon, Persichetti's writings failed to have a similar impact on later analysts, theorists and composers. On a more modest level, specifically motivic material contained in the musical examples included in *Twentieth Century Harmony* led to the composition of a musical work, namely the

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<sup>21</sup> Chapter 4 adopts Schenker's premises to discuss Glass's approach to goal-directed motion.

*Masquerade for Band*, composed in 1965 (Shackelford 1981/2, p. 128). Such self-borrowing can consequently be regarded as an intertextual practice by Glass's direct predecessor – a practice that led to Persichetti being regarded as a 'cross-referencing' composer,<sup>22</sup> primarily due to the use of a collection of sacred choral pieces, *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year* (1955), as the basis of several later works, as illustrated in Fig. 5.1.

**Fig. 5.1 Persichetti's cross-references**



Persichetti's self-borrowing seemingly ranged from small-scale 'motives' in the textbook to more extensive quotations from his *Hymns and Responses*. Similarly, Glass has borrowed both from a collection of generic devices including arpeggios, hemiola, scallic figurations, harmonic patterns and recurrent pitch-class configurations. Pre-existing material has also been used explicitly and developed on a more extensive scale, particularly in the film soundtracks. As a result, a discussion on these two approaches to quotation will form the remainder of this chapter. Firstly, some of Glass's common characteristics discussed in Chapter 4 will be examined in

<sup>22</sup> See Simmons, W. G., 'Persichetti, Vincent,' *Grove Music Online* <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> (Last accessed 12 May 2008).

relation to Persichetti's textbook, forming a 'common pool' of compositional techniques. Such an examination will reveal Glass's self-referentiality at a generic level. Secondly, analysing the re-contextualisation of Glass's works both within and outside the film music domain will furnish a discussion on how more explicit references can either create or avoid the transfer of extra-musical meanings from one context to another. This section will elucidate and illuminate the referential networks of Glass's film music, differentiating between the various sources of his works (e.g. abstract concert music, incidental music, film music). In turn, a selection of films that employ his pre-existing music will be discussed in greater detail, such as *Mishima*, *The Truman Show*, *The Hours* and *A Crude Awakening*, with a close examination of how examples of his earlier works are adopted or adapted within their new contexts.

### **Glass and Persichetti – Some Preliminary Comparisons**

Some preliminary comparisons may be drawn between Glass and Persichetti's approaches. Both composers articulated a desire to eradicate their earliest compositional attempts from their catalogues: Persichetti believed that his music from the 1930s was 'going beyond the extremes within which' he subsequently worked, which suggests that he considered his compositional style to be avant-gardist in a contrived sense. (Evetts 1955, p. 17). Later on, Glass confided in a recent interview that 'if [he] could get [his Juilliard] pieces back from the publisher, [he] would', probably due to their lack of relation to his later style.<sup>23</sup> Incidentally, Persichetti had

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<sup>23</sup> *The Independent*, 29 June 2007. It may be argued however that there is a common tendency for composers to withdraw their earliest materials from print.

served as the editor of Glass's earliest publisher, Elkan-Vogel,<sup>24</sup> who had been particularly proactive in printing Glass's works (Grimes 1989, p. 28). Similarly, Glass also established his own publishing company, Dunvagen, which continues to operate to this day (ibid.).<sup>25</sup>

As suggested earlier, in terms of musical characteristics, several broad similarities can be observed between Persichetti and Glass. The former composer's fondness of using motives as opposed to elaborate melodic lines is essentially a pre-minimalist element.<sup>26</sup> Glass subsequently developed this on a much greater scale in his frequent uses of repetitive figurations, for instance in *Music in Fifths* and *Music in Similar Motion*. Joseph Straus's writings on post-modern approaches to 'remaking techniques' if applied to Glass's repeated use of short motivic material represents 'motivisation' while the cadence avoiding techniques often employed in the early works demonstrate 'neutralisation' in their avoidance of goal-oriented motion that is an inherent feature of tonal music (Straus 1990, p. 17).

Indeed, both Glass and Persichetti work within largely tonal frameworks, though the latter's tonal language – within a modernist setting – is laden with chromaticism, while Glass's approach is intrinsically post-modern in its use of conventional tonal practices (see McClary 2000, p. 140). Both composers made use of major and minor thirds in order to invoke tonal instability: Persichetti writes that the Symphony No. 7 (based on *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year*) 'presents a minor-major third indecisiveness that acts as a harmonic irritant throughout the

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<sup>24</sup> Elkan-Vogel subsequently became part of the larger Theodore Presser Company. See <<http://www.presser.com>> (Last accessed 18 January 2009).

<sup>25</sup> See <<http://www.dunvagen.com>> (Last accessed 18 January 2009). Glass's music is also published by Chester Music, distributed by Music Sales Ltd. Other minimalist contemporaries such as Steve Reich and John Adams did not however venture into such self-representation, choosing instead to be solely associated with such mainstream publishers as Boosey & Hawkes.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Evett writes that 'in the main, Persichetti's music is motivic in character', whereby 'the generating motive will be textural rather than melodic' (Evett 1955, p. 19).

work' (Persichetti 1963, p. 54), while Glass also makes an overt use of similar semitonal shifts, as examined earlier in Chapter 4.<sup>27</sup>

Although both composers display the use of such shared characteristics, 'drawing a personal style from a common technical pot', their outputs were obviously and markedly different. Despite this, certain aspects of *Twentieth Century Harmony* can indeed be related to Glass's technique, particularly the sections on added-note chords, harmonic directionality (or the lack thereof), use of melodic line and polyharmonies.<sup>28</sup> For instance, Glass's use of recurrent pc-sets, such as 4-19 and 4-20 (12), correspond to Persichetti's description of an 'added-note chord',<sup>29</sup> described as 'a basic formation whose textural quality has been modified by the imposition of tones not found in the original chord' (Persichetti 1978, p. 109). More specifically, Glass's aforementioned pc-sets are illustrated in the textbook (as example 5-5), whereby 'major and minor seconds may be added above or below any member of a major or minor triad' (ibid., p. 112). Persichetti notes that 'the lower the added note is placed in the chord the less resonant the formation' (ibid.); Glass's frequent addition of the major or minor sixth within a tonic chord consequently results in a 'resonant' formation, whereby this specific pitch class is more prominent than, for instance, a minor second above the tonic.

On the subject of 'harmonic direction' Persichetti writes that 'when a succession of chords establishes a definite direction it has formal function and is considered a progression' (ibid., p. 182). However, 'the goal of a progression may be

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<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Glass's often-used harmonic progression from tonic to submediant can also be observed in Persichetti's music. In his analysis of *The Harmonium*, Evett observes the textural amalgamation of G major, and its relative minor, E (Evett 1955, p. 23).

<sup>28</sup> Polyharmonic usage, explains Persichetti, involves the use of more than one chord, while polytonality employs more than one key (Persichetti 1978, p. 136). The former type, it may be suggested, is more characteristic of Glass's approach.

<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note on this point that in the very few remarks available of Persichetti's recollections on teaching Glass, he noted that his student 'enjoyed special notes', while Steve Reich on the other hand 'liked to frost a chord' (Shackleford 1981/2, p. 130).



reached or abandoned, a tonality fixed or forsaken' (Persichetti 1978, p. 182). This latter statement essentially pre-empts one of the main harmonic techniques employed by Glass within a minimalist context, whereby stasis and cyclical progressions replace traditional goal-orientated motion. Furthermore, 'a melodic line, whether an inner or outer voice, often acts as a directional guide for harmonic progression' (ibid., p. 185). A prime example of this feature can be observed in Glass's use of an ascending scale in the inner voice of 'Invitation' from the *Notes on a Scandal* soundtrack, which promotes this sense of directionality, though combined with a cyclical harmonic progression that effectively limits the degree of tonal motion afforded by this particular scenario.<sup>30</sup>

### **Metamorphosis vs. 'Autogenesis'**

The comparisons presented up to this point, while relatively general in nature, clearly point towards a degree of similarity between both composers' working practices and their uses of generic musical techniques. On a more specific level, Persichetti and Glass both share a tendency of recycling pre-existing material whereby specific extracts are re-used in new contexts – a process defined by Persichetti as 'autogenesis [which] is always a strong factor in my music' (Persichetti 1963, p. 54). Persichetti drew upon both his written textbook and a hymnal as the basis for several of his subsequent works. On a broader scale, Glass's self-borrowing is nowhere more apparent than in his music for film as demonstrated in the diagram of Fig. 2, which illustrates the integration of pre-existing music, ranging from abstract concert music to incidental music for ballet or theatre, within new audio-visual contexts. The

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 4 for an analysis of this scene.



diagram also displays Glass's use of film music in later works; in the soundtrack to *The Truman Show*, for instance, pieces from *Mishima*, *Powaqatsi* and *Anima Mundi* are re-used.

Chapter 4 noted the use of *Music with Changing Parts* in the *Roving Mars* soundtrack; as Fig. 5.2 shows, this association represents the furthest distance between text and its new context – the former was composed in 1970, and later re-worked for use in 2006. A reworking of an extract out of *Satyagraha* in *The Hours* is also alluded to;<sup>31</sup> *The Hours* also employs the second part of *Metamorphosis* – a piece that originated in the soundtrack to Errol Morris's documentary *The Thin Blue Line*, based on the conviction and subsequent release of a suspect in a murder case in 1976.<sup>32</sup> In its original context, the opening section of *Metamorphosis Two* provides an unobtrusive backdrop to the recounting of this story at the outset of the film, formed out of an assemblage of interview footage, recreated scenes and graphic images of the crime scene investigation. The central section of the piece is heard in the film's closing credit sequence. Glass's music is orchestrated for strings and woodwind, and at first provides a subdued soundtrack to the visual-verbal narrative of the film's opening material. As the story develops however, the music somehow adopts a poignant quality, which is in clear contrast to the brutality of the murder scene presented in the visual narrative.

Similar to *The Thin Blue Line*, the quotation of *Metamorphosis* in *The Hours* (performed an octave lower than the original piano part, and renamed 'Escape!') also brings about a similar emotion, as the subject matter of the film revolves around the notion of life and death. In fact, the conjunction of this music with the cinematic

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 4 for a more detailed description.

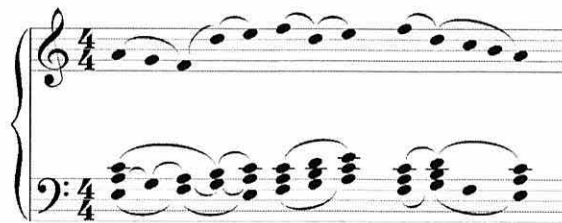
<sup>32</sup> Other pieces from this set of five, namely 'Metamorphosis Three' and 'Metamorphosis Four', were originally composed for the dramatisation of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.



narrative acquires a further, structural, significance. *Metamorphosis Two*, or ‘Escape!’, fundamentally consists of a ternary structure with each section internally divided into three subsections. The middle section contrasts by the use of arpeggiated triplets in the treble part. At the transition from the first to the middle section occurring in bar 27 – a character in the film commits suicide through defenestration – the flourish of Glass’s semiquaver triplets consequently adds a dramatic element at this point in contrast to the slower material in the preceding section.

Ex. 5.3 is a basic reduction of the first section (bb. 1-30), though this graph is equally relevant to the remainder of the piece, which is also based on similar progressions to those outlined below. As displayed, three distinct motions are

Ex. 5.3 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘Escape’ from *The Hours*



apparent, reflecting the section’s three sub-components. In the first sub-section, it is noted that the voice leading operates on three different levels of neighbour-note figurations, alternating between second inversion A minor chords and its major submediant, F. The middle part of the graph displays yet another characteristically Glassian progression of three parallel triads leading to the tonic, while the concluding part of the graph ultimately shows a return to the second inversion tonic chord. Conventional goal direction is avoided – *Metamorphosis Two* consequently displays a further instance of Straus’s ‘neutralisation’ of tonality due to this avoidance of cadential closure.

Similar to *Metamorphosis Two*, the quotation from *Satyagraha* in *The Hours* again demonstrates teleological avoidance. Allison Welch notes *Satyagraha*'s frequent use of the chaconne, which demonstrates the use of a Baroque technique, and thereby Glass's remaking of a past form, also reflecting Glass's interest in Indian philosophy due to the signification of a process of rebirth (Welch 1999, pp. 181, 192-4). So how is the cyclical nature of the chaconne relevant to the original context, *Satyagraha*, and its subsequent reapplication in *The Hours*? In the opera, the music is heard in a protest scene wherein Gandhi burns military records, while a circular moving object is seen to be rotating in the background. In its re-contextualised form in *The Hours*, this cyclical process as symbolised by the notion of rebirth is effectively transferred as the film revolves over a repetition of similar subject matter dispersed over three time periods.

### **Other Eastern Influences**

Glass's interest in Eastern influences, particularly Buddhism, is further apparent in his piece for piano, *Mad Rush*, which demonstrates a closer relationship between text and context than those in *The Hours*. Originally conceived as an organ piece entitled 'Fourth Series Part 4', the work was commissioned as part of a public performance to accompany the fourteenth Dalai Lama's appearance in New York in 1981.<sup>33</sup> *Mad Rush* was subsequently used in a soundtrack to *Compassion in Exile* (1992) – a documentary on the life of the Dalai Lama, which will later be discussed in this chapter. *Mad Rush* fundamentally comprises a hemiola figuration of two against

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<sup>33</sup> See <[http://www.philipglass.com/music/recordings/solo\\_piano.php](http://www.philipglass.com/music/recordings/solo_piano.php)> (Last accessed 25 January 2009).

three with oscillation between F major and second inversion A minor chords, while alternating sections consist of a G minor to F major progression. Ex. 5.4 presents an outline of these progressions, from which a resemblance to *Metamorphosis Two* may be observed (see the earlier presented Ex. 5.3) – not only in terms of the general tonality, and oscillation between F major and A minor second inversion chords, but also particularly in the final unit wherein the material is almost identical to the final subsection of *Metamorphosis*. Glass’s use of a generic harmonic language is yet again apparent through this comparison.

Ex. 5.4 Basic harmonic reduction of *Mad Rush*



Apart from operatic works and compositions for solo piano or organ, Glass’s string quartets, namely the Second and Third, form new associations with cinematic texts. String Quartet No. 3, for instance, was actually first conceived for the soundtrack to *Mishima* in 1984, and later released as a self-contained chamber work in the subsequent year. Similarly, the music for Flemming Flindt’s ballet *Phaedra* (1986) also developed from this soundtrack.<sup>34</sup> *Mishima*’s opening music, not used in the string quartet, was also employed in the soundtrack to *The Truman Show* (1998) – a film that also employs pre-existing music from two non-narrated productions, *Anima Mundi* and *Powaaqatsi*, in addition to three original tracks. More than half of this film’s soundtrack however constitutes material composed by the lesser-known Burkhard Dallwitz. Dallwitz’s pieces as ‘Trutalk’ and ‘It’s A Life’ prove an effective combination with Glass’s music as they ostensibly assimilate the somehow ethnic

<sup>34</sup> See Marianne Messina, ‘Out of the Tragic Ashes’, *Metroactive* <<http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/10.12.05/Phaedra-0541.html>> (Last accessed 1 February 2009).

element of *Mishima* ('Opening'), *Powaaqatsi* ('Anthem-Part 2') and *Anima Mundi* (1992) ('The Beginning' and 'Living Waters') particularly in terms of the use of drones, trills and percussive instrumentation.<sup>35</sup> Dallwitz's musical inserts essentially attempt to complement the environmental, ambient nature of Glass's extracted music. Inevitably, Glass's influence upon another composer is exerted, resulting in a compositional style loosely based on minimalist characteristics.

The aforementioned 'ethnic' element of Glass's selected extracts from his pre-existing works may be regarded as compatible with the film in some respects. The subject matter of *The Truman Show* is centred upon a meta-real situation – a so-called 'world within a world' – in which the main character, Truman Burbank, stars in a television programme that streams on a 24/7 basis, controlled by the director of the 'show', Kristof, who serves an omnipresent role in Truman's life.<sup>36</sup> Truman's predilection for escaping the confinement of this synthetic environment – to Fiji – forms the goal of the film's cinematic narrative.<sup>37</sup> The extra-musical content of Glass's pre-existing music from *Anima Mundi* and *Powaaqatsi* is thus complementary to this new context, offering a post-modern 'take' on modern-day life and its environment. Glass's music in *Anima Mundi* for instance is 'based on rhythms and music from the most unspoiled traditional ethnic music',<sup>38</sup> while its application in *The Truman Show* hinges on Truman's struggle to reach this natural utopia, outside the synthesised world that he is trapped within. Similarly so, the music quoted from the opening of *Mishima* also conveys an ethnicity that resounds with its new context,

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<sup>35</sup> 'Living waters' is used in an underwater scene in *Anima Mundi*; the use of tolling bells underneath the water is arguably a reference to Debussy's 'La cathédrale engloutie', which by its religious connotations, upholds a spiritual element that is equally relevant to *The Truman Show*.

<sup>36</sup> Such media scrutiny also occurs in Channel 4's Big Brother series.

<sup>37</sup> Rebecca Eaton also discusses this film, and argues that the situation portrayed is 'otherworldly' and a 'fake utopia, a dystopia' (See Eaton 2008, p. 190). As discussed in this present dissertation's Chapter 7, Glass's music asserts a dystopian effect in *Naqoyqatsi*.

<sup>38</sup> See <[http://www.philipglass.com/music/films/anima\\_mundi.php](http://www.philipglass.com/music/films/anima_mundi.php)> (Last accessed 8 February 2009).

while Glass's use of electronic instrumentation and his idiosyncratic use of tonality – in the *Powaaqatsi* track for instance – attuned with the synthesised backdrop of the film that essentially satires the uninterrupted media scrutiny of contemporary Western society.

Not only does the use of these extracts from pre-existing soundtracks demonstrate how musical and extra-musical meaning can be transferred from one context to another, *The Truman Show* soundtrack also effectively demonstrates how Glass's re-contextualised music can occupy the same terrain as music by other composers. Added to Glass and Dallwitz's music are non-diegetic extracts from Classical and Romantic periods, such as Arthur Rubinstein's performance of the expressive slow movement from Chopin's First Piano Concerto (1830), and also the exoticism of Mozart's *Alla Turca* (c. 1783).<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, a spiritual, quasi-minimalist piece composed by Wojciech Kilar is also heard in the film, entitled 'Father Kolbe's Preaching', which supplements the mystical ambience of Glass's 'Living Waters' from *Anima Mundi*.<sup>40</sup>

The *Truman Show* soundtrack further comprises three original pieces by Glass, who in fact takes on a rare diegetic cameo role in the film, by performing 'Truman Sleeps' on piano.<sup>41</sup> This piece, in addition to 'Dreaming of Fiji' and 'Raising the Sail', differ from the pre-existing film music however as they are all

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<sup>39</sup> This latter example does not however feature on the film's accompanying soundtrack recording.

<sup>40</sup> Kilar is a Polish contemporary of Glass, and another one of Boulanger's pupils who has ventured into film music composition. See Jan Jakub Bokun, 'Wojciech Kilar', Polish Music Center website <<http://www.pljournal.com/music/wojciech-kilar-interview.html>> (Last accessed 2 February 2009). Rebecca Eaton plausibly associates the spirituality of this 'slow, hymn-like' music to the idea of Christof as a God-like character (Eaton 2008, p. 214). As noted earlier, Glass's 'Living Waters' also conveys a similar effect.

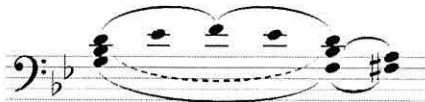
<sup>41</sup> Glass also appears as an 'extra' character in *No Reservations*. By appearing in *The Truman Show* however, Jeremy Grimshaw comments that Glass 'spoofed his own commercialism and transparency' (Grimshaw 2002, p. 474), which might similarly be the case in his cameo appearances in episodes of the animated series *The Simpsons* and *South Park* (see Fink 2005, p. xii).

based on the cycling of a basic harmonic progression:  $i - VI^6 - III^{6/4} - V^6$ , shown in Exs. 5.5 and 5.6.

Ex. 5.5 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Truman Sleeps' from *The Truman Show*



Ex. 5.6 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Dreaming of Fiji' and 'Raising the Sail' from *The Truman Show*



In fact, this progression is an extended form of the harmonic patterns employed in *The Hours* and *Notes on a Scandal* ( $i - VI - V$ ), and a slight variation of certain progressions used in *Dracula* (particularly  $i - VI - VII - V$  and  $i - v - VI - V$ ) and the minor-key version in *The Illusionist* ( $I/i - vi - iv - V$ ).<sup>42</sup> Reaching the dominant through (sub)mediant chords can be observed as a frequent harmonic element in Glass's recent soundtracks, and an implicit reference to his generic approach towards harmonic progressions.

As discussed earlier, Glass's tonal practices reference the nineteenth-century Germanic tradition; this chapter has cited McClary's analysis of *Glassworks* (1981) while in the preceding chapter the relevance of Romanticism upon the soundtrack to *The Hours* was also discussed. Glass's newly written piano pieces for *The Truman Show* soundtrack, particularly the harmonic progressions defined earlier, can be seen again as evocative of the Romantic era. Glass's new music thereby complements the non-diegetic performance of Chopin's 'Romance' from the Piano Concerto, while the pre-existing music provides an ambient or ethnic quality to the film, and a spiritual element that complements the portrayal of Kristof in a 'God-like' manner.

<sup>42</sup> The employment of harmonic progressions in *Dracula* is discussed in Chapter 7, while an analysis of passages from *The Illusionist* takes place in Chapter 4.



## Documenting Intertextuality

With the exception of *Candyman* and its sequel, the first borrowing of Glass's pre-existing film music, as opposed to his concert or theatrical works, occurs in *The Truman Show*. As shown in Fig. 5.2, this praxis was again subsequently adopted in the soundtrack to *A Crude Awakening* (2006) – a film that, to date, makes most references to Glass's music, in addition to music by lesser-known composers and excerpts of notable 'Classical' works.<sup>43</sup> The intertextual approach to soundtracks that employ Glass's music is equally apparent in both the Hollywood feature productions that he contributes towards, in addition to factual documentaries. In keeping with the general setup of documentary productions, Basil Gelpke's *A Crude Awakening* is an assemblage of raw interviews, archived television footage, and close-up visual scenes that are pitted against music by Glass and other composers. This combination of material, often observed in fact-based realisations, is inherently intertextual by its appropriation of multiple texts, both pre-existing and otherwise. The selective borrowing of Glass's music from an extensive body of works is therefore highly suitable for use in this stylistically pluralist environment of mixed media. This section will seek to examine a selection of musical texts in their re-contextualised form, with particular regard to any apparent musico-visual interactivity.

In the film's opening scene, an extract out of 'Façades' from *Glassworks* is heard,<sup>44</sup> scored for strings and two soprano saxophones. The sustained pitches on the saxophones provide a sonority above the repetitive dyadic figure by the strings,

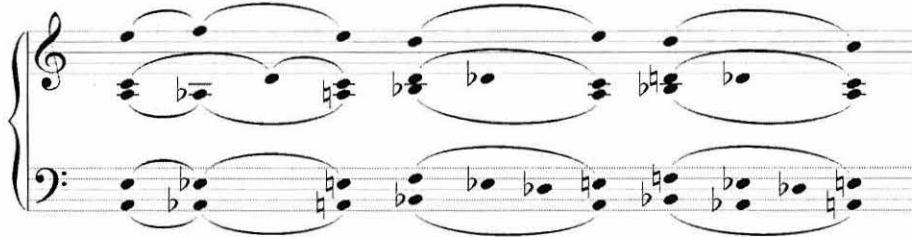
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<sup>43</sup> *A Crude Awakening* also employs music by lesser-known composers Danier Schnyder, Philippe Kuhn, Stefan Faesch, together with extracts by Handel and Saint-Saëns.

<sup>44</sup> The final part of *Glassworks*, 'Closing', is also employed in the film. Interestingly enough, 'Façades' was originally conceived as part of the soundtrack to *Koyaanisqatsi*, but was excluded from the final cut. The piece was however employed in Reggio's short film, *Evidence* (1995). See <<http://www.koyaanisqatsi.org/films/evidence.php>> (Last accessed 25 January 2010).

shifting between A minor and A-flat major chords, as shown in the Ex. 5.7 harmonic reduction. The entrance of the saxophone's solo material (shown in the uppermost

Ex. 5.7 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Façades' from *Glassworks*



voice of Ex. 5.7) however redefines this latter chord as an A-flat major chord with added 6th. This third-based relationship between A minor and F minor has already proven its existence as a recurrent element in Glass's tonal language in the preceding chapter, similar to the registral disparity again evident in this piece. The major/minor 3<sup>rd</sup> ambiguity is very strong here. What is also interesting is the expanding and contracting motion between the outer lines, which creates an impression of tension and resolution, a fact supported by the second half with its own B-flat to A 'cadence'.

While this harmonic analysis clearly points towards Glass's self-referentiality on a generic level, a study of the music in relation to the visual dimension, in which the viscous movement of oil is foregrounded, demonstrates an effective partnership of music and image – Glass's oscillating harmonies and gently undulating rhythms complements this scene. The verbal narrative that subsequently follows is a collection of largely negative multi-lingual quotations offering explanations to the attributes of oil from different perspectives. In a later scene, almost an hour into the film, the same music is heard against footage of George W. Bush's US administration on Islamic fundamentalism, therefore what appears implicit in the opening scene has

since become explicit at this later stage in the film. Glass's music evokes a sinister, bleak outlook that is compatible with its extra-musical subject, and the suitability of the semitonal shifts used in a melodic (*e* and *f*) and harmonic (*a* and *a*-flat, *b*-flat and *a*) context becomes evident.<sup>45</sup> Chromaticism, in this context, therefore equals uncertainty, instability or edginess, and the the imbalance of Glass's harmonic progressions can be observed as a trope that accompanies political uneasiness or environmental quandaries – the latter is equally relevant to the music for *Koyaanisqatsi*, particularly the 'Clouds' scene as discussed in this thesis's opening chapter.

Also used in *A Crude Awakening*, is the fourth movement of String Quartet No. 2, originally commissioned for Mabou Mines's production of Samuel Beckett's existential monologue, *Company* (1979) which centres on the pervading inner thoughts of an individual lying in darkness. Glass chose to write a string quartet for Beckett's play as he considered that the genre matched the contemplative nature of the work: 'the musical equivalent of that kind of reflective piece is normally a string quartet. The works which are considered the most introspective and private works of composers are often string quartets' (Zurbrugg 1999, p. 144). Similar to the notion of the piano as the quintessence of nineteenth century development (discussed in relation to *Glassworks*), Glass's use of the string quartet demonstrates yet again the re-use of an established genre, and thus a reference to the conventions of his predecessors. Glass's string quartet scoring for the soundtrack to *Mindwalk* (1990) – extracts of which are later employed in *A Crude Awakening* – yet again suits the interiority of this deeply psychological film.

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<sup>45</sup> Incidentally, 'Façades' and 'Closing' from *Glassworks*, as well as the Second Symphony (1994) is quoted in yet another documentary involving terrorism, *One Day in September* (1999) – this film does not appear on the official Philip Glass website.

The re-contextualisation of ‘Company’ in *A Crude Awakening* again succeeds in conveying an ominous atmosphere that parallels the subject matter of the film, which addresses the international repercussions of the shortage of crude oil from generally bleak perspectives. The fourth movement of the quartet is employed twice during the film – in the first occurrence, a montage of short footages that include constant flows of traffic, the rotating dial on a petrol pump and factory machinery, with scenic changes loosely synchronised with each bar of Glass’s music. In terms of cinematography, the use of time-lapse sequences is an explicit reference to innovative production techniques by Godfrey Reggio in *Koyaanisqatsi*, which the director Basil Gelpke noted to be highly influential on his own approach to filmmaking.<sup>46</sup> The music’s a-teleology once again suits the sense of motion without direction conveyed in the visual scenery involving cars, and the mechanisation conveyed in the factory’s mass production.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to *Glassworks* and the ‘Company’ string quartet, extracts from other works are also employed in the film, as shown in Fig. 5.2. These include earlier soundtracks (*Mindwalk*, *A Brief History of Time* and *Compassion in Exile*), theatre music from *In the Upper Room* and *Phaedra* (according to the film’s credits), and two pieces from *In the Summer House*. The latter work, written for the dramatisation of Jane Bowles’s play of the same name, manifests itself in the two extracts from ‘Enter Vivian’ and ‘Mr Solares’ Picnic Lunch’. The former piece, transcribed in Ex. 5.8, is scored for solo violin and cello, and is heard in a scene comprising footage of wind turbines that rotate gracefully; Glass’s music complements this motion both in its

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<sup>46</sup> See <<http://www.swissroots.org/swissroots/en/stories/lifestyle/helvetica-bold/film-tv/oil.html>> (Last accessed 18 January 2009). Glass’s music for *Koyaanisqatsi* is not however employed in Gelpke’s film. As mentioned earlier however, ‘Façades’ from *Glassworks* was in fact intended for use in Reggio’s film.

<sup>47</sup> The correlation of this type of motion with minimalist music may be categorised under Leydon’s ‘motoric’ trope.

gentle tempo, the cyclical motion of the violin part and the overall stasis created by repetition. This piece is both tonally and rhythmically ambiguous: while the violin part makes use of four pitch classes – *e*, *a*, *g* and *d* – the cello oscillates between extended *c* and *f* pitches. The additional quaver in the third group provides each bar with a sense of metrical ambiguity as a result of Glass’s characteristic use of an additive approach. Towards the end of the piece however, the bowing pattern of the cello is modified (b. 12 onwards), which induces a slight degree of variation to an overtly repetitive piece.

Ex. 5.8 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘Enter Vivian’ from *In the Summer House*

The musical score for 'Enter Vivian' from *In the Summer House* is presented as a basic harmonic reduction. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The melody in the treble staff is a repeating eighth-note pattern: *e* (quarter), *a* (quarter), *g* (quarter), *d* (quarter), *e* (quarter), *a* (quarter), *g* (quarter), *d* (quarter), *e* (quarter), *a* (quarter), *g* (quarter), *d* (quarter). The bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with quarter notes: *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter), *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter), *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter), *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter), *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter), *c* (quarter), *f* (quarter). The piece concludes with a double bar line in the final measure of the fifth system.

The second extract from *In the Summer House*, ‘Mr Solares’ Picnic Lunch’ (Ex. 5.9), is heard in a scene that examines the growth in population over the last century. Grainy black and white footage of walking crowds is shown, depicting both the past and the present day. The music is considerably dissonant in the scene, opening with four bars based on the diminished seventh chord in the key of G, with the cello’s dyadic ostinato figuration providing a tritone interval. The tonic is

Ex. 5.9 Basic harmonic reduction of ‘Mr Solares’ Picnic Lunch’ from *In the Summer House*

The image shows a basic harmonic reduction of the piece 'Mr Solares' Picnic Lunch' from the film *In the Summer House*. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system shows the initial four bars, characterized by a diminished seventh chord in the right hand and a dyadic ostinato in the left hand. The subsequent systems show the continuation of the piece, with various harmonic textures and rhythmic patterns. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings, providing a detailed view of the music's structure.

affirmed in bar 5 onwards, though interplay between G minor and E-flat major chords takes place. Overall, the music’s sombre attributes consequently parallel the bleakness of the visual aesthetic and the spoken narrative enacted on-screen. Glass’s music also interacts at a structural level – contrasting sections of music correlate with the visual aspect’s shift from archived footage of the past to the black-and-white images of present day crowds, where the parallel tenths of bar 9 onwards are heard.

Returning back to the music's original context, it may be observed that the dissonant, if depressive ambience of Glass's music in 'Mr Solares' Picnic Lunch' is suitably compatible with Bowles's play. The first scene of which is set in a desolate Southern Californian garden 'with ragged cactus plants and broken ornaments scattered about' during the early 1950s (Bowles 1984, p. 207). The music of 'Mr Solares' Picnic Lunch' accompanies the appearance of a multicultural gathering of people arriving at the garden. This, perhaps coincidentally, holds some resemblance to its re-contextualised employment in *A Crude Awakening* though the amount of people depicted in the film's visual footage is much greater than the gathering at the garden in the original play.

### **New vs. Old Meanings**

The use of 'Mr Solares' Picnic Lunch' in Gelpke's film therefore suggests a slight overlap between the original musical text and its new context. A similar situation also arises in another film, perhaps more explicitly, in the use of *Mad Rush* in *Compassion in Exile*, as both instances shared a similar association with the Dalai Lama. The employment of 'Enter Vivian' in *A Crude Awakening* on the other hand does not seem to demonstrate a transfer of signification, as in fact an entirely new meaning is seemingly constructed by the effective interplay of musical and visual oscillating motion. The reapplication of 'Façades' also demonstrated this form of musico-visual kinetic effect whereby a sense of ebb and flow was musically and visually represented. However, both it and the 'Company' String Quartet penetrate deeper into the aesthetic of the film due to the unsettling harmonic activity. Both works have

also been used in other documentary films of this nature including *The Fog of War* and *One Day in September*, as shown in Fig. 5.2.

By studying the reapplication of Glass's music in new contexts, it may be observed that meanings can either be transferred (on varying levels of identity), or result in entirely new implications between music and other media. Though demonstrating generic traits and instances of self-borrowing, Glass's music is effectively applied to various cinematic contexts. At this point, it would seem logical to offer an overview of how Glass's musical texts may be accommodated within several different extra-musical scenarios. Most scenarios are not covered by Rebecca Leydon's 'typology of minimalist tropes',<sup>48</sup> while some types are relevant to other films discussed in the preceding chapter (namely *Dracula*, *Roving Mars* and *The Illusionist*), which do not necessarily employ pre-existing music.

First, Glass's music is often associated with horror, conflict or bleakness (particularly urban or industrial greyness), due to his fondness for uses of minor tonalities, tritones and semitonal shifts. In contrast, issues of an ecological or ethnic nature can also be observed as a common theme, often evinced by uses of indigenous instrumentation – the use of the didgeridoo and native drums such as woodblocks and log drums in 'The Beginning' from *Anima Mundi*, or chimes in the opening of *Mishima* for example – and the assimilation of 'world' music through complex polyrhythmic activity.<sup>49</sup> Thirdly, the motivic repetition correlates with visual motion, for instance cars, trains, airplanes, machinery and space exploration (hence Leydon's motoric trope is relevant to this category). Fourthly, music depicting psychological interiority can be observed – this chapter has drawn attention to the string quartet as

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<sup>48</sup> See Leydon 2002, which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3.

<sup>49</sup> In contrast to *The Truman Show*, Glass's soundtrack to *Undertow* is not self-referential, however his score also incorporate indigenous instrumentation including the didgeridoo, which assimilates the arid environment of the Southern American outback where the film is set.



an effective conveyance of this, also uses of cyclical repetition can be connotative of psychological entrapment, obsession or hypnotism (although this latter cognitive state is partly covered by Leydon's 'mantric' trope). Fifthly, Glass's use of traditional orchestration, symphony, string quartet and solo piano, coupled with references to tonal practices, signifies a Romantic trope, as employed in several films that will be listed in due course. Finally, the use of cyclical motion correlating with Glass's interest in Buddhist philosophy suggests a spiritual trope. Also, several films refer to Islamic fundamentalism, which can also be accommodated within this particular trope.

The Fig. 5.3 table associates these generic tropes with the soundtracks noted in the Fig. 5.2 intertextual diagram, listed in alphabetical order. Apparent in this table is the fact that Glass's soundtracks is most often associated with themes involving horror, conflict or bleakness, while the assimilation of a Romantic aesthetic is least employed, and only apparent in three soundtracks listed. Instances of musico-visual representation of motion, psychological conditions and ecological subjects are again often observed, in virtually equal numbers.

Several further findings can be drawn from this table. First, the films that use the least number of affective types are in most cases the least intertextual – this is particularly the case in *Anima Mundi* and *Mindwalk*, for instance. On the other hand, films that make use of a wide array of different types, including *A Crude Awakening*, *Koyaanisqatsi* and *The Fog of War* are seemingly the most intertextual; this observation can be confirmed by cross-reference to Fig. 5.2, which demonstrates where the music was used and re-used. It can also be drawn from Fig. 5.3 that Glass's music is of perhaps of less importance in the works that display a wide range

of types, while those with less associations are more integrated musically – the music often performs a specific purpose in these films.

In terms of extra-musical connotations that are interlinked with the visual aspect of the films, cross-referencing Fig. 5.2 and Fig. 5.3 offers an explanation of how the transference or adaptation of meaning occurs in new scenarios. For instance, both *Anima Mundi* and *Powaaqatsi* are employed in *The Truman Show*, and as shown in the chart, each one evinces an ecological or ethnic aspect – the original meaning is consequently seen to be similar. The quotation of ‘Pruit Igoe’ from *Koyaanisqatsi* in the most recent film, *Watchmen*, again continues to carry the original – apocalyptic –

**Fig. 5.3 Table of affective types in Glass’s soundtracks**

	Horror, conflict, bleakness	Ecology / Ethnicity	Motion	Psychological state	Romanticism	Spirituality
<i>Anima Mundi</i>						
<i>A Brief History of Time</i>						
<i>Candyman / Candyman II</i>						
<i>Compassion in Exile</i>						
<i>A Crude Awakening</i>						
<i>Dracula</i>						
<i>The Fog of War</i>						
<i>The Hours</i>						
<i>The Illusionist</i>						
<i>Koyaanisqatsi</i>						
<i>Kundun</i>						
<i>Mindwalk</i>						
<i>One Day in September</i>						
<i>Powaaqatsi</i>						
<i>Roving Mars</i>						
<i>The Thin Blue Line</i>						
<i>The Truman Show</i>						
<i>Watchmen</i>						

meaning, while uses of ‘Prophecies’ (evoking a spiritual ambience through the use of vocal incantation) is again apparent to a certain extent.<sup>50</sup>

Applying Nicholas Cook’s multimedia models would suggest that the above relationships between original and new contexts are conformant in most cases. Other scenarios however reveal more contrasting relationships, where entirely new meanings are formed between music and image. Quotations from the documentary *A Brief History of Time*, based on the life of Stephen Hawking, for instance demonstrate no apparent affiliation to its use in *A Crude Awakening*, other than their re-application within a factual programme. Moreover, the extract of ‘Enter Vivian’ from *In the Summer House* created a new meaning as a result of the musico-visual interactivity observed in the wind-turbine scene. Similarly so, the use of *Music with Changing Parts* in *Roving Mars* results in the construction of a new significance, due to the music being paired with the visual a-teleological motion of space exploration.

Perhaps occupying an exemplar middle ground is the use of the ‘Company’ String Quartet in *A Crude Awakening* and *The Fog of War*. Psychological interiority conveyed in the original concert work (with its orchestration implying connotations of Romanticism, and the introverted nature of Beckett’s existential play) occupies a similar ground to the brooding nature of both documentaries, though not being entirely identical in context. In similar respect, the use of solo piano music in *The Hours* is yet again complementary. The symphonic nature of *The Illusionist* soundtrack on the other hand demonstrates a closer similarity to the cinematic subject matter, and is thus an instance of conformance. It is worth pointing out however that Glass’s score was written specifically for this film, and contains no explicit references to his pre-existing works, neither for film or otherwise.

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<sup>50</sup> The re-usage of *Koyaanisqatsi* in *Watchmen* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Finally, the re-employment of an extract from *Compassion in Exile* in *A Crude Awakening* and *One Day in September* demonstrates yet another example of a complementary relationship between original context and its re-involvement. In *Compassion in Exile*, the material was originally heard in conjunction with a narrative describing China's brutality towards the Tibetans, while in its re-employment in *A Crude Awakening*, the same music was heard as a musical backdrop to yet another instance of conflict, between Islam fundamentalists and the West.

## **Conclusions**

By tracing Glass's intertextual influences – from the Romantic composers to the individuals that were a part of his formative years as a student (particularly Boulanger, Milhaud and Persichetti) – an impression is formed that his own approach indeed reflected the self-borrowing methods of his predecessors. Glass however worked these techniques into his own personal style, creating entirely innovative musical outputs. Several scenarios, in which the self-borrowing methods are applied and re-applied, particularly in filmic contexts have subsequently been analysed. Glass's influence on other composers has also been revealed as, in the case of *The Truman Show* and *A Crude Awakening* for instance, other lesser-known composers have apparently strived to assimilate his style.

Going beyond the purely 'technical' analysis of his approach, an examination of extra-musical meanings fostered as a result of the re-contextualisation of his music has also taken place, thereby highlighting instances where the original meanings are preserved or adapted to different extents. In most instances however, Glass's texts have shown to be often adaptable to suit their new context; similar to the title of his

piano work, these re-contextualisations do in fact demonstrate that metamorphoses take place.

## **Chapter Six**

## **This is (not) a Soundtrack:**

### ***Dracula* the Movie or Music Drama?**

I'm proposing film as a performance work where we're not talking about music as background – it's music with film and not film with music  
(Glass in Russell & Young 2000, p. 130)

#### **Introduction**

In many respects, Philip Glass was the ideal composer to provide the soundtrack for the re-release of Tod Browning's *Dracula* in 1999. Both Hollywood's 'first talkie horror movie' originally released in 1931, together with its starring actor Bela Lugosi, soon acquired cult recognition (Bronfen 2006, p. 158). Equally so, Glass might be regarded as a composer who has received, and continues to receive, a cult following. Representing an innovative approach to working with film, Glass's score performed by the Kronos Quartet replaced the original music – or more specifically, the opening extract taken from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, in addition to some brief extracts of music that are diegetically performed in a concert hall. And due to the scarcity of music in the original production, it is argued that Glass's score 'could be viewed both as a belated gesture at finishing an "unfinished" film and an attempt to re-view the horror classic through a more contemporary sensibility' (Morgan 2000, p. 234).

Through the application of this 'contemporary sensibility' Glass made an intentional effort to depart from the conventions of Hollywood's mainstream film composers. As shown in this chapter's epigraph, a purposeful aim towards a musico-cinematic equality is attempted, whereby music is elevated to an equal (or possibly superior) status in this so-called 'performance work'. A clear shift from the tradition of music being secondary to the cinematic sequence of events is therefore apparent. But, being more than just a soundtrack, *Dracula* in its restored form was presented by

Glass as a melodrama ‘in which actors speak over music [...] It was basically a piece of music theater’ (Morgan 2000, p. 235). Could a resurrection of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which the music, image and text were hierarchically equal, have arguably taken place?

Glass’s radicalism is not unique. Nearly thirty years beforehand, the English minimalist composer Michael Nyman had begun collaborating with the filmmaker Peter Greenaway on several films, taking again ‘a radical alternative approach’, but in this instance ‘music existed separately and autonomously from the visual narrative’ (ap Siôn 2007, p. 85). The musico-visual relationships formed in such films as *A Walk Through H* (1978) and *The Draughtsman’s Contract* (1982) were primarily based on ‘co-existence’ rather than ‘dependence’ (ibid.). Furthermore, and somewhat akin to Glass’s situation, Nyman also considered that his music ‘never functioned as a background to the plot [and] it has nothing to do with the interplay between the actors’ (Haglund 1994 in ibid.). Further parallelisms with Glass can be observed in the fact that Nyman also worked in early cinema: three years after Browning’s *Dracula* was re-released, Nyman re-worked Dziga Vertov’s Soviet experimental silent film, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), by writing a soundtrack for it.<sup>1</sup> Both films were screened in conjunction with a live performance of the music.

The extent to which Glass’s music avoids an interaction with the characters of this film as in Nyman’s case is questionable, however. The key question of whether the relationship between music and moving image is again based on ‘co-existence’ rather than ‘dependence’ will be raised. While both composers strived for their music to be more than just a ‘background,’ James Tobias argues that the modular nature of

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<sup>1</sup> Of further interest is the fact that Vertov’s film is widely regarded as a precursor to Reggio’s *Qatsi* trilogy, which featured Glass’s music. James Tobias writes that *Koyaanisqatsi* is ‘a late-twentieth-century exemplar of the modernist city symphony pioneered by Vertov or Ruttman’ (Tobias 2004).



Glass's minimalist style serves a background function, principally due to the affording of structural flexibility (Tobias 2004). An avoidance of leitmotivic forms dilutes musical meaning according to Tobias, and while the use of the leitmotif as referential marking points is possibly regarded as a frequently employed structural technique in Hollywood soundtracks, these are rarely used in Glass's score for this early Hollywood film. Notwithstanding Tobias's argument however, Glass's self-referential tendencies are indeed clear in this score; his use of recurrent themes (and their filmic associations) can be explored in greater detail with regard to the self-referential concept of intratextuality.<sup>2</sup>

### **Deconstructing *Dracula***

While several interactions between music and the moving image will shortly be highlighted, several scenes demonstrate none at all. Music heard in conjunction with certain dialogues avoids building on the pre-existing verbal narrative, and merely occupies a similar temporal domain.<sup>3</sup> In Nyman's terms, the music in these instances would seem to 'co-exist' as opposed to 'depend' on Browning's cinematic material. In Glass's terms, this demonstrates a lack of 'mickey-mousing' synchronisation as ubiquitously employed in animated scenarios and commercials (Tobias 2004).

Glass's lack of any significant correlation between music and image is a departure from objective association, and promotes subjectivity in the interpretation of the completed work. Music can induce different connotations for different people,

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<sup>2</sup> The chapter title of 'This is not a soundtrack' alludes to the self-referential nature of the work, by borrowing Magritte's title to his surrealist painting 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe,' as discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> It would appear that the music heard in certain dialogic situations, for instance involving the characters of Dr Seward or Van Helsing, assumes a further distant role than those in the *Dracula*, Renfield and Lucy Weston scenes. The latter characters will in due course be discussed in greater detail.

or can even mean nothing more than its abstract musical value. From a semiological perspective, as the findings presented in this chapter are drawn out of aural transcriptions of the music, they are based on a listener's subjectivity.<sup>4</sup> In Nattiez's terms, this inquiry involves an interaction between the poietic and the esthetic dimensions of the semiological tripartition, whereby the composer's intentions are transferred to the listener's perspective in the absence of a written – neutral – score.

A musico-visual correlation in *Dracula* is indubitable, as the recurrence of musical material promotes a narrative that functions either separately or alternatively in conjunction with Browning's cinematic plot. Associating the concept of narrativity with minimalism is a somewhat contentious issue, however. Minimalist music is widely considered to possess anti-narrative features, which does not require a 'linear memory in the listener that forces him or her to follow the linear musical evolution' (Mertens 1988, p. 17). Narrative tendencies are indeed apparent in *Dracula*, as Glass makes 'reference to what has gone before' in the recurrence of musical material (ibid.), hence demonstrating the evolution of minimalism post-1976.<sup>5</sup>

Also, Glass considers that the 'essential feature of a modern aesthetic is the idea that works of art do not stand alone, but exist as an interaction between the perceiver or viewer and the work itself' (Tobias 2004, unpag.). Often in his multimedia works there is according to the composer

a metaphorical distance between the image and the spectator, and the way you cross that line, that distance, that becomes your interpretation of what you're looking at. A lot can be indicated, but the final experience is personalized by the viewer (ibid.).

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<sup>4</sup> Naomi Cumming's analysis of Reich's *Different Trains* was also based on her subjective listening, without a consultation of the written score (see Cumming 1997). Rebecca Leydon notes that Cumming's work 'focuses upon the ways in which [*Different Trains*] construct musical personae that serve as figures of identification for the listener' (Leydon 2002, unpag.).

<sup>5</sup> The year 1976 is widely considered as a turning point for musical minimalism (see Potter 2007).

Glass's observation of the distance between art and audience – between object and subject – can easily be discussed in the literary critical context of deconstructionist theories, which again allude to the plurality of interpretation, the 'disparity between symbol and idea' – between language and meaning or the signifier and signified (Hartman 2004, p. vi).

Parallelisms between Glass's comments above and theories relating to the so-called third generation of semiotics, that is existential semiotics, can also be observed. Semiological interpretations have evolved according to Eero Tarasti, as 'the sign itself is no longer in focus; instead it is the dialogue not only among people but between man and text' (Tarasti 2000, p. 10).<sup>6</sup> Demonstrating post-structural traits, meanings according to this philosophy are understood by their reference to other things. Furthermore, 'meaning is not situated in any particular place [...] meaning is instead present – in fact, omnipresent – in a *dialogue* between the subjects of enunciation and enunciate' (Tarasti 2000, p. 18), and according to Tarasti, this is closely related to the notion of a 'journey', transcendence, and the 'wandering' of the Romantic spirit (ibid.).

The freedom of existentialism afforded by this transcendental status had been previously developed by Jean-Paul Sartre who, drawing on Kantian philosophy, considered that 'it is by pursuing transcendent aims that [one] is able to exist' (Sartre 1984, pp. 52-55). Furthermore, the Sartrean maxim of 'production precedes existence' is highly relevant to the context of this study (ibid., p. 27). Glass's musical contribution is considered a completion to Browning's film – changing its function from an essentially musically deprived screenplay to a 'piece of music theater'. In this respect, the interpretational subjectivity of Glass's music (or the *essential* part in

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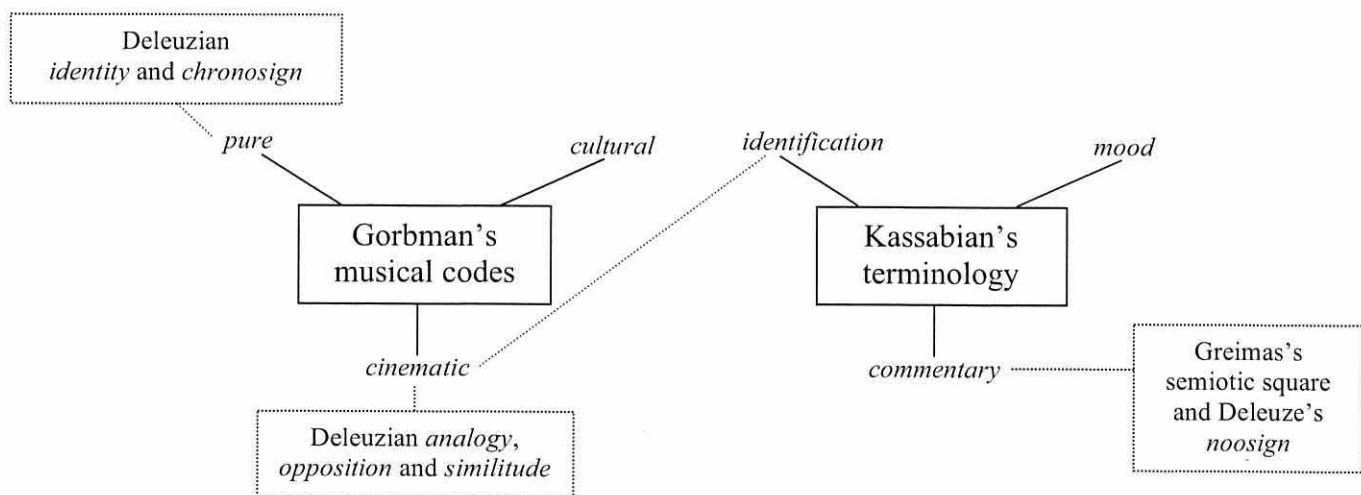
<sup>6</sup> Other aspects of Tarasti's existential semiotics have been explored previously in Chapter 2.

Sartre's terms) succeeds the *existential* presence of Browning's original production (ibid., p. 26-7). Or in other words, the cause of Browning's film precedes the consequence of Glass's music.<sup>7</sup>

## Film (Music) Theory

In the light of Sartre's philosophy, the function of Glass's music might therefore be considered as having being conceived prior to its composition to a certain extent, i.e. may have been determined by the cinematic narrative. But what exactly are the functions of film music? Claudia Gorbman in her writings on the semiotics of film music outlines three functions, as shown in Fig. 6.1. The first functional type, according to Gorbman, is the *pure* musical code wherein musical meaning takes priority over the visual/verbal narrative; secondly, *cultural* musical codes relate to the context of the on-screen material; thirdly, *cinematic* musical codes involve the filmic narrative determining the music's structural significance, as in the case of a leitmotif, for instance (Gorbman 1987, pp. 2-3).

Fig. 6.1 Methodological framework based on film theories



<sup>7</sup> Sartre's maxim of 'existence comes before essence' is explained with reference to a paper knife, which purpose has been defined its creator before it is designed and placed in use (Sartre 1984, p. 26).

Gorbman's earlier research (Gorbman 1980), explains the 'pure' type as music that 'refers to music itself,' and is thereby independent from the visual dimension. In this respect, the independence afforded by a 'pure musical code' is comparable to the Deleuzian notion of singular *identity*, as discussed in Chapter 2. In addition to this philosophical premise elicited in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 2004), Deleuze's theory of the *chronosign* (in relation to the moving image) is also relevant in this context; a *chronosign* is defined as 'a 'purer' form of image, which has moved away from the referent and towards a 'pure optical and sound situation'' (Deleuze 1989 in Powell 2005, p. 160).<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Gorbman's latter type, *cinematic* musical codes, 'refers to the film – that it bears specific formal relationships to coexistent elements in the film' (Gorbman 1980, p. 185). This functional type is therefore dependent on an interaction between music and the verbal/visual narrative of the film; differences within these musico-visual relationships would consequently be mediated by other means – for instance *analogy*, *opposition* or *resemblance* in Deleuze's terms.

Also shown in Fig. 6.1 is Anahid Kassabian's postulation of a further set of three terms that are relevant to the study of musical functions in Hollywood film music. The first, *identification*, is comparable to Gorbman's latter type of musical code, *cinematic* due to the extra-musical attributes that are embedded within the music's function. The second is again somewhat self-explanatory: music that serves an expression of *mood* or *ambience* that is coherent with the filmic narrative. Finally, and possibly the most sophisticated function of the three, is the implicit *commentary* purpose, which 'for example, might tell us that a seemingly romantic situation is actually humorous, or that a daisy filled meadow contains some unseen danger'

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<sup>8</sup> In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze offers a film-study methodology based on Peircean semiotics, with the postulation of three different functions of the moving image – *chronosigns*, *lectosigns* and *noosigns* (Powell 2005, p. 160). The latter type will shortly be discussed in greater detail, with regard to Anahid Kassabian's 'commentary' function of film music.

(Kassabian 2001, pp. 58-9). Kassabian's *commentary* type might also be explained in relation to the Greimasian semiotic square, wherein meaning is formed at a higher level, and is exclusively aimed towards the perceiver of the film as opposed to the diegetic characters involved.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the *commentary* type is also associable with Deleuze's cinematographic *noosigns*, which through the use of a moving image 'correspond to the process of [...] thought' (Powell 2005, p. 160).

If Gorbman and Kassabian's models are applied to the *Dracula*, certain problems will undoubtedly be brought into play given Glass's proclamation that this is an unconventional soundtrack. Firstly, how applicable is a terminology designed for classic and contemporary Hollywood film music for the analysis of minimalist music – a specific and idiosyncratic musical style? Secondly, are any of the six functions either generally preferred or precluded? Lastly, does Glass's music fulfil other duties that are excluded from Gorbman and Kassabian's typologies?

Glass's opening title music would satisfy a 'cinematic' function in Gorbman's terms: its location at a structurally significant location in the film, i.e. the beginning, conforms to standard cinematic practice in this respect (Gorbman 1987, p. 3). Philip Tagg would argue that this music serves a similar 'preparatory function' to that in *The Da Vinci Code*, as earlier discussed in Chapter 3. Glass's title track, 'Dracula' replaces the only instance of non-diegetic music in the original 1931 production – an extract out of *Swan Lake*'s so-called 'Swan Theme' – with an impressive performance by the Kronos Quartet.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A brief commentary on Greimas's semiotic square may be found in Chapter 2. Also of interest is Ennio Simeon's succinct proposal of the applicability of Greimas's semiotics to the study of film music in Simeon 1996, pp. 347-55.

<sup>10</sup> The original title music was edited by Universal Pictures's Heinz Roemheld and 'had been used in the silent era as a general *misterioso* accompaniment' (Skal 1990, p. 133).

In contrast to Tchaikovsky's extract however, 'Dracula' conveys a pervasive sense of menace, combining exuberance and power that might foretell the persona of the principal character of the film (Bela Lugosi). Dark tonality sets the tone for the entire work, the striking grandeur of a triple-stopped F minor chord, which is insidiously repeated above a weaving ostinato based on a two-against-three hemiola pattern and followed by a descending chromatic line, the outline of which is shown in Ex. 6.1.<sup>11</sup>

Ex. 6.1 Aural transcription of 'Dracula' from *Dracula*



### **Music as *Foreground*?**

The compositional intention for the music to serve at the foreground of this 'performance work' would consequently be indicative of a *pure* musical code as the visual narrative bears no great influence on the music in this situation. However, according to Glass 'the partnership between music and image becomes unmistakable' (Russell & Young 2000, p. 130); as a result of this affinity the use of a *cinematic* semiotic is consequently apparent. Once the performance begins, the remainder of the music serves a variety of functions with clear interaction between Glass's music and Browning's cinematography. This section of the chapter will henceforth seek to demonstrate this interaction by examining the role of Glass's music in specific scenes.

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<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the music examples in this chapter are the author's transcription of Michael Riesman's arrangement for solo piano (Philip Glass: *Dracula* (arr. Michael Riesman). Orange Mountain Music 0033 (2007).

Four main aspects will be highlighted during the course of this section: firstly, how Glass's music conveys motion through repetition will be discussed in considerable detail. This chapter will subsequently explore any structural relations that might or might not be present between music and the visual-verbal dialogic narratives of the film. Finally, an examination of the subjectivity of Glass's music when pitted against several instances of Dracula's ostensible mind control over diegetic characters in the film will take place, thus demonstrating musico-visual interactivity. In this section, the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, in addition to Bergsonian-Deleuzian film theory will be discussed, mainly in association with Wim Mertens, Rebecca Leydon and Robert Fink's research into musical minimalism and Anna Powell's Deleuzian writings on horror films.

### **Minimal Motion?**

In the opening scene, one of the main characters, identified only as Renfield (played by Dwight Frye), is literally driven into the film by horse-drawn carriage.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent to this initial panoramic shot (as exemplified in Fig. 6.2), the visual focus then shifts onto the dark interior of the carriage in which Renfield and the other passengers are travelling to a Transylvanian inn. At this point, the musical track, 'Journey to the Inn' suitably conforms to the visual motion as the lilting effect created by the syncopated rhythms reflects the undulation of the carriage.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the

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<sup>12</sup> This form of entrance, where a character into is literally driven on screen, was also observed in the VW Jetta commercial discussed in Chapter 3.

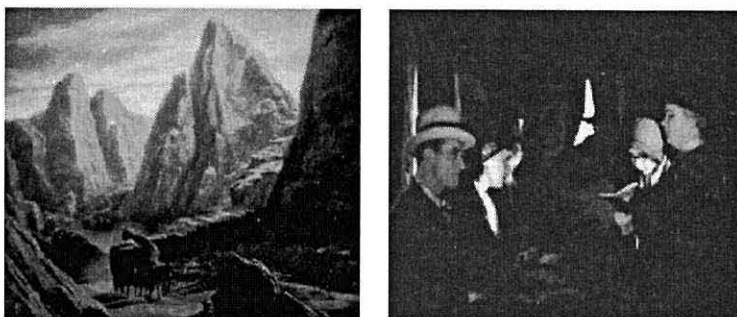
<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Abbate also refers to the 'persuasive illusion' of music's conveyance of motion in her reading of the film *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951) (Abbate 2005, p. 607). Rebecca Leydon's 'motoric' form in her typology of minimalist tropes is also applicable in this context, where 'musematic strategies evoke an "indifferent" mechanized process' (Leydon 2002). Leydon notes that



interiority of this scene created by the closed off from the carriage's exterior environment further reinforces the deprivation of goal-direction as evinced by the repetitive attribute of the music. In short, Glass's music in this example conveys a moving object from within.

Not only is the interiority of the scene evinced in temporal terms, the music's orchestration also correlates with the intimacy of the visual dimension. In a recent interview, Glass recalls how *Dracula* was mainly set in 'fairly confined interiors'; consequently, his scoring for a string quartet 'achieved the same depth of emotion but remained in the same scale as the film' (DesJardins 2006, p. 115).<sup>14</sup>

Fig. 6.2 'Journey to the Inn' snapshots



Renfield's residence at the inn serves as the halfway stop of his journey; he subsequently travels to Count Dracula's castle in a horse drawn carriage driven by the Count himself, although this fact is unbeknown to its lone passenger. Using Kassabian's typology, the music in this scenario, as heard in 'Carriage Without a Driver', describes a *mood* – namely the sinister ambience created by the driver's non-conversational manner, the howling wolves and the night fog. While Renfield

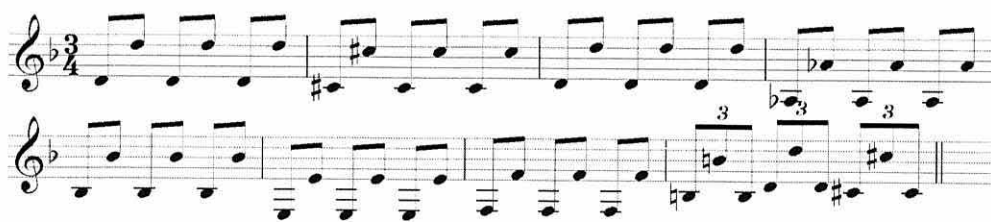
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'a lack of telos is cultivated by composers in works that attempt to portray machines in motion – like Reich's train music, or Michael Nyman's *Musique a grande vitesse*' (ibid.).

<sup>14</sup> In his programme note on the work, Glass had earlier remarked this sentiment; moreover, the 'evocative and effective' qualities of a string quartet matched the film's evocation of 'the feeling of the world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century' <<http://www.philipglass.com/music/compositions/Dracula.php>> (Accessed 21 July 2008).

travelled to the inn during the day, the second part of his journey to Dracula’s castle occurs at night. The meandering nature of the melodic line as shown in Ex. 6.2 reflects the unsettling ambiguity of Renfield’s situation, and a ‘ticking clock’ effect that suggests the countdown to his arrival at Dracula’s castle. Also, the textural sparseness created by the homophonic phrases also represents Renfield’s solitude while travelling in the carriage. Glass’s approach to texture in this instance evokes a certain mood – more specifically, the music serves a *textural* function; this thus supplements Kassabian’s typology.

Ex. 6.2 Aural transcription of ‘Carriage Without a Driver’ from *Dracula*



Additionally, the use of tritonal intervallic leaps as observed in Ex. 6.2 might be taken to symbolize the so-called ‘diabolus in music’ – Dracula is possibly implicitly represented (and identified) by this intervallic content. Indeed, once the carriage is set in motion, an arpeggiated figure is heard based on a theme earlier heard in ‘The Crypt’, in which scene the viewer was introduced to the Count prior to Renfield’s arrival at the castle. Not only is the onset of this arpeggiated figuration comparable to the motion of the driven carriage, the thematic content itself also bears extra-musical weight. The four-bar theme, outlined in Ex. 6.3, is adopted and adapted in four separate tracks during the course of the work, and might be taken to represent the (transformational) character of Dracula. ‘Carriage without a Driver’, after all, refers to Renfield’s discovery that his mode of transport is driverless at one point, as the horses are in fact guided by Dracula’s transformed state – a bat. In Gorbman’s

terms, this particular musical theme represents a *cinematic* sign. Moreover, if Kassabian's typology is applied, it may be gathered that it serves both an *identifying* and *commentary* function. Not only is the relentless repetition of the arpeggiated figure a representation of motion, but also the actual theme supplies the audience with information that the diegetic character, Renfield, is not privy to (that he is actually being transported to the castle by the Count). In this respect, the music demonstrates the practice of a *commentary* function.

Ex. 6.3 Aural transcription of 'The Crypt' motif in *Dracula*



While Renfield was unwittingly introduced to the Count in the last scene, his first 'official' meeting at the castle is yet another scene worthy of analysis, particularly so from a structuralist viewpoint. Interestingly enough, the cinematography in these opening scenes was highly acclaimed by critics of the original production, particularly 'for its convincing cinematic dramaturgy' (Bronfen 2006, p. 152). So how does the addition of Glass's music contribute to the verbal-visual narrative, here? The scene starts with a verbal silence, which plays an integral role up until the point at which Dracula introduces himself to Renfield; Bronfen considers Dracula's delayed and succinct greeting to his guest – "I am Dracula" – to be 'one of the signature lines from the film' (Bronfen 2006, p. 152). In fact, the lack of a spoken narrative between both characters up to this short sentence creates an increased sense of tension, and foregrounds the effectively executed interplay between musical and visual gesture. And according to Peter Hutchings, who offers a survey of horror soundtracks, Glass's soundtrack to *Dracula* offers 'purposefulness' to this particular scene as 'the brooding music helps to suggest a predatory approach,

with a potential *longueur* thereby transformed into something suspenseful' (Hutchings 2009, p. 220).

The musical depiction of the meeting between Renfield and Dracula is based on binary opposition. As shown in Ex. 6.4 from 'The Castle',<sup>15</sup> two contrasting musical modules are introduced and subsequently developed. The tentativeness of Renfield at his arrival at the castle is represented in the first system of this example (with reductive repetition). A soft dynamic and the unsettling mood of the alternating second inversion A minor – root position F minor progression, with a semitonal shift in the bass, epitomizes Renfield's sense of apprehension. Also, the temporal instability invoked by this first section's 5/8 metre is subsequently followed, in clear contrast, with the second module, which correlates with the dramaturgical grandeur of Dracula's castle, and the Count's emergence whilst walking down the stairs of the Gothic castle. Coupled with the semitonal shifts, this rhythmic element reinforces the role of the soundtrack in creating tension and uncertainty through musical attributes.

Ex. 6.4 Aural transcription of 'The Castle' from *Dracula*

The image displays a musical score for piano accompaniment, titled 'Ex. 6.4 Aural transcription of 'The Castle' from Dracula'. The score is written in 5/8 time and consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-5) is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 6-9) is marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and features a complex, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The third system (measures 10-13) is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

<sup>15</sup> This transcript is based on Kronos's recording of the soundtrack (1999).

In musical terms, the grandeur of Dracula's entrance is conveyed by the increased sense of metric assurance afforded by the duple compound metre, in addition to the higher-pitched triple stopping of the violins above a tremolando pedal, executed in a markedly different dynamic range. It may also be noted from a thematic perspective that the overarching neighbour-note figuration (*e-f-e*) as articulated in the second component of Ex. 6.4 (bar 6 onwards) was also a feature of the identification theme discussed in Ex. 6.3, albeit a tone step was employed in this latter context as opposed to a semitone.

In 'The Castle' the expression of Renfield and Dracula's contrasting personae ultimately involves satisfying a diegetic *mood* function in Kassabian's terms, although it may also be argued that the music equally serves an *identifying* role. Glass's music is not directly synchronised with the visual shots of both characters, which allows for a musico-visual distance to a certain extent – or a complementation in Cook's terms. In a later scene at the castle, 'Excellent Mr. Renfield' a closer structural relationship between both media is apparent. Renfield transfers legal documents to Dracula for his perusal over the matter of leasing Carfax Abbey in Whitby, and a commentary function is shown to be in operation.

Fig. 6.3 offers a multimodal transcription of the scene (see snapshots in Fig. 6.4), in which an ostensibly harmless conversation hides what Kassabian would consider to be 'some unseen danger' (Kassabian 2001, p. 59).<sup>16</sup> While the implicit nature of Dracula's intentions are palpable to the perceiver of the film, Renfield is however oblivious to his demise that lies ahead. Shortly after drinking the "very old wine", he collapses, and is subsequently transformed off-camera into Dracula's

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<sup>16</sup> The methodology behind multimodal transcription, which collects data relating to image, gesture, action and sound etc., has primarily been developed by Anthony P. Baldry and Paul J. Thibault (See Baldry 2004 pp. 83-108).

Fig. 6.3 Multimodal transcription of 'Excellent Mr Renfield' scene

Action / gesture	Verbal narrative	Glass's music: 'Excellent Mr. Renfield'
R sits at dinner table		
D moves bottle of wine	D: "I trust you've kept your coming here a secret"	
	R: "I've followed your instructions implicitly"	
	D: "Excellent Mr. Renfield. Excellent. And now if you're not fatigued I would like to discuss the lease on Carfax Abbey"	<i>A</i>
R reaches into case to take out lease	R: "Oh yes. Everything is in order awaiting your signature"	
D stares at R. R looks unsettled		
D reads lease	R: "Why, I hope I've brought out enough labels for your luggage"	
	D: "I'm taking with me only three ... boxes"	
	R: "Very well"	
D stares again. R is drawn by his gaze		
	D: "I have chartered a ship to take us to England. We will be leaving ... tomorrow <i>evening</i> "	
D turns away. R looks anxious	R: "Everything will be ready"	
D walks towards R's bed	D: "I hope you will find this comfortable"	
	R: "Thanks – it looks very inviting. Ouch"	
R injures his finger with a paper clip		<i>B</i>
D stares at the bleeding finger, walks towards it. R's crucifix is inadvertently displayed. D turns away with a dramatic gesture		
	R: "Oh it's nothing serious. It's just a small cut from that paper clip. It's just a scratch"	<i>A+B</i>
R keeps crucifix in pocket and sucks the blood from his finger		
D holds bottle of wine again	D: "This is very old wine. I hope you will like it"	
D pours wine	R: "Aren't you drinking?"	
	D: "I never drink ... <i>wine</i> "	
R drinks. D stares	R: "Well, it's delicious"	
	D: "And now I'll leave you"	
	R: "Well, good night"	
	D: "Good night, Mr ... Renfield"	
D leaves the room. R rises from chair		
R sits down in chair and looks bemused		

vampiric slave – a cognitively impaired state in which he remains throughout the remainder of the story, confined to the psychiatric care of Dr. Seward, the sanatorium of which neighbored the Dracula's newly acquired Carfax Abbey.

Fig. 6.3 displays how the structure of the accompanying piece of music, 'Excellent Mr. Renfield' (see transcript in Appendix I) is dialectically based on *A B A+B* sections. While sections *A* and *B* are oppositional in key (F minor vs. A-flatminor), texture, dynamic and rhythmic attributes, the concluding section aims towards conflating the characteristics of both preceding material together in a slightly synthetic form. The quaver-beat ostinato figuration heard in the bass, together with the melodic qualities of the upper register, is juxtaposed with the continuation of the middle section's demisemiquaver pattern. The track begins with a meandering melodic line heard in octaves above a four-bar progression of a two-bar F minor figuration alternating with an augmented A-flat minor chord in first inversion employed throughout the opening section, in the form of a pizzicato bass line below a



Fig. 6.4 'Excellent Mr Renfield' snapshots

1



2



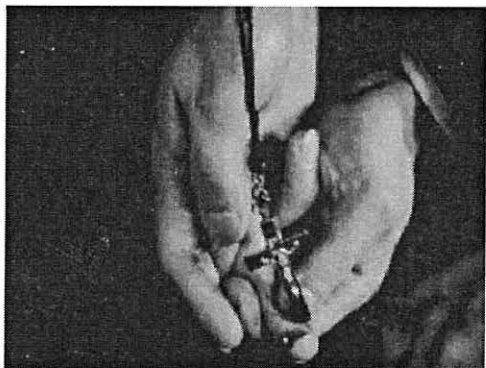
3



4



5



6



7



8



descending third figuration repeated in semiquavers. The seemingly lyrical nature of the melody, combined with the playful nature of the ostinati, however conceals the sinister undertones of the chromatic progression beneath it, thus serving the earlier discussed *commentary* function in this respect.

Glass's music in this scene serves an additional function, however – one that is once again a supplement to Kassabian's typology. In terms of verbal and musical narrative, this scene evinces a clear sense of progression and a self-containment: the scene has a beginning, middle and end. This is also conveyed in physical action as well as a somewhat symmetrical form of order – Renfield for instance sits at the table at the beginning and at the very end of the scene, whilst Dracula initially holds the wine bottle then delays pouring it until almost the end. Therefore in partnership with this scene's visual and verbal narrative, the dialectical nature of Glass's music satisfies a *temporal* function, where the tonal or thematic structure evidently coincides with the pre-determined length of the visual montage, and relates to the goal-direction of the visual scene, i.e. whether a scene ends with either a structural closure or alternatively an unresolved conclusion.

Indeed, the open-ended nature of several of the scenes has been the focus of several readings of the film in the past. Bronfen, for instance, draws attention to the fact that one of the main features of Browning's cinematography is the use of inconclusive closures – contemporary critics of the film had in fact 'faulted Browning for [...] letting not only the vampire's fatal bites but also his own death occur off screen' (Bronfen 2006, p. 157). Uli Jung draws attention to the effect of this lack of narrative resolution on the audiences of the original production – this, Jung notes, 'leaves such a distinct sense of unease that any simple assuagement of fears is successfully prohibited' (Jung 1997, p. 111 in *ibid.*, p. 158).

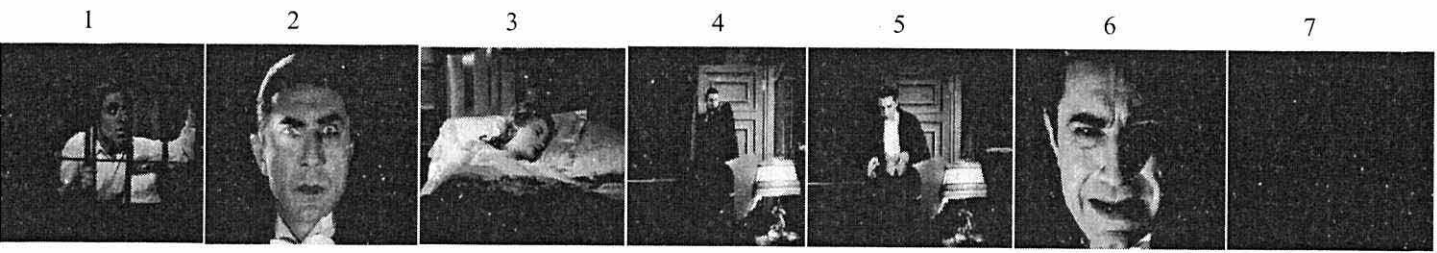


Hence Browning's *Dracula* might in several instances be observed as being anti-dialectical due to the lack of explicit scenic conclusions, and in this respect, reflects the idiosyncrasies of minimalism's approach to temporal structure. Mertens for instance writes that the 'music of the American composers of repetitive music can be described as non-narrative and a-teleological' (Mertens 1988, p. 17) – a sentiment also shared by Tarasti who states that repetition employed in this genre promotes an anti-narrative sense (Tarasti 1994, pp. 284-5). More recently, Fink has assumed a mid-point between teleological music and music that conveys non-direction: 'any music with a regular pulse, a clear tonal center, and some degree of process is more likely to be an example of recombinant teleology' (Fink 2005, p. 43).

The sense of something left in an unfinished state certainly appears in Glass's soundtrack. A lack of tonal resolution displayed in 'In His Cell', for instance, parallels the scene's lack of visual conclusion in diegetic terms. The first representational screenshot shown in Fig. 6.5 captures Renfield's monologue pleads for Dracula not to capture Mina Seward, the psychiatrist's daughter (Helen Chandler). A musical correlation takes place here – a poignant effect is evoked by a four-bar arpeggiated figuration, primarily based on a solemn descent from the tonic minor to the dominant major, representing a typical Baroque ostinato progression known as a 'lament bass'. This progression is subsequently repeated below the counterpoint of the evocative and embellished scallic ascent heard on the violin (Ex. 6.5).

A development of the tonic-dominant descent heard in the bass then takes place in the form of the semiquaver contrary motion arpeggiation; this provides an intensification coinciding with the visual appearance of Dracula in Mina's room (as shown in the fourth snapshot). The dominant arpeggio in the concluding three bars is

Fig. 6.5 'In His Cell' snapshots



**Ex. 6.5**  
**Musico-visual unfolding in 'In His Cell'**

Note: all bars are once directly repeated, although in bb. 5-8, dotted minims are extended by tied semibreves.

extended by its presentation in different inversions (first inversion, root position and lastly the arpeggio that starts on the seventh degree of the dominant). Each one provides an increase in dynamic and a contrast in pitch, which heightens the tension in preparation for a climactic conclusion that ultimately fails to materialise on screen – while the viewer observes the vampire’s approach towards his prey, the actual bite is not shown. Instead, the scene symbolically concludes in darkness (snapshot seven), and it is this visual silence that opposes the sheer force of Glass’s arpeggiative drive.

The earlier discussed pieces, ‘The Castle’ and ‘Excellent Mr. Renfield’, demonstrate an interaction between Glass’s music and the visual/verbal dialogue between two principal characters, namely Renfield and Dracula. In contrast, ‘In His Cell’ is an example of a monological scenario that subsequently leads to Dracula’s silently executed fatal deed. Renfield’s poignant request, and his tormented state of mind while incarcerated in the cell (and ultimately within the control of his master, the Count), is characterized by the solemnity of the unremitting descent through a fourth from tonic to dominant. The ability to express a diegetic emotion through music is thus exemplified in this particular scene, as Dracula is ostensibly able to tap into the psyche of his subject.

Earlier on in the film, Lucy Weston (played by Frances Dade) is yet another character subjected to Dracula’s mind control. After being mesmerised by the Count while attending the theatre in London, her subsequent reverie in which she confesses to Mina the fantasy of becoming Dracula’s Countess is yet another example of the vampire’s subjective power. Lucy is regarded an interesting character in the film as she represents ‘the financially independent young woman, attracted to a world of morbidity’ (Bronfen 2006, p. 163). Due to this perverse attraction, she is therefore considered ‘a marginal member of Western society’ (ibid.). Drawing on Horkheimer

and Adorno's 'dialectic of enlightenment', Elisabeth Bronfen argues that the character of Dracula represents the antithesis of modern Western society, and in this respect his attack on Lucy *Weston* is ironically 'poignant' (Bronfen 2006, p. 162-3).<sup>17</sup> And in structuralist terms, the slightly dark nature of Lucy's character, together with her authoritative persona, presents a unifying element that is required by all binary oppositions. Lucy's character connects a thesis (Western culture) and antithesis (Dracula as the representation of the East, i.e. unknown Eastern European territory).

However is the character of Lucy being represented by Glass's music in any form whatsoever? More specifically, is there an apparently antithetical contrast in use to denote her? Indeed, Glass's music in this scene, 'Lucy's Bitten', juxtaposes a darkly grotesque aesthetic with the decadence and lyricism of the Romantic era. In this respect, the music is reminiscent of *La Belle et la Bête*. As shown in Ex. 6.6, 'Lucy's Bitten' initially employs a markedly different tonal colour to the *Dracula* soundtrack on the whole: the bi-tonal combination of A-flat major in the bass, coupled with the dominant major in the treble register evokes a characteristic contrast. This hemiola figuration subsequently alternates with an E major chord in the bass, below the static E-flat major ostinato heard in the higher register. A lyrical descent of a minor third is heard across bb. 10-11, which is subsequently repeated prior to the inverted and transposed version heard across bb. 14-15. But behind the seeming innocence of the scene lies an unsettling sense provided by the alternating A-flat / E major figuration in the lower treble register – particularly the semitonal shift between

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<sup>17</sup> In *New Music and the Claims of Modernity*, Alistair Williams draws attention to Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which 'maintain[s] that Western rationality is distorted by a narrow pursuit of instrumental and technological ends that show scant regard for ethical or expressive considerations; and they trace the dark vein that threads its way through the European Enlightenment, mirroring the development of reason and ideals of social freedom with a subterranean history of violence and repression' (Williams 1997, p. 6).

the rising E-flat and E-natural and the falling C-natural to B-natural, which again promotes the film's tentative aspect.

Glass's music then develops as an apparent interaction with the motion of Dracula in his transformed state as a bat, which appears outside Lucy's bedroom window – the oscillating motion of the creature's wings induces her hypnotic state. Dracula's subsequent emergence in the room invokes a heightened sense of intensity, expressed through an increase in chromaticism and the employment of the double-stopping string technique. This intensification ultimately recedes however when Dracula approaches his victim in the scene's unfinished closure.

Ex. 6.6 Aural transcription of 'Lucy's Bitten' from *Dracula*

The image displays a musical score for the scene 'Lucy's Bitten' from the film *Dracula*. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, often grouped in triplets. The key signature is B-flat major, indicated by two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first system shows the initial rhythmic pattern. The second system continues the pattern with some chromatic movement in the bass line. The third system features a double-stopping string technique, with a slur over the treble staff indicating a double stop. The fourth system continues the rhythmic pattern with further chromaticism. The fifth system concludes the transcription with a final double bar line and repeat sign.

## Minimalism, hypnotism and altered states of cognition

Repetition is an inherent part of *Dracula*'s plot. Moreover, repetition equates to hypnotism, as the 'aesthetic techniques of repetition are hypnotic and open us [as the audience] up to suggestion' (Bergson 1971, p. 14 in Powell 2005, p. 112). The relentlessness and unremitting drive of Dracula's actions in his quest for immortality implies this tendency in the film's overall plot. Furthermore, his execution of an inducible and mesmerising power over several individual characters including Renfield, Lucy and the cloakroom attendant at the theatre in London, is equally apparent as the narrative unfolds. This hypnotic element, it may be argued, parallels the influence of Glass's repetitive modules upon the listener; minimalist music is consequently ideally suited for this context. A Bergsonian perspective (subsequently developed by Deleuze) would argue, however, that music in general could induce this effect. In her writings on Deleuze and horror film, Anna Powell quotes Bergson's observation that 'music is particularly hypnotic, as its "rhythm and measure suspends the normal flow of our sensations and ideas by causing our attention to swing to and fro between fixed points," so it can manipulate our emotions without needing lyrics' (Powell 2005, p. 112).

More specifically to minimalism however, Mertens uses the term 'meditative music' to discuss this hypnotic affect, which 'refers to an extra-musical event' where 'a particular effect on the listener is sought after' (Mertens 1988, p. 16). Developing on from this, Leydon postulates the 'mantric' trope with reference to Arvo Pärt's *Arbos*, to define the subjective meaning of this form of musematic repetition 'as a kind of mantra, whose endless repetition suggests access to mystical or spiritual transcendence' (Leydon 2002, unpag.). On similar lines, Mertens had previously

expanded the affective influence of minimalism's repetition by drawing on libidinal philosophy and the Freudian sense of the unconscious:

In repetitive music, repetition does not refer to eros and to the ego, but to the libido and to the death instinct. Process and repetition produce a shift from the dialectical principle of reality onto the unconscious level, where external realities are replaced by psychic ones [...] The ecstatic state induced by this music, which could also be called a state of innocence, an hypnotic state, or a religious state, is created by an independent libido, freed of all the restrictions of reality (Mertens 1988, pp. 123-4).

Further Freudian theories relating to the notion of 'the uncanny' are also broadly applicable to the subject matter of *Dracula*. The uncanny, according to Nicholas Royle's interpretation 'seems to be about a strange repetitiveness. It has to do with the return of something repressed, something no longer familiar, the return of the dead' (Royle 2003, p. 84). In Freud's words, the uncanny is also the 'constant recurrence of the same thing', which relates to the death drive, otherwise known as Thanatos (Freud 1985, p. 360 in *ibid.*). Elisabeth Bronfen considers 'the challenge posed by Freud's formulation of the death drive resides in the fact that he ultimately binds all desire, whether sexual, aggressive or melancholic, to a desire for death' (Bronfen 1992, p. 56 in Royle 2003, p. 93). Robert Fink however draws attention to the fact that Freud's Thanatos was designed 'to explain a particular war neurosis, the compulsion to repeat traumatic events that seemed to seize shell-shocked veterans' (Fink 2005, p. 5), and in this respect is consequently hardly relevant.

While the above theories demonstrate different levels of association with the subject matter of the film, the function of Glass's repetition, and the extent with which it is suggestive of an 'ecstatic' or an 'hypnotic state' for the listener, should be examined at this point. Indeed, how does repetition relate to the cognitive states of the film's diegetic subjects and its perceiver in general? In the case of Renfield, repetition is first used to show the aftermath of Dracula's effect upon this particular



character as the chartered ship arrives in England. The accompanying soundtrack, ‘Horrible Tragedy’, makes use of atonal consecutive patterns that recreates the scene’s gruesomeness and peculiarity, in addition to Renfield’s mania.<sup>18</sup> Glass’s use of atonality in this scene further reinforces Renfield’s altered state of cognition, and is unconventional in the general harmonic language of the soundtrack. Repetition in this instance points towards Leydon’s ‘aphasic’ trope ‘where musematic repetition suggests a cognitively impaired [cinematic] subject’ (Leydon 2002); probably the most famous example being the shower scene in Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960).<sup>19</sup>

Renfield’s frame of mind is subsequently manipulated in the film to provide a darkly comical element – particularly his conversations with minor characters of the film, for instance Martin, the sanatorium’s Cockney psychiatric nurse played by Charles Gerrard (see Fig. 6.6).<sup>20</sup> This change in mood is also expressed in musical terms: sequenced uses of pizzicato arpeggios are employed in these specific scenes (for instance in ‘Seward Sanatorium’), thereby evoking a degree of playfulness in contrast to the otherwise ominous nature of the film. This dark humour was almost foretold by similar uses of pizzicati passages heard near to the outset of the film in ‘The Inn’ when Renfield was in dialogue with the superstitious villagers of Transylvania.

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<sup>18</sup> Atonality is also heard in *Chappaqua* in order to convey the drug-induced psychosis of the main character, Conrad Rooks. Thus, similar to Renfield’s predicament, the use of chromatic and repetitive passages denotes his altered state of cognition.

<sup>19</sup> Hutchings refers to the similarity in Glass and Hermann’s orchestrations here – the use of stringed instruments alone depict an ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘aged’ aesthetic (Hutchings 2009, pp. 220-21).

<sup>20</sup> Consider, for instance this particular exchange – Renfield: “Flies? Flies? Who wants to eat flies?” Martin: “You do, you loony!”



Fig. 6.6 'Seward Sanitarium' snapshot



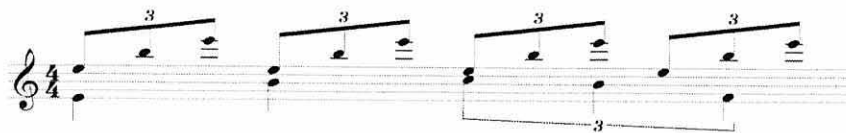
Apart from Renfield's psychosis, the repetitive nature of Glass's music is also complementary to Dracula's hypnotic abilities. Firstly, consider for example his explicit power over the cloakroom attendant at the theatre. In 'In the Theatre', a bass-line four-note museme is cyclically repeated on the cello (supported by a homophonic violin and a quaver-beat oscillating thirds figuration on the other instruments). The gravity of this performance by the quartet can also be regarded as correlating with the authoritarian role taken by Dracula when controlling the mind of the cloakroom attendant. In the same piece of music, this affect is subsequently transferred (albeit in a more subliminal manner) to Lucy in the theatre's box, where she is unconsciously brought under the power of the Count.

Repetition in both instances are highly compatible with Rebecca Leydon's 'mantric' trope, in addition to Mertens's description of minimalism's ability to evoke an 'hypnotic state'. The museme heard in 'In the Theatre' is subjected to subtle transformation during performance. Although Glass adheres to the original rhythmic characteristics of this sombre motive, slight melodic variations are apparent, which promotes an interaction at a narrative level between the unfolding of the music and the unfolding storyline of the theatre scene. On returning from the theatre, the subliminal captivation of Lucy by Dracula is evinced in 'Lucy's Bitten'. The repetition of a bi-tonal major configuration (shown earlier in Ex. 6.6) alludes to her fantasising frame of mind. Moreover, Mina's imaginary role-play when addressing

her friend as “the Countess” again reflects the innocence of the scene, albeit masking the moroseness of Lucy’s gothic fascinations. With reference to Mertens, repetition in this context might be compared to a dreamlike ‘state of innocence’ (Mertens 1988, p. 124), or Leydon’s ‘maternal’ trope that suggests a regression to childhood (Leydon, 2002).<sup>21</sup>

Dracula’s subliminal power over Mina is also observed towards the end of the film, as she walks outside at night towards the awaiting Count. In ‘Or a Wolf’, an ascending scale from the tonic of F minor to the sub-dominant is repeated and transposed above the interlacing hemiola pattern heard in the opening track, ‘Dracula’. In the subsequent track, ‘Women in White’, a five-note pattern extrapolated in Ex. 6.7,<sup>22</sup> is repeated above an arpeggiated figuration, coexisting with the motion of a vampiric Lucy walking in a trance-like manner at night. Subsequently, the second part of this piece’s *ABC* structure re-uses material heard in ‘Lucy’s Bitten’ when Mina recounts her sighting of the deceased Lucy as “the woman in white” during the prior night. With reference to Gorbman and typologies, the leitmotivic quality of this particular extract is clearly an example of a *cinematic* code and an *identifying* function respectively.

Ex. 6.7 Aural transcription of ‘Women in White’ from *Dracula*



<sup>21</sup> This material is also heard in ‘Dracula Enters’ when Mina recalls a strange occurrence (Dracula’s manifestation) in her dream.

<sup>22</sup> This transcript is based on the Kronos performance (1999).

## Intratextual Glass – simultaneously (post-)modern?

Glass's *Dracula* is entwined with internal references to music heard earlier in the work. Thus the concept of intratextuality in relation to nineteenth-century practices will form the basis of the following analysis. On the whole, Glass's soundtracks might be regarded as being essentially intratextual due to their quotation of music from his previous (non-)film works, as opposed to the music of other composers. Furthermore, the widespread use of arpeggiation, chromatic linear progressions, oscillating thirds and additive/reductive forms of repetition is further evidence of self-referentiality.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, several of his recent soundtracks for movies including *Taking Lives*, *No Reservations* and *Roving Mars* demonstrate the co-existence of his music with excerpts from other genres ranging from 'high' art to popular culture.<sup>24</sup>

The visibility (or, more correctly, the audibility) of intratextual relations is somewhat fitting in this context as Browning's film is widely recognised as being intrinsically 'modernist' (Bronfen 2006, p. 162) – Hollywood's take on modernism, at least. Somewhat paradoxically however,<sup>25</sup> the act of re-writing a score for a pre-existing film might also be regarded as 'intermedial' – defined by Winfried Nöth as the 'relation between different media or genre (Nöth 2007, p. 15) – due to the juxtaposition of the chamber music genre with cinematic material. Furthermore, Browning's film is in itself inherently intermedial, being a screen adaptation of

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<sup>23</sup> Ex. 1.1, for instance, is reminiscent of the falling bass line heard in 'I Came Down from the Mountain' from *Book of Longing*.

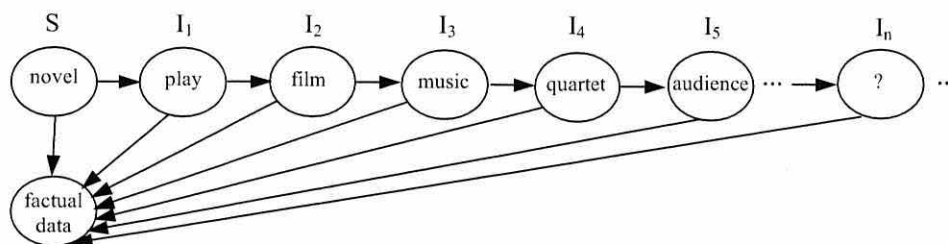
<sup>24</sup> The soundtrack to *Taking Lives* is intertextual, comprising an eclectic mix of diegetic and non-diegetic music by U2 and The Clash, Walter Werzowa's acousmatic montage of sounds, Massive Attack's 'trip-hop', in addition to jazz and latin music. As discussed in Chapter 4, Glass's music in *No Reservations* was subsumed by Italian operatic arias that interacted with a character in the film. *Roving Mars*'s end credits uses Sigur Rós's 'Glossoli' (See Chapter 4).

<sup>25</sup> Winfried Nöth differentiates between different levels of post-modern self-references as evident in recent media instances: intratextual, intertextual and intermedial (Nöth 2007, p. 14-5).

Hamilton and Balderton's play based on Bram Stoker's novel, itself centred on the legend of Vlad the Impaler.

Such a chain of connections is reminiscent of the applicability of Peirecean semiology, particularly the concept of the 'infinite interpretant' (Nattiez 1990b, pp. 6-7). Fig. 6.7 is an application of this model, which assimilates Jean-Jaques Nattiez's diagrammatic explanation (ibid., p. 6). As the diagram displays, the object (the factual information relating to Vlad the Impaler) is interpreted by the sign (Bram Stoker's novel), which then leads to a chain of signifieds: Hamilton and Balderton's play, followed by Browning's film adaptation, Glass's music, Kronos's interpretation of the score and finally the audience's interpretation of the combined visual and musical performance. As shown in the final part of the diagram, in keeping with Peirce's theory, the chain of interpretants is infinite ( $I_n$ ) (ibid.).

Fig. 6.7 Application of Peircean 'infinite interpretant' model



While Fig. 6.7 effectively combines the function of representing Peirce's semiotic theory with an intermedial mapping-out of influences, in exclusively musical terms the general absence of external references to music outside of Glass's score can be observed as intratextual, thus satisfying modernist requisitions and their adjoined structuralist implications. In Saussurean linguistics for instance, meanings are extrapolated from interior codes or systems of language, whereby no external matters are relevant to that understanding (Norris 2002, p. 4). In short, 'nothing could exist

outside the “text” because everything was ultimately contained within it’ (ap Siôn 2007, p. 59). Parallelisms between intratextuality and the objectivity afforded by structuralism may be observed in the definition of the former concept as an ‘allusion [...] involving internal relations within the text’ (Chandler 2007, p. 203).

Intratextuality according to Kent D. Palmer ‘takes a single text or set of related texts and treats them as a closed system of contexts which produce internal to that a meta-system of signification’ (Palmer 2002, p. 23). And in accordance with John Frow’s interpretation, it reaches ‘the point at which a text departs from “hypogrammatical” conventions and clichés in order to establish its own network of internal correspondences’ (ap Siôn 2007, p. 61). With reference to the film music of Michael Nyman, Pwyll ap Siôn notes that the composer tended to ‘adopt a more intratextual or inter-referential approach’ in his late works, as opposed to intertextuality (ibid.). On the contrary, Glass should be considered more of an intratextual composer due to his avoidance of musical borrowings from the work of other composers.<sup>26</sup>

In keeping with Glass’s comment about *Dracula* being ‘a piece of music theater’ (Morgan 2000, p. 235), it may be argued that the internal references within the work are in fact leitmotivic forms (or in Gorbman’s terms, *cinematic* musical codes). Intratextuality, as ‘a meta-system of signification’ (Palmer 2002, p. 23), might therefore be regarded as the theoretical concept behind Wagner’s network of leitmotifs. Within a cinematic context, not only does Wagner’s structural technique strive for a total ‘unity’ in separate musical and visual channels, ‘the two tracks must

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<sup>26</sup> Glass however borrows prize-winning written texts for use in his music for theatre; recent examples include *Book of Longing*, based on poetry and illustrations by Leonard Cohen (discussed in Chapter 7), and the adaptation of John Coetzee’s novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Furthermore, a significant amount of his film soundtracks are for screen adaptations of literary texts, with *Dracula* being a prime example of this.

Fig. 6.8 Intratextual references in *Dracula*



also cohere so as to invite perception as a unified whole' (Paulin 2000, p. 63).<sup>27</sup> This forges a strong musico-visual partnership in *Dracula* – but how exactly are the inter-relational meanings formed in the work?

The diagram of Fig. 6.8 illustrates the framework of Glass's work from an intratextual perspective, and is somewhat akin to a London tube map.<sup>28</sup> The musical narrative of the work can be read from top to bottom. Several interconnections denoting (extra-)musical references are shown between pieces by the use of several different line styles. A reference to a separate work by Glass is also suggested in Fig. 8, namely *Metamorphosis Two* (1988), which thereby alludes to an external reference to music outside of the work, but within Glass's overall *oeuvre*. As Ex. 6.8.1, out of 'Mina on the Terrace' in *Dracula* illustrates, the repetitive use of an intervallic third in the tenor register, followed by the ascending-descending triplet figuration bears resemblances to fragments of Glass's second instalment of *Metamorphosis* (1988), extracted in Ex. 6.8.2.<sup>29</sup> Although tonally contrasting (F minor vs. A minor), and differences exist in the rhythmic and intervallic values of both extracts, a similarity can undoubtedly be observed. On the other hand, this reference could be regarded as a generic borrowing of a musical figuration, as opposed to being a reference to a specific work. This connection is surely an abstract one, as no apparent extra-musical relation between both contexts can be identified.

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<sup>27</sup> Paulin cites Wagner's treatise *Oper und Drama* on the formation of musical meanings: 'A musical motif (*Motiv*) can produce a definite impression on the Feeling, inciting it to a function akin to Thought, only when the emotion uttered in that motif has been definitely conditioned by a definite object, and proclaimed by a definite individual' (Wagner 1893, p. 329 in Paulin 2000, p. 61).

<sup>28</sup> In fact, this diagram assimilates the map of a specific underground line – a map of the entire underground system would be regarded as intertextual, while a map of a city transport system (buses, trains and metro) would demonstrate intermediality.

<sup>29</sup> Ex. 9.2 is extracted from the published score, Philip Glass: *Solo Piano* (Chester Music DU 10527) (1991).

Ex. 6.8.1 Aural transcription of 'Mina on the Terrace' from *Dracula*

Ex. 6.8.2 Score of *Metamorphosis 2*

However, taking the title of *Metamorphosis* into consideration, it is somehow ironic (or possibly deliberate) that several transformational uses of this have been made. Glass had earlier employed the work in the soundtrack to *The Thin Blue Line* (1988),<sup>30</sup> and later in *The Hours* under the title of 'Escape!'<sup>31</sup> Use of this material in numerous soundtracks consequently proves how music can be adopted and adapted in re-contextualised scenarios.<sup>32</sup>

On returning at this point to the analysis of the internal references contained in the work, the six threads presented in Fig. 6.8 offers scope for a close examination from a comparative viewpoint. In terms of frequency, the most frequently used thematic material is shown by the dash-dot-dot line: in 'The Inn', 'The Drawing Room', 'The Three Consorts of Dracula', 'Seward Sanatorium' and 'When the Dream Comes'. Indeed, the music in these instances is re-contextualised in five different scenarios, which reflects the leitmotif's ability to adapt. Comprising short cadential

<sup>30</sup> Jody Dalton notes that *Metamorphosis 1, 2 and 5* were based on thematic material from *The Thin Blue Line* soundtrack (see liner notes to *Philip Glass: Solo Piano*. Sony Classical SMK 87976 (2003)).

<sup>31</sup> According to notes published in the score, material from *Metamorphosis* had also been intended for performance in a staging of Kafka's eponymous play – thereby demonstrating an intertextual relation to Glass's music. Furthermore, the Uakti ensemble performs an arrangement of *Metamorphosis 1* in Glass's *Aguas da Amazonia* (1999); also, an extract out of a different piece of this work, 'Paru River', has also been used in a televisual context by Dru Masters in the soundtrack to *The Apprentice* series by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

<sup>32</sup> Glass's self-referentiality was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.



statements, these passages are seen to be relating to the conversational narrative between Renfield and minor characters of the film, for instance the inhabitants of Transylvania in 'The Inn' and Martin in 'Seward Sanatorium', wherein the mood of the scenes implies a comedial subtext, and thus a contribution to the overall filmic mood in Kassabian's terms. However in 'The Three Consorts of Dracula' the music becomes increasingly visible as it is employed in a non-verbal scene wherein the effect of visual gesture is heightened. In 'When The Dream Comes' the arpeggiated version of the cadential progressions is arguably a reference to Dracula, and is heard when Van Helsing interrogates Mina in the presence of Dr Seward and John Harker upon the nature of her strange dream. In short, Glass's material is therefore heard in a different context with no strongly apparent association between them.

Second place in terms of frequency is the Dracula theme presented in Ex. 6.3 (interconnected in Fig. 6.8 with a dash-dot line). This material was initially presented in 'The Crypt' and subsequently arpeggiated and developed in 'Carriage without a Driver', 'Mina's Bedroom – The Abbey' and in the work's conclusion, 'The End of Dracula'. Without a doubt, this music serves an *identifying* role in Kassabian's terms, as it is exclusively associated with one character – Dracula. As a consequence, a significant intratextual association between these pieces is made. In short, the signification of this particular thematic material remains static throughout.

While the Lucy-Dream passage earlier discussed (presented in Fig. 6.8 with a double dotted line) is yet another theme that ostensibly performs an *identifying* role, two intratextual associations exemplify how Glass's music forms entirely new meanings from the manner in which they were originally heard – the title credits. First, the descending chromatic line transcribed in its basic form in Ex. 6.1 returns late in the work: in 'Renfield in the Drawing Room' and finally in the concluding piece

'The End of Dracula'. Second, the weaving hemiola figuration again employed in the inaugural track is re-employed in 'Or a Wolf', as shown by a dashed line.

Finally, and representing the only intratextual connection heard in consecutive tracks, seven seconds of material heard in 'Journey to the Inn' is briefly quoted in 'The Inn'. This exemplifies a separation or a distance between Glass's music and the moving image, as the music does not directly correlate to the filmic narrative in the scene at the Transylvanian inn.

## Conclusions

The various approaches taken to the analysis of this work have manoeuvred between the two distinct areas of film music study and the self-referential perspective in relation to music theatre. Central to this chapter has been the use and function of repetition, and fittingly so within the context of minimalism, whereby the use of repetitive patterns were compared to the hypnotic transcendence impelled by the main character of the film over his diegetic subjects. The former approach demonstrated the relevance of Gorbman and Kassabian's typologies, with a further reference to Deleuzian theory, and with the postulation of other functions relating to temporality and texture. A great degree of *cinematic* functions were seemingly apparent; and while this study did not discuss any *cultural* musical codes in any detail, a reference to Eastern European culture is heard briefly in the modal inflections and dance patterns of 'The Inn'.

Examining the self-referential aspect of *Dracula* highlighted the intratextual nature of Glass's compositional approach, focusing on its interaction with the extra-musical content of the moving image and the verbal narrative. Indeed, Glass also

made use of leitmotifs in the ‘idiosyncratic’ cinematic opera *La Belle et la Bête* in order to represent objects and subjective emotions (Joe 2002, p. 60-62). It may therefore be regarded that *La Belle* is an opera with film; *Dracula* in a similar manner is a string quartet with film, although the verbal channel of the film draws greater attention to the visual screen. In *La Belle* however, a greater focus appears to be on the libretto – and thereby on the live performers – as opposed to the silent screen.

Central to this investigation has been the issue of whether or not the music in *Dracula* serves as a film soundtrack, or as Glass proposes, represents a post-modern ‘performance work’ (Russell & Young 2000, p. 130). As James Tobias states, it is indeed ‘more than a score’ (Tobias 2004). As applicable to a film setting and Wagnerian music drama alike, Glass’s use of *cinematic* music codes in Gorbman’s terms, or Kassabian’s *identifying* role – the use of leitmotivic associations – are equally relevant to both contexts. In certain respects, the musico-visual interactivity demonstrated in *Dracula* would respond positively to the comparison with a soundtrack, as the performance of the music in conjunction with the moving image is recognised as a traditional practice of early silent cinema. This practice has widely seen regeneration according to Thomas Doherty, being ‘a regular fixture at highbrow concert venues’ as a ‘mix of avant-garde and retrograde sensibilities’ (Doherty 2001). And in fact, it is hard to determine *Dracula* as a piece of conventional music theatre alone, primarily due to the absence of any song and dance elements.

## **Chapter Seven**

## Musical Conflict? War and Existentialism in

### *Naqoyqatsi, Book of Longing and Watchmen*

#### Introduction

The opening scene in Godfrey Reggio's *Naqoyqatsi* (2002) presents the reworking of Pieter Bruegel's symbolic painting of the crumbling Tower of Babel (c. 1563). This shortly and seamlessly merges into more recent footage of the inside and outside of a dilapidated train station in Detroit.<sup>1</sup> Though the title of the film, being the final instalment of the Qatsi trilogy, translates from the Hopi language as 'life as war', neither Bruegel's tower nor the train station overtly refers to war. Both symbols however allude to conflict in a roundabout way. In the former image, for instance, a sense of impending doom transpires, particularly due to the brooding grey clouds that circumnavigate the spiralling tower. Bruegel's painting has even been alluded as a prophecy to the atrocities in New York on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (Bonn 2006, p. 142), while the decrepit station in Detroit represents a more recent example of how human 'evolution' can ultimately lead to destruction and failure. Both ancient and modern pieces of architecture represent a dualism between human achievement and destruction, setting out an existential tone that is central to the film as a whole.

A reading of *Naqoyqatsi* in existential terms will consequently take place, drawing particularly on pre-Sartrean theories developed by German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers, who wrote extensively on the status of an individual in

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<sup>1</sup> The painting was described as that of the Tower of Babel by Joyce MacPhee in her article on *Naqoyqatsi* in *Rambles: A cultural arts magazine* <<http://www.rambles.net/naqoyqatsi02.html>> (Last accessed 8 June 2009).

contemporary society. Added to this, references to Marshall McLuhan's media writings will also prove to be pertinent, perhaps demonstrating a closer alliance, or at least a more immediate reference, to Reggio's preconceptions. A study of the manner in which the post-modernism of Glass's music, featuring Yo-Yo Ma's solo performances on cello, is posited within this existential sphere will prove to be vital, as key concepts relating to this philosophy certainly resonate in both the film's visual and musical dimensions.

### **Glass and Existentialism – The Paris Years**

But how valid would be a claim that the existential movement, or any existential though processes had in fact an impact on Glass's music? Whether or not Glass was particularly well read in the theories of Sartre, or the predecessors including Nietzsche, Heidegger and Jaspers is unclear.<sup>2</sup> However, his associations with dramatists Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht, and the Beat generation writers such as Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Leonard Cohen are more affirmative.<sup>3</sup> These individuals may be regarded as being particularly influential in the course of the formative stages of his career, in Paris especially, where he studied during the mid-1960s as a Fulbright scholar. In fact, the Beat writers often travelled to Paris, where they resided at the so-called 'Beat Hotel' in the Latin Quarter of the city, and although

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<sup>2</sup> In comparison, Reich's knowledge of Wittgenstein's theories, which also relate to existentialism, is generally more apparent (see for instance Reich 2002, pp. 191-3).

<sup>3</sup> Jennie Skerl defines the Beat generation as 'an avant-garde arts movement and bohemian subculture that led an underground existence in the 1940s and early 1950s, gaining public recognition in the late 1950s' (Skerl 2004, p. 1). The Beats 'fashioned a role as poet-prophets who sought a spiritual alternative to the relentless materialist drive of industrial capitalism' (ibid., p. 2). An example of Glass's connection with the movement is evident by his collaboration with Allen Ginsberg, whose texts (including the poem 'Howl') are employed in *Hydrogen Jukebox* (1990). Furthermore, Glass took part in a documentary on the Beats entitled *The Source* (1996), which also features extracts out of his *Hydrogen Jukebox* and 'Metamorphosis 2'.

it is claimed that they did not cross paths with Sartre, it is undoubted that Paris was simultaneously a hotbed of existential influences and Beat activity during this time. Barry Miles comments that even though the Beats and the existential writers (particularly Sartre, Camus and Beckett) were living in close proximity to each other, the Beats 'were never interested in the existentialists and did not read their books',<sup>4</sup> and one of the founding members of the Generation, Jack Kerouac, saw 'existentialism as a communist plot' (ibid., pp. 60, 66). Nevertheless, resemblances inasmuch as both groups promoted individuality and freedom of thought within a Bohemian mindset are in no doubt. This proximity is observed in Pete Edler's comment that 'unlike existentialism, which grew out of Sartre's writings, to encourage new lifestyles, beat was the *result* of a new lifestyle, a word that *defined* a lifestyle rather than creating it' (Edler 2006, unpag.).

Glass's experiences in Paris at this time can therefore be perceived as mediations between existential and Beat influences,<sup>5</sup> although his period in the Gallic city during the mid-1960s was not his first. In 1954, Glass had gone on an expedition that led to him becoming increasingly familiar with the works of another existentialist, Jean Cocteau,<sup>6</sup> some of which he subsequently reworked during the mid-1990s (*Orphée*, *La Belle et la Bête*, and *Les Enfants Terribles*). His visit during the mid-1960s however resulted in a submersion within the subversive existential counter-culture. In fact, Glass's interest in Beckett's work preceded his visit to Europe, although it was during these years that these interests were crystallised through his attendance at various performances in Paris's theatres (Bryden 1998, p.

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that one of the speakers in *The Source* documentary noted that Dostoyevsky's *Notes on Underground* had a considerable impact on the writers, which reinforces the argument for interrelating existential elements with the movement.

<sup>5</sup> For more details on the Beat writers' residency at the Hotel, situated at Paris's 9, rue Git-le-Coeur, see Miles 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cott, Liner notes to *La Belle et La Bête*. Nonesuch 79347 (1995).

191), including the *Théâtre Odéon* and the *Théâtre Nationale Populaire*, which often performed the works of Beckett, Genet and Brecht (Glass 1987, pp. 4-5). In contrast to the Beat writers, whom he knew personally, Glass articulated in an interview that he did not meet Beckett in person, only through other individuals – David Warrilow and Fred Neumann – who were active in Paris during this period (Bryden 1998, p. 193).<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, from 1965 onwards, an indirect collaboration took place between the two individuals, starting with the Mabou Mines group's staging of Beckett's *Play*.

Glass's music for *Play*, scored for soprano saxophones performing in conjunction with pre-recorded material,<sup>8</sup> demonstrates the use of similar 'cut-up' techniques to those developed by William Burroughs (Zurbrugg 1999, p. 145).<sup>9</sup> In the subsequent year, his collaboration on the *Chappaqua* soundtrack again reveals an association with Burroughs (and Ginsberg) who took cameo roles in the film, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. The mid-1960s was a period when Eastern cultures, with Zen Buddhism emerging in conjunction with interests in existentialism.<sup>10</sup> Glass and his literary counterparts ostensibly took hold of these developments, as evident in Rooks's film.

But why did these approaches appeal to him, and what associations can be drawn between existential literature and music? Although Glass's compositions for Beckett's productions did not include *Waiting for Godot* (1948-9) this work demonstrates a close conceptual proximity between both dramatist and composer.

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<sup>7</sup> Potter's writings contradict this statement as he claims that Glass had in fact met Beckett in either 1964 or 1965 (see Potter 2000, p. 255).

<sup>8</sup> Reich was also combining live instrumentation with taped material around this time, for instance *Violin Phase* (1967) (see Reich 2002, p. 26).

<sup>9</sup> This 'non-narrative literary form' associated all of the Beat writers (Bryden 1998, p. 191). Beckett was initially unsure of the use of music in his works, and thought of it as 'an intrusion' (ibid., p. 193).

<sup>10</sup> See Chang 1969.



Edith Kern observes how the characters in the play are disengaged from the society that they placed within (Kern 1954, p. 44). Moreover, *Godot* represents a literary work that has no real action, instead focusing on persona and psychological dimensions (ibid., p. 41).

Clearly, this relates to the interiority of the music in *Notes on a Scandal* and *The Hours*, as it does to the staging of Beckett's *Company*, as discussed in Chapter 5. Their perceptible interests in existentialism are again similar. Beckett, for instance, 'is not concerned about the appearance of things and whether they show themselves in their truth or in distortion when man's intelligence sheds light upon them' (Kern 1954, p. 41). Instead, his works demonstrates 'the conviction of the absurdity and confusion of the universe' (ibid., p. 47). And it is this crucial element that is expressed in Reggio and Glass's Qatsi trilogy, particularly *Naqoyqatsi*, which will be closely read during the course of this chapter.<sup>11</sup> The discussion on conflict and existentialism in relation to the subject matter of *Naqoyqatsi* will later lead onto two slightly more recent instances of existential traits in Glass's music, namely the song cycle, *Book of Longing*, and the soundtrack to the recent adaptation of a comic-book series, *Watchmen*. These three works are chosen as they demonstrate resonances of existentialism in different manners.

### **Holst and Glass – a Musico-Contextual Comparison**

Like Reggio in his selection and reworking of visual images, Glass makes implicit references to war, initially with a paraphrase of the opening passage from Gustav

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that Brian Fitch posits the Tower of Babel myth within theories relating to Beckett's translation of his own works, focusing on the distance between original text and its translation (Fitch 1988, pp. 180-224). This myth has also been the subject of Jacques Derrida's deconstructive analyses (see also Bartholomew 1998, pp. 305-28).

Holst's 'Mars' from *The Planets* (1914-16) at the beginning of the soundtrack.<sup>12</sup>

Equally so, Bruegel's painting in the opening sequence is resembled by the footage of the subsequent Detroit train station, modified by the removal of colour in order to merge in with the greyness of the train station footage. The inside of the train station effectively 'becomes' the interior of Bruegel's tower, in a similar manner to the shattered windows of the modern building's emulation of the tower's window openings. Both music and image are also similar in their shared use of a gradual progression – Reggio's visual footage slowly zooms into or rotates around static objects, while Glass's use of repetition leads to the music being equally reticent in progress.<sup>13</sup>

So while resemblances are apparent between Reggio and Bruegel's visual images, and Glass's music in relation to these footages, what findings can be drawn from the relationship between Glass's music and its allusion to Holst's *Planets*? How do both examples suggest an extra-musical meaning? Writing on the latter work, Richard Greene comments that 'Mars' should not be regarded as programmatic per se, 'rather, the musical events – the chromatic inflections and ramblings, the insistent but unconventional rhythmic figures – act as metaphors of the emotive and psychological states which we associate with the idea of war' (Greene 1995, p. 4). Greene's statement suggests that a programmatic piece of music demonstrates a high degree of objectivity due to its expression of a specific text or image, while a metaphoric reference is essentially implicit, subjective and open to different

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<sup>12</sup> An earlier reworking of Holst's 'Mars' actually took place. Gavin Bryars quotes the figuration in *The Vespertine Park* – a work that forms the part of his referential collection of pieces under the title of *Hommages* (1981).

<sup>13</sup> In other scenes, the pace of Glass's music often matches the visual tempo of the moving image, which also often occurs in the earlier Qatsi instalments.

interpretations. In other words, a piece of music can only offer a specific, or programmatic, meaning if the listener is aware of its context.

The lack of any verbal narrative in *Naqoyqatsi* promotes a sense of multiple interpretations, which relates to the symbolic use of the Tower of Babel at the outset of the film. The word ‘babel’ is taken to mean the linguistic confusion, or babble, caused as a consequence of God’s actions in the story – that is, to confuse the languages of the Tower’s workmen. In his review of *Naqoyqatsi*, Roger Ebert notes that the inclusion of the Tower of Babel in the film suggests ‘that the confusion of spoken tongues has been made worse by the inclusion of visual and digital languages’.<sup>14</sup>

In due course, the validity of the claim that New York City is the modern-day equivalent of Babylon will be explored, as the city itself is regarded as representing ‘a babble of contradictions, an aesthetic chaos of “elusive meaning”’ (White 1976 in Bonn 2006, p. 141). Daniel Chua compares the absolutism of modernist instrumental music to the Babel myth, and claims that ‘this journey from knowledge to confusion is the path that instrumental music traces [...] as humanity progresses towards Babel’ (Chua 1999, p. 288). Moreover, Chua observes that

Babel is the vacant sign – the sound of absolute music – that stands in the place of the Name [...] Babel is therefore transcendental absence, the negative absolute that is the motor of late modernity and all that follows in its wake (ibid., p. 289).<sup>15</sup>

As an example of a style that followed on in the ‘motor of late modernity’ (ibid.), one can argue that due to its neutral state, varied interpretations can indeed be construed in minimalism. Tarasti, for instance, holds that ‘although minimalist music presupposes

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<sup>14</sup> See Ebert’s blog entry, ‘Naqoyqatsi’ (25 October 2002) <<http://www.rogerebert.com>> (Last accessed 31 July 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Resonating with the relevance of Lacanian thought upon minimalist music, Chua further cites Roland Barthes’s viewpoint that ‘the name Babel [for Barthes] is a kind of *jouissance*, a celebration of confusion designed to turn the punishment into bliss (Chua 1999, p. 289fn).

a musical listener-subject, such music is basically impersonal and de-actorial, at least in its American manifestations' (Tarasti 1994, p. 278). Tarasti's view on the most objective form of minimalism 'coincides with a post-modern aesthetic which has also rejected narrativity' (ibid., p. 285). Glass's Qatsi trilogy and the portrait operas are distinctively postmodern due to their rejection of a single narrative.<sup>16</sup>

If Chua argues that late-modern music onwards lacks one specific meaning, thereby open to all form of contesting interpretations, how relevant is this to a postmodern non-narrative film? In contrast to a Hollywood movie for instance, the pairing of music and image in the Qatsi trilogy essentially means that it is open to all forms of interpretations due to the absence of a spoken plot. Characteristic of a deconstructive approach, Reggio presents a multitude of socio-cultural iconography during the course of his film, leaving the perceiver to decipher the meaning of their codes, often causing a sense of 'information overload' so often identified by post-modernist writers. Jonathan Kramer for instance wrote about Kenneth Gergen's concept of 'social saturation' within a psychological context, stating that it involved 'the condition in which we continually receive messages of all sorts, coming (often electronically) from many corners of the globe, all competing for our attention and involvement' (Kramer 2002, p. 19). This rush of information often emerges in Reggio's film, leaving the viewer to decipher the plethora of possible interpretations.

This issue leads to question of whether or not Glass's music also offers such extra-musical meanings, or does it merely function as an autonomous narrative running in parallel with Reggio's visual dimension? Or do both dimensions intersect at certain points in the composite whole? The allusion to Holst's music clearly shows

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<sup>16</sup> Glass's works since *Einstein on the Beach* display characteristic features of postopera according to Jelena Novak. The rejection of a single narrative and the promotion of multiple meanings reflect Novak's description of a lack of 'domination of one operatic text over another' in such filmic and operatic works (Novak 2007, p. 4).

an interrelation between music and subject matter. If the insistence of the ostinato in ‘Mars’ is to be taken as a metaphor of war, the use of repetition conveys – through musical gesture – exactly the imagery depicted of Mars as a planet of war, if the listener is familiar with the original context of Holst’s piece. However, other instances of repetition used to imply a state of conflict are apparent in past examples of music. Wagner’s anvil leitmotiv in *Das Rheingold* (1869) for instance, also strongly implies this, while Steve Reich’s ‘Nibelung Zeppelin’ from the first act of *Three Tales*, ‘Hindenburg’ again picked up this significance. Reich reworks this particular Wagnerian theme, pitting it against the visual image of the swastika shown on the side of the infamous airship, causing the perceiver of the opera to disentangle the meanings implied therein.<sup>17</sup>

In Rebecca Leydon’s terms, the form of musematic repetition employed by Wagner and Reich would be categorised as a totalitarian trope, defined as an ‘involuntary state of unfreedom’ (Leydon 2002). This is also a state conveyed in Reich’s *Different Trains*, where the psychological entrapment of the victims of the Nazi concentration camp is reinforced by the perpetuity of Reich’s repetitive units. And as transcribed in Ex. 7.1, the beginning of *Naqoyqatsi* again assimilates a state of war by an allusion to the earlier-written ‘Mars’. Use of repetition in Wagner, Reich and Glass’s works all convey an implied meaning therefore; as opposed to serving an explicitly programmatic function, they all present one of many narrative strands in the composite audio-visual works.

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<sup>17</sup> Reich’s video opera was released in the same year as *Naqoyqatsi*; its subject matter often hinges around the double-edged sword of technological developments.

## **‘Life as War’ vs. ‘The Bringer of War’**

So how exactly are ‘Mars’ and ‘Naqoyqatsi’ similar? What are the resembling characteristics that enhance a sense of common identity between both Glass’s film music and Holst’s orchestral work? In metrical terms, both composers employ a 5/4 time signature that inherently presupposes a sense of metrical imbalance that signifies the notion of conflict. In ‘Mars’, it invokes a sense of ‘aggression and tenacity’ (Greene 1995, p. 42), which is also evident, albeit more subtly, in ‘Naqoyqatsi’. Glass’s rhythmic figure, comprising two dotted crotchets followed by two regular crotchets, as shown in Ex. 7.1, is far from being a direct quotation from Holst’s piece (shown in Ex. 7.2), though it is clearly implied in the dissonances of minor seconds, causing conflict and subsequent resolution, which are equally apparent in both works.<sup>18</sup> The rhythmic aspect of Glass’s opening material, i.e. the sung ‘Naqoyqatsi’ phrase, also relates to the repeated low-note ‘themes’ that use the title of the first and last instalment of the Qatsi trilogy.

Yet another resemblance between Holst and Glass’s works can be observed in the use of sequential chords that fall by a step and then rise to the next pair of chords. Both examples show a linkage by tri-tone leaps: Glass’s example leaps between *b* and *f*, while Holst’s example elicits a leap between *g* and *d*-flat (though it initially rises by a perfect fifth to *d* before descending by a half step). In terms of orchestration, the scoring of woodwind and brass instruments is yet another resemblance between Holst and Glass’s textures. Glass’s dependence on strings in the work, he argues, reflects

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<sup>18</sup> This intervallic configuration – causing tension and release – is often heard in Glass’s compositions, as earlier discussed in relation to *Façades* in Chapter 5.

Beethoven and Brahms’s recognition of this section of the orchestra as ‘the body and substance of an orchestral piece’;<sup>19</sup> Glass’s reference to his predecessors is yet again

Ex. 7.1 Aural transcription of ‘Naqoyqatsi’ from *Naqoyqatsi*

The musical score for 'Naqoyqatsi' is presented in two systems. The first system is a piano accompaniment in 5/4 time, featuring a bass line of quarter notes and a treble line of chords. The second system shows a vocal line with the lyrics 'Na - qoy - qat - si Na - qoy - qat - si'.

expressed in this statement. If Richard Greene considers Holst’s ‘Mars’ to be a rhetorical reference to war, then Glass’s ‘Naqoyqatsi’ can similarly be regarded so. While *The Planets* were composed in the midst of World War I, Glass’s music appeared at the time when the so-called ‘war on terror’ was initially waged at the turn of the new millennium. As discussed earlier in this chapter’s introduction, it has previously been suggested within the context of art history that Bruegel’s painting possibly foretold the events that took place in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 (Bonn 2006, p. 142), though *Naqoyqatsi* avoids any explicit references to the event.

On this subject, Glass recounted that they ‘were making the film at that period in September when everyone was freaking out, and there had been enough wars around to make the piece very current’ (Maycock 2002, p. 139). Meanings of ‘life as war’ are largely created through artistic implication therefore, in contrast to such

<sup>19</sup> ‘Music of *Naqoyqatsi*: A Conversation with Philip Glass and Yo-Yo Ma’, *Naqoyqatsi* DVD (Bonus Material).

Ex. 7.2 Reduced score of Holst's 'Mars' from *The Planets*



documentary-based collaboration with Errol Morris on *The Fog of War*, based on the life of a past Secretary of Defense in the US, Robert McNamara, and his involvement in the Vietnam War.

Glass and Reggio eschew any overt references to the atrocities in New York on 9/11 by the selection of the Detroit train station footage, as opposed to a more obvious icon of migration such as the centre on Ellis Island. New York's infamous World Trade Center is furthermore conspicuous by its absence in the film, yet it is widely regarded as the reincarnation of the tower in Babylon.<sup>20</sup> In his writings on Bruegel's paintings, Robert L. Bonn draws a parallelism between both old and modern developed civilizations (Babylon vs. New York), noting that 'if the ancient Tower of Babel was the place from which the peoples of the world were dispersed, New York City of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the place to which displaced people came' (Bonn 2006, p. 140). Such skyscrapers as the World Trade Center may be regarded as the reincarnation of the ancient Tower (ibid.), while Bruegel's paintings 'captured the essence of the social change we call 'urbanization', and the ongoing struggle of life versus death' (ibid., p. 144). From a theological perspective, the myth of the

<sup>20</sup> John Adams's one-movement work *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002) is the first minimalist effort that explicitly engages with this topic, being a tribute to the victims of 9/11. Adams's work merges choral and instrumental music with an acousmatic element, namely spoken material that lists the names of those missing or deceased.



Tower of Babel ‘portrays a clash of human and divine wills’, and ‘a conflict of centripetal and centrifugal forces’ (Anderson 2005, p. 166).

If the notion of war is indeed inferred through music and image in the opening sequence of *Naqoyqatsi*, subsequent references to this topic only appear in an explicit form towards the end of the film. In ‘Intensive Time’ for instance, nearly one hour into the film, Glass’s three-against-two beats on strings are punctuated by percussive outbursts and octave leaps, correlating at first with the slow-motion footage of a bullet being fired out of a gun.<sup>21</sup> Also used in the scene is the recycled footage of the detonation of an atomic bomb – yet another theme developed by Reich in his second act of *Three Tales*, the cataclysmic ‘Bikini’, and identically using the footage employed by Bruce Conner in *Crossroads*.<sup>22</sup> Both bullet and bomb are clearly symbols of war, reinforced by the sound of military side drums.

In contrast to the percussive sections however, lyrical passages by the cello alternating and subsequently combined with an intoning soprano part (lacking any textual material) can be heard. In fact, during an interview with Robert Maycock, Glass commented on the use of cello in the soundtrack, saying that it ‘becomes almost the voice of the piece’ as a textural device ‘that weaves through it’ (Maycock 2002, p. 140).<sup>23</sup> This solo element represents an individualism that is central to the existential messages conveyed in the film – an individualism that parallels the singular voices heard in literary examples including Dostoyevsky’s *Notes on Underground* (1864), Camus’s *L’Étranger* (1942), or perhaps most relevant to the present context,

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<sup>21</sup> Bruno Lessard considers this early cinematic footage to be ‘a digital rendering of Edwin S. Porter’s *Great Train Robbery* (1906)’, with the gunshot being ‘of an outlaw who fires at the spectator’ (Lessard 2009, p. 504fn). Lessard also draws attention to the quotation from Muybridge’s zoopraxiscopy footage, again employed in ‘Intensive Time’, which interestingly enough forms the subject of Glass’s opera, *The Photographer*.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3 for an analysis of Reich’s ‘Bikini’ and Bruce Conner’s film *Crossroads* (with music by Terry Riley).

<sup>23</sup> In the interview on the DVD’s bonus material, Glass again states that the solo cello offers a “distinctive voice” to the music.

Beckett's *Company* or Cohen's *Book of Longing* (2006).<sup>24</sup> As this chapter unfolds, a comparison will take place between *Naqoyqatsi* and Cohen's recent text, both in terms of musical and extra-musical subject matter. The study of the theatrical song cycle will instead unavoidably focus on a comparison of the music and text, even though this work also involves visual material in the form of Cohen's artwork, the staging and lighting etc. The analysis of *Naqoyqatsi*, however, will be founded on the relationship between Reggio's visual narrative and specific musical characteristics that include harmonic devices and orchestration.

### **Harmony vs. Conflict**

In his writings on music and metaphor, Michael Spitzer re-associates the basic concept of musical harmony, 'or the "rhythm" of harmony [with the expression of] the many harmonic cycles of the universe: the orbit of the planets, the oscillation of a string, the return of a spirit to God' (Spitzer 2004, p. 142). Harmony is consequently an intrinsic part of human life – musical harmony is consequently a metaphoric representation of this natural state, and any abruptions to this state – e.g. war or death – can be expressed through harmonic dissonance or conflict. Spitzer's list might further be appended by the cyclical feature of Glass's harmonic devices, which coincide with his Buddhist approach towards life.

In fact, one can examine how the harmonic usage in *Naqoyqatsi* interacts with Reggio's visual narrative – specifically with the depiction of war and conflict.

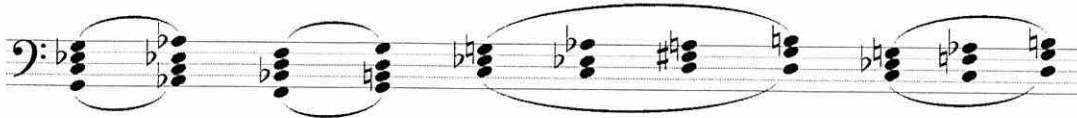
'Intensive Time' makes a similar use of 'buildup-to-climaxes' to those examined by

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<sup>24</sup> As discussed earlier, Glass was well read in Beckett's work, and wrote music for several adaptations of his plays including *Play*, *Cascano*, *The Lost Ones*, *Mercier and Camier*, *Endgame*, *Company*. See Zurbrugg 1999, pp. 143-49.

Susan McClary in *The Photographer* and *Koyaanisqatsi*, in addition to the cyclical progressions discussed in several other soundtracks during the course of this thesis. Glass once again focuses on the progression from the tonic to the dominant, passing through VI and VII chords at the beginning of the track, then subsequently through VI and II chords, as shown in Ex. 7.3.

Ex. 7.3 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Intensive Time' from *Naqoyqatsi*



The employment of a looping technique in 'Intensive Time' is again particularly apt, conveying a sense of intensification (albeit receding) compatible with the expression of conflict. The ultimate climax, however, occurs right at the end of the scene, in which a person takes a bite of a burger, captured in slow motion. Glass's technique consequently gives this occasion a false sense of significance. Or alternatively, this climactic progression, in conjunction with the slowed down footage, perhaps alludes to the over-inflated importance of fast food in the commercialised and the global society that we inhabit.

The subsequent scene accompanying the track entitled 'Point Blank' follows on seamlessly from the former, in which further overt visual references to war and conflict are made with footages of the burning of an US flag, nuclear explosions and missile launches. However, the depiction of real images of war then leads to simulated conflict as apparent in video games and cartoons. Similar to the former scene, Reggio again conveys a derisive message in using these materials; in this case, the use of animation can be regarded as rhetorically questioning the purpose of war, underlining the illogicality of human conflict.

In fact, this sense of mockery complements the light-heartedness of Glass's music, as heard in 'Point Blank'. In contrast to 'Intensive Time' a greater use of major harmonies is made, suggesting an element of irony when pitted against images of conflict and warfare. The piece opens with a cyclical progression that rests on an E-flat major dyad, before subsequently moving on to the basic framework of which is transcribed in a reductive form in the graph of Ex. 7.4.

Ex. 7.4 Basic harmonic reduction of 'Point Blank' from *Naqoyqatsi*



Aesthetically, this is an evocative passage that is reminiscent of nineteenth-century French music; Glass in this passage arguably reveals some of his Parisian influences, as a former pupil of Nadia Boulanger. The string section gently fundamentally undulates between two chords, those being a root-position G-flat minor and first-inversion E-flat major chords. The upper two voices perform a dyadic ostinato, alternating between *a*-natural to *d*-flat pitches in the first chord, and *b*-flat to *e*-flat pitches in the second chord. As shown in the example, the lowest voice progresses through neighbour note figurations (*g*-flat/*a*-flat and *g*-natural/*a*-flat pitches). This later progresses to a first-inversion F minor chord, with the neighbour note figure being transferred to the upper voice, before returning to a first-inversion E-flat chord that ultimately rests on the diminished fifth pitch (*b*-natural). The graph also reveals how a neighbour note figuration operates on varying levels of prolongation, which can be regarded as a characteristic trait of Glass's voice leading strategies. A similar configuration was observed in pieces from the soundtrack to *No Reservations*, as

discussed in Chapter 4, wherein simultaneous uses of neighbour note figurations led to the avoidance of any form of dialectical cadencing through the use of this motion.

Such pleasing harmonies as those heard in this passage are contesting with the overall visual meaning in the scene. 'Point Blank' primarily depicts society's protestation and conflict, though (contradictory) also it alludes to the positive aspect of humanity's progression in architecture and mechanisation. One gets the impression that Reggio attempts to convey the message that building things in order to be demolished is an absurd act. Glass's music also becomes a rhetorical feature, as the meanings conveyed are not clear.

Nevertheless, this dialectic is soon negated. As the scene unfolds, musical lyricism adopts a new meaning in its expression of the irrationality of military conflict, in contest with the atrocity and brutality of the images. Also, the repetition of octave descents through a chromatic scale as heard on a tuba is a figuration that promotes a sense of mockery, again evincing the downfall and destructive effect caused as a consequence of nuclear war. In contrast, the use of ascending chromatic scales can be regarded as advancement or progression, particularly when heard in conjunction with the launching of a missile or airplane. Glass's music, in this instance, therefore plays an integrated role that is closely related to the visual narrative of the film.

This scene's military setting is further enhanced by a further subtle employment of side drums and timpani – instruments that often play a ceremonial role – is eminently heard in the track. Interestingly enough, the timpani also plays a significant function in Glass's 'Puppet Time' from *Book of Longing* – a scene that again alludes to the irrationality of war. Puppetry, after all, is most often associated with entertainment, as are the cartoon footage employed in *Naqoyqatsi*'s 'Point

Blank'. Cohen's poem seems to suggest everything that happens on earth is somehow controlled by a puppet master – God, perhaps? The line, 'Puppet presidents command puppet troops to burn the land', clearly reverberates with the conflict depicted in *Naqoyqatsi*'s 'Point Blank'. On the other hand, the similarity in orchestration, i.e. the use of timpani, might just simply have occurred serendipitously

### **A Musico-Visual Critique of Modern Civilisation?**

While the opening scene, and the later 'Intensive Time' and 'Point Blank' are overtly musical representations of war, the remainder of the film tends to be less dependent on conveying such a state of conflict. Instead, as Bruno Lessard observes, the film 'looks at globalization as civilized violence, and at its potential cultural, ecological and ideological side effects' (Lessard 2009, p. 494). Reggio's moving pictures can be regarded as a musico-visual critique of modern-day civilisation, differing from the other two *Qatsi* productions by its primary focus on the progress of digital technology at the turn of the new millennium, or as 'a commentary on digital culture and the cult of the computer' (Lessard 2009, p. 503fn).<sup>25</sup> If *Naqoyqatsi* is therefore to be considered as a study of humanity, or *humanism*, Karl Jaspers's philosophies can be drawn upon in order to highlight the existential inferences contained in the film.

Reggio draws attention to several key symbols and themes of relevance to our contemporary society. In the area of science, images of x-ray technology, genetic experimentation and the cloning of Dolly the sheep emerges.<sup>26</sup> Images relating to

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley briefly refer to the *Qatsi* trilogy under the title of 'technological humanism', also drawing on the theories of Foucault, Baudrillard and Haraway (see Halliwell and Mousley 2003, pp. 178-9).

<sup>26</sup> Dolly the sheep prominently features in the last act of Reich's *Three Tales* also, thus demonstrating yet another common theme shared between Glass and Reich's oeuvres.

industry and urbanisation, globalisation and commerce as well as entertainment and sport activities such as running and swimming appear. Furthermore, Reggio collates religious icons and company logos, footage of explorations in space, the natural world and of course images of conflict are again often apparent, as are the humanistic element evinced in the focus on facial gestures.

These images are all assembled in a way that effectively highlights the dialectic between human achievement and destruction, although Reggio's assemblage does not entail a single clear narrative – the film can be regarded as being multiply narrative or even anti-narrative in some respects, inherently embodying the post-modern condition identified by Lyotard as 'a state in which no one believes in grand stories or master narratives' (Tarasti 1994, p. 285). Reggio's overall message, according to himself, is

not the effect of technology on society, on economics, on religion, on war, on culture, etc., on art. It's that everything now is existing in technology as the new host of life. It's the price we pay for the pursuit of our technological happiness that is what warfare is. It's way beyond the battlefield. It's total war. It's war as ordinary daily life.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from the scenes that overtly refer to war, i.e. 'Naqoyqatsi', 'Intensive Time' and 'Point Blank', Glass's work eschews a single extra-musical narrative. The employment of a solo cello as well, the intoning soprano voice and the overdubbing of the sound of a heartbeat however evinces a humanistic theme that is central to the music. In this respect, Glass approximates Reggio's focus on the influence of war on society's population. The soloistic textures employed – showcased by lyrical passages on cello or the voice – represent such human achievement as space exploration or the breaking of the sound barrier on land. On the other hand, the use of accompanimental

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<sup>27</sup> This quotation is a transcript of Reggio's commentary in a behind the scenes featurette on the DVD.

ostinato (often on strings) essentially embodies society, or the masses, as often illustrated in Reggio's selection of visual crowds.

### **Applying Jaspers**

Karl Jaspers's philosophy notes that a human entity is recognised as part of a mass society but also holds onto an individuality – 'each individual continues to say to himself: 'What another has, I also want; what another can do, I also can do' (Jaspers 1951, p. 42).<sup>28</sup> This statement also resounds with Baudrillard's observation in his article 'The System of Objects', that in a commercial world 'each individual feels unique while resembling everyone else' (Baudrillard 1968, p. 409). Both theories highlight a desire for both material gain and achievement – a desire that is well represented in *Naqoyqatsi*'s frequent reference to advertising material and mankind's advancement in space exploration, in bio-medical science and sport. As an example of individuality, one can instantly compare this to the expression of solitude in 'Vivid Unknown'. This scene represents an individual's achievement, for instance by breaking the speed barrier or venturing into space. In this respect, the meandering nature of the solo melodic line is clearly associated with the scene's subject matter that gives a picture of an individual's achievement in one form or another.

On the other hand, such scene as 'Massman' represents civilisation, or a multitude of people in society. By this scene's title, one is reminded of Jaspers's view on the notion of a 'massman', which features heavily in his *Man in the Modern Age*, further to Jose Ortega's *The Revolt of the Masses*, in which it is defined as 'a

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<sup>28</sup> The efficacy of minimalism for advertising will further be explored in this thesis's conclusions.



multitude of ‘the average man’ (Ortega 1950, p. 8). In *Naqoyqatsi*, the company of swimmers almost at the outset of the scene would indeed represent a ‘mass phenomenon’ in Jaspers’s mind – the display of man’s competitive streak and his ‘self-preserved impulse’ (Jaspers 1951, p. 67). In musical terms, Glass’s three-against-two figuration, shown in Ex. 7.5, draws a parallel with the pace of the sea waves and the swimmers, thereby demonstrating a musico-visual kineticism. As the example demonstrates, based around F melodic minor, Glass’s melodic lines in the upper treble voice and the bass line progress in contrary motion, causing dissonances in the use of extended sevenths and minor second intervals (between *e*-natural and *d*-natural, and between *d*-natural and *e*-flat in b. 5 for instance). The overall contour of the upper and lower voices undulates, which can be regarded as the musical equivalent of the natural ebb and flow of the sea.

### **The Dialectic of Progress?**

While the melodic contours heard in ‘Massman’ evinces a certain degree of extra-musical meaning, evoking the contour and motion of sea waves and the group of swimmers, other scenes in the film are, not surprisingly, heavily engaged with technology. The development of technology is often discussed in social commentaries, being a subject featuring in both Jaspers and Ortega’s writings. Needless to say, however, the technology explored in *Naqoyqatsi*’s digital context, has advanced greatly since both authors’ periods of writing. Nevertheless, in his introduction to Sartre’s *Existentialism and Humanism*, Philip Marlet notes that

Ex. 7.5 Aural transcription of 'Massman' from *Naqoyqatsi*

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system shows a piano introduction with a steady bass line of chords and a treble staff that is mostly empty. The second system begins the main melody in the treble staff, characterized by eighth-note triplets. The bass line continues with chords and some eighth-note movement. The third system continues the triplet melody and includes a repeat sign at the end. The fourth system further develops the triplet melody. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final triplet flourish in the treble staff and sustained chords in the bass.

Jaspers's *Man in the Modern Age* is 'mainly a powerful indictment of the progress of technological civilisation, which he regards as a social disease' (Sartre 1973, p. 11).

The multifaceted nature of this observation is often illustrated in Reggio's film, which essentially embodies the following statement by Mariet on Jaspers's views:

The surrender of man's thinking to rationalism and of his artifice to technics have consequences which console man with the feeling that he is progression,

but make him neglect or deny fundamental forces of his inner life which are then turned into forces of destruction (Sartre 1973, p. 11).<sup>29</sup>

In a nutshell, this citation articulates the struggle between mankind's achievement and failures, or a dialectical battle between the positive and negative aspects of human civilisation and the natural world. A similar stance is also taken in José Ortega y Gasset's seminal *Revolt of the Masses*, first written in Spanish in 1931:

The rebellion of the masses may, in fact be the transition to some new, unexampled organisation of humanity, but it may also be a catastrophe of human destiny. There is no reason to deny the reality of progress, but there is to correct the notion that believes this progress secure. It is more in accordance with facts to hold that there is no certain progress, no evolution, without the threat of 'involution,' of retrogression' (Ortega 1950, p. 56).

Ortega's commentary further reinforces some of the ideas formed in the visual narrative of *Naqoyqatsi*, particularly those that display mankind's advances in science and medicine, for instance, yet at the same time demonstrating the destructive effect of nuclear development and social rebellion. These visual representations are confirmed by Fredric Jameson's location of Ortega's writings within Heideggerian ideology – an ideology that 'expresses a horror of the new industrial city with its new working and white-collar classes, its mass culture and its public sphere' (Jameson 2009, p. 426).

Glass's 'Massman' shares a close kinetic relationship between music and subject matter, as the musical flow is consistent with the visual pace of society. In other instances it ostensibly interacts with the colouristic characteristics of a scene. In 'New World' and 'Old World' (note how the titles revealing the dichotomy between old and new that is central to the film), Reggio employs idiosyncratic colour effects, whereby the earth is blue and the sky is orange for instance. This correlates with

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<sup>29</sup> In Jaspers's own words, 'the mass-order brings into being a universal life-apparatus which proves destructive to the world of a truly human life' (Jaspers 1951, p. 44).

Glass's scoring of harmonics on cello that enhance the otherworldly, ethereal ambience of the scene. And if one reads further into this musico-visual association, one might argue that both music and vision is an expression of dystopia – of a natural world affected, or even spoiled – by technological 'advances'.

Glass's music also interacts with the subject of digital technology in his piece entitled 'Primacy of Number'.<sup>30</sup> As the visual material drifts at a rapid pace through the darkness of space amid a flurry of stars, a rhythmic drive is offered in the music that matches the visual tempo, based on two groups of three and one group of two quaver beat figuration. This piece opens with the economic use of a single pitch class, *g*, which is repeated. It soon develops into eight-note quaver chromatic patterns that alternate with the fixed *g* pitches established previously. A gradual textural unfolding occurs, initially with strings and a Jew's harp, followed by the percussive attributes of a woodblock, a flute, marimba and cello.

Slightly more recent than Jaspers and Ortega's philosophies, Marshall McLuhan's theses on the dawn of technology in society, particularly those contained in *Understanding Media*, first published in 1964, can also be taken into account when discussing 'Primacy of Number'. McLuhan's essay on 'numbers' marry together the relationship between new technology and the concept of the 'masses' that is explored in its visual form in *Naqoyqatsi*. According to McLuhan, 'the power of sheer numbers, in wealth, or in crowds, to set a dynamic drive towards growth and aggrandizement is mysterious' (McLuhan 2001, p. 115). This 'dynamic drive' is

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<sup>30</sup> In his PhD thesis, Sean Atkinson focuses on this specific scene in his chapter on *Naqoyqatsi*, which he considers 'as a microcosm of the entire film' (Atkinson 2009, p. 115). However, while he claims that his analysis is partly dependent on the meaning of the scene's title, he does not explain what in fact the title means, or its relation to the musico-visual narrative. During the course of the chapter, Atkinson highlights the bipartite nature of the key structure (G minor / C minor), the use of reductive strategies (or 'subtractive processes') and a ternary form as the main structural basis for the music in this scene (ibid., p. 116).

reflected in the perpetual nature of Glass's 'Primacy of Number', and the title in itself offers a multiplicity of meanings, and could refer to the power of monetary numbers represented by the collection of international financial symbols. Alternatively, the series of 0's and 1's are again numerals symbolising the digital revolution – further reinforcing the message of sociological development occurring at a relentless pace, with the aid of an economical amount of musical material that propels the listener towards the future.

In addition to his writings on 'numbers', McLuhan's discussion on 'the spoken word' is equally relevant to *Naqoyqatsi*, in which he highlights the efficacy of the emergent advances in computer technology, stating that they 'hold out the promise of a means of instant translation of any code or language into any other code or language' (McLuhan 2001, p. 87). Such a statement also resounds with the opening scene of the film – the image of the Tower of Babel – wherein issues relating to multiple languages and rhetoric were visually expressed in Bruegel's painting. And by providence, McLuhan even refers to the Tower in his essay. Drawing on the theories of Henri Bergson, he claims that 'language as the technology of human extension, whose powers of division and separation we know so well, may have been the "Tower of Babel" by which men sought to scale the highest heavens' (ibid.). This reference to the Biblical myth raises the obvious question of whether or not Reggio was aware of McLuhan's writings on the subject, and directly influenced as a result when selecting graphic material for the film?

## From Babel to Babylon

Matters relating to existential philosophy converge in *Naqoyqatsi* from the perspective of an individual and the masses, musically represented by the cello as the singular voice driving the work onwards amid the characteristic texture of arpeggiative figures. Glass's collaboration with Leonard Cohen on *Book of Longing* on the other hand represents a more personal or introverted exploration of an individual psyche. *Naqoyqatsi* looks towards the future, while *Book of Longing* looks back at the past in a similar manner to the nineteenth-century poets, replicating a similar intensity of emotion and yearning belonging to the Romantic movement.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the fact that the *Book* takes the form of a song cycle is yet again an allusion to the Romantic era – to Schumann's *Dichterliebe* or Schubert's *Winterreise*, for instance. Characteristic of a post-modern aesthetic however, Glass's selection of Cohen's texts takes the form of an assemblage of the poems in no particular order, thereby promoting a sense of anti-narrativity to the overall work.

Clearly contrasting nonetheless is the absence of any technological developments as part of social development – instead, in his representation of the thoughts of an anti-hero, Cohen's work often touches upon issues including feelings of love, depression, hopelessness, religion, war, drugs, the 'dark rivers' of Babylon, which may be taken to imply a sense of unreachable utopia. The introverted aspect often manifesting in Cohen's text is hardly surprising given the fact that most of the poems were written during a period when their author was retreating in the solitary environment of the Buddhist monastery, Mount Baldy, in California.

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<sup>31</sup> Bono, the Irish rock band U2's lead singer, has even declared Cohen to be 'our Byron, our Shelley'. See 'He's Moses coming down from the mountaintop,' *The Telegraph* (24 September 2006) <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3655548/Hes-Moses-coming-down-from-the-mountaintop.html>> (Last accessed 23 July 2009).

Glass's music is equally intense, even sombre and bleak, though sometimes tinged with a degree of sentimentality or melancholy, reinforced by the employment of major tonalities. In 'The Light Came Through the Window' for example, as a setting of Cohen's 'Love Itself', the use of major tonalities can be taken as a metaphor for optimism; in fact, the poem depicts a longing for love, which remains unfulfilled. Such a piece can even be regarded as an allusion to past song-cycles such as Schubert's *Winterreise*, which also makes sparing uses of major key structures – A major, for instance in 'Frühlingstraum' (Dreams of Spring), 'Täuschung' (Delusion) and 'Die Nebensonnen' (The Mock Suns),<sup>32</sup> in reflection of Müller's poetic optimism.

Several of the work's movements are based on solo material, often performed in an extemporal manner, such as the cello piece entitled 'Want to Fly', the saxophone in 'Not a Jew', the violin in 'I Enjoyed the Laughter', and double bass ('I am now able'). Similar to the importance of Yo-Yo Ma's performance in *Naqoyqatsi*, the monophonic textures of these pieces arguably replicate the solitude, if existential, character of the first-person narratives often presented in Cohen's text. The graininess of the lower-pitched strings, in addition to the often-used low tessitura by the ensemble in general, assimilates Cohen's own earthy voice. Roland Barthes's writings on the 'grain of the voice' within the context of a musical voice, seems particularly apt in this instance, particularly his comment that

the 'grain' of the voice is not – or is not merely – its timbre; the *significance* it opens cannot better be defined, indeed, than by the very friction between the music and something else, which something else is the particular language (and nowise the message) (Barthes 1977, p. 185).<sup>33</sup>

In the Prologue, 'I Can't Make the Hills', for instance, the 'grain' of Cohen's voice interrelates with the low-pitched flute melody, the dyadic activity on low strings and

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<sup>32</sup> Susan Youens discusses the uses of tonality in Youens 1991, especially pp. 75-6.

<sup>33</sup> Barthes's writings on the 'grain' of the voice are also partially cited in Chapter 1 in relation to Cumming's work on the 'the musical subject'.

drones, which altogether convey a dismal, grounded ambience – or a sense of ‘existential dread’ as Errol Morris claimed Glass was adept in expressing in music.<sup>34</sup>

If the music in *Book of Longing* assimilates the text in terms of its sombre mood, certain intersections of a more specific nature between text and musical expression also ostensibly exist. In ‘Want to Fly’ – the beginning of which is transcribed in Ex. 7.6 – constant attempts to fly are heard in the first notes of the groups of two quavers. However, the recurrence of the pitch class *d* (being the dominant pitch of G minor) in the second part of the dyads creates a ‘grounded’ sense and a lack of progression. Ascending and descending scales in bars 4 and 8 respectively contribute to this motion, while the more extensive scale in bar 15 onwards prepares towards a modulation to C. This interaction between scallic motion

Ex. 7.6 Aural transcription of ‘Want to Fly’ from *Book of Longing*



and textual meaning is reminiscent of the earlier mentioned relationship between music and image in *Naqoyqatsi*'s ‘Point Blank’, where the projection and subsequent destructive effect of military warfare in the visual narrative corresponded with Glass's

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<sup>34</sup> See Scott Hicks's documentary, *Glass: A Portrait of Philip in Twelve Parts* (2007) for Morris's quote. In his discussion on the *Fog of War* soundtrack, Glass also refers to ‘the ambience of existential dread’ during an interview with Marc Savlov (see Savlov 2004, unpag.).



ascending and descending scales. And as a further comparison, Barbara's ascent to the doorstep of the Harts' home in *Notes on a Scandal* was also paired with an extensive ascending melodic scale amid a cyclical arpeggiative figure. In this respect, a trope can be identified in the characterisation of visual ascending or descending motion through the use of scales.<sup>35</sup>

Further textual-musical interrelations also occur in *Book of Longing*. In 'I Came down from the Mountain', recounting Cohen's departure from his Zen retreat in California, descending lines are heard again both in syncopation and otherwise, that surely imitate the downhill motion alluded to in Cohen's text, 'Leaving Mt. Baldy'. Cohen in this poem turns his back on the spiritual heights of the retreat, which sets the tone for the remainder of the work. Glass's music consequently shows an ability to assimilate the poetic narrative – demonstrating a metaphoric descent from a spiritual haven to the grim reality of human existence.

### **“The Existence of Life is a Highly Overrated Phenomenon”**

A more recent association, albeit more indirect, between Philip Glass and Leonard Cohen occurred in the inclusion of their music in the soundtrack to Jack Snyder's epic fantasy film, *Watchmen* (2009), where Cohen's pop song, 'First we take Manhattan' (1988) is used in the final part of the film's end credit sequence, as are extracts from Glass's *Koyaanisqatsi*. While Glass and Cohen's *Book of Longing* makes several references to religion, either as a rejection or an acceptance of its influence upon the poet's life, human existence and issues surrounding existentialism forms the crux of

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<sup>35</sup> In 'All Falls Apart', from the soundtrack to *Candyman II: Farewell to the Flesh*, a descending ostinato scale in the organ's bass register incurs a similar effect.

yet another work involving Glass's music, the soundtrack to the film *Watchmen* (2009).

In addition to an original score by Tyler Bates, the soundtrack combines Glass's music with an eclectic mix of styles, including a comprehensive back-catalogue of pop music by Simon & Garfunkel, Billie Holiday, Nat "King" Cole's 'Unforgettable' (1951) and Bob Dylan's 'The times they are a-changing' (1964). The quotation of such tracks ties in with the social context of the film, serving a cultural function in Claudia Gorbman's terms.<sup>36</sup> Glass's music on the other hand operates on a different level, as it integrates with the mood of the film, offering an unsurprising reference to an apocalyptic event.

Within an intricate plot set in the final minutes before a doomsday scenario, *Watchmen* assembles a group of comic book heroes together in a dramatic attempt to save the world from destruction at the hands of Adrian Veidt. The plot absorbs real historic events involving conflict, such as the Cold War and the Vietnam War, and also existent politicians including Ronald Reagan and JFK, thereby juxtaposing factual material within a fictional setting. The thematic material from *Koyaanisqatsi* is associated with a particular character, namely a government scientist called Doctor Manhattan whose body was subjected to an irreversible transformation (acquiring super powers and physically changing his colour to blue) due to a nuclear accident at the laboratory in which he worked.<sup>37</sup> Glass's music is thematically associated with this filmic character, therefore a Wagnerian compositional device (the leitmotiv) is ostensibly employed in this recent Hollywood film. In its original context, *Koyaanisqatsi*, Glass and Reggio had avoided the use of the leitmotiv; mainstream

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<sup>36</sup> Gorbman's cinematic semiology is discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>37</sup> Doctor Manhattan proclaims towards the conclusion of the film that "human existence is a highly overrated phenomenon", to which this section's title refers.

composers such as Howard Shore, John Williams and Hans Zimmer on the other hand often revert to using this traditional referential tool.<sup>38</sup>

### **Re-employing ‘Prophecies’ and ‘Pruit Igoe’**

The initial quotation from *Koyaanisqatsi*, from the ‘Prophecies’ scene, occurs in *Watchmen* at a point when Doctor Manhattan looks back at his life before the accident. Prior to this scene however, as the character of Doctor Manhattan develops, music that assimilates certain generic aspects of Glass’s technique is heard. Tyler Bates employs arpeggios, choral passages, semitonal shifts and works towards climaxes, thereby creating a ‘dramatic’ effect comparable to the depiction of the accident in the filmic narrative. Indeed, in other films quoting Glass’s pre-existing music, other lesser-known composers have assimilated his approach, in *The Truman Show*, for instance.<sup>39</sup>

By the decision to quote ‘Prophecies’, the apocalyptic meaning of Glass’s music in *Koyaanisqatsi*, one might argue, is transferred to its new context in *Watchmen*. Demonstrating a rare occurrence of a sung text (other than the opening track), Glass offers a setting of three foretelling statements of an apocalyptic nature derived from Hopi Native Americans, reinforcing Reggio’s visual depiction of ‘life out of balance’. In ‘Prophecies’, we hear the vocal incantation on the lines of ‘If we dig precious things from the land, we will invite disaster’, ‘Near the day of Purification, there will be cobwebs spun back and forth in the sky’ and finally, ‘A container of ashes might one day be thrown from the sky, which could burn the land

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<sup>38</sup> Chapter 3 illustrates the latter composer’s approach towards leitmotivic threads in *The Da Vinci Code*.

<sup>39</sup> The assimilation of Glass’s music in scores by other composers became apparent in Burkhard Dallwitz’s music for this film, as discussed in Chapter 5.

and boil the oceans’.

Central to the plot of *Watchmen* is a pervasive sense of instability, with frequent references to war, social lawlessness and riots, in addition to the imminent threat of nuclear Armageddon. An ominous sense of dystopia is conveyed throughout the film’s narrative. The quotation of Glass’s ‘Prophecies’ nevertheless presents a contrasting effect, in its calming or even spiritual ambience. In Nicholas Cook’s terms, the relationship between the musical attributes of ‘Prophecies’ and the overall subject matter of the film would be a contesting one.<sup>40</sup> As shown in Ex. 7.7,<sup>41</sup> a combination of rising arpeggios on organ is heard; this figuration alternates between second-inversion D minor and root position A minor chords (although penultimate group of two bars are centred around G minor chords with added seventh), which delays the progression to the A descent through an A minor scale is apparent in the lower bass register of the organ, which presents another repetitive unit.

Once again, this downward motion is perceptibly an allusion to the downfall foreseen in the Hopi text, and the film’s depiction of humanity’s destructive abilities. This descent is reinforced by the vocal part, below a static chant on the tonic pitch, *a*. On this level, the calmness of the music, the tonal stability and the instruction of a ‘piano’ dynamic is similar to Doctor Manhattan’s speech quality. The physicist recounts the story of his accident in a softly spoken, monotonous manner, implying a similar degree of poignancy in both speech and music.

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<sup>40</sup> Another contesting relationship occurs in the opening sequence of the film, where Nat “King” Cole’s ‘Unforgettable’ is used in a violent scene.

<sup>41</sup> Both musical examples from *Koyaanisqatsi* are not transcriptions as they have derived from the score.

Ex. 7.7 Reduced score of 'Prophecies' from *Koyaanisqatsi*

The image displays a reduced score for the piece 'Prophecies' from the film *Koyaanisqatsi*. It consists of three systems of musical notation, each with a piano (treble clef) and bass (bass clef) staff. The time signature is 4/4. The first system shows a piano part with a sequence of eighth notes and a bass part with a single note. The second system features a piano part with a sequence of eighth notes and a bass part with a sequence of eighth notes. The third system shows a piano part with a sequence of eighth notes and a bass part with a sequence of eighth notes. The score includes various musical notations such as beams, slurs, and triplets.

The extract from 'Prophecies' seamlessly merges into a quotation from 'Pruit Igoe' (Ex. 7.8), specifically at the point when the flashback to the destruction of Doctor Manhattan's human body, later regenerating into a superhuman entity, occurs. Once again, the meaning of this particular musical extract seemingly relates to its original context on a certain level: in *Koyaanisqatsi*, 'Pruit Igoe' is employed in conjunction with the destruction of a housing estate. Glass's music consequently offers a 'cataclysmic' connotation in both instances.<sup>42</sup> In terms of musical characteristics, 'Pruit Igoe' differs to 'Prophecies' by the use of a reductive technique (the figuration is reduced from four notes to three, and subsequently to two). 'Pruit Igoe' also offers a greater degree of instability through chromaticism, though a scallic

<sup>42</sup> For a different application of 'Pruit Igoe', namely in a BMW car commercial, refer to Chapter 1.

descent is once again apparent. Subsequent to the drama offered by 'Pruit Igoe', the music returns to a section from 'Prophecies', which causes a change in ambience with a return to the solemnity of the initial quotation, which matches Dr Manhattan's spoken manner. Glass's 'Prophecies' in fact is compatible with the otherworldly nature of Dr Manhattan's character, and his supposed supernatural power to halt the cataclysmic destruction of the world.

Ex. 7.8 Reduced score of 'Pruit Igoe' from *Koyaanisqatsi*

The musical score for 'Pruit Igoe' from *Koyaanisqatsi* is presented in a reduced format. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system includes Violin (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (DB.) parts. The second system continues the Vc. and DB. parts. The third system introduces a Treble Clef staff, likely for a piano accompaniment. The fourth system continues the Treble Clef staff and the Vc. and DB. parts. The score features various musical notations, including multi-measure rests (x2, x4) and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pulse and a somber, atmospheric quality.

## Conclusions

The re-application of 'Prophecies' and 'Pruit Igoe' has demonstrated how the apocalyptic aspect associated with the original context of the music, i.e. *Koyaanisqatsi*, can also gather similar meanings in *Watchmen*. The textual content of 'Prophecies' resonated with the subject matter of the film, and also with Dr Manhattan's omniscient perspective of life on earth. 'Pruit Igoe' on the other hand has been shown to evince a dramatic effect that coincides with the cataclysm depicted in the visual dimension. In short, although the music in *Koyaanisqatsi* is recycled, some of its extra-musical meaning has been maintained.

In the *Book of Longing* however, Glass a musical genre largely developed by Romantic composers is assimilated – the song cycle. Glass complements Cohen's text by applying low pitch-registers, minor tonality, grainy and dissonant timbres. Using monophonic textures in 'I Want to Fly' for example, carries over the existential attribute of solitude that assimilates the semantic aspect of Cohen's poetry. This singular voice is also projected in *Naqoyqatsi*, evoking a humanistic aspect that is central to the film, as also reinforced by the overdubbing of a heartbeat. The notion of war is also maintained in the music by the employment of military percussion and timpani (which demonstrates a literal representation of conflict), while the conflict created by the juxtaposition of lyrical, or 'beautiful' music with footages of riots and war surely points towards a rhetorical reference. The opening sequence, which assimilates Holst's 'Mars', is yet another rhetorical reference to war by its use of repetition, tri-tones, dissonance followed by consonance, and a metrical imbalance – all of which convey a sense of foreboding that integrates with the aesthetic aspect of Bruegel's painting.

By focusing on *Naqoyqatsi*, *Book of Longing* and the chosen material in *Watchmen*, Glass's music can demonstrably be applied to the context of social science, humanism and particularly existentialism. Hence, in supplementing Leydon's typology, one might postulate the 'existential' trope for this context, which may be defined as: music that expresses a sense of individuality within a social setting (often dystopian), by employing solo textures, harmonic conflicts or metrical imbalances. Any future research could infinitely look into the relevance of this trope to other of Glass's music – both for film and otherwise. Firstly, the use of 'Façades' in *A Crude Awakening*, could be taken as an example of this type, as the soloistic nature of the saxophone in this work again summons a singular 'voice'. This singular voice is also heard in the cello parts of *Naqoyqatsi* and the various solo passages in *Book of Longing*. Secondly, Glass's opera, *Civil warS* is yet another example of a work that can be connected with this type of social context, both in its subject matter and its musical expression. In the Prologue to the fifth act, 'The Rome Section' for instance, Glass employs percussion instruments such as the side drum, which explicitly refers to a military context. Also, the frequent alternation between major/minor chords evinces a sense of instability, while the employment of a solo voice intoning against an orchestral backdrop offers a lyrical quality that is reminiscent of the textures earlier discussed in *Naqoyqatsi*.



## **Conclusions**

## **A Review of Concepts and Approaches**

Over the last seven chapters, numerous ways in which minimalist music has been integrated in multimedia contexts have been subject of this thesis's focus. Up to this point however, the underlying reasons for its application in filmic and tele-visual scenarios have not been discussed in any great detail. The findings contained herein will attempt to address this very question, drawing on research in the area of film and advertising, while concurrently offering a critique of the analytical methodologies developed during the course of this investigation. Further opportunities for theoretical refinements will also take place, and in a return to the opening theme of the thesis, two different television commercials will be unpacked in light of the crystallized and synthesised models for analysing multimedia. The paradoxical manner in which minimalist music often co-exists with other media will finally be outlined.

### **Why Post-minimalism?**

The opening chapter pointed out concurrent development of music and the visual arts, and the universality of the venues for performing works belonging to this particular genre. Minimalist music naturally co-exists with Conner's films, sculptures by Serra and Judd, or poetry for instance by Ginsberg or Beckett. Minimalism and post-minimalism's accessibility, and their ability to be popular yet equally relevant to 'high' art, is a widely held opinion.<sup>1</sup> It shares characteristics with techno and rock

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Grimshaw locates Glass's works, particularly the symphonies that quote Bowie and Eno's music within the spectrum of high vs. low art. Drawing attention to the relevance of the title, he argues that 'crucial to the "Low" Symphony's appeal to a large portion of its audiences is a perceived

genres, while simultaneously resonating with music written for string quartet, opera and symphony. While such music is duly considered accessible and popular, maintaining Eaton's proposal of its 'difference' confirms its ability as a real alternative to mainstream, post-Romantic film music. Glass's often-uncluttered textures and the homogeneity of the orchestration offer understatement to the cinematic narrative, while instances of symphonic writings offer a more dynamic edge to the film, hence alluding to the techniques of his contemporaries in Hollywood in this respect. While Zimmer, Williams, Kamen and similar mainstream composers tend to reinforce action scenes by clichéd music,<sup>2</sup> repetitive rhythmic figurations in minimalist music can, in fact, offer emotional content – or a psychological dimension – to the overall production. In other words, this thesis has shown that the use of minimalist music in film can paradoxically achieve simplicity and complexity at the same time.

Taking account of Deleuze and Foucault's post-structural theories offered a way of demonstrating how the music can co-exist from various distances to the visual or textual spheres. Due to its deconstructive nature and its malleable qualities, post-minimal music can be applied to a variety of different contexts as this thesis has demonstrated. And as a result of the intertextual nature of the films often employing such music – documentaries, screen adaptations of book, and theatrical adaptations of written plays etc. – these uses often correlate with the borrowing of pre-existing music. Recycled images, text and music seemingly go hand in hand.

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counterposition of opposing artistic forces that exert tension upon the crossover work, a tension that holds the work in suspension between the poles of high art and low art' (Grimshaw 2002, p. 480).

<sup>2</sup> Even Glass in some instances draws on this affective stereotype. In the soundtrack to *Taking Lives*, certain dramatic points in the film are heightened by overly dramatic music, implying a parody of Hollywood compositional techniques.

In terms of tonal unfoldings and temporality, the adoption of Schenkerian methodology brought to the forefront Glass's reliance on surface material, in avoidance of the *urlinie* or the *ursatz* that promote unity through the construction of a fundamental structure. By functioning at foreground level, the music reveals its compatibility with the two-dimensional attribute of both the small screen and the large screen due to the lack of any deeper tonal structures. A Schenkerian approach also illustrated how the temporal aspect of the music (be it either cyclical or teleological) interacts directly with the visual kinesis presented on screen.

Minimalism effectively works in film due to its capacity to convey stasis, motion, repetition, or a mixture of such elements. Moreover, cinematographers often employ common montage techniques, causing a certain degree of parallelism with the generic elements of the music – the 'common pool' of compositional techniques as extensively discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 – resonate with the use of standardized techniques in cinema.<sup>3</sup> Lengthwise, cinematic productions are often extensive, most often of at least two to three hours' duration. Similarly, minimalist music is also frequently based on extended structures, broken down into smaller, self-contained units or modules, which offers another reason in its favour for use in film.

### **The minimalist 'gravy train'?**

But, at the opposing end of the spectrum, television commercials deliver an epigrammatic message within approximately one to one and a half minute's duration. Somewhat contradictory therefore, the series of analyses undertaken to study

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<sup>3</sup> Some considerations of standardised uses of cinematic techniques include such parameters as visual movement, angle, lighting and scenic transitions.

commercials has demonstrated its viability for use in such concise scenarios. On this point, the reasons for the effectiveness of minimalism in commercials needs to be addressed. In order to explore this question, it would seem logical to outline the general reasons for using any type of music in advertising, before focusing specifically on minimalist examples.

Writing in the late 1980s, David Huron noted that advertising strategies ‘[rely] entirely on mass media and consequently on widespread social meanings rather than personal or idiosyncratic motivations for purchasing’ (Huron 1989, p. 557).<sup>4</sup> Huron proceeds to give six reasons for using music in adverts. Firstly, he suggests that music is employed as ‘entertainment’ in order to draw the viewer’s interest by supplementing the verbal narrative with a sonic dimension (ibid., p. 560). Secondly, music can underpin the structure or continuity of the visual-verbal narrative, which ‘can be employed as simply an uninterrupted background – what has been dubbed “gravy train”’ (ibid., p. 561). Also, music can also reinforce any sense of drama or tension in a commercial, thereby drawing on techniques that are apparent in film music (ibid.). Thirdly, it offers ‘memorability’ through associating music with the product, as in the case of a jingle (ibid., p. 562). The fourth technique derives from the Greek allegorical tradition, with the employment of ‘lyrical language’ – the combination of spoken and sung elements – being considered an effective advertising strategy (ibid., 565). Music can also be used to target the audience through associating a specific musical genre (ibid., p. 566). Lastly, music is often used as ‘authority establishment’ to reinforce the credibility and integrity of the commercial

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<sup>4</sup> Minimalist music’s often derogative comparison to ‘wallpaper music’ serendipitously resonates with the inquisitorial title of Edith Smith’s publication, *Mass Media Advertising – Information or Wallpaper?* (Amsterdam: Spinhuis, 1999).

through artistic endorsement, quotation or assimilation of a well-known work (Huron 1989, p. 568).

This latter category is perhaps becoming increasingly apparent in recent advertising strategies, with quotations from well-known pop or rock songs, or film soundtracks, often heard in television commercials.<sup>5</sup> The first chapter of this thesis drew attention to the use of Glass's soundtracks in the Carbon Trust and the BMW commercial. The subsequent chapter identified and discussed musical quotations from recent films (namely *Solaris* and *Donny Darko*) in an advert by Ford and Volkswagen. In fact, there is scope to investigate the applicability of Huron's six techniques in relation to the instances of minimalist music in commercials.

Undoubtedly its constant flow of repetition reinforces the structure of the visual and verbal narrative, thereby indicative of Huron's second technique, though it may also function as a 'targeting' strategy, whereby the music is targeted at a specific audience in relation to the actual product or service that is advertised. However, compared with quotations of pop or rock music, minimalism's identity is unquestionably aimed towards a rather more exclusive audience (though at the same time representing its overall accessibility).

Minimalism's ability to enhance the structural continuity of the narrative resounds with Fink's research into the subliminal qualities of minimalist music in relation to advertising strategies, as briefly touched upon in the opening chapters of this thesis. In his chapter on the 'media sublime', the relationship between repetition in advertising and repetition in minimalism leads to the argument that 'pulsal repetition turns out to be the key structural trope of both process music and modern

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<sup>5</sup> Some research into media trends reveals that the use of a jingle (which represents Huron's 'memorability' technique) is in decline, according to Carrie McLaren (McLaren 1998). Instead, there is now a greater tendency of commercials that 'work by "borrowing interest" – transferring value from the music to the product' (ibid.).

advertising campaigns' (Fink 2005, p. 141). In order to reinforce this observation, Fink first draws attention to an early marketing strategy that demonstrated some precursory minimalist techniques. In his discussion on a printed advert for an item of clothing in the *New York Herald Examiner* during 1856, the additive structure of the text employed (specifically the word 'overcoat') is compared to Glass's similar use of such a pattern, over a hundred and twenty years later (ibid., p. 121). Yet another comparison between minimalist music and minimalism in advertising is apparent in the discussion of a VW Beetle printed campaign. The advert entitled 'Think Small' in 1966 dates from a similar period to the birth of minimalist music, although television commercials of this date did not combine such music with the repetitive strategies of advertising campaigns, often choosing instead to employ folk-rock music (ibid., p. 128).<sup>6</sup>

If early examples of television commercials eschewed the use of minimalist music as part of their campaigns, this thesis has brought attention to its increased popularity in more recent adverts. This leads to the question of why minimalist music is effective in these instances? Further to Fink's comparison of repetition in advertising strategies and music, interlinked with the notion of consumer desire and Lacan's philosophies, a few other reasons have been suggested for its use.<sup>7</sup> In a relatively recent newspaper article, an editor of an advertising magazine refers to the frequent use of music by John Adams, Steve Reich, Michael Nyman and Karl Jenkins

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<sup>6</sup> Minimalism and car commercials is becoming an increasingly apparent theme, it would appear, as the advertising agency for BMW in Canada launched a campaign in 2008 for its Mini Cooper model under the title 'MINIMALISM'. Minimalist music is not however employed in the campaign.

<sup>7</sup> In an online essay for *Associated Content*, Matthew Seipel also associates Lacanian psychoanalysis with minimalism and advertising, drawing on some of Fink's research in this area. Seipel does not however discuss any commercials that make use of minimalist music, instead comparing the effect of the 'sonorous envelope' expressed in Adams's *China Gates* and Reich's *Electric Counterpoint*, with advertising strategies (see Seipel 2009, unpag.).

in commercials (Mills 2005, unpag.).<sup>8</sup> Dominic Mills partly attributes the reason for this employment to the fact that all of the above composers are represented by Boosey and Hawkes, whose Chief Executive Officer, John Minch was formerly involved in the advertising industry (ibid.). Mills's observation points therefore towards the influence of a publishing company on the advertising industry, and in fact, the licensing of music for commercials, particularly popular music, is generally regarded a lucrative deal for composers and musicians (McLaren 1998, unpag.).

From an aesthetic perspective, Mills suggests this type of music embodies 'modern classical music' as 'the new cool' (Mills, op. cit.). Moreover, this genre does not date as in the case of pop or rock music (ibid.). This will be confirmed shortly when a commercial for Pepsi cola from the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century uses a piece of minimalist music and a pop-based extract – the latter example inevitably dates, while the former does not (at least not as quickly). In fact, it is the analysis of television commercials offered an entrance into the use of methodologies primarily developed to study multimedia – particularly Cook's models, which subsequently paved the way for the deconstructive method developed out of Deleuze and Foucault's premises.

## **Synthesising Models**

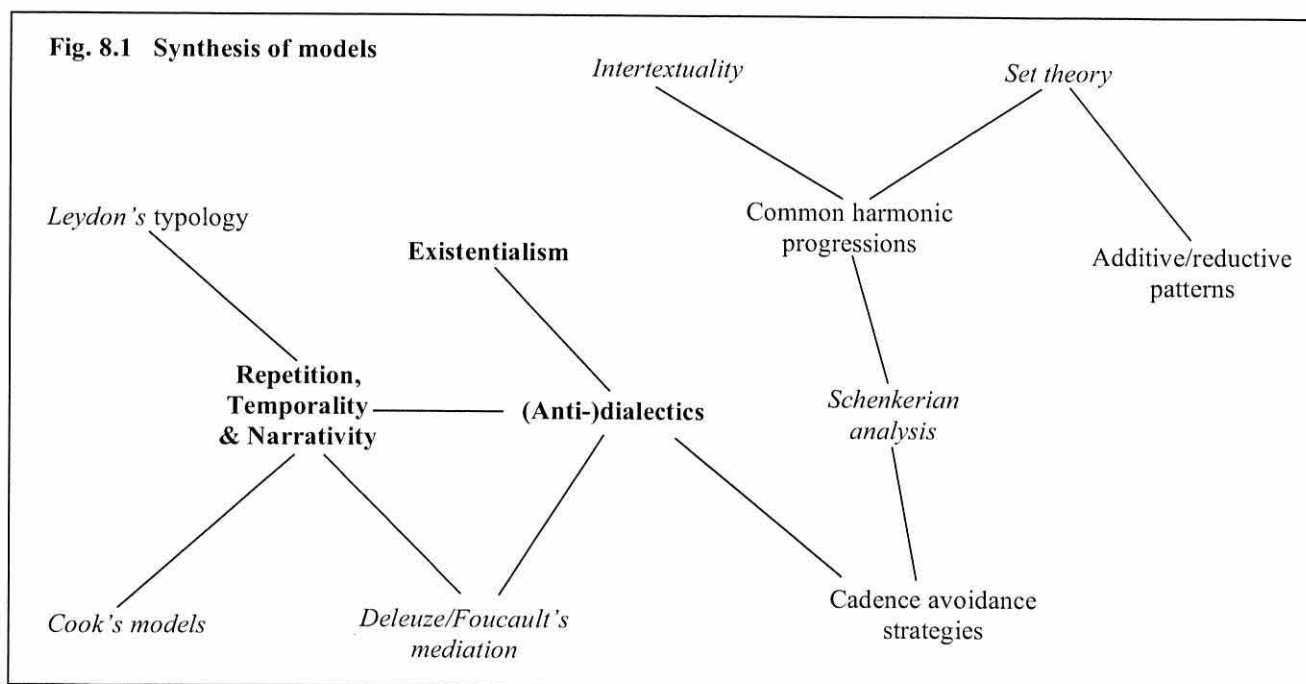
In working towards a theory of multimedia integration in minimalism and post-minimal music, this thesis has largely focused on examining interrelationships between music and other media, and the meanings construed therein. This inquiry has

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<sup>8</sup> Although Mills refers to the use of Reich's music in a Volkswagen Beetle commercial, the music is in fact The Orb's 'Little Fluffy Clouds', which samples Reich's *Electric Counterpoint*. It is unclear, however, whether Reich's actual sample is heard in the advertisement.



led to the adoption and adaptation of a wide range of methodologies that were not intended for the area of musicology, particularly film studies and philosophy. The diagram contained in Fig. 8.1 brings together the key concepts and approaches that provided the theoretical framework for the thesis. These approaches will shortly be applied to the two final case studies of this investigation: firstly, the re-contextualised use of Glass’s *Einstein on the Beach* in an advertising campaign by the drinks company Pepsi; secondly, the adoption of Reich’s *Music for 18 Musicians* in a commercial by the telecommunication company Orange. These analyses will set out to demonstrate how the two case studies can be read in the light of the synthesised model, tailored for each individual reading.



An assessment of the effectiveness of the approaches taken and the manner in which the methodologies have been subjected to further development will henceforth form the basis of this chapter. Cook’s basic models of multimedia, the framework based on Deleuze and Foucault’s theories relating to the mediation of difference,

Leydon's typology of minimalist tropes, together with aspects relating to intertextuality, existentialism, and the more traditional forms of analysis (all of which are shown in italic typeface) will all be scrutinised. In due course, certain elements from these methodologies will be assembled into a holistic framework for analysing minimalist music involving multimedia. Though this framework is mainly constructed in light of the study of Glass's works for film, this system is easily adaptable to accommodate a broader spectrum of minimalist and post-minimal music.

### **Cook's Models**

The adoption of Cook's three basic models of multimedia in the thesis's opening chapter offered a 'tried and tested' method of ascertaining meanings forged by the relationships between stylistically diverse examples of music and other media. In this instance, however, Cook's model has been applied to the specific genre of minimalism and attempted to unravel meanings in the juxtaposition of Glass's music and the non-verbal nature of Reggio's visual work in *Koyaanisqatsi*. This methodology also took notice of the music's secondary context – that of the BMW and Carbon Trust commercials, leading to the concluding argument that Glass's music operates on a dialectical basis when pitted against such visual narratives.

The exploration of Cook's models subsequently led to research into deconstructive theories outside of Cook's premises, which were principally modelled on the linguistic metaphor. The application of certain aspects of Deleuze and Foucault's philosophical theories in the second chapter further refined Cook's model by running the conceptual gamut of 'difference'. In this instance, the void between any combination of music, image and text could be mediated in one of several forms;

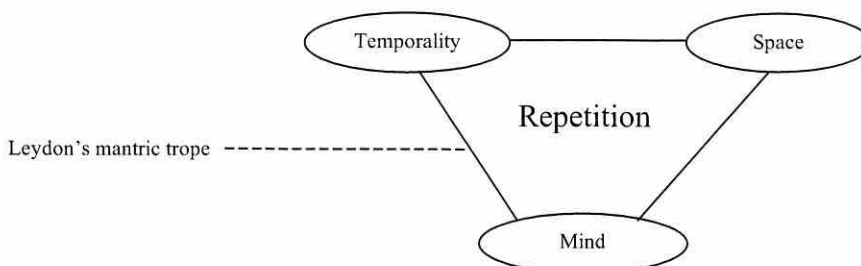
this model offers a greater amount of terminology that are mostly compatible with Cook's 'complementation' model, which accommodated a mixture of similarities and differences. In other words, this elaborated framework offered more ways of ascertaining the relationships formed in multimedia contexts, which in turn showed a greater tendency towards a focus on the anti-dialectic, and on the singular object.

Due to a primary focus on anti-dialectical processes, this deconstructive model shows more relevance to the genre of minimalism (particularly from a teleological perspective) than Cook's largely dialectical model. On the other hand, it may be argued that the approach is perhaps too complex and esoteric to be employed on its own – Foucault and Deleuze's premises might be considered as being rather fluid. This model might further benefit from being streamlined, drawing out some of the clearer aspects of the theoretical framework, which will take place in later parts of the chapter.

### Leydon's Typology

In continuation of the study of music in relation to external factors, Leydon's typology has undoubtedly proven to be an effective resource in offering and promoting meanings in repetitive music, particularly when the music coexists with other media forms. This thesis has further supplemented Leydon's typology with several new types (or sub-types that are interrelated with the original categories). On a higher level, the additional types postulated in this research may be associated with

**Fig. 8.2 Extrapolation diagram based on Leydon's typology**



three distinct spheres, those of temporality, space and the mind as illustrated in Fig. 8.2. This thesis's third chapter brought to light four significant types of meanings that are associated with temporality in one form or another: the cataclysmic trope (or alternatively the apocalyptic trope), the psychedelic trope, the extra-terrestrial trope and the urban trope. All of these showed a clear relation to the unfolding of time in different forms. The cataclysmic trope, as described in Riley's *Crossroads* and Reich's 'Bikini' out of *Three Tales* is implicated with the end of time, or the countdown towards an apocalyptic event. Such a trope was equally relevant to Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* and *Koyaanisqatsi*, together with John Adams's recent opera *Doctor Atomic* (though these works were not discussed in great detail during the course of the thesis).

The psychedelic trope conveys a distorted sense of time inflicted by a drug-induced affect, which was seen to be applicable to the general work of the progressive rock group Soft Machine. The promotion of stasis in Brian Eno's ambient music, and the lack of goal-directed motion in Glass's soundtrack to *Roving Mars* arguably create a sense of suspended temporality coinciding with the extra-terrestrial trope, while the hustle and bustle of an urban environment focuses on the 'momentum', the 'moment' or the immediacy of temporality. Reich's general oeuvre and Jenkins's *Harpers Bizarre* equally strive towards assimilating these urban characteristics through unrelenting repetition.

While the extra-terrestrial and the urban trope both form a link to the spatial dimensions delineated in the Fig. 8.2 diagram, the conjunction of minimalism within a psychedelic context relates to the mind or the self. In the 'Metamorphic Meanings' chapter, Leydon's typology was further supplemented by the association of common themes between Glass's soundtracks and the cinematic narratives of the films

discussed: the expression of horror and bleakness; music relating to ecology or ethnicity; motion (i.e. the motoric trope); psychological interiority and Romanticism; and finally, a spiritual trope that resounds particularly with Glass's interest in Eastern philosophy. If these scenarios were pitted against the tripartite spheres of time, space and the mind, then it may be gathered that ecology relates to space, while horror, psychological interiority, Romanticism and spirituality correlate with the mind. The Buddhist element also articulates an obvious connection to the temporal sphere due to the predominance of a cyclical philosophy.

The reading of the *Dracula* soundtrack on the other hand brought to the foreground the hypnotic effect of the music, compatible with Leydon's mantric trope, and to the 'mind' dimension. Furthermore the scoring for a string quartet alone enhances the psychological interiority of the film. In fact the *Dracula* chapter pointed towards a degree of affinity with existential philosophy, though a greater exploration of this ontological system took place in the chapter on 'Musical Conflicts', particularly with regard to pre-Sartrean branches of thoughts. This penultimate part of the thesis posited existentialism within a sociological sphere, also drawing on humanistic theories in order to validate the concept of existentialism with Glass's harmonic language and the employment of soloistic textures in the vocal or cello parts. Postulating a relationship between the social aspects of the film with existential elements, this analysis explained how the juxtaposition of minimalist music and an assemblage of recycled visual footages conveyed an effective representation of war and conflict.

## Schenkerian and Set-Theoretic Methodology

Glass's harmonic instabilities and major/minor equivocations were taken as metaphors that enhanced this sense of conflict. The adoption of more prescribed forms of music analysis (particularly Schenkerian representation) illustrated these patterns through harmonic reduction; these traditional methodologies were nevertheless applied in to the context of minimalism. Before Schenker's methods were discussed in this context however, his premises were initially taken into account within a traditional backdrop in 'Postmodern Unfoldings'. Mendelssohn's Song Without Words was presented here in a graphically reductive form, and juxtaposed with visual snapshots taken from the television commercial where it was employed. This approach proved to be effective in demonstrating the unfolding of Mendelssohn's tonal music – the unfolding of the triad was indeed strongly apparent even though the piece was a curtailed version of the original. Equally apparent was the interactivity between the musical and the visual unfolding contained in the commercial's non-verbal narrative.

Subsequent uses of Schenkerian techniques during the course of the thesis were applied to depict Glass's voice leading strategies, together with the anti-dialectical nature of his cadence-avoiding strategies (most notably discussed in Chapter 4, 'Notes on a Soundtrack'). These applications however avoided a comprehensive attempt to uncover any fundamental lines, primarily due to the lack of dependence on melodic material. Imposing such descents would therefore have proven to be arbitrary and contrived. However, a descent from the third degree of the scale was seemingly apparent in the opening track of *The Illusionist*, as discussed in the 'Notes on a Soundtrack' chapter, which reinforces and illuminates the tonal

framework of the music. Schenker's graphical form of representation also effectively illustrated the use of common harmonic progressions (in *The Hours*, for instance), demonstrating an intratextual element in the manner in which Glass expanded on certain frameworks as the basis of several pieces within a work.

External references are also apparent in Glass's cadence-avoiding strategies, illustrated by the countless cyclical progressions from the tonic to the dominant in several of his soundtracks. In fact, during the course of this study a considerable amount of various methods of reaching V have been notable; the table contained in Fig. 8.3 goes some way to unpack the similar strategies observed during the course of this investigation.

**Fig. 8.3 Table of common harmonic progressions**

HARMONIC PROGRESSION	FILM SOUNDTRACK	MUSICAL PIECE
i – bII – V	<i>The Hours</i>	'Dead Things', 'Morning Passage'
i – bII – V	<i>Notes on a Scandal</i>	'Invitation'
i – iv <sub>c</sub> – V <sub>c</sub>	<i>Naqoyqatsi</i>	'Intensive Time'
i – v <sub>b</sub> – VI – V	<i>Dracula</i>	'In His Cell'
i – VI – V <sup>7</sup>	<i>The Hours</i>	'I'm Going to Make a Cake'
i – VI – II – V	<i>Notes on a Scandal</i>	'Invitation'
i – VI <sub>b</sub> – II <sub>b</sub> – V <sub>c</sub>	<i>Naqoyqatsi</i>	'Intensive Time'
i – VI <sub>b</sub> – III <sub>c</sub> – V	<i>The Truman Show</i>	'Truman Sleeps', 'Dreaming of Fiji', 'Raising the Sail'
I/i – vi – iv – V (– I/i)	<i>The Illusionist</i>	'The Illusionist'
i – VI – VII – V	<i>Dracula</i>	'The Crypt', 'Carriage without a Driver'
i <sub>c</sub> – VI – VII – V	<i>Naqoyqatsi</i>	'Intensive Time'

The table outlines ten occurrences of progressions extending from the tonic minor chord to the dominant major. Each progression inevitably sounds similar, though are slightly varied by the modification of certain chords or chord positions. From this chart, it is deducible that an initial progression from the tonic to the submediant chord is the most frequently heard, apparent in *The Hours*, *Notes on a Scandal*, *Naqoyqatsi*, *The Truman Show*, *The Illusionist* and *Dracula*. However, the third chord of the

progression before reaching V is the deciding factor (comprising of either II, III, iv or VII).

Also apparent in the Fig. 8.3 table is the employment of a similar progression in *The Hours* and *Notes on a Scandal* (i – ♭II – V) and an almost identical progression between *Dracula* and *Naqoyqatsi* (i-VI-VII-V). The initial tonic in the latter sequence of chords is however a second inversion chord as opposed to a root position. A similar progression can be observed between *Notes on a Scandal*'s 'Invitation' and *Naqoyqatsi* (i-VI-II-V) though slightly varied by the chord positioning, as the *Naqoyqatsi* progression makes use of first and second positions as opposed to the root alone.

The prevalence of other harmonic commonalities were also revealed during the course of this thesis by the employment of a set-theoretic approach. Even though Rob Haskins however had undertaken some application of the theory in his analysis of Glass's *Two Pages* and *Music in Similar Motion*, it is applied to a different purpose than that intended by Milton Babbitt and Allen Forte, who conceived this mathematical system primarily to analyse atonal music. In the case of this present study, set theory facilitated the illustration of common intervallic configurations, especially clusters relating to prime forms 4-19 and 4-20 (12). Furthermore, any visible additive or reductive patterns in terms of pitch were easily identifiable by the calculations of subset and superset structures. Both the adoption of Schenkerian methodology and the a set-theoretic approach offered an interface to examine Glass's self-borrowing practices, as discussed in depth during the course of the 'Metamorphic Meanings' chapter.

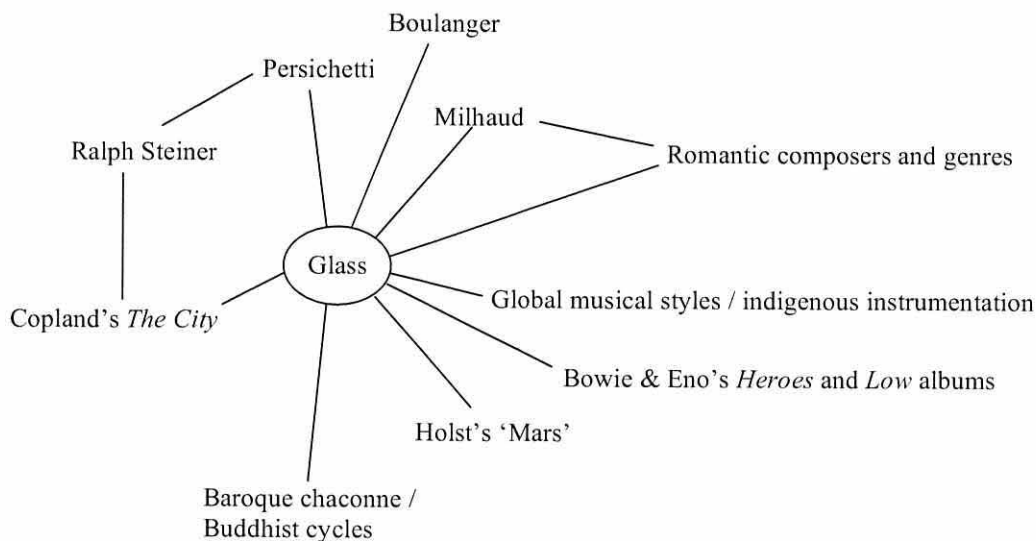


## Intertexts and Influences

As shown in Fig. 8.1, Glass's employment of common harmonic procedures and intervallic configurations are associated with the notion of intertextuality, and in this respect demonstrate his self-borrowing tendencies. The 'Metamorphic Meanings' chapter discussed some of the most obvious influences upon Glass, which are incorporated into the diagram of Fig. 8.4. This diagram essentially maps out several composers, works and musical styles that are interconnected with Glass's own approach in various forms.

It was argued that the intertextual nature of Glass's music as employed in film highlighted parallelisms with Persichetti's self-referential approach. Furthermore, the tonal aspect of his music, the rejection of goal-directed motion, together with frequent major and minor equivocations, were all techniques specified in Persichetti's

**Fig. 8.4 Summary of Glass's influences**



compositional textbook. The reading of *Dracula* brought further attention to the bi-tonal aspect of Glass's approach to harmony, particularly in the piece entitled 'Lucy's Bitten'. This score also pointed out the uses of tritonal activity in 'Journey to the

Inn', which carries an unsettling extra-musical connotation. Such intervallic configurations were also observed in the opening piece of *Naqoyqatsi*, which once again induces a sense of conflict and instability, also promoted by frequent instances of semitonal progressions.

### **Existentialism or existential processes?**

At one point, the discussion on *Dracula* briefly referred to the theories of Sartre, however, during the course of this thesis, pre-Sartrean and post-Sartrean concepts relating to existentialism have mostly been applied; instead of focusing on a limited perspective of philosophy, a multifaceted approach has been taken in order to examine a diverse range of its effect and implications. This all-encompassing interpretation of existentialism is not surprising given the fact that neither Glass nor the other minimalist composers were strongly influenced by Sartrean literature, although his formative period in Paris where existentialism was more generally absorbed into the Bohemian culture point toward a subsequent impact on his approach. It must not be forgotten at this point that Errol Morris famously noted his adeptness for conveying “existential dread” as mentioned earlier. In this respect, Glass’s aesthetic conveyed a realism that is compatible with the existential trope.

But what other aspects of this philosophy have shown to be relevant to this study? In the preceding chapter, the notion of an individual vs. a mass society was brought to the forefront in the reading of Reggio and Glass’s *Naqoyqatsi* within Jaspers’s theories. And in Chapter 2, references to Kierkegaard and Deleuze illustrated how subjective thinking was a vital part of individuality, identity, the anti-dialectic, and consequently existentialism. Tarasti’s model, as applied to a bleak and

surreal car commercial shown how the existential trope relates to the realism of Michael Andrews's music, while at the same time passing through a journey of negation and affirmation, through a focus on 'being' as opposed to the dialectical 'becoming'.

### **Future research**

While a doctoral thesis can suitably accommodate the investigation of a specific topic, it is inevitable that certain areas might benefit from even further exploration; this section will suggest how any future research can potentially expand on the findings herein. Firstly, a simplified deconstructive model based on Deleuze and Foucault's theories on 'difference' can instantaneously be applied to new multimedia contexts that either employ minimalist music, or otherwise music that belong to other stylistic genres outside the minimalist canon. Equipped with a streamlined framework, such a comparison could promote a more penetrative understanding of the relationships between media. Applying the model to discuss the Mondeo commercial brought to light the different interactions between both versions of music (Delibes and Andrews's pieces) and the visual dimension. Different interpretations of the commercial were construed as a result of the different extracts of music being played. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that applying different music to other visual material would again result in a multiplicity of meanings.

Secondly, there is scope to further explore the relevance of Tarasti's existential model across a larger corpus of mixed-media case studies. A survey of a greater amount of television commercials could quantify whether or not a process of 'becoming' is common or not in such scenarios. This would require the examination

of whether an existential process from reality to negation/affirmation and the final return to reality, is often visible in adverts. In contrast to the Mondeo commercial, which exemplified such a process, the Jetta commercial discussed in Chapter Three alluded towards a more traditional narrative based on the dialectic. Similarly, the BMW commercial discussed in the opening chapter might well be another instance of the existential journey – the onset of new musical material towards the end of the commercial correlates with a shift in the visual narrative – in a similar way that the triadic ‘uplift’ in Michael Andrews’s music for the Mondeo commercial occurred at a broadly similar point. Representing a significant point in the musical and visual narrative of the commercial, this element conveys a sense of a breakthrough in the process; this state will later be discussed in relation to other existential examples, particularly *Naqoyqatsi*.

Moreover, by studying the poetic narrative of the BMW’s text as discussed in Chapter 1, it is apparent that the commercial is formed out of distinct sections that conform to the existential model. First, a basic statement of reality is presented by the sentiment contained in the words ‘it’s only a car’. The text subsequently lists the mundane aspects of the car, representing a state of ‘nothingness’ in Tarasti’s terms. The positive attributes of the car are later reinforced by the focus upon its more alluring features – the high-tech equipment that it offers, presented in a poetic manner that aims to appeal to the viewer’s senses (belonging to the ‘affirmative’ stage of the existential process). Finally, a return to the original state of being occurs with the return of the opening text.

While the Mondeo and the BMW commercial demonstrated an alliance to the existential process outlined by Tarasti (in contrast to the traditional narrative of the Jetta commercial) further research in this area would ascertain how often this

existential model appears in advertising campaigns and other media applications. The analysis of the Orange and the Pepsi commercials that will shortly take place, will investigate whether these musical, visual and verbal narratives contained are either affiliated with an existential process, a dialectical process, or otherwise an alternative procedure altogether.

In continuation of the research into the induction of an extra-musical narrative in minimalist music, further analysis of music relating to this genre might broaden the spectrum of tropes first initiated in Leydon's typology. Even though this thesis has indeed brought to light other specific correlations between repetitive music and subject matters, a wider survey would undoubtedly uncover more metaphoric representations in (post-) minimal music. Any additional research in this area would benefit by conducting empirical research from a semiologically esthetic perspective, looking into the manner in which re-contextualised instances of such music are interpreted experientially. That is, how consistent would a specific meaning be across a range of listeners from different musical and non-musical backgrounds? Would the music induce a similar subjective affect to most listeners, and what were the characteristics that created such a response. Or would the music mean different things to different people?

While further exploration of Leydon's typology offered an experiential study into the subjectivity of music, the adoption of the more traditional methodologies (namely Schenkerian techniques and set theoretic principles), presented a more objective approach to analysis. The graphical form of representation formulated by Schenker could effectively be applied to study other examples of minimalist and post-minimal music, outside of Glass's repertoire. Using this method for additional analysis of Glass's film soundtracks might however expand on the generic list of

harmonic progressions collated in this concluding chapter, demonstrating a formulaic approach to the composition of repetitive tonal structures. In a similar manner, further set-theoretic applications would inevitably reveal more common pitch-class combinations apparent in Glass's music, without any significant adaptation to the methodology being required.

So if all combined methodologies were to be employed to analyse the re-application of Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* in a Pepsi advert, what results could be drawn from this study? The next section will seek to address the main interactions between the music and the visual/verbal narrative of this commercial, in comparison with the meanings formed in the original use of the music.

#### **'No Brainer' – A dialectical commercial?**

The Pepsi commercial begins with an Einstein look-alike walking across a wood-panelled corridor towards two drinks vending machines selling Coca-Cola and Pepsi, as shown in the snapshot contained in Fig. 8.5. On reaching this point, 'Einstein' is obliged to make a decision on which product he should purchase – a decision that is, he comments "an interesting paradox". He enters into an elaborate thought process during the commercial, explaining how one must always reach a logical decision after taking account of all possible factors. In conclusion, he decides that the Pepsi cola is simply the right answer. Such a decision, he comments is a "no brainer".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines this slang phrase as 'something that requires or involves little or no mental effort'.

Fig. 8.5 Pepsi commercial screen snapshot



Einstein's thought process is simplistically based on a dialectical argument – Coke and Pepsi represent a mutually exclusive concept pair of objects. The final stage in the argument, i.e., Einstein's decision, represents the resolution that any dialectical process aims to achieve. In this respect, the resolution of this commercial's narrative is reminiscent of the Jetta commercial, which fails to reflect the existential process outlined in Tarasti's model. Nevertheless, the scientific nature of Einstein's logic alludes to existentialism by demonstrating an individual thought process by means of a scientific or reasoned method of argument. In fact, the point at which Glass's music begins occurs when the camera leads the viewer deep into the mind of the scientist.

A comparison can be drawn between the mathematical element of the Einstein figure in the commercial and the subject matter of the original context, from which the music is taken, namely the opening 'Knee Play No. 1' from *Einstein On the Beach* (1975-6). The scientific aspect of the commercial is further reinforced by the fact that Glass's 'Knee Plays' were conceived for performance in a cube at the side of the stage – this geometric element therefore reflects Einstein's theoretical mindset

Ex. 8.1 Score of 'Knee Play No. 1' from *Einstein on the Beach*

(Cunningham 1997, pp. 154-5). Einstein himself does not appear in the Knee Plays, however. In this specific scene, the singing of numbers occurs in a clear demonstration of an additive process by the composer: the numbers 1-4, then 1-6 and 1 to 8 are sung to the accompaniment of a three note motif on organ (enacting a cyclical vi – V – I chord progression), as shown in Ex. 8.1.

So what are the differences, if any, between the original context and the re-contextualised borrowing of the music? An anti-narrative approach is widely considered as the basis of the portrayed scenes. In terms of narrative, the commercial offers a much simpler, direct message, which is to sell a product. Nevertheless, the potent psychological element of the opera reverberates in the new scenario, albeit in a more diluted or superficial manner. The opera's librettist, Robert Wilson compared the opera "to schizophrenia: the splitting of the atom and the splitting of the mind" (Cunningham, op. cit., p. 163). And in the commercial, it is apparent that the scientist is in two minds – whether to choose the Coke or Pepsi brand of cola. This dichotomy is visually represented by the geometry of the vending machines as shown in Fig. 8.5

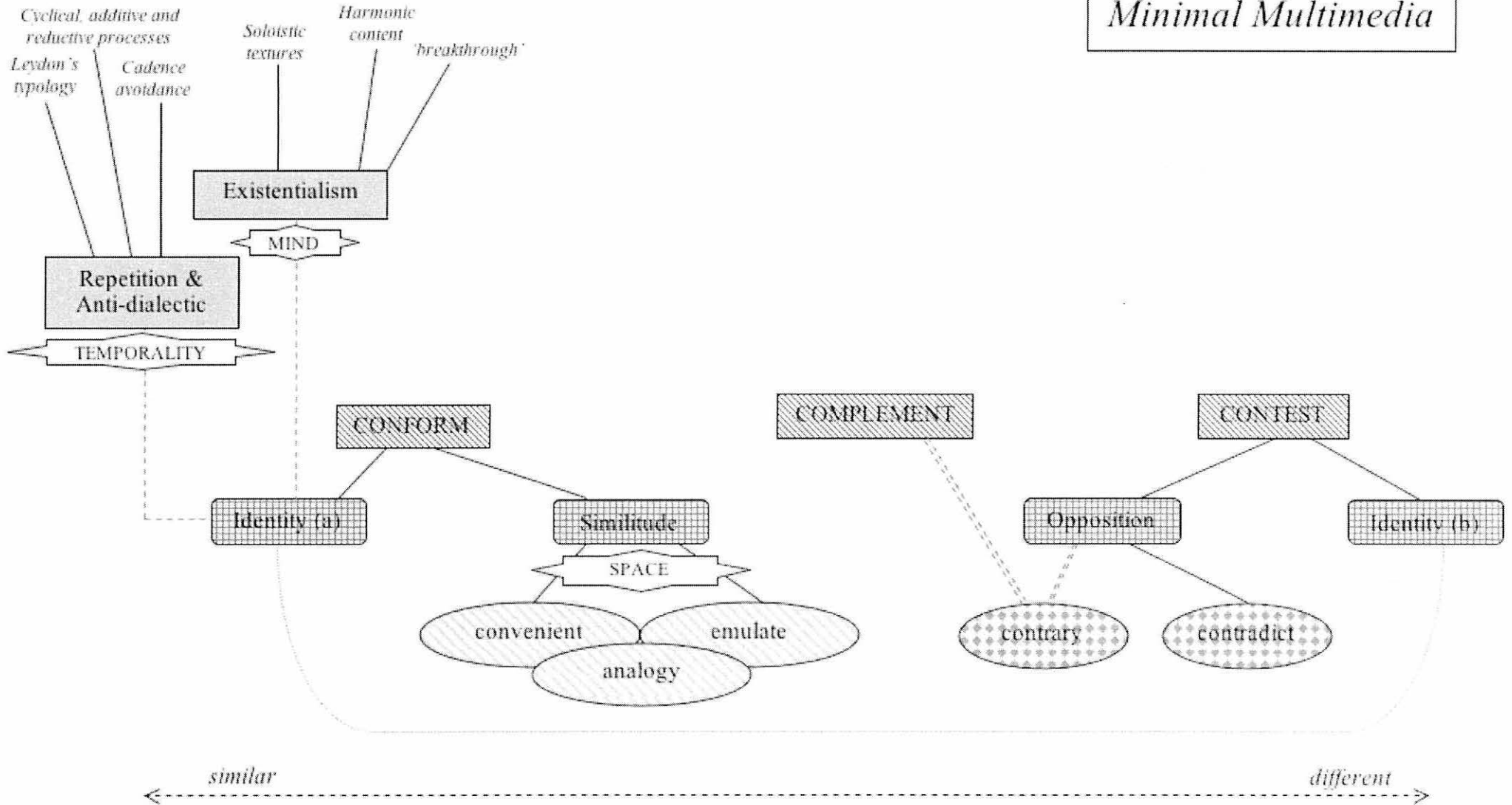


– the Coke brand is posited on the left, while Pepsi on the right, while the counting vocalists create a sense of urgency for the character to make the right decision.

If the investigation of the relationships between the music, image and text in the opera and the commercial was continued, applying the multimedia models discussed during the course of this thesis is seemingly the best way forward. This will also offer an opportunity to streamline the difference model, in conjunction with Cook's approach, as condensed in Fig. 8.6. This framework based on Deleuze and Foucault's premises, shown for the purposes of clarification in curved square boxes filled in with small grids, and connected to the oval sub-categories filled in with thick diagonal lines and diamond shapes. Cook's models are also nested within this structure (as shown in thin diagonal line boxes). The diagram also takes into account three other elements, namely repetition, the anti-dialectic and existentialism. It also emphasises how repetition is interrelated with temporality, existentialism's alliance with the mind, and the associative factors between the three forms of similitude and the spatial dimension (based on Foucault's description of proximity vs. distance, earlier discussed in Chapter 2).

For recapitulative purposes, the notion of identity is contradictory. It may be interpreted as either an object that is identical to another, or alternatively, a unique object that is entirely different to everything else; hence, this concept appears on both ends of the spectrum in the Fig. 8.6 diagram, connected with dotted lines. In further discussions, it might be logical to distinguish between both definitions as 'identity (a)' and 'identity (b)'. Another aspect that is slightly problematic in the model appears in the positioning of the 'contrary' element – in Cook's model it represents a

Fig. 8.6 Final post-minimal multimedia model



middleground ‘complementation’, although in Deleuze’s four shackles of mediation, it is a form of opposition (hence belonging to Cook’s contesting model). For the purposes of this display, these connective lines are shown in double-dotted lines.

### **Theoretical application**

So how can this model be applied to the Pepsi commercial, and how can the relationships forged between the visual, verbal and the musical narratives be discussed? It may be postulated that the visual element of the Pepsi commercial resembles the psychological aspect in *Einstein* – this is primarily noticeable by the portrayal of a process of calculation. As the scientist himself does not appear in the ‘Knee Play’, it may be argued that the differences between both visual contexts are mediated by emulation as opposed to convenience (the latter form would be an even closer similarity than the former). The spoken narrative of the commercial also seemingly emulates the opera by the inclusion of calculations (the singers are counting from 1 to 4, 6 or 8), although once again this element does not directly relate to the scientist himself, due to his absence in the ‘Knee Play’. But on a more fundamental level, the overall subject matters are in opposition – one sells a product, while the portrait opera establishes the identity of the scientist. In this respect, as both contexts hold a unique purpose, this is based on an ‘identity b’ relationship – at the far right of the difference spectrum shown in the Fig. 6 diagram.

Should the commercial be studied in the context of Leydon’s tropes, it would appear that none of these categories are obviously compatible. The original context of Glass and Wilson’s opera is associated with the cataclysmic trope earlier discussed in the ‘Postmodern Unfoldings’ chapter, due to the relevance of nuclear development

and Einstein's theory of relativity. This trope does not apply to the Pepsi commercial, however. Instead, the portrayal of a cognitive thought process in the commercial, reinforced by the counting in the music, is associated to the existential trope by its overt interaction with the 'mind' dimension. The shift from Glass's music to the Pepsi jingle coincides with the 'breakthrough' in the commercial's narrative – that is, Einstein's decision. A similar expression of a new idea appearing towards the end of the commercial was also apparent in two other instances alluding to existentialism – the BMW commercial as discussed in this thesis's first chapter, and the Mondeo campaign quoting Andrews's music, discussed in the second.

From a temporal aspect, the music establishes an 'identity' by its dependence on a cyclical and an additive/reductive process. It is also worth noting that the harmonic progression of  $vi - V - I$  is different to those contained in the table of generic patterns mapped out in Fig. 8.3. It may be gathered that Glass's cyclical procedures in reaching towards the dominant chord is more often characteristic of his film music than his operatic works. In this example, cadence avoidance is not apparent due to the persistence of a perfect cadence. Though due to the cyclical nature of this progression, it cannot be argued that the music offers an overall dialectical resolution, although the advert's subject matter does in fact resolve (as expected in most television commercials). The entrance of the music coincides with the entrance into Einstein's mind. The music's exit occurs when Einstein has resolved his decision, which leads into the concluding Pepsi jingle that contrasts stylistically.

### **‘I am’ – An existential commercial?**

The interaction between musical and visual temporality, and the lack of a dialectical resolution assumes a more prominent position in the next and final case study of this concluding chapter. The telecommunications company Orange rolled out a series of commercials during 2008 entitled ‘I am’, one of which featured the Scottish cyclist Mark Beaumont who currently holds the Guinness world record for cycling around the world. In the commercial, Beaumont attributes his success to the support that he gained by family, friends and everyone along the way (non-diegetically stating at the end of the commercial: “I am who I am because of everyone”).

The commercial’s message is subliminal, as it does not directly refer to the brand’s products or services, and in comparison to the Pepsi commercial, can thus be regarded as a more sophisticated method of advertising. The use of Reich’s music in the commercial – namely extracts from *Music for 18 Musicians* further contributes towards this sense of sophistication.<sup>10</sup> In comparison with his contemporaries such as Glass, Adams and Nyman, Reich’s music is widely regarded as being a more intellectually sophisticated form of minimalism; perhaps some of the reasons for this assumption lies with the fact that his music is less associated with mainstream contexts than the others. Reich, after all, has avoided writing music for film (although some of his pre-existing music has been employed in recent cinematic contexts, such as *The Dying Gaul*). The urbane characteristic of his music in general, as earlier associated with the newly defined urban trope, again adds to this suavity. If Huron’s categories for the use of music in commercials were applied in this scenario, then it

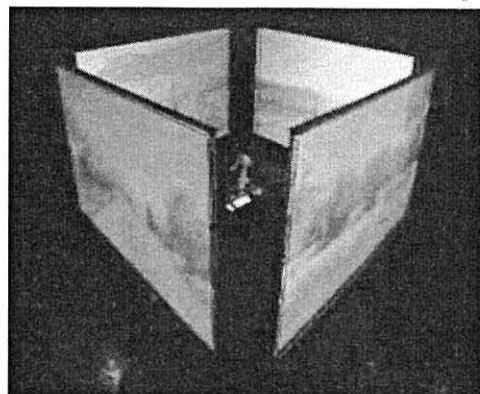
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<sup>10</sup> It is somehow ironic to note however that in 2002, Orange had in fact employed Glass’s *Einstein on the Beach* in a campaign entitled ‘City Skyline’ <<http://www.commercialbreaksandbeats.co.uk>> (Last accessed 25 February 2007).

would appear that the musical quotation offers authority or integrity to the advert, in addition to promoting a sense of structural cohesion through repetition.

So how does the quotation from *Music for 18 Musicians* operate in the Orange commercial, and in what respect does it function in a different manner to the preceding example of the Pepsi commercial? The abstract nature of the music seemingly offers no overt connection to the advert's subject matter. In fact, the commercial's subject matter can be regarded as being non-representational in itself, as the narrative does not directly relate to the selling of Orange products or services. As a result, no extra-musical meaning is carried from the text to its new context. The commercial is centred around Beaumont, who is positioned cycling on the spot, and is surrounded by video walls with footages recalling his journeys to date, as exemplified in the snapshot contained in Fig. 8.7.

**Fig. 8.7 Orange commercial screen snapshot**



The geometric layout of the commercial's set, as exemplified in the snapshot, shows a degree of compatibility with the minimalist aesthetic. Further symmetries between the music in the Orange commercial and its visual dimension may be observed in the combination of motion and stasis – the overall stasis of the bicycle vs. the movements of the wheels and the moving images – audibly interact with the temporal aspect of Reich's music. In teleological terms, the music conveys a sense of

motion through repetition, however avoids any sense of goal-oriented direction, thus an instance of ‘non-directed linear time’ in Jonathan Kramer’s temporal typology.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of Leydon’s typology, this sense of motion would undoubtedly be covered by the ‘motoric’ trope, albeit a natural or organic form of motoricism, due to the fact that the bicycle is driven by an individual and not by a mechanical object. Repetition in this instance does not convey a ‘state of mechanized indifference’ associated with industrialism. Through the cycling process, Beaumont generates electricity that powers the visual screens, which represents an interaction between human effort and machinery. Several other examples of the representation of production or progress can be cited: the workers in *Powaaqatsi*, Meredith Monk’s *Book of Days*, Reich’s ‘Hindenburg’, and the building of an airplane in Glass’s soundtrack to *Undertow*, to name but a few. Further to this ‘humanized motoricism’, the urban trope would also be applicable in this scenario. Cycling is commonly regarded as an urban form of travel, compatible with the corporate image of the Orange company – communication and global travel go hand in hand.

If consideration is given to whether or not the commercial offers a dialectical or an anti-dialectical narrative (which would suggest an allusion to an existential process), the lack of resolution in the music would strongly suggest that it is indeed based on the anti-dialectic. The meaning of the commercial – that is, how Beaumont’s speech relates to the overall purpose – again fails to resolve, while focus on the personal achievements of the cyclist, the emphasis on stating who he is and what he does, all offer a relation to a thought process based on existential and

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<sup>11</sup> See the earlier ‘Postmodern Unfoldings’ chapter for a more comprehensive discussion on Kramer’s descriptions of different temporal states.

humanistic principles.<sup>12</sup> In the chapter on *Naqoyqatsi* also, attention was drawn to human efforts in breaking through the sound barrier, as a testimony of human achievement. The ‘breakthrough’ element in such instances might be regarded as a common trait in the existential trope – as earlier mentioned, Andrews’s music in the Mondeo commercial and Glass’s music in the BMW commercial both introduced new material at significant points. In the Orange commercial, different extracts out of *Music for 18 Musicians* results in changes in pace, and a heightened state of intensity as the commercial develops, in tandem with the apparent temporal progress of the music.

It is undoubted that the combination of motion and stasis in the music and the visual element represents a similar relationship between both media. More specifically, this interaction with temporality, together with the existential element of the commercial, promotes an identical relationship between the music and the subject matter – represented by ‘identity a’ in the Fig. 8.6 model. If this is compared to the original context of the music, that is *Music for 18 Musicians*, firstly, there is no visual dimension belonging to the work, being a work for the concert hall. The abstract nature of the music and the music’s title offers no extra-musical meaning (while the music might reflect urban characteristics, they are entirely subjective). As a result, the Orange commercial acquires its own identity. This relationship between text and context might therefore best be explained as ‘identity b’ primarily due to the fact that one work holds no relation to the other. In short, the Orange commercial simultaneously demonstrates instances of similarity and difference, which thus causes a paradoxical relationship.

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<sup>12</sup> In this respect, Descartes’ famous observation “*Cogito, ergo sum*” resonates with the subjective thinking and a sense of identity portrayed in the commercial’s verbal narrative, but is obviously a precursor to the existentialist movement as largely developed by Sartre.



The Orange commercial serves as a final demonstration of an instance of minimalist music co-existing with newer visual and textual material. In fact, the analyses conducted during the course of this thesis have all demonstrated how post-minimalist music interacts with visual and textual media in different forms, from a theoretic perspective. Cook's model and the models developed in light of this study have offered various different methods to discuss the relationships between media. The viability of positing these frameworks within dialectical and anti-dialectical processes has been tested, and the research has also taken into account other theories that directly relate to either minimalism or multimedia. As a result, Leydon's argument that minimalist music promotes meaning can further be confirmed.

This final chapter has further clarified how new meanings can be extracted out of pre-existing music. In the case of the Orange commercial for instance, the abstract nature of Reich's music led to an interaction with other media. As the analysis has proven, the extracts out of *Music for 18 Musicians* maintains and affirms its own musical identity, yet can simultaneously offer an additional dimension that integrates within the verbal and visual narrative of the advert. The Pepsi commercial, on the other hand, reflects how meanings in Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* may be transferred to a subsequent context, which was also demonstrated in the quotations from *Koyaanisqatsi* in the Carbon Trust and BMW commercials, as discussed in the thesis's opening chapter.

So, in drawing towards conclusion, a key question that needs to be addressed is the reason why post-minimalism, and more specifically Glass's music, work in multimedia situations? In offering clarification, the relationship might be explained in six paradoxical statements. First, minimalist and post-minimal works successfully because it is accessible yet cultured. Second, its application in filmic and commercial

contexts demonstrates its efficiency in either extensive or concise structural contexts. Third, its dependence on foreground harmonic material allows it to operate as a background element, without the requisition of an underlying large-scale tonal structure. Fourth, it can co-exist with stasis or progression in cinematic narratives. Fifth, even though it is often based on rhythmic directedness, it can offer a considerable degree of psychological or emotional involvement. Finally, its juxtaposition allows it to convey a new meaning or alternatively maintain its existing identity.

In fact, Glass's own recent words accurately capture the essence of the fifth and final statements. During an interview in which he discussed his approach towards film music composition he noted, "if you put a picture up and change the music, the picture has a different meaning. The emotional inflection always comes from the music" (Jiang 2009, unpag.). Not only does this observation tease out a connection between theoretic and practical concerns, it also crystallises Glass's workmanlike approach to scoring for the medium.

## **Appendix**

**(Supplementary Transcription Extracts)**

Appendix A

Cliff Martinez: 'Don't Blow It' from *Solaris*

The musical score is presented in five systems. The first system is a single treble clef staff with a 'Cory' marking and a repeat sign followed by 'x 3'. The second and third systems are single treble clef staves with repeat signs followed by 'x 2'. The fourth system is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a repeat sign followed by 'x 1'. The fifth system is also a grand staff. The music features complex chordal textures and melodic lines with various articulations and dynamics.

Appendix B

'Invitation' from *Notes on a Scandal*

The first system of music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand features a series of whole rests, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The system concludes with a key signature change to one flat (B-flat).

The second system continues in 3/4 time with one flat. The right hand has whole rests, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line.

The third system changes to 2/4 time with one flat. Both hands play eighth-note patterns. The right hand has a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment.

The fourth system continues in 2/4 time with one flat. The right hand plays a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment.

The fifth system continues in 2/4 time with one flat. The right hand plays a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to 3/4 time.

The sixth system continues in 3/4 time with one flat. The right hand features a complex, multi-measure melodic line, while the left hand plays a simple accompaniment.

cont.

First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass clef. The treble clef contains a complex, fast-moving melodic line with many beamed notes. The bass clef contains a simpler, slower-moving line with fewer notes.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. The treble clef part remains highly active with beamed notes, while the bass clef part continues with a steady, slower rhythm.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef part continues with its fast, beamed melodic line. The bass clef part features a long, sweeping slur over several notes, indicating a sustained or gliding bass line.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef part continues with its fast, beamed melodic line. The bass clef part features a long, sweeping slur over several notes, indicating a sustained or gliding bass line.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef part continues with its fast, beamed melodic line. The bass clef part features a long, sweeping slur over several notes, indicating a sustained or gliding bass line.

Sixth system of musical notation. The treble clef part continues with its fast, beamed melodic line. The bass clef part features a long, sweeping slur over several notes, indicating a sustained or gliding bass line.

cont.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a series of eighth-note chords, while the bass clef staff features a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues with eighth-note chords, and the bass clef staff has a similar quarter-note accompaniment. The key signature remains two flats.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues with eighth-note chords, and the bass clef staff has a similar quarter-note accompaniment. The key signature remains two flats. The system concludes with a double bar line.

## Appendix C

### 'Zoe and Kate Watch Video' from *No Reservations*

♩ = 65

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff begins with a whole note chord of G2, B2, and D3, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2, and C3. The system concludes with two measures of a sixteenth-note triplet in the treble staff and an eighth-note triplet in the bass staff.

The second system continues the piece. The treble staff features a sixteenth-note triplet in the first measure, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff features an eighth-note triplet in the first measure, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2, and C3. The system concludes with two measures of a sixteenth-note triplet in the treble staff and an eighth-note triplet in the bass staff.

The third system continues the piece. The treble staff features a sixteenth-note triplet in the first measure, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff features an eighth-note triplet in the first measure, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2, and C3. The system concludes with two measures of a sixteenth-note triplet in the treble staff and an eighth-note triplet in the bass staff.

The fourth system continues the piece. The treble staff features quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff features a whole note chord of G2, B2, and D3, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2, and C3. The system concludes with two measures of a whole note chord in the bass staff.

The fifth system concludes the piece. The treble staff features quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff features a whole note chord of G2, B2, and D3, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2, and C3. The system concludes with two measures of a whole note chord in the bass staff.



Appendix D

'Zoe Goes to the Restaurant' from *No Reservations*

♩ = 65

The first system of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 65. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note pairs and slurs, while the left hand provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

The second system continues the piece, maintaining the same melodic and accompaniment patterns as the first system.

The third system introduces a more active bass line, with the left hand playing eighth-note patterns that mirror the eighth-note pairs in the right hand.

The fourth system continues the eighth-note accompaniment in both hands, with the right hand's melody becoming more intricate.

The fifth system concludes the piece, returning to a simpler accompaniment style with quarter notes in the left hand and a final melodic phrase in the right hand.

Appendix E

'First Day of School' from *Notes on a Scandal*

The musical score is presented in four systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The piece is characterized by frequent triplet patterns in both hands. The first system shows a steady accompaniment with triplets in the bass line. The second system continues this pattern, with the right hand playing a series of triplets. The third system features a more active right hand with eighth-note triplets. The fourth system concludes the piece with a final triplet in the right hand and a sustained chord in the bass.

Appendix F

'The History' from *Notes on a Scandal*

5-21

4-19

4-20 (12)

6-14

4-4

5-30

The musical score consists of eight systems of piano accompaniment. Each system includes a treble and bass clef staff. The first system is a single bass clef staff with two highlighted measures: 4-19 and 4-20 (12). The second system is a grand staff with a treble clef staff containing a long melodic line and a bass clef staff with accompaniment; measure 6-14 is highlighted. The third system is a grand staff with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line and a bass clef staff with accompaniment; measure 4-4 is highlighted. The fourth system is a grand staff with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line and a bass clef staff with accompaniment; measure 5-30 is highlighted. The remaining four systems are grand staves with treble and bass clef staves, showing melodic lines and accompaniment without specific measure highlights.

## Appendix G

### 'Barbara's House' from *Notes on a Scandal*

The musical score for 'Barbara's House' from *Notes on a Scandal* is presented in seven systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment in 2/4 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand. The second system continues this pattern. The third system introduces a change in the piano part, with the right hand playing a more complex rhythmic pattern and the left hand playing quarter notes. The fourth system shows a change in the piano part, with the right hand playing a more complex rhythmic pattern and the left hand playing quarter notes. The fifth system shows the piano part in 2/4 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand. The sixth system continues this pattern. The seventh system shows a change in the piano part, with the right hand playing a more complex rhythmic pattern and the left hand playing quarter notes. The score concludes with a double bar line.

## Appendix H

### 'Sheba and Steven' from *Notes on a Scandal*

The musical score consists of five systems. The first system is a single melodic line in 2/4 time. The second system is a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef, featuring time signature changes to 3/4 and 2/4. The third system continues the piano accompaniment. The fourth system also features time signature changes to 3/4 and 2/4. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final 3/4 time signature.

Appendix I

'Excellent Mr Renfield' from *Dracula*

The first system of the piano score for 'Excellent Mr Renfield' is in 3/4 time and the key of B-flat major. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note melody, while the left hand provides a steady bass line of eighth notes.

The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand melody is characterized by slurs and accents, and the left hand maintains its rhythmic pattern.

The third system of the score shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment with consistent melodic and rhythmic elements.

The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment, maintaining the established musical structure.

The fifth system of the score continues the piano accompaniment with the same melodic and rhythmic motifs.

The sixth system concludes the piano accompaniment on this page, ending with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.

cont.

x3

First system of musical notation. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/8. The right hand has a whole rest, and the left hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. A 'v' marking is above the first measure, and a repeat sign is at the end.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. It features the same grand staff, key signature, and time signature as the first system. The right hand remains a whole rest, and the left hand continues the eighth-note pattern.

Third system of musical notation, continuing the piece. It features the same grand staff, key signature, and time signature as the first system. The right hand remains a whole rest, and the left hand continues the eighth-note pattern.

Fourth system of musical notation. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, Eb). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The left hand continues with eighth notes.

Fifth system of musical notation. The key signature remains two flats. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The left hand continues with eighth notes.

Sixth system of musical notation. The key signature remains two flats. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The left hand continues with eighth notes.

cont.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The bass clef staff provides a simple accompaniment. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a more complex melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a highly rhythmic and dense melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats. The system concludes with a double bar line.



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