

**From “Can’t Buy Me Love” to “How Deep Is Your Love?”: An Analysis Examining
Key Phases of Development of the Functions of Popular Music in U.K. and U.S.
Films of the 1960s and 1970s.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to identify the extent to which popular music functionality in UK and US film can be regarded as a developmental process, and, in particular, the importance of the contribution of the 13-year period bounded by the films *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, UK, 1964) and *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, USA, 1977) to this. It also explores salient cultural, historical and industrial factors which may have influenced development. Both these areas have been largely neglected to date.

Within the period identified above, three key phases have been recognized which each contributed to specific innovations and developments. These have been labelled 'The British Invasion Phase', 'The New Hollywood Alienation Phase' and 'The Disco Phase'. For each of these a primary film text (*A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* and *Saturday Night Fever* respectively) is analyzed in detail, with reference to the work of Claudia Gorbman and Jeff Smith on the principles of musical function in film.

In addition, these chapters are prefaced by an examination of a further stage, 'The Classic American Musical Phase', covering a period of relative inactivity, in respect of developments in popular music function, prior to the 'British Invasion Phase'. Examples of two of Elvis Presley's films, *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair*, are examined to illustrate why innovation was lacking at this time.

As this thesis is not only concerned with what innovations occurred but also why they manifested specifically during a particular phase, individual chapters extend

beyond pure film analysis into a study of crucial elements of cultural and popular music history associated with aspects of The British Invasion, New Hollywood and Disco.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed Date

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INTRODUCTION

To date there have only been patchy attempts to deal with popular music's relationship with film... It is startling that there is so little written on a subject that is so popular as a consumer item and thus has a significant cultural profile.

(Donnelly 2015: 9)

Given the scarcity of writing on this subject, this thesis aims to address a new concept of this relationship: popular music function as a developmental process.

Whilst much has been written on the functions of popular music in film, including a number of textual analyses comparing and contrasting them to those of a classical film score, there has been little attempt to trace the development in the range of functions, from the point at which popular music is first included, to that at which its functional abilities have expanded to such an extent that they could justifiably be regarded as strongly resembling those of a film score. In addition, the consideration of possible reasons for such a period of functional development has also been overlooked.

To address these omissions, this thesis will identify examples of ground-breaking UK and US films, which played a part in this developmental process through being the first significant examples to demonstrate advances in specific functional capabilities of popular music. Simultaneously, it will investigate salient, contemporary, cultural and industrial factors which contributed to the presence of the innovations within each of these films.

In order to facilitate these aims it is first necessary to define the terms 'music function', 'popular music' and 'developmental process' contained within the above

statement. In addition, an identification of the most significant phases from within this period, which will most successfully set out the concept of development, will be included in this introduction, along with a justification for the selection of the individual films which will form the primary text for each phase, to establish the reasoning behind the parameters set. Explanations for the focus on UK and US film and for the employment of textual analysis as a method will also be addressed.

Music Function

Before embarking on this investigation an explanation of the meaning of the term 'music function' in the context of this thesis is needed. The iconic theme from *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1975) is an appropriate musical text which can be employed to assist in providing examples of music functions, through the relationship between the film's score and its other visual and aural elements. At various points during the film when this piece of music is heard, such as when Alex Kintner (Jeffrey Voorhees) is attacked by the shark, the audience is aware of the beast's presence in the water even though it is not visible on the screen. This suggests there is some form of association between this musical theme and the shark. At these points it is the music, rather than the visual image which functions to denote its presence. Furthermore, this ability to act as a signifier is not limited merely to that of the presence of the shark but extends to a representation of its perceived movements. "The ponderous *Jaws* theme music suggests a shark pushing inexorably forward, then speeding towards its prey." (Sipos 2010: 236). This depiction is achieved by increasing the tempo of the music as the piece progresses, signifying the increased speed of movement of the shark as it closes in on its victim.

But, importantly, the functions performed by this theme are not restricted to signification of a physical object and its actions. This piece of music is also intended to engender specific emotions in the audience, including tension and fear, through its structure and choice of instrumentation. Its initial bass notes, performed on a cello, creating a deeper, more ominous tone, gradually, through the introduction of a tuba, build to a crescendo as they represent the shark firstly stalking, and then attacking its victims. As Friedman points out “Throughout *Jaws*, Spielberg uses Williams’ theme to trigger apprehension in the viewers, to alert us to danger, and to replace our rational consciousness with an irrational fear” (2006: 174). So, from this example, it is evident that music is capable of contributing to the narrative meaning of, and the audience response to, a film through performing a variety of functions in collaboration with its other elements, such as dialogue, sound effects, mise-en-scene and editing.

In the example of *Jaws* it is John Williams’ film score, music composed specifically for the film, which performs these functions. However, as Shuker points out, film score is not the only form of music included in film.

Mainstream narrative cinema has used two types of musical soundtrack to compliment the filmic text (1) theme music usually composed specifically for the film (e.g. *Star Wars* and *Jaws*); (2) a soundtrack consisting of selected popular music, usually contemporary with the temporal and physical setting of the film, or representative of the period evoked (e.g. *The Big Chill*, *Singles*, *American Graffiti*).

(2002: 132)

One of the aims of this thesis is to establish the degree to which the concept of music functionality can be applied equally to both categories referred to by Shuker. So, although the analysis of the *Jaws*’ theme above refers to music belonging to

Shuker's first category, a film score, it is also necessary to construct an assessment of the extent to which a piece of popular music can be examined in a similar way to evaluate its functions and this will be completed in the literature review following this introduction through an appraisal of existing work on this topic. But, since popular music is an extremely broad term, some form of clarification of its meaning in this instance is helpful at this point.

Popular Music

The term popular music is problematic as "it defies precise, straightforward definition [since] the criteria for what counts as popular, and their application to specific musical styles and genres, are open to considerable debate" (Shuker 2013: 5). Denisoff also recognizes this difficulty in pinpointing the meaning, arguing "There are few definitions of popular music of any substance" (1995: 30). Fabbri identifies shortcomings in many such definitions of the genres of music: "In most musicological literature which has tackled the problem of genres... formal and technical rules seem to be the only ones taken into consideration, to the point where genre and form become synonymous" (1981: 55). Instead, Fabbri argues that genre definitions should additionally consider semiotic, social, ideological, economic, behavioural and juridicial dimensions. Frith also acknowledges that definitions can be constructed to take account of factors which extend beyond form, such as the intended market. But, Frith also concedes that, similar to other attempts to define genre, those based on market are also hampered by a lack of clarity and consistency: "Different media by necessity map their consumers in different ways" (1998:77).

Therefore, if these problems in defining all genres of music, including popular music, are accepted, rather than embarking on an attempt to construct an all-encompassing meaning, a more useful alternative would be to convey aspects commonly attached to this term which are relevant within the framework of this thesis. Since the focus of this relates to an association between music and film, in this context popular music could be regarded as originating in the 1950s, specifically beginning with the inclusion of “Rock Around the Clock” in the film *Blackboard Jungle* (Richard Brooks, USA, 1955), since this has been identified by Barron as “the precise moment at which this relationship [between popular music and film] came into being” (2003: 148). The importance of this moment is also singled out by James:

It [*Blackboard Jungle*] inaugurated the synergistic interaction between cinema and the new music and introduced the ideological tasks and entertainment opportunities that subsequent rock ‘n’ roll films would pursue... In May 1955, two months after the film opened, “Rock Around the Clock” was reissued and immediately became a huge hit, culturally as significant as the detonation of the United States’ first and biggest hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll the month before the record was made.

(2016: 23)

Additionally, Marwick (2011) recognizes the significance of the imported records of Bill Haley and the films, beginning with *Blackboard Jungle*, which incorporated his music, as a “trenchant influence” upon the establishment of rock ‘n’ roll in the U.K. at this time.

However, this focus upon the inclusion of “Rock Around the Clock” in *Blackboard Jungle* is not intended to suggest that popular music did not exist prior to this point. Evidently, the term popular music was employed before 1955. “It was first linked in

a published title to a certain kind of music ... in William Chapple's *Popular Music of the Olden Times*, published in 1855" (Shuker 2013: 5), and the label was widely in use during the 1930s and 1940s.

Given this, it may appear contradictory to rely upon Barron's statement that popular music did not appear in film until 1955, when there exist much earlier examples, such as Jackie Rabinowitz (Al Jolson) singing "My Mammy" in *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, USA, 1927), which, at the time, would have been regarded as belonging to this genre. However, as Shuker recognizes, popular music has a "shifting topography" (2013: 6). Frith concurs with this view of popular music as a fluid entity: "If the music industry has always used labelling procedures, then, they have never been clear or consistent. Genre maps change according to who they're for" (1998: 77). Consequently, popular music should not be seen as a constant, since its definitive and temporal parameters are subject to change. Songs or tunes which may have been regarded as popular music in 1855 would not be commonly attached to the term today. As earlier examples become excluded the perceived date of origin is brought forward in time leading, in part, to Barron's statement above that 1955 marked the beginning of the relationship between popular music and film. But, this does not explain why Barron and others have identified "Rock Around the Clock", in particular, as the key song to the start of this relationship. To investigate his reasoning further it is necessary to examine some of the key elements included within existing definitions of popular music.

One of these components is popular music's commercial nature, in that its success, in part, is measured via record sales and airplay and it is orientated to achieve these

goals. Beard and Gloag define popular music as “music that achieves a sense of popularity or strives to be popular ... situated within a commercially driven entertainment-based industry” (2005: 133). In this industrial respect, the birth of rock ‘n’ roll coincided with the growing establishment of 45rpm singles and record charts as a measure of commercial success. “In America the 45 and rock ‘n’ roll triumphed simultaneously: the pivotal period for both was 1954-57” (Osborne 2013). If the introduction of the single and its effect on the expansion of the influence of the charts are seen as a new beginning for music, in a commercial sense, then this accounts for rock ‘n’ roll being the genre of popular music associated with the start of this new era. This aspect of the perception of a connection between the birth of rock ‘n’ roll and the beginning of popular music is further enhanced by Shuker’s argument that the term ‘rock’ “became roughly contiguous with ‘popular music’ post the emergence of rock ‘n’ roll in the 1950s” (2013: 6). Therefore, as “Rock Around the Clock” was the first major rock ‘n’ roll hit, under the definition of this genre as representative of popular music, it could also be regarded as the first popular music hit in this context.

This assumption that the birth of rock ‘n’ roll denotes the beginning of popular music could only be made retrospectively. It is only when searching for the origins of what is subsequently regarded as popular music, that they can be traced back to songs such as “Rock Around the Clock”. However, in terms of the relationship between popular music and film, the song’s inclusion in *Blackboard Jungle* also marked a significant change at the time. The song had been previously released in 1954, but only enjoyed international chart success after it was included over the

opening and closing credits of the film. At this point, the synergistic possibilities of film and rock 'n' roll music were first realized. The coupling of a film and pre-recorded popular music, both of which were aimed primarily at a youth audience, an increasingly important demographic economically, allowed each to be exploited in the promotion of the other. Consequently, according to Reid (2006: 39), the film took \$5.2 million in US/Canadian box-office rentals, making it the sixteenth most successful film of the year, and the song achieved international chart success, including reaching No. 1 in the US and the UK.

This summary identifies elements of an interpretation of popular music which are relevant in the context of this thesis. These being: that it incorporates a period beginning with the birth of rock 'n' roll; is driven by commercial goals such as chart success; and is aimed predominantly at youth. It is these aspects, incorporated within a film, the target audience of which matches that of the music, which gives validity not only to Barron's claim, but also to the choice of *Blackboard Jungle* as the starting point for assessing the development of popular music function in film within this thesis.

Developmental Process

Having substantiated the reasoning behind the recognition of the presence of "Rock Around the Clock" in *Blackboard Jungle* as marking the birth of popular music in film, a comparison to later examples illustrates its limitations. This song is the sole piece of popular music included in the film and is heard only during the opening and closing credits, along with an orchestral version during a fight sequence. Moving forward in time to 1977, by contrast, popular music is abundantly present

throughout the film, *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, USA, 1977). In this film, pieces are performed by different artists and different versions of individual songs are also included. Furthermore, popular music is included diegetically, non-diegetically and meta-diegetically, that is, both within and outside the world of the film, and also within the imagination of the film's characters. This greater variety, both in the array of pieces and their utilization, impacts upon the functions of the popular music in this film. But, it would be wrong to assume that all these advances, and their influence upon the expansion of functional abilities, were instantaneous. In terms of popular music function, it was not a single jump straight from *Blackboard Jungle* to *Saturday Night Fever*. During the intervening period between the release of each of these films, other key examples were produced which exhibit individual innovations in their use of popular music in forms which are absent from their predecessors. Important examples of these will be analyzed in detail to assist in identifying key phases which enabled expansion in the scope of popular music function. This path of progress, along which the range of these functions expanded, is represented by the term 'developmental process' which is referred to within the opening paragraph. The initial phase of this process, linked to the British Invasion, marks the first major advances in popular music function. The process then continues via two subsequent key phases attached to New Hollywood and Disco, during which additional functional capabilities are demonstrated for the first time. For the purposes of this research, the aim is to culminate the exploration of this process at a point at which the variety of the functions of popular music have grown to such a degree that they bear a strong resemblance to those of a classical film score.

Period Analyzed and Selected Film Examples

Having established a definition of a developmental process, the period to be analyzed which will best illustrate this concept needs to be identified, along with the 'key phases' within it which contain salient film examples, the music from which can most effectively demonstrate significant points on the 'path of progress' referred to above. Since the focus of this thesis is on the development of popular music functionality, rather than its mere presence, it does not seem fitting to begin an analysis of development at 1955 with *Blackboard Jungle* (Richard Brooks, USA, 1955) and its inclusion of "Rock Around the Clock", solely for the reason that it marks the first use of popular music in film, since restricting the inclusion of this song to the opening and closing credits severely limits the functions it can perform. Instead, it would be more appropriate for the period of analysis to commence at a point at which innovations in the use of popular music can first be seen to have a noteworthy effect in expanding the range of functional capabilities already present.

With regards to the end of the period of analysis, as stated above, the intention is to mark a point at which this range of functional capabilities first broadened to the level at which it can be regarded as closely resembling that of a score written specifically for a film. As a result, the aim is to identify a phase containing a film example which displays a variety of popular music functions so numerous as to enable a detailed comparison to a film score.

Originally the intention was to set out these functional developments purely in chronological order, but this over simplifies the temporal relationship between innovative films, since a number of the movements which contributed to individual

advances overlapped one another. Consequently, it is more suitable to divide the period analyzed into key phases, each of which contributed to specific advances, as it needs to be acknowledged that innovation did not mark a universal change in the manner of inclusion of popular music within film. For example, the methods used for including popular music within all the movies starring Elvis Presley remained largely the same, regardless of whether these films were produced before or after developments were introduced in other more innovative films, such as *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, UK, 1964) and *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, USA, 1967). "Although Presley starred in thirty-one movies ... they have always existed in a self-contained, unchanging sphere all of their own, unrelated to developments in film during the same years" (Hajdu 2009: 191). The same could be said for the style of the songs within his films. "As Dylan, the Beatles and their peers elevated the standards for rock songwriting ... Elvis was [still] recording goofy tripe such as "(There's) No Room to Rhumba in a Sports Car", "Do the Clam", and "Petunia, the Gardener's Daughter"" (Hajdu 2009: 190). Consequently, since Presley's movies are present throughout much of the period which will be analyzed, it is more appropriate to identify distinct significant phases which will categorize films according to the cultural movements which contributed to their innovation and, subsequently, to the developmental process, rather than attempt to construct a timeline which will classify films simply according to the year in which they were released.

As described in the opening paragraph, the period of development to be researched is from 1964 to 1977. This will be divided into three key phases, which

will be referred to as 'The British Invasion Phase', 'The New Hollywood Alienation Phase' and 'The Disco Phase'. Each of these has been identified as being driven by change, through the emergence of new traits of genre, both within film and popular music. In relation to film, the first phase encompasses a time when British cinema was in the ascendancy owing to the establishment of the New Wave movement and, from a popular music viewpoint, it was a period when a number of British singers and bands were achieving transatlantic success. The second phase encompasses the rise of New Hollywood cinema, protest singers, youth alienation and the hippie movement and the final phase embraces elements of disco culture, such as music, dance and venue and the ways in which these are represented in film.

Looking at each in more detail, the reasoning behind choosing the phases which mark the beginning and end of the period of development to be analyzed, and the selection of a primary film text within each, is as follows.

The establishment and the growing popularity of the representation of social realism in British cinema, which coincided with the 'Invasion' of numerous popular British musicians touring America, has been identified as contributing to the first innovations, since it was this combination, manifesting itself in the form of the Beatles' film debut, *A Hard Day's Night*, which marked the first significant breakaway from the established formats of pop-musicals, including the presentation of their music, thereby effecting advances in popular music function.

As already mentioned, the end of the period is representative of a complete contrast to *Blackboard Jungle* with its single popular song, in the sense that movies

of the “Disco” phase, such as *Saturday Night Fever* and *Thank God It’s Friday* (Robert Klane, USA, 1978) contained enough music to fill double-album soundtracks. Furthermore, the quantity of pieces of popular music, the variety of artists performing them and the inclusion of different versions of individual songs, are indicators of developments, not only from the utilization of popular music in *Blackboard Jungle*, but also from that of intervening films, such as *A Hard Day’s Night*. As this phase’s most iconic example, the selected primary film text, which will be analyzed to demonstrate the functional capabilities of popular music during this phase, is *Saturday Night Fever*.

With regards to the selection of these individual films as representative of their respective phases, there are clear reasons as to why each can be regarded as foremost in the development of the functions of popular music at the time. *A Hard Day’s Night*’s original intersection of genres, technology and contemporary culture led Sarris to the following conclusion:

A Hard Day’s Night has turned out to be the *Citizen Kane* of jukebox musicals, the brilliant crystallization of such diverse cultural particles as the pop movie, rock ‘n’ roll, cinema verite, the nouvelle vague, free cinema, the affectedly hand-held camera, frenzied cutting, the cult of the sexless sub-adolescent, the semi-documentary and studied spontaneity.

(2004:50)

Sarris’ view is supported by Glynn’s statement that *A Hard Day’s Night* “effected a paradigm shift in the sub-genre of the pop musical ... through its innovative power” (2005: 3) which, although referring to the film text as a whole, can also be applied specifically to the methods used for the inclusion of popular song within the film,

such as the use of multiple cameras to film the 'live' performances and the landmark sequences accompanied by the non-diegetic "Can't Buy Me Love", which have been widely recognized as a forerunner of the music video.

Babington and Evans describe *Saturday Night Fever* as a "film of great significance [containing] some quality of innovation which is able to extend what the [musical] genre can do" (1985:224). Equally, its utilization of popular music warrants detailed analysis to ascertain the level to which this extension, referred to by Babington and Evans, encompasses expansion in the scope of functional abilities. Through embracing the popularity of the disco movement at this time, a large proportion of the music can be included diegetically, in spite of there being no 'live' performance by musicians, since none are visually present in the film. The soundtrack album consists of seventeen tracks, some of which are heard on more than one occasion. Therefore, given the extensive variety of popular music contained within this film, it provides a particularly relevant text in assessing the extent to which the range of the music's functions not only resemble that of a classical score, but may also be capable of exceeding it through the performance of additional functions specific to the genre of popular music. Therefore, the view that *Saturday Night Fever*, as representative of disco, marks an appropriate closing key phase of the developmental process warrants a detailed investigation.

Bridging the gap between these two phases, a third, the New Hollywood Alienation Phase, will be included. This phase is significant to the role of popular music in film since its contribution is the removal of the visual image of the performer. This elimination of the tie between the music heard and the musician seen removes

many of the pre-existing constraints on the points during a film at which popular music can be used, and inclusion of a study of this phase allows for an assessment of the effects of this upon functional capability, again via a detailed examination of a primary film text. Also, through providing an additional intermediate point in the analysis of the chosen overall period, the insertion of this third phase will aid in an evaluation of the validity of the concept of popular music function as a developmental process by assessing progress post the British Invasion Phase but prior to the Disco Phase.

As with the other two phases, a primary film text has been selected for close analysis, in this case *The Graduate*. As is the basis with *A Hard Day's Night* and *Saturday Night Fever*, *The Graduate's* significance to this research lies in its innovative use of popular music, with it being "one of the first box office hits with compilation music on the soundtrack" (Larsen 2005: 151). As an example of a New Hollywood Alienation film, it also differs from its predecessors as it is illustrative of the aforementioned complete detachment of popular song from the visual image of the performer, in this instance Simon and Garfunkel. Although music had previously been used non-diegetically in this way during opening and closing sequences since its first inclusion in *Blackboard Jungle*, this is the first example in which such an approach was used throughout the narrative of a Hollywood film. Additionally, the repeated use of individual songs, such as "The Sound of Silence", is a further innovative use of the film's musical soundtrack. Such novelty within *The Graduate* underlines its importance to the study of the development of popular music function. Given these advances in technique, it is unsurprising that Denisoff and

Romanowski describe it as “a landmark picture, elevating the integration of story and rock music” (1991: 166).

Although selecting films from these three distinct phases makes it possible to compare the range of functions present in each to aid in establishing the extent to which popular music function can be regarded as a developmental process, there are also obvious limitations of restricting detailed analysis to such a small sample of films and these need to be acknowledged. While it may be possible to identify a number of developments by focussing entirely on just three film texts, this substantially restricts the range of material to be used and, consequently, there will exist gaps within the overall period studied which would evade scrutiny. To partially address this inadequacy, although close textual analysis is restricted primarily to these films, it will also be necessary to incorporate reference to significant sequences from others because, clearly, functional developments would not have been confined to these three primary cases. Examples of these additional texts include sequences from *Catch Us If You Can* (John Boorman, UK, 1965), which will demonstrate how a number of the innovations present in *A Hard Day's Night* were subsequently developed in films starring other British Bands, and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, USA, 1969), the musical soundtrack of which can be contrasted to Simon and Garfunkel's in *The Graduate* through it consisting of a collection of previously released songs, performed by a variety of artists. However, it should be noted that even with the inclusion of these additional references this is still not an attempt at recognition of all functional developments during this period, but rather that

analysis of sequences from these films is added to provide further support to the concept of the expansion of musical function as a developmental process.

In addition to analyzing film texts from within the chosen period of 1964 to 1977, given the acceptance of Barron's argument that popular music was first included in film in 1955, almost a decade earlier, it will also be necessary to refer to film examples from this earlier time covering 1955 to 1964. This is required to demonstrate the variety of functional advances present in *A Hard Day's Night* through comparison to its pop-musical predecessors. Consequently, analysis of the three key phases identified above will be prefaced by an examination of evidence of, and reasons for, a lack of development prior to the Beatles' movie debut.

This thesis benefits from the inclusion of this preface in two ways. Firstly, in order to illustrate functional advances it will be necessary to analyze not only the texts which contain them but also similar examples which don't. This will enable a clear explanation of the innovation present. For example, to demonstrate the occurrence of any functional development in *A Hard Day's Night* it is necessary to evidence that development's absence from other contemporary and previously-released films, such as those starring Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard.

Secondly, the inclusion of references to functionally non-innovative films can, on occasion, assist in establishing possible reasons for subsequent originality at a specific time. For instance, change may arise from a desire not to conform, or an aversion, to the conventions of the time. From comments attributed to John Lennon, it is clear that the novel configuration of *A Hard Day's Night* was, at least in

part, borne out of a response to the existing, predictable pop-musical format which preceded it.

We'd made it clear to Brian (Epstein) that we weren't interested in being stuck in one of those typical nobody-understands-our-music plots where the local dignitaries are trying to ban something as terrible as the Saturday-night hop. The kind of thing where we'd just pop up a couple of times between the action ... all smiles and clean shirt collars to sing our latest record and once again at the end when the local mayor has been convinced we're not all mass murderers ... We all know the scene so well ... where he and a bunch of town councillors and the police chief start dancing around all over the place like those bloody *Thunderbirds* puppets.

(Lennon in Carr 1996: 30)

From Lennon's views it is evident that there was a desire by the Beatles to distance themselves from the style of the conventional pop-musicals of the time. In achieving this, *A Hard Day's Night* contributed many novel elements to the genre, including the methods used in the presentation of many of the film's songs. Therefore, to more fully engage with this point, an examination of examples of the pop-musicals to which Lennon is referring will be included as a preface to the analysis of the subsequent period.

In constructing this analysis of the development of popular music function this thesis, therefore, attempts to set out key genres of film and popular music, along with cultural changes which enabled a route of progression from the Beatles' film debut, via the decline of the pop-musical and the emergence of New Hollywood and the pop soundtrack movie, to *Saturday Night Fever*. But, it will also incorporate an analysis of a salient evolutionary dead-end, which preceded and coincided with the period of development from 1964 to 1977, in the form of the film career of Elvis

Presley from 1956 to 1969, since it is vital to appreciate its significance to this thesis, both as a contrasting element against which developments can be measured and as a relevant factor which contributed to functional innovation.

From this assessment of the phases which are to be analyzed, along with the preface to these, it is apparent that there is a clear focus on UK and US film. The reasons for this attention are mainly twofold. Firstly, since it is the British Invasion, the 1960s American counterculture movement and the disco phases which have been identified as key to the development of popular music function, it follows that selected primary film texts should be representative of these, and it is examples from British and American cinema which best serve this purpose. Also, the UK and the US have consistently been at the forefront of popular music and its incorporation within film. "International popular music has been dominated by the United States and Britain since the turn of the twentieth century. The advent of rock 'n' roll in the mid 1950s reinforced this dominance and was embraced by films that wished to add energy, show youthful credentials and make money" (Donnelly 2015: 9-10).

Secondly, iconic British and American film texts, such as *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* and *Saturday Night Fever*, can be regarded as possessing cultural capital in terms of their commercial success and their critical reception. Each can, therefore, be regarded as representative of popular culture at the time. In this respect, in addition to being examples of films which advanced popular music function, they can also demonstrate cultural and historical factors common to the time, which may have contributed to these advances.

The commercial success is evidenced by the popularity of each of these films, and its music, not only in the US and the UK, but globally. *A Hard Day's Night* "brought in \$5,800,000 in US Rentals in six weeks and ... was the second most profitable film of 1964 in Britain" (Glynn 2005: 87). In the same year, it was also released in countries such as West Germany, Ireland, Denmark, Japan, Sweden, Canada, Iceland, Finland, Venezuela, Spain, France and Argentina, helping it gross \$14 million worldwide. The film's music was equally successful commercially. The soundtrack topped the UK album charts for twenty-one weeks and its US counterpart for fourteen. Additionally, as a single, the film's title track reached number 1 in Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Malaysia and Hong Kong. It also topped the charts in Argentina and reached the top 5 in Brazil, Peru and Uruguay (Glynn 2005: 88).

Similarly, the soundtrack to *Saturday Night Fever* was at number one in the US charts for 24 weeks between January and July 1978 and in the UK for 18 weeks. Globally it has sold over 40 million copies (Henderson & Stacey 2014: 74). According to Smith the film, itself, "grossed more than \$94 million dollars in domestic box office and another \$143 million in foreign sales" (2014: 96). Its release in a diverse range of countries, including Italy, Finland, Australia, Brazil, Mexico and Japan, contributed to this global success.

Smith also states "*The Graduate* ... grossed about \$100 million worldwide, sold more than 2 million copies of its soundtrack and spawned a #1 single in Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson"" (2014: 96). Like *Saturday Night Fever* the film was released throughout Europe and South America, but also reached cinemagoers in

Japan and Hong Kong. The soundtrack album reached the top 10 in Australia, France, Norway and Spain, in addition to the US and the UK.

As well as being commercially successful each was critically acclaimed and recognized by the film industry at the time of its release. Michael Thornton distinguished *A Hard Day's Night* as “not the usual kind of British pop-musical in which a series of hit songs are linked loosely by an incredible plot and unspeakable dialogue” whilst containing “all the ingredients of good cinema – wonderful photography, imaginative direction and excellent character performances” (in Glynn 2005: 82-3). Stanley Kauffman’s review of *The Graduate* in *The New Republic* was entitled “How Mike Nichols and ‘The Graduate’ Changed American Movies Forever” and made the claim that “*All* the talents involved in *The Graduate* make it soar brightly above its shortcomings and ... make it a milestone in American film history” (1967). Pauline Kael described *Saturday Night Fever* as containing “among the most hypnotically beautiful pop dance scenes ever filmed” (1994: 764). Collectively, industrial commendation was displayed by the twelve Oscar nominations received between them. These factors are salient since they provide evidence that each was an example of popular film culture at the time of its cinema release, enjoyed by large audiences and appreciated by reviewers of that period.

In focussing primarily upon these three texts it is not the intention to infer these are the only innovative films of this period. However, to enable sufficient depth to textual analysis it is necessary to restrict to a small sample of, what may be considered, the most significant examples. Consequently, an analysis of *Scorpio Rising* (Kenneth Anger, USA, 1964), which, musically, could be considered to be

equally as innovative as its contemporary, *A Hard Day's Night*, being "structured around thirteen pop songs which, aside from a few sound effects, make up its entire soundtrack" (Smith 1998: 161), is omitted as it lacks some of the elements of the 'cultural capital' which *A Hard Day's Night* possesses. Although the film received favourable reviews in the *New Yorker* and *Newsweek*, according to Denisoff and Romanowski (1991: 168), its avant-garde style resulted in it being an underground classic, rather than a commercial success. The cult status of the film was further enhanced by its subject matter, addressing issues considered extremely contentious at the time, such as homosexuality, sadism and Naziism. This led to a limited release, largely restricted to American art-cinemas and a mixed reception, swathed in controversy. "When the film was shown at a Los Angeles art theatre, the manager was arrested and the run cancelled" (Denisoff & Romanowski 1991: 168). As a result, in spite of critical acclaim, *Scorpio Rising* would not have reached as wide an audience as *A Hard Day's Night*. For this reason it would, therefore, have been unable to directly penetrate international popular culture to the same degree.

From the details set out in this introduction it is clear the research within this thesis will rely heavily upon textual analysis of film. As a method, textual analysis of key sequences is the most appropriate in this instance, as it enables the acquisition of material which is specifically relevant to this investigation. Britton provides a strong defence for this approach arguing "No film theory is worth anything which does not stay close to the concrete and which does not strive continually to check its own assumptions and procedures in relation to producible texts" (1986: 3).

A further key benefit of this method is explained by Gibbs and Pye, who observe “A central advantage of rooting interpretation in the detail of film, the results of specific decisions taken by filmmakers, is that it provides a material and verifiable basis for discussion” (2005: 4). Engagement with the observable aspects of film, be they visual, aural or the relationship between the two, is essential to research as this approach allows the acquisition of data which will assist in constructing theory. This is demonstrated within the literature review which follows this introduction, as all the examples of work theorizing the functions of popular music in film, cited therein, rely upon this method. It is also the method employed by theorists, such as Claudia Gorbman, in constructing a list of principles of musical function. Therefore, to best engage with this existing body of theory on the functions of film music, and identify the gaps within it which this research intends to address, it is appropriate to utilize the same approach.

However, in spite of employing a heavy reliance upon close textual analysis of film, recognition of the limitations of this method in accumulation of data remains important. For example, it should be acknowledged that a text may be interpreted in a multitude of ways.

No intra-textual interpretation ever is or could be a proof. Most often, it is a description of aspects of the film with suggested understandings of some of the ways they are patterned. Rhetoric is involved in developing the description so that evolves a sense of how, seen this way, the film may affect us, or so that it invites participation in the pleasure of discovering this way in which various of the film’s features hang together.

(Perkins 1990: 4)

However, although there can never be a single definitive reading via textual analysis there is also a limit to the number of interpretations which may be justified. This follows since an interpretation is not simply a purely subjective view, but rather “an understanding capable of being shared or challenged and, in the process, enhanced, reworked or replaced” (Gibbs and Pye 2005: 4). Therefore, to be most effective as a method, textual analysis should be presented in a form which stimulates a connection with, an understanding of and a response to the author’s view. In the case of film, analysis consists of both description and interpretation, which are inextricably linked. Thereby, in relation to popular music and its functions, by describing pertinent film sequences which incorporate this medium, the intention is to construct an accurate description and a valid interpretation of the functions present which can then be effectively shared, but may subsequently be challenged, enhanced, reworked or replaced.

The defence of textual analysis in relation to this thesis is not intended to suggest that there are no alternative methods which could be employed for other studies of popular music function. For example, a more quantitative based approach could be used to develop alternative terms to describe how popular music contributes to a film via audience questionnaires. The frequency of given responses could then be grouped and quantified as a means of assessing the importance of each. The occurrence of the most significant could then be measured against a sample of films to gauge the presence of individual popular music functions.

To illustrate how this could work in more detail, a similar ‘bottom up’ method was taken by The Business School of the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and

Technology who applied such a quantitative approach to the study of film genres (2014). Rather than engaging with existing theories and definitions, and applying these to selected film texts, instead the Business School questioned a sample of students to obtain a list of descriptive adjectives for a variety of films. A number of quantitative methods were then employed to isolate the principal terms attained and, from these, create a list of eight 'movie-type indicators'. Via cluster analysis, this list was then applied to a selection of films resulting in the identification of nine movie types.

Whilst not denying the value of quantitative methods, such an approach, which aims to categorize events based upon their numeric occurrence, is not appropriate if the aims of this thesis are to be achieved. If solely quantitative methods were applied to this research, films would be assessed purely upon the frequency of the popular music functions present. Consequently, close analysis of texts is the more relevant method in this instance as the aims are to investigate the internal mechanics of the selected film sequences and re-appraise specific roles and functions within them that have been overlooked. Also, since a further intention of this research is to identify whether a concept of development can be applied to popular music function and assess the degree to which such an idea has been ignored within the body of theory, it is necessary to engage with existing work, as will be done in the following literature review. As this body of theory is dominated by the employment of qualitative methods, in order to best position the arguments put forward here within, a similar approach is required. Gardner adds support to these views arguing, "Within media and film studies this 'text' has been considered

as a site rich in meaning to be deconstructed and critiqued, and recent defences (Dyer, 2014, in relation to film studies) insist that it remains crucial in the face of a range of methodologies across media studies in particular, that turn away from it” (2016: 69).

Furthermore, a quantitative approach applied to single films would ignore theory concerning the individual importance of each of the phases that have been identified as key to functional development, thereby ignoring another of the aims of this thesis. As films would be categorized based upon frequency of individual functions, neglecting the significance of their relationship to the British Invasion, New Hollywood and Disco movements, an historic analysis of key cultural and industrial factors relating to these which may have contributed to innovations in the utilization of popular music in film would be lost.

In conclusion, the purpose of this introduction is to concisely explain the aims and methodology of this thesis, whilst offering a definition of some of its key terms. But, a further pre-requisite to setting out the key phases of this developmental process is a detailed explanation as to what original findings and conclusions may be accrued from such a form of analysis, which focuses on the period highlighted. Addressing this issue calls for a review of a range of existing relevant literature which tackles the concept of popular music function. Completion of such a review will assist in illustrating the current lack of engagement, from within this body, with films of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. It is also the intention to use the literature review to assess the degree to which the expansion of popular music functions has

previously been analyzed comparatively, using a variety of film texts, with regard to the concept of a developmental process.

Furthermore, by extending this review of literature to cover existing work on the functions of another form of film music, the classical film score, it will aid in the construction of a list of principles of function which can then be employed as a means of measuring development, via comparison of their presence, or absence, in the popular music of films released during the different phases which make up the period of study. Such a list can also be utilized as a means of comparing the functional capabilities of popular music to those of a classical film score to ascertain the extent to which these had reached similar levels by the end of the period investigated, the release of *Saturday Night Fever*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intention of this literature review is twofold. Firstly, reference to other work on popular music function will enable identification of gaps within current theory and provide a validation for research based upon the aims set out in the opening paragraph of this thesis. Secondly, a summary of the history of theory relating to the principles of music function in film will be used to compile a suitable list of these which can then be applied to significant sequences from the films which will be analyzed throughout this study.

One of the key motivations in choosing to produce this thesis in the form of a comparative analysis of a number of key phases is that although much has been written on the functions of popular music in relation to UK and US films, from within this body of work there exists little engagement with the concept of the development of the range of these functions over a period of time via analyses of a sample of films taken from different periods. Rather than adopting this approach in an attempt to identify significant stages of innovation and advance, existing work tends to concentrate on a close textual analysis of either an individual sequence or the entire soundtrack of a single film. As a result of this, research into the origins of individual functions, along with an analysis of the reasons for their initial employment at that time, is largely absent. For this reason, as previously stated, this thesis aims to examine a key period from the point at which popular music's functional range began to expand significantly, to that at which its functional capability closely resembled, and in some ways even exceeded, that of a classical film score. It will also seek to recognize major cultural, historical and industrial

factors which contributed to the functional innovations during this period as a means of pinpointing the main reasons for the specific timing of their occurrence, as this is another area which has evaded scrutiny.

Consequently, as this thesis is explicitly concerned with popular music in film, it is essential to ascertain whether music of this genre, which is often pre-recorded independently, has the capability to perform similar functions to a classical film score, such as those identified in the example from *Jaws* set out in the introduction. Addressing this issue necessitates an exploration of existing theory covering the functions of popular music in film and comparisons to those of a film score, since many have already written in detail on this area. Salient pieces include work by Kalinak (2010: 1-8), Reay (2004: 48-55), Anderson (2003: 102-116), Carey and Hannan (2003: 162-177) and Rodman (2006: 119-136).

Briefly summarising each in turn, Kalinak analyzes the torture sequence from *Reservoir Dogs* (Quentin Tarantino, USA, 1992), in which Mr. Blonde (Michael Madsen) cuts off the ear of Officer Marvin Nash (Kirk Baltz), to demonstrate the functions performed by the Stealers Wheel song "Stuck in the Middle with You".

Kalinak immediately acknowledges a similarity between the functions of different forms of music used in film

Film music, whether it is a pop song, an improvised accompaniment, or an originally composed cue, can do a variety of things. It can establish setting, specifying a particular time or place; it can fashion a mood and create atmosphere; it can call attention to elements onscreen and offscreen, thus clarifying matters of plot and narrative progression; it can reinforce or foreshadow narrative developments and contribute to the way we respond to them; it can elucidate characters' motivations and help us know what they are thinking; it can contribute to the creation of emotions, sometimes

only dimly realized in the images, both for characters to emote and audiences to feel.

(2014: 1)

Kalinak then uses the example of “Stuck in the Middle With You” to demonstrate how the song creates mood, affecting the audience response to the torture scene, observing that the ironic use of an up-tempo song contributes to a similarly ironic enjoyment of a scene which, logically, should be regarded as horrific.

Kalinak also identifies the song as a representation of the 1970s through its association with traits of greed and selfishness, recognizing the relevance of the lyrics in their ability to draw our attention to Mr. Orange who is, literally, “Stuck in the Middle” of this situation owing to his gunshot wound.

In addition, the use of the song to clarify the feelings and emotions of characters is acknowledged. “It is the music, its ebullience and joyfulness, in conjunction with the grisly torture, that helps us to interpret the facial expression of Mr. Blonde as sadistic” (Kalinak 2010: 3).

All these findings, which provide evidence of the variety of functions of an individual popular song, are summarized within the conclusion.

It has created mood, helped to establish atmosphere, aided in characterization, helped to shape the narrative, fashioned a complicated emotional response for the audience, especially in terms of the representation of violence, unified the sequence, given it its rhythm, and absorbed the audience into the spectacle of the film. And it has forced us to identify with a sadistic criminal.

(2010: 7)

Whereas Kalinak's analysis is restricted to the functions of a single song, Reay examines the entire compilation score of *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, USA, 1990), not only to explore its functions, but also to compare them directly to those of a classical film score. This analysis includes an explanation as to how both popular songs and classical score are capable of performing similar functions, though sometimes this is achieved by different methods. For example, in the case of the song "Rags to Riches" Reay points out it is the lyrics, rather than the musical style, "setting the mood and stating one of the main themes of the film" (Reay 2004: 50). This highlights lyrical content as a component factor which often differentiates popular music from classical film score structurally, thereby contributing to alternative means of achieving a particular function.

In addition to drawing attention to functional similarities, Reay also identifies further functions unique to popular music, such as a means of denoting a particular period through the inclusion of a time specific sub-genre, which enables the music to "chronicle the life of the central character" (2004:50), Henry Hill, from his youth which is represented by The Cleftones' "Can't We Be Sweethearts", recorded in 1956, to his going into hiding with a false identity at the end of the film, which is represented by The Sex Pistols' punk version of "My Way", recorded in 1978.

Reay also pinpoints allusionism as a function peculiar to popular music, in that a more detailed knowledge of a song, or its performer, may result in a deeper interpretation of that piece of music. As an example of this, Smith refers to the use of the music of Hank Williams in *The Last Picture Show* (Peter Bogdanovich, USA, 1971) to "evoke the atmosphere of a dying Texas town in the mid-fifties" (1998:

165). Knowledge that Williams was a country music singer who died at the tragically young age of twenty-nine in 1953 would provide an audience with a greater appreciation of the relevance of the inclusion of his songs in this film. By contrast, a lack of public knowledge or prominence of the majority of film score composers means that allusionism, as a function, would rarely apply to their work in this way.

As with Kalinak's findings, Reay's are reflected within the conclusion.

This score of popular songs still fulfils many of the functions of the classical score; both melody and lyrics are used to signify emotion, whilst song titles and lyrics often operate as a narrative cue. Despite the fact that the majority of the songs are played only once so there are no themes, the songs themselves provide continuity by providing a soundtrack and a structure to Henry's life story. In addition the use of musical allusionism gives added meaning to the film for both an informed and an uninformed audience.

(2004: 54)

Further examples of work which recognize the similarities and differences in the ways in which popular music functions in film compared to a classical film score include Anderson's analysis of *Sliding Doors* (Peter Howitt, UK/USA, 1998) and *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* (Harry Sinclair, New Zealand, 1997), and Carey and Hannan's examination of *The Big Chill* (Lawrence Kasdan, USA, 1983). Anderson's conclusions mirror some of those of Reay in that she finds that popular music can perform similar functions to a classical film score, but by different methods borne out of features particular to the genre, such as lyrics, structural independence, in that as a piece of pre-recorded music its form is created without the composer's prior knowledge how it is to be used within a film, and extra-textual meaning. Similar to Reay, Anderson deduces that detailed knowledge of a song or its performer can allow a sub-text to create additional meaning to the informed

viewer (2003: 108). For example, audience knowledge that most of the popular songs from *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* are performed by artists from New Zealand would heighten awareness of the importance of national culture as a theme of the film.

In their analysis of *The Big Chill* (Lawrence Kasdan, USA, 1983), Carey and Hannan also recognize the importance of song lyrics as a means of providing the narrative, which can then allow the accompanying visual images to be more abstract or vague in meaning, such as on the occasion when The Band's "The Weight" is used to explain the mood of the characters both collectively and individually during a montage sequence. A further example of popular music providing greater clarity to a scene is the aforementioned inclusion of "My Way" at the end of *Goodfellas*. As Henry picks up the newspaper from his porch, his monologue describes how dull his life is and how he is unable to get decent food. But, as he turns back to the house he smiles in a way which appears incongruous to his words. This ambiguity is clarified by "My Way", the opening of which is cued by this smile. The inclusion of the song reveals that this moment of happiness is brought about by a recollection of his past. The song's anarchic, punk style represents Henry's criminal past and is supported by a subsequent brief visual flashback to his gangster lifestyle. The lyrics "Regrets, I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention" further represent a nostalgic trail of thought in that he recalls he may have had problems in his past but he was generally more fulfilled, and that life was better his way, as it had been, rather than our way, as it has to be now he is living anonymously under witness protection. However, although this example further supports Carey and Hannan's

view that the lyrics of a popular song can provide clarity to an otherwise ambiguous scene, this ability is not unique to this form of music. It is also true that a classical score can perform the same function without the use of lyrics, as “different music will cue the viewer to different interpretations of an image or scene” (Gorbman 1987: 85). Stevens provides an example of how this may work:

A scene where a woman is asleep in bed late at night, which is accompanied by soft, gentle music, elicits a very different interpretation to when the same scene is accompanied by irregular, discordant music. The scene is actually ambiguous but the accompanying elements, in this case the music and its perceived meaning, clarify the context.

(2009: 61)

So, it can be argued that, rather than an example of an additional function, the ability to assist in clarifying an ambiguous scene is a further method by which popular music can, through its lyrics, perform a similar function to a classical score, but in a different way which elucidates meaning through the words sung as well as the mood of the music.

In addition to this removal of ambiguity of meaning, another similarity between the findings of Reay and those of Carey and Hannan is the use of popular music as a representation of time. But, whereas Reay notes the use of a number of songs from different years to signify the passing of time in *Goodfellas*, Carey and Hannan identify the significance of the inclusion of 1960s music to *The Big Chill*, a film set in the 1980s, as a representation of nostalgia and an indication of the importance of the past to the film’s narrative.

As well as highlighting functions of popular song in film, Carey and Hannan also identify a number of shortcomings arising from its inclusion in preference to a classical film score. For example, they argue it is more difficult to edit a pre-recorded, popular song to fit the visual image as it is not normally possible to manipulate such a song effectively. But, they go on to acknowledge that in certain cases this problem may be overcome by editing the image to fit the song. "By cutting the film to the song track, the traditional relationship between movement (action) and musical rhythm and texture can also be achieved" (2003: 177). The opening sequence of *Saturday Night Fever* in which the footsteps of Tony Manero (John Travolta) are edited to fit the rhythm of the accompanying, pre-recorded song "Stayin' Alive", is an example of this which will be revisited in detail later in this thesis.

Carey and Hannan also identify an additional potential problem with the inclusion of popular music, arguing that it is harder to use it in a thematic manner since repeated use will not be tolerated by an audience, whereas the classical score can repeat themes and variations in an unobtrusive way. However, examples such as "The Sound of Silence", which is heard on three separate occasions during *The Graduate*, and is another example which will be revisited in detail later, suggest this may not always be the case. Furthermore, in his analysis of the music of *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, USA, 1994), Rodman provides a counter-argument to that of Carey and Hannan, contending that popular music can act as a leitmotif through a collection of songs with an underlying connection, rather than through the repeated use of an individual song. Rodman maintains "If we accept that popular

songs can signify in ways similar to classical film scores we may also accept that popular song music tracks provide the opportunity for leitmotivic development” (2007: 129). He then goes on to support this claim with an example from the film. “Mia’s (Uma Thurman) character is accompanied by songs that foreground ‘female’ characteristics such as Dusty Springfield’s rendition of ‘Son of a Preacher Man’ and Urge Overkill’s rendition of Neil Diamond’s tune, ‘Girl, You’ll Be a Woman Soon’” (2007: 126). So, like Reay, Anderson and Carey and Hannan, Rodman has also concluded that popular music can perform a similar function to a classical film score, in this case acting as a leitmotif, but in a different way.

This brief summary of existing theory illustrates a number of ways in which analyses tend to focus on demonstrating the scope of functions of popular songs and comparing this, either individually, or as a component of a compilation soundtrack, to that of a classical film score. From this sample, there is a general consensus that the functions of popular music resemble those of a classical score, though in many cases these functions can be achieved by alternative means. It also provides evidence of additional functions performed solely by popular music, such as the representation of a specific period of time and the use of audience knowledge of a musician to allude to a particular interpretation.

But, this body of work also demonstrates the need for an investigation into the concept of a path of development, since it reveals a lack of engagement with the principle of the expansion of popular music functionality as an evolutionary process. Absent from these studies are recognition of film’s first employment of individual functions and the identification of key films in which the range of

functions expanded before eventually reaching the point at which they could be closely compared to a classical film score, in a manner as set out in the work summarized above. Instead, existing theories predominantly focus on films made following this initial period of functional development and, instead, concentrate mainly on the identification of similarities and differences between popular music and classical score, both in their functions and the ways in which these are performed. As a result, a study focussing on the derivation of individual functions and key points in the development of functional capability of popular music in film has consistently evaded attention. So, whilst the theories examined above address the performance of a variety of functions of popular music, there is no attempt to analyse the films, or sequences within them, from the viewpoint of functional innovation. For instance, the “Stuck in the Middle with You” sequence, analyzed in detail by Kalinak, could be utilized in conjunction with other relevant film examples from different periods to consider both its individual significance and its historical position within the developmental process of popular music function. The resultant lack of such an investigation into the origins and expansion of individual functions has led to an absence of an analysis of popular music’s development in this area. However, although there is a lack of engagement with this topic, this omission has previously been recognized by Williams, who drew attention to it with the following request:

We need some working hypotheses – an “evolution of the Language of Cinema” for the soundtrack... we should have precise descriptions of the soundtrack of selected musicals and non-musicals... these areas could best be attacked comparatively.

(1981: 157-8)

But, in spite of Williams' plea for a comparative approach, subsequent textual analysis, as illustrated by the examples above, has tended to focus on individual films, or individual sequences, rather than considering a theory of continuity by evaluating a selection from different periods. As a result, there has been no attempt to establish the extent to which functional development can be regarded as a developmental process. Nor has there been any attempt to identify any of the key phases in this development of popular music function. Analyzing a range of relevant film texts which are representative of a number of different phases, as laid out within the preceding introduction of this thesis, is a necessity if both these ignored issues are to be addressed.

Reference to Reay's conclusion that "the score of popular songs fulfils many of the functions of the classical score" (2004: 54), further demonstrates the void which can be filled through such an investigation. As previously mentioned, this view is constructed via a thorough analysis of the compilation soundtrack of *Goodfellas*. However, whilst this conclusion is justifiable in relation to the music of this particular film, it is also clear that such a statement could not be applied universally to all popular music included in film dating back to "Rock Around the Clock", the only song heard when popular music made its film debut in *Blackboard Jungle* (Richard Brooks, USA, 1955). As Bill Haley and His Comets' version of this song is used only as an accompaniment to the opening and closing titles, it is clear that such a limited use of popular music within a film severely restricts its functional capability. This constraint would also limit popular music's ability to function similarly to a classical score at this time. For example, it could be argued the song is

capable of functioning effectively as a leitmotif, representing the theme of disaffected youth through rock 'n' roll music, when it is heard at the beginning and the end of the film, and during a brawl scene, which is accompanied by a modified orchestral version. However, its ability to support the narrative is severely restricted if its inclusion is limited largely to accompanying the credits. Therefore, in this case, Reay's conclusion would not be appropriate.

So, this contrast in the range of popular music functions present in these two films leads to the question as to how and when it expanded between *Blackboard Jungle* and *Goodfellas*. In attempting to answer this, it is possible that the completion of an exploration of innovative uses of popular music, contained within a selection of films covering key phases from the most significant period between these two examples, will assist in both creating an understanding as to how these changes contributed to an expansion in functional capabilities, and identifying precise moments within the intervening time at which these developments occurred. Furthermore, having ascertained examples of innovation, it should then become possible to explore salient, contemporary factors, both internal and external to the film industry, which assisted in enabling these changes to occur. This latter point will be addressed in more detail later in this chapter.

A possible reason for the current lack of consideration of popular music function from a developmental perspective is the limited date range of film texts selected for analysis within the existing work on this topic summarized above. Through temporal identification as a post-1980 movie, *Goodfellas* can be described as representative of those which have been analyzed in detail. A summary of the films

included in the studies of popular music function included in this literature review, reveals them to be (in chronological order of release), *The Big Chill* (1983), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* (1997) and *Sliding Doors* (1998). There are exceptions to this trend of analyzing films of the 1980s and 1990s to be found in other work, including that of Smith (1987: 161-3 & 168-70) who includes earlier examples, such as *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, USA, 1969) and *Zabriskie Point* (Michelangelo Antonioni, USA, 1970), when discussing allusionism and other popular music functions. However, Smith's references are restricted to brief points in relation to individual songs used, rather than a more comprehensive textual analysis of each of these films and, for this reason, his work is excluded from this review owing to its lack of detail in this respect.

But, if the origins of, and developments in, individual popular music functions are to be investigated successfully, it would be both insufficient and inappropriate to limit analysis solely to post-1980 films, as this would certainly partially, and possibly wholly, exclude key examples. If we refer back to Barron's point that, the inclusion of "Rock Around the Clock" in *Blackboard Jungle* marks the beginning of the relationship between popular music and film, it is clear that relevant earlier film texts should be included in a study of this topic. Together, Barron's statement, which dates the origins of popular music in film as 1955, and the age of the films analyzed in detail to date, which are almost exclusively post-1980, demonstrate that there remains an unjustifiable absence of a thorough examination of the functions of popular music in films of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. For this reason

the following chapters will address these omissions through close textual analyses of three films from within this period, *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* and *Saturday Night Fever* which have been identified as significant in the development of popular music function. Additionally, as established in the introduction, since the era of popular music in film extends beyond the time parameters bounded by these examples, 1964 to 1977, it is necessary to not only identify why this part of the 1960s and 1970s is salient to its functional development, but also to provide an explanation as to why films made before this period are not to be considered as equally significant to this evolutionary process. So, as no film text prior to 1964 is included, a preface to this study, setting out the reasons for their exclusion, is required. Similarly, a justification to the view that *Saturday Night Fever* marks some form of culmination of this period of development will also be necessary.

The principal reasons for the selection of the three primary film texts have already been set out in the introduction. But, in addition to these, their inclusion will address the dearth of detailed analysis of the functions of popular music in pre-1980 film. Moreover, by selecting films from three distinct phases within this period, it will be possible to analyze the range of functions present in each comparatively, as well as individually, to aid in establishing the extent to which popular music function can be regarded as a developmental process.

Therefore, within the introduction and literature review, it has been established that by means of a detailed examination of these three salient films, along with references to noteworthy instances from a number of other significant movies, the intention of this thesis is to identify key evolutionary moments from the earliest

major advances in popular music function to the point at which the range of these functions closely resembled, and in certain ways exceeded, those of a classical film score. But, in order to achieve these aims it is essential to assemble a list of principles of musical function, which can be used as a measure of chronological development, through application to each of the film examples. From within the body of work on this topic a number of theorists, set out below, have already constructed summaries of what they consider the principles behind these individual functions to be. A referential list of principles of film music function is an indispensable tool for this research as it provides a catalogue of individual criteria against which to test textual analysis of the use of popular music in the selected films. Such tests will help to determine the function or functions of individual popular songs, variations of individual songs or groups of songs, and facilitate comparison to those of a classical film score, enabling a cross-reference of the functional similarities and differences between the two. It will also assist in a construction of a timeline of the developmental process of popular music functionality through assessment of the range of functions operating in films of different key phases.

Examples of existing lists of musical functions include those compiled by Copland (1949), Spottiswoode (1950), Lissa (1965) and Gorbman (1987). In his article “Tips to Moviegoers: Take off Those Ear-Muffs” in the *New York Times* of 6th November 1949 (pp 28-32) Copland divides the functions of music into five principles as follows:

- 1) Music can create a more convincing atmosphere of time and place.

- 2) Music can be used to underline or create psychological refinements: the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation.
- 3) Music can serve as a kind of neutral background filler.
- 4) Music can help build a sense of continuity in a film.
- 5) Music can provide the underpinning for the theatrical buildup for a scene and then round it off with a sense of finality.

Spottiswoode also divides music into five uses (1950: 49-50):

- 1) Imitative use. The music is used to imitate sound or speech.
- 2) Commentative use. The music comments on the film, often ironically.
- 3) Evocative use. Music, silence and a combination of the two are used to evoke responses. Leitmotifs are included in this category as they are both evocative and assist in providing insight in to characters.
- 4) Contrastive use. According to Spottiswoode this use is combined with 2) and 3) contrasting with the visual image to heighten effect.
- 5) Dynamic use. The rhythm of the music is used to support the rhythm of the cutting rates.

Both of these summaries include material which could be useful when applied to the selected film texts. However, their content is limited compared to some later examples and, therefore, in isolation, each would produce a less comprehensive application tool than later studies, as additional musical functions included in these would be omitted if the analysis of findings were restricted to those listed above.

For example, neither Copland's nor Spottiswoode's list accounts for the function of music in relation to other film sounds, such as dialogue or sound effects. For this

reason, although reference to each could be justifiably included, there exist more detailed sources for assessing developments in popular music function and comparing these functions to those of a classical film score.

Lissa offers a more thorough analysis (1965: 115-256) which includes much present in the above lists. Tagg's "Functions of Film Music and Miscellaneous Terminology" (undated) provides a brief summary of Lissa's compilation of the functions of film music in list form:

- 1) Emphasis of movement.
- 2) Emphasis of "real" sounds.
- 3) Representation of location. This representation could be based on the physical, ethnical, social or historical viewpoint.
- 4) Source Music.
- 5) Comment.
- 6) Expressions of the actor's emotions.
- 7) Basis for audience emotions.
- 8) Symbol.
- 9) Anticipation of subsequent action.
- 10) Enhancement and demarcation of the film's formal structure through the use of leitmotifs, openings, links and bridges, tails and endings.

However, although Lissa's examination is more comprehensive in its content than its predecessors, it can be argued this work should also be considered unsuitable as a primary theoretical source. The main reason for this is its obscurity. It has not been possible for me to locate an English translation of Lissa's *Asthetik der*

Filmmusik (1965). Hillman highlights the book's rarity, describing it as "unknown here and long out of print" (2005: 170). Without a copy of this text it would be necessary to rely on a source which analyzed rather than translated the original. This would be unacceptable, as interpretation would be impossible since it would not contain Lissa's theory in its original form. Obscurity is further evidenced by Tagg's list being the only piece I have been able to find referring to Lissa's work on the functions of film music in detail. In light of these factors it would be extremely difficult to engage with both the original text and its position within the theoretical debate on this topic, to the level required to complete an analysis satisfactorily.

By contrast, Claudia Gorbman's synopsis of music functions in film is among the most frequently cited work in this field. Donnelly describes Gorbman's book, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (1987), as "perhaps the most enduring analysis of film music" (2001: 5) and Reay refers to it as "the most influential writing in this area" (2004: 32). Therefore, it is evident this work is not only referred to, but is also widely endorsed, by other theorists. This extensive level of engagement is one of several factors which differentiates Gorbman's list of principles from the earlier examples set out above.

A second reason for its appropriateness for this thesis is that Gorbman's list refers specifically to functions of classical Hollywood film scores, including the music of *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B Schoedsack, USA, 1933) and *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1945). It, therefore, provides a relevant basis for this research by providing criteria which can be used to compare classical film score to the popular music in the selected films and to illustrate the similarities and differences.

This is particularly relevant to the analysis of *Saturday Night Fever* as this film has been chosen to establish the extent of functional similarity between popular music and a classic score at the end of the period of development encompassed by this study. So in this case, Gorbman's principles, which were originally applied to classical film score, can also be employed in relation to popular music to illustrate its own functionality for comparative purposes.

Also, in contrast to Lissa's work on the functions of film music, a significant number of other theorists, including all those mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, have engaged with Gorbman's principles when exploring the functions of popular music. Using the same source as others as a reference for this analysis will assist in a direct connection with existing theory and, consequently, will help to clearly identify the originality of the choice of film texts and the chronological approach to these contained within this thesis.

Since Gorbman's principles are to be included it is necessary to set these out in some detail as an illustration of some of the individual functions which will be referred to throughout this investigation. Furthermore, an examination as to how Gorbman's analysis resulted in the construction of this list also assists in justifying its inclusion.

In Chapter IV of *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (1987: 70-98) Gorbman describes the form music takes in a classical Hollywood film and the principles which determine this form. Through reference to Bazin's "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" (2004), Gorbman identifies classical film as being established towards the end of the 1930s, citing films such as *Stagecoach* (John Ford, USA,

1939) among examples. This is the point at which “film genres and narrating techniques reached a new stability” (1987: 71). However, whilst accepting Bazin’s assertion regarding the timing of the establishment of the classical Hollywood film, she explains that film theorists have modified other Bazinian ideas, including that of the concept of the spectator from “An autonomous perceiving subject – who wants to see dramatically important details to an anti-idealist stance which regards as crucial the film’s ideological and psychical positioning of its viewing subject.” (1987: 72)

The resultant conclusion is that it is not freedom of choice which draws the spectator’s attention to specific visual or sound content within a film. Instead, the filmmaker uses techniques which lead the spectator to position himself, or herself, in a particular way, and to prioritise certain elements seen and heard above others. For example, a director may foreground a telephone centre screen to draw the spectator’s attention to it, emphasizing its importance and signalling that it is about to ring. This frequently employed technique is even taken a stage further in the ending of the US version of *Strangers on a Train* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1951) when an oversized phone is used to further stress the importance of the expected call by filling yet more of the screen with the telephone’s image.

Additionally, Gorbman observes that “classical Hollywood film works toward the goal of a transparent or invisible discourse” (1987: 72). As a consequence, methods are employed to help conceal elements which disrupt the narrative. These include continuity editing to obscure the disruption of cutting. By using this technique to

give a film temporal coherence, the disorientating effect of switching from one location to another is reduced.

Many, including Kalinak (2010: 18) and Gorbman (1987: 12-16), support the argument that music is one of several, interdependent components which make up film, rather than an element which merely supports or counterpoints visual image. Consequently, music is also one of the contributory elements which can function to help position the spectator, raise awareness of particular items or events, and help to hide narrative disruption. As an example of each of these, the iconic late-50s and early 60s music used in *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, USA, 1973) not only places the spectator in that decade but also creates a sense of nostalgia within, which is further supported by the images of classic cars and diners which are symbolic of that time. In terms of raising awareness, the inclusion of the repeated, high-pitched strings in Bernard Herrmann's score draws the spectator's attention to the rhythm of the repeated stabbing of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) by Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) in *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1960), whilst simultaneously reinforcing the horror of the scene through a musical representation of Marion's screams. Lastly, by its inclusion during sequences which use parallel editing, that is shots which switch back and forth between simultaneous events occurring at different locations, a single continual piece of music may help to obscure narrative disruption by introducing an element of consistency. Using *Snatch* (Guy Ritchie, UK/USA, 2000) as an example, this method is used on a number of occasions, such as when a continuous score is heard over scenes of Mickey O'Neill (Brad Pitt) and his fellow travellers hare-coursing which are interwoven with those of Brick Top's (Alan Ford)

henchmen kidnapping Tyrone (Ade), and again later when Massive Attack's "Angel" is used to smooth repeated switches between scenes of Turkish's (Jason Statham) amusement arcade being ransacked and Mickey watching helplessly as his mother (Sorcha Cusack) is burnt alive in her caravan.

Drawing on all these arguments Gorbman goes on to construct a list of seven principles relating to the "composition, mixing and editing (of musical score) in the classical narrative film" (1987: 73), which illustrate how these operate to achieve the functions described above:

- I. *Invisibility*: the technical apparatus of non-diegetic music must not be visible.
- II. *"Inaudibility"*: Music is not meant to be heard consciously. As such it should subordinate itself to dialogue, to visuals – i.e. to the primary vehicles of the narrative.
- III. *Signifier of Emotion*: Soundtrack music may set specific moods and emphasize particular emotions suggested in the narrative, but first and foremost, it is a signifier of emotion itself.
- IV. *Narrative cueing*:
 - *Referential/ Narrative*: music gives referential and narrative cues, e.g. indicating point of view, supplying formal demarcations, and establishing setting and characters.
 - *Connotative*: music "interprets" and "illustrates" narrative events.
- V. *Continuity*: music provides formal and rhythmic continuity – between shots, in transitions between scenes, by filling "gaps."

- VI. *Unity*: via repetition and variation of musical material and instrumentation, music aids in the construction of formal and narrative unity.
- VII. A given film score may violate any of the principles above, providing the violation is at the service of the other principles.

(1987: 73)

Gorbman's summary is followed by a more comprehensive examination, using the film scores of composer Max Steiner to illustrate instances of each in operation. Each of these principles will be addressed in more detail in the following chapters, but, as an illustration, taking the principle of *inaudibility* as an example, Gorbman expands the definition by explaining that this term doesn't indicate a claim that music is literally unheard, but rather that it often operates in the background on a sub-conscious level. She then proceeds to set out four practices "dictated by the principle of inaudibility" (1987: 76).

- 1) The musical form is generally subordinate to the narrative form.
- 2) Music is normally subordinate to the voice.
- 3) In order for music to be less noticeable there are certain points in a film at which it is better for it to start or stop.
- 4) The music should be appropriate to the scene.

(1987: 76-9)

Engagement with such a detailed explanation of *inaudibility*, and each of the other principles, will allow a greater depth of analysis, giving more authority to any

resultant conclusions on the functions within a compilation soundtrack, such as that of *Saturday Night Fever*, and the ways in which they can resemble, or even exceed, those of the score of a classical film.

However, whilst Gorbman's principles on the functions of a classical film score may be the most relevant of the above sources to this research, they cannot be regarded as an exhaustive catalogue. As has been demonstrated earlier in this chapter via reference to the findings of Reay and others, there are additional functions, peculiar to popular music, which are not included within the principles listed in *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. One of the chief reasons for their omission is Gorbman's reference to this genre of music being largely restricted to a brief mention in the Afterword (1987: 162-3), in which the functional similarities of popular music, firstly to a traditional Hollywood musical and then to classical music in films, are questioned. Additionally, as with the other pieces of work identified previously in this literature review, Gorbman's also focuses on the concept of popular music function in film as a post-1980 phenomenon, identifying its origins as being rooted in the following decade, thereby providing further evidence of neglect of consideration of relevant films from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, the brevity of Gorbman's reference to popular music function suggests the intention of this postscript is to raise questions on these points rather than provide answers or definitive statements. As a result, it is necessary to look elsewhere and consider the work of others for details of additional functions specific to popular music.

Kassabian (2002) is amongst those who consider the differences between audience perception of a composed score written specifically for a film and a compiled score made up of pre-existing pieces of music, including popular music. She addresses this distinction, describing compiled scores as having “affiliating identifications” which comprise of external associations for those previously familiar with the music. Consequently, such pieces of music already have a history beyond the confines of the film which will contribute to audience perception via prior knowledge and experience of them. Conversely, original composed score tends to have no such affiliations. Therefore, according to Kassabian, perception of a composed score is assimilated in relation to the other elements of the film rather than affiliated to the music’s history. This distinction could be incorporated within an analysis of the differences between the functions of a classical score, composed for a film, and those of pre-existing popular music, as it would assist in identifying any functions peculiar to the latter.

Alternatively, it may be possible to compile a list of such functions from the pieces mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, since each contributes to this topic. However, drawing upon appropriate sections of Smith’s *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (1998) will be of greater benefit to this research, since it provides a more rigorous analysis which specifically addresses this area. As with Gorbman’s work on the functions of a classical score, Smith’s theories on those of popular music in film are widely supported by others, including Reay (2004: 41), who has created the following concise list of the functions specific to this musical genre identified by Smith as follows:

- 1) As an effective means of denoting particular time periods (1998: 165)
- 2) To highlight the element of authorial expressivity by commenting on characters rather than speaking from their point of view (1998: 169)
- 3) The lyrics can give voice to feelings and attitudes not made explicit by the film's visuals and dialogue (1998: 170)
- 4) Intertextual/ extra-textual/ musical allusionism can be used to flesh out characters, and emphasise particular generic or narrative themes (1998: 170)

Taking each of these in turn, the inclusion of sub-genres of popular music contemporary to the period in which the movie is set, or one which is important to the narrative, assists in audience recognition of a film's historical position. To support this view Smith identifies "Elvis and Rockabilly as a touchstone of the fifties, and the Eagles and disco as emblems of the seventies" (1998: 165). However, this does not mean that it is necessary for music to date from that period. For example, *Grease* (Randal Kleiser, USA, 1978) includes songs such as "Greased Lightning" and "Born to Hand Jive" which, although written in the early 1970s for the original stage musical version, denote the late 1950s through their early rock 'n' roll style in a similar way to the songs included in the film which are original to that decade, such as "Hound Dog" and "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On". Style of music, rather than specific songs, is even more important in denoting the future, since there are no existing popular musical references to draw on. The same would apply to musical signifiers of fictional entities, such as invaders from other planets. As a result, in such cases, score which is performed using state-of-the-art instruments is often

included to create a futuristic sound or support images of aliens from space. For example, parts of Bernard Herrmann's score for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Robert Wise, USA, 1951) were performed on the theremin, an early electronic instrument, and much of Vangelis's score for *Bladerunner* (Ridley Scott, USA, 1982) was performed on synthesizers, which were only beginning to establish their presence at this time. So, whilst it is true that since the birth of rock 'n' roll, particular past periods, along with the present, are usually denoted by popular music, by contrast, the future is often represented by film score performed on electronic instruments, since there is no specific existing musical catalogue to draw from, or be influenced by, for this time.

In addition to the historical context mentioned by Reay, Smith also reveals a connection between music and social context, concluding that music can help to position a film both geographically, "the mixture of opera and contemporary pop in *Mean Streets* gives viewers a strong flavour of the film's Little Italy locales" (1998: 165), and culturally, "the juke-box in *Mean Streets* functions at the center of the characters' cultural rituals and provides an aural backdrop for their dancing, drinking, debauching, and fighting" (1998: 165).

Gorbman argues a classical score also "contributes to the narrative's geographical and temporal setting" (1987: 83), giving examples of how this is achieved through the use of particular musical instruments: "The first diegetic shots of *Casablanca* are accompanied by a vaguely Middle-Eastern cue (a clarinet plays a minor key melody with much ornamentation)... harps introduce us to medieval, Renaissance or heavenly settings" (1987: 83). However, these cases illustrate a lack of specificity of

location and time. They demonstrate that a classical score's representation of location is largely restricted to a country, continent or region and that of time to an era or period which may span decades or even centuries. In these contexts classical score is not as effective as popular music since the latter can allude to a given time not only through its genre but also through its lyrics and its performer. This additional ability to reference more precisely also extends to geographical location. For example, classical score would not be as effective in contributing to a setting of 1960s, working-class Liverpool as the Gerry and the Pacemakers' version of "Ferry Cross the Mersey", with its title, contemporary Liverpoolian performer and its lyrics all contributing to this image, since all these components are usually absent in a classical score. Furthermore, as the song was already a top ten hit prior to the release of the film of the same name, many cinemagoers would already have been aware of these associations with the geographical setting of the film.

In respect of the second function listed above, Smith refers to the songs from *Easy Rider* to demonstrate the ways in which popular music can contribute to audience interpretation of characters by substituting dialogue as a means of commenting on their actions. For example, "'Born to be Wild' sets the film's tone by capturing the sense of power that fuels the character's nomadic drive" (1998: 168-9). As a result Captain America and Billy do not need to verbalize their views since "the music provides a schema with which we may interpret the significance of the characters' actions" (1998: 169). In such cases, songs replace the role of a commentator with their lyrics acting as the dialogue, in a way in which a classical score is largely incapable as it usually includes no lyrical content.

Smith identifies directors who wanted to “have their cake and eat it too” (1998: 170) as the exploiters of the third function on the list. By this he means that they not only wanted to present their characters as ambivalent through their actions and words, but also required clarity when they felt the need arose. As Smith explains, by using carefully selected songs at these points music can ““speak for” characters [and] fill some of the problematic gaps of causality and motivation while at the same time maintaining the veneer of more complex and realistic characterization” (1998: 170). So, on occasions when interpretations may have been unclear based on visual image, accompanying songs could provide a degree of lucidity. In the examination of Carey and Hannan’s work earlier in this chapter, which supports this view, attention was drawn to Steven’s account of the similar ability of classical score to give a degree of clarity to an ambiguous scene. However, as Smith points out, it is only popular music which provides lucidity through sung lyrics, enabling a more precise audience interpretation rather than a more general appreciation of mood. Whereas a classical score may clarify the feelings of a character, song lyrics can also set out reasons for these feelings and articulate them in detail.

Finally, Smith observes that in addition to lyrics, style and instrumentation, there often exist further sub-texts within a popular song which give it additional meanings. To sustain this argument he cites the tragic, premature deaths of Johnny Ace and the aforementioned Hank Williams as examples in which a sub-text is drawn from the identity of the musician, rather than from the music itself, thus providing another reading of the reason for the inclusion of a song to audiences who are aware of this additional information. Given that the celebrity-based nature

of popular music performers does not normally apply to film composers it follows that such sub-texts do not normally extend to a classical score.

So, by taking Gorbman's principles of the classical film score and Smith's work on additional functions unique to popular music, it is possible to construct a catalogue of functions which is appropriate to ascertaining the development of popular music in film throughout the chosen period. Therefore, the range of functions drawn from the work of Gorbman and Smith will be applied comparatively to the film texts in this study as a means of determining the origins of individual functions and tracking development in the scope of functionality.

But, as mentioned earlier, the absence of a comparative analysis of popular music function through taking films from different phases has resulted in a further gap in the body of theory in this area. Because there is no summary of the major innovations there is also no consideration of possible reasons for these advances taking place at the particular time they did. Evidently, a lack of recognition of the relationship between key points of functional development and relevant external factors has resulted in an absence of full consideration of the reasons for these advances. Consequently, the importance of cultural and industrial change must be considered if a fuller understanding of the causes of functional development is to be attained.

Therefore, in order to tackle this area, in addition to identifying originality within each film and its effect on the potential functional capability of popular music in subsequent films, significant potential causes of these changes will also be considered through an investigation of relevant, contemporary, cultural and

industrial factors. The importance of these elements, specific to each of the phases covered by the chosen film examples, will be scrutinized to assess the relevance of this time to the development of popular music function in film. Since the focus of this thesis is constructing a path of functional development, there will be a restriction on the depth of examination of these factors owing to the confines imposed by the length of this piece. The intention is, therefore, to highlight the presence of these rather than provide a comprehensive analysis. However, it is hoped that drawing attention to them will raise awareness of this as an area potentially requiring more detailed study in the future.

As a result of this additional consideration of the causes of advances of popular music function, the detailed textual analysis of relevant sequences from each film example will be accompanied by a review of salient contemporary factors which may be considered as having contributed to functional change. Since this is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of the elements which influenced functional development, as this would be impractical to include within the confines of this thesis, the aim of such a review is to identify the most significant issues which played a role in the advancement of the range of functions in order to illustrate that these were not limited to issues uniquely connected to the film texts examined, but also to wider external factors which indirectly influenced the ways in which popular music was utilized in these cases.

As an illustration of how this will be achieved using each of the three primary film texts in turn, an investigation into noteworthy elements within *A Hard Day's Night* which contributed to functional innovation would include examining not only

internal aspects specific to the film, such as its mock documentary style, its surreal humour, the significance of the Beatles as the stars and the selection of Richard Lester as director, but also more general factors, such as relevant economic influences and cultural features of the “swinging sixties”, which increased the popularity of British cinema with the American film industry and American cinemagoers. These are relevant as the release of *A Hard Day’s Night* coincided with a period during which British films “earned more money at the American box-office than ever before” (Street 2002:169).

The analysis of *The Graduate* will address the effects of the New-Hollywood style of film-making upon the inclusion of popular music. King describes common characteristics of this style as undermining aspects of the classical narrative, giving the example of the lack of “clear motivation of the actions of the hero” (2002: 4). So, it will be necessary to consider the significance of musical allusionism within accompanying songs. The importance of the choice to include the music of Simon and Garfunkel, in particular, will also be considered via an examination of their musical style, lyrics and star image. But, the analysis of developments in the scope of musical functions present within this film will also consider wider contemporary factors, such as the Vietnam War and the rise of counterculture, youth protest and the dawn of the festival performance.

In respect of the final film, *Saturday Night Fever*, the effect of disco culture on popular music function will be considered. For example, this will include questioning the impact of the gender and race of performers to the functions of both individual songs and the music collectively. But, the examination of disco

music will extend to include an investigation in to cultural reasons for its initial emergence, including the rise of gay rights and the increase in popularity of nightclubs, before considering adaptations made which enabled its expansion into mainstream music at this time, along with possible causes of its rapid decline. Other industrial factors such as the effects of a more sophisticated synergistic business model on a film and its music soundtrack during this phase will also be explored.

Coupled with detailed analysis of these three primary film texts, recognition of industrial and cultural factors which contributed to the novel use of music will assist in a deeper understanding as to reasons for the timing of individual advances. It will also help in identifying the level of importance of the period covering the 1960s and 1970s, spanned by *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* and *Saturday Night Fever*, to the development of the functions of popular music.

But, as highlighted in the introduction, before attempting to identify noteworthy innovations present throughout this period bounded by *A Hard Day's Night* and *Saturday Night Fever* it is firstly necessary to examine the use of popular music in films prior to this time. Only by assessing the relative lack of advancement in the functional use of popular music in films preceding the release of the Beatles' movie debut, along with salient reasons for this, will it be possible to comprehensively assess the advances contained within it and justify it as the starting point of a period of significant development. The following chapter will therefore concentrate on the early pop-musicals and include a close textual analysis of a small selection of films starring a salient artist from this period which best illustrate the functional

capabilities and limitations of their songs. It will also seek to identify factors which influenced the lack of functional advance.

CHAPTER 1

THE CLASSIC AMERICAN MUSICAL PHASE: THE FILMS OF ELVIS PRESLEY

During the period from the release of *Blackboard Jungle* to that of *A Hard Day's Night* there were three main categories of film which included popular music, which Donnelly has identified as "Pop Musicals, Vehicles and Revues" (2001: 13). Using Donnelly's definition, a vehicle is a dramatic film which included popular songs only in 'realistic' performance mode, either on stage or in a recording studio. Similarly, revue films also usually include all songs in performance mode. But, instead of focussing on one artist, films of this category used an array of performers and created a simple narrative to link these acts together. These films were intended to replicate the format of contemporary television shows, such as *Six-Five Special* and *Oh Boy!*, with the interconnecting storyline replacing the presenters as the link between the songs.

But, using vehicle or revue films as texts for analysis would be problematic, since limiting a study of popular music function to songs presented solely in 'realistic' performance mode would not fully represent the range of capabilities at this time and, therefore, would prevent a true comparison between films of this period and *A Hard Day's Night*. Instead, it would be more appropriate to examine film examples in which a more varied approach to the inclusion of songs allows a greater scope for demonstrating the diversity of their musical functions. Since it is pop-musicals which best meet these criteria, they will best provide the texts for analysis. This preference is also appropriate since this was the genre of choice for promoting the most popular singing stars of the time. "In the late 1950s and early 1960s, pop-

musicals were the dominant form for films using pop stars” (Donnelly 2001: 13). Although written with reference to British cinema, Donnelly’s statement could also be applied to American film at this time. In the U.K. it was Cliff Richard, following on from the earlier success of Tommy Steele, who became the principal star of pop-musicals produced in the UK prior to the Beatles, whilst on the other side of the Atlantic it was Elvis Presley who held this position. As a result, it could be considered fitting to examine music function in the films of either of these performers, but, whilst it is necessary to acknowledge the value of the work of Richard, it is Presley’s acting career which is preferred as the primary focus of the preface. The following explains the reasons for this decision.

A significant factor of Richard’s film repertoire is that it encompasses various key stages of the British pop-musical during the pre- Beatles period. His first two films, *Serious Charge* (Terence Young, UK, 1959) and *Expresso Bongo* (Val Guest, UK, 1960), both deal with generational divide, a theme which is common to the early pop-musical. In *Serious Charge* this divide takes the form of a group of unruly youths terrorizing a small town. The conflict is exacerbated when the new vicar, Reverend Howard Phillips (Anthony Quayle), is falsely accused by one of the youths, Larry Thompson (Andrew Ray), of making sexual advances towards him. Richard’s role as another of the youths, Curley Thompson, is a fairly minor one (“of the film’s 20 extant trade and national press reviews, only three mentioned Cliff’s contribution to the film” (Glynn 2013: 35)). So, it would appear the main intention of his inclusion was to shoehorn a number of his songs into the film to increase its appeal to a younger audience. However, through its engagement with the

controversial topic of homosexuality, the film was awarded an X-certificate, resulting in many of Richard's younger fans being unable to view his performance.

In *Expresso Bongo*, the generational divide takes a different form, one of financial exploitation. Cliff Richard plays Bert Rudge, who is discovered singing in a coffee bar by an agent, Johnny Jackson (Laurence Harvey), who takes advantage of Rudge's talent for his own personal gain. The less contentious subject matter, compared to *Serious Charge*, resulted in Richard's second film being accessible to his younger fans, leading to greater commercial success for both the film and the EP containing its four songs. "Within three months the 'Expresso Bongo' EP had sold over 150,000 copies, five times the average EP hit sales" (Glynn 2013: 27).

Subsequently, the beginning of the 1960s marked a transformation in the style of popular music in film, "a transmutation of rock 'n' roll into more traditional musical forms" (Glynn 2013: 47) and Cliff Richard's films at this time contributed to this change. The commercial limitations of youth-orientated pop-musicals, both in the niche audience they attracted and their inclusion of a genre of music which, at the time, was widely regarded as a likely passing fad, led a trend towards a softening of the music and the characters portrayed by Cliff Richard. However, the musical conversion of Richard had already begun before the release of *The Young Ones* (Sidney J. Furie, UK, 1961), *Summer Holiday* (Peter Yates, UK, 1963) and *Wonderful Life* (Sidney J. Furie, UK, 1964) when, in 1959, a revised, slower version of "Living Doll" was released as a single. The reworked version was more of a ballad than the rock 'n' roll original which had previously been included in *Serious Charge*. The commercial astuteness of this modification was confirmed as the single sold over a

million copies and spent six weeks at the top of the UK charts. But, unlike his character, Bert Rudge in *Expresso Bongo*, Cliff Richard was influential in these changes rather than exploited by the decisions of others, stating “I parted company with the greasy haired rock ‘n’ roll scene and began attracting the mums” (Richard quoted in Doncaster & Jasper 1983: 619).

Consequently, the new sanitised Richard image also began to manifest itself within his films. Gone was the sullen teenager in the realistic setting of a new-wave film, such as Curley Thompson in *Serious Charge*. Instead were positive role models, such as singer Nicky Black in *The Young Ones* (Sidney J Furie, UK, 1961), who makes a record to help save his local youth club, or fantasy situations, such as Don and his friends driving a double-decker bus across Europe in *Summer Holiday* (Peter Yates, UK, 1963) or Johnnie producing a musical movie in *Wonderful Life* (Sidney J. Furie, UK, 1964). These later films “hark back to the 1940s, even the 1930s” (Glynn 2013:48) through their classic musical influences, which extend even to the style of the songs included. Songs like the aforementioned original version of “Living Doll” in *Serious Charge* have given way to the “We Love a Movie” sequence in *Wonderful Life*, which is a nostalgic homage to the history of Hollywood. Its lyrics refer to past stars such as Fred Astaire and Judy Garland, whilst Richard and his co-stars dress as Charlie Chaplin and The Marx Brothers, and re-enact scenes from classic musicals such as *West Side Story* (Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, USA, 1961). The music and choreography are in a style which has little, if any, connection to contemporary popular music. At this point, in the year of the release of *A Hard Day’s Night*,

describing *Wonderful Life* as a pop-musical could be considered a misnomer, as Richard's film career had now deviated so far from its rock 'n' roll origins.

So, from this summary of Richard's film career, it is apparent that it reflects the development of popular music in film, spanning a period from the early rock 'n' roll films of the mid to late 1950s, which highlight the generational differences of the time, to the more family-orientated films, rooted in the classic musical genre, which became the trend at the beginning of the 1960s. Both the timing and the form of this transformation are strikingly similar to that which also took place during Elvis Presley's film career, though as Caine explains: "Cliff's success coincided with outbursts of British pride" (2004: 142) rather than through an overt attempt to mimic Presley.

Evidently, Richard's films can be regarded as relevant texts which would be suitable for analysis of popular music functions at this time. However, in spite of their importance, there exists a convincing argument that, collectively, the films of Presley were of even greater significance. One of the reasons for this was their proliferation. Between 1956 and 1964, the year of release of the Beatles' film debut, Presley starred in a total of sixteen films, going on to appear in a further fifteen before his acting career ended in 1969. By contrast, during the corresponding thirteen-year period Richard made only seven films in total. As a result, a Presley movie was the most common film incorporating popular music at this time. Additionally, they were internationally successful in a way unmatched by others, including those of Richard. For example, according to imdb.com, *Blue Hawaii* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1961) grossed almost \$10.5 million worldwide, being

successfully released throughout Europe and in Japan during 1962. Although at this time Richard's film, *The Young Ones*, ranked second in the UK's top grossing films of the same year, this popularity was not matched in the US as Glynn explains:

Across the Atlantic, the film, retitled *It's Wonderful to be Young* premiered on 13 March but only found exhibition in October 1962. A concerted campaign was mounted to break into the lucrative American market, with Cliff and the Shadows giving hour-long live shows after selected film showings. Sadly, the plan proved a total failure ... with theatres normally holding over two thousand less than half full. Cliff and the Shadows would never tour the States again.

(2013: 49)

Therefore, because of their abundance coupled with their international appeal, it is the films of Presley which can be considered the most popular and numerous representations of pop-musicals at this time and, as a result, it is primarily examples of these which will be used in this chapter to demonstrate how popular song functioned at this time. Additionally, there are factors connected to the production of Presley's films which result in a strict adherence to an approved format including the presentation of its music. Such a rigid approach is pertinent since it is likely to have a restrictive effect on the range of musical function and, therefore, merits further investigation. Such an examination of the format of Presley's films will also help to establish contrasts to, and consequently the innovative nature of, *A Hard Day's Night*.

Although the abundance of Presley's films is foremost among the reasons for selecting them as examples to demonstrate the functions of popular music in film prior to the release of *A Hard Day's Night*, textual analysis in this chapter will concentrate mainly on just two of his pre-1964 films, *Girls! Girls! Girls!* (Norman

Taurog, USA, 1962) and *It Happened at the World's Fair* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1963), though reference to his other films will also be included where considered relevant. Both these examples will be examined with the intention of identifying the functional range of the songs within as a demonstration of their potential capability.

At this point it would be legitimate to question whether it is possible to comprehensively explore the range of musical functions present during this phase through detailed analysis of only two films. In response, justification of this approach is twofold. Firstly, it would not be possible to examine the music of a much larger sample of films in sufficient detail within the confines of the structure of this thesis. Secondly, within this chapter, a strong case will be made that, for much of this phase, the most prominent pop-musicals, including the two selected examples to be analyzed, had become rigidly standardized in their format. In light of this, the intention is to demonstrate that the findings from examining just two primary examples would be largely replicated if a more extensive, or alternative, selection of films were referenced. Indeed, Hajdu describes Presley as making “One movie thirty-one times” (2009: 191). Whilst this statement may not be considered completely accurate, since a few of his earliest movies did not strictly conform to the ‘Elvis formula’, as this chapter will demonstrate, it could be applied to the majority. Given this, these two films have been selected as they are representative of the format of most of Presley’s films from 1960 onwards. Also, as both were released just prior to *A Hard Day's Night*, they will serve as examples of the

conventional norms of the techniques used to include popular music, which were challenged by the Beatles' film.

Before embarking on a detailed examination of the chosen texts, it is necessary to verify the assertion of the presence of such a formulaic configuration within Presley's films, through clarifying the reasons for this and summarizing what the key ingredients of this formula are. Since a number of the components of the Elvis formula relate to the films' music, identifying their occurrence within *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair* will enable the illustration of standard techniques used to enable each song's inclusion, which in turn will facilitate an analysis of the limitations of the functional potential of popular music within this format.

Also, to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the establishment of such a rigid method, a comprehensive analysis of Presley's early film career is essential, as this will demonstrate the effects of key decisions made by influential personnel, particularly his manager, Colonel Tom Parker.

The standard characters played by Presley in his films of the 1960s, including those in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair*, differed greatly from those at the beginning of his acting career. His earliest roles include characters such as Vince Everett, a rebellious youth who embraced the birth of rock 'n' roll, in *Jailhouse Rock* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1957). As Everett, Presley's unruly image was enhanced by the character's appearance (he spent much of the film dressed in convict denims) and the vigorous nature of his dance movements during musical performance. Campbell and Brody describe his moves during the performance of

the film's title song as "uninhibited" and "contrast[ing] sharply with pop singers – white and black- who simply stand in front of microphones and croon their songs" (2008: 107). However, this on-screen image of youthful rebellion, embodying the new subversive genre of rock 'n' roll music, was to change radically after Presley returned from completing two year's national service in 1960. There were a number of reasons for this transformation. Foremost was the belief of Colonel Tom Parker, Presley's manager, that targeting Presley's image primarily at a youth fan base limited its commercial potential, since he regarded rock 'n' roll and its stars as a short-term craze. "Parker like many people in the 1950s ... thought of Elvis as a charismatic novelty" (Hajdu 2009: 189). In his opinion, extending Presley's appeal to a family audience would both prolong and expand his popularity. His belief in this strategy had been supported by the previous success of another of Presley's earlier films, *Love Me Tender* (Robert D Webb, USA, 1956). This film was originally entitled *The Reno Brothers* and included no songs. However, an appearance by Presley on *The Ed Sullivan Show* whilst on a break in filming, during which he promoted the film and performed "Love Me Tender", resulted in a significant re-formatting, with the film being re-titled *Love Me Tender* in order to strengthen its link to Presley's music, and four songs being inserted. Messenger sets out the reasons for these changes:

RCA received almost one million pre-orders for "Love Me Tender", despite the fact they had not originally intended it to be a single. For Parker it showed the way of the future. Presley's first ballad – courtesy of the Hollywood studio system – had managed to sell three million copies, one million more than his previous biggest hit, "Heartbreak Hotel". In the process "Love Me Tender" handily promoted the movie while broadening Elvis' appeal to a family audience, many of whom had been wary of the controversy surrounding his generation-dividing rock and roll performances.

By the end of 1956 film would become the key medium for Parker's charge ... helping to transform Presley into an all-round – and potentially longer lasting – family entertainer.

(2005: 5)

So, even at this early stage, it was apparent to Parker that film provided the means to sustain his success as a singer by extending his appeal. But, although it was the move towards the utilization of film as Presley's promotional vehicle which marked the beginning of the re-invention of his star image, it was his enforced two-year hiatus, whilst completing national service in Germany, which offered the opportunity to complete the conversion from rock 'n' roll singer to star of film musicals. Upon his return, his time spent in the army was to be exploited to present him as a more mature, patriotic and conventional individual, increasing his appeal to parents rather than specifically to their teenage children.

Near the climax of his first post-Army film, *G.I. Blues* (1960), Presley, playing an American soldier based in Germany, entertains his fellow troops in concert. Here the star appears before a huge stars and stripes flag that covers the entire screen. The scene testifies to his transition from rebel to national hero.

(Caine 2004: 76)

Coincidentally, as previously referred to, this timed almost simultaneously with a similar transformation of the predominant British star of the pop-musical, Cliff Richard, who also deserted his younger, more rebellious market in search of success with a more responsible, family-orientated market. "He [too] personified the ideal non deviant role model for British youth ... Cliff [like Elvis] typified the key hegemonic ideas of the era, particularly youth affluence and patriotism, demonstrating that teenagers did not deserve condemnation as a delinquent

generation” (Caine 2004: 143). Caine also offers, as an explanation for this change, that, in Britain at the time, this transition was considered a pre-requisite to maintain popularity: “Long-term career progression could only exist for pop performers if they also proved adept at theatre and films ... This route from pop-performer to light entertainer was considered unavoidable for British pop stars until the mid-1960s” (2004: 115). So, by the beginning of the 1960s the major film stars representing popular music on both sides of the Atlantic had rejected the gritty realism of their earlier work in favour of a more whimsical, escapist format which bore a stronger resemblance to that of the classic musicals of the previous decades.

In the case of Presley, changes in musical personnel also contributed to this alteration of star image. From the point at which his film career started Presley became increasingly distanced from his previous rock ‘n’ roll connections through decisions which resulted in a disconnection with previous musicians and songwriters. Both the choice and the quality of song writing was diluted by a contract created by Presley’s music publishers, Hill and Range, ensuring the singer received one third of the songwriter’s royalties along with a co-credit. Although the latter condition was later removed, “Hill and Range had its own deal in place ... getting a one-third cut in from every songwriter who wanted to have his song recorded by Elvis Presley” (Guralnick 2005: 386-7). This had an obvious restrictive effect on the choice of song material available. “It would be virtually impossible at this point for a non-Hill and Range song to find its way to a session” (Guralnick 2005: 387). This situation was exacerbated by a constraint of any creative input

from songwriters. “Parker imposed a rigid code on Hill and Range songwriters. An “Elvis song” had to have simple, accessible words, a first-person point of view, and a happy ending - like the standards of children’s books” (Hajdu 2009: 190). These restrictions were evident from the experience of Jerry Leiber, who, with Mike Stoller, co-wrote four of the songs for *Jailhouse Rock* and three for *King Creole* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1958). When Leiber pitched an idea for a new musical to Presley’s management team it was met by the response “ “ If you ever try to interfere with the business or artistic workings of the process known as Elvis Presley, if you ever start thinking in this direction again, you will never work for us again”” (Guralnick 2005: 448-9). So the choice of writers was further reduced because of an unerring preservation of the Presley film formula by his management. Leiber’s words serve as clear evidence that it was this lack of creativity that was the reason for his withdrawal, rather than any financial considerations. They also illustrate the ingredients, in the form of the style of individual songs, which made up this part of the Presley-film formula (the other constituents of this formula will be examined in detail later in this chapter).

It was not long after that ... that we got bored, because we knew there were no possibilities left. It was just going to be like the last one, every movie the same. I mean you had three ballads, one medium-tempo, one up-tempo, and one break blues boogie ... We talked about – you know, maybe we’re burning up a license to print money. I said “You know what? Burn it up.” ‘Cause we could have made fucking history, and those assholes only wanted to make another nickel the same way.

(Leiber in Guralnick 2005: 449)

A further disconnection with Presley’s rock ‘n’ roll past is identified by Messenger, who points out that increasingly often the singer was unable to perform with all the

members of his original backing band since “the Los Angeles branch of the American Federation of Musicians was a powerful presence in Hollywood, and film studio recording sessions were closed shops to non-members” (2005: 5). This not only reduced Presley’s connection with his past but also resulted in his record company RCA ceding power over his recordings to his film studio, and consequently the producer, Hal Wallis, and his manager, Colonel Parker. So, by the time Presley completed his national service, Parker and Wallis had sufficient control to ensure that all the ingredients of their prospective film formula, including song writing and recording, fitted their plan to present Presley as an entertainer who would appeal to the whole family rather than just teenagers. According to Guralnick (1999: 84), Parker even had influence over the choice of artwork for Presley’s record covers, giving him the power to ensure a cross-promotional link between Presley’s films and records and, thus, maximise revenue from each source.

As a consequence of all these changes, Presley’s manager was able to manipulate song lyrics and style, along with the visual image projected by Presley, to fulfil his aims. “Parker’s machinations dictated or limited most of Presley’s professional activities – the kinds of songs Presley could record, and when, where, and with what musicians, which movies he could make” (Hajdu 2009: 189). It is, therefore, unsurprising that, after completing his national service, his comeback film, *G. I. Blues* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1960), is used to exploit his time in the army by presenting Presley in his new star image. As a direct acknowledgement of his time serving his country, Presley plays Tulsa Mclean, a member of a tank division stationed in Germany. Evidently, playing a soldier rather than a convict, as he had in

Jailhouse Rock, is a clear indication of one of the ways in which the creation of a more sanitised, acceptable star image for Presley manifested itself. Inevitably, McLean was a very different character, both physically and mentally, from Vince Everett. Doll's summary sets out the major modifications to the style of the film, Presley's on-screen persona and the songs he performs:

The movie is aimed at a family audience, and his [Presley's] controversial performing style has been toned down. Presley's character has also changed; he's older and looks more conservative. Although most of the songs in *G.I. Blues* are fast-paced, they lack the hard-driving sound, sexual connotations and emotional delivery of his early soundtrack recordings. Presley's screen image has been deliberately softened.

(1998: 30-31)

Doll goes on to identify Presley's hair as shorter in *G.I. Blues* than his previous "wild, ducktail haircut" (1998: 31) which he sports as Everett prior to that character's incarceration in *Jailhouse Rock*. The narrative of *G.I. Blues* is also more light-hearted than that of the earlier film. As an example of this contrast, to add to the film's frivolous effect, Tulsa sings "Wooden Heart" from within a puppet show, accompanied by his audience of young children during the chorus, in an attempt to impress Lili (Juliet Prowse). There is no such interaction with children and families within *Jailhouse Rock*. So, through modifications to the genre of the film, from musical drama to musical comedy, to Presley's appearance, from wild youth to respectable soldier, and to the style of performance, from hip-swivelling rocker to clean-cut balladeer, Presley's star persona is altered from a youthful, rock 'n' roll star to a more mature, family entertainer.

The character that Elvis played was at odds not just with the characters that he had played in all of his pre-army films but with the very image of

rebellion that had always defined him. Far from being an outcast, this Elvis Presley was safe, “social,” and cheerfully domesticated, a conventionally bland Hollywood stick figure.

(Guralnick 1999: 73-4)

As previously stated, the aim of this transformation was to broaden his appeal to include older audiences and thus enhance his commercial viability, and *G. I. Blues* serves as evidence of what could be accomplished through the employment of this approach as “Colonel Parker neatened up, softened and promoted Elvis Presley as a brand suitable for mass consumption” (Hajdu 2009: 191). Doll describes the film’s impressive level of commercial success. “It ranked fourteenth in box-office receipts for 1960. The soundtrack album reached number one quickly, remaining in the charts longer than any other Elvis Presley album” (1998: 31).

G. I. Blues marked the beginning of what was to become a formulaic approach to Presley’s films. Another factor which contributed to the standardization of this format was the relative lack of commercial success of his next two films which did not conform to this *modus operandi*. In the Western, *Flaming Star* (Don Siegel, USA, 1960), Presley plays Pacer Burton, whose father is white and mother is Kiowa Indian. In an ensuing conflict between the two sides both his parents are killed and Pacer is forced to choose between siding with the whites or the Kiowa. He chooses the Kiowa, a decision which places him in direct conflict with his half-brother Clint (Steve Forrest). In addition to the film addressing the serious topics of racial and family conflict, it also differs from the formula of *G. I. Blues* by including only two songs, “A Cane and a High Starched Collar” and “Flaming Star”, thereby relying less on Presley’s fame as a singer and providing little opportunity for associated

soundtrack record sales. This film was followed by *Wild in the Country* (Phillip Dunne, USA, 1961) in which Presley stars as Glenn Tyler, a troubled young man who discovers he has a talent for writing. As with *Flaming Star* songs were not originally seen as a major priority within the film. However, this plan was changed, as Doll explains: “No songs were included in the original script of *Wild in the Country*, but after the poor showing of *Flaming Star*, six musical numbers were shot for the film. Only four made the final cut” (1998: 31). Although neither of these films could be regarded as a comprehensive failure, reference to box office figures confirms that these more dramatic, less musical films, *Flaming Star* (\$4.13 million) and *Wild in the Country* (\$4.69 million), both failed to match the box office success of the more humorous, cheerful, song-laden *G.I. Blues* (\$9.46 million).

Significantly, by this time Presley’s income had become even more dependent upon the commercial success of his movies. After negotiating a contract with Paramount for \$175,000 for each of Presley’s next three films and \$200,000 for two additional films, in January 1961 Colonel Parker negotiated “a guaranteed four-picture deal (with MGM) at \$500,000 per picture and 50 per cent of the profits. This meant ... they were sold out for motion pictures through (to) 1965” (Guralnick 1999: 92). The box office receipts of Presley’s last three films signalled it was the configuration of *G.I. Blues* which had proved most profitable. So, in Parker’s view, it would be of significant financial benefit to repeatedly produce films in a similar format which would be most likely to attract large audiences and to do this as frequently as possible. When Presley’s lucrative royalties deal, described above, is also taken into account, it becomes clear why the inclusion of enough songs to complete a

soundtrack album was an indispensable element of the film format, providing an additional important income source.

Influenced by these contract terms, the decision was made to return to the more successful formula produced in *G.I. Blues* in his next film, *Blue Hawaii* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1961), and this approach was repeated in the majority of his subsequent films, which were produced at the copious rate of two or three per year, for the remainder of his acting career. Schindler and Schwartz set out this formula as follows: “cast Elvis as a rakish lifeguard/ helicopter pilot/race car driver, place him in an exotic location, surround him with pretty girls and cartoonish comic complications, and have him sing enough mediocre songs to fill the accompanying soundtrack album” (2008: 15). Other elements regularly present are a storyline involving romance between Elvis’ character and one, or more, of the film’s leading ladies. Presley’s character’s involvement in fist fights is also commonplace, with a victorious outcome inevitable.

Both *G.I. Blues* and *Blue Hawaii* were directed by Norman Taurog who went on to direct nine of Elvis’ films, a further factor in the maintaining of the Elvis movie formula. Taurog was a veteran of the film industry who had begun his career directing silent movies during the 1920s. He had also previously directed a number of musicals, such as *Girl Crazy* (1943). *Girl Crazy* could be regarded as a blueprint for a post-army Elvis movie. Not only does the title bear a striking resemblance to films such as *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *Girl Happy* (Boris Sagal, USA, 1965), but, also, Danny Churchill Jr.’s (Mickey Rooney) obsession with girls matches that of many of Elvis’

characters. However, a more pertinent similarity is the cleaner, safer image of youth portrayed by *Girl Crazy*.

This film usually represents young people as apprentice adults, folks with tastes and modes of behavior not very different from those of their elders. Since *Girl Crazy* is a romantic comedy, we cannot be surprised that Danny and Ginger eventually end up together in what promises to be a happy-ever-after of the sort endorsed by their elders. Coming from the perspective of today's America, however, we might be surprised to see this couple and their peers dressing like their elders and sharing their elder's musical tastes.

(Dunne 2004: 53)

Dunne's observations regarding *Girl Crazy* could equally be applied to the Elvis films directed by Taurog, as their lead characters more closely share the values, dress sense and musical tastes of their elders than is the case in Presley's earliest movies, and the conclusion often sees Elvis' character in a 'happy-ever-after' relationship. Parker's desire to re-invent Elvis' star image in this way would therefore suggest Taurog's previous films such as *Girl Crazy* led to him being specifically chosen as a director for this purpose. This choice of an aging director, nearing the end of his career, also resulted in Elvis' movies lacking innovation and, instead, bearing a greater resemblance to the classic American musicals of the preceding decades. Furthermore, Taurog was not alone amongst directors of Elvis' films in this connection with American musicals of the past. For example, George Sidney, who directed *Viva Las Vegas* (1964), had previously served a similar role with musicals from the 1940s, such as *Anchors Aweigh* (1945) starring Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly, and the 1950s, such as *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950) starring Betty Hutton and Howard Keel.

As is the case with the Taurog-directed *G.I. Blues* and *Blue Hawaii*, the titles of many of Presley's films during this period often assist in revealing some of the details of the aforementioned elements of this formula contained within them. For example, *Fun In Acapulco* (Richard Thorpe, USA, 1963) and *Viva Las Vegas* reveal the exotic location of each of these films, whereas *Spinout* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1966) and *Speedway* (Norman Taurog, USA, 1968) allude to Presley's character being a race car/stock car driver and *Girl Happy* (Boris Sagal, USA, 1965) and *The Trouble With Girls* (Peter Tewkesbury, USA, 1969) hint at the ubiquitous presence of the "pretty girls" referred to by Schindler and Schwarz.

Importantly, from the viewpoint of analyzing popular music function, this formulaic approach is not restricted to those ingredients listed above. It also extends to the methods by which Presley's songs are included. Initial versions of the scripts contained no details of songs but instead "were marked with placeholders for the tunes and sent to Hill and Range's staff of writers "who competed with each other to fill as many slots as they could"" (Jeansonne, Lührssen & Sokolovic 2011: 165). As a result of this method, the techniques used to lead into each song also took on a level of standardization which will be thoroughly investigated later in this chapter.

Having set out major contributory factors in the creation of the Elvis movie formula, the following detailed analysis of *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair* establishes the extent to which the components of this formula were present in these examples, providing a particular focus on the period immediately prior to the release of *A Hard Day's Night*, a film which broke the mould created by the movies starring Presley. The findings of this investigation will then be utilized to illustrate

the effects of this regimented approach on the ways in which songs were included, which in turn will enable an evaluation of the functional capabilities and restrictions upon these within the limitations of such a rigidly structured format.

Girls! Girls! Girls! is set in the exotic location of the Hawaiian coast, in an attempt to emulate the commercial success of the earlier Presley movie, *Blue Hawaii*. Presley plays the part of Ross Carpenter, who has a glamorous job as the captain/guide of a boat operating fishing trips for tourists. He discovers his boss is retiring and, as a consequence of this, has to find a way to raise the money to acquire *The Westwind*, a boat which he built with his late father. At the beginning of the film Ross is personally involved with Robin (Stella Stevens) who, like him, sings at the Pirate's Den night club. But, subsequently he meets and falls in love with Laurel (Laurel Goodwin), who, unknown to Ross is wealthy. Ross' pride is hurt when Laurel buys *The Westwind* for him and he sails off without her. When Laurel asks the unpleasant Wesley Johnson (Jeremy Slate) to help her chase after Ross, his unwanted advances force Ross to return to rescue her. A fist fight between Ross and Wesley ensues, which Ross, predictably, wins. As a result, Ross forces Wesley to buy the boat back from Laurel. The film ends with Ross proposing to Laurel and them deciding to build a new boat of their own.

In *It Happened at the World's Fair* Presley plays the part of Mike Edwards, a pilot, who operates a crop-dusting business with his partner, Danny Burke (Gary Lockwood). Danny's gambling habit causes problems for the pair and their business. At one point Mike has to rescue Danny, via a trademark fist fight, when he is unable to pay his debts at a poker game. Eventually Danny's habit leads to their plane

being seized by the local sheriff. To raise the money to get it back, they decide to travel to Seattle, as Danny is confident he can recoup his losses there by getting work from the shady Vince Bradley (H. M. Wynant). To get there they hitch a ride with a young girl, Su Lin (Vicky Tiu) and her uncle, Walter (Kam Tong). Upon arrival in Seattle Mike takes Su Lin to the World's Fair, whilst her uncle attends to business. When Su Lin becomes sick through eating too much, Mike takes her to the on-site medical facility where he meets, and immediately falls in love with, a nurse, Diane Warren (Joan O'Brien). Initially, he does not make a good impression with her, but eventually, after some help from Su Lin, who Mike cares for after her uncle disappears, he wins her over. In the meantime Danny takes on a job for Vince Bradley in return for enough money to repossess their plane. When Mike discovers their flight involves smuggling illegal furs, Vince draws a gun on the pair in an attempt to force them to do the job. Another fight ensues and Mike disarms Vince. Su Lin's uncle, Walter, is then found in a local hospital, having had a minor accident and she is returned to him. The film ends with Mike, encouraged by Diane, signing up for training with NASA in the hope of making better use of his flying skills.

Many of the ingredients of the "Elvis movie formula" are clearly evident in both examples. Each places Presley's character in an exciting job; a skipper of a boat in Hawaii in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and a pilot in *It Happened at the World's Fair*. However, although these are desirable jobs both films also show Elvis' character to be ambitious, a trait which would be regarded as commendable by his intended audience. In *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, Ross aims to become a boat owner and, in *It Happened at the World's Fair*, Mike hopes to make better use of his flying skills by

applying to NASA. In each case this would make his, already, thrilling lifestyle even more desirable. Plainly, this is a further attempt to broaden his appeal to a more mature audience by representing him as somebody who is aspiring and eager to improve by making the most of his abilities. The attractiveness of both Ross' and Mike's way of life is further enhanced by another ingredient present in both films, an exotic setting in the form of the Hawaiian coast in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and the futuristic environment of the World's Fair in Seattle in the appropriately-named *It Happened at the World's Fair*.

Additionally, in each of these film examples there exists the common element of a romantic connection between Presley's character and a variety of women. In *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, Ross has to choose between Robin and Laurel. In *It Happened at the World's Fair*, Mike visits a girlfriend, Dorothy (Yvonne Craig), before travelling to Seattle and meeting Diane. Furthermore, during an intimate moment Mike mistakenly calls Dorothy 'Shirley', hinting that he has many other girlfriends in his home town. But, although Mike and Ross both have numerous girlfriends, by the end of each film the situation is resolved by them developing a deeper, more monogamous relationship, in Ross' case with Laurel and in Mike's with Diane. Through representing characters played by Elvis as individuals who are seeking a committed relationship even though they are attractive to many women, the extra factor of a sense of caring and morality is introduced to make his image more acceptable to those with similar values.

It has already been recognized that another ingredient common to both films is fistfights, but this is represented in a positive light with Presley's characters' brawls

symbolizing righteousness, when Mike fights smuggler Vince Bradley, camaraderie, when Mike helps his friend, Danny, escape trouble after a poker game and heroism, when Ross rescues Laurel from Wesley Johnson. So, even when physically violent, Presley's characters are still portrayed positively. This is a clear contrast to Vince Everett's brawl at the beginning of *Jailhouse Rock* when, in spite of the pleas of onlookers, he continues to beat a man until he is dead, resulting in his receiving a jail sentence for manslaughter.

An affectionate relationship with children is a further element common to both of these films, these being with sisters, Mai Ling (Ginny Tiu) and Tai Ling (Elizabeth Tiu), in *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, and Su Lin in *It Happened at the World's Fair*. The inclusion of this trait is yet another part of this re-invention to broaden Presley's appeal to an older audience by portraying his potential as a responsible father figure, who is happy to care for children. However, by coupling this with his image as a single man with several girls to choose from, this is achieved without totally alienating his younger, more free and easy fans.

Finally, in accordance with the description of Schindler and Schwartz above, both films "have him sing enough ... songs to fill the accompanying soundtrack album" (2008: 15). At this time there were obvious financial reasons for including this number of songs as Osborne explains:

Cast and film recordings continued to dominate LP sales; the longevity of those sales appealed to any artist (or manager) wishing to build a lasting career ... It provided the easiest way to sell a whole package: the star as "product"; the film itself; the music on the soundtrack. And it worked: Cliff Richard's film soundtracks were the most successful pre-Beatles British LPs. However, the move towards film-work and the family oriented variety of the

material on the soundtrack LPs helped to emasculate the image of many rock 'n' roll performers.

(2012: 107)

As an illustration of the homogenized approach to the format of the most successful pop-musicals at this time, although Osborne's comments relate to British artists they could, just as easily, be applied to Elvis Presley, whose post-1960s films were similarly aimed at broadening his fan base to include families. As with Richard's, Presley's soundtrack albums also consistently outsold those released independent of his films. There was, therefore, a consistency of method to the inclusion of popular music in both British and American film at this time, both in format and the synergistic business model relating to the film and its soundtrack recording.

This uniformity of the film format is equally relevant to the functions of the music, since the consistency of the implementation of the Elvis film formula extended to the methods used to incorporate songs within it. Analysis of the two chosen film texts reveals four methods constantly employed. These are:

- 1) The song accompanying the opening titles.
- 2) The song performed on stage.
- 3) The audio dissolve through use of a musical prop.
- 4) The romantic serenade which ends with a kiss.

Each of these techniques will be examined, in turn, followed by an assessment of their functional capabilities, both individually and collectively.

The opening of a film was consistently accompanied by an up-tempo, song performed by Presley. Often this song title was eponymous to that of the film, for example *Viva Las Vegas*, *Kissin' Cousins* (Gene Nelson, USA, 1964), *Fun in Acapulco* and *Girls! Girls! Girls!*. However, there were exceptions to this rule including *Kid Galahad* (Phil Karlson, USA, 1962), which opens with "King of the Whole Wide World", and *It Happened at the World's Fair* which opens with "Beyond the Bend". But, regardless of whether its title matched that of the film, the functions of the opening song were largely consistent.

In a similar way to the opening credits themselves, which impart information such as the film's title, its cast and its crew, the opening song provides the audience with additional details. For example, in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* the title of the song, "Girls! Girls! Girls!", which is included repeatedly in the lyrics, stresses the importance of "girls" as suggested by the name of the film. Furthermore, via Ross's lip-synched performance of the song and its subject matter, it supports generic identification of the film as a romantic musical. The visual presence of these girls in an exotic location, off the coast of Hawaii, is also enhanced by the following lyrics from the song "Girls goin' swimming, girls in bikinis ... Girls sailin' sailboats, girls water skiin'". So from this combination the audience are made aware that the film is set in a warm coastal climate and will concern Ross Carpenter's love of girls. The latter point is apparent since it is Ross giving his point of view, when describing himself with the lyrics "I'm just a red-blooded boy". So, in this case it is evident that details of genre, theme, location and character are all imparted through the opening song.

As previously noted, unlike *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, *It Happened at the World's Fair* does not begin with a title song, but the functions of its opening song, "Beyond the Bend", are very similar. Once again, the lyrics inform us of the themes of the film. Mike Edwards sings "Don't know where I'm going. Don't know where it ends" suggesting the narrative will include a journey to an, as yet, unknown destination. One of the desired outcomes of this journey is also revealed by the lyric "Beyond the bend perhaps there'll be somebody who's right for me". These words are repeated to highlight the importance of the theme of romance within this film. Similar to the previous example, the combination of Mike's lip-synched performance and the lyrical content of the song performed aids generic identification of the film as a romantic musical, with Mike as the leading male. But, the song is used to introduce the audience not only to Mike, but also to another of the characters of the film. The line "The trip is shorter when you've got a friend" cues a shot of Mike's friend, Danny Burke, sat in front of him in the plane, who will be his companion throughout the film. Additionally, just as "Girls! Girls! Girls!" informs the audience of Ross's interest in girls through the lyric "I'm just a red-blooded boy and I can't stop thinking about girls", "Beyond the Bend" performs the same function with the line "I haven't got a care", which alludes to his being single and having no ties. In both cases this clarification of his relationship status can also be interpreted as having the intention to make "the sheer proliferation of scenes of Elvis, being chased by, kissing, dancing with, winning, or merely ogling girls" (Dennis 2013: 79) more morally acceptable to a wider audience, through the justification that his characters start each film without any committed relationship and, therefore, their behaviour should be regarded as inoffensive.

So, like “Girls! Girls! Girls!”, “Beyond the Bend” can also be regarded as a song accompanying the opening titles of an Elvis Presley movie which provides information about its genre, location, characters and themes. In addition, the fact that both are up-tempo, happy songs, for example “Beyond the Bend’s” opening line is “Breeze, sing a happy song”, further assists in identifying each film as being a light-hearted comedy rather than a serious drama.

However, whilst this approach is regularly employed in Elvis’s films this does not mean that every opening song includes all the ingredients recognized above. For instance, the exact location of the destination of the journey in *It Happened at the World’s Fair* is revealed by a later song, “Take Me to the Fair”. But, it remains apparent that the consistency of this method was part of the formula of a Presley film at this time, and continued to be so throughout his film career, being included in many later examples such as *Harum Scarum* (Gene Nelson, USA, 1965), in which Elvis plays Johnny Tyronne, a movie star, who is kidnapped whilst on a promotional tour of the Middle East. The film opens with the song “Harem Holiday”, which begins with the informative lyric “Gonna travel, gonna travel wild and free” and ends with “Every pretty girl’s gonna know I’m around, they’re gonna know I’m in town on a harem holiday”. In this case “harem” is included to infer the Middle Eastern location of the film in addition to the presence of a multitude of girls. Also Presley’s character once again describes himself as “free”, highlighting that romance will be a prominent theme. So, this illustrates that even after the innovative presentation of the songs in *A Hard Day’s Night* had emerged a year

earlier, Presley's films remained unswerving in this aspect of their rigid structure, uninfluenced by advances elsewhere in the methods used to include popular music.

Through reference to these examples it can be seen that the main function of the opening song was to provide the audience with information via its tempo and its lyrics. In referring to a classical score Gorbman explains "Music normally accompanies opening and end titles of a feature film. As background for opening titles, it defines the genre (*Mildred Pierce's* title music signals a melodrama) and it sets a general mood (for *Mildred Pierce*, sweepingly emotional, tragic perhaps, as it plays over images of waves washing up on shore)" (1987: 82). So, whilst the function of the songs' tempo at the beginning of a Presley movie may resemble this, assisting in the recognition of genre traits present within the film, the additional inclusion of lyrics enable provision of specific details relating to theme, character and location to a degree which would not be possible using an instrumental piece of music, such as telling the audience a theme of the film is a journey, as Mike does via the lyrics of "Beyond the Bend". However, in spite of this, in the case of Presley's films, the extent of the functional capabilities of the lyrics does not extend to those identified by Smith. Rather than expressing the author's opinion of a character, instead they represent the character's point of view, since it is Ross and Mike who are seen singing the song. As an illustration of this, Mike clearly sees himself as fitting the 'ladies man' description included in the lyrics, rather than the director highlighting a personal trait of which he is unaware, since it is Mike, himself, who sings the words which portray this image. Also, as one of the primary intentions of a Presley movie is to clearly portray a particular star image via

a consistent format, there is little room for ambiguity within the film. As a result song lyrics are not required to “give voice to feelings and attitudes not made explicit in the film’s visuals and dialogue” (Smith 1998: 170) in Presley movies, since such scenes are almost non-existent, although a rare exception will be analyzed when this topic is revisited later in this chapter.

The second approach to inserting a song is through performance of it by Presley’s character on stage. This is often enabled by the unlikely scenario of the character combining his glamorous profession with a second job singing in a night club or bar, such as that in *Spinout* when Mike McCoy (Elvis Presley) divides his time between racing cars and singing in a band, with the other band members doubling as his pit crew. Similarly, in *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, in addition to working as captain of a pleasure boat, Ross Carpenter takes a second job, singing in the Pirate’s Den night club, in order to raise the money to buy the boat he built with his father.

But, as with the song which accompanies the opening credits, although this inclusion of performance is common to many of Presley’s roles, it does not apply to all. For example, in *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, Mike Edwards is not a professional singer, though importantly, he does own a guitar. As a result it is not credible to write stage performance into this film, but it is still possible for Mike to ‘perform’ with his musical instrument. It could be argued that this occasional absence of Presley as a musical stage performer from some of his films suggests that the importance of being seen as a live-performing, rock ‘n’ roll star continued to diminish as his movie career progressed, since it was not felt necessary to always directly reference his pop-star career through his film roles. Instead film

increasingly took over as the primary vehicle for his music, consistently portraying him as a star of musical comedies, through regularly breaking into song in implausible ways consistent with this genre, rather than taking to the stage or the recording studio to perform.

However, although occasionally absent, stage performance in front of an audience is still a regularly used ingredient of the Presley film formula. It is useful since it enables the pop star element of his star persona to come to the fore as, during these sequences, it is Presley's image, rather than the traits of the character he is playing, which is privileged above all else. While singing at The Pirate's Den in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* the camera focuses almost exclusively on Ross, interrupted only by the occasional shot of the audience, whose reaction is used to demonstrate how popular he is, or Laurel and Robin during his performance of "I Don't Wanna be Tied", to highlight their role as love rivals, or Sam (Robert Strauss), the owner of the club, dancing surreptitiously, to add comic value to the sequence. As a result of privileging the performance in this way the subject of its focus is switched from the personality of Ross Carpenter, boat captain, to that of Elvis Presley, film and music star. So the manner of the performance, including dance movement, facial expression, appearance, dress and song material promote the intended image of Presley, acting as a further illustration of the attempt to widen his appeal and maximise record sales of the film's soundtrack. Consequently, they reveal little about the character of Ross Carpenter or the film's themes. But, it is not only Presley, himself, as the performer of such songs, who contributes to his image. The

performance venue and the on-screen audience are further factors which add to the intended impression of him as a star.

As has been identified earlier in this chapter, by this point in his career, Presley was establishing himself more as a family entertainer than a rock 'n' roll star.

Accordingly, the venue for Ross Carpenter's performance has a level of refinement, in that the audience watch him sing whilst seated in small groups around individual tables. Also, the owner of the club wears a suit and the resident band, along with the bar staff, are smartly uniformed in a nautical theme matching that of the club, which is decorated with paraphernalia of a similar ilk. The members of the audience mirror the more formal image created by the club. They are stylishly dressed, the men in suits and the women in formal dresses. They appear more mature, in their twenties or older, and this is reflected in their behaviour. They remain seated during the performance and their engagement with it, although appreciative, is restricted to clapping or clicking their fingers in time to the music. The screaming, dancing teenagers associated with Presley's early career are conspicuously absent from these scenes. In a display of Taurog's influence as a director, they are replaced by youngsters acting more like their elders, similar to those in *Girl Crazy*.

This reformed Presley image is further borne out by the physical appearance of Ross during stage performance. When he sings "I Don't Wanna be Tied" he is dressed in jacket, collar and tie, with a handkerchief in his top pocket. He smiles regularly during his performance and many of his dance moves resemble the twist, which although a fairly recent dance craze had by this time been widely accepted within broader family culture. This is evident through its absorption into popular

prime time television. In the same year, 1962, the twist was the theme for the “Twizzle” episode of the Emmy award winning family sitcom, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and it also makes an appearance in “The Twitch”, an episode of *The Flintstones*. So, although still trendy, it would, by this time, have also been regarded as acceptable by many older family members.

Ross’ dress code is equally formal later in the film, this time dressed in black suit, shirt and tie, when he makes his professional debut at The Pirate’s Den, singing “Return to Sender” and “Because of Love”. These songs are a further indication of the more mature, gentler, style, with its broader appeal, that was prevalent in Presley’s post-1960 films, and which contrast with much of his earlier, more generationally divisive, rock ‘n’ roll-based material such as “Jailhouse Rock”.

The main function of performed songs such as these is not, therefore, connected to the film’s narrative. Primarily, they are not used to inform the audience about characters, location, themes or emotions, as is the case with the opening songs. Instead they function to create an image of the film’s star, Elvis Presley, as a clean-cut, mature, respectable, pleasant entertainer who performs congenial songs to respectable, family audiences. This function of image projection would have been performed by songs throughout Presley’s film career, including those which predated the implementation of the post-1960 formula. So, although it is a very different Presley who is seen and heard performing the title song in *Jailhouse Rock*, dressed in denim, curling his lip and vigorously gyrating whilst singing a rock ‘n’ roll song about life as a convict, the function of the song is similar to that of the above examples. Both, the performance of “Jailhouse Rock” and that of “Return to

Sender” function to promote the star image of Elvis Presley. It is just that the image promoted as a youthful, rebellious rock ‘n’ roll star in *Jailhouse Rock* is very different from that of mature club singer portrayed in *Girls! Girls! Girls!*.

Perhaps the most commonly used technique employed to introduce songs within *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World’s Fair* is the audio dissolve. Altman defines the audio dissolve as “a passage from the diegetic track (e.g. conversation) to the musical track (e.g. orchestral accompaniment) through the intermediary of diegetic music” (1987: 63). This approach was already common to the musical genre as a link smoothing the transition between ‘realistic’ dialogue, which is true to the diegesis of the film, and the ‘fantasy’ of musical performance, which is beyond the diegesis due to its inclusion of certain elements, such as instrumental and vocal backing. The following example from *Singin’ in the Rain* (Stanley Donan & Gene Kelly, USA, 1952) acts as an illustration of how this concept works. The ‘Make Em’ Laugh’ sequence begins with Cosmo Brown (Donald O’Connor) trying to raise the spirits of Don Lockwood (Gene Kelly). Firstly, Brown’s dialogue takes on a rhythmic quality as he describes how the show must go on. He then sits at a backstage piano and begins to sing, before leaping on it with his feet crashing on the keys. Up until this point the music is diegetic, limited to Brown’s voice and the sounds of the piano synchronized to his movements. However his leap from the piano coincides with the introduction of a full orchestral backing for the remainder of the song. The backstage piano provides the apparatus to enable the audio dissolve from the ‘realistic’ opening dialogue to the ‘fantastic’ full orchestral song and dance routine.

In *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair* there are three dominant ways in which the audio dissolve is utilized; use of a musical instrument by Presley's character, use of other items as representations of a musical source and use of other musicians.

The sets of Presley's films are teeming with musical instruments, particularly guitars, to facilitate the first of these methods of audio dissolve. In *Girls! Girls! Girls!* the first occurrence is at the retirement party of Papa (Frank Puglia) and Mama (Lili Valenty) Stavros. A number of the guests are singing traditional Greek songs and playing guitar in a diegetic fashion. This provides Ross Carpenter the opportunity to take one of the guitars and begin to serenade Mama Stavros with the song "We'll be Together". Although the song begins with Ross and some of the other party guests playing their instruments, his singing cues the introduction of percussion instruments and female backing vocals which are clearly not represented realistically within the diegesis of the film. Another instance takes place later in the film, in a scene on the fishing boat, when Ross spots one of the crew playing a guitar and takes it from him. The instrument then provides the means for the audio dissolve into the performance of "Song of the Shrimp". Again this piece of music begins with Ross' vocals accompanied only by his own guitar. However, other instruments are quickly introduced and, even if you were to accept the unlikely scenario that some of the drum sounds are produced by the other fishermen bashing on upturned buckets, other instruments heard, such as the wood block percussion, are still non-diegetic. A third example can be found at the end of the film. Mai Ling and Tai Ling emerge hidden from behind an upturned boat with a

guitar which they hand to Ross so he can perform a reprise of “Girls! Girls! Girls!”, which although beginning in a diegetic form, develops into a fully orchestrated version, with no orchestra visibly present on the beach.

Although a similar approach is used in *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, as earlier stated, Presley’s character, Mike Edwards, is not a performing musician. However, this potential problem is overcome by his owning a guitar which is never far from his side in relevant scenes. As with *Girls! Girls! Girls!* there are numerous examples of the inclusion of audio dissolve. Whilst practicing on his guitar in his chalet in Seattle, Mike wanders onto the balcony providing a diegetic link to break into a version of “One Broken Heart for Sale” complete with non-diegetic bass and percussion along with some of the other residents of the Century 21 Estates pausing from their everyday activities to perform as implausible backing singers. The performance of “Cotton Candy Land” provides a further example of this method of audio dissolve. When Mike puts Sue Lin to bed he then picks up his guitar, which just happens to be in the corner of the room, to sing her a lullaby. Again, although initially it is only the diegetic acoustic guitar which is heard it is soon joined by an electric guitar, bass, percussion and other instruments which are external to the diegesis.

In both films, in addition to the guitar, other musical instruments are used to facilitate this technique. In *Girls! Girls! Girls!* a Chinese lute known as a Yueqin, or moon guitar, found on the porch of Madam Yung’s (Beulah Quo) house is used as a means of audio dissolve into the song “Earth Boy”, and again at the end of the film for the reprise of “Girls! Girls! Girls!”, and in *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, whilst

travelling to Seattle in the back of Uncle Walter's truck, Sue Lin's ukulele serves a similar purpose for the song "Take me to the Fair". As both these songs were performed to children they help to reinforce Presley's more universally acceptable star image, so it may be that the variation in instrumentation was intended as novelty value to give these songs a more frivolous feel in line with the accompanying visual image. Additionally, in the case of the Yuequin, the choice of instrumentation may have been used to denote a race or culture, since it is chosen to perform a song where Ross is accompanied by two Chinese children, Mai Ling and Tai Ling. Similarly, mandolins are heard at the Stavros' retirement party as a representation of their Greek nationality and musical traditions.

This novelty value which helps to establish the more sanitised image of Presley may also act as the motivation for certain cases when items other than musical instruments are utilized to facilitate an audio dissolve. In a scene from *It Happened at the World's Fair* in which Sue Lin is feeling unhappy because her Uncle Walter is missing, Mike winds up a selection of musical toys to cheer her up. It is this action, rather than the music from the toys, which acts as the audio dissolve since the sound of winding is appropriate, whereas the sound immediately emanating from them, beginning with the percussion, is clearly the instrumentation from the studio recorded track "Cotton Candy Land" rather than the accurate representation of a drum kit which you would associate with a wind-up musical toy. The completion of this dissolution into the 'ideal' world of the musical section is further supported by a succession of changes in tempo and instrumentation throughout the song, including the quicker tempo of the rock 'n' roll segment, with its lead guitar solo.

Such variations could not be achieved by the assortment of diegetic musical toys. Additionally, the tempo remains consistent before the song comes to an abrupt end, whereas in reality the music from wind-up toys would gradually slow before stopping. So, in this instance, although there is no conventional musical instrument visibly present, it is still possible to achieve the audio dissolve by providing a plausible means to introduce music, even if it turns out not to be in the form of the music which is actually heard.

Altman identifies a further method of audio dissolve present in the classic American musicals, which is also present in examples from Presley films. "Diegetic music is that space where two world's meet – a realm of unrelenting reality where slamming doors always make the sound of doors slamming (*action produces sound*) and a never-never-land in which doors only slam if they can be made to do so in time to the music (*music produces action*)" (1987: 64). It therefore follows that a realistic sound, such as a slamming door can take on a rhythm, before dissolving into song by taking on a less realistic sound or disappearing beneath the other instrumentation of the song. An example of this is present within *Girls! Girls! Girls!* after Laurel invites Ross to her apartment for dinner. At the end of the meal they are disturbed by music, and then an argument, from the apartment next door. Ross bangs on the wall three times and the neighbour responds in kind. This is followed by similar banging from the apartment above, followed by a similar response from below, which results in Laurel's coffee table jumping up and down on the floor, in an unrealistic manner. This marks the dissolve into the song "The Walls Have Ears" as the sounds emanating from these actions take on a rhythmic form. Ross'

subsequent vocal performance is then backed by the sound of music, supposedly coming from Laurel's stereogram, but this sequence further loses its sense of reality as, in the tradition of the musical, the music is of too perfect a sound quality to actually originate from this source. Furthermore, there are additional visual sources of instrumentation, such as the banging on the wall and the stamping of Ross's and Laurel's feet as they continue to dance around the apartment. But, as with the other elements of the music, the sound derived from these actions also takes on an exaggerated quality with the rhythm and timing fitting perfectly into the tango-style of the music as the song enters the never-never land associated with the musical genre as described by Altman.

In addition to the use of musical instruments and other sound making objects or actions, other musicians are also used to provide an audio dissolve into a song. At the end of *It Happened at the World's Fair* Mike, accompanied by Diane, submits his application to NASA. Whilst he is doing this a brass band can be heard in the background. Having completed his paperwork, Mike and Diane stride in front of the brass band and begin to sing "Happy Ending". The first verse is backed by the instruments of the brass band present within the diegesis. However, by the beginning of the second verse a guitar and backing vocals, sounds beyond the diegesis of the film, are also present.

This persistent insertion of the audio dissolve, whether via the inclusion of a single musical instrument, an alternative musical source or a rhythmic action, such as knocking on a wall or stamping on a floor, contributes significantly to Elvis' movies resembling the classical American musicals of the preceding decades, such as

Singin' in the Rain, which also relied heavily upon this technique. Its constant employment also denies opportunity of a break from the accepted norms of including music associated with this genre.

Examples of the final predominant method, the inclusion of a serenade ending with a kiss include “A Boy like Me, A Girl like You” from *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and “I’m Falling in Love Tonight” and “A World of Our Own” from *It Happened at the World’s Fair*. In each case Presley’s character addresses the song directly to his true love interest. Ross sings “A Boy like Me, A Girl like You” to Laurel whilst they are sailing on *The Westwind* and Mike serenades Diane with “I’m Falling in Love” whilst the couple dine atop The Space Needle. Both songs have a slower tempo and include different instruments to heighten their romantic effect, orchestral strings in the instance of the former and an organ in the latter. Each of these examples ends with the couple kissing, with the song marking the rise to this climax of their romance. A further example, “A World of Our Own”, is slightly different in that it signifies the reigniting of Mike’s and Diane’s relationship after she rejected him upon discovering that he faked an injury to spend time with her. With a quicker tempo, the song evokes happiness more than romance, but like the others culminates with the couple kissing as a mark of the cementing of their renewed bond. In none of these cases are musical instruments played by Presley’s character in order to effect an audio dissolve, since if an instrument were being played this would obstruct the couple embracing and kissing at the end of the song. In this sense the approach differs to that used when Elvis serenades other characters, such as Mama Stavros at her retirement party, when his playing a guitar is used as a means of audio dissolve,

because a lack of romantic involvement means the guitar will not be an obstruction, since the song will not end with a kiss and an embrace.

Although one of these four methods is used to include almost all of the songs within these two film examples, there exists one significant exception, “They Remind Me Too Much of You” from *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, which marks a breakaway from the traditional methods for the inclusion of popular music described above. This song is heard as Mike and Sue Lin return to Seattle from The World’s Fair on the monorail. The method of inclusion of this song is unusual since Mike does not sing it and there are no musical sources visible. It can be concluded that it is, therefore, not a diegetic piece. While the song is heard there is little on-screen action with Sue Lin sleeping and Mike staring wistfully into space. This scene represents a unique example in a Presley film through its being potentially ambiguous. Purely from what is seen by the audience, it is not totally clear what Mike is thinking or what his mood is. In this case, it is the song which provides a greater degree of clarity through its lyrics, which express Mike’s thoughts and feelings. However, although Mike is not seen performing or lip-synching the song, it does not represent authorial comment which is unbeknownst to Mike, since it is his vocals which are heard. Instead, the song is used meta-diegetically, that is, as a representation of Mike’s thoughts at this time, thereby maintaining an association between the character and this musical expression of his unspoken feelings towards Diane. Given the otherwise largely traditional format of Presley’s films, including their presentation of songs, this scene seems inexplicably innovative, in that it pre-dates what is widely regarded as ground-breaking use of non-diegetic

popular song in *A Hard Day's Night* and *Scorpio Rising* (Kenneth Anger, USA, 1964), albeit in a manner which fails to fully exploit the variety of functional capabilities afforded by including music in this way. The reasons for such novelty are unclear. It may simply be that it was felt that Mike singing about his feelings for Diane when he is supposed to be caring for Sue Lin was inappropriate for his image as a responsible, caring adult. But, the consequences in that the potential to extend a song's musical function beyond those enabled by the other methods of inclusion in a Presley film, are clear. Through deconstructing performance of a song into its individual aural and visual components, the performer is freed from the technique of lip-synching, enabling him to perform other actions which may be supported by the song's lyrics or melody. Potentially, such novelty opens up numerous new ways to vary the relationship between the visual and aural components of performer and song, but this potential is not realized in this instance as, in Mike's case, this newly discovered freedom merely results in his sitting and thinking of Diane, whilst the song vocalizes his thoughts. Nor was this advance to be developed in Presley's subsequent films, including the five directed by Taurog, which continued to adhere to the methods consistently employed to this point. Consequently, it would appear unlikely that Taurog appreciated the functional possibilities which could be realized by employing popular music in this way. Because of this, the sequence should be regarded as a chance forerunner of what was to come, rather than an innovative breakthrough.

From the above analysis it can be concluded that Presley's songs fall into four main categories, with one significant exception. But, what are the effects of such a

limited approach to the inclusion of songs on their functions compared to those of a classical film score as defined by Gorbman and Smith? To assess this, each of these principles will be taken and applied to the above examples of Presley's film songs.

Invisibility.

In Presley's films the technical apparatus of non-diegetic music is not visible. However, because the films contain many of the generic traits of the classic American musical, there is a blurring of diegetic and non-diegetic instrumentation, in that the former often includes the sounds of instruments which are outside the diegesis of the film, such as the unseen guitars and backing vocals which accompany the visual representation of a marching band during the performance of "Happy Ending" which concludes *It Happened at the World's Fair*. Therefore, in terms of Invisibility such an approach to the inclusion of songs bears a greater resemblance to those in musicals, creating a fantasy world for the duration of the song, rather than to a classical score as described by Gorbman, contributing to the interpretation of a scene.

Inaudibility.

Since Presley's films are musicals, Gorbman's principle of *Inaudibility* would be inappropriate as songs are privileged within their narrative. In the case of a classical score "Its volume, mood and rhythm must be subordinated to the dramatic and emotional dictates of the film narrative" (Gorbman 1987: 76). By contrast, "The privileged moments of the musical reverse that relationship, inviting people to

move in time to pre-recorded music ... in order to assure the primacy of the musical accompaniment ... over natural activity and sound” (Altman 1987: 65). Commercial considerations would also have demanded a clear prominence of the songs and a strong visual connection to Elvis Presley, to promote the soundtrack compilation and increase record sales. However, Presley’s films would often also include additional orchestral score which adheres to the principle of *Inaudibility*, since this would not have been burdened by the same commercial considerations. But this function did not extend to the film’s popular music.

Signifier of Emotion.

According to Gorbman, “Music appears in classical cinema as a signifier of emotion. Sabeneev describes the image-track, dialogue, and sound effects as ‘the purely photographic,’ objective elements of film, to which music brings a necessary emotional, irrational, romantic or intuitive dimension” (1987: 79). However, once again, because of Presley’s films’ strong association with the musical genre, both the popular music within and the accompanying visuals perform a different role to that in the classical Hollywood films described by Gorbman. As Williams observes, “Musical numbers in a musical liberate the images from the demands of veracity. In non-musical films the music becomes the servant of the image” (1981: 148). Therefore, the visuals accompanying the songs of Presley’s films often do not align with the paradigms of logic, everyday reality and control, as Gorbman suggests is the case with a classic Hollywood film, but instead ally those of the irrational, dream and loss of control which are more usually associated with such a film’s music. As a result, rather than adding emotion to the visual image, the song from

the Presley musical often works with the accompanying visuals to heighten the emotion of the scene immediately preceding or proceeding it. An example would be any of the songs beginning or ending with a kiss, such as “I’m Falling in Love Tonight” from *It Happened at the World’s Fair*. Prior to this song Diane and Mike dine in the revolving restaurant at the top of The Space Needle. At the beginning they discuss the NASA space programme and opportunities it may afford Mike, as a pilot. But there is then a cut to after dinner. Darkness has fallen and their romance has developed. It is at this point that Mike breaks into a love song, highlighting the irrational, dream and loss of control referred to by Gorbman and culminating with a kiss at the end of the song, before returning to reality with the diegetic sound of the applause of the other diners. So, whilst “I’m Falling in Love Tonight” intensifies the emotion of the dining sequence, it does so in association with the visual image of Mike singing, rather than in a form less directly attached to what is seen, as is the case with a classical score. From this it may be concluded that the songs in Presley’s films can function as a source of emotion but in a different way to a classical score owing to the disparity of the music’s relationship with its accompanying visuals in each case.

Narrative Cueing

Referential/narrative. Via examples from the two primary film texts it has already been discussed how the opening songs of Presley movies provide information about genre, characters, setting and plot, thereby fulfilling this function to a point. Furthermore, it has also been illustrated that as songs are seen to be sung by a character they can also often be regarded as representative of their point of view.

But, as Gorbman observes, classical score often also establishes musical themes which will be repeated or varied throughout the film. Songs are rarely repeated in Presley films. Owing to the demands of the accompanying soundtrack album it is necessary to have such a large number of different songs as to make repetition impossible within the confines of the film.

Gorbman also describes how a classical score can function to denote time and place. As Presley's post-1960 films are set largely in the present, the inclusion of his contemporary music does not detract from this image. Also, since popular music was in its infancy at this time there would have been difficulties in using this genre as a representation of the past.

With regards to place, again, opportunities for music to function as a representation of location are limited. How can it be possible to clearly denote The World's Fair in Seattle or The Las Vegas Strip musically, except via lyrical content? But, the style of Presley's music is occasionally used to represent race or nationality through the use of particular instruments. The version of "Girls! Girls! Girls!" heard at the end of the film illustrates how this is achieved. It includes a moon guitar at the beginning, to represent China, followed by a steel guitar, finger cymbals and castanets to represent Hawaii, Thailand and Spain respectively, as Ross sings about his craze for girls of all nationalities. However this representation is limited through the songs being performed by an artist and in a style associated with white, western popular music.

Connotative. From the chosen film texts, only in the example of "They Remind Me Too Much of You" does popular song act connotatively as a narrative cue. The

reasons for this lie in its meta-diegetic use. If Mike were to be seen singing this song, his performance would clarify his thoughts diegetically. But, the deconstruction of the performance into its component parts of singer and song release Mike from the bondage of having to express his feelings in the usual way. Instead he is free to perform other actions, which in this case are limited to his sitting and looking pensive, whilst his thoughts are verbalized separately through the inclusion of a non-diegetic song. However, since present only in this single instance, this function is exceptional within Presley's films.

Continuity.

According to Gorbman, a classical film score "smooths discontinuities of editing within scenes and sequences" (1987: 89). This is achieved by inserting a constant element, the music, to lessen the disorienting effect of switch from one particular time or location to another. Although this practice is employed in Presley's films it is achieved through the use of additional orchestral score, rather than popular song. The limiting of the inclusion of songs to the four main methods described within this chapter, (opening song, performance, audio dissolve and serenade), has resulted in an inability to use popular music to smooth the link between different scenes. With the exception of the aforementioned "They Remind Me Too Much of You" all songs incorporate one of these four methods listed above and, as a result, are accompanied by the performance or lip-synching of Mike or Ross. They cannot, therefore, smooth transition between scenes, since this would involve Presley's character changing time or location mid-song which would be likely to increase rather than decrease the jarring effect of switching scenes.

Unity.

As mentioned in the above section on *Narrative Cueing* the classical score accompanying the opening titles of a film may be the first instance of a piece of music which is repeated and varied throughout the film. In this way music can be used to denote a character, location or theme central to the film and thereby assist in clarifying the narrative. Gorbman explains how this is achieved by composer Max Steiner. “After watching the rough cut, he devised the principal character and idea motifs, and then elaborated the score from there” (1987: 90). This contrasts greatly from the previously described insertion of songs into existing gaps in the scripts of Presley movies. The form and style of these songs were motivated by the need to maximize sales of the accompanying soundtrack album and the assumption of Parker and Wallis that the repetition of a particular structure, including the composition of the body of songs included, would ensure a film’s popularity. As a result, repetition and variation of an individual song is almost non-existent, the title song of *Girls! Girls! Girls!* being a rare exception, because the film needed to contain enough songs to fill the soundtrack album. Consequently individual songs are incapable of functioning as leitmotifs. This is also true of the use of songs collectively to promote a theme, since, as Leiber implies, the assemblage of the songs as a body is motivated by having the appropriate selection of styles, “three ballads, one medium-tempo, one up-tempo, and one break blues boogie” (Guralnick 2005: 449), rather than an underlying thematic connection.

In addition to their relationship with Gorbman's principles, there are also functions performed by songs which are specific to popular music, as summarized by Smith, present within Presley's material.

Denoting Time Periods.

Whilst it would not have been the intention at the time, from an historical point of view the inclusion of contemporary popular music within Presley's films categorize them as representations of the late 1950s and early 1960s, since although his film career extended beyond this period it is during this heyday, prior to the emergence of the Beatles, that his style of music was the dominant force. The style of music and use of instruments would aid audience recognition, but above all it would be recognition of Presley's voice and his songs which would impart a strong association with the period encompassing his film career. The strength of this ability of popular music, alone, to denote specific time periods can be illustrated by contrasting Presley's songs with the remainder of the musical score contained within his films, which consisted of short orchestral pieces, and which, if taken in isolation, would be incapable of replicating this function of the popular music since there is nothing within its structure or performance which strengthens an audience connection with a specific period. But this identification with the 1950s is only possible retrospectively and it would not be until the 1970s that film deliberately associated rock 'n' roll with earlier decades. Therefore although Presley's movies could be regarded as performing this function now this would not have been the case at their time of release.

Authorial Expressivity.

Given the intentional simplicity of each film's narrative, coupled with the fact that it is the character played by Presley who performs the songs, which are largely in the form of performance or lip-synching modes or an expression of his characters' thoughts, actions or feelings, there is no scope for authorial expressivity. Even on the occasion when the link between performer and performance is severed when "They Remind Me Too Much of You" is included non-diegetically, the visual presence of Mike sat on the monorail which accompanies the song ensures that it is identified as representing his point of view, rather than a view of the author of which he may be unaware.

Lyrics Give Voice to Feelings Unclear from the Visuals.

As with authorial expressivity, this is not generally the case as the songs are accompanied by the image of Presley singing them. Therefore, the lyrics support the visuals as both are representative of the character's feelings. For example, when Mike sings "I'm Falling in Love" the song title, its ballad style and its lyrics complement, rather than clarify, the visual image of Mike and Diane sharing a romantic dinner and falling in love. Again, it is only when Mike is released from the constraints of performing or lip-synching a song as it is heard in the "They Remind Me Too Much of You" sequence that his actions can be regarded as more ambiguous, with the music providing the clarity through its lyrics. But, even in this case it could be argued that Mike's thoughts are reasonably clear even without the accompanying music and that its inclusion in lip-synch mode may have caused further confusion as it would have been Sue Lin who is physically present whilst he sang a song about Diane, who is absent from the scene.

Inter-textual, Extra-textual and Allusional Use.

As songs were inserted into Presley's film at pre-determined points it was appropriate form (ballad, dance etc.), rather than specific lyrics, which would take precedence. Additionally since different teams of songwriters competed to have their songs chosen, their lack of direct involvement with the film would have removed the ability to include inter-textual or extra-textual meaning within the songs. Furthermore, since all songs are sung by Presley's character and accompanied by his visual image it is not possible to allude to additional meaning via the performer of an individual song.

By categorizing examples with reference to the work of Gorbman and Smith, it can be deduced that although the popular music within the films of Presley did perform a variety of functions, they did not mark a phase of development in this area as the format of these films, including the manner in which music was included, increasingly grew to resemble that of the classic American musicals which had preceded them, rather than evolving into something new and original. Besides, in comparison to his initial films, such as *Jailhouse Rock* and *King Creole*, which address harder-hitting issues, such as incarceration for man-slaughter and delinquency, by 1960 Elvis' movies had retreated back from the controversial elements of rock 'n' roll to an escapist narrative made up of inoffensive characters and music of a style more akin to their musical predecessors. In doing so they increasingly lost their connection with anything new and revolutionary.

During this phase influential personnel, such as managers, producers and directors, and in the case of Elvis' British counterpart, Cliff Richard, the artist himself, all

played significant roles in this resistance to change and it was this lack of a desire to challenge existing methods of introducing a piece of music, such as the audio dissolve and stage performance, which consequently restricted innovation in popular music function. Added to this, the employment of Hollywood veterans, such as Norman Taurog, who was in his late sixties, with failing eyesight and nearing retirement when he directed Presley's final film, ensured a lack of change, since there is no respect in which he could be regarded as an innovator at this point in his career, but rather an advocate of the traditions of the classic American musicals of the past.

So, although this phase marked the birth of popular music, it did not signal the dawn of the development of its functionality in film, owing to the unswerving compliance to the generic structure of the classic American musical. In particular, the combination of popular music accompanied by images of lip-synching and performance was consistently maintained.

It was only when the adherence to these conventions was subsequently defied by more forward-thinking musical artists and a new generation of film directors, that innovation and development within the field of music functionality were enabled.

CHAPTER 2

THE BRITISH INVASION PHASE: *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT*

This chapter aims to identify the causes of a perceived gap which opened in the pop-musical market during the first half of the 1960s and the reasons why it was that innovative British films of this genre, beginning with *A Hard Day's Night*, were most successful in filling this void. It will then consider the specific influences of contemporary British film, music and comedy which contributed to the ground-breaking format of the Beatles' movie debut. This will be followed by a close textual analysis of *A Hard Day's Night*, examining how this originality extended to the musical sequences of this film. This analysis will also demonstrate the effect of factors connected to the British Invasion upon the expansion of popular music's functional capabilities in comparison to its pop-musical predecessors.

From the previous chapter it is evident that the decision made by those influencing the films of Cliff Richard and Elvis Presley to broaden their appeal to family audiences was largely motivated by a desire to minimize commercial risk by targeting an audience from as wide a range of people as possible. It was further driven by the belief of many, including the managers of Presley and Richard, that the attraction of popular music was a short-lived fad which would fade in time. The effect of this upon these films was a return in format to something more akin to the classic American musicals of the 1940s and early 1950s including a dilution of the rock and roll influences upon the songs they contained. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, a consequence of this reversion was a stifling of innovation both in the presentation of popular music within film and of its functional abilities.

But the view that the careers of popular musicians could best be enhanced and prolonged by a softening of star image and musical style, and the subsequent changes it spawned, failed to acknowledge the continuing significance of the growth in the disposable income, and the alterations to the spending habits, of teenagers, as they grew into an increasingly significant demographic. By the end of the 1950s there was growing evidence that young adults were developing into an important sector of the consumerist society in both the UK and the US.

Confirmation of this trend in the UK is contained within Mark Abrams' *Teenage Consumer Spending in 1959* (1961). In this paper Abrams examines the spending habits of 'teenagers', (in reality, those aged between 15 and 25), who were unmarried and earning a wage. He discovered that after paying for food and lodgings, disposable income averaged 71s 6d for males and 54s for females, and then goes on to conclude that, after accounting for savings, this amounted to £830 million or 5.3% of total spending at this time.

As a demographic, this group represented 13% of the adult population at the time, but contributed only just over 5% to total spending. So, on first inspection 'teenagers' may not appear an especially significant group from a consumerist viewpoint. This finding would, therefore, seem to support the decision of those influencing the pop-musical market to widen the target audience for the films of Presley and Richard from primarily teenagers to a broader family base, given that older people had higher earnings. However, such a judgment fails to take account of two significant factors.

Firstly, the disposable income of the 'teenage' sector, and consequently the spending, was growing more quickly than that of older age groups. This was because their total income was growing faster and they had fewer financial commitments. Therefore, comparably, 'teenagers' were becoming more important to the consumerist market. Secondly, because 'teenage' spending was concentrated on particular categories, their significance as consumers in certain areas was disproportionately high. As an illustration of this, Abrams' findings indicate that 'teenagers' accounted for over 37% of total consumer spending on "bicycles, motor cycles etc." (Table 1: 1961), in part reflecting the importance of different forms of two-wheel transport to both the mods and rockers cultural movements which were embraced by sections of the youth community at this time.

Even more relevant to the topics of film and popular music covered by this thesis, Abrams also found that 'teenage' spending on records, record players and associated products contributed 42.5% to total consumer spending on these goods and that spent on cinema admissions contributed 28.2%, both significantly in excess of the 13% which would have been representative for this demographic and the 5.3% which would have been in line with their overall spending levels. Teenagers were therefore becoming vital to the prosperity of the film and music industries.

It should be noted there are shortcomings with Abrams' study on teenage spending in 1959. It does not state the size of the sample or the region or regions from which they were selected, and, as a result, it is possible the findings may not be truly representative of the UK as a whole. However, as Donnelly argues, although this research "probably exaggerated the reach of affluence among young Britons at this

time ... their growing economic power was undeniable and it was to become one of the decade's key cultural determinants" (2005: 35).

This growth in teenage consumerism was replicated in the U.S. as endorsed by Palladino's assessment that by 1957 teenagers had become "the nation's most exciting new consumer market" (1996: 175). She goes on to expand on how this trend continued into the following decade and reveals its impact on popular music and film.

There were 22 million teenagers in 1964, and their numbers were increasing three times as fast as the overall population ... teenagers comprised a \$12 billion consumer market and spent \$13 billion of their parents' money, too. The group spent about \$100 million a year on records ... and purchased more than half of all the soft drinks and movie tickets sold nationwide.

(1996: 195)

Consequently, although teenage films, such as *Blackboard Jungle* with its depiction of high-school gang violence, accompanied by the rock 'n' roll song, "Rock Around the Clock", attracted opposition in some quarters, including "Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver [who] used the movie as a negative symbol of what integrated schools would become" (Walker 2009: 1912), as Palladino points out "corporate America saw a chance to make money from rock 'n' roll, and money, as American teenagers were learning every day, changed everything" (1996: 127). Therefore, because of their spending power, the influence of teenagers, as film and popular music consumers, often outweighed that of those opposed to their tastes, in the eyes of the record and movie producers.

This stage of the continuing establishment of the expanding youth market at the start of the Sixties coincided with a period during which the existing popular

musicians, who dominated film at the time (i.e. Presley and Richard), were increasingly distancing themselves from appealing exclusively to this group. Rock 'n' roll was in, what Hebdige refers to as "the process of recuperation [via] the conversion of sub-cultural signs (dress, music etc.) into mass-produced objects" (1979: 94) as it was absorbed into conventional popular culture. Similarly, the pop-musical had been transformed from a subversive source of threat and moral panic, which is evident from newspaper reports at the time of the release of the earliest examples, such as *Blackboard Jungle* and some of the Elvis pre-conscription movies, to "a diverting spectacle within the dominant mythology" (Hebdige 1979: 94), in the form of the formulaic pop-musicals, such as *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World's Fair*, referred to in the previous chapter. In the case of the songs within Presley's films, Philo substantiates how this transformation developed.

Indicatively, the addition of strings and smooth backing vocals to many of Elvis Presley's early recordings for major label RCA-Victor also apparently signalled rock 'n' roll's journey to the very heart of pop mainstream. The distance and difference between "Heartbreak Hotel" (1956) and "Wooden Heart" (1961) seemed to demonstrate not only that Elvis had been de-fanged but that the threat and promise he and his music symbolized had been well and truly nullified.

(2014: 74)

Since these songs formed part of the film's soundtrack, as well as musically, this development created a gap within film production, an opportunity to commercially exploit new forms of popular music via this medium, which appealed specifically to teenage consumers. Just as Elvis Presley's popularity with teenagers had grown out of his initial divisive image and music, the continual dilution and subsequent wider acceptance of these facets had created a commercial opportunity for a second

generation of new, controversial, popular musicians to exploit the teenage market by challenging the now more broadly accepted conventions of existing pop-musicals on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the aforementioned Elvis Presley examples and Cliff Richard's *Summer Holiday* (Peter Yates, UK, 1963) and *Wonderful Life* (Sidney J. Furie, UK, 1964).

However, although this explanation establishes a number of salient reasons for the existence of an opportunity for new, contemporary popular music to be promoted via film at this time, it does not fully account for why this void was filled by representatives of the 'British Invasion', in the form of the Beatles, and their film, *A Hard Day's Night*. Were there factors, specific to the film and music industries at this time, which enabled the production of a British, rather than an American film? Furthermore, whilst it is clear that the Beatles' popularity made them obvious candidates for exploitation through the medium of film in the U.K., was the band's inclusion the only explanation for the transatlantic popularity of this British film? Also, were there particular reasons why the group chose to use this film, in particular, as a vehicle? Finally, and most important to fulfilling the aims of this thesis, were there elements particular to the film's national identity and the Beatles' willingness to appear in it which set it apart from earlier pop-musicals and subsequently contributed to the film's innovative use of a number of its songs?

As a British band appearing in the U.S., the clean-cut, smartly-dressed, articulate Beatles represented a gentler, more acceptable image of rock 'n' roll than that of the more overtly sexual, surly, long-haired Elvis Presley at the beginning of his career. Palladino claims "They could easily 'pass' in the middle-class world. They

may have stirred up the same kind of hysteria that Elvis did in the 1950s but their message was crafted for sheltered suburban teens ... the Beatles drew their fans from affluent teenagers , kids who wanted to be rebels but not “greasers”” (1996: 196). But in spite of this cleaner image they were still seen as rebellious and revolutionary by this section of American youth, and, consequently, were also regarded as a challenge to the music and culture of their parents. Their Liverpudlian accents and quick-witted, surreal sense of humour would have further contributed to this perception of a group which challenged accepted norms of belief and authority, on both sides of the Atlantic. But, simultaneously, as this watered-down rebelliousness appealed to the youth of the American middle-classes, the Beatles tapped in to a wealthy financial source which contributed to their commercial success.

As a result of the popularity of the aforementioned aspects of the band’s ‘Britishness’ in the US, their appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* was followed two weeks later by that of another band from the UK, The Dave Clark Five. This marked the beginning of, what has become known as, ‘The British Invasion’, a period of the mid 1960s during which an increasing number of British popular music acts, such as The Kinks, The Rolling Stones and The Who, gained popularity and commercial success in the US.

For five years from 1964 to 1969, the American pop, fashion and film scenes were inundated and almost overpowered by British acts, designers and actors. Pop acts who barely registered in the British charts in that time were scoring top 10 hits Stateside... *Time* magazine, that international clarion of all things American, put Swinging London on its cover. Oscars went to a string of British actors, directors and films.

(Miles 2009: 8)

From Miles' description of the British Invasion it is clear this transatlantic success was not limited to popular music. At the same time British films were also attracting both larger audiences and critical acclaim in the US. There were commercial successes in this field prior to the release of *A Hard Day's Night*, including *Tom Jones* (Tony Richardson, UK, 1963), an irreverent comedy set in the eighteenth century. The transatlantic popularity of 'Britishness' is evidenced within this film, which achieved \$17.5 million in rentals income, through the prominence of history, class-system, costume, humour, settings and accents indigenous to the UK. Furthermore, as was later to prove the case with *A Hard Day's Night*, the employment of a young director, in this case Tony Richardson, who as part of the British 'New Wave' had developed his craft away from the major Hollywood studios, resulted in American, as well as British, audiences being introduced to unfamiliar and innovative techniques, such as the introduction of a narrator during key scenes and characters speaking directly to the camera.

But, it is possible that films such as *Tom Jones* would not have been produced had it not been for a further enabling factor in the rise in the popularity of British films on both sides of the Atlantic at this time. This was the introduction of the Eady Levy, which became statutory in 1957. This levy was intended as a financial incentive for producers to invest into a film industry which, at this time, was in serious decline, due largely to the advent of widespread television ownership. As Street explains "The idea was to create a production fund from a levy on cinema tickets which would be distributed to British producers on the basis of box-office takings. The most successful British films would, therefore, be the major beneficiaries." (2009:

19). But in reality, it was the American studios producing in the UK, rather than their British counterparts, who received the majority of the funding. "During the 1960s American investment reached an unprecedented level, enabling films registered as 'British' to earn large amounts at the American box-office." (Street 2002: 11). Like *Tom Jones*, *A Hard Day's Night* is an example of a film which fell into this category through the Hollywood studio, United Artists, employing an independent American producer, Walter Shenson, who had experience of making films in Britain which also proved commercially successful in the USA.

However, in the case of *A Hard Day's Night*, the Eady Levy was not the only financial motive behind production. United Artists had been aware that the Beatles' existing contract with EMI failed to cover music included in film soundtracks. It was the desire to exploit this loophole, with the intention of profiting primarily from sales of the soundtrack albums, that was behind their subsequent offer of a three-film contract. Initially, the films were, therefore, regarded by the studio as being of secondary importance to the music they contained. "United Artists' sole concern was that the Beatles produce original music for the soundtrack" (Glynn 2005: 15). This was a major reason why the film commanded a small budget of £200,000 and an extremely short shooting schedule of seven weeks. Another was the studio's desire to have the film released as cheaply and quickly as possible, owing to its awareness of the possibility that the Beatles' popularity may decrease as rapidly as it had risen. As Glynn observes, "in its conception, the greatest British pop-musical was akin [to] ... a low-budget exploitation movie to milk the latest brief musical craze for all it was worth" (2005: 9).

This hurried approach clearly resembled that of the production of Elvis Presley's movies. But, in the case of *A Hard Day's Night*, in spite of these strict financial and temporal restrictions, there were positives to be drawn by the producer, Walter Shenson, from the lack of studio interference in the film. It allowed him a greater freedom in the selection of a director and the style of the film and, perversely, for these reasons this absence of direct studio involvement in *A Hard Day's Night* may also have contributed directly to the Beatles' willingness to be involved. In an interview, McCartney makes it clear that if they were to appear in a film "it had to be something decent. Something we wouldn't be ashamed of later" (McCartney quoted in Carr 1996: 17). From a musical viewpoint the Beatles were also able to ensure a quality of material that Elvis was not since, as composers, they had control over what songs were included in the film.

In addition, in contrast to the films of Presley, which were under the strict control of his management and directed by their favoured, established studio directors, such as Norman Taurog, further comments attributed to Paul McCartney suggest the Beatles, themselves, had greater influence, as they were allowed input into the selection process of the director. "The only person we could think of was, whoever made that *Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film*? ... Brian [Epstein] discovered it had been made by Richard Lester and so we said, "Well he's all right by us."" (McCartney quoted in Carr 1996: 30)

The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film (Richard Lester and Peter Sellers, UK, 1960) was an eleven-minute, black-and-white comedy with no dialogue. The Beatles' admiration of the film's surreal, visual humour and slapstick style were a

clear indication that the group had no intention of replicating the conventional musical format of the films of Presley and Richard. The choice of Lester as director cemented this detachment, as Sinyard highlights:

Lester was a director in tune with the advanced modernist tendencies of early sixties cinema ... He was a young film-maker of 32 which contrasted strikingly with the Hollywood directors who were making youth pictures at the time and whose average age, as calculated by the critic Robin Bean, was 65.6 years.

(1985: 21-22)

Despite being much younger than his counterparts, Lester had already acquired an important range of experience in both television and film. In television, he had worked on live programmes as a floor manager with CBS, made commercials for ITV, produced the jazz show *Downbeat* and directed a number of surreal comedy programmes including *A Show Called Fred*. Also, he had already directed the previously referred to short film, *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* along with *It's Trad Dad!* (Richard Lester, UK, 1962), a pop-musical in which Helen (Helen Shapiro) and Craig (Craig Douglas) attempt to popularize Trad Jazz in their town, in the face of opposition from older residents. By this time, Lester's C.V. also included experience relating to music, both as a disc jockey and playing guitar and piano in European bars and cafes to fund a tour of the continent in 1955. Furthermore, he had composed the music for *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film*.

From this varied career, Lester was able to draw on his knowledge of specific aspects of television, cinema and music. These included contemporary British cinema, the production of television advertising, live programming and surreal comedy. Aspects of all these elements contribute to *A Hard Day's Night's*

revolutionary, in terms of a pop-musical, combined representation of the 'real' and the 'unreal', "in which its realist aesthetic is punctured by Lester's knockabout surrealism" (Mundy 1999: 171). Also, pertinent to the demands of completing this film, he had previous experience of directing a film with a tight budget and shooting schedule. *It's Trad Dad!* was shot in just four weeks on a budget of only £65,000.

In respect of the 'realist' aesthetic of *A Hard Day's Night* referred to by Mundy, the Beatles play a version of themselves, something which Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard had never previously done in film, in a recreation of a day and a half in their life as a band. During a Scandinavian tour John Lennon had described the Beatles' routine as "a room and a car and a car and a room and a room and a car" (Lennon quoted in Carr 1996: 41), and the film attempts to create a depiction of this experience as the band travel on a train, are ensconced in a hotel, attend a press conference, rehearse and perform in a theatre, before leaving by helicopter with the implication that the whole process will be repeated again and again. To emphasize this feel, Lennon's quote is repeated, in adapted form, by Paul's grandfather (Wilfrid Brambell) when he says "I thought I was going to get a change of scenery and so far I've been in a train and a room and a car and a room and a room and a room".

A further contributory factor to the film's verisimilitude is the influence of certain movements of 1950s and 1960s British cinema upon the director, particularly Free Cinema and British New Wave. This influence is recognized by Philo. "Shooting the movie in black and white gave it a documentary feel and here, Richard Lester was also directly influenced by documentary filmmaking traditions, and in particular

British free cinema" (2014: 89). Free Cinema was a documentary movement which ran from 1956 until 1959. It was co-founded by Karel Reisz, Lindsay Anderson, Tony Richardson and Lorenza Mazzetti, and espoused liberation from commercial considerations and interests, along with the freedom of directors to choose subjects of personal concern. In doing so the movement rejected many of the earlier documentaries, particularly those of Grierson, which Anderson regarded as constrained by government sponsorship and, consequently, saw as political propaganda. Instead, this new generation of documentary directors drew greater influence from the more poetic style of the work of Humphrey Jennings, who challenged the idealized illusion of reality present in Grierson's work, in films such as *Coalface* (Humphrey Jennings, UK, 1935), which combines commentary with the poetry of Auden and the music of Britten to present the miners in an heroic light. Freed from the restrictions of what it saw as political representations of externally selected topics or industries, the founders of Free Cinema were able to address their own concerns which were, as defined by Hillier and Lovell, "A sympathetic interest in communities, whether they were the traditional ones ... or the new, improvised one of the jazz club ... fascination with the newly emerging youth culture ... and respect for the traditional working class" (1972: 172).

Hanley claimss that the effect of this more poetic approach to documenting communities is to create an image "more evocative than obviously instructional" (2011). Hanley also identifies the influence of this effect of Free Cinema within A *Hard Day's Night*.

Like Jennings' documentaries, the effect is to value the creation of a sense of place over advancing the plot ... It became close enough to a cliché that it

would be half copied half parodied in Ringo Starr's lonely walk through the city in *A Hard Day's Night* ... The intended result of this landscape ... is to suggest that the lives of the working class protagonists are inescapably defined and limited by their environment.

(2011)

It is during this sequence, when Ringo absconds from rehearsals, more than any other during the film, that we get a sense of elements of sixties working-class culture including the British pub, children 'bunking off' school and the urban landscape beside the Thames. But, since this style is prevalent only during this single episode, it not only acts to provide an insight into the life of the working class, but also serves as an intermission from the more frenetic banter and music of the remainder of the film. Furthermore, with Ringo in disguise, his mop-top hairstyle concealed under a cap and his Beatles' suit hidden under an old raincoat, it acts as an intermission from the primary commercial consideration of the film which is to promote the Beatles' image and their music. So whilst other sequences, such as when the band escapes to the night club and are seen drinking, smoking, dancing and socializing, also contain influences of Free Cinema within their representation of young people enjoying themselves at a club, the presence of the medley of Beatles' songs heard simultaneously point to the commercial aim to promote this band of famous stars as ordinary people in order to further their star appeal and increase their record sales. By contrast, the sequence following Ringo's adventures escapes this commercial approach, since it is the only occasion during which the music heard is not instantly recognizable as a Beatles song, owing to its orchestral arrangement and lack of vocal content.

Several of the founders of British Free Cinema went on to make feature films which have been identified as belonging to the British 'New Wave' movement, and these, too, were influential on Lester in the making of *A Hard Day's Night*. One of the major traits of films belonging to this movement was to give a voice to the working class, who until then had largely been represented as comic characters or 'salt of the earth' caricatures. Instead, "New wave films were characterised by their warts-and-all representation of abrasive working-class protagonists who swore and drank and exhibited none of the deference towards social authority that had traditionally been the trait of working-class characters in film" (Chapman 2005: 197). Other characteristics of British 'New Wave' are drawn from its French namesake, such as a detailed interest in aspects of everyday life and recognition of ordinary people and their dialects, and also from the Italian Neo-Realism movement, including location shooting, a deeper engagement with characters and a more sympathetic view of the working-class. It is no coincidence that these characteristics emerged in British film at around the same time as the Conservative government under Harold Macmillan (1957-63). Initially during this period, many working-class people may have been slightly more affluent with Macmillan declaring that "most of our people had never had it so good". But by 1961, a wage freeze had been imposed to curb inflation and the economic feel good factor was waning. Also, important to the British 'New Wave' movement, in spite of any financial improvements, the place of the working man or woman within the class structure remained largely unaltered. Some British 'New Wave' films directly address this conflict between the working and middle class. In *Look Back in Anger* (Tony Richardson, UK, 1959), the protagonist, candy-stall proprietor Jimmy Porter (Richard Burton), continually bears

out his grudges toward the middle class, which is represented by his wife Alison (Mary Ure), who in turn shows the gulf between the social classes through her lack of affection for Jimmy's ex-landlady, Ma Tanner (Edith Evans).

Many of these influences of British 'New Wave' films are present throughout *A Hard Day's Night*. Much of the film was shot on location including Marylebone railway station, the Scala theatre, a Mayfair night club and various areas of London such as Notting Hill, Isleworth and the south bank of the Thames. Even though not all the locations are truly authentic, for example Marylebone station is depicted as Liverpool Lime Street for logistical reasons, relying so heavily on location shooting evokes a greater sense of the 'real' urban and rural landscapes of sixties Britain than a studio re-creation could have achieved.

The British 'New Wave' influence is also evident through Lester's focus on the mundane aspects of everyday life for the Beatles. Rather than concentrate solely on the more glamorous features of being pop stars he also includes the duller parts of their routine, such as evenings in hotel rooms answering fan mail, attending press conferences and the sense of boredom whilst filling their time between rehearsal and performance. Indeed, it is the escape from this mundane experience which results in the iconic "Can't Buy Me Love" sequence which will be examined in detail later in this chapter. Again, the inclusion of these everyday events gives the impression of being a more genuine re-creation of popular musicians than the more idealized depiction in the films of Elvis Presley, in which his character is often portrayed as effortlessly combining a singing career with another glamorous job,

such as a racing driver or a pilot, whilst glossing over the more routine elements of both.

The inclusion of a further facet of the 'New Wave' movement, which can be used to illustrate the disparity between the style of *A Hard Day's Night* and that of the contemporary American pop-musicals starring Presley, is the attitude towards dialect. In commenting upon the connections between realism and regional dialect in film Hodson observes that "British 'new wave' cinema of the 1950s and 1960s frequently took Northern working-class heroes as its central subject" (2014: 206). In similar fashion, Shohat and Stam also highlight the importance of dialect: "In many British New Wave films, upper-class English is worn like a coat of arms, an instrument of exclusion, while working-class speech is carried like a stigmata" (1987: 241). By employing Alun Owen, a "Bohemian with working class roots" (Carr 1996: 24), who spent much of his life in Liverpool, Lester was able to fully utilize regional characteristics, such as the Beatles' Scouse accents, along with the notorious humour associated with Liverpool, in a realistic way which maximized the potential of each. However, although recognized by Lester, the importance of this factor was not appreciated by the Hollywood studio, United Artists, who, according to Glynn, "contacted Shenson with instructions to wipe the Beatles' voices from the soundtrack and re-dub them with the more accessible tones of transatlantic professional actors" (2005: 28-9). Shenson stood firm and refused to comply with this demand, but it still acts as an evident demonstration as to why, at this time, innovation in the style of the pop-musical was likely to occur outside of the United States and away from the control of the more conservative Hollywood studios.

Also, as is the case with 'New Wave' films such as *Look Back in Anger*, it is clear that *A Hard Day's Night* addresses structures of class and social authority with a view more sympathetic to those oppressed. Lester made it clear this was his intention when he stated "You must accept that this is a film based on a class society" (Lester quoted in Di Franco 1977: 5). So whilst not replicating the abrasive, swearing, drinking protagonists of many of the British 'New Wave' films, the adaptations of John, Paul, George and Ringo, in their own quick-witted way, do refuse to completely defer to social authority.

At this point it is important to differentiate between the on-screen versions of the individual members of the Beatles and those that existed outside the world of the film. The characters in the films are representations of the star image of the Beatles and its individual members. Placing the Beatles in a film adds an additional element of fantasy to this already artificially constructed image, enabling fictional situations to be created which can more effectively stress individual traits of their star persona, such as a sense of camaraderie between them as the others rescue Ringo from the police station and make their escape in a comic chase sequence.

Therefore, members of the Beatles were at once both stars and real people. Dyer provides clarification of this differentiation. "Stars are, like characters in stories, representations of people... However, unlike characters in stories, stars are also real people." (1992: 22). The John, Paul, George and Ringo in *A Hard Day's Night* support this position as they are simultaneously characters in a film, which contribute to their star images as representations of people, and real individuals

who are acting as these characters. Dyer also explains it is not the real people who are revealed to film audiences, but instead their star image.

What I think is the case, however, is that roles and/or performance of a star in a film were taken as revealing the personality of the star (which then was corroborated by the stories in the magazines, etc.). What was only sometimes glimpsed and seldom brought out by ... the stars was that that personality was itself a construction known and expressed only through films, stories, publicity etc.

(1992: 22-3)

As an illustration of Dyer's point, in *A Hard Day's Night* the Beatles are represented as working-class heroes, but, as Glynn points out, "it needs a broad definition of 'working class' to include any of the quartet other than Ringo" and "the Beatles' education and wealth meant they were now leaving those environs faster than a speeding train" (2005:35). It is the mock-documentary style of the film, enhanced by the Beatles playing a version of themselves, rather than a group of other actors filling these roles, which intentionally creates the impression of the 'real' John, Paul, George and Ringo as being a group of everyday, working-class lads. It is this representation which strengthens the image of them as an 'ordinary' group of young people oppressed and controlled by the social authority of other characters in the film. However, even if it were to be accepted that the Beatles' characters within the film are depictions of the 'real', there remains a problematic inconsistency within the film between their portrayal as a group of ordinary working-class lads and their extraordinary life as pop superstars, with the influence, freedom, wealth and adulation which that entails. Dyer recognizes this inconsistency, stating "One of the problems in coming to grips with the phenomenon of stardom is the extreme ambiguity/contradiction ... concerning the

stars-as-ordinary and the star-as-special" (1992:49). This ordinary/extraordinary paradox will be re-addressed later in this chapter as, on occasions, it is also influential upon the ways in which the film's songs are presented.

With regards to this depiction of the band as a group of working-class individuals, there are a number of examples of this throughout the film. Two of these take place after they board the train from Liverpool to London and whilst they are playing in the field at the end of the first "Can't Buy Me Love" sequence. In the first instance, they are joined in their train compartment by a city gent (Richard Vernon). He shuts the window, and despite their protestations refuses to re-open it. Immediately, John shows a mocking lack of deference by fluttering his eyelids towards the man. Ringo then turns on his radio, which the gent immediately switches off. On both occasions he defends his actions by stating he is within his rights. On the second occasion Paul points out there are four of them so their rights should count for more. He also uses the phrase "Up the workers" to position the Beatles as belonging to the oppressed majority of the working-class, battling against the powerful minority of the middle-class establishment, represented by the city gent with his bowler hat, briefcase and broadsheet newspaper. The mocking from John continues when he asks the man to give him a kiss, and when the gent points out "I fought the war for your sort", Ringo retorts "I bet you're sorry you won". Eventually, realizing they cannot change the old man's views, they leave the compartment. But, they continue to tease him from outside by repeatedly shouting "Hey Mister, can we have our ball back?" to show their feelings of disdain

towards the way in which they are treated like children by the social class and generation this man represents.

The second example of conflict with social authority involves a much shorter exchange. At the close of the first “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequence, as the song ends, the groundsman approaches the Beatles and says “I suppose you realise this is private property?” George’s reply of “Sorry we hurt your field Mister” again shows a lack of deference for social authority through ridiculing its power to prevent people playing in an open space intended for leisure pursuits.

However, in both these cases there is no aggressive resistance to authority as is present in ‘New Wave’ films such as *Look Back In Anger*, for instance when Jimmy pushes over Cliff (Gary Raymond) and Alison, causing Alison to burn her arm on an iron, during a rant about her middle-class family. Instead, the rebelliousness of the Beatles is confined to a non-threatening, cheerful, sharp wit and an eventual compliance, both in leaving the city gent in peace in his train compartment and leaving the field as instructed by the groundsman. Furthermore, although positioned as oppressed, this cannot be considered a true representation of the Beatles’ place within the social system. “Wherever we place the Beatles in Britain’s class structure, they are the antithesis of the downtrodden working man and woman that Jack Clayton, Lindsay Anderson, John Schlesinger and Tony Richardson had depicted”. (Glynn 2005: 36). This is a further example of an ordinary/extraordinary contradiction within the image of the Beatles.

Although Lester is influenced in many ways by elements of British Free Cinema and British New Wave, such as location shooting, a focus on the mundane aspects of

life, addressing class structure and the inclusion of local dialects, the mood of *A Hard Day's Night* is much more light-hearted and optimistic. This tone is essential, as it is vital for the Beatles to be seen as likeable characters if the film is to fulfil its purpose as a star vehicle promoting the band and their music. Therefore, in the case of this film, as opposed to British New Wave films such as *Look Back in Anger*, the period of the early sixties is generally viewed in a more positive light with the Beatles being seen as “gentle revolutionaries” (Philo 2014: 86). One of the primary contributory factors in the film's success in evoking this more positive feel is through the inclusion of the Beatles' music which is largely upbeat and cheerful. Another is that it not only engages with a representation of the mundane aspects of the 'real', as portrayed in Free Cinema and New Wave films, but also with the 'unreal' in the form of the surreal, and in particular, surreal humour.

As briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, by the time he directed *A Hard Day's Night*, Lester already possessed experience relating to working with surreal humour, both in television and film. In spite of his first venture into this sphere, *The Dick Lester Show*, being axed after one episode, it attracted the interest of Peter Sellers who invited him to work on transferring the Goon's brand of this genre from radio to television. As a result, Lester directed *The Idiot's Weekly Price 2d* (1956), *A Show Called Fred* (1956) and *Son of Fred* (1956). As a side project he also directed the aforementioned *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* starring Sellers and Spike Milligan, which, as previously described, was the film which drew the attention of the Beatles to Lester's work. Some of the humorous moments in *A Hard Day's Night*, such as the two “Can't Buy Me Love” sequences, are stylistically

based upon this earlier short, silent film as Lester explains: “One [of the connections] was that I had always, in comedy, found visual humour taking preference over verbal” (Lester quoted in Carr 1996: 21). A pop-musical can be regarded as an effective vehicle for silent humour as songs can be used as the aural component since dialogue is not required when the comedy is purely visual.

A Hard Day's Night is filled with moments of visual, surreal humour. These include the conclusion of the aforementioned sequence involving the city gent on the train. After the Beatles are seen banging on the compartment door shouting “Can we have our ball back”, they suddenly, incomprehensibly appear outside, chasing the moving train on foot and on bicycle, repeating their request to have their ball back. A further instance of this mode of comedy occurs in a later scene in their hotel when John disappears beneath the soapy surface of his bath, with just his hat remaining when it is drained, only to inexplicably reappear behind a bewildered Norm (Norman Rossington).

One of the effects of episodes such as these was to add to the film's comedic feel, whilst still maintaining its British New Wave influences. In each of these examples it is those in authority, the city gent and the Beatles' manager, who represent the bewildered victims of these surreal events. So, although the film representations of the young, working-class Beatles are ultimately compliant to authority, they use their intellect to reveal that, on occasions, in spite of their youth and their humble background, they can outwit those who regard themselves as superior, in a social and cultural sense.

This style of humour was not wholly ground-breaking as it had already begun to gain a degree of transatlantic recognition prior to the release of *A Hard Day's Night*, carrying out its own mini British invasion. *Beyond the Fringe* was a stage revue showcasing satirical and surreal humour, written and performed by Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller, which successfully made the transition from London to New York's Broadway, where it played from 1962 until 1964. The significance of this revue's popularity in New York to the American appreciation of the humour of *A Hard Day's Night* is also recognized by Philo:

The unexpected Broadway success in 1962 of the Oxbridge satirical review *Beyond the Fringe* could well be viewed as a sign of things to come. Its mix of irreverence, satire and surrealism arguably prepared the ground for one of the Beatles' key qualities – specifically, the refreshing humor and wit that would be communicated through their music, their jousting with the press and of course through the movie *A Hard Day's Night*

(2014: 70)

So, from the above summary, it can be seen that Lester utilized his previous experience to combine elements of the different forms of entertainment which were, at the time 'invading' America. He blended the 'real' British cultural landscape of the New Wave film Free Cinema, the 'unreal' of the surrealist humour of *Beyond the Fringe* and the fashion, wit, charm, dialect and, most importantly, songs of the latest phenomenon in popular music, the Beatles, to create a revolutionary pop-musical.

The importance of the concept of the paradoxical representations within this film of both the 'real' and the 'unreal', and of the Beatles as simultaneously an ordinary and extraordinary group of people, is not limited to its impact on altering the

aesthetic of the pop-musical. It also extends to the innovative presentation of popular music within this film genre.

In relation to the film's music, in addressing the first of these apparent contradictions, generally, the 'real' is denoted by the diegetic song sequences and the 'unreal' by those accompanied by non-diegetic songs. The sequences of the film containing diegetic music can also be divided into two categories - those which show the Beatles perform, either in rehearsals or during the live show, and those during which music is played on audio equipment.

A novel technique employed by Lester for the Beatles' performances is the use of multiple camera shoots. Again, Lester drew upon his previous experience in appreciating the benefits of this. Since, like *a Hard Day's Night*, *It's Trad Dad!* needed to be shot to a very tight schedule, he was already aware of the practical advantages of employing multiple cameras simultaneously. As Carr explains: "A three-camera shoot may have presented numerous technical difficulties But taking into account the kind of schedule he was given, it was the only feasible way of shooting that amount of footage in any given day" (1996: 23).

However, practical considerations were not the sole motivation behind the employment of this technique. Multiple-camera shoots also expanded artistic possibilities, by capturing performance from an increased variety of angles and distances. A single shoot could effectively contain a wide shot of the whole band accompanied by individual images of John, Paul, George and Ringo whilst including close-ups of guitar-strumming hands or drum-beating feet and also acknowledging the presence of both a screaming audience and a television production crew.

This effect contributes to a greater sense of the 'real' during performance sequences as it enables a more comprehensive representation through recognizing details which may have been omitted otherwise. For example, by shooting from different multiple angles during the "If I Fell" sequence we not only see the band, but also the production crew, cleaners and stage hands working both in front of and behind the Beatles as they rehearse. In addition, at one point the view of the band is obscured by somebody walking in front of the camera to add to this awareness of the presence of these people. This gives a sense of the imperfections of rehearsals, with the intention of adding realism, by more comprehensively recreating an image of live performance through including all elements of this process, including those of preparation of the venue and dummy runs by the performer.

Multiple-camera shoots are also utilized to enhance realism by enabling recognition of aspects of television production during performance, via an assortment of images of relevant equipment and personnel, throughout a number of musical sequences. At the beginning of "And I Love Her", the song is introduced via the reality of television when the director (Victor Spinetti) counts the band in from his booth. The band's image is then seen, in various guises, on a row of monitors in front of him. A subsequent shot shows a camera and large monitor in front of them as they perform. Just as the sequence begins, it ends with the voice of the director from the booth, this time thanking them. To reveal further equipment, during the "I'm Happy Just to Dance with You" sequence the Beatles, in part, are seen via the screens on the cameras filming the rehearsal.

Finally, multiple cameras are used during the culminating concert sequence to show all these facets along with the effect of the inclusion of a frantic, screaming audience, again shot from a number of angles and distances. These include one from the back of the theatre behind the audience and distant from the stage to give a more realistic version of being in the crowd, rather than an idealized impression of being in the perfect position with an uninterrupted view, as was consistently the case when Elvis' characters performed.

Consequently, from the point of view of giving a 'real' perception of these musical performances, Lester's use of multiple-camera shoots provides numerous perspectives of what is occurring during rehearsals and the concert itself to provide a much fuller vision of events than those portrayed in earlier and contemporary pop-musicals, which did not exploit this technique. For example, many of the love songs in films starring Presley relied upon a simpler shot/reverse-shot approach, focussing solely upon Presley's character and his love interest and essentially ignoring any other action around them.

As these diegetic performances within *A Hard Day's Night* are presented in a style which contributes to the documentary feel of the film, so the non-diegetic music adds to the sense of the surreal, particularly on the first occasion when "Can't Buy Me Love" is heard as the Beatles escape the theatre to 'run, jump and stand still' in an adjacent field in a scene heavily influenced by Lester's earlier short film.

In the previous chapter it was established that this sequence, accompanied by "Can't Buy Me Love", was not the first example of the use of a non-diegetic pop song in a mainstream Hollywood or British film. However, as explained therein,

when “They Remind Me Too Much of You” is used non-diegetically in *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, there is little exploitation of the freeing-up of the accompanying visual image. Instead, Elvis Presley’s character just sits, largely motionless, looking thoughtful. By contrast, the energy portrayed within the images which accompany the first use of “Can’t Buy Me Love” illustrates how different effects, shooting distances and camera angles can be exploited when John, Paul, George and Ringo are liberated from the bond of synchronized performance.

From the start of the song, as the Beatles descend the fire escape, their movements are shot from various unusual angles including directly beneath the grilles of the steps. This more imaginative approach, which includes a shot in which their heads are cropped from the frame, is only made possible through the song’s disconnection from the diegesis, thereby eliminating the need to accompany the song with the visual image of performance. The Beatles no longer need to be seen lip-synching the words and, consequently, the face, and particularly movement of the mouth, does not have to be clearly visible. As a result, although their physical actions maintain rhythmic co-ordination with the tempo of the song, in a visual sense, they are distanced from musical performance. Similarly, parts of the sequence consist of long shots, including aerial shots which are occasionally so long that it is difficult to identify each of the individual band members. As with the use of unusual angles, this technique is more appropriate to the use of non-diegetic music since it, too, renders the singer’s face redundant. This development allows for popular music to be included in a manner more akin to that sometimes employed by a film score, supporting the rhythm of visual actions rather than enslaving the

inclusion of songs to a representation of their performance. Therefore, non-diegetic music enables greater directorial creativity than its diegetic counterpart since it does not need to include a visual representation of the source of the music. In the case of *A Hard Day's Night* "Lester allowed the pop song the opportunity to work in a similar manner to that of conventional incidental music, as an abstract entity capable of emotionally punctuating action which is not tied to performance" (Neaverson 2000: 154).

This abstract entity, referred to by Neaverson, supports surreal elements in keeping with those already identified. The removal of the need for visual synchronization of performance and song allowed the director to play with the speed at which the image is filmed. So, on occasions, such as when the Beatles first run onto the field, the film is speeded up. On others, such as when John, Paul and George are seen individually jumping from a great height, the film is in slow motion.

On the second occasion on which "Can't Buy Me Love" is heard it also accompanies a surreal interlude from the narrative. John, Paul and George rush to the police station to rescue Ringo. A chase ensues which regularly passes a car thief, who, eventually succeeds in stealing a vehicle only to be ordered by a policeman to join the pursuit. So, although rescuing Ringo is relevant to the narrative, the subsequent chase instead acts more as a comic, surreal intermission. There is no explanation as to why the Beatles entering the police station leads to them being chased, Keystone-Kop-style by an ever-increasing number of policemen. There is no explanation why Ringo is able to just wander out of the station nonchalantly after having been arrested. There is no explanation why the Beatles run back into the

police station whilst they are being pursued by the police. Finally, there is no explanation why, when the Beatles return to the theatre, they are not followed inside by the policemen. Instead, they seem to simply vanish, their disappearance marking the end of this interlude and the return to the primary narrative of the band preparing to perform a televised concert. As in the first appearance of “Can’t Buy Me Love”, non-diegetic use of the song allows the Beatles to engage in a wacky, silent-comedy style chase, on this occasion intertwined with the running gag involving the car thief, because the need for a visual image of the band performing or lip-synching is removed. It is likely these interludes containing non-diegetic music were drawn from Lester’s experience in commercial television, acting as a breach from the narrative in a similar manner to advert breaks in the middle of a television show.

In addition to the purely diegetic and non-diegetic use of songs, there is an additional musical sequence, aboard the train, which single-handedly embraces the ‘real’- ‘unreal’ paradox which runs throughout the film, through using both techniques within a single song. The Beatles join Paul’s grandfather, who has been banished to the caged, goods car. They begin playing a game of cards which signals the start of the song “I Should Have Known Better”. The song seems non-diegetic, as no musical source is visible, but a surreal uncertainty is created by the Beatles’ actions. George begins to sway and Ringo is shaking his head, both in time to the music. This vagueness is reinforced when Paul lip-synchs the words “Everything that you do” as they are heard in the song. The bizarre style of this opening sequence culminates when “the boys’ cards are suddenly – surreally – transformed into

musical instruments, only to return to a hand of cards as the song enters its final chorus” (Glynn 2005: 68). In contrast to the beginning and the end of the sequence, during the middle, diegetic section the song is accompanied by a ‘real’ Beatles performance in a style consistent with other songs performed by the group during the film, albeit in the unusual location of a goods carriage on a train.

The diegetic uncertainty at the beginning and the switch mid-song from non-diegetic to diegetic and back again can be regarded as an aural break of continuity which complements the other surreal elements of the film. It illustrates that a pop song within a film is not bounded by specific associated visual images, but, instead, only by the beginning and the end of the song. In the same way, “I Should Have Known Better” is not tied to its non-diegetic form throughout simply because it begins in that manner. Within the boundary of beginning and end any blend of visual images may be used, regardless of whether, individually, they support a diegetic or a non-diegetic representation.

As well as encapsulating the ‘real’/‘unreal’ contradiction present throughout the film, this sequence also illustrates the ordinary/extraordinary paradox addressed earlier in this chapter. Through its switch from non-diegetic to diegetic form, within a single song, it is able to combine images of the Beatles as an ordinary group of friends having a game of cards, with an extraordinary pop group, constantly exposed to the public, trapped by the commitments of their fame and separated from their fans as symbolized by the caged compartment of the mail car in which they perform “I Should Have Known Better”. Consequently, in this sequence “the

star is both an ordinary being, present to the fan's ordinary world, and, at the same time, he or she [or they] exists in a separate, extraordinary realm" (Ellis 1991: 301).

This ordinary/extraordinary duality, referred to by Ellis, is also present in another of the musical sequences. When the Beatles abscond from their hotel room to a night club they are seen dancing, drinking, smoking and socialising in the manner you would expect from an ordinary group of young men on a night out. But the music heard belies this impression since, unlike others in the night club, the Beatles are in the extraordinary position of dancing to a collection of their own hit songs.

Conversely, there are also instances during performance in which the band's extraordinary image is punctuated by moments which present them as more ordinary. Generally, a song performed by a film character played by Elvis Presley is idealized in the sense that his looks and moves are unrealistically faultless. But, this is not the case in *A Hard Day's Night*. Minor flaws of movement are included and physical imperfections are acknowledged. When the Beatles are rehearsing "If I Fell" George leans against his guitar amp and accidentally knocks it over, and during the final concert John and Paul are both seen sweating profusely under the stage lights. The perceived message from this is that although they may be adulated stars they retain traits of ordinary people including, albeit very minor, fallibilities and imperfections. But, it is significant that these never extend to the quality of the band's music, which is overdubbed, since this must be heard as faultless to maximise soundtrack sales and maintain their image as adept musicians.

So, it is apparent that the song sequences contribute to these generic characteristics and the themes of *A Hard Day's Night*. At various points they

strengthen both the documentary feel of the film and its surreal comedy, whilst at different times also presenting the Beatles as both pop superstars and a group of ordinary working-class lads. These aims are achieved through the introduction of a number of innovative techniques including the implementation of multiple-camera shoots, the introduction of non-diegetic popular music and the sole use of recorded music as a diegetic source (as opposed to a performer singing over a jukebox as Curley Thompson (Cliff Richard) did in the case of “Living Doll” in *Serious Charge* (Terence Young, UK, 1959)). But, what were the effects of these numerous innovations upon the functional capability of popular music and were there marked advances in comparison to those present in the films of Elvis Presley? Taking each of Gorbman’s principles in turn, these can be assessed as follows:

Invisibility.

One of the distinctions between *A Hard Day’s Night* and the films of Elvis Presley is the former’s absence of lip-synching distanced it from the influences of the classic American musicals. Unlike instances in Presley films in which there are fictitious sources of musical instruments, such as upturned buckets creating the sound of bongo drums in *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and a collection of musical boxes creating a full instrumental backing in *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, the documentary style of many of the musical performance sequences in *A Hard Day’s Night* requires a more realistic representation including an absence of non-diegetic instrumentation. The fact that the performance seen is not the actual source of the song we hear does not affect the interpretation of the performance as authentic since it is governed by conventions of verisimilitude. Also, on both occasions when “Can’t Buy Me Love” is

heard in non-diegetic form, the source of the music adheres to Gorbman's principle of *Invisibility* in that "the physical apparatus of film music like the film's other technical apparatus ... must under most circumstances not be visible on the screen" (Gorbman 1987: 73-4). However, whereas in the majority of cases the application of this principle clarifies the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic songs, there is one exception. The "I Should Have Known Better" sequence on the train breaks the principle by creating a diegetic/non-diegetic uncertainty through the opening bars of the song. But, this is not done by revealing the technical apparatus required to produce non-diegetic music as Gorbman suggests. Instead it is the reversal of this, in that the music acknowledged within the diegesis of the film by various members of the band appears to have no diegetic source. Before the Beatles' instruments magically appear, George, Ringo and Paul move and sing in time to the music, but there is nothing within the diegesis, for example a radio or record player, which causes them to do so. At this point "Lester exposed the manipulations inherent in image-sound juxtapositions, and thereby violated the formal paradigm's essential quest for invisibility" (Ray 1985: 272). However, although this is a clear divergence from this principle of a classical film score, this manipulation is derived from the film's surreal qualities. It is therefore unsurprising that this sequence does not comply with the principle of *Invisibility* since surrealism is absent from the film texts observed by Gorbman. Consequently, it is a break with the existing conventions for the inclusion of music which results in this development rather than an ability which is gained through the inclusion of popular music, as the technique could be replicated using a classical score.

Inaudibility.

Like the films of Presley, *A Hard Day's Night* is both a musical and a vehicle to promote popular music. For this reason, the Beatles' songs are generally privileged in the same way. So, when John, Paul, George and Ringo go to the night club, their conversations, along with all other sounds, are muted so as not to act as an aural distraction from the medley of their songs which are heard at this time. In spite of this being the general rule throughout the film, there are exceptions, occasions when songs do subordinate to other sounds. During the final concert, the screaming of the audience is faded in and out at various points. One possible reason for this is that, in keeping with the conventions of verisimilitude, it adds to the realism of the recreation of live performance. In contrast to the romanticized view of the performances of Elvis' characters in front of perfectly-behaved attentive audiences which remain silent throughout a song, *A Hard Day's Night* illustrates a truer representation of the behaviour of fans. But, there may also be commercial considerations behind the decision to subordinate the songs in this way, as it draws attention to the image of hysterical fans as a component of Beatlemania, helping to convey it as an emerging phenomenon which appeals specifically to younger audiences and thereby acting as a promotional tool for the group's popularity with that demographic.

But, of more relevance to Gorbman's principle of *Inaudibility* is a section of the second "Can't Buy Me Love" sequence. When the Beatles are chased back to the police station, there is a brief exchange during which the police sergeant at the desk (Deryck Guyler) asks John if he is okay as he tries to catch his breath. The

conversation coincides with the instrumental section of the song during which its volume is decreased to “subordinate itself to dialogue” (Gorbman 1987: 73). The lack of vocals at this point is relevant since, even at a low volume, sung words may prove distracting beneath spoken dialogue. It is only when the conversation is over and the chase resumes, that the volume of “Can’t Buy Me Love” is increased to coincide with the resumption of a vocal section of the song. Therefore, this sequence demonstrates an increased similarity to the use of a classical film score in comparison to earlier pop-musicals, as it demonstrates how the volume of a song can be decreased, at appropriate times, to give way to dialogue or other sounds.

Signifier of Emotion.

In respect of signifying emotion, given the film’s generic identity as a pop-musical, the songs within *A Hard Day’s Night* bear more resemblance to those in Presley’s films rather than a classical film score. Furthermore, with regards to the film’s diegetic music, it can be argued that the Beatles’ songs are not primarily intended to signify emotion. Unlike, *Girls! Girls! Girls!* and *It Happened at the World’s Fair*, *A Hard Day’s Night* does not contain a romantic interest. As a result, love songs are not sung directly to another individual to heighten the emotion the performer feels towards that person, as is commonly the case in films starring Presley. Instead, it is the non-diegetic music which more successfully signifies emotion. “Can’t Buy Me Love” accompanies two sequences which both contain energy and humour, through the Beatles’ knockabout antics in the field and the comic police chase as they rescue Ringo. Neaverson supports this view by explaining “the form of the musical sequences was ultimately a by-product of a desire to convey emotion”

(2004: 19). In both cases the use of this upbeat Beatles' song augments, not only, the emotions, but also the continuity and the rhythm of what is seen in a similar manner to a score whose "composers add enthralling music to a chase scene to heighten its excitement" (Gorbman 1987: 79). Therefore, on both occasions when it is heard, this song does resemble a classical score in signifying emotion, but only in a sense limited to the tempo and rhythm of the song. At this point, song lyrics are not used to achieve this principle.

Narrative Cueing.

Referential/ Narrative. In contrast to the classical film scores analyzed by Gorbman, the style and the lyrics of the diegetic songs in *A Hard Day's Night* reveal little about the characters, setting or plot. Rather, with the exception of those heard at the nightclub, they serve as a means of displaying the qualities of the Beatles as performers, both as a group and individually, the latter being achieved via close ups of hands, feet or mouths, highlighting their technical abilities as singers and musicians. Additionally, even though a number of the songs, such as "I Should Have Known Better", are heard more than once and variations of others are heard, such as the solo piano version of "I'm Happy Just to Dance with You" which accompanies the dancers' rehearsal, there appear to be no specific reasons for this repetition/adaptation in relation to supporting the film's narrative.

Of the non-diegetic songs, it is the title track, "A Hard Day's Night", which could be considered most referential as its lyrics reinforce the idea of the Beatles' busy schedule and their desire to escape this, which they achieve, temporarily, when they cavort in the field, but, even with this example it is the title, rather than the

lyrics as a whole, which refer to the narrative since the words sung refer to a romantic connection which is absent from the film's narrative.

Additionally, unlike examples present in Presley's films, the music of *A Hard Day's Night* is not used to represent race through its style or the choice of musical instruments used, though it could be argued that it is used to signify nationality in the form of 'Britishness', supporting the accompanying images of 1960s London. However, the strength of this position is questionable since most of the songs accompany images of rehearsal and performance within an anonymous-looking theatre, rather than those of iconic buildings or scenery, which would have been incorporated if the main intention had been to promote national identity through performance of song.

Connotive. In the previous chapter, it was explained how the "They Remind Me Too Much of You" sequence in *It Happened at the World's Fair*, used the song non-diegetically to connote Mike Edwards' thoughts via the lyrics. By contrast, the non-diegetic use of "Can't Buy Me Love" is used to support visual action through its tempo rather than denote feelings or thoughts through its lyrics. As a result the non-diegetic music cannot be regarded as functioning in a connotative fashion, so in this context there are no clear examples in *A Hard Day's Night* that adhere to this principle of a classical score.

Continuity.

As has already been considered, many of the musical sequences of the film, and particularly the non-diegetic examples, act as surreal interludes from the

verisimilitude of the narrative of a day and a half in the life of the Beatles.

Therefore, the songs function more in line with those of a musical rather than a classical film score. Instead of the music smoothing transitions and filling gaps, the opposite is true. They occupy “a privileged space free from life’s cares” (Altman 1987: 77). Dialogue cues the impending musical sequence. For example, Ringo’s shout of “We’re out!” marks the beginning of a comic musical break from the ‘realities’ of preparing for the live television performance. Similarly, the second “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequence is signalled by the television director stating “They’ve only got twenty minutes” which cues another interlude, in the form of the madcap chase at the police station. At the same time, it can be argued that, self-contained within these sequences, the non-diegetic song does provide continuity which helps to explain why Smith (1998: 159-60) has regarded these as pre-cursors of music videos. But since, in these cases, the song is consciously employed to segment the film, in the form of verisimilitude, followed by a surreal interlude containing “Can’t Buy Me Love”, followed by a return to verisimilitude, it does not contribute to the continuity of a film in the manner of a classical score.

Unity.

As mentioned when considering *Referential Narrative* the song that most strongly reinforces elements of the plot via its lyrics is “A Hard Day’s Night”. It is also the only example of a song whose repeated use contributes to one of the themes of the film. It is first heard over the opening credits as the Beatles rush to catch the train to their next engagement. It is heard again at the end of the film as these actions are repeated, but with a helicopter replacing the train as the mode of transport.

This theme of an ever-repeating treadmill of commitments is supported by the lyrics of “A Hard Day’s Night” and its title which is attributed to Ringo’s description of a particularly long working day when he is reputed to have said “A hard day? Look at that clock. You mean a hard day’s night, don’t you?” (Starr quoted in Carr 1996: 40). So, this is the only song which “aids in the construction of formal and narrative unity” (Gorbman 1987: 73).

Gorbman also states a principle may be violated, providing this is at the service of other principles. By toying with generic uncertainty during the “I Should Have Known Better” sequence on the train, the principle of *Invisiblility* is foregone, initially by character awareness of, what seems, non-diegetic music, followed by the inexplicable materialisation and subsequent disappearance of a musical source, in the form of the Beatles’ instruments. Instead, this unusual presentation of the song is used to help foreground surrealism as a generic component of the film.

Gorbman’s description of *Narrative Cueing* explains how music over the opening titles can be used to define genre (1987: 82), but this example illustrates that any song can fulfil this purpose by acting as an illustration of surrealism in support of the film’s generic identity as a surreal pop-musical.

In relation to the first of the additional functions specific to popular music, identified by Smith and listed in the literature review (Pages 50-1), the music of the Beatles can be regarded as emblematic of the 1960s, in the same way as that of Elvis is representative of the 1950s. In this respect they denote this specific time period. However, in both cases, this view of the decade as a distinct musical period is garnered from an historic perspective so, at the time of release, a more accurate

observation of the film's music may have been that it represented the present, through its inclusion of the latest songs performed by popular music's newest phenomenon. But, whichever of these alternative interpretations is adopted, each demonstrates that the music can denote a specific time.

In addition to specific identity, the music of the Beatles also denotes a particular geographical location. To an American audience, the music was representative of The British Invasion, adding to other elements, such as locations and accents, which help in the identification of the film as British in origin. To a British audience the Beatles and their music represented Liverpool, through their association with the Merseybeat movement which grew out of the city during the early 1960s. Again, this view was supported by the prominence of the Scouse accents and the brand of humour of the characters of John, Paul, George and Ringo in the film.

By contrast, the other functions identified by Smith are largely absent from the music of *A Hard Day's Night*. The songs do not express the authors' views since the majority are about love yet there are no links to romantic relationships within the film's plot. For similar reasons the songs do not function to give voice to feelings and attitudes not made explicit by the film's visuals and dialogue. In the case of the diegetic songs, as most are included in performance mode, they function more as promotions for the Beatles' music and their image, aiding record and merchandise sales. In the case of the non-diegetic "Can't Buy Me Love", the song is used as a rhythmic support of the energy of the actions seen rather than a vocal expression of unspoken feelings. It could be argued that the title song from the film is an expression of emotion, a declaration of dissatisfaction with their workload.

However, as previously mentioned, the lyrics of the song also contain an overriding romantic theme, relating to returning home to be with their loved one, which is absent from the narrative of the film. Consequently, it is primarily the song's title which resonates with the character's feelings.

Finally, there is no sub-text contained within the music. As *A Hard Day's Night* was the film debut of a newly emerging group, the primary purpose of film is to act as a star vehicle developing the personas of the individual members and the band as a whole. For the employment of a sub-text, widespread knowledge of such details would previously have needed to be established so that they could subsequently be recognized by a cinema audience.

The Beatles' film debut broke the mould of the previous pop-musicals starring Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard, through its combination of the 'real' and 'unreal' in the form of its mock-documentary style interspersed with zany, bizarre moments.

Donnelly sets out the extent of change, comparing *A Hard Day's Night* to Cliff Richard's *Wonderful Life*, which was released in the same year:

The contrast between the two could not be starker, with the Beatles espousing action, cinematic kinesis and a foregrounding of their songs, while Cliff Richard and his cohorts attempt to reconstruct a stage musical for the cameras in a similar manner to old-time Hollywood musicals.

(2015:13)

The Beatles' film also revolutionized many of the ways in which popular music was included, not least through its inclusion of non-diegetic songs to contribute to the sense of energy depicted in a scene. As has been discussed this revolution grew

from developments specific to British national culture which were reflected within its film and popular music, in forms such as Free Cinema and Merseybeat.

However, as can be gleaned from the above analysis, not all of the innovations present within the musical sequences of the film result in an expansion in the range of functions of the songs used. This view is shared by Smith who comments “the music of *A Hard Day’s Night* promised more than it delivered in terms of scoring innovation” (1998: 160).

This is especially true of those songs included within the diegesis of the film. Even though the multiple cameras used to shoot the Beatles perform provide the cinema audience with greater details of the group’s fashion, hairstyles and musical abilities, along with a ‘realistic’ re-creation of the production process and a comprehensive view of a screaming audience, these elements add little to the songs’ narrative or thematic meaning. This is because the lyrics, style and tempo of each song are irrelevant in this context. Their sole intended purpose is as a promotional tool, a song written and performed by the Beatles, which raises awareness of the group and their music, thereby increasing record sales of the soundtrack and their other albums. This is unsurprising since, as earlier mentioned, United Artists’ prime motivation in making the film was to exploit a contract loophole and sell records.

Similarly, in spite of the diegetic music in the nightclub being played on a record player, thus freeing John, Paul, George and Ringo from the constraints of having to be seen performing, the songs do not function individually in specific ways as, again, there is nothing within each piece of music which is peculiar to a precise aspect of the film. However, as a medley of Beatles’ songs which the group

themselves dance to, collectively they do contribute to the ordinary/extraordinary duality of their image which is evident throughout the film as the film characters, John, Paul, George and Ringo, as representations of ordinary people, dance to the music of the band of stars, the Beatles.

Rather than the presentation of these songs included within the diegesis of the film, it is those outside which allow popular music to function in a number of ground-breaking ways. Whilst the connotative use of a non-diegetic song within *It Happened at the World's Fair* may not be present in *A Hard Day's Night*, the latter film does reveal a number of additional possibilities which are achievable when popular music is freed from diegesis, such as long shots and tampering with film speed.

"A Hard Day's Night" is used non-diegetically at the beginning and the end of the film, in each case as the Beatles hurry to the transport for their next engagement. The use of the same song strengthens the theme of the repetitive nature of the Beatles' routine as the film ends as it begins with the group travelling to one venue after another, an action they can only take as they are released from the restriction of having to be seen performing the song. Although songs such as "Girls! Girls! Girls!" were used in a similar fashion in the films of Elvis Presley, they lack this thematic purpose. By the time this song is reprised at the end of the film, Ross is in love with Laurel and its lyrics are therefore irrelevant to his feelings or the film's themes at this point.

"Can't Buy Me Love" is also heard twice, but is not used to contribute to the film's narrative unity by supporting a particular theme. Instead, on the first occasion, the

song's tempo is used to complement that of the visual images, thus emphasizing the impression of fun and energy depicted by the group playing in the field. On the second occasion when the song is heard it also demonstrates how dialogue can be incorporated into a song sequence by reducing its volume during an instrumental section, enabling the music to most successfully subordinate to the dialogue, by avoiding a clash of sung and spoken word.

The introduction of non-diegetic popular music at this time "proved that rock music could be used as underscore for filmed action; a director simply had to use the music in a proper context or treat it as an element equal to the image" (Smith 1998: 160).

Yet, despite this more widespread and varied use of songs non-diegetically, the format of *A Hard Day's Night* resulted in it still retaining certain limitations on its functional development. As vehicles, films such as this and the Beatles' follow up, *Help!*, served their purpose most effectively if they included images of the stars performing their songs to enhance audience consciousness of their image and their music. Furthermore, enough different songs to fill a considerable portion of the soundtrack album are a continued requirement. As a consequence of having to include a sufficient number of different songs diegetically in performance mode, opportunity to include non-diegetic music is restricted and the need for a variety of songs also places constraints on an individual piece being used thematically through repeated use. Additionally, at this point, non-diegetic music still requires an accompanying visual image of the performers, even if not performing in the conventional sense, to maintain a strong association between the two. So, although

the iconic “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequence did free the popular music from the film’s diegesis, the fact that it had to be the Beatles playing in the field demonstrated its liberation was not total. To further expand the functional abilities of popular music in film it would be necessary to further develop this disassociation of a song from a visual image of its performer, thus freeing it to accompany scenes in which the performer is physically absent. However, such a development did not fully materialize during the British Invasion Phase, but instead was a consequence of innovations which took place in Hollywood film during part of the 1960s and 1970s, a period which has, for the purposes of this thesis, been identified as the New Hollywood Alienation Phase.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW HOLLYWOOD ALIENATION PHASE: *THE GRADUATE*

This chapter examines developments in the use of popular music post *A Hard Day's Night*, initially by a brief examination of the Beatles' other movies. It then considers the role of the Dave Clark Five film, *Catch Us If You Can*, in facilitating the transition of popular music from the British Invasion films to those belonging to the New Hollywood movement. It goes on to consider the significance of counterculture, and the importance of youth alienation as a component part in the emergence of New Hollywood. A detailed textual analysis of pertinent scenes from *The Graduate* are then employed as an example to demonstrate the prominence of popular music within some of the New Hollywood films and to illustrate new techniques used for the inclusion of the music of Simon and Garfunkel, along with the effects of these advances upon its functional capabilities.

Before commencing on this analysis, a brief definition of the term New Hollywood is required since, as King (2012) points out, a number of alternatives have been proposed, but for the purposes of this thesis the term is used "to describe a wave of films and film-makers that came to critical attention from the mid-to-late 1960s to the mid-to-late 1970s, a phenomenon also labelled as the Hollywood 'Renaissance'" (King 2012; 3). King also explains that one of the reasons New Hollywood is so named is because it is seen as a break from aspects of Classical Hollywood, particularly in relation to editing and narrative.

A post-classical style in New Hollywood has been described in terms of departures at both levels. Some films of the Hollywood Renaissance are

characterized partly by breaches of the continuity editing regime of classical Hollywood, inspired largely by films of the French New Wave (*Nouvelle Vague*) of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Some also undermine aspects of classical narrative such as the clear motivations of the actions of the hero.

(King 2012: 4)

Later in this chapter, the influence of British pop-musicals, such as *A Hard Day's Night*, upon New Hollywood will be considered. But prior to this, it will be beneficial to examine subsequent British Invasion films of this genre to better understand how popular music, and in particular, its non-diegetic inclusion, made its transition from British studios to Hollywood.

The Beatles went on to abandon the black-and-white, mock-documentary style of *A Hard Day's Night* in their subsequent films. Although the narrative of *Help!* was built around the band producing an album, their zany adventures as a consequence of Ringo being unable to remove a sacrificial ring place the film more in the realms of the farcical and the fantastic, rather than portraying a version of the realistic. As an example of this change of style, during an episode entitled "The exciting adventure of Paul on the Floor" Paul is mistakenly stabbed in the leg with a syringe, containing a potion which causes him to temporarily shrink in size.

The psychedelic aspects of their next film, *Magical Mystery Tour* (George Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney & Ringo Starr, UK, 1967), which follows a coach trip interspersed with unusual and incredible events, represent a further trip into the world of surrealism. As a result, like *Help!*, this film is also lacking the realistic aesthetic of *A Hard Day's Night*. Many of the shots from *Magical Mystery Tour*, such as those of the landscape seen from the coach, which are accompanied by the

instrumental “Flying”, use filters and polarization effects to produce stylized images flooded with changing colours. *Magical Mystery Tour’s* structure also lacks the cohesion of their two earlier films. Neaverson describes it as “the first pop-musical to break so wholeheartedly with the constraints of narrative logic” (2004: 4) and McCartney likens it to “an abstract painting ... a series of unconnected, disconnected events” (McCartney in Neaverson 2004: 74). This departure from the dominant generic influences of their film debut was extended via another adventure into the world of the psychedelic, the animated *Yellow Submarine* (George Dunning, UK, 1968). In this film the Beatles, represented by cartoon characters whose words were spoken by voice actors rather than themselves, travel in their Yellow Submarine to the vibrant Pepperland in order to do battle with the Blue Meanies whilst armed only with their joyful music.

Although all the Beatles’ subsequent films may, to varying degrees, be considered influential upon the Hollywood renaissance of the 1960s and the development of the New Hollywood Alienation movie, it is *A Hard Day’s Night* which best fits this description. As one of the most successful ‘Invasion Movies’, *A Hard Day’s Night* not only depicted a portrayal of ‘Britishness’ to a mass American audience, but also a representation of counterculture, a concept central to the narrative of many New Hollywood films, examples of which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

With their witty blend of anarchy and communality, the Beatles represented the counterculture’s own best image of itself. As a group they suggested whole new possibilities for lifestyles, particularly those that simultaneously used and mocked existing conventions. The Beatles wore suits and ties, played music recognizably derived from traditional rock and roll, and showed an obvious interest in success. At the same time, however, they

kept their hair shockingly long, dismantled pop chord structures, and poked fun at their own celebrity. Thus they provided an ideal symbol for an American audience developing an ironic attitude toward an ideology it wished to retain.

(Ray 1985: 270)

There exist clear parallels between these traits described by Ray and those present in characters such as Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) in the primary film text to be analyzed in this chapter, *The Graduate*. Braddock conforms to the dominant ideologies of his parents and their acquaintances by driving an expensive sports car and relaxing in his home's luxurious outdoor swimming pool, whilst simultaneously resisting them by refusing to work and having an affair with an older married woman, before eloping with her daughter who has, herself, just got married to another man.

In addition to having an influence on the characters, *A Hard Day's Night* also had an effect on a number of subsequent American films through its style and generic derivations. Again, *The Graduate* acts as a fitting example of this. Ray describes the Beatles' film as "a perfect commercial synthesis of all the new formal elements in recent European films: *cinema verite*, jump cutting, hand-held cameras, delirious tracking shots, rapid kaleidoscopic editing ... *A Hard Day's Night* finally made available to the American audience the stylistic innovations of the French New Wave" (1985: 270-272). In a strikingly similar description, Ryan and Kellner summarize *The Graduate* as "innovative in style, relying on imported French New Wave techniques – jump cuts, long takes with hand-held cameras [and] tight close-ups" (1990: 20). Furthermore both authors give specific examples which reinforce

these connections. Ray talks of the “visual riff” when the Beatles inexplicably appear outside the train immediately after arguing with the passenger in one of the carriages, whilst Ryan and Kellner refer to “nonrealist transitions [which] allow Ben to walk out of one space (his parents’ outdoor pool) and into another quite different one (the hotel room where he carries on his affair)” (1990: 21).

Ray concludes that it is difficult to exaggerate the impact that *A Hard Day’s Night* had on the American film industry. The mirroring of techniques described within Ryan and Kellner’s analysis of *The Graduate* provides evidence which supports the validity of this view.

However, in spite of these influences within *A Hard Day’s Night*, all the Beatles’ film output, including each of their movies mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, along with their final movie, *Let it Be* (Michael Lindsay-Hogg, UK, 1970), were primarily intended to serve a similar purpose. In the words of Neaverson, they were “central to the creation and maintenance of ‘Beatlemania’ ... Without film the Beatles’ global popularity would not and could not have existed to anything like the same degree” (2004: 3). The importance of these films, be it the aforementioned feature-length versions or the short promotions which accompanied the release of many of their singles, intensified after they stopped touring in 1966. Given this cessation of live performance, essential in achieving this aim of sustaining ‘Beatlemania’ is the visual, on-screen image of the Beatles themselves, be it the mop-topped, suited version of 1964 or the longer-haired, more hippie-influenced variant of the second half of the decade. Consequently, ever present in all these films and their musical sequences are representations of images of John, Paul,

George and Ringo and, as a result of this, even though the Beatles' movies continue to include their songs both diegetically and non-diegetically, the functional capabilities of these pieces of music remain restricted by the visual constraint of the obligatory inclusion of an image of the band, which is required to promote its star profile. So, although *A Hard Day's Night* and the Beatles' subsequent films did much to shape the style and content of countercultural film in the US, they contributed little to forwarding the functional capabilities of the popular music within the New Hollywood Alienation movie, as they resist a further disconnection between the song heard and the visual image of the performer playing a version of themselves, beyond that which is first seen in the "Can't Buy Me Love" sequences.

Consequently, in spite of its influential nature, it is not *A Hard Day's Night* which points to the way in which New Hollywood would incorporate popular music. Instead, it is a film starring another of the 'British Invasion' bands, The Dave Clark Five, which hints at the direction of the next phase of development in the relationship between the popular musician and their music within film. *Catch Us If You Can* (John Boorman, UK, 1965), like *A Hard Day's Night*, was intended as a vehicle to promote a band and its music. Additionally, as with the Beatles' film, a young director with experience in television, in this case John Boorman, was given virtual carte-blanche in deciding what form this vehicle should take, resulting in a breakaway from the format of previous pop-musicals.

Some of the results sustain a degree of similarity to scenes in *A Hard Day's Night*. For instance, the film's opening, during which the characters, played by the members of the Dave Clark Five, are seen running around a playground and riding

on the equipment whilst the song “Catch Us If You Can” is heard as non-diegetic music, bears a strong resemblance to the first “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequence in which the Beatles play around in a field. The film also contains scenes of the group dancing to their own music at parties, as the Beatles do in the nightclub, after they abscond from their hotel room in *A Hard Day’s Night*.

However, in spite of these likenesses, there are also significant differences. Most importantly, the band members do not play versions of themselves. Instead they are a group of stuntmen working on an advertising campaign for the meat industry, with Dave Clark being cast as the lead male character, Steve. Yet, this does not mark a return to the format of the films of Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard, who also play fictional characters rather than representations of themselves, since Steve and his friends are not musicians and do not sing. From a narrative viewpoint this emergence of a greater detachment between the pop star and the film character played is important since it enables the film to address more controversial issues without suggesting that the pop stars themselves may be directly involved with these, since the distinction between the two is more clearly defined through the characters’ lack of musical acumen. Stars become more identifiable as actors by their fans, rather than being seen as sharing the personality traits of the character they are playing. Consequently, in contrast to the more conservative representation of youth culture portrayed in *A Hard Day’s Night*, *Catch Us If You Can* is able to engage more directly with some of the more divisive aspects of the emerging counterculture. One of the ways in which this is evident is through the film’s representation of a group of travelling squatters on Salisbury Plain. They

greet Steve and Dinah (Barbara Ferris) by asking them if they have any 'spliffs' or 'horse'. Such direct drug references are in complete contrast to the more subtle antics of John pretending to snort a bottle of cola (i.e. coke) on the train in *A Hard Day's Night*. Furthermore, within *Catch Us If You Can*, this countercultural group of hippies are seen as the enemy of the state, as they are hunted down and rounded up by the army who are on manoeuvres in the deserted village in which they have temporarily taken up residence. This hostility from the establishment can be seen as the antithesis of the treatment of alternative youth culture in the Salisbury Plain setting in *Help!*, in which the army are instead employed to protect the Beatles from a religious cult, which is attempting to kidnap Ringo, as they perform and record the song, "I Need You".

The group of travellers are not alone in *Catch Us If You Can* in those who desire an alternative lifestyle. Whilst Dinah may more closely resemble the Beatles' characters in *A Hard Day's Night*, in the sense that even though she wants a degree of freedom, she is ultimately compliant to the demands of her management, the same cannot be said for Steve. So, at the film's conclusion, as she returns to her professional commitments and allows her manager, Louis (David Lodge), to use her escape and subsequent adventures to generate more media hype for her career, Steve and the rest of his friends refuse to join her on her return to the world of advertising, instead driving away from the crowds, the press, the publicity and a world in which they, as 'true' representatives of their countercultural generation, do not feel they belong.

Although, evidently containing elements of a 'British Invasion' film through the inclusion of The Dave Clark Five and their music, the depiction within the narrative of Steve's, and others', such as the Bohemian couple, Guy (Robin Bailey) and Nan (Yootha Joyce), alienation from cultural conformity also distinguishes *Catch Us If You Can* as a fore-runner of the New Hollywood and British films which were to address this theme later in the decade.

The free-and-easy surface of the film is ... troubled by ominous undercurrents, imbuing it with more interest than other contemporary rock 'n' roll movies and foreshadowing the darker elements of 1960s landmark counter-culture films such as Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Performance* (Donald Cammell/Nic Roeg 1970).

(Krzvinska 2001: 33)

There are other parallels with *Easy Rider* (a film which will be analyzed in more detail at the end of this chapter), in addition to that identified by Krzvinska, which further draw attention to the influential nature of this film. For example, *Catch Us If You Can* is also a road movie, with Steve and Dinah embarking on a journey from London to Devon via Salisbury Plain and Bath. Also, like Wyatt (Peter Fonda) and Billy (Dennis Hopper) in *Easy Rider*, the two leading characters encounter groups, both engaged with and opposed to countercultural lifestyles, in a journey which takes on a spiritual meaning, before ultimately ending without satisfactory resolution. In addition to these factors, the use of popular music in *Catch Us If You Can* also indicates the direction which would be taken in a number of subsequent New Hollywood films, including *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider*, since a further effect of the developments present in this film is that popular music no longer has to be

supported by a visual image which supports the star persona of the performer of a song.

In order to successfully combine a sense of youthful alienation with the promotion of the popular music of The Dave Clark Five, an unambiguous level of detachment between the two is required. This means foregrounding the members of the band and their music but excluding any visual representation linked to their star persona. This is because it would be more difficult to equate the cheerful, smart image of Dave Clark, the pop star, who regularly performed on the prime time Ed Sullivan Show, with that of a man who wants to escape the bright lights of London and who rejects fame and wealth, without the clear distinction that the latter is a film character named Steve rather than a fictional depiction of the pop star. In his study of film stardom Dyer offers that “the roles and/or the performance of a star in a film were taken as revealing the personality of the star” (1992: 22). In *A Hard Day's Night*, the Beatles are not seen as actors playing roles, but, instead as the ‘real’ John, Paul, George and Ringo. The relationship between the Beatles as stars and the characters they play is, what Dyer refers to as a ‘perfect fit’ in which “all the aspects of a star’s image fit with all the traits of a character” (1992:145). Through each member playing a version of his star persona there is a stronger association between the band and the themes of the film. But, in avoiding the approach of *A Hard Day's Night*, by playing a group of fictitious stuntmen, the effect of this link is diluted by the Dave Clark Five in *Catch Us If You Can* resulting in a more ‘problematic fit’ between star and character in that the persona of the star has no associations with that of the character.

Furthermore, as Steve is not a singer or a musician, this disconnection also extends to the songs and music of the Dave Clark Five which, as a result, are entirely present either non-diegetically, or diegetically via record players at parties, rather than performed or lip-synched by the band. It therefore follows that, in relation to later New Hollywood films, in which “a major ingredient ... is [also] a foregrounding of youthful alienation and/or rebellion” (King 2012: 15), a comparable detachment of popular music heard from the visual image of performance seen, would be appropriate. Indeed, to better achieve the sense of alienation felt by a film character, this disconnection was to be further extended to the complete removal of the popular musician onscreen, thus entirely removing any visual association between music and star image which may contradict the personality of the character.

As a consequence of this ‘problematic fit’ between the Dave Clark Five as stars and the characters they play, although, in terms of popular music innovation, *Catch Us If You Can* proved a stepping stone between the Beatles movies and the New Hollywood films engaging with alienation, it was not commercially successful. The disconnection between the stuntmen characters and the pop band and their music, described above, was a primary contributor to its failure at the box office. “The British trade press had warned how ‘a picture that stars a pop group without showing a pop group takes a risk’ and this ‘burial’ of the group’s primary function undoubtedly contributed to poor box-office returns” (Glynn 2013: 106). A lack of thematic connection between cheerful, upbeat songs such as the title track and the ‘ominous undercurrents’ of the film referred to by Krzvwinska above ‘buried’ the

Dave Clark Five's image as a pop group still deeper. Up until this point, the existing star image of the group had given no indication of them as part of the counterculture movement as expressed in this film, so this abrupt break would likely have contributed to a rejection of the film by much of their fan base as it would have failed to meet many of its expectations.

But, in spite of this lack of commercial success, the film also acted as a stepping stone for its director, John Boorman, who was lured away from the UK to Hollywood as part of "a depressing trend" (Duguid 2015). It is, therefore, unsurprising, given the export of British directing talent across the Atlantic, a trend which coincided with the renaissance of the film industry in Hollywood, it is in the US, rather than the UK, that the next phase of innovation which enabled advances in the range of popular music function was to occur, in the form of the New Hollywood Alienation movie.

Owing to this migration of British talent and the establishment of a 'New Hollywood', the remainder of this chapter will concentrate primarily on alienation movies produced in the US at this time. Because of this, there will be a predominant focus on the concepts of counterculture and alienation from an American perspective, in relation to political, social and cultural issues.

Although the term counterculture is most commonly used in reference to the 1960s, and that is the decade upon which this chapter focuses, as a concept, it is not restricted to this period. "Counterculture is a perennial phenomenon... probably as old as civilisation, and possibly as old as culture itself. In fact many of the figures who have come to occupy prominent positions in the schoolbooks –

from Socrates to Jesus, Galileo, Martin Luther and Mark Twain – were countercultural in their time” (Leary in Goffman and Joy 2004: 12). Taking Twain as an example to expand on this view, his writing qualifies him as a countercultural figure as the young characters he created, such as Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, did not behave in a manner which was considered culturally acceptable at the time. “For some of Twain’s contemporaries in the 1870s and 1880s, this Tom Sawyer appeared to be a poor role model for young readers. Libraries and schools were slow to adopt him or his pal Huckleberry Finn, or to approve of the antics of these characters” (McParland 2014: 85-6).

Therefore, given that counterculture is recurrent throughout history it is necessary to question why it is a term which is predominantly used to refer to a period pertaining to the 1960s. One possibility, pertinent to this thesis, is the emergence of youth driven movements during the decade. As an example, in 1960 four black college students staged a sit in at a whites-only lunch counter at a Woolworth store in Greensboro when they were refused service. By the fourth day the number of protesters had grown to over 300 and the protest went on to spread to further stores in other towns and cities. The significance of this event is acknowledged by Anderson who recognizes that it “marked a decisive break with earlier civil rights demonstrations [because] the sit-ins ignited a younger generation of blacks to become activists” (1995: 45). Later in the decade, as a result of opposition to the Vietnam War, “countercultural forces... seeped onto college campuses in 1965 and flooded them by 1967” (Farber 1992: 10) in a further display of widespread youth rejection of some of the dominant ideologies of the US. Through non-conformity,

younger people displayed their alienation from their elders and those in positions of political authority and, at this time, there were a myriad of issues against which to feel alienated and a multitude of ways to express their non-conformity.

The civil rights movement, race riots: 'black power'. The counter-culture, hippies, drug-taking: 'flower-power'. Youth, popular music and fashion. Protests against the war in Vietnam. Student radicalization and the 'New Left'. A new wave of feminism and demands for gay rights. Political hopes, dreams and nightmares. Kennedy, the Kennedy assassination. Another Kennedy; another assassination. Martin Luther King: assassination. My Lai, Cambodia and the shooting of students at Kent State. Battles on the streets of Chicago. Nixon. Watergate. Humiliating withdrawal from Vietnam. The oil crisis and a reduced scale of global American economic power... Sometimes... the times are such that they impose themselves forcefully on our consciousness, unmistakably invading the terrain of popular entertainment such as Hollywood cinema. The late 1960s and early 1970s appear to be such a time.

(King 2012: 14)

In addition to its influence upon Hollywood cinema, another of the consequences of the growth of youth alienation and protest was the re-surfacing of countercultural views within the lyrics of popular music. Songs reflecting such views, like counterculture itself, were not a new phenomenon. Perone describes how "the pro-labour songs of the 1930s and 1940s, the folk songs of the late-nineteenth century that were adapted to support the violent labor strikes in Oakland, California or the anti-slavery songs of the mid-nineteenth century might all be considered to be precedents of the [1960s countercultural] era" (2004: 6). However, this was the first occasion on which countercultural views had penetrated the lyrics of popular music so deeply. As a result, by 1967, the year in which *The Graduate* was released, "Music orientated publications such as *Rolling Stone* magazine... celebrated singer songwriters, such as Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell, as the counterculture's poet-laureates" (Murrin et al 2012: 996). Dylan encapsulates the sense of alienation

increasingly portrayed within the lyrics of popular music. His song “Oxford Town” addresses the case of James Meredith, the Civil Rights movement figure, who in 1962 became the first African-American student admitted to the segregated University of Mississippi, “Masters of War” is a protest against the Cold War arms build-up and “The Times They Are a-Changin’” is an anthem for change, its lyrics calling upon “senators” and “congressmen” to heed this call for reform.

1967 was also the year of the first major music festival which took place in Monterey in California, an event which marked a change in how audiences viewed the performance of popular music. Stylized, on-screen performance by prominent bands such as the Beatles, who by this time had retired from touring and retreated into the studio, and The Monkees, who found fame through their television series, was now challenged by authentic, live presentations by a new generation of artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Simon and Garfunkel. This inaugural festival was recorded in the documentary film, *Monterey Pop* (D.A. Pennebaker, USA, 1968), thereby also providing cinema audiences the opportunity to gain awareness of this new form of performance and its countercultural elements, in a similar way to those present at the event. Consequently, cinemagoers who watched another example of the festival film, *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh, USA, 1970), were able to witness Jimi Hendrix’s conflict-ridden rendition of “Star Spangled Banner” which “seems at once to be a strong patriotic statement, supporting the ideals of the United States, and an equally strong statement against the activities of the U.S. military in Southeast Asia” (Perone 2004: 60).

In addition to the growth of youth protest movements and the birth of festival performance as important facets of the 1960s countercultural movement, there was another which would prove especially important to the American film industry. Ryan and Kellner observe that “the sixties were also characterized by a high level of disaffection on the part of white, middle-class youth from the values and ideals of fifties America, the world of suburban houses, corporate jobs, “straight” dress and behaviour, sexual repression and social conformity” (1990: 18). During the second half of the decade this element of counterculture, in the form of a sense of alienation amongst young characters, became a recurring theme of the New Hollywood film movement in films starting with *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, USA, 1967) and *The Graduate*. King supports this view stating “A major ingredient of many of these [New Hollywood] films is a foregrounding of youthful alienation and/or rebellion” (2012: 15). As an example of this, Benjamin Braddock’s sense of alienation against the suburban culture of his parents is a predominant theme throughout *The Graduate*.

There were a number of other factors which further contributed to the establishment of New Hollywood at this time. At the opening of this chapter, the French New Wave Movement is identified as a major influence upon these films and since *A Hard Day’s Night* also drew upon aspects of the French New Wave, it is unsurprising that the popularity of this film in the US is regarded as contributing to the establishment of New Hollywood, but it was not alone in this respect. During the first half of the 1960s, European cinema established a foothold in the U.S. via showings in an expanding number of art cinemas. According to Dennis Hopper, the

number of venues of this type had grown from fifty in 1960 to six thousand in 1965 (Hopper quoted in Ray 1985: 269). This growth in popularity of experimental film, coupled with its commercial viability, demonstrated by films such as *A Hard Day's Night*, made Hollywood less resistant to change from its classic conventions.

A further element in the growth of New Hollywood at this time was the breakup of the studio system.

During the 1960s most of the motion picture companies merged with or were taken over by conglomerates attracted by their undervalued stock, their film libraries and their real estate, and the years from 1966 to 1969 in particular saw an upheaval in company ownership more substantial even than that of the early 1930s... The period of instability coincides with the "Hollywood Renaissance" which is usually seen as the period in which a group of new and mainly young directors took the opportunity provided by the industry's corporate uncertainty to produce a number of stylistically innovative and thematically challenging movies.

(Maltby 2003: 173 & 176)

This freedom resulted in the rise of a new generation of directors in Hollywood from non-conventional backgrounds similar to those who had directed many of the 'British Invasion' movies, such as Tony Richardson (*Tom Jones*), who had previously worked in theatre, and Richard Lester (*A Hard Day's Night*) and John Boorman (*Catch Us If You Can*), who had both worked in television. "Not coincidentally the director of the period's breakthrough film (Mike Nichols, *The Graduate*) duplicated the early career of Orson Welles, coming to Hollywood from Broadway, undertaking a private crash course to learn standard filmmaking procedures, many of which he then took apart" (Ray 1985: 267). The increasing number of directors with experience in a variety of other fields created an environment rich in innovation, as

they could draw upon techniques, novel to Hollywood film, learnt from their previous roles.

The continuing importance of the younger cinemagoer as an increasingly influential demographic at this time also contributed to changes in subject matter and style of films at this time. A 1968 Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) audience survey showed that 16 to 24 year olds accounted for 48 per cent of national ticket sales which was an indication of the level of success of their aim to “bring films into a closer accord with the youth audience and its general questioning of Establishment values” (Prince 2001: 8). As a result more characters which younger people could relate to were introduced, such as Benjamin Braddock in *The Graduate*, or which they could regard as heroic opponents of the establishment, such as Bonnie Parker (Faye Dunaway) and Clyde Barrow (Warren Beatty) in *Bonnie and Clyde*, or Wyatt (Peter Fonda) and Billy (Dennis Hopper) in *Easy Rider*.

In the case of *The Graduate*, these changes also allowed for a number of developments in the ways in which popular music functioned compared to that in the films of the Beatles and Elvis Presley, examined in the previous chapters. This is particularly true in the case of two of the functions recognized by Smith as specific to popular music, the first of these being that lyrics can give voice to feelings and attitudes not made explicit by the film’s visuals and dialogue. King sets out in his definition of New Hollywood, referred to above, that some films “undermine aspects of the classical narrative such as the clear motivation of the actions of the hero” (2002: 5). *The Graduate* falls into this category in that it contains a number of scenes in which the feelings or emotions of Benjamin Braddock are unclear from

what is seen. However, in several instances clarity is provided through the lyrics of an accompanying song. In this respect, Nichols counts among those directors Smith describes as “having their cake and eating it too” (1998: 170), in the manner in which he uses songs to verbalize the feelings of characters whilst, at the same time, retaining ambivalence through the associated images.

This paradoxical approach is employed from the beginning of the film. Initially, Ben is seen seated on the plane. The lack of emotion in his facial expression reveals nothing of how he is feeling. Like him, the other passengers also do not betray their emotions visually and so, in isolation, this opening shot could legitimately be interpreted as a simple narrative device, the sole intention of which is to inform the spectator that Ben is returning home. It is only after Ben disembarks from the plane and is seen on the moving walkway that the ambivalence of Ben’s expression, or the lack of it, is given a degree of clarity through the introduction of “The Sound of Silence”. It is the lyrics of the song, rather than Ben’s words, expressions or actions, which speak for his feelings. “The Sound of Silence”, according to Art Garfunkel, was about “the inability of people to communicate with each other, not particularly internationally, but especially emotionally, so what you see around you are people unable to love each other” (Garfunkel in Eliot 2010: 40). Given this meaning, and the timing at which the song is included, in the context of *The Graduate*, the song gives a voice to Ben’s feelings of alienation in the sense that he is unable to communicate and connect with others emotionally. The opening lines of the song, “Hello darkness my old friend, I’ve come to talk with you again”, suggest that Ben is experiencing a return to this state, brought on by his returning home to live with his

family. Therefore, the inclusion of this song also implies that he feels alienated from his parents, their lifestyle and what they represent.

It is on this occasion that film first fully exploits popular music's lyrical ability to more precisely provide clarity to scenes which are open to multiple interpretations via its non-diegetic use. As has been identified in the chapter examining The Classic American Musical Phase, in the films of Elvis Presley song lyrics were used almost exclusively to reinforce thoughts and feelings which were already clearly apparent through preceding dialogue or visuals. During the British Invasion Phase, in *A Hard Day's Night*, "Can't Buy Me Love" complemented the sense of energy portrayed within the accompanying images through its tempo, but since the song's lyrics did not contribute to this process, this effect could have been achieved equally successfully by a suitable piece of orchestral film score. By contrast, in *The Graduate*, although a film score may have been able to amplify Ben's general emotions of sadness and depression, it is only through the lyrical content of an appropriate song, "The Sound of Silence", that a sense of alienation as the cause of these feelings can be revealed musically. From this point, songs are therefore able to clarify both an emotion and its underlying cause.

In spite of this development, the functions of the film's songs do not extend to another of those specific to popular music identified by Smith, authorial expressivity commenting on characters rather than speaking from their point of view. The opening lyrics of "The Sound of Silence" refer to darkness as "my old friend" rather than his or your old friend. This clearly indicates the words sung are representative of Ben's subjective point of view rather than that of an author.

Furthermore, it is apparent throughout the film that Ben is aware he is unhappy and is also conscious that this feeling takes a form in keeping with those expressed within the song's lyrics, so in this case an author's view is not required as there is no need to support or contradict Ben's view which is being clearly and accurately expressed via dialogue and song lyrics. It could also be argued that the author does not necessarily share Benjamin's view that he is entirely alienated from the "consumer-oriented world of 1960s suburbia" (King 2012:15). Both King (2012: 16) and Whitehead (2011: 3) describe the film as a satire in which Benjamin's role as a countercultural hero should not be taken literally. According to Whitehead, Nichols himself argues that, in time, Benjamin and Elaine would "become their parents, those swamps of empty striving and anxiety" (2011: 2). Given this, it is apparent that Benjamin's view of himself, which is reflected in the lyrics of the film's songs, is not shared by the director and cannot, therefore, be regarded as representative of the author's view.

Instead the second of the functions particular to popular music, identified by Smith, which first comes to prominence through its employment in *The Graduate* is the assertion that "musical allusionism can be used to flesh out characters and emphasise particular generic or narrative themes" (1998: 170). The inclusion of the music of Simon and Garfunkel adds associations to aspects of their star image relating to their musical style, their lyrics and their festival performances, which strengthen themes provided by the film's visuals and dialogue. Paul Simon's lyrics, in particular, already had an extra-textual association with the theme of alienation prior to the release of *The Graduate*, as Kingston highlights.

The alienation tag seemed to stay with Paul, it was a gross over-simplification, but Paul later admitted that he had unintentionally helped it along at the beginning. 'A kid comes back from England with a big hit record and everybody says, "You seem to write a lot about alienation." "Right," I said "Right, I do." "Alienation seems to be your big theme." "That's my theme," I said. And I proceeded to write songs about alienation. Everybody had a tag... and it was a self-fulfilling prophecy, so I wrote alienation songs.

(1996: 60)

But the concept of allusionism is not a one-way street. Rather, there is a synergistic relationship which exists between *The Graduate* and the music of Simon and Garfunkel in which each supports the countercultural image and the theme of alienation within the other. So, in a similar manner the association of the music with a New Hollywood film helped support the countercultural image of Simon and Garfunkel, since "in the 1960s many Hollywood films, responding to social movements, mobilized around issues of civil rights, poverty, feminism and militarism that was cresting at that time, articulated critiques of American values and institutions. They transcoded a growing sense of alienation from the dominant myths and ideals of U.S. society" (Ryan & Kellner 1988: 17).

As a result of this symbiotic relationship, not only is musical allusionism used to flesh out the theme of alienation in the film, but also, the images in the film allude to the same theme within the star image of Simon and Garfunkel.

Finally, with reference to the fourth of the functions noted by Smith, popular music as a means of denoting particular time periods, there are no significant developments within *The Graduate*. The songs in the film were written around the same time as those in *A Hard Day's Night*, a time when popular music was still in its infancy. As has already been identified in previous chapters, for this reason it was

too early in its development for this genre to be used in a nostalgic way since even the earliest rock and roll could only reference a period around ten years earlier. Therefore, at the time of the film's release, popular music was used to denote the present. It is only later when films such as *The Graduate*, *A Hard Day's Night* and *Girls! Girls! Girls!* are placed in an historical context that their music denotes a specific decade, be it the 1950s or 1960s as particular sub-genres of popular music, such as rock 'n' roll, Merseybeat and folk-rock attained such temporal associations.

In addition to the developments in relation to the popular music functions identified by Smith, described above, there are also advances connected to the principles of Gorbman which similarly arise primarily through innovations such as the universal use of the songs of Simon and Garfunkel non-diegetically and the utilization of their lyrics as a contributory element of the narrative. These can be assessed as follows:

Invisibility.

A noticeable consequence of the absence of the visual image of Simon and Garfunkel throughout *The Graduate* is the disappearance of performance and lip-synch modes as means of incorporating popular music within a film. This development allows all the prominent songs, "The Sound of Silence", "April Come She Will", "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" and "Mrs. Robinson", to be included in a non-diegetic form. This collective removal of the popular music from the diegesis enables these songs to conform more closely to the principle of *Invisibility*, as described by Gorbman, since the presence of a musical source is totally removed as a requirement for their inclusion. This is possible because the expansion of the use

of non-diegetic popular music from the single example in *It Happened at the World's Fair*, and the two "Can't Buy Me Love" sequences in *A Hard Day's Night*, to the majority of the musical soundtrack in *The Graduate*, enables the latter film's songs to function with a freedom more closely associated with a classical film score. As a result of the removal of the need for performance or lip-synching mode, popular music can be included at any point, allowing it to contribute to the meaning of any scene, rather than being restricted to those containing its performer. Additionally, unlike in the films of Presley and the Beatles, in which performance is the primary mode for the inclusion of popular music, the song no longer acts as a break in the narrative.

This difference can be illustrated by comparing the first "Can't Buy Me Love" sequence to that during which "April Come She Will" is heard during *The Graduate*. In the former example, the song which accompanies images of the Beatles (i.e. the performer) running around a field acts as a musical intermission which is marked at the beginning, by Ringo's shout of "We're out!", and at the end, by the groundsman's reprimand. Street's description of this as "a narrative device which marks the song off as a brief non-naturalist interlude" which acts as a means of "addressing the cinema audience *and* the record buying public" (2009: 97), confirms that this sequence, although entertaining, could be removed with little effect on the narrative, since its primary purpose is to promote the song.

By contrast, "April Come She Will" helps to contribute meaning to a montage sequence which forms an important part of the narrative, showing Benjamin becoming more distant from his parents during his ongoing affair with Mrs

Robinson (Anne Bancroft). The song adds to the interpretation of the narrative through its lyrics, which support the visual montage as an effective method for a succinct representation of the period from April to September, with each verse referring to an advancing month and to Ben's growing unhappiness in his relationship with Mrs. Robinson as time progresses. The utilization of the principle of *Invisibility*, in relation to popular music, facilitates this development, since the connection between song and image has moved away from one of performance and direct performer promotion. This has been replaced by a greater association of mood and lyrical relevance. This is not to say that *The Graduate* did not act as a promotional vehicle for the music of Simon and Garfunkel, but rather that their music was also promoted via its association with Ben, as a youth who felt alienated from many of the dominant ideologies of the time, rather than through an association with the appearance, fashion or performance style of the musicians themselves. Allusionism had emerged as an alternative to promotion via a directly connected visual image as it had been, and continued to be, in the films of Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

Although, non-diegetic songs are more numerous in *The Graduate*, the film still contains examples of music which exists within the diegesis, such as at the drive-in burger restaurant when Ben and Elaine's (Katherine Ross) conversation is drowned out by the sound of music from the radio in a car next to them. But, in accordance with the principle of *Invisibility*, in all such cases the diegetic source of the music is visible. Additionally, it is significant that the film's primary songs, those of Simon and Garfunkel, are not used diegetically. They do not, therefore, act as the muted

aural backdrop to the setting of Ben and Elaine's date. Instead their songs are consistently given little aural competition from dialogue or other sounds when they are heard, since this further bestows greater ability upon their lyrical content to contribute to the intended interpretation of a scene. Giving these songs prominence also results in them, like the film songs of the Beatles and Elvis Presley, fulfilling the synergistic task of promoting the film's soundtrack album, though in a more subtle way which excludes a visual image of the performer.

Inaudibility.

Given the aforementioned prominence of the songs of Simon and Garfunkel, although the popular music in *The Graduate* bears a greater resemblance to a classical film score than that in the earlier pop-musicals analyzed, through its more comprehensive removal from the film's diegesis, there still remain significant differences, including its approach to the principle of *Inaudibility*. This disparity arises as a result of additional objectives in including popular music in film which do not normally apply to a classical film score. Firstly, the popular music soundtrack and the film form a symbiotic relationship in which the commercial success of each is to a large degree reliant upon the commercial success of the other. This co-dependence would be affected if large sections of each song were subordinate to dialogue, and therefore less noticeable to the audience, in accordance with this principle. Secondly, in most cases, popular music contains sung lyrics which may cause confusion if heard subordinate to dialogue or other sounds. It would be unsatisfactory to have to attempt to discern the sung lyric from the spoken word and the value of each to the narrative may be lost or diluted. Finally, popular music

in film at this time would consist predominantly of pieces which were pre-recorded and could not, therefore, be easily adapted or edited to fit a scene, as would be the case with a score written specifically for a film.

The songs in *The Graduate* attempt to address all three of these issues. Firstly rather than music being subordinate to dialogue, the reverse principle is applied. So, during the sequence accompanying the opening credits the sound of the automated message repeatedly instructing travellers to “please hold the handrail and stand to the right, if you wish to pass please do so on the left” is heard at a lower volume than “The Sound of Silence”, since it is the repetition of the message which is significant rather than its exact contents, which are of secondary importance to the lyrics of the song which express Benjamin’s feelings of loneliness. In a later attempt not to break the principle of *Inaudibility*, song and dialogue are purposely kept apart during the sequence in which Ben pursues Elaine to Berkeley. Consequently, no dialogue is present when “Scarborough Fair/Canticle” is heard. However, the song then pauses whilst Ben tells his parents he is going to marry Elaine, only to be reprised when the conversation ends and he begins his journey to the college. Having found her there, the song is again suspended whilst Ben converses with his new landlord, before once more returning as he waits in a cafe for Elaine to emerge from the bookshop opposite. On a final occasion, the music fades when Ben follows Elaine onto the bus and it disappears during their ongoing exchange on the way to the zoo, only to be re-introduced for a last time when Ben is left alone staring at the ape house. The effect of this process is to give a sense of continuity of time during Ben’s pursuit of Elaine, with occasional pauses for

dialogue during each of these sequences to provide a better understanding of narrative developments. For example, Ben and Elaine's conversation on the bus reveals she is meeting her boyfriend at the zoo, thus providing an explanation as to why the scene ends with Ben standing alone, staring at an ape house.

A similar method is used during the sequence accompanied by "Mrs Robinson". As with "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" rather than the song being subordinate to dialogue it is instead put on hold when Ben enters the Robinsons' house to try to find Elaine, and when he stops at the boarding house to ask where Carl (Brian Avery) is getting married. However, there is also a small section during which this principle of *Inaudibility* does apply. When Ben stops at the petrol station to use the phone, an instrumental section of "Mrs Robinson" continues beneath the dialogue as he speaks into the receiver before asking the garage attendant for directions to the church. A possible reason for this exception is that "Mrs Robinson" differs from the other songs included in that it was not written and recorded prior to the film. At that point it was only partly completed and was subsequently finished after the film was released so that it could be included on the soundtrack album. Therefore, as a work in progress, the song could, like a classical film score, be adapted to fit scenes without the need to pause it in order that its lyrical content does not come into conflict with the film's dialogue, in a manner which a pre-recorded song, could not. Whereas a pre-recorded track, such as "Can't Buy Me Love", dictates that images are cut to fit the rhythm of the song, in this case "Mrs. Robinson" can be adapted to fit the image. So, in the above example an instrumental section could be added to coincide with Ben's phone conversation. Similarly, later in the sequence, when

Ben's car runs out of petrol as he is driving to the church, the strumming of the guitar which accompanies the scene is gradually slowed to reflect the vehicle's decreasing speed. Again, this is possible since, in its unfinished form, this piece of popular music can be adapted and varied in a manner similar to a film score.

The above analysis illustrates that in the majority of cases the non-diegetic music does not comply with the element of Gorbman's principle of *Inaudibility* that states it should be subordinate to the voice. Instead the songs of Simon and Garfunkel are either included in scenes with no dialogue or, alternatively, are paused during sections of dialogue to avoid conflict. However, it should be noted that subordination to the voice is only one of the conditions of this principle. Gorbman also argues that the music should be subordinate to the narrative form, should begin and end at appropriate points and should fit the mood of the scene (1987: 76-79). In this respect, the examples of "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" and "Mrs. Robinson" can be seen as complying.

The inclusion of popular music, especially lyrical pieces, in place of a film score affects the music/narrative relationship. Lyrics are capable of both supporting and contradicting the narrative of a film. For example, the lyrics of "Can't Buy Me Love" are irrelevant to the actions seen during both sequences the song supports in *A Hard Day's Night*. Smith describes this effect of lyrics as "a double-edged sword ... they carry a certain potential for distraction, but their referential dimension can also be exploited to "speak for" characters or comment on a film's action" (1998: 166). Prior to *The Graduate* popular music was employed chiefly as a distraction. "The common solution taken by the standard film is not to declare songs off-limits –

for they can give pleasure on their own - but to defer significant action and dialogue during their performance" (Reay 2004: 39). This statement not only applies to the performed diegetic songs in the earlier films analyzed but, as already described in relation to the principle of *Invisibility*, also to the aforementioned non-diegetic musical sequences in *A Hard Day's Night* which acted as interludes from the primary narrative. It is in *The Graduate* that Smith's second 'edge', the referential dimension, begins to be forged. This is achieved through the individual use of a song, as in the case of "April Come She Will", the lyrics of which refer to progressive months thereby helping to reaffirm the passing of time represented by the accompanying montage of images, or "Mrs Robinson" which alludes to "Ben's increasing estrangement from an older generation he sees as hypocritical and morally bankrupt" (Smith 1998: 169). It is also achieved through the repeated use of a song, such as "The Sound of Silence" which helps to flesh out a consistent theme which is present in each of the sequences it accompanies. In these instances the lyrics take on the role of a commentator, or put the thoughts of a character into words. In doing so, they take on a narrative form similar to dialogue and, therefore, these songs require prominence rather than subordination to be able to fulfil this task.

Another of the elements of Gorbman's principle of *Inaudibility* is that music begins and ends at an appropriate point. Gorbman argues that "typically within a scene music enters or exits on actions (an actor's movement, the closing of a door) or on sound events (a doorbell, a telephone ring)" (1987: 78). Accordingly, this condition applies on the second occasion on which "The Sound of Silence" is heard. Ben and

Mrs. Robinson meet at The Taft Hotel, but when they get to their room Ben has misgivings about having an affair until Mrs. Robinson's goading convinces him to carry on. In compliance with Gorbman's principle the scene ends with the sound of the door slamming which acts as a cue for the song.

However, this example does not fully abide by this condition of *Inaudibility*.

Gorbman further states that, in the case of a classical film score, the music "goes relatively unnoticed because the attention focuses on the action, the sound, or the very narrative change the music is helping to dramatize" (1987: 78). Although "The Sound of Silence" does help to dramatize the change from Ben's feelings prior to the affair to those after its inception, it does not go unnoticed because the door slamming is followed, visually, by complete darkness (a representation of Ben switching off the light of the hotel room). As it is at this point that the beginning of the song is introduced, there is, therefore, no conflicting action or dialogue for the spectator to focus their attention on. Consequently, the spectator is already fully conscious of the song by the time the blank screen gives way to the montage sequence of Ben and Mrs. Robinson's ongoing affair which accompanies the remainder.

It is likely that overriding commercial considerations form part of the reason for these 'more audible' approaches to the inclusion of popular music. As already recognized, there would have been a desire to privilege these songs of Simon and Garfunkel more than a film score to assist in promoting the soundtrack album and boost sales. In addition, greater audibility would have been employed to raise awareness of each song's lyrics, since as previously described, these are important

in helping to contribute to the narrative meaning supported by the accompanying visual images.

The final element of *Inaudibility*, as described by Gorbman, relates to the suitability of the mood of the music. A film score should be “parallel to the action, to reinforce the mood or tempo” (1987: 78). Within *The Graduate* there are examples of appropriateness of mood and tempo in the choice of songs used at specific points. This can be illustrated through comparison of the sequences accompanied by “Scarborough Fair/Canticle” and “Mrs. Robinson”. In the first, Ben seeks out Elaine at Berkeley, but there is no sense of urgency to his quest. He clearly intends to take as long as necessary to find her and then be patient in picking his moment to make contact. What is seen supports this view. As an example, Ben is seen sitting by a fountain on an empty campus, before time-lapse techniques are used to show the area filling with students over a long period of time. The choice of “Scarborough Fair/Canticle” further supports this mood of patience and calmness via its slow tempo and its use of instruments, such as flute and harp, which create a softer sound.

Later in the film Ben searches for Elaine once more. But this time it is a frantic rush to find her before she marries Carl. So instead “Mrs Robinson”, with its quicker tempo and frenetic guitar strumming, is included to add to the mood of panic and stress. As with the “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequences the tempo of the song combines with the tempo of movement to create a mood, but in *The Graduate* this technique is not restricted to a single song, as it was with “Can’t Buy Me Love”, and can

therefore more clearly contrast a sense of energy and urgency within one sequence with a sense of calm and patience in another.

Signifier of Emotion.

In relation to this principle, Gorbman states “music is seen as augmenting the external representation, the objectivity of the image track, with its inner truth” (1987: 79). As has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the fast-paced, cheerful “Can’t Buy Me Love” was included during the police chase sequence in *A Hard Day’s Night* in order to augment the energy and humour present in the images. However, as previously stated, these emotions are garnered from the tempo and instrumentation rather than the lyrics. The music supplements what is seen rather than adding an inner truth, and the words sung do not provide an emotional viewpoint which is visually clear.

It is only when the subject matter of the lyrics becomes synonymous with the emotions of the alienated characters predominant within New Hollywood films that they can more successfully act as a signifier of emotion in a similar way to a classical film score. As *The Graduate* was the first of the New Hollywood films to be dominated by popular music, the lyrics of which held an emotional significance, it is central to the development of this function.

There are occasions throughout the film when Ben is seen sitting, without any facial signs of what his state of emotion is. As outlined earlier in this chapter, it is “The Sound of Silence” which is used during the opening sequence to articulate his feelings of emptiness and alienation on returning home to his family. By signifying

the inner truth of these emotions the song also exposes Ben's smile at the end of the scene as superficial.

"The Sound of Silence" again serves a similar purpose later during the film. The song accompanies a montage of images of Ben lying in the pool in the sun, mixed with those of his clandestine meetings with Mrs Robinson at The Taft Hotel. As with the film's opening, throughout the sequence Ben's face remains without any sign of expression. Once more it is left to the music to signify Ben's emotion. Although, from the visual images alone, multiple interpretations of Ben's mood are possible, combined with "The Sound of Silence" the intended reading of his feelings is clarified.

From within the textual analysis of the films of Elvis Presley and the Beatles in the earlier chapters, it is only the "They Remind Me Too Much Of You" sequence from *It Happened at the World's Fair*, which functions in a similar way. But, even during this sequence it may be possible to predict Mike Edwards' thoughts as he has just met and fallen in love with Diane. So, given that obsession with girls and romance is part of the Elvis film formula, an informed audience familiar with this detail would likely be able to read this scene as intended, even without the song. The same assumptions could not be made for the inclusion of "The Sound of Silence" at the beginning of *The Graduate*. At this point the audience is not in possession of any information about Benjamin, such as the reasons for his flight or his feelings about it, and his lack of facial expression and the absence of dialogue provide no hints. Furthermore, as an early example of a New Hollywood film, there are no strong generic clues as to how this opening sequence should be read. From King's

description of New Hollywood film quoted at the opening of this chapter, one of its generic traits is to not conform to the narrative conventions of its Classical counterpart. For this reason, in this instance, the lyrics of the accompanying song take on an unprecedented importance as a signifier as it allows the director to simultaneously combine visual ambiguity with an aural signification of emotion.

Narrative Cueing.

Referential/Narrative. As is the case in *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* begins and ends with the same song. In both films this repeated use of a single piece of music acts as a reference to the cyclical nature of an element of the narrative of each. In the Beatles' movie it adds to the sense of the band's repetitive lifestyle. The film opens with them running to the station to catch a train to London to perform. This scenario is repeated at the end, but with the mode of transport now a helicopter and the venue now in Wolverhampton. In *The Graduate*, "The Sound of Silence" is indicative of Ben's feelings at the beginning of the film as he returns home. The use of the same song at its conclusion implies that in spite of all the intervening events his mood has returned to its original state.

A further similarity to *A Hard Day's Night*, in relation to referential narrative cueing, is the lack of evidence that music is included to reveal information regarding the geographical location in which the film is set. Similar, to the setting of "Swinging London", which is representative of the British Invasion, California is significant as the setting for *The Graduate* since the state represents "the origin of counterculture" (Ray 1985: 303). Also as with the link between the songs of the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night* and "Swinging London", there are connections

between the style of the music of Simon and Garfunkel and the California setting of *The Graduate*. Their harmonic style and Simon's lyrics, addressing themes pertinent to young people at the time, such as alienation, connected them to the hippie movement, led by bands such as The Mamas and the Papas and The Byrds, which was emerging from California's Laurel Canyon. This connection was further strengthened by their appearance at California's Monterey festival six months prior to the release of *The Graduate*. But, in spite of these details, it is unlikely that this association would have been made by the majority of the audience since, as with the Beatles' music being more closely associated with Liverpool than London, there appear no obvious references within the film to associate the music of Simon and Garfunkel explicitly with California.

The area of *Referential Cueing* referred to by Gorbman, where the music of *The Graduate* most clearly displays development from that of the earlier films analyzed, is in its use to emphasize Ben's subjectivity. Gorbman draws upon the example of the score for *Of Human Bondage* (1933) to demonstrate how a waltz, first heard as Philip Carey (Leslie Howard) dines with Mildred Rogers (Bette Davis), a piece of music which Philip says he loves because it reminds him of her, is subsequently, repeatedly used non-diegetically to signify Philip's feelings for Mildred. Similarly, as was established earlier in this chapter via reference to the functions of popular music identified by Smith, the lyrics of "The Sound of Silence" are employed frequently as an expression of Benjamin's personal feelings.

Connotative. There is a distinct division between a classical film score and the popular music soundtrack of *The Graduate* in this respect. Gorbman sets out the aims of the score.

Narrative film music “anchors” the image in meaning. It expresses moods and connotations which, in conjunction with the images and other sounds, aid in interpreting narrative events and indicating moral/class/ethnic values of characters... Classical cinema, predicated as it is on telling a story with the greatest possible transparency, overdetermines these connotative values. Soundtrack music reinforces what is (usually) already signified by dialogue gestures, lighting color, tempo of figure movement and editing, and so forth”

(1987: 84)

But, *The Graduate* acts as an example of a New Hollywood film which destabilizes aspects of this classical model through the introduction of characters whose rationale is often unclear, visually. Unlike the classical cinema referred to by Gorbman the intention is not to tell a story with the greatest possible transparency. Instead, a degree of ambiguity is introduced. As a result of this, the songs of Simon and Garfunkel act as a clarification of how to interpret what is seen, rather than a reinforcement of a message already clear from the dialogue or action of the characters.

Continuity.

As the primary songs within *The Graduate* do not form part of the film’s diegesis, they are not required to be synchronized with image of performance, or sourced from visible or implied audio equipment. Furthermore, as previously recognized, unlike the “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequences in *A Hard Day’s Night*, they do not act as

musical interludes with distinct opening and closing cues. Instead, the music is able to smooth discontinuities of editing within sequences and scenes by providing the spectator with a cohesive aural element. In *The Graduate*, the temporal elipses within the montage representing Ben's lifestyle over a number of months which switches between the hotel and his home are smoothed by the inclusion of both "The Sound of Silence" and "April Come She Will" throughout the sequence.

Gorbman argues that "Music also bridges gaps between scenes and segments" (1987: 89). Similar to a film score, when heard for the first time, the final bars of "The Sound of Silence" smooth Ben's transition from the airport to his bedroom. Then later, the blank screen, seen after Ben slams the bedroom door at The Taft Hotel is accompanied by the opening of the same song which then continues over the following sequence, marking the beginning of another period of emotional emptiness in his life.

Other songs are used as an adhesive in a slightly differently manner. For example, as previously described, "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" is included sporadically, interspersed with short scenes including dialogue, to knit together episodes in Ben's pursuit of Elaine to Berkeley. Similarly, "Mrs Robinson" ties together his frantic search to find her before she marries Carl. This marks a development from the songs of the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night*, which do not transcend the parameters of a single location or point in time, being restricted to an individual performance or chase.

Unity.

According to Gorbman “The major unifying force in Hollywood scoring is the use of musical themes... The thematic score provides a built in unity of statement and variation as well as a semiotic subsystem. The repetition, interaction and variation of musical themes throughout a film contribute much to the clarity of its dermatology and to the clarity of its formal structures” (1987 90-91)

One of the developments to emerge in the utilization of popular music in *The Graduate* is the repeated and thematic use of a single song, “The Sound of Silence”. Since popular music’s first appearance in *Blackboard Jungle*, the same song has often been included at both the beginning and end of a film. In *The Graduate* the same song appears on a third occasion, but, more importantly this repetition is employed for thematic purposes, helping to add a sense of unity to otherwise seemingly unconnected scenes. Without the inclusion of the same song, the scene in which Ben arrives at the airport, the montage which chronicles his affair with Mrs Robinson and the film’s finale in which he and Elaine escape on the bus may appear to have no common theme.

It has already been explained, earlier in this chapter, the ways in which “The Sound of Silence” acts as a signifier of emotion, in the form of Ben’s feelings of emptiness and alienation. Without the presence of this song Ben’s mood could be interpreted in a number of ways throughout the opening scene. He could be regarded as bored or tired after his flight. Additionally, when he smiles at the end of the scene, a possible reading is that he is happy to return home to his parents. It is the sombre tone and lyrics of the song which help to belie that smile, betraying the darkness of his inner feelings.

Therefore, the association between the song and Ben's dark mood and sense of alienation has already been established when the song is heard on the second occasion. Consequently, the spectator is in an informed position to interpret that these feelings have returned, after the excitement of the thought of having an affair gives way to the mundanity of the reality. The song clarifies the scene even though, visually, Ben's expressionless face gives nothing away. This is partly achieved through the lyrics but additionally through a connection with the opening scene in which the same song is heard.

"The Sound of Silence" is also included on a third occasion, to elucidate the film's conclusion. After Ben rescues Elaine from a loveless marriage with Carl, they escape from the church and board a bus. Once seated their initial smiles give way to more thoughtful, ambiguous expressions which are, again, open to a number of different interpretations. Referring to the images alone, the film could be regarded as having a happy and conclusive ending. Ryan and Kellner see it as a "traditionalist romantic conclusion" in which "the escaping young couple ride a common bus to freedom" (1990: 20 & 21). But, such an interpretation fails to account for New Hollywood's resistance to the narrative tradition of resolution and a 'happy ending'. The conclusions of films such as *Harold and Maude* (Hal Ashby, USA, 1971), in which Maude commits suicide leaving her lover Harold alone, and *Easy Rider*, in which Wyatt (Peter Fonda) and Billy (Dennis Hopper) are both shot dead before completing their journey across America, further illustrate this point.

In respect of *The Graduate*, Whitehead describes how Ryan and Kellner's misinterpretation of the film's ending is a common mistake. "My students, like the

first audiences in the late 1960s, laugh and cheer, vicariously jazzed by the stunning rescue... They think Benjamin and Elaine have “won”. This is a routine reaction, because it is the clichéd rhetoric the film offers as a projection of Benjamin’s point of view, and Benjamin wants to believe he’s won” (2011: 2). He also points out one of the more significant reasons for his students’ misunderstanding. “They barely register or else set aside the coda on the bus, with its mournful reprise of Simon and Garfunkel’s “Sounds of Silence”” (2011: 2).

There are also visual clues which hint at a less than happy future for the couple. The final shot of them on the bus is from outside through the rear window. Throughout the film there exists a recurring image of people trapped behind glass such as the toy diver in the fish tank, Ben behind the mask of his skin-diving suit and the congregation trapped behind the glass doors of the church as Ben and Elaine make their escape. All these suggest an imprisonment within the invisible boundaries of convention, an imprisonment which Ben wishes, but ultimately fails, to liberate himself from.

But, as Whitehead recognizes, it is the theme linked to the repeated inclusion of “The Sound of Silence” which most obviously anchors the true meaning to the final scene. Ben and Elaine have not won. The depression which Ben has felt on the earlier occasions, marked by this song, has returned once more as the thrill of the chase subsides and gives way to the realization of a future more akin to the conventional lifestyle of his parents, rather than the countercultural alternative Ben has been craving. The film’s director also supports this view, in subsequent interviews: “Nichols would grimly intone that, within five years, Benjamin and

Elaine would become their *parents*, those swamps of empty social striving and anxiety” (Whitehead 2011: 2). It is the third, and final, playing of “The Sound of Silence”, as a thematic component, which is integral in clarifying this reading of the film’s conclusion that Ben and Elaine have become aware that they will eventually be absorbed into the dominant culture which they have attempted to resist.

However, although such thematic use of a single song marks a development in the range of function of popular music in film, it does not fully adhere to Gorbman’s principle of *Continuity* which refers not only to the repetition of a musical theme, but also to its variation. This quality, however, is absent from the multiple inclusion of “The Sound of Silence” since it is the same version which is heard on each occasion. Therefore, although a theme is established in relation to this song, variations upon it are not.

There is an additional occasion on which two of the songs in *The Graduate* do not meet the conditions of another of the elements of this principle. Gorbman states that “tonal relationships in the score are also managed so as to contribute to a sense of the film’s unity” (1987: 90) before proceeding to quote Sabaneev’s rule that music should be absent for fifteen seconds before the composer is free to start a new music cue in an unrelated key. This allows the spectator opportunity to have forgotten the previous piece before a new one is introduced. But, in *The Graduate*, “April Come She Will” is heard immediately after “The Sound of Silence”. As the first song is in G Major and the second in D Minor the key of each is unrelated, highlighting, rather than obscuring, the switch from one to the other. This is further evidence of the dual role of the songs within this film as both a subtle informer of

narrative or emotion and a commercial product to be promoted and consumed. In this instance both songs add to the film's meaning, but do so in a manner which raises awareness of their presence aiding in their promotion as tracks on the accompanying soundtrack album.

From this analysis of Gorbman's principles it is evident that the disappearance of the pop musician as a film star, a new found politicisation in popular music lyrics, scored versions of popular songs such as "Mrs Robinson", an increase in visually ambiguous scenes and the repeated use of a single song within a film all contributed to advances in popular music function. It also reveals the growing importance of song lyrics to popular music functions. Consequently, although the popular music of *The Graduate* is able to replicate many of the functions of a classical score this is often achieved by different methods many of which relate to the incorporation of sung words, an element absent from a typical score.

But, in addition to these factors, there was a further important development in the inclusion of popular music in film which emerged during the New Hollywood Alienation Phase, though it was not present in *The Graduate*. This was the introduction of the compilation soundtrack of pre-recorded music by a variety of artists. Although earlier present in art-house films, such as *Scorpio Rising*, *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, USA, 1969) was the first of the New Hollywood films to include such a collection, in this case consisting of previously released songs by a variety of artists including Steppenwolf, The Byrds, The Band and The Jimi Hendrix Experience. "*Easy Rider* (1969) revolutionized the film soundtrack by eschewing the use of especially written, scored music for making dramatic and emotional effects.

In its place excerpts from existing song recordings were used across the whole film” (Donnelly 2015:15).

Easy Rider follows the journey of Wyatt and Billy as they travel across America.

After completing a highly-profitable drug deal in California they stash their money in the gas tanks of their bikes and set off for New Orleans for Mardi Gras. On their trip they encounter discrimination as they are turned away from motels because of their appearance, but they also have positive experiences such as when they encounter a rancher who allows them to use his barn to repair their bike and then invites them to stay for a meal, sharing what little food his family has. After picking up a hitch-hiking hippie, they visit his colony which is attempting to live as an alternative, self-sufficient community. But, upon continuing their journey, prejudice against the pair returns when they are arrested unnecessarily and thrown into jail. Whilst incarcerated they meet fellow inmate, alcoholic lawyer George Hanson (Jack Nicholson), who decides to join them on their trip. However, they encounter more intolerance in a small-town restaurant from the local residents and are forced to leave. That night, whilst camping out, the three are attacked by a group who had followed them from the town. Wyatt and Billy survive but George is murdered.

After vowing to return his body to his family, they continue to their destination where, accompanied by two prostitutes (Toni Basil and Karen Black) they explore the Mardi Gras celebrations before ending up in a cemetery where they embark on a traumatic LSD-induced ‘trip’. It is after this that Wyatt realizes their road trip has been a failure in that they have been unable to attain the spiritual freedom they were seeking.

The next day they set off for Florida but encounter more hostility from two rednecks in a pickup who shout abuse at Billy, before pointing a gun in his direction to scare him. The gun goes off and Billy is badly wounded. Wyatt sets off to find help but the rednecks murder him to ensure there are no witnesses to the first shooting.

A recurrent image which links the events described above is that of Wyatt and Billy astride their motorcycles riding through deserts, countryside, towns and cities. It is also these images which provide the visual setting for the majority of the film's popular music. Indeed, there are only two exceptions, these being on the occasion "Wasn't Born to Follow" by The Byrds accompanies Billy and Wyatt swimming in the river with two of the women from the hippie colony and The Electric Prunes' "Kyrie Eleison/ Mardi Gras" which is heard during the scene in the whorehouse where Billy and Wyatt have a meal as a memorial to George Hanson. All the other pieces provide an aural backdrop for the road trip as "diegetic sound is marginalized, allowing for the foregrounding of the music as loud accompaniment to spectacular sequences of landscape and travel" (Donnelly 2015: 54). Apart from the practical reason for this, in that non-diegetic music provides the best sound, since dialogue would have been impossible or unrealistic in such scenes, Smith provides a more pertinent explanation as to the significance of the songs' inclusion at these points, within a film which, in accordance with its New Hollywood generic identity, is filled with ambiguity.

By thematizing this ambiguity in terms of a picaresque narrative, *Easy Rider* utilized music to tell the "story" not told in the film's visuals and dialogue and to fill the void at the characters' hollow center. The film may equivocate about Billy and Captain America's mores and motivations, but the film's

music and lyrics offer important thematic cues regarding their self-image... With *Easy Rider's* music providing a detailed referential system of communication, Captain America and Billy need do little to express this sense of individuality and this desire for freedom. Whether peddling drugs, smoking pot, skinny dipping or simply riding, the music provides a schema with which we may interpret the significance of the characters' actions. In other words, Captain America and Billy need not communicate their goals and desires verbally; they simply must embody them, and the music itself will serve to specify these goals through individual character traits.

(1998: 168-9)

From the lyrics of the film's first song, "The Pusher" by Steppenwolf, the importance of drugs, both as the means of escaping conformity by financing their trip to Mardi Gras, and a means of escaping reality via another form of 'trip', is brought to light. Later songs, including "If You Want to be a Bird" by the Holy Modal Rounders and "Don't Bogart Me" by the Fraternity of Man, provide further reference to Wyatt and Billy's ethos towards drug use.

Other songs such as Steppenwolf's "Born to be Wild" and "The Weight" by The Band allude to *Easy Rider* being a road movie involving a number of noteworthy encounters and events along the way, whilst the lyrics of Jimi Hendrix's "If 6 was 9" can be regarded as a statement of individuality and "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" by Bob Dylan an expression of anger towards the hypocrisy, commercialism, consumerism and war mentality inherent in American culture.

Similar to that of *The Graduate*, the popular music of *Easy Rider* is used to flesh out the thoughts, views and feelings of the leading characters in scenes which are visually ambiguous. However, because the songs are largely restricted to an accompaniment of the visuals of Wyatt and Billy riding across America, they do not inform on their reaction to specific occurrences during their journey, but, rather,

reflect their general view of themselves as champions of countercultural America. This is in contrast to *The Graduate*, which allows a greater freedom over the points at which a song may be introduced, by not restricting it to a scene of travel. Consequently, Benjamin Braddock's attitude to explicit incidents, such as the beginning of his affair with Mrs. Robinson, are expressed by the lyrics of songs in a way in which those of Wyatt and Billy are not.

It is for this reason that *The Graduate* was selected as the primary film text to illustrate functional advances in the utilization of popular music during this phase, as it is this freedom to include popular music at any point which could be considered the primary enabler for advances in functional capability during the New Hollywood Alienation Phase. But, this liberation was not fully exploited, even by *The Graduate*, since although music can be included during any scene to support any interpretation, in this film it is restricted to those including the protagonist and his views. In both *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider* such a restriction results in limiting popular music to sub-genres, such as folk and rock, which are symbolic of the white masculinity represented by their leading characters. To remove this constraint it would be necessary to integrate a form of popular music more inclusive than rock into film, one which was not so much dominated by a single race or gender. That form was to be disco music.

CHAPTER 5

THE DISCO PHASE: *SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER*

Easy Rider is an example of the “white, male buddy movies” (Lupack 2002: 381) which were predominant around the time of its release and this identity is reflected in the film’s ten-song compilation soundtrack album which, almost exclusively, consists of rock, psychedelic and folk songs performed by white, male artists. Even the identity of its one notable exception, “If 6 was 9”, is so entrenched within these sub-genres of popular music that, by the time of the arrival of disco, the performer of this song, Jimi Hendrix, became seen by some as representative of white-influenced rock, rather than black-influenced rhythm ‘n’ blues. As Echols recounts “Jimi Hendrix’s blues-inspired music became so linked to white rock that to a gay black waiter at the disco where I worked his songs were simply “white, trash music”” (2013: 167). The inclusion of his music as an accompaniment to images of Wyatt and Billy as they rode across America in *Easy Rider* would only have served to reinforce this perception.

The soundtrack album to the most successful film of the Disco Phase, *Saturday Night Fever*, like that of *Easy Rider*, is a compilation of tracks by a number of different artists. However, it is an expansion on its predecessor, both in the volume and the variety of the music. It was released as a double album consisting of seventeen tracks. Although six of these are songs performed by The Bee Gees, overall it is made up of a diverse range of disco styles, including Funk and Latin variants, performed by a variety of artists, both male and female. The album also includes the eleven-minute, 12-inch version of “Disco Inferno” performed by The

Trammps, along with disco re-workings of classical pieces, such as “Fifth of Beethoven”, based upon Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, and “Night on Disco Mountain”, based on Mussorgsky’s “Night on Bald Mountain”.

However, in spite of the range of tracks included on the double album, it still does not comprise a complete collection of the film’s popular music. For example, the novelty single “Disco Duck”, performed by Rick Dees, and the instrumental versions of “How Deep Is Your Love?” are missing. When all these additional pieces are taken in to account, it becomes clearer the extent to which the quantity and range of popular music incorporated within *Saturday Night Fever* exceed that, not only of *Easy Rider* but, of any of the films examined in the previous chapters of this thesis. Furthermore, the film’s soundtrack combines the differing musical structures of its predecessors in that it comprises of both a compilation of popular music by a variety of artists, like *Easy Rider*, and a hybrid consisting of tracked and scored versions of songs, like *The Graduate*.

But, before considering the effects of this plethora of music upon the scope of functional capabilities within the film, it is necessary to assess possible reasons for the rise of some of the key generic elements of disco reflected in the soundtrack of *Saturday Night Fever*. This will include an analysis of its origins, its orchestral style, its multi-national and multi-cultural influences, an investigation into reasons for the emergence of extended remixes, the establishment of the female vocalist within the genre and the consequences of the growing commercial success of disco music.

Although the term disco is a derivation of the word discotheque, a French word originally used to describe clubs at which people danced to recorded music rather

than live bands, the origins of the disco culture of the 1970s, portrayed in films such as *Saturday Night Fever*, lay in the gay communities of a number of American cities.

Some theorists are more specific, geographically, when identifying where disco began. Anthony Thomas claims that “although disco is most often associated with gay white men, the roots of the music actually go back to the small underground gay black clubs of New York City” (1995: 438). However, this view of such a singular genesis is questioned by Fikentscher.

Underground parties were the offspring of dance parties at nightclubs, lofts, basements and bars held by and for a segment of urban society that – by default or choice – identified itself as being on the margins of mainstream society. This segment consisted largely of gays, African Americans, Latinos, artists and to some degree, straight and gay women many of whom were musicians, poets or visual artists.

(2000: 100)

In spite of this conflict of views on the exact origins of disco in the US, from the above it is evident that there exists a consensus that disco was originally confined to, what at the time were considered, fringe, minority groups. As a consequence, disco music initially evaded the commercial attention it was subsequently to attract towards the end of the 1970s. However, over a number of years, disco was to succeed in becoming integrated into mainstream popular culture. This development occurred for both musical and social reasons. Werner explains how and why the appeal of disco broadened into the mainstream. “Musically, disco developed out of the main styles of early seventies black dance music ... Socially, its primary sources lay in the gay rights movement that gathered momentum following the Stonewall Riot of 1969.” (2014: 205)

The Stonewall Riot was the result of a police raid on The Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village which was “the only gay bar in New York which permitted dancing” (Werner 2014: 205). Police lost control as the raid attracted crowds outside the club which were incited to riot, throwing coins and stones as a result of the police handling of those arrested. The riots continued over subsequent nights as the crowds returned shouting their intent to “Liberate Christopher Street” (Teal 1971: 22), the location of the establishment.

As a consequence of the riots, sections of the gay community became more cohesive. “Literally overnight, the Stonewall riots transformed the *homophile reform movement* of several dozen homosexuals into a *gay liberation movement* populated by thousands of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals who formed hundreds of organizations demanding radical changes in the way gay people were treated by the state” (Eskridge 2009: 99). As an example of this, the new found unity of purpose contributed to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front, an organization which would expand globally, within weeks of the riots taking place.

For some, the Stonewall Riots also marked the beginning of an increased acceptance of homosexuality. According to Till, “Following days of rioting ... enough pressure was exerted to change the policy of the police in New York towards open expressions of homosexuality, such as dancing together and kissing” (2010: 24). This change in attitude had the effect of increasing the exposure of disco culture and its music as “A number of gay clubs opened up in which DJs played records for people to dance to” (Till 2010: 24). With this increased exposure, music played in these clubs, of which disco was a prominent form, began to attract greater

commercial attention. So much so, that by 1973 Billboard had introduced the term “disco-hit” and Rolling Stone had written the first article about this emerging sub-genre of popular music.

Examples of early disco music, such as that of Joe Bataan, reflected its diverse fan base through its assortment of musical influences. Bataan incorporated two musical styles, the Latin boogaloo and the African-American doo-wop. His 1973 album *Salsoul*, a reference to the music’s Salsa and Soul influences, contained the single “Latin Strut”, which according to Hernandez “became a hit on disco dance floors after the influential African-American disco DJ Frankie Crocker gave it extensive play on his R & B radio program on WBLS” (2010: 59). As a results of such hits, Bataan went on to co-found the Salsoul record label, the aim of which “was to create a new sound for the burgeoning disco dance scene that, combining elements of both salsa and soul, would be rhythmic but also instrumental and lush” (Hernandez 2010: 59). The label took on its own group of musicians, The Salsoul Orchestra, who fulfilled this intention with minor chart success from tunes such as “Salsoul Hustle” and “Salsoul 3001”, the latter being a disco reworking of the classical piece *Also Sprach Zarathustra* composed by Richard Strauss. As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, the soundtrack of *Saturday Night Fever* would subsequently also include its own re-workings of classical pieces in the form of “A Fifth of Beethoven” and “Night on Disco Mountain”.

However, it was another of the disco orchestras which would realize the genre’s first major chart success. In early 1974, “Love’s Theme” by Barry White’s Love Unlimited Orchestra, became the first disco track to top the American Billboard

Chart. The manner in which this track achieved its chart-topping status also led to an industrial acknowledgement of the promotional power of the disco club and its deejays. Echols observes that “Love’s Theme” owed its success to the enterprise of its record label, 20th Century, who distributed free copies to New York deejays. “Steady disco play created so much demand for the track that, by the beginning of 1974, “Love’s Theme” was swept into the pop Top 20 without radio support – something that rarely happened, and that suggested the potential power of club deejays” (2010: 4). With little radio exposure at this time, disco music was largely reliant on deejay promotion of this type. The chart success of “Love’s Theme”, in spite of limited airplay, revealed the commercial potential of both disco music and disco culture.

Significantly, this first disco number one was an orchestral, instrumental piece blending stirring strings, wah-wah guitars and percussion. It sharply divided opinion, in a manner in which disco music would continue to do throughout the decade. Shapiro lauds it as “in many ways ... the perfect disco record” (2005: 56). By contrast, Echols recounts John Peel’s view of the track as a “stunningly dull tune”. Pertinently, in spite of his clear dislike of “Love’s Theme”, Peel also observed the tune’s filmic quality, commenting that it “sounded like a cross between two movie soundtracks – the Percy Faith Orchestra’s 1960 hit “The Theme from a Summer Place” and Isaac Hayes’ recent smash “Theme From Shaft”” (Echols 2010: 4). Coincidentally, the Bee Gees would later base the opening of the *Saturday Night Fever* track, “Night Fever”, upon the first of these film themes and this similarity between disco music and film scores, identified by Peel, would prove a vital

component in enabling in the expansion of popular music's functional capability in film, through exploitation of disco's cinematic elements. This connection and its effects will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter within the textual analysis of key musical sequences from *Saturday Night Fever*.

In addition to being a pioneer of disco, White's music also marked a breakaway from the traditional Soul and R 'n' B of the time, such as that of James Brown and Stevie Wonder, with its strong African-American association. In this sense "Love's Theme" and White's other songs operated "in a register devoid of racial politics" (Echols 2010: 5) and, in doing so succeeded in attracting an increasingly important record-buying demographic, single, white women.

For white women, independence also meant freedom from the traditional male-centered world of rock music that their dates had expected them to enjoy. Many men could go for hours on end without dancing at gigs, but women did dance. Single and career women could spend all their money on themselves, and their musical tastes were becoming apparent. They dug Barry White, and "Love's Theme," too.

(Jones & Kantonen 2000: 5)

However, white, single women were not the only group that contributed to disco music's growing popularity. Commercially, other equally important demographics were the "blacks and Hispanics [who] were spending more of their income on records, car radios and hi-fi equipment than whites were" (Jones & Kantonen 2000: 5). Disco's appeal to these groups led to increased airplay, which was also in part due to the growth in the number of radio stations playing black music. As a result of this increasingly broad audience, disco, with its amalgam of generic musical influences, continued to expand further into the mainstream of popular music.

Early disco hits, such as “Love’s Theme” revealed an acceptance of instrumental pieces within popular music culture at this time. An absence of vocals made it easier for deejays to blend tracks together enabling continuous music without the interruption of an obvious change of record. This proved very popular on disco dance floors. Initially, in the earliest clubs “DJs, in order to accommodate the dancing urgencies of their gay, black clientele, overlapped soul and Philly (Philadelphia International) records, phasing them in and out, to form uninterrupted soundtracks for non-stop dancing” (Thomas 1995: 438). The growth in popularity of instrumentals would make it easier for deejays to seamlessly blend individual tracks into a seemingly continuous piece of music.

There was another development which coincided with the emergence of disco which would also extend this trend for unbroken music through the introduction of lengthy breaks between vocal sections of an individual song. This was the establishment of the 12-inch single. As a forerunner of this, Gloria Gaynor’s 1975 debut album, “Never Can Say Goodbye”, had included a 20-minute mix of songs which filled one side. To achieve this extended mix, instrumental breaks were included to allow for shifts of mood and tempo. This need for extended versions of songs, like that for instrumental singles, grew out of a disco culture based upon the desire for continuous dancing. Disco was, therefore, well suited to remixed versions of songs which extended well beyond the conventional three-minute single.

In 1974 Tom Moulton, an American record producer, who had been working on 7-inch remixes, was the first to stumble upon the 12-inch single format. There were three main advantages to this new format: greater volume, a greater emphasis on

bass and a capacity for longer tracks. All three were desirable qualities in disco music.

The specific needs of the dance floor for longer grooves with an excellent loud sound quality led eventually to the adoption of the 12-inch vinyl disco single and the further development of its dance floor-specific aesthetic. In 1976, Salsoul released the first commercially available underground disco remix. Walter Gibbons, known for his DJ use of rhythm breaks, deconstructed the original three-minute recording of “10 Percent” by Double Exposure to a percussive dance groove of nine minutes.

(Rietveld 2007: 109)

Using the opening of Rietveld’s example, “10 Percent”, as an illustration as to how the remix can affect the structure of a song, vocals begin after an instrumental introduction of just over twenty seconds on the original 7-inch single, whereas on the remixed version the opening instrumental section lasts for over a minute and a half. This growing popularity of more extensive instrumental pieces and this change in the proportional balance between the vocal and instrumental sections would have an effect on popular music function in film, more easily enabling the inclusion of an instrumental section of a track without the need for a clash between the lyrical content of that song and the spoken dialogue of a character.

The 12-inch single was also central to the establishment of one of disco’s foremost female performers, Donna Summer. In its infancy the aforementioned Salsoul Orchestra employed female singers on a number of its songs, such as “Run Away” which featured the vocals of Loleatta Holloway. However, Summer was the first female vocalist to make a significant impact commercially, with her first hit “Love to Love You Baby” which reached Number 2 in the U.S. Charts and Number 4 in the U.K. With this song, the extended, 12-inch mix of which lasts almost seventeen

minutes, producer Giorgio Moroder created a synthesized variant of disco which, combined with Summer's vocals, transformed Moroder into "the prophet of dance floor automation" (Shapiro 2005: 105). Jones and Kantonen describe how the mixture of the electronic sound of Moroder and the erotically charged vocals of Summer within this song marked a significant cut-off point in disco's evolution.

There are two distinct time zones. One is before the first orgasmic gasps of Donna Summer's gigantic club smash "Love to Love You Baby" began its startling aural assault with a thudding bass augmented by slippery strings. The second is after her series of cadenced climaxes had seduced the satiated sweat-soaked masses into becoming her besotted love slaves.

(2000: 34)

There are earlier examples of lascivious female vocals on singles, such as Jane Birkin's explicitly sexual contribution on "Je T'aime, Moi Non Plus" (1969), which was banned in several countries. But, in spite of also receiving a ban on BBC radio, "Love to Love You Baby" marked the beginning of a greater acceptance of women overtly addressing sex and desire within the lyrics and vocal performance of their songs, and it was disco artists and their fans, more than those of any of the other sub-genres of popular music, who embraced this change. This is evidenced by Donna Summer's equally controversial follow-up hits, "I Feel Love" (1976) and "Theme from the Deep (Down Deep Inside)" (1977). So, from a functional perspective, at this point it became potentially possible for a woman's viewpoint on these issues to be represented within a film by a song performed by a female vocalist.

Despite Donna Summer's significant contribution to the commercial expansion of disco music, at this point, the genre was still to achieve its ultimate peak in

popularity. Influential in this final step was the re-invention of the Bee Gees as disco artists. After initial success in the second half of the 1960s, mainly singing ballads, the band's popularity waned until they began to release more dance-orientated, disco tracks as singles. In 1975 "Jive Talkin'" enjoyed international chart success and this was replicated in the following year with a song which would later be included in the soundtrack of *Saturday Night Fever*, "You Should Be Dancing". The Bee Gees had, therefore, already begun to establish themselves as the primary white representation of disco, something which had been largely lacking from the genre until this point, before the release of the film. But, as Frank points out, it still required increased radio exposure and the inclusion of their music on a major movie soundtrack to cement this image, and in doing so, complete disco's crossover into mainstream popular culture. "Two phenomena in 1977 helped the disco genre attract a straight, white, middle-class audience and to become a billion-dollar business: *Saturday Night Fever* and WKTU-FM" (2010: 162).

WKTU-FM, a New York radio station, switched overnight from a soft rock to a disco format with astounding results. Its success led other stations to follow suit resulting in a massive increase in airplay of disco music. "Having limped along with a one-point-three share of the listening audience, the station rose to an eleven-point-three share... WKTU-FM was the number-one station in the number-one market, and, by the end of the year, approximately two hundred radio stations had adopted an all-disco format. Rock's stranglehold on the airwaves was over" (Lawrence 2003: 315). Radio airplay did much to promote the sound of disco, but film, in the form of *Saturday Night Fever*, was required to publicize its visual image.

Saturday Night Fever incorporates the music of the Bee Gees, a white, UK band employing an identifiable, distinct variant of the genre in the form of Barry Gibb's falsetto vocals, to accompany many of the scenes of Tony Manero (John Travolta), a white, heterosexual character, dancing in discos. In this way, as Frank concludes "The Bee Gees and Travolta made disco safe for white, straight, male, young and middle-class Americans and were crucial to disco successfully crossing over to this new audience" (2010: 162-3). The result of attracting "this new audience" was not only a revival of the Bee Gees' career, but also a huge commercial success for the film, details of which have already been set out within the introduction (See Introduction Page 19).

From this brief assessment of the rise in popularity of disco, it is apparent many of the elements present in the music of *Saturday Night Fever* were already absorbed within the genre well before the film and its soundtrack were released: the African-American and Latino influences, the rich orchestral sounds of instrumental pieces, extended versions of singles, female vocalists singing about their sexual and emotional desires, the re-workings of classical pieces and the surfacing of the Bee Gees as the "white" representatives of disco. But, although already part of popular music culture by this time, the inclusion of all these factors was new to the popular music film soundtrack and, consequently, enabled that music to function in a number of innovative ways.

Given that such a diverse range of songs are used in *Saturday Night Fever* and that many of these fulfil more than one function within the film, rather than applying appropriate examples of songs to each function, as has been done in previous

chapters, instead an assessment of developments present can be better achieved by applying relevant functions to key individual songs, such as “Stayin’ Alive”, “How Deep Is Your Love?”, “More Than A Woman” and “If I Can’t Have You”.

In considering the role of these songs it is useful to note *Saturday Night Fever* is a largely misremembered film, as subsequent parodies illustrate. Examples, such as the comic re-creation in *Airplane!* (Jim Abrahams, Jerry Zucker and David Zucker, USA, 1980) in which Ted Striker (Robert Hays) dances with Elaine Dickinson (Julie Hagerty) to “Stayin’ Alive”, largely confine their focus to Tony Manero’s white suit and his dance performances to the music of the Bee Gees. Consequently, they ignore many of the more serious issues addressed by the original film. Echols’ observations support this view. “Disco is often criticised for being either apolitical or politically regressive, and yet, as Nile Rodgers argues, *Fever* was full of “politically, socially relevant stuff”, as much so as punk. To this day *Fever* is remembered for its fashions ... John Travolta’s moves and the Bee Gees’ signature falsetto” (2010: 194).

Echols’ comments can certainly be considered appropriate when applied to the film’s opening and its use of the song, “Stayin’ Alive”. For whilst it is true that fashion, John Travolta’s moves and the Bee Gees’ signature falsetto are at the forefront from the beginning of the film, political comment is also present from the start, especially via lyrical references to poverty and lack of opportunity within the Bay Ridge community. The lyrics to “Stayin’ Alive”, reinforce both the political and apolitical elements of what is seen: the fashions, the moves and the poverty of the neighbourhood.

The film opens with Tony Manero strutting down the street as “Stayin’ Alive” is heard. In one sense, this song functions in a similar way to those used at the beginning of an Elvis Presley film, in that the lyrics support the visual image and provide us with information about the main protagonist. The first shot we see of Tony is a close-up of his stylish shoes, as he lifts his foot to compare them to a shoe in a shop window. This focus on his feet continues as he swaggers back to work, before the camera tilts up to reveal his sharply-creased, flared trousers, red open-neck shirt, designer leather jacket, medallion and perfectly-styled hair. Simultaneously, the reasons for the manner of his walk and his style of dress are revealed by the song’s opening lyrics, “You can tell by the way I use my walk/ I’m a woman’s man, no time to talk”. Tony’s walk, clothing and hair are all styled with the intention of attracting women and these lyrics also imply that his physical appearance is more important to him than anything he, or anybody else, has to say. This information is imparted not only by the song and Tony’s appearance, but also by his gaze and his actions, following a woman as she passes him, and by his unsuccessful attempt to stop another by physically blocking her path, but then being unable to think of anything to say to her.

Also, as with the opening song in many of Presley’s films, the lyrics tell us about additional aspects of Tony’s character, lifestyle and environment. The reason for the initial focus on Tony’s feet is explained by the lyric “Got wings of heaven on my shoes/ I’m a dancin’ man and I just can’t lose”. The disco beat of the song supports the lyrical content, stressing how important disco dancing is to Tony.

The song's title, "Stayin' Alive", discloses information about the Bay Ridge neighbourhood where Tony lives and works. It implies that Tony is just surviving, and the paint pot which he is carrying provides a further visual clue to this being the case. He has a poorly-paid, dead-end job in a hardware store. He lives in a small house with his sister, grandmother, mother and unemployed father. Tony's situation is not unique within this neighbourhood, as the lyrics state "Whether you're a mother, or whether you're a brother you're stayin' alive, stayin' alive". Furthermore, the Bee Gees' vocals convey the impression that there seems to be no escape for Tony from this lifestyle: "Life goin' nowhere, somebody help me". His only physical and emotional outlet is the disco music and the dancing at the Odyssey 2000 night club, which he can only afford to visit on a Saturday night.

The lyrics of "Stayin' Alive", therefore, provide us with much information, both political and apolitical, about Tony and his environment whilst the song's disco beat hints at the importance of this genre of popular music to the film's narrative. But, these factors, alone, cannot be regarded as a significant functional development since this is also the case with the opening songs of Elvis Presley movies, such as *Girls! Girls! Girls!*, which inform details about Ross Carpenter, *A Hard Day's Night*, which tells about the Beatles' hectic lifestyle and *The Graduate*, which enlightens about Benjamin Braddock's feelings of emptiness and depression.

Furthermore, "Stayin' Alive" also resembles these earlier examples in the manner in which it adheres to Gorbman's principles of *Invisibility*. As with the opening songs of earlier films analyzed in this thesis there is no visible source of the music heard.

"The technical apparatus of non-diegetic music must not be visible" (Gorbman

1987: 73), therefore, no musical instruments or audio equipment can be seen. But, although this is the case, there is also an important difference between the opening song of *Saturday Night Fever* and those which are heard at the beginning of Elvis' and the Beatles' films, in that "Stayin' Alive" takes on a meta-diegetic quality. Gorbman describes meta-diegetic music as that imagined, or hallucinated by a character. In the instance of "Stayin' Alive", at the opening of the film, Tony is evidently imagining the tune of the song. As already described, the first view of him is a shot of his foot raised to compare his shoe to another in a shop window. However, his foot is not stationary. Instead it is swaying in time to the music. The focus on his feet continues with a close up shot as he walks in perfect time to the beat of the song, implying that it is in his thoughts at this time.

But, although absent from the beginning of these earlier films, it could still be argued that the meta-diegetic use of popular music, as with the descriptive lyrical content of the opening song, is not a novel technique for its inclusion. Instead, Tony's awareness of "Stayin' Alive" could be seen as resembling the opening of the "I Should Have Known Better" sequence on the train in *A Hard Day's Night* in which members of the Beatles move in time to the song even though there is no visible or discernible diegetic source, or the opening of *The Graduate*, when "The Sound of Silence" accompanies Benjamin Braddock's arrival at the airport. Yet, in the case of the Beatles' movie, the intention appears to be primarily to add to the film's surreal qualities. Therefore, since surrealism is not a theme of *Saturday Night Fever*, a more relevant comparison would be to the opening of *The Graduate*, which could also be read as using its opening song meta-diegetically. For whilst "The Sound of

Silence” could be interpreted as a non-diegetic device to verbalize Benjamin’s feelings, which are not clear from his expressions and demeanour, an alternative reading places the song in Benjamin’s thoughts through his awareness of their relevance to his state of depression. Using this interpretation, it could be argued Tony Manero’s awareness of “Stayin’ Alive” is, in some respects, similar to Benjamin Braddock’s consciousness of “The Sound of Silence”. With the repeated use of “The Sound of Silence” accompanying scenes in which this feeling of emptiness returns to Benjamin throughout *The Graduate*, it becomes increasingly clear Benjamin’s thoughts, like Tony’s physical movements, reflect that he is conscious of the film’s opening song, even though there is no visible apparatus producing the music.

However, even if this reading of the opening is adopted there remains a significant difference which results in “Stayin’ Alive” functioning differently. In Tony’s case, although he is moving in time, his emotions at this point in the film show no awareness of the song’s meaning. There is no indication that he is unhappy or desperate to leave Bay Ridge. Instead he is looking at girls and buying a new shirt in preparation for his next night at the disco. This contradiction between Tony’s mood and sections of the words sung by the Bee Gees is important since, at this point, it indicates Tony does not appreciate the relevance of some of the lyrics to his own life. Instead, he is thinking only of the song’s upbeat disco tune. His strut points to his frame of mind as also being upbeat and, therefore, does not suggest he views his life as “goin’ nowhere” nor his existence as merely “stayin’ alive”, even though the lyrics suggest this is the reality. Instead of speaking for Tony, as the lyrics of

“Sound of Silence” do for Benjamin Braddock, in this instance they act as a form of authorial expressivity in the form of musical allusionism. As Smith states, “musical allusionism is used to underline traits which a character may not wish to acknowledge” (1998: 169). So whilst the significance of the lyrics of “Stayin’ Alive” is apparent to the audience, Tony is unaware or unwilling to admit that his life is going nowhere and he needs somebody to help him. In this way, the song’s function contrasts with that at the opening of *The Graduate* since Benjamin is fully conscious of his feelings being reflected in the lyrics of “The Sound of Silence”. He knows he feels depressed, Tony does not know he is unhappy. Consequently, in this respect, the opening song of *Saturday Night Fever* illustrates a functional advance from that of *The Graduate*.

This view of Tony being ignorant of the song’s meaning at the beginning of the film is further supported by the second occasion on which “Stayin’ Alive” is heard. This takes place after Tony and Stephanie (Karen Lynn Gorney) have won the dance contest. Tony believes they have won solely because the voting was biased in his favour and he has, by this point, become disenchanted with his life, his friends and the nightclub, which he calls a “shit hole”. In contrast to the first “Stayin’ Alive” sequence, it is the lyrics, which he initially ignored, that now represent the views of Tony, acting as a substitute for dialogue. At the start of the film, the beat of “Stayin’ Alive” was, to Tony, representative of the Odyssey night club as the highlight of his life, the place where he was regarded as a hero. However, by the time the song is heard for a second time he has realized the club is as depressing, restrictive and dead-end as the rest of his life. He has recognized his world in the song’s lyrics.

“Stayin’ Alive” can also be used to demonstrate innovations in respect of Gorbman’s principle of *Inaudibility*, compared to earlier films analysed. This can be done by examining the way in which the song is interwoven with dialogue, with the volume of the music being reduced at appropriate points. As already disclosed earlier in this chapter, one of the reasons why this principle works so effectively in this case is because “Stayin’ Alive”, like many other disco songs, contains instrumental sections which can be played beneath dialogue avoiding conflict between words spoken and lyrics sung. For example, when Tony stops to buy pizza his conversation with the vendor (Ann Travolta) coincides with a fade in the volume of the music during an instrumental break between the first and second verses. The volume is subsequently raised as the song’s vocals return, coinciding with the end of the dialogue as Tony resumes his walk. Similarly when he stops to discuss placing a deposit on a new shirt, the volume of the song is again reduced beneath the dialogue. Compared to the structure of other sub-genres of popular music, particularly the folk-influenced rock of Simon and Garfunkel which relied heavily upon the lyrical content, disco’s long instrumental parts and repetitive choruses are factors which often make its songs more suitable for utilizing Gorbman’s principle of *Inaudibility* in this way, since there are numerous opportunities to decrease and subsequently increase the volume of a song, the beginning and end of an instrumental section being an example.

Although this new development is utilized on a number of other occasions throughout the film it is not universally applied. There are also sequences during which music either competes with dialogue and other sounds at the same volume

or even takes precedence over these, thereby breaking the principle of *Inaudibility*. Examples of this reversal in the dialogue/popular music balance are employed on occasions when characters enter Odyssey, for example as Tony and his brother Frank Jr. (Martin Shakar) walk from the entrance of the disco to their table. In this instance, the song, "If I Can't Have You", is used initially to contribute to establishing that the sequence is set in Odyssey, visually supported by shots of people on the dance floor and Tony being greeted by his admirers. The characters' need to talk over the music assists in this creation of setting by adding a further dimension of the reality of being in a disco to the scene. To allow for this conflict, the spoken words at this time are not consequential to the narrative of the film. Instead, they are restricted to greetings, with more meaningful dialogue saved until Tony, Frank Jr. and the others are seated at their table, at which point the volume of the music is faded. So, on this occasion the music acts firstly as what Gorbman refers to as a *narrative cue*, assisting in establishing the setting as the disco, before reverting to adherence of the principle of *Inaudibility*, allowing dialogue to be heard. This temporary breach of *Inaudibility* also represents an example of Gorbman's seventh principle which states "A given film score may violate any of the principles above, providing the violation is at the service of the other principles" (1987: 73). In this sequence, *Inaudibility* is temporarily violated at the service of *Narrative Cueing*, as the need to hear dialogue is subordinated to that of a realistic representation of a nightclub.

This approach represents an extension in the use of diegetic music compared to that in the earlier primary film texts analyzed. For instance, it differs from the

manner in which the music is included during a comparable nightclub sequence in *A Hard Day's Night*, in that the medley of Beatles' songs heard is privileged to the extent that dialogue and other sounds are totally excluded. This is not to say there are no instances in which the diegetic music of *Saturday Night Fever* is favoured in a similar way to that of the Beatles film. Indeed, there are strong similarities between the iconic dance scene accompanied by "You Should Be Dancing" and the Beatles concert at the culmination of *A Hard Day's Night*, with Tony's solo performance on the dance floor replacing that of the Fab Four on stage, and the cheering and clapping of the disco-goers beneath the music substituting for the screaming, delirious Beatles' fans in the theatre. However, whereas *A Hard Day's Night* consistently uses this approach to favour the diegetic music of the Beatles throughout the film, *Saturday Night Fever* varies the relationship between music and other sound so that it may also comply with principles associated with a film score, such as *Inaudibility* and *Narrative Cueing*.

In relation to additional principles identified by Gorbman, another of the film's songs, "How Deep Is Your Love?", which is included on multiple occasions and in several different forms during the film, functions as both a *Signifier of Emotion* and as an element of *Unity*. It also stands alone amongst all the pieces of music within the film because of its title and its musical style. The titles of many of the other tracks are connected either to the hellish heat of the disco which is central to Bay Ridge night life, such as in the case of "Night Fever" and "Disco Inferno", or the physicality of a lifestyle built around lust and dancing, in the case of "You Should Be Dancing" and "If I Can't Have You". This focus on the hot and the physical is further

strengthened by them being up-tempo, dance songs. By contrast, the title “How Deep Is Your Love?” is the only song which addresses the emotional and the spiritual. It is also the only song in a slower-tempo, ballad style which further supports its representing an alternative theme to the rest of the music.

It is heard on four occasions during the film, always non-diegetically. There are two different instrumental versions and the vocal version which is heard twice.

Collectively these are employed in a similar way to a classical film-score establishing mood and supporting the film’s “construction of formal and narrative unity” (Gorbman 1987: 73). “How Deep Is Your Love?” is never heard in the Odyssey nightclub nor in any scene set in Brooklyn, since it is representative of Tony’s desire to find something more meaningful beyond his current existence. As a result, this love song can be interpreted as portraying Manhattan as a heavenly escape from the inferno of the disco and Tony’s hellish life in Bay Ridge.

The song is also a theme for his developing friendship with Stephanie. In this respect, it serves as a direct contrast to another of the film’s songs, “If I Can’t Have You”, a theme representing unfulfilled sexual desire, which accompanies scenes in Brooklyn, such as the stripper dancing at the nightclub and Annette presenting a handful of condoms to Tony in an attempt to convince him to have sex with her.

“How Deep Is Your Love?” is first heard as Tony drives Stephanie to her new apartment, but only starts after they have left Bay Ridge and are crossing the bridge to Manhattan. It is an upbeat, cheerful, instrumental version of the song, which signifies both Tony’s escape from Brooklyn and his optimism at the positive development of his relationship with Stephanie. However, this optimism and the

accompanying music, simultaneously evaporate upon arrival at the apartment when Tony meets Jay (Donald Gantry) and learns that he and Stephanie had previously been lovers. Consequently, the couple's return journey to Brooklyn is accompanied by a slower, more melancholy, instrumental version of the song to signify Tony's jealousy, his upset at this revelation and his depression at having to go back home. In both cases "How Deep Is Your Love?" acts as a *Signifier of Emotion*, in that each version "set[s] specific moods and emphasize[s] particular emotions suggested in the narrative" (Gorbman 1987: 73).

Additionally, the song adheres to Gorbman's principle of *Unity*. In spite of the second version of "How Deep Is Your Love?" representing a setback, the song continues to act as a theme for the development of the relationship between Tony and Stephanie. They stop near the Verrazano Bridge where Tony talks about his feelings and explains how he often comes to this spot to think. He talks to Stephanie in a personal and honest way which completely differs from his arrogant, aggressive manner when he is in Brooklyn. The orchestral version of the song heard supports this new image of Tony, complementing his feelings and personality at this time. At this point it also complies with Gorbman's principle of *Inaudibility*, being included at a barely audible level beneath the dialogue. So, although the song contributes to our understanding of the narrative it is the spoken word which is more prominent. This is in accordance with Gorbman's view that "logic requires music to give way to dialogue" (1987: 77).

The use of these two scored instrumental versions of "How Deep Is Your Love?" is significant. The vocal version of the song had already been released before the film

and achieved chart success. As a result a large proportion of the film's audience would have been very familiar with it prior to viewing *Saturday Night Fever*. To them, both of the instrumental versions would have sounded alien and incomplete, lacking the lyrical content associated with the tune. But, by using these 'incomplete' variations at this point in the film, the song implies that Tony's feelings towards Stephanie and his desire to leave Brooklyn are still evolving. He is yet to come to terms with these new emotions and is uncertain how to act upon them. Therefore, the instrumental versions help to illustrate that these emotions exist, but, at this point, Tony cannot put them in to words. This ability is peculiar to scored popular music, as its connection to the lyrics of the original song on which it is based enables it a greater depth of interpretation compared to an original classical score with no such associations with a widely known popular song.

As a consequence of this musical representation of Tony's developing feelings towards Stephanie, the familiar vocal version of the song is withheld until towards the film's conclusion, after Tony walks away from his friends and his life in Bay Ridge. He is riding on the subway train and, initially, this scene is accompanied by a depressing, monotonous, instrumental tune. But, this gradually fades out and is replaced by the Bee Gees' version of "How Deep Is Your Love?". In the previous chapter it was observed how Gorbman's principle of *Unity* was broken through the inclusion of two songs in different keys, "The Sound of Silence" and "April Come She Will", one immediately after the other. It is a similar scenario in this instance as the change is obvious from the hard synthesized tones of the first tune to the softer keyboard, percussion and falsetto vocals of "How Deep Is Your Love?". But the

blatancy of this switch seems intentional as a signifier of a change in Tony's emotions, from dissatisfaction with the present to hope about the future. As with the example from *The Graduate*, this is an instance in which the principle of *Unity* is forsaken in favour of another function. But, on this occasion, the two pieces of music act collectively as a signifier, not only of different emotions, but also of a sudden change from one to the other. The stark contrast between the styles of the two pieces of music indicates a shift in Tony's mood and a point of realization, that his future lies not with his gang and Annette in the hellish Odyssey disco and the Bay Ridge neighbourhood, but, instead, with Stephanie in Manhattan. The inclusion of the vocals on this occasion signifies he is now able to put his feelings in to words. This musical function is supported by his rushing to Stephanie's apartment to tell her he wants to move to Manhattan to make something of his life, and that he is now happy for the two of them to be just friends. Within the film, the evolution of his relationship with Stephanie, his emotional development and his desire to escape from Bay Ridge to Manhattan has reached its conclusion. This message is emphasized by the inclusion of a reprise of this version of "How Deep Is Your Love?", complete with the familiar Bee Gees vocals, which marks the end of the film.

Henderson also recognizes that "it is telling that what is arguably the soundtrack's biggest hit, "How Deep Is Your Love", deviates from disco stylings and instead functions as a reflective ballad" (2015: 478), before interpreting the significance as a backdrop to Tony on the subway "reflecting on the error of his ways, and the failings in the American dream narrative". However, this reading analyzes this single

inclusion of “How Deep Is Your Love?” in isolation, both from other adaptations of the song and from the film’s other music. For this reason, it fails to acknowledge any thematic relationship with the other versions of the song present throughout the film. It also overlooks the collective importance of its immediately following another piece of music, which is very different in tone, signifying a change in emotion. It is only when analyzing the soundtrack as a whole that the function of *Unity*, that is, incorporating multiple plays/versions of “How Deep Is Your Love” as a theme of Tony’s growing relationship with Stephanie, becomes apparent. Given this interpretation, the reprise of the song at the end of the film, representing Tony’s growing acceptance of a more platonic relationship with Stephanie, indicates a more positive, uplifting conclusion than that of Henderson who views the film as “a condemnation of the lure of the American dream” (2015: 478) in which even an escape to Manhattan is just an illusion.

Another of the film’s songs, “More Than A Woman”, is also used to emphasize Tony’s point of view towards Stephanie. This is achieved through using two versions during the film. On the first occasion Tony produces a record of the version performed by Tavares at the dance studios whilst he and Stephanie are rehearsing for the competition at Odyssey. It is also their chosen song for the performance at the competition itself, but this time it is the Bee Gees’ version which is heard. Tavares are an American band, consisting of five Cape-Verdean American brothers, who had already had a number of hits prior to the release of *Saturday Night Fever* and would therefore have been identifiable as a black, soul band by much of the film’s audience. Their version of this song and the sequence which it accompanies

are indicative of Tony's emotional development and his growing dissatisfaction with the racist, misogynistic community he inhabits. In the privacy of the dance studio, and in the company of Stephanie, he is comfortable dancing to the music of Tavares and discussing dance styles such as the *Latin Hustle* and the *Tango Hustle*. In addition to Tavares as the performer, the title of the song also reinforces Tony's other feelings. He is beginning to see Stephanie as "More Than A Woman", as somebody who interests him and with whom he would like to form a friendship, even fall in love with, rather than solely an object of physical desire.

But later, when the couple dance in the competition, in the public gaze of Tony's racist friends and admirers, it is to the music of the band that epitomizes white disco, The Bee Gees. Although it is the same song, because Tony still sees Stephanie in the same light, within the competition environment, Tony must be seen as representative of the white-Italian community of Bay Ridge and this is reflected in the choice of artist. In both versions extra-textual allusionism contributes to the function of "More Than A Woman". It is the knowledge of Tavares and the Bee Gees as artists, and the contrasts between them, which make possible the songs' collective function within the film's narrative, pointing out the growing conflict between Tony's private, personal views and his public image when he is with his peers.

In the same way as the Bee Gees' version of "More Than A Woman" represents 'white' disco, the songs selected by the other couples who are seen competing in the dance contest are similarly symbolic of their race and ethnic culture. The black couple dance to "Open Sesame", a funk song performed by KC and the Sunshine

Band. Vincent's description sets out the connection between funk and other forms of black music. "Funk music combines aspects of a wide range of black musical traditions. The blues, rhythm and blues, soul music, progressive jazz, African percussion, psychedelics and synthesizers all find a place in the rich structure of The Funk" (2014: 19). At the time, KC and the Sunshine Band were seen as emblematic of the genre following their eponymous album released in 1975, which achieved chart success in the US, UK, Sweden and The Netherlands. Vincent explains that although the band contained white members, unlike the Bee Gees, this did not affect its association with black music. "The white-led KC and the Sunshine Band ... was an organic, soulful band of Sly Stone clones with Florida black church roots that could be heard on every cut. They literally passed for a black band playing dance funk" (2014: 189). As they are not present visually in *Saturday Night Fever* this illusion of the band as representative of a black dance couple can be maintained through the credibility of their funk music.

The final performers seen in the dance contest are the Puerto Rican couple, Cesar Rodriguez and Maria Hector (uncredited), who dance to "K-Jee" by MFSB. MFSB were a pool of over thirty studio musicians, similar to the Salsoul Orchestra, mentioned previously in this chapter. There were a number of musicians who worked for both, strengthening the connection between them. Consequently, MFSB drew upon the same combination of salsa and soul influences which had been introduced to Salsoul by Joe Bataan. The salsa factor was especially prominent in the track "K-Jee", thus underpinning the Latino culture and history presented in the dancing style of the Puerto Rican couple. This is evidenced by two other pieces of

music from the film. The first is “Salsation” which is heard when Stephanie is first seen on the dance floor at Odyssey. The opening of “K-Jee” is very similar to that of “Salsation”, both in its tune and its use of particular instruments such as Afro-Cuban percussion, including congas and timbales. Since, as the title suggests, “Salsation” draws heavily on Salsa, a genre of music originating in Cuba and Puerto Rico, it follows that “K-Jee” also has strong links to this genre. As with “K-Jee”, “Salsation” functions as a symbol of race. It is the track which Stephanie is dancing to when Tony first sees her. In this instance, rather than supporting a Puerto Rican presence, it instead signifies the greater open-mindedness of Stephanie in comparison to the others at Odyssey, including Tony, who refuses to dance to such music, calling it “shit”.

The second piece of music which bears similarities to “K-Jee” is that which accompanies the sequence in which Tony and his friends fight members of The Barracudas, an Hispanic gang, in revenge for their alleged attack on Gus. This piece, along with “K-Jee”, are the only two in which lead guitar solos are prominent. In both, the style of these is similar to that of Carlos Santana, whose band is famous for its fusion of rock and Latin American music. This influence was a further factor which helped to solidify the racial and national bond between the music heard and the characters it represented in both scenes. By similar means, through the choice of artists and variants of style and instrumentation, collectively, the music heard during the dance competition helps to highlight racial and cultural identification and division.

The principle of *Narrative Cueing* has already been addressed within the analysis of the use of the song “Stayin’ Alive”, in relation to establishing the disco as a setting central to the film, but it is also applicable to the aforementioned dance contest. According to Gorbman, a classical score is also capable of establishing other elements of a film’s narrative. “Music, via the well-established convention, contributes to the narrative’s geographical and temporal setting ... Character types, too, have typical musical signifiers” (1987: 83). So, in addition to establishing the geographical setting as a disco and the temporal setting of the film as the present, the different styles of disco music which are heard during the dance contest in *Saturday Night Fever* also signify the race or nationality of the various competing couples, the funk of “Open Sesame” for the African-American couple, the Bee Gees’ version of “More Than A Woman” for the white couple, and the Salsa-influenced “K-Jee” for the Puerto Rican couple.

Disco, as a sub-genre of popular music, has the ability to achieve racial signification in a manner in which previous forms of rock and pop do not, as a number of its variants incorporated elements, such as rhythms, instruments and vocal styles with specific racial or national associations. Whilst there are earlier examples of popular songs representing race, including the second version of “Girls! Girls! Girls!”, in the Elvis Presley film of the same name, these are largely achieved solely through the use of particular instruments, rather than combining these with an appropriate style and performing artist. They, therefore, lack the authenticity of variants of disco music, which are formed from racial or national influences and are performed by original artists with a pre-existing association to these. Because they lack the

variants which disco possesses, previous sub-genres, such as rock or soul, tended more towards a more singular association. Consequently, the popular music of the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night* and Simon and Garfunkel in *The Graduate* or, alternatively, that of Curtis Mayfield in *Superfly* (Gordon Parks Jr., USA, 1972) was not as capable of signifying a variety of races or nationalities, since Merseybeat, Folk-Rock and Soul tended to be associated with a specific individual race or nationality, and, to a large extent, with the male gender. Additionally, even though compilation soundtracks for films such as *Easy Rider* included the music of a variety of artists, including both white and black musicians, their songs largely maintained an association with a single race and, therefore, were not capable of acting as a signifier of multiple races and nationalities in a manner as that utilized throughout the dance contest in *Saturday Night Fever*.

Another of the consequences of the emergence of disco music, and, in particular the popularity of the music of Donna Summer, was that it was now possible to include the female sung voice to explicitly verbalize a female character's sexual desires within a film. On two occasions *Saturday Night Fever* uses the song "If I Can't Have You" for this function as it accompanies scenes addressing Annette's attempts to 'have' Tony. The first occurs in the bar at Odyssey as she talks him in to partnering her in the upcoming dance contest. From their conversation it becomes clear that her primary motivation is the hope that he will eventually marry her so that she can 'have' him as a husband and be like her sisters. The song later accompanies the scene in which she shows Tony a handful of condoms in another attempt to 'have' him after she had tried and failed in a previous attempt to trap

him by getting him to have unprotected sex with her. Each time the song's lyrics are used to clarify the reasons for Annette's actions. Using a song performed by a disco diva, Yvonne Elliman, is especially pertinent in the case of Annette. As Kutulas comments, "Disco divas made women's sexuality at once liberated and problematic. They sang about assertive women but said little about the social or individual consequences of that assertiveness ... For women, the idea that sex might be divorced from love was alluring but also filled with many problems. Disco's version of sex gave women the initiative, but men defined the terms" (2003: 188). Annette has the freedom and assertiveness to approach men for sex and, in particular, used this to attempt to lure Tony into a sexual relationship in the hope that if he made her pregnant he would marry her. However, this new found liberation results in tragic consequences, when her judgement is impaired by alcohol and drugs, as Tony's misogynistic friends exploit her promiscuity by removing her freedom to choose, raping her in the back of their car. Therefore, as knowledge of the identity of the Bee Gees alludes to the importance of their version of "More Than A Woman" in the dance contest, so knowledge of Yvonne Elliman, as a disco diva, alludes to aspects of Annette's character and an explanation of the dreadful consequences which these contribute to.

So, from analyzing four of the film's songs, many similarities between the functions of the film's popular music soundtrack and those of a classical film score are apparent. It can be seen how, together, they adhere to Gorbman's principles of *Invisibility*, *Inaudibility*, *Signifying Emotion*, elements of *Narrative Cueing* and *Unity*. The analysis also provides an example of how the music may violate any of these

principles providing it is at the service of another, in accordance with Gorbman's seventh principle. The only of Gorbman's principles absent from this study, to this point, are *Continuity* and *Connotative Cueing*, a sub-section of *Narrative Cueing*, but there are also examples of these contained within sequences accompanied by the film's other songs.

The song "Night Fever" acts as an example of the use of music providing *Continuity*, through giving an element of consistency to lessen the jar of a transition between scenes. The second occasion when the song is heard is during a scene at Odyssey as everybody dances in unison. As the song reaches its conclusion it begins to fade and this coincides with a dissolve cut to a shot of Tony's legs as he lies on his bed the next morning. Whilst the song is fading, echo is introduced as if Tony has been dreaming about dancing the previous night, but his memory of this is disappearing as he wakes. In her assessment of this principle, Gorbman describes how music is used at the beginning of *The Big Sleep* (Howard Hawks, USA, 1946) as a "spatiotemporal connective tissue" (1987: 90) to smooth the transition between a number of different scenes set in different places at different times. Similarly, the ending of "Night Fever" helps to smooth the transition from Saturday night to Sunday morning and from Odyssey to Tony's bedroom. Its echoing conclusion provides an aural consistency which assuages this sudden visual shift of location. In doing so, like the classical score in Gorbman's example from *The Big Sleep*, it complies with the principle of *Continuity*.

In respect of *Connotative Cueing*, Gorbman explains that "attributes of melody, instrumentation and rhythm imitate or illustrate physical events on the screen ...

Soundtrack music reinforces what is (usually) already signified by dialogue, gestures, lighting, color, tempo of figure movement and editing, and so forth” (1987: 84). She goes on to identify one of the techniques used to achieve this as “*The stinger*. A musical *sforzando* used to illustrate sudden dramatic tension” (1987: 88). Examples from *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1945) are cited by Gorbman to illustrate the presence of stingers at the exact moment when Bert (Bruce Bennett) discovers Mildred (Joan Crawford) embracing Monte (Zachary Scott) and, again later, precisely as Mildred finds Monte in an embrace with Veda (Ann Blyth). Although, not used in a scene of love and deception, as in *Mildred Pierce*, there is an example of the use of a stinger in *Saturday Night Fever*. As Tony and his friends are seen walking towards the entrance of Odyssey “A Fifth of Beethoven” is introduced. True to the diegesis of the film, the music is muffled as the boys would hear it from outside the club. As they enter there is a cut from the outside of Odyssey to its interior and, simultaneously, the volume of the music increases and it becomes clearer, as it would to their ears. Furthermore, not only does the music get louder, but it does so at a moment which exactly coincides with a *sforzando* within the tune. In effect the group enter the club and the importance of this is stressed musically by the equivalent of a “ta-dah!” moment. Within the context of the film, the stinger is appropriate since they are seen as ‘faces’ at Odyssey, making their arrival important to others there. This is backed up by the reception they receive after making their entrance, being greeted by their admirers as they walk to their table.

In addition to connoting the importance of a specific shot Gorbman also observes that music can contribute to influencing the mood of a scene. "The associations that ... conventions attach to particular musical instruments, rhythms, melody types, and harmony form a veritable lexicon of musical connotation which the studio music department exploits" (Gorbman 1987: 85). Again, there is a scene in *Saturday Night Fever* which demonstrates such a function is not restricted to a classical film score, but can also be performed by popular music. On one of the occasions when Tony arrives at the dance studio, the studio's manager, Pete (Bert Michaels), is teaching a group of older clients various disco dance moves. The scene is clearly intended to be humorous since all the participants are excessively incompetent or uninterested. For example, one of the men is smoking a pipe whilst barely moving to the music. As the film is aimed primarily at the 18-30 age group (or even younger in its cut version), by ridiculing the older generation's attempt to participate, one of the purposes of this scene is to demonstrate that disco culture is a 'cool' and trendy movement only for the young. Consequently, to emphasize the silliness of the participants they do not dance to the songs of the Bee Gees, KC and the Sunshine Band or Yvonne Elliman. Instead they dance to "Disco Duck", by comedian Rick Dees. The video to this song shows a performance by Dees accompanied by a duck puppet which participates by quacking and using a voice associated with animated duck characters. This connection with absurdity and comedy enables the song to aid that of the visual image of the middle-aged and elderly dance students by anchoring the image's humorous meaning.

So, the above examination of the music of *Saturday Night Fever* reveals examples of all the principles of function as described by Gorbman in relation to a classical film score. But, as has already been suggested above, this disco soundtrack also performs the additional functions, identified by Smith, which are specific to popular music. As explained previously, during the film's opening, "Stayin' Alive" highlights authorial expressivity by commenting on Tony's plight rather than speaking from his point of view. Additionally, the lyrics of this song and others such as "More Than A Woman" and "How Deep Is Your Love?" give voice to feelings and attitudes not made explicit by the film's visuals and dialogue. Furthermore, knowledge of artists, such as the Bee Gees, KC and the Sunshine Band and MFSB helps to emphasize the choice of music for each contestant in the dance contest. Extra-textual allusionism is, therefore, used to stress particular narrative themes.

Disco music also acts as an effective means of denoting particular time periods, placing the film in the present, at the time of its release. However, it is true that popular music helped to highlight all the films of the 1950s and 1960s were set in the present, so *Saturday Night Fever* is not the best example from the 1970s to illustrate the development of this function which occurred during this decade. But, by this time it was not always the case that popular music signified the contemporary. It was now around twenty years since the birth of rock 'n' roll and this length of time had proved sufficient for a feeling of nostalgia for its early days to have grown. In terms of Hollywood film this feeling materialized in the form of *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, USA, 1973) which is set in a Californian town in the summer of 1962. Dika explains how music plays a part in the creation of nostalgia in

this film. “The past is re-created in the film’s mise-en-scene, for example, through the distinctive style of its cars, clothing, and music” (2003: 90). In terms of the music of *American Graffiti*, the soundtrack consists of a compilation of hit songs from the late 1950s and early 1960s to cement the film’s temporal setting as close to this period. Therefore, it was from this point popular music was not only used to denote the present, but also the past, marking an advance in a function specific to this genre of music.

Overall, from this detailed assessment it is apparent that the soundtrack to *Saturday Night Fever* can be used as an example to illustrate how not only is it capable of performing similar functions to a classical film score, but also additional functions specific to popular music.

Saturday Night Fever can be considered unique amongst the films analyzed within this thesis. Unlike films belonging to the previous phases investigated, it is of a particular individual importance to the development of popular music function, because it is the only example during the Disco phase which fully exploits the potential of its soundtrack in the manner described above. *A Hard Day’s Night* and *The Graduate* are significant to the British Invasion Phase and the New Hollywood Alienation Phase, as each acts as the earliest example within its respective stage which demonstrates innovation in its use of music. However, during each of these earlier periods, such innovations were replicated and built upon within subsequent films. For example, the use of non-diegetic songs in *A Hard Day’s Night* was copied in *Catch Us If You Can*, the Beatles’ subsequent movies, including *Help!* and *Magical Mystery Tour*, and the Monkees’ movie *Head* (Bob Rafelson, USA, 1968), which

although not British was greatly influenced by other British Invasion films. Similarly, the technique of including popular music by an artist visually absent from the film, which was pioneered by *The Graduate*, was repeated in examples, such as *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, USA, 1969) and *Harold and Maude* (Hal Ashby, USA, 1971).

To establish one of the reasons why *Saturday Night Fever* stands alone during this phase in the utilization of its music, a comparison to another of the Disco movies is required. *Thank God It's Friday* (Robert Klane, USA, 1978), the Hollywood disco follow-up, is also set around a dance contest at a disco, this time in Los Angeles at the Zoo club. However, this is where the similarities end. Unlike its predecessor it lacked any overt political message. “*TGIF ... was as sweet and light as chocolate mousse, with an equally soft center ... [it] didn’t pretend to carry a message, like Saturday Night Fever*” (Jones & Kantonnen 2000: 126). The film’s music also lacked any purpose, other than as a promotion for artists of the Casablanca and Motown record labels. It provided an almost constant backdrop to the film, but the intention of this was largely to promote the contents of the 32-song, double-album soundtrack rather than support interpretation of the film’s narrative. To further this endorsement of the album, two of the label’s premier artists, Donna Summer (as Nicole Sims) and The Commodores (as themselves), appear in the film, each performing one of their songs. Therefore, in terms of popular music function, instead of building on the innovation of *Saturday Night Fever*, this film represented a retrograde step more akin to the promotional vehicles of Elvis Presley from the previous decades.

By contrast, *Saturday Night Fever* openly addresses contentious issues such as drug-taking, gang violence, rape and racism in a manner similar to that in New Hollywood films, such as *Easy Rider*. Controversial issues such as these became part of the identity of this genre as they were able to exploit the erosion of the censorship powers of the Production Code Administration, caused by the breakup of the vertically integrated studio system, by including content which previously would not have been allowed. "The breakdown and eventual replacement of the Production Code was a development of great significance to the establishment of the Hollywood Renaissance" (King 2012: 32). Additionally, the film's lead character, Tony Manero, like many of his counterparts in films of the New Hollywood genre, such as Wyatt and Billy, cannot be regarded as a traditional hero, since he shares many of the unpleasant characteristics of his friends. The only thing which sets him apart is a desire to change. Like Benjamin Braddock, on the surface Tony Manero could be seen as a champion. In *Odyssey* he is revered by men, who regard him as one of "the faces" and adored by women for his dancing. However, as with Benjamin Braddock, whose countercultural rebelliousness is tempered by his love of his sports car and his parents' swimming pool, the fleeting facade of Tony Manero as some form of dancing God is exposed by the mundane nature of his poorly-paid job and the misery of his home life which make up the remainder of his week. Consequently, whereas Disco films such as *Thank God It's Friday* drew influences from the traditional classic Hollywood musicals of the past, *Saturday Night Fever* was shaped more by innovative aspects of the contemporary Hollywood Renaissance.

Another contributory factor to the individuality of *Saturday Night Fever* was the swift decline of disco following the film's release. Within a year its popularity was beginning to wane rapidly. There were many reasons for this, including the rise of punk and goth music, and disco's continued association with drugs, promiscuity and homosexuality, which alienated some sections of society. In support of this final point Frank observes "disco's timeline ran parallel to the rise and backlash against gay rights" (2010: 162). In particular, disco's credibility had always been challenged by rock fans: "Disco music and dancing fads were depicted as not only silly (witness Frank Zappa's satirical song "Dancin' Fool"), but effeminate ... such that the expression "Disco Sucks" was common by the late-1970s among these fans" (Sfetcu 2014: 108 & 109). The hatred for the genre, in particular by factions of the rock fraternity, was brought to a head by the Disco Demolition Night on July 12th 1979 at Comiskey Park, the home of the Chicago White Sox baseball team. In an attempt to boost crowds the White Sox invited two local DJs, Steve Dahl and Garry Meier, to stage an anti-disco event. Spectators were invited to bring their disco records in exchange for discounted entry. The records would then be blown up between baseball games. The response to the event far exceeded expectations. Instead of the average six-thousand attendance, a crowd of around ten times that number turned up, with many locked out because the stadium was full. Further fuelled by an additional promotion involving the sale of cheap alcohol, after the records were blown up, a near riot ensued as thousands invaded the playing area forcing the second baseball game to be abandoned.

This event has often been dubbed 'the night that disco died', but this comment was subsequently credited to one of the organisers, Steve Dahl, who, in a further attempt for self-promotion, also claimed that the Bee Gees had blamed him for 'killing disco'. A more balanced perspective on the event's legacy is provided by Dietrich.

Disco demolition night was not the death of disco, and perhaps more importantly disco never really died. That particular incarnation of disco music was already in its death throes and was transforming into other genres of music ... By 1979 disco had gone supernova. Musically speaking disco did not have a second act, or at least a second act that could retain anything resembling the enormous success of its first act. The fad was fading. Disco, in that particular incarnation and under that particular name, was already dead.

(2013: 353)

However, even if it is accepted that Dietrich is correct in his assertion that disco never really died, it was the death of this particular incarnation which ensured that the styles of disco music included in *Saturday Night Fever* were no longer an economically viable option when compiling a film soundtrack of popular music. Its rapid demise also eradicated any opportunity to utilize the particular facets of this form of disco, which enabled expansion in the range of popular music function within *Saturday Night Fever* to a degree where it closely resembled, and in a number of ways exceeded, that of a classical film score, to be repeated. Disco Demolition Night may not have marked the death of disco music, but it did contribute to the end of the disco movie.

Although a number of films continued to incorporate dance music, specific connections with disco music and culture were largely absent. Instead, the decline

of the disco marked a revival of the show musical. As Altman describes, “The show musical involves the spectator in the creation of a work of art” (1987: 272). In the show musicals of this era which made use of popular music the work of art often took the form of a stage performance of song, dance or a combination of the two.

One of the earliest examples of this transformation following *Saturday Night Fever* is *Fame* (Alan Parker, USA, 1980), which follows a group of students of song, music and dance at a School of Performing Arts, ending with their performance at the graduation ceremony. However, a more appropriate example in the context of the decline of the Disco Phase is the sequel to *Saturday Night Fever*, *Staying Alive* (Sylvester Stallone, USA, 1983). Tony Manero remains as the protagonist, but the Broadway stage has replaced a Brooklyn discotheque as his performance arena. Fitting of a show musical the plot concentrates on Tony’s struggle to become a male lead in a Broadway show, concluding with his on-stage performance after he achieves this goal. In a particularly telling reference, which attempts to affirm disco’s removal from mainstream popular culture and its consignment back to the fringes from which it originated, at one point Tony walks past Odyssey, only to discover it has been converted into a gay nightclub. For straight, white New Yorkers, such as Tony, disco is no more.

The restoration in the popularity of the show musical was not the only retrograde element present in the dance films which followed *Saturday Night Fever*. In *Flashdance* (Adrian Lyne, USA, 1983), Alex Owens (Jennifer Beals) splits her work life between two jobs in a similar manner to that of an Elvis Presley character, who divides his time between singing and racing cars. In Alex’s case, the unlikely

combination is welder by day and exotic dancer by night. Her dancing, like the singing performances of an Elvis character, enables the inclusion of the popular music, whilst holding her own in the macho industry of welding shows her as a strong and independent woman.

But it is films such as *Footloose* (Herbert Ross, USA, 1984) and *Grease* (Randal Kleiser, USA, 1978) which most clearly display a return to the narrative themes of the pre-Beatles pop-musical. Set in a small-town named Rydell in 1959 *Grease* represents a nostalgic view of high-school life. It also marks a return to the traditional folk musical with its emphasis on the family and a sense of community. Altman observes that “During the thirties and early forties, the family grouping is often represented by a substitute, such as the students of a faculty of a college” (1987: 274). This format is re-created in *Grease* with the lead characters, Danny Zuko (John Travolta) and Sandy Olsson (Olivia Newton-John), both belonging to high-school gangs, the T-Birds and the Pink Ladies respectively. The sense of community is emphasized at the film’s conclusion not only through the happy resolution of the relationship between Danny and Sandy, but also in the ‘pairing off’ of the other members of their gangs.

In *Footloose* Ren McCormack (Kevin Bacon) moves with his mother from Chicago to a small mid-western town, Bomont. He befriends Willard (Christopher Penn), who informs him the council have banned dancing and rock music from the town. Ren battles with the council, and in particular a strict preacher named Reverend Shaw Moore (John Lithgow), to get the decision reversed. Eventually, after Ren uses passages from the Bible to support his argument, Shaw Moore begins to relent on

his hard-line approach to music and dance. The film concludes with Ren organizing a prom in a disused grain store outside of the town where its youth are free to dance to the latest music. Shaw and his wife, Vi (Dianne Wiest), go to check on the Prom and end up dancing together outside the venue.

Effectively, the plot of *Footloose* is in many ways identical to that of the films which the Beatles were rejecting twenty years earlier. Referring back to Lennon's words included in the Introduction of this thesis, their relevance to this film are obvious:

We'd made it clear to Brian (Epstein) that we weren't interested in being stuck in one of those typical nobody-understands-our-music plots where the local dignitaries are trying to ban something as terrible as the Saturday-night hop... and... at the end when the local mayor [or, in the case of *Footloose*, preacher] has been convinced we're not all mass murderers.

Lennon in Carr (1996: 30)

Applying this quote to *Footloose*, and comparing the character of Alex Owens in *Flashdance* to those played by Elvis Presley, helps to illustrate the degree to which the films following *Saturday Night Fever*, which incorporate sequences of dancing to popular music, drew from a variety of influences present in those pop-musicals made prior to *A Hard Day's Night*, which lacked its innovation and creativity.

Like films such as *Grease*, *Footloose* and *Flashdance*, those of the disco phase have also been criticised as lacking in originality and narrative depth. Donnelly argues that "disco films merely exploited the current pop music trend for music for night clubs. Films such as *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)... and *Thank God It's Friday* (1978) set their narrative in clubs with plenty of dance sequences and distinctly resembled the structural format of the backstage musical" (2015: 16). This view can certainly

be regarded as an accurate summary of *Thank God It's Friday*, which is wholly set in and around a disco providing a source for almost constant music to promote the film's soundtrack, including some songs presented in performance mode to promote particular artists.

However, as has already been illustrated, there is a strong argument that *Saturday Night Fever* does not fall into this category. It stands alone amongst films of the Disco Phase in that, whilst exploiting the trend for dance music, its narrative often takes it far from the night club whilst addressing issues, such as poverty, racism and misogyny, not normally associated with films which are produced primarily as soundtrack promotion vehicles. This singularity of approach allows the soundtrack's wide variety of disco music to operate both within and outside the disco environment and, as a consequence, both within and outside the constraints of the film's diegesis, thus enabling a range of musical functions significantly in excess of not only other examples from the disco phase, but also the earlier innovative films analyzed throughout this thesis, such as *A Hard Day's Night* and *The Graduate*.

What makes this possible is that *Saturday Day Night Fever* draws together key advances from previous individual films of the New Hollywood era. It combines the use of tracked and scored music, present in *The Graduate*, with a compilation soundtrack, like that first heard in *Easy Rider*. But, it also expands upon the original implementation of these innovations. In *Saturday Night Fever* scored variations of a track are no longer restricted to changes in tempo and structure by the original artist, as was the case with "Mrs Robinson". They now include full orchestral adaptations, which can better reflect changes in mood, whilst still maintaining an

attachment to the original song, as illustrated by the example “How Deep Is Your Love?”. Also, because of the greater diversity within the styles, instrumentation and performers of disco music in comparison to other sub-genres of popular music, the compilation soundtrack of *Saturday Night Fever* was able to contribute a whole new array of racial and national signification to film via associations of individual tracks and artists with particular elements of its variants, such as Funk and Salsa. It could also be used as a clearer representation of gender, along with a more transparent differentiation between the emotions of men and women, owing to the emergence of the disco diva as a key constituent.

As a result, it is the Disco Movie Phase which denotes the point at which film was able to draw upon all its previous innovations and combine them with an exceptionally enabling sub-genre of popular music. This made it possible for a soundtrack of largely pre-recorded pieces of music to both replicate and surpass the functions of a classical film score, as defined by Gorbman. Within the Disco Phase, *Saturday Night Fever* stands out as the primary example which demonstrates how this is achieved. For this reason, it is this phase and this film which marks the conclusion of the period of development investigated herein.

CONCLUSION

In concurring with Donnelly's statement regarding the dearth of engagement with the topic of popular music's relationship with film, as quoted at the opening of the Introduction (see Page 1), this thesis has attempted to address three of the neglected areas of study on this relationship. Firstly, it has investigated the ways in which popular music functioned in the films of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a period which has been largely passed over in respect of detailed textual analysis of this topic. Secondly, it has considered the concept of popular music function as a developmental process through comparison of functional ability during three distinct phases: the British Invasion Phase, the New Hollywood Alienation Phase and the Disco Phase to demonstrate a path of progression. In addition it has examined the Classic American Musical Phase, an initial period lacking in developments. Finally, it has attempted to identify some of the major historical, cultural and industrial aspects, particular to each phase, which played a part in the occurrence of innovation, or lack thereof, in the utilization of popular music in film.

Within the preceding chapters it has been demonstrated that there are innovations linked to each of these individual phases, the causes of which are specific to each. For example, the importance of elements of national identity to advances during the British Invasion Phase, of American political issues to the New Hollywood Alienation Phase and the rise of and backlash against gay rights to the Disco Phase, have all contributed to the overall developmental process.

But, in addition to these findings, it is also important to acknowledge the significance of the whole period analyzed as a single entity since, from a holistic assessment of this investigation, it can also be deduced that there are linked paths of development, common throughout, covering all the phases from the release of *Blackboard Jungle* to that of *Saturday Night Fever*, which made a recurring contribution to the expansion of popular music function.

One such aspect, important throughout this period, is an ongoing change in the relationship between the popular music heard and the visual presence, or absence, of the performer of that music. In the films of the Classic American Musical Phase, such as those of Elvis Presley, the performer is always present when their music is heard. Furthermore, whether in performance or lip-synch mode, the image which accompanies the song is consistently that of them singing.

Whilst performance mode continues during the films of the British Invasion Phase it becomes more stylized, through the use of close-ups, concentrating on various constituents of image such as hair or clothing. This enables a change in relationship between the music and the performer by allowing a more complex and detailed star image to be portrayed via emphasis on the various individual elements important to this.

More significantly, it is also during the British Invasion Phase that the mould of simultaneous synchronization of performance heard and performance seen is broken, with the popular music and its performer being deconstructed into two disconnected individual parts during a musical sequence. This new-found liberty from synchronized performance, exhibited in the “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequences,

enables the Beatles to be simultaneously seen carrying out a whole range of actions unconnected to the music heard. In addition, the “I Should Have Known Better” sequence on the train, which combines diegetic and non-diegetic use of the song, exposes the illusion of visual performance of music on film through demonstration of a song’s continuance regardless of whether the performer is holding a guitar or a deck of cards and regardless of whether the singer is lip-synching the vocals or not. It is at this point that the potential of using popular music as an accompaniment to any scene is first realized. It demonstrates that a piece of popular music can be used either diegetically or non-diegetically, or even as a combination of the two. But, during the British Invasion Phase, this ability is not fully utilized. In spite of this breakdown of performance heard and performer seen into their individual component parts, through the use of non-diegetic music, the physical presence of the musician on screen during sequences in which their songs are heard remains a pre-requisite. Throughout *A Hard Day’s Night* and all the Beatles’ subsequent films, whether in a night club, on a sports field, in a police station, in the middle of Salisbury Plain or on a beach in The Bahamas, when a Beatles song is heard the Beatles are seen on screen. Consequently, even though popular music, at this point, can be used in conjunction with images of actions other than those of performance, the identity of the characters seen carrying out such actions remains restricted to that of the performers of the music.

Via further advances in *Catch Us If You Can* in which, although still present, the relationship between performer seen and their music heard becomes even more distant, with the Dave Clark Five playing totally fictional characters which have no

link to the popular music heard. This deconstruction was to develop further during the New Hollywood Alienation Phase. This resulted from the complete removal of the visual presence of the performer from the film. Throughout *The Graduate*, although the music of Simon and Garfunkel is included, they are nowhere to be seen. This advance further extends the ability of their music to become more fully integrated into the film. Whereas, during the Classic American Musical Phase songs are only included during sequences in which the character played by the performer is seen performing or lip-synching, and then, throughout the British Invasion Phase, although not only included during performance, popular music remains restricted to scenes in which the performers are present, with this subsequent change, potentially, it becomes possible to introduce popular music during any scene, regardless of who is present or what they are doing, although, throughout *The Graduate*, it is limited to sequences in which the lead character is on screen.

However, this is not to say that the star persona of the performer completely loses its value. Although they are no longer seen, elements of this image remain important, in the form of musical allusionism, as audience awareness of facets of this image often contribute to the reading of a scene in which a song is present. In *The Graduate*, Benjamin Braddock's sense of alienation from his parents' lifestyle is reinforced not only by the lyrical content of the music of Simon and Garfunkel, but also by their star image which, at the time, included a strong association with youth alienation from the contemporary dominant American ideologies towards capitalism and war in Vietnam.

This versatility is further expanded in films such as *Easy Rider*, which extends the variety of artists whose music is included in this way from a single singer or band to a compilation of a number of different performers.

The Disco Phase uses popular music in a similar way, removing the visual presence of the performer whilst still exploiting musical allusionism, but also building on this development by extending the diversity of music which is included within a film, beyond that of a single artist to a compilation of different singers and groups.

However, Disco music has additional particular traits which enable it to more fully exploit these developments, in comparison to its rock-based predecessors.

Consequently, it is particularly effective in facilitating an expansion in functional capabilities, since it incorporates Black, Hispanic and White influences within its variants, as well as embracing both male and female vocal performance. It can, therefore, be assimilated within a film more successfully to contribute to a representation of an individual race or gender. Consequently, it allows popular music even greater versatility by enabling representation of a more diverse range of characters and settings. It is at this point, when film incorporates such a multi-faceted form of popular music as disco, that the music is able to attain a similar versatility to a classical score, since it is no longer restricted to a limited range of characters, such as the protagonist or the performers of the music, and their actions.

In addition, the emergence of the disco-inspired night club as a location creates a space in which the music can be included diegetically to contribute to the meaning of a scene, without the need for the distraction of a visual image of musical

performance. As the New Hollywood Alienation Phase liberated the use of non-diegetic popular music to signify Benjamin Braddock's thoughts and emotions, so the Disco Phase liberated its diegetic counterpart for the same purpose.

Consequently, in *Saturday Night Fever*, songs such as "Stayin' Alive" are able to address the theme of Tony's increasing realization of the worthlessness of his life through its repeated use both within and outside the diegesis of the film.

It is also during the Disco Phase that distinctions between specially-composed score and previously-released track become more blurred in the form of the variations of "How Deep Is Your Love?". As a result of this further disconnection between the performer and their song, and its effect upon the structure of popular music in film, variations can now be used to reflect changes within a theme, such as the high and low points in Tony's relationship with Stephanie.

This summary of advances in the association between popular music and its performer illustrates how each of the three progressive phases increasingly achieved a further self-determination in the use of popular music in film in comparison to its predecessors. This made it possible for popular music to progressively escape the conventions of the musical genre, allowing greater freedom in selecting scenes within a film during which it could be included to combine with the other elements of the mise-en-scene to contribute to meaning. Ultimately a point was reached, during the Disco Phase with the release of *Saturday Night Fever*, where, if desired, popular music could largely replicate the functions of a classical score, being introduced during any scene as appropriate.

In addition to the progression of the visual image of the musical performer, another common factor key to the expansion of popular music function, revealed by the analysis of these key phases collectively, is the development of different forms of re-formulation of an individual piece of popular music within a film. As early as the Beatles' second movie, *Help!*, an adapted version of "A Hard Day's Night", played on sitars and Indian percussion instruments, is heard when the group visit an Indian restaurant to denote both the setting and the band's presence. Later, in *The Graduate*, additional segments of "Mrs Robinson" are included. These do not form part of the released version of this track, but instead are recorded specifically for use in the film, partly because the song was still to be completed at the time. In employing this technique the relationship between the popular music and the other mise-en-scene is altered to one in which the song is edited to fit the scene rather than the reverse, which would normally be the case when including a pre-recorded track, an obvious example being the opening scene of *Saturday Night Fever* in which Tony Manero's movements are timed to fit with the beat of "Stayin' Alive". By contrast, when Benjamin Braddock's car gradually slows and stops as it runs out of petrol whilst he is attempting to get to Elaine's wedding, this image can be supported by the sound of the slowing tempo of the strumming guitar because this section of the song was composed specifically for this film, rather than being a section of the pre-recorded song to be sold as a single, or a track on an album. Similarly, as has already been noted earlier in this conclusion, in *Saturday Night Fever*, two different orchestral adaptations of "How Deep Is Your Love?" are included. As with the adaptation of "Mrs Robinson" in *The Graduate*, these are arranged just for the film, in this instance by David Shire, the film's composer,

rather than pre-recorded by the Bee Gees, as was the case with the vocal version. By including these three versions, two of which are created especially for the film, the song is able to function not only as a recurring theme of Tony's relationship with Stephanie, but also as an indicator of different stages of this through the use of up-tempo, downbeat and vocal variations as representations of good and bad points in their friendship, along with the point at which Tony can finally put his feelings in to words. So, from these examples, it can be concluded that, in part, popular music's functional development during the period analyzed is dependent upon its adaptation into forms which more closely resemble the classical score, as described by Gorbman. However, these alternative adaptations do not lose their identity as pieces of popular music since, although they differ from the original version of the song, their association to it remains identifiable, thereby retaining allusions to the familiar version, its lyrics and its performer in a manner which a wholly original score would not.

In addition to collectively exposing continuing changes in the relationship between the visual and aural elements of popular music, analysis of these phases of development also demonstrate the importance of specific factors peculiar to each in the expansion of musical functionality. It is for this reason that innovation in the use of popular music does not always result in its being fully exploited functionally on the first occasion it appears in a film. As previously explained, although it has been established that the "They Remind Me Too Much of You" sequence in the Elvis Presley Movie, *It Happened at the World's Fair*, was the first example of non-diegetic popular music, this use of the song fails to significantly add to its range of

functions, owing to a lack of action in the scene it accompanies. Instead it is the “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequences from *A Hard Day’s Night* which are generally remembered as ground-breaking in this respect. One of the reasons for this, which differentiates it from the earlier example, is the use of the energy of the music to support equally vigorous images which contain a surreal style of humour, associated specifically with a form of contemporary British comedy, which was adopted by the Beatles at this time. Another is the structure of both “Can’t Buy Me Love” sequences as independent musical interludes, which were likely to have been influenced by Richard Lester’s experience of working in commercial television. It is the combination of these factors, which are peculiar to the British Invasion Phase, rather than simply the inclusion of non-diegetic popular music alone, which enables the advance in functionality.

Similarly, during the New Hollywood Alienation Phase, *Easy Rider* includes the music of a variety of artists, but its reliance on rock, a sub-genre dominated by white, male performers, does not allow it to make full use of this development. Additionally, the inclusion of the music predominantly as an accompaniment to the sequences in which Wyatt and Billy ride their motorbikes across the country further restricts its functional potential by limiting its association to those two characters in a single, repeated situation. Conversely, *Saturday Night Fever* takes advantage of the numerous influences on disco culture to allow different pieces of music, which display specific individual traits, to strengthen the importance of themes such as race or gender within a scene. Also, popular music is included throughout, both inside and outside the Odyssey nightclub and within and outside the diegesis of the

film. So, as with the introduction of the non-diegetic pop song, it is not simply the emergence of the compilation soundtrack which enables functional expansion, but also the incorporation of this within a film which is more fully able to exploit it, in the form of a disco movie, which can better convey multiple associations via its collection of music by a number of different artists used in a variety of scenes.

Yet, in spite of the breadth of findings which are summarized above, this remains a topic for further research. As stated in the introduction this thesis aims to address the concept of popular music function as a developmental process, rather than provide a complete assessment of it. This examination is limited in its attempt to trace a path from the first advances to a point at which all the principles of function identified by Gorbman and Smith can be regarded as present in a single film.

Consequently, it does not claim to be a comprehensive analysis of the process containing all films which contributed to the expansion in the range of popular music function. Nor does it assert all relevant phases are included within. The constraints upon the length of this thesis have meant restricting the parameters of study to, what have been identified as, the three most important phases and a key film from each. This has resulted in limiting research to a small number of commercially successful Trans-Atlantic films made during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, which were representative of the British Invasion, New Hollywood Alienation and Disco movies, in order that each of these could be examined in sufficient detail. Even within each of these phases, it could prove beneficial to complete a detailed textual analysis of additional films which may provide a more comprehensive assessment of advances in the range of popular music function. For

example, a more complete examination of the British Invasion Phase could include exploring the Beatles' other movies in detail, along with those showcasing the music of additional relevant artists who formed part of the British Invasion, such as Gerry and the Pacemakers' *Ferry Cross the Mersey* (Jerry Summers, UK, 1964).

Additionally, it needs to be acknowledged that there exist further areas of exclusion which lie outside the phases examined within this work. For example, the contribution of the films of avant-garde and international directors who incorporated popular music, such as Kenneth Anger and Jean-Luc Godard, is omitted and this would also need to be attended to in future research on this topic if a more comprehensive understanding of its development is to be attained.

Furthermore, although a study of the period prior to the British Invasion is included, an examination of phases after the Disco Phase and *Saturday Night Fever* are not considered within this thesis. But, from this omission, it is not my intention to suggest that the Disco Phase marked the end of the development of popular music function in film.

Referring back to the literature review and Reay's analysis of *Goodfellas*, once more, this demonstrates how the complete soundtrack is used to represent advancing years and decades throughout the narrative of the film. Although the concept of popular music denoting the passing of time was identified as present during the period covered by this thesis, it was not achieved using this technique. Instead it was realized via a single song "April Come She Will", the lyrics of which directly describe the passing months and are used in *The Graduate* to signify the longevity of the affair of Benjamin Braddock and Mrs. Robinson.

Therefore, although *Saturday Night Fever* has been identified as the first Hollywood film in which popular music largely replicates all the functions of a classical score and, as such, marks an appropriate point at which to conclude this study, it is evident that developments in alternative methods of achieving individual functions have continued since. As a result, it must be conceded that an analysis of relevant films which follow *Saturday Night Fever* would assist in identifying additional subsequent developments in the intervening period between this film and those cited in the literature review. Such a study would not only extend the period covered herein but would assist in identifying the degree of originality of the method of performing the various functions described in the existing work referred to in the literature review, by filling the gap between the conclusion of this thesis, the late 1970s, and that of other films analyzed in detail, mainly the 1990s onwards. Since the previous chapter has revealed that post-*Saturday Night Fever* films incorporating dance music largely represented a retrograde step, in terms of popular music function, a possible starting point for this could be an examination of what might be labelled as a 'High School Phase'. This would include films written and directed by John Hughes such as *Pretty In Pink* (1986), *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *Weird Science* (1985), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) and *She's Having A Baby* (1988), all of which contain compilation soundtracks of popular music.

Hughes is an important director in the context of popular music function as he had a comprehensive awareness of its worth and this is reflected in his films. As an example of this, the following extract from an interview illustrates his knowledge of musical allusionism:

Simple Minds – I like the stance of their music. There is a certain tone to their music that matched the tone of *The Breakfast Club* – the band as a whole – so you can say Simple Minds is doing the title song. People who knew Simple Minds would [then] have a sense of what the film is going to be, because their politics and the politics of the film were in sync.

(2011)

Another comment from Howard Deutch, the director of *Pretty in Pink*, a film written by Hughes, also demonstrates Hughes' appreciation of popular music's ability to act as a substitute for a score. Commenting on Hughes' decision to include the music of New Order in the film he says "It was just this magical sense that it was score, but it wasn't score. It was source that acted as score. At that time in history, in the 80s, that was something that felt innovative. It had been done before but it felt like it captured the sensibility, it captured the times and it worked" (2011).

Given this consciousness of popular music function, a textual analysis of a selection of these films would reveal how it manifested within them and demonstrate ways in which it may have further developed post *Saturday Night Fever* and the Disco Phase.

In addition, if future research were to include not only the identification of additional advances in specific films, but also an investigation of possible cultural, historical and industrial causes and contributory factors for these, this could assist in the identification of further phases, in addition to those already analyzed within this thesis.

This thesis has aimed to lay the foundations for further research, such as that suggested above. But, primarily, it has achieved its objectives of setting out key phases which illustrate the concept of musical function as a developmental process,

along with salient reasons for their importance. Analysis of each of these phases primary film texts, *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Graduate* and *Saturday Night Fever*, has led to a sharing of Donnelly's conviction "that the relationship between film and [popular] music is not simply one of financial exploitation" (2015: 20). For, whilst accepting the importance of the synergistic commercial relationship between each of these films and its soundtrack album, the presence of the innovation and invention identified within confirm an additional artistic and aesthetic value, which lie beyond such monetary considerations. Additionally, as this thesis has revealed, it is the continual striving for creative originality by directors such as Lester, Nichols and Badham which also contributed to progression in the scope of popular music function, from the non-diegetic "Can't Buy Me Love" sequences of *A Hard Day's Night* to the multiple versions, both tracked and scored, of "How Deep Is Your Love?" included within *Saturday Night Fever*.

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