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How does film music communicate meaning?

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on how film music communicates meaning by looking at the development of film music across the years, the general functions of film music and the semiotic nature of music.

The first chapter discusses the function of film music. Other topics covered here include: the persons involved in the post-production process, early film music history and discussion on the development of film music.

The second chapter builds upon the knowledge of the first chapter by looking at the semiotic nature of music. This chapter also discusses the development of semiotics from linguistics and issues that arise from analysing music semiotically.

The final chapter takes the theories discussed from the first two chapters and applies them, using a scene from the film *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008) as a case study.

The conclusion argues that there has been a convergence of styles and techniques in film music over the years. This breaking down of barriers has allowed filmmakers to communicate meaning through music, more faithfully.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate how film music communicates meaning. This investigation is not a study of all music and all film, as that would exceed the scope of this project. Instead, this investigation will focus on music and films of Western origin, within the context of Western culture. The meaning communicated by film music is an interesting and relevant issue because music, in some form, has always persistently accompanied films, even after the advent of recorded sound in the 20th century. Moreover, as time has progressed, film music has entered into increasing prominence, as filmmakers invest more and more time and money into producing and releasing soundtracks.

Chapter one discusses the function of film music, beginning with brief comment on the roles of the sound designer and composer, as they are important protagonists in deciding what sounds go where and when. This chapter will then go on to discuss the historical relationship between music and the moving image and the role music has played in film. The main useful resources for the first half of this chapter were works by Dakic (2007) and Clark and Spohr (2002). Dakic (2007) and Clark and Spohr (2002) provided information and insight on the roles of the sound designer and composer. In addition to this, Dakic (2007) and Clark and Spohr (2002) also provide comment on the post-production process of spotting.

The main works used to discuss the function of film music, are from the prominent film music theorists Gorbman (1987), Levinson (1996), Larsen (2007) and Tagg (2008). Many of the theorists take ideas from Gorbman's (1987) work on Classical Hollywood practice. Gorbman (1987) gives the principles behind the use of film music in narrative film. Gorbman's (1987) chapter[1] is also useful for this investigation because it looks specifically at orchestral music, which is the type of music that the analysis in the final chapter mainly consists of. Gorbman's (1987) work is complementary to the work of Levinson (1996), to the point that in some cases his theories are even interchangeable. Levinson's (1996), work also goes into detail about how music can function as an indicator for the actors and audience's emotions. Larsen's (2007) work was another useful resource for showing how film music supports the narrative. This work is supported by the other resources and also looks at leitmotifs, which is a major part of the score of the case study. The last helpful resource for this chapter, by Tagg (2008), provides another list of film music functions and also contains definitions of general film music terms, which is useful for the entire project.

The second chapter will then build upon the knowledge of the first chapter by looking at the semiotics of music. This chapter will firstly draw the two chapters together, discuss the development of semiotics from linguistics and then discuss general semiotic theories. The semiotic nature of music within the context of Western Culture will also be discussed. This chapter will also look at the issues that can occur when analysing music from a semiotic standpoint. The main

[1] Classical Hollywood practice and the model of Max Steiner (Gorbman 1987), for more information see Bibliography.

useful resources for this chapter were works from Tagg (1999), Van Leeuwen (1999) and Chandler (2011). Tagg's (1999) paper[2] was a starting point for most of the research as Tagg (1999) summarises the main semiotic theories. Tagg's (1999) paper also provided the theoretical basis for the arguments showing the faults of semiotic analysis, which have been included in this chapter. Van Leeuwen's (1999) work was useful for providing insight into the linguistic past of semiotics, due to his incorporation of phonetics into his semiotic theory. Van Leeuwen's (1999) work was also useful when discussing the general theories of semiotics. Chandler's (2011) work was useful for discussing the development of semiotics and general semiotic theories as he provides a historical account of the development of semiotics from linguistics. Chandler's (2011) work was also useful for providing further criticisms and strengths of semiotic analysis.

The final chapter will be an analysis of music from a scene of *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008), composed by Harry Gregson-Williams. This chapter will provide an analysis utilising theories discussed in Chapter one and Chapter two, showing how they can be put into practice. The conclusion to this investigation will summarise all of the main findings and draw conclusions based on the evidence presented.

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[2] *Introductory notes to the semiotics of Music* (Tagg 1999), for more information see Bibliography

Chapter One

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the function of film music. I mainly use theories from Gorbman (1987), Tagg (2008) and Levinson (1996) to discuss theories pertaining to the function of film music. This chapter begins with a brief explanation of the two types of film music (Diegetic[3] and Non-Diegetic[4]); discussions on roles of the Sound Supervisor and Composer; a brief history on the development of film music then ensues, followed by a brief discussion on theories as to why music originally accompanied films. The latter part of this chapter discusses the function of film music and concludes with a summary of the main points.

Film music occurs in two forms, Diegetic and Non-Diegetic. Diegetic music comes from the narrative world of the film (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Non-Diegetic music is music that does not come from the narrative world of the film (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Two of the main people involved in deciding where and when the d music goes in a film are, the sound supervisor and composer (Carlin 1991, p56). The sound supervisors role is mainly to be the head of the sound department, "…with a staff of dozens of sound editors, required to realize a complete sound job for the movie." (Dakic 2007, p2). The composer is brought in during the post-production process and is mainly responsible for the score. The director and producers will consult with the composer during post-production, providing direction with regards to the score (Clark & Spohr 2002, p25). Other duties of the composer and sound

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[3] Also known as 'Source music' (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music)
[4] Also known as 'Underscore' (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music)

supervisor include consulting during spotting[5].

The film making process did not always involve a designated sound supervisor and music composer. Due to a lack of sound supervision and set pieces, the orchestras and soloists that accompanied the early silent films, often played music that was unsuitable (Reay 2004, p6). Eventually, in the early 20th century, production companies took more control over the music accompanying films and the profession of film music composer began to experience increased distinction (Reay 2004, p6). Nowadays, the Sound Supervisor is on hand to consult and original music is commissioned for films, although, occasionally pre-recorded music is included as well. Moreover, in this post silent film and Classical Hollywood cinema era (1940's onwards), composers no longer feel limited to European styles of composition and instrumentation. Now a rich array of jazz, big band music, folk and even blues can be heard in modern soundtracks (Brown 2004, p66). These changes are briefly summarised, using examples, in the table below.

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[5] The process where, "…decisions are made regarding the placement of music cues and sound effects…" (Clark & Spohr 2002, p24).

Table 1 Development of film music's genres

Decade	Composer	Example Film	Genre/Musical Content
Late 19th Century no set pieces, mainly orchestral ensembles and European, Romantic era scores			
1910's	Joseph Carl Breil (1870-1926)	*The Birth of a Nation* (1915)	European, Romantic, Orchestral
1920's	Cecil Copping (1888–1966) (Un-ccredited)	*The Lost World* (1925)	European, Romantic, Orchestral
1930's	Max Steiner (1888-1971)	*Gone With The Wind* (1939)	European, Romantic, Orchestral
1940's	Scott Bradley (1891-1977)	*The Cat That Hated People* (1948)	Serialism, A-tonal
1950's	Louis (1920-1989) & Bebe Barron (1925-2008)	*Forbidden Planet* (1956)	Electronic
1960's	Quincy Jones's (1933-)	*In The Heat Of The Night* (1967)	Jazz, Blues and Folk
1970's	Various	*Saturday Night Fever* (1977)	Pop, Disco, R'n'B, Orchestral, Pre-recorded songs
1980's	Various	*Top Gun* (1986)	Pop, Rock, Pre-recorded songs
1990's	John Williams (1932-)	Schindler's List (1993)	European, Romantic, Orchestral, Ethnic, Middle Eastern

2000's	Harry Gregson-Williams (1961-)	*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008)	Electronic, European, Romantic, Orchestral, Ethnic
2010's	Trent Reznor (1965-) & Atticus Ross (1968-)	*The Social Network* (2010)	Dance, Pop, Pre-recorded songs, Electronic, Percussive, A-tonal, Orchestral

From the above table, one can see that although traditional romantic orchestral soundtracks have remained, composers eventually had more freedom and were no longer slaves to European compositional styles. Also, as time has progressed, filmmakers have made more use of pre-recorded music not originally intended for film soundtracks[6]. Moreover, some scores even began to consist entirely of electronic music, without any kind of traditional instrumentation. In addition to this, traditional orchestral scores are now being infused with other genres and styles relative to the cultural context of the films. For example William's (1932-) use of Middle Eastern styles in a soundtrack accompanying a film about Jews in the Second World War or Louis (1920-1989) and Bebe Barron's (1925-2008) purely electronically generated music for the Science Fiction film *Forbidden Planet* (1956). These changes help to further reinforce and communicate meaning, as even the presence of a certain type of music can be a 'symbol' (Tagg 1999, p4) for something.

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[6] For example, *Saturday Night Fever* (1977).

No theorist has a solid answer as to why music originally accompanied films. Despite this, filmmakers still take advantage of this custom. Traditionally, music is primarily present to serve the story, ensuring "...unobstructed narrative explosion." (Kalinak 1992, xv). The narrative goes unhindered, according to Gorbman (1987, p73), by functioning as an 'inaudible' (Gorbman 1987, p73), 'cohesive filling' (Gorbman 1987, p89); there to distract viewers attention from the technical features of the film (Levinson 1996, p258) and to fill the silences (Gorbman 1987, p89). Filmmakers do this firstly by making sure that the musicians playing the non-diegetic music are not seen (Gorbman 1987, p74). Secondly, the music is kept subordinated to the voice and other important sounds (Gorbman 1987, p77). The other way this is accomplished is by using music as, what Larsen (2007, p169) describes as, a 'reading aid'. This involves using music to emphasise transitions in scenes, mark changes in the narrative and adapt to the changes in mood (Larsen 2007, p169). This also involves distracting the viewer's attention away from editing techniques, by keeping the music consistent between changes in scene or viewpoint (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

Film music can also be used to function as an indicator of emotion, indicating the general story-appropriate mood of a scene as a whole (Levinson1996, p 257-258). Moreover, due to not always being able to hear characters thoughts, film music is also used to function as a signifier of characters emotions (Gorbman 1987, p73). An example of this is the sad sounding music that underscores the unhappy expressions on the faces of the characters of *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (2009), when the main character appears to be dead. The purpose of

this, according to Levinson (1996, p258), is to make the audience more emotionally involved in the story unfolding on screen.

Using music as a signifier of emotion is a form of what Gorbman (1987, p73) describes as Narrative Cueing. Narrative Cueing comes in two forms, referential and connotative (Gorbman 1987, p73). Describing a piece of film music as being in the referential form denotes that the music is being used to give referential and narrative cues. This means; the music is in some way being used to signify some fact or state of affairs which is "…already fully evident…" (Levinson 1996, p257) in the narrative. These states of affairs can involve: beginnings and endings, anticipation of subsequent action, times and places and points of view (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

To describe a piece of film music as being in the connotative form of Narrative Cueing is to mean that the music has been used to anchor the images in meaning (Gorbman 1987, p84). This, according to Gorbman (1987, p79), means that the music functions as a catalyst in the "…textual process of slipping in and out of the discourse of realism…" (Gorbman 1987, p79). Connotative cueing is especially evident in fantasy films, when music is used to try and manipulate the audience into feeling an "…"epic feeling."…In tandem with the visual film narrative…" (Gorbman 1987, p81). This also means that the music is used to form the basis of the audience's emotions (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music), suggesting to the viewers how they are supposed to feel (Levinson 1996, p258). In addition to this, music that is used for connotative cueing: "…expresses moods and connotations which…aid in interpreting events and indicate the

moral/class/ethnic values of characters." (Gorbman 1987, p84).

Often, the function of film music is to establish the geographical, cultural and historical setting of a film (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). This has been an easier task since the diversification of film music, post the Classical Hollywood cinema era. This is done by composing in a 'genericist' (Negus 1996, p145) style; by 'quoting' (Larsen 2007, p172) and or incorporating styles that are specific to certain genres; related to specific cultures and or locations; at a particular time. The audience then add their own cultural significance to the music and film, by authenticating it through Cultural or meta-authenticity[7] (Moore 2002, p215). An example of film music being used to establish a cultural, geographical and historical context is found in Quincy Jones's (1933-) score for *In The Heat Of The Night* (1967). Jones's (1933-) infusion of jazz, folk and blues emulates the musical styles that were popular in the culture, time and area[8] of the films setting.

Film music is also habitually used to define and emphasise characters. Emphasising characters is done by the repetition of a particular melody called a leitmotif[9]. Whenever a character is seen or mentioned, their leitmotif is heard, "It is hardly possible to establish a leitmotif more pedagogically." (Larsen 2007, p170). An example of a leitmotif can be found in Ennio Morricone's (1928-) score for the film, *Once upon a Time in the West* (1968). Morricone composed

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[7] A form of Third Person Authenticity (Moore 2002, p216). This type of authenticity involves the "...validating of 'synthetic' texts through the "...meta-reflexivity of their author..." (Moore 2002, p215).
[8] This film was set in the Southern American state of Mississippi.
[9] A musical device that hearkens back to films music's European roots popularised by the German composer Wagner (1813-1883) (Buhler 2010, p 36).

an "...almost tuneless song built around the lone wail of a harmonica."
(Pramaggiore & Wallis 2005, p228). This motif was then constantly associated
with a character called Harmonica[10] (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2005, p229).

Occasionally music is also used to comment upon the action on screen. A
popular way to do this is through counterpoint, meaning that the connotative
sphere of the music is contradictory to the action on screen (Tagg 2008,
Functions of film music). An example of this would be the George Fenton's
(1950-) romantic love theme that underscores an execution scene in *Anna and
the King* (1999).

The final function of film music to be discussed in this investigation is the
function of enhancing realism and emphasising real sounds[11] (Tagg 2008,
Functions of film music). This was a common function of film music in the
early silent films and the Classical Hollywood cinema era. Around that time,
music had to tell a story realistically "...in both an Aristotelian sense (truth to
be probable) and a naturalistic one (truth to historical fact)." (Bordwell 1985,
p3). Occasionally, emphasis of real sounds is done by *'Mickey-mousing'*[12];
when music emphasises real sounds, it is also fulfilling the function of acting as
a symbol. This can involve:

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[10] Charles Bronson.

[11] This could possibly support the idea that film music was originally used to make the silent
figures seem less irrational (Buhler, Flinn & Neumeyer 2000, p9).

[12] A term that refers to the synchronisation of musical effects with images on screen
(Gorbman 1987, p87).

"…using music to represent something or someone known by the audience from the narrative but not currently part of the narrative…" (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

The idea of symbolism in film music will be expanded upon in the second chapter. An example of this function can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008) when the composer utilises electronically generated drums to imitate the racing heartbeat of one of the characters.

Film music has come a long way, instead of consisting of purely Eurocentric compositional styles and instrumentation, film music is now more likely to be an amalgamation of various styles of music. Consultation by sound supervisors and increased artistic freedom for composers has aided this process and influenced the function music plays in films. Although there is no solid answer as to why music originally accompanied films, filmmakers have utilised this practice to continually aid and enhance the narrative of their films. As a fan of soundtracks and music in general, I often notice and purposely listen out for the music in films. Nevertheless, clever editing techniques make sure the music does not often distract, leaving music to serve its main function, which is to aid and enhance the narrative.

Chapter 2

The purpose of this chapter is to build upon the knowledge of the function of film music by looking at the semiotics of music. I mainly utilise theories from Chandler (2011), Tagg (1999), Van Leeuwen (1999) and Peirce's (1839-1914) threefold signification category in my discussion on semiotics. This chapter will firstly provide a brief recapitulation of the first chapter, linking the two subjects of the chapters together, then briefly mention the development of semiotics from linguistics and look at general semiotic theories. The semiotic nature of music within the context of Western Culture will be also discussed. The latter part of this chapter will look at the issues of analysing music semiotically and conclude with a summary of the main points.

As was established in the first chapter, film music's function[13], is prescribed by and reliant upon a series of signification conventions designed to enhance realism and serve the narrative (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). When film music successfully resides within and submits to these conventions, the music appears 'inaudible' (Gorbman 1987, p73), as the spectators who are familiar with the conventional practices, have no need to attend to the music consciously, as it fits the 'status quo' (Gorbman 1987, p76). Theorists such as Gorbman (1987, pp76-77), suggest that subversion of the accepted and understood conventions can be perceived to be distracting to audiences familiar with a certain signification system, as the music would appear to not fit the action or suitably communicate meaning in an understandable way to the

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[13] In Western cinema, the cinema style this investigation focuses on.

audience. This has not always been the case, however, as the breaking down of certain conventional barriers, like genre and instrumentation, have actually come to assist the narrative, not distract from it[14]. With these points in mind, it appears that to further understand how film music communicates meaning, one has to look at the symbolic nature of music itself, which means undertaking an investigation of the study of semiotics and its application to music.

Semiotics can be defined as:

"…the study of signs and symbols, especially the relation between written or spoken signs and their referents in the physical world or the world of ideas." (Tagg 1999, p3).

This study of signs developed out of Linguistics[15], which was further developed into semiology[16] following the research of the founder of linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914); another important protagonist in the development of modern semiotics; then developed Saussure's (1857-1913) theories into modern semiotics, the formal doctrine of signs closely related to logic. Semiotics began to become a major approach to cultural studies in the late 1960s, as a result of the work of Roland Barthes (1915-1980) whose work[17] greatly increased scholarly awareness of this approach (Chandler 2011, Introduction).

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[14] For example the inclusion of jazz, folk and blues instrumentation and techniques to represent a Southern American states in Quincy Jones's (1933-) score for *In The Heat Of The Night* (1967).

[15] The systematic study of the structure and development of language in general or of particular languages (Cambridge Dictionary Online, Definition of linguistics)

[16] The studying of the role of signs as part of social life is was what Saussure (1857-1913) referred to as semiology (Chandler 2011, Introduction).

[17] *Mythologies* (1957), see Bibliography for further details.

Semiotics is still quite closely linked with linguistics; this is evidenced by the work of the semiotician Van Leeuwen[18] (1999), who draws close connections between musical symbolism and Phonetics[19]. Thus, according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p4), the study of semiotics concerns itself with "…what you can 'say' with *sound*, and how you can interpret the things other people 'say with sound'." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p4). Just like phonetics, a semiotic analysis takes into consideration the meanings behind aspects of time, pitch and dynamics. However, a semiotic analysis of music also demands the consideration of: melodic aspects, instrumentation, tonality and texture, venue and even electro-musical aspects such as reverb, panning and mixing (Tagg 1982, pp47-48).

The signification theory that this investigation relies on comes from the work of Peirce (1839-1914). Peirce (1839-1914) developed a sign typology, which divides by trichotomy every sign into the basic categories of 'Icon', 'Index' or 'Symbol'; these categories help to explain the types of signification that can occur in any given society or medium (Peirce 1935, p50). Signs considered to be 'Icons' (Tagg 1999, p4) bear a physical resemblance to what they represent, for example, a photograph or a map. One of the most obvious musical examples of an 'Icon' (Tagg 1999, p4) is traditional Western notation[20] (Tagg 1999, p4). Signs that are considered to be 'Indexical' have a "…matter of fact…" (Peirce 1935, p51) association with the object they represent and are connected through causality to what they represent (Tagg 1999, p4). Verbal metaphors are

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[18] *Speech, Music, Sound* (1999), see Bibliography for more details.
[19] A branch of linguistics, the study of the sounds made by the human voice in speech (Cambridge Dictionary Online, Definition of phonetics)
[20] For example, legato slurs and staccato dots (Tagg 1999, p 4).

examples of 'Indices', for example, the use of the phrase, 'the crown' is used to represent the monarch because the monarch wears a crown (Tagg 1999, p4). A sign that is considered a 'Symbol' is connected merely through convention to what it represents and "...is not primarily based on structural similarity (icons)...or causality (indices)." (Tagg 1999, p4). A musical example of a 'Symbol' in a Peircian (1839-1914) sense would be the use of minor keys to represent sadness. This is because in Western music there is nothing apart from convention that connects minor keys to sadness (Valentine 1962, p213). Most of the semiotic devices in non-diegetic[21] film music, such as Anaphones[22] (Van Leeuwen 1999, p181), would fall into the categories of 'Index' or 'Symbol', as the musicians cannot be seen.

Pierces (1839-1914) final category, 'Symbol' (Tagg 1999, p4), highlights another point, which is the issue of the imposition of culture upon meaning and the importance of knowing the signification 'code' (Van Leeuwen 1999, p4) to infer meaning. Film music has faced this issue as the music has continued to diversify. Composers have become bricoleurs (Hebdidge 1997, p104) by incorporating and 'quoting' (Larsen 2007, p172) genres outside of the Romantic era and styles from other cultures in modern scores. How does this music communicate meaning to Western audiences who are perhaps unaware of the signification 'code' (Van Leeuwen 1999, p4) of certain cultures? Van Leeuwen's (1999, p9) answer to this question is thus; once these styles have been documented by Western anthropologists and distributed through Western

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[21] Non-Diegetic film music is music that does not come from the narrative world of the film, or Underscore (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).
[22] A semiotic device for communicating meaning "...based on a criterion of verisimilitude." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p181).

distribution chains; they have already been "...transformed and incorporated into Western culture and its frame of reference." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p9). Therefore, a piece of music that is unfamiliar to Western audiences, can be a 'Symbol' (Tagg 1999, p4) in itself of the unfamiliar to Western audiences; possibly ignorant of the intra-cultural context that a member of the culture where the music came from might have (Van Leeuwen 1999, p9). As for non-Western cultures, due to Anglo-American dominance of the media and popular music forms, it could be postulated that non-Western cultures would perhaps be more aware of Western musical conventions, than Westerners are aware of non-Western cultures musical conventions (Lipsitz 2007, p50).

This issue highlights one of the problems with undertaking a semiotic analysis of music. Most studies on semiotics have focused on Anglo-American music and culture. Therefore, not all semiotic theories are applicable to all music from all cultures (Tagg 1999, p7). Theories based on Western music would be hard to apply to music such as Gamelan, which contains instruments evoking their own cultural significance in Indonesia (Spiller 2008, p84). Furthermore, Gamelan music does not even contain all the notes normally found on a piano and even adds notes not present in Western scales (Spiller 2008, p78).

Moreover, some theorists, such as Stravinsky (1936, p91), even go as far as to suggest that:

"...music is, by its very nature, powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature. If,

as is nearly always the case, music appears to express something, this is only an illusion and not a reality." (Stravinsky 1936, p91)

Advocates of this idea suggest that it should be understood that meaning in music depends upon ones familiarity with the signification 'language' and each culture has their own 'language' of signification, relative to that culture (Burkholder 2007, p77).

Another problem with undertaking a semiotic analysis of music is that meaning and 'truth' is only negotiated and renegotiated by those in power, in order to produce a shared view of the world, to have a common conception of reality that can be used as a basis for judgement and action (Van Leeuwen 1999, p158). Therefore:

"…'truth' is, in the end, 'true to the values held by the group whose truth it is', rather than 'true to some kind of objective reality'…." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p158)

Thus, dependent upon the analyst (Van Leeuwen 1999, p158).

Secondly, some analysts such as Saussure (1857-1913), evaluate using the "…ahistorical…" (Tagg 1999, p7) synchronic semantics method[23], instead of analysing in the fashion of diachronic semantics[24] (Tagg 1999, p7). This is a problem because not every set of musical sounds is going to have the same

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[23] Looking at a symbolic system at one given point in time in one given culture (Tagg 1999, p7).
[24] Studying meaning as part of a dynamic symbolic system constantly changing in space and time (Tagg 1999, p7).

meaning at different times in history, even within the same culture (Tagg 1999, p7).

Lastly, music is polysemic, coming from Greek words *poly* (πολυ = many) and *séma* (σήμα= sign), meaning that music can signify many things at the same time (Tagg 1999, p7-8). Therefore, a musical device cannot be said to signify just one thing, as many semioticians suggest. For example, in Western culture, a high-pitched male singing voice can signify assertiveness (Van Leeuwen 1999, p134). However, within the same culture a high-pitched male singing voice can also be understood as effeminate, raising issues of gender ambiguity (Van Leeuwen 1999, p134).

Despite the problems involved with semiotics, the science is still important as it reminds audiences to not "…take 'reality' for granted as something having a purely objective existence …" (Chandler 2011, Introduction). Signs of any kind can be split into three main categories, 'icons', 'indices' and 'symbols' (Tagg 1999, p4). These categories are useful as t any phenomena perceived as a sign can fit in them. The close links semiotics has with phonetics means that many modern semioticians still make connections between music and speech. This is not a fault in semiotics, merely an observation. From semiotics, one learns about signs and symbols making a study of semiotics relevant to film music, as Western film music is guided by a series of signification conventions. In fact, part of the function of film music is to act as a sign to signify meaning of some kind (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Lastly, despite the rigidly prescribed conventions, the breaking down of barriers in film music has expanded the

semiotic resources available to composers, allowing more tools for the

interpretation and production of meaning (Van Leeuwen 1999, p10).

Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to show an application of the theories that were

discussed in chapter one and two. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the

function of film music, the development of film music and semiotics by

analysing the music from a scene from *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince

Caspian* (2008), as a case study. The conclusion summarises the main findings

based on analytical evidence.

Return of The Lion

1:58:48 – 1:59.01 – Queen Lucy is chased through the forest

My analysis begins at chase scene. At this point in the film, there are fast paced

drums, juxtaposed against the fast paced gallops of the horse Queen Lucy is

escaping on and intermittent shots of her face looking fearful. Fast paced

quintuplets in the strings also accompany images of Queen Lucy being chased

on horseback through a forest, fearful of assassins who are perusing her.

Film music is often used to reveal "…something about a character's

psychological condition…" (Levinson 1996, p257). The fast quintuplet rhythm

in the strings and percussion could be representative of the fearfully intense

heartbeat felt by Queen Lucy as she tries to escape her attackers. The fast

rhythm of the drums is an example of an Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p32), a useful

'indexical' (Tagg 1999, p4) semiotic device for communicating meaning in film

music "…based on a criterion of verisimilitude." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p181).

Anaphones are useful because they relate directly to phenomena[25] in the real world, based on logic and convention, so listeners can ascribe a high level of modality to them, making use of Social Authenticity (Moore 2002, p215). The particular Anaphone used here is a Composite Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p26), as it is a mixture of Anaphones. In this case, Sonic and Kinetic Anaphones are used. Sonic Anaphones (Tagg 1999, p23) are musical representations of non-musical sounds (Tagg 1999, p23). The non-musical sound in question is the implied fast beating of a heart. The other Anaphone, a Kinetic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23), is the musical representation of movement (Tagg 1999, p23). The movement represented here could be the fast gallops of the horses of the assassins and Queen Lucy.

The way a society handles time in music can to be understood to be representative of the way that society handles time in general (Van Leeuwen 1999, p38). A regular beat is considered by musical theorists to represent a high degree of acceptance and identification with time (Van Leeuwen 1999, p38). Therefore, it could be postulated that the fast regular tempo stresses the importance of moving quickly whilst being pursued by assassins. However, by doing that, the music subverts the Classical Hollywood ideal of "..."*Inaudibility*"..." (Gorbman 1987, p73).

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[25] The phenomenon in this case is the fast beating of a heart and the swift gallops of the horses.

Azlan suddenly appears, running through the forest at this point[26]. Azlan's character is emphasized by a leitmotif (Larsen 2007, p170); containing an ascending high-pitched melody line, which falls around the middle, then rises again. According to Van Leeuwen (1999, p5), a high-pitched melody that rises and falls is representative of joy, as that it what we do with our voices when expressing joy[27]. Therefore, this motif not only emphasizes Azlan's character but also associates Azlan with the emotion of joy. The rises and falls in pitch are also considered to be an expression of surprise[28] (Van Leeuwen 1999, p95). Surprise and joy are appropriate responses to seeing Azlan at this point, as this is the first time, (in the narrative world of the film), that he has appeared in person to Queen Lucy for a year, furthermore, Azlan is also expected to save Queen Lucy.

The motif is embellished with bells and high-pitched vocals and the music continues to heighten in pitch after the motif. This embellished form of Azlan's motif could also be an example of "…connotative cueing…" (Gorbman 1987, p82), in the form of a 'symbol'[29] (Tagg 1999, p4). This is because as Schafer (1986, p122) suggested:

"…If composers wish to suggest a sublime or superhuman event or sensation they make considerable use of those instruments which lie far outside the human vocal range. This is most evident in church music, where the extremely high and low notes of

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[26] This is the first time Azlan has appeared in person (and not in a dream) in the film world.
[27] This idea borrows from phonetics (Van Leeuwen (1999, p5).
[28] This idea borrows from phonetics (Van Leeuwen 1999, p95).
[29] A symbol according to C. S. Pierce (1839-1914) (Tagg 1999, p4)

the pipe organ can be used to suggest the voices of God and celestial beings." (Schafer 1986, p122).

This idea is appropriate for Azlan's motif as he is supposed to be a metaphor for Christ, so the composer could be subtly hinting at Azlan's Christ-like qualities here. As Azlan continues to run through the forest alongside Queen Lucy and her attackers, the pitch of the music continues to rise. This is a tense moment in the film and the music facilitates this tension by continuously raising in pitch (Schoenberg 1983, p190). According to Van Leeuwen (1999, p131), rises in pitch and high pitches are synonymous with tension because from ones own experience, when humans speak, there is a certain level of tension needed in the vocal chords to produce high-pitched sounds[30]. Therefore, "...the sound that results from tensing not only *is* tense, it also *means* 'tense' – and *makes* tense." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131).

1:59:11 – 1:59:15

At this point the music is performing the function of musically underlining movement (Tagg 2008 Functions of film music). This is evidenced by the 'iconic' (Tagg 1999, p4) cessation of the drumbeat when Azlan and Queen Lucy stop moving. Moreover, when the action comes to a climax, so does the music.

Azlan's roar interrupts the action momentarily, after his roar there is no dialogue or narration. In this instance, the responsibility of

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[30] See footnote no. 27.

"...signifying...some fact or state of affairs in the film..." (Levinson 1996, p257) falls on the music. The state of affairs to be indicated at this point is a sense of interruption. This interruption is reflected by an abrupt sounding of orchestral cymbals, the cessation of the drumbeat and a sudden decrease in volume, which in itself interrupts the continuity of the music by suddenly removing it from the 'Figure', (the centre of attention) (Schafer 1977, p152), of the music. Queen Lucy accidentally falls off her horse. The music then decreases in volume but sustains the interrupted cadence[31], performing the function of anticipating subsequent action (Tagg 2008 Functions of film music). This is because through convention, interrupted Cadences symbolically "...invoke a feeling of incompleteness." (Day & Jarrett, 2008, p116) in Western societies, as they do not resolve to the tonic[32]. Instead, they end on a chord other than the tonic; generally chord VI (Day & Jarrett 2008, p115). (Further theory on this matter is contained in the Appendix. See point: i).

Eventually, Azlan appears in full view and he and Queen Lucy stare at one another. There is no dialogue here and the focus is entirely on Azlan and Queen Lucy. A leitmotif (Larsen 2007, p170) which initially appeared in the first film; (when Azlan stared at the Snow Queen, just before he bit her face off); underscores them staring at each other. One of the functions of this motif is to fill in the empty spaces in the action (Gorbman 1987, p89). The motif consists of: an abundance of reverb, sustaining the last chord of the Interrupted Cadence; an electronically manipulated and or generated breathy wooden flute sound, thoroughly doused with reverb, which pans left to right automatically; a drone

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[31] Chords V to VI
[32] Chord I

made from an electronically generated instrument, (again with lots of reverb) and there also appears to be an ambiguous or total suspension of metronomic time here as well.

In fantasy films such as this, the music is used for the representation of the irrational (Gorbman 1987, p79). This motif functions as an indicator for the irrational, surreal, and ethereal nature of the action here, emphasizing that it is not contiguous with the previous action. Surrealism and ethereality is communicated through the composer's subversion of traditional Eurocentric scoring techniques, (that typified early film music), by the inclusion of a drone accentuated by reverb, which is an Eastern compositional technique that subverts metronomic time. This technique has the cultural significance of ethereality because the continuous sound is considered 'inhuman', as drones are associated with nature and cannot be reproduced by the human voice except through specialist singing techniques (Van Leeuwen 1999, p52). In addition to this, the drone's subversion of metronomic time can also be said to go against the natural rhythmic nature of human life (Van Leeuwen 1999, p53). Take a heartbeat for example; healthy hearts beat at regular intervals, rhythmically, everyday and night (Tagg 1984, Understanding Musical 'Time Sense').

Excessive amplification of the reverb parameter is also considered to be a contributing factor to representing the surreal because it skews the listener's perception of depth in the music (Van Leeuwen 1999, p174). It makes it hard to distinguish sounds as 'Figure'[33] or 'Ground'[34] (Schafer 1977, p152), as

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[33] The centre of attention (Schafer 1977, p152)

everything sounds far away and out of focus (Van Leeuwen 1999, p25). In this case, the most prominent sound is the electronically generated[35] wooden flute sound. This electronically generated instruments inclusion demonstrates the diversification of film music post the silent and Classical Hollywood cinema era. The very inclusion of this instrument also adds to the surreal and ethereal nature of this moment due to the instruments connections with Eastern mysticism (Paul 2007, p52). Although this instrument is prominent, the automated panning and reverb make it hard to perceive this sound as 'Figure' or 'Ground' (Schafer 1977, p152). This undermines the traditional "…figure/ground…melody/accompaniment dualism…" (Adlington 2000, p171) that Western listeners are used to and thus adds to the surreal nature of the action.

There are only two characters on screen at this moment, Azlan and Queen Lucy who are focusing entirely on each other. On top of illustrating the surreal nature of this moment, the music also gives an indication to the intimacy of the action and the fact that there are only two individuals focusing on each other. Intimacy is communicated through the composer's use of a breathy, wooden flute sounding, electronically generated[36] sound. Semiotics borrows a lot from Phonology and most semioticians would equate a 'breathy' sound with intimacy (Morton & Tatham 2006, p223) because one has to be in close proximity to hear a whisper.

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[34] The context (Schafer 1977, p152)
[35] Or electronically manipulated.
[36] Again, it could also be an electronically manipulated acoustic instrument.

Once Azlan and Queen Lucy are finished staring at each other there is a swift and decisive change in the action from being surreal and still, to a sudden outburst of action, as Azlan suddenly displays aggressive predatory behaviour towards Queen Lucy's attackers. The music heard here is a short brass melody in a minor key. At this point, the music functions as what Larsen (2007, p169) described as a 'Reading Aid', by marking transitions with a new type of music (Larsen 2007, p169).

In Western music[37], minor tonalities are generally associated with sadness (Valentine 1962, p213). However, researching the semiotics of tonality, it has become clear that there is no natural reason why minor keys should appear 'sad' (Valentine 1962, p213). After conducting an experiment, the theorist Valentine (1962, p213) concluded that:

"...the custom of setting sad songs to minor keys originated without any felt suitability of the key to the ideas, but that gradually, by repetition of the association, we have come to connect the two, so that a piece of music in a minor key now usually appears to us sad or plaintive." (Valentine 1962, p213).

Further details on the experiment are contained in the Appendix (See point: ii). When Azlan, a large male lion, displays predatory behaviour by jumping on the soldiers pursuing Queen Lucy a brass 'stinger' (Gorbman 1987, p88) is heard. The inclusion of brass here is appropriate, from a semiotic point of view, as brass is considered to have 'symbolic' and 'indexical'[38] (Tagg 1999, p4)

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[37] Western music is the kind of music that is heard on this soundtrack.
[38] As theorised by Pierce (1839-1914) (Tagg 1999, p4)

associations with "…predatory behaviour (due to the history of the use of brass instruments in hunting calls)…" (Dibben 2003, p196). The brass instruments also reinforce the masculinity of Azlan, as they are "…associated with masculinity…" (Dibben 2003, p196), due to brass instruments affiliation with hunting, a pursuit generally thought of as being dominated by men. The use of brass also emphasises Azlan's character (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music), as according to semiotic analysts, brass can also have "…connotations of importance, dignity and drama." (Bignell 2002, p113), a possible reason for its use in factual media such as the news on television (Bignell 2002, p113). This moment is tense and the presence of a stinger in the brass functions as a connotative narrative cue (Gorbman 1987, p73). This is because a stinger is a "…musical *sforzando* used to illustrate sudden dramatic tension…" (Gorbman 1987, p88).

After Azlan disperses Queen Lucy's attackers, the music changes back to the staring texture as he stares at Queen Lucy again. Unusual electronically manipulated instruments can be heard in this section. As mentioned before, these factors help to represent the diversification of film music, the surreal and facilitate the "…mesmerizing of the viewer…to facilitate emotional involvement in the fictional world…" (Levinson 1996, p258).

There is a sharp contrast in the music from when Queen Lucy was chased, with what sounds like muted triplets in the strings, to a relaxed tempo and 4/4 rhythm

when she converses calmly with Azlan. Tempo, according to the semiotician Van Leeuwen (1999, p39) is associated with (and possibly an 'icon'[39] (Tagg 1999, p4) of), human biological movements (Van Leeuwen 1999, p39), like walking, hence the musical term *andante*, (walking pace), which comes from the Italian word *andare*, meaning 'walking'. Therefore, this could be a possible attempt to suggest to the viewer how they are to feel (Levinson 1996, p258). In this case, the slow pulse can indicate relaxation, for example, the moderately paced heartbeat of a calm person. There is also an abundance of reverb again, however, not so much that one cannot perceive instruments in the 'Ground' and 'Figure' (Schafer 1977, p152). There is a definite melody and accompaniment here and the instruments can be clearly identified and the pulse is slow.

After a brief pause, the music returns with a leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) containing another Eastern sounding wooden flute, another example of the diversification of film music. This motif occurred in the first film when Queen Lucy first discovered the entrance to Narnia and has been associated with a sense of the surreal. This motif suggests the surreal by the inclusion of an Eastern instrument, due to the instruments causal associations (Tagg 1999, p4) with Eastern mysticism (Paul 2007, p52).

1:59:25 – 2:00:49 – Dialogue between Azlan and Queen Lucy

This music is quiet whilst Queen Lucy and Azlan converse, another example of

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[39] As theorised by C. S. Pierce (1839-1914) (Tagg 1999, p4)

the music's subordination to dialogue (Gorbman 1987, p77). As soon as Azlan's name is mentioned, at 1:59:35, Azlan's leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) sounds, which includes soft drums, high pitched voices, high pitched strings and high pitched brass. As mentioned earlier, high pitches could represent Azlan's Christ like qualities (Schafer 1986, p122). Also the brass instruments function as an indexical sign (Peirce 1935, p51) of Azlan's importance, as they have a physical connection with "…importance, dignity and drama." (Bignell 2002, p113),

If one compares Azlan's physical proximity to Queen Lucy at this point, to the first time his theme is heard, it is obvious that Azlan is standing much closer to Queen Lucy. When Azlan is closer his motif is heard in a softer dynamic. Semiotic analysts associate loudness and softness with what humans do when their voices are loud or soft, due to close relationship semiotics has with linguistics. The loudness of the human voice is interpreted in terms of distance. For example, two people far away from each other have to raise their voices to make themselves audible to each other (Hall 2009, p148). People standing close to each other do not need to raise their voices to be heard, so keep their voices "…moderately low to soft," (Hall 2009, p144).

At 1:59:44, Queen Lucy speaks something negative and then Azlan reprimands her for it. Azlan's motif underscores her negative dialogue in the lower strings. Here the music could be functioning as a communicative devise, indicating the basis for the audience's emotions (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Azlan's motif in the lower strings could be interpreted as a semiotic devise to

communicate that her dialogue is negative. As Van Leeuwen (1999, p108) states, in traditional Western art music, low-pitched voices are equated with negativity and scenarios of a threatening nature. For example, in operas "...the tenor is the hero, the bass or baritone the villain." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p108).

Queen Lucy pauses to reflect on her wrong actions, there is no dialogue here. The texture of the music becomes monophonic, with a solo French horn and (what sounds like) a synthesizer playing the tonic pedal. The volume of the music becomes quiet until it temporarily fades and there is an abundance of reverb. It is interesting that the composer chose to apply a monophonic[40] texture to images of a character being reflective. According to Van Leeuwen (1999, p79), what a musical texture can represent depends on what people normally do when they are singing or playing that texture. Moreover, what a texture can represent is also reliant upon the culture in which it occurs and how people from that culture perceive and make use of interacting sounds. Monophony in Western[41] music is associated with Gregorian chant, a medieval form of European music, sung in monasteries during reflective times[42] (Wright 2008, p70). This music did not have any discernable rhythm, which gave it "...timeless otherworldly qualities." (Wright 2008, p70). Gregorian chant is considered by musicologists such as Wright (2008, p71) to be "Free of tension and drama..." (Wright 2008, p71) and "...conducive to pious reflection..." (Wright 2008, p71); which is what makes the composers 'genericist' (Negus 1996, p145), 'quotation' (Larsen 2007, p172) of Gregorian chant's texture, an

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[40] In music, a monophonic texture is a single line of music with no accompaniment, when all instruments and or voices are singing and or playing the same pitch (Wright 2008, p52).
[41] A Western composer composed this music and the film is adapted from a Western book, so it makes sense to analyze this texture from a Western perspective.
[42] Such as the eight monastic hours of prayer and mass (Wright 2008, p70).

appropriate musical device to underscore and represent Queen Lucy's reflection.

Reflection is also represented by the use of reverb in this passage of music because according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p167), reverb can sometimes make sounds appear "…subjective and 'interior'…" (Van Leeuwen 1999, p167). Reverb also functions as an 'indexical'[43] sign (Tagg 1999, p4), as reverb makes sounds appear like they are the only sounds heard inside ones head because discrete reverberations, which would normally be drowned out by everyday background noise, are suddenly detectable (Van Leeuwen 1999, p167). The fade in the music is a big indicator of reflection. As was mentioned before, dynamic range can be associated with distance (Hall 2009, p145) because as experience suggests, quiet sounds can only be heard at close distances (Hall 2009, p145). Therefore, in the context of reflective action on screen, a decrease in volume could be understood to be representative of reflective actions, as there is no closer distance than inside ones mind, seeing as thoughts are a very internal, intimate and personal affair.

During the discourse, Queen Lucy momentarily appears sad and negative. It appears that music is being used to express emotions here, making it another example of connotative cueing (Gorbman 1987, p84), where the music functions as a signalling device to communicate what characters the characters on screen are supposed to be feeling (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Sadness is represented firstly in the minor key, which Western society has

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[43] See Footnote No. 39.

become a 'symbol'[44] (Peirce 1935, p51) of sadness.

Sadness is also reflected in the descending melody in the strings heard here. Acknowledging semiotics linguistic past, musical theorists associate falling melodies with a falling tone in voice, which has connotations of "…proclaiming information…" (Van Leeuwen 1999, p102), hence why falling tones are regularly used by newsreaders (Van Leeuwen 1999, p100).

An occurrence of Azlan's motif in the lower strings appears again whilst Queen Lucy looks sad. Sadness and negativity are also represented in the use of the low-pitched instruments here[45] (Van Leeuwen 1999, p108). The use of Azlan's motif in the low-pitched strings could possibly be representative of Azlan's emotions and what he thinks about the situation[46] (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

Lastly, at this moment of sadness, Lord Miraz's theme is heard. Negativity could be expressed through the use of the playing techniques and instrumentation of this theme, as the Syuzhet (Larsen 2007, p159) has already identified this character as being 'bad'. Therefore, this characters theme could act as a 'symbol'[47] (Peirce 1935, p51) of negativity because the character is negative and a "…leitmotif…" (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) at the same time.

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[44] See Footnote No. 39.

[45] As was mentioned earlier, semioticians influenced by phonology associate low-pitched instruments with low-pitched voices, which are equated with negativity (Van Leeuwen 1999, p108).

[46] Therefore the music could be functioning as a communicative device to communicate what the character on screen is supposed to be feeling (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

[47] See Footnote No. 39.

Once Queen Lucy no longer looks sad, Azlan's leitmotif is played in a solo clarinet, with a quiet accompaniment. In Western music solo instruments are considered 'indexical'[48] signs (Tagg 1999, p4) of loneliness and extreme isolation (Van Leeuwen 1999, p72). The solo clarinet could, according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p72), be understood using conversation analysis to represent her monologue and the quiet accompaniment could be representative of Azlan's quietness at this point. This effect is repeated when Azlan responds, except the solo instrument is a wooden sounding instrument of the Eastern flute family again, this is another example of film music diversifying but in doing so aids the narrative. Perhaps the composer used conventional instrumentation to represent a human and instruments unconventional to Western orchestras for Azlan, to represent his 'mystical' nature[49] (Paul 2007, p52).

Azlan comforts Queen Lucy, the music modulates back to a major key, which to Western audiences, has a high modality with happiness and is seen as "…a stylization of…pastoral pleasantness…" (Gorbman 1987, p86). This is another example of music being used as a 'Reading Aid' (Larsen 2007, p169).

As the conversation draws to a positive close, the music slowly gets louder. String sections gradually get louder at 2:00:30, brass, enters playing Azlan's theme loudly, an ascending melody can be heard and the section ends on a perfect cadence with trumpets underscoring Azlan's roar.

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[48] See Footnote No. 39.
[49] Again, due to the Eastern wooden flute's connections with Eastern mysticism (Paul 2007, p52).

The pitch movement of this closing section of the dialogue, can be said to communicate "Anticipation of subsequent action…" (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). Cooke (1959, p 103), a musical theorist argues that music "…functions as a language…" and melodies that ascend in pitch are "active" and "outgoing" as if they are going out or moving away (Cooke 1959, p 103). Van Leeuwen (1999, p103) also relates rises in pitch to the tension in the vocal chords needed to sing in a higher pitch.

As the music continues to get louder, Azlan's leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) is heard loudly in the brass and once Azlan roars, trumpets underscore his roar. As was mentioned earlier, brass instruments have "…connotations of importance, dignity and drama." (Bignell 2002, p113), making them an appropriate instrument to underscore the roar of Azlan, who is the most important character in the film, moreover his roar is a dramatic moment in the film. The use of a leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) also emphasises Azlan's character (Larsen 2007, p170). Finally, the conclusiveness of this section is indicated by the use of a perfect cadence. Which is a common 'symbolic'[50] (Tagg 1999, p4) convention employed by Western composers to indicate completion (Day & Jarrett 2008, p115).

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[50] See Footnote No. 39.

2:00:49 – 2:01:45 – Fight section[51]

After the discourse between Azlan and Queen Lucy, the action moves to a battlefield where the Narnians and Talmarin's are warring. The Narnian soldiers are outnumbered and loosing the war. The characters look tense and the music reflects this because part of the function of music in film, is to reveal the character's psychological conditions (Levinson 1996, p257) and emphasize a situation on screen, "…already fully evident…" (Levinson 1996, p257).

The return of the fast paced drums could be an 'indexical'[52] sign (Tagg 1999, p4) of the tenseness and a heightened state of emotion experienced by the Narnian soldiers. These drums are electronically generated and are another example of the diversification of film music for the benefit of communicating meaning implied in the narrative. As with Queen Lucy, these drums could be a musical representation of a racing heartbeat, which often accompanies feelings of tenseness and fear (Larsen *et al* 2010, p184). However, unlike the earlier occurrence, the drums heard in this part of the film pulsate exactly like a heartbeat. This would make these drums another example of a Composite Anaphone[53] (Tagg 1999, p26) simultaneously containing a Sonic and Kinetic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23) (See the Appendix for further explanation on this Anaphone, See point: iii).

As the action moves on; the Talmarin soldiers quickly enclose around the Narnian soldiers; the few Narnian soldiers that remain are utterly surrounded

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[51] The music that accompanies this next section is not available for purchase on the soundtrack.
[52] See Footnote No 39.
[53] This technique was also employed at the beginning of this scene, when Queen Lucy was chased and outnumbered.

and an ascending melody, which gets more frequent and louder can be heard. This is an example of the music functioning as a "…musical parallel to the action to reinforce the mood…" (Gorbman 1987, p78). In this case, the mood is tense. Tension is conveyed, as indicated before, by the ascents in pitch[54] (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131), which is further accentuated by repetition and loud dynamics, which makes these sounds the 'Figure'[55] (Schafer 1977, p152).

The closer the Talmarin soldiers get, the more the loud dynamics make a homophonic[56] violin part the 'Figure' (Schafer 1977, p152). The Talmarain soldiers form tight formations and walk in sync towards the Narnian soldiers. The nature of a homophonic texture, relates directly to be an 'iconic'[57] (Tagg 1999, p4) representation of the tight formations of the enclosing Talmarin troops. These tight formations could be said to resemble chords, which in typical homophonic music, move in a "…tight, interlocking fashion." (Wright 2008, p53), just like the infantry seen at this point in the film, (further theory on this is contained in the Appendix. See point: iv). This potential relationship the texture of the music has to the troops, means that it could also function as a Kinetic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23), as the music is "…musically underlining visible…movement…" (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

As the action continues, the Narnian's continue to loose the battle. Enemy troops carry on surrounding them in vast numbers and their actions become

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[54] Again, as human vocal chords undergo a certain amount of tension to produce high-pitched sounds (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131).

[55] The centre of attention (Schafer 1977, p152).

[56] Homophony means 'same sounding', in this texture, instruments and or voices move pitches at the same time (Wright 2008, p53).

[57] See Footnote No 39.

more desperate and irrational. Around 2:01:01, Queen Susan[58], is in focus beating back several enemy soldiers alone. Queen Susan is surrounded and looks beleaguered. Azlan's leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) underscores her actions but in a minor tonality, (instead of a major tonality as it normally is), with diminution of the tempo that, according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p39), could 'symbolically'[59] (Tagg 1999, p4) represent her hastened bodily movements. As a minor tonality can be understood as representing negative emotions (Valentine 1962, p213), the juxtaposition of the music and Queen Susan's distress could be an 'symbol' (Tagg 1999, p4) that the music is functioning as a sign to conveying her emotions (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). The concurrence of the music and the other Narnian solders' distressing circumstances could also mean that the music is also functioning as an indicator of a general "…story-appropriate mood…" (Levinson1996, p 257-258).

A number of high-pitched sounds appear here and become quite loud in the mix[60]. These high pitches could be another example of the music conveying a "…story-appropriate mood…" (Levinson1996, p 257-258) of tension, as was mentioned before, high pitches are synonymous with tension (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131).

At 2:01:32 centaurs and faun's jump fecklessly into the enemy troops and elements of Azlan's leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music) are heard again. This time, however, the leitmotif appears in high-pitched brass. Again,

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[58] The sister of Queen Lucy.
[59] See Footnote No. 39.
[60] Generally composers avoid writing music that would distract the viewer from his or her "…oneiric state of involvement in the story…" (Gorbman 1987, p78) and decisions on the mix are down to the Sound Supervisor (Chandler 2004, p265).

the composer has used high pitches at stressful moments, which as mentioned earlier, represent stress and tension (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131). This could be an attempt to signify the tension the characters are feeling (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). This suicidal action is also quite dramatic. The composer's use of brass instruments could be an attempt to reflect this because brass instruments, in Western music and culture, are associated with drama (Bignell 2002, p113).

Throughout this battle scene, there is a continuous ascending melody which slowly gets more frequent and louder, making it the 'Figure', forcing it to be the centre of attention (Schafer 1977, p152), reinforcing its meaning upon listeners. As was previously mentioned, ascents in pitch pertain to tension (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131). However, in this case, the music never resolves, which, according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p98), hints at continuity, "…as if there is more to come." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p98). The reasoning behind this is Eurocentric and thus, applicable to this case. In traditional Western music, when the music has come to a close, the melody falls to the tonic, forming a perfect cadence (Day & Jarrett 2008, p115). As a result of this, any other progression is seen as an interruption, imperfect and or incomplete (Day & Jarrett, 2008, p116). Therefore, to Western ears, continuous rises in melody not only sound tense but sound open ended, making it a perfectly suitable device to underscore action where the outcome is yet to arrive and the actors seem uneasy.

At 2:01:40, the music becomes increasingly loud and explicitly dissonant, just

as the Captain of the Talmarin army pulls out a spear to kill Prince Caspian[61],

who had fallen unexpectedly. This could be a loose example of '*Illustration*'[62]

(Gorbman 1987, p87). To a certain extent, this dissonance could also be called

'*Mickey-mousing*', a more overt form of '*Illustration*' (Gorbman 1987, p87).

The loud dynamics makes the dissonance feature as the 'Figure' (Schafer 1977,

p152), purposely making it the centre of attention. The use of dissonance is also

another example of the diversification of film music post-Classical Hollywood

cinema era, when composers used more dissonance. This diversification has

assisted this production in communicating meaning as Dissonance from a

Western perspective, is a 'symbol'[63] (Tagg 1999, p4), used to represent

unpleasantness because it undermines the classical European ideal of

consonance and harmonic closure (Melnick 1994, p8). Moreover, according to

Melnick (1994, p8), because of it's refusal to resolve to a conventional tonal

ending, dissonance can also convey tension, as the listener never achieves

finality and or closure. The association dissonance has with pain, anguish, death

and cruel fate can be found in early music like the madrigals of the Renaissance,

since then, composers have merely continued the practice (Wright 2008, p96),

(See Appendix for further theory. See point: v). This is another example of

music functioning as an indicator of emotion as the music is being used to

inform the viewer how they are supposed to feel about the story (Levinson1996,

p258).

From 2:01:45 – 2:00:00 there is a noticeable absence of music but it helps to

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[61] One of the main characters of the film.
[62] When musical effects are synchronized closely with events on screen (Gorbman 1987, p87).
[63] See Footnote No. 39.

facilitate the "…mesmerizing of the viewer…" (Levinson 1996, p258), as the action briefly stops as well. This is another example of a Kinetic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23); as the music is being used to represent movement (Tagg 1999, p23), except in this case, the lack of movement.

2:02:02 – 2:02:56 – The Trees come to life

At 2:02:02 the music restarts and functions as a sign for the presentation of a mood of threat "…just before the visuals go ugly…" (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). This is done by the use of with low-pitched notes; as was mentioned earlier, low-pitched sounds are equated with danger and threat (Van Leeuwen 1999, p108). Threat is also conveyed by the use of an ascending glissando in the upper strings and an ascending melody in the bass instruments as ascending pitches are also associated tension (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131), (See Appendix for further theory. See point: vi). In this case, the composer has used pitch to give an 'indexical'[64] sign (Tagg 1999, p4) of a threat and an indexical sign of how one experiences the fear of a threat, in a Peircian sense (Peirce 1935, pp.50-51). The reinforcement of tension is also an example of the music being used to suggest to the viewer how he or she is supposed to feel about the action on screen (Levinson1996, p258).

Eventually Prince Caspian is rescued and walking trees join the war. The trees have their own leitmotif (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). The 'Figure' (Schafer 1977, p152) of the motif is mainly played in the brass, which has

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[64] See Footnote No. 39.

connotations of drama (Bignell 2002, p113); a possible attempt to "...trigger a response of "epic feeling."" (Gorbman 1987, p81).

The motif also makes use of Anaphonic connections, to represent the unusual walking. This means that the music helps the audience to be greater involved in the fantasy, as the unusual circumstances on screen are equated with and explained by phenomena and musical analogies familiar and understandable to the audience (Gorbman 1987, p79). The melody contains large intervals between pitches and a slow tempo, which could be understood as functioning as a Kinetic Anaphone[65] (Tagg 1999, p23), representing the large slow steps the trees make.

At 2:02:40-2:03.08, despite Azlan not being on the war field, his theme is heard in the brass, emphasising the drama (Bignell 2002, p113). High-pitched strings, vocals and large crashing cymbals embellish the theme, highlighting Azlan's Christ-like allegory (Schafer 1986, p122) and the general tension (Van Leeuwen 1999, p131) of the scene.

This section of music displays a greater dynamic range than the previous sections of music, as it goes from being unnoticeable, to almost distractingly loud. As a result, according to Van Leeuwen (1999, p173), analysing this section semiotically would conclude that this section appears more emotive, which befits the drama, as a large dynamic range in the voice could be seen from a linguistic point of view as reflecting the large dynamic range utilised by

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[65] Or an 'icon'(Tagg 1999, p4).

the human voice to emote.

2:02:57 – 2:03:54

Lord Veruna converses with a soldier at 2:02:57 and despite the 'epic' (Gorbman 1987, p81) and melodic nature of the music, it fades, demonstrating "*Subordination to the voice.*" (Gorbman 1987, p77). The soldier blows a horn at 2:03:05 – 2:03:10, an example of 'Source music' (Davis 1999, p29), which continues to sound when the action cuts from the field to a riverbed where the Talmarin troops escape to, "…distracting of the viewer's attention from the technical features of the film…" (Levinson 1996, p258).

From 2:03:42 – 2:03:50, the action is suddenly interrupted by the sight of Queen Lucy alone on a nearby the bridge, all the characters are still and silent. The music reflects this sudden interruption in the action and silence by suddenly ceasing, another example of a Kinetic Anaphone[66] (Tagg 1999, p23) and the music performing the function of musically underlining movement (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

A solo Eastern sounding flute a, 'little nuance' (Buskin 2005, Composing For Films: Harry Gregson-Williams), from the first film is heard again, when Queen Lucy is in focus. As Azlan appears behind her his motif appears as well. As mentioned earlier, the occurrence of this instrument is an example of film music diversifying (Kalinak 1992, p5). This instrument also highlights that the convergence of styles, can assist the film music in the communicating of

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[66] See Footnote No. 65.

meaning, as the instrument has its own cultural significance[67] (Paul 2007, p52). In addition to this, the solo also acts as an 'iconic'[68] (Tagg 1999, p4) representation of Queen Lucy's isolation on the bridge (Van Leeuwen 1999, p72). Azlan's motif, as mentioned earlier, serves as a tool to emphasise his character (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music).

From this analysis one can see that the sound supervisor, composer and director have taken deliberate steps to aptly convey meaning through music. It is also clear from this analysis that the function of film music is interdependent upon the semiotic nature of music. Analysis of this scene also provides an example of the development of film music, which further demonstrates that; the inclusion of styles other than European musical forms can strengthen a scores ability to convey meaning because as mentioned before, the very presence of certain genres can evoke meaning through causal associations (Tagg 1999, p4). As this film is a Western production, the main semiotic theories of the early founders of semiotics and theories from modern semioticians are applicable to this scene. The application of these theories to this scene expose the subtle language of signification and function present in this film, which makes the music 'inaudible' (Gorbman 1987, p73). For all of the above reasons, analysis of this scene reveals that film music communicates meaning through its function, style and signification codes, all of which can only be fully enjoyed if the audience are familiar with the conventions employed.

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[67] Which highlights the unusual and ethereal nature of this unusual moment, due to the instruments connections with Eastern mysticism (Paul 2007, p52).
[68] See Footnote No. 39.

Conclusion

Since the early films, music has always played an integral part of many forms of popular entertainment. The function of film music has changed over the years from merely being a means by which cinema owners attracted custom, to a respected art. Original music is now composed for films, although occasionally pre-recorded music is used. Complex and lush romantic symphony orchestras are often employed, instead of a lone musician using their own common sense, to musically represent the action on screen (Tagg 2008, Functions of film music). In modern films, filmmakers have taken advantage of music as an extra form of narration (Kalinak 1992, xv), as conventional narration might be distracting. Film music is also used to divert the audience's attention away from the technical features of the film, such as dramatic cuts and change of scenery (Levinson 1996, p258). The music reinforces and explains the narrative, whether this is by signifying some sort of emotion or even signifying that the film has ended.

To understand the signification of film music one has to have a grasp of semiotics. Semiotics emerged out of linguistics and was developed mainly by Peirce (1839-1914). Although not originally applied to music, theorists such as Barthes (1915-1980) later modified existing theories to apply to music. There are issues with analysing music semiotically. The first issue being that the analysis is hugely dependent on the analyst (Van Leeuwen 1999, p158). The second issue being, the analyses are ahistorical, also the majority of material focuses on Western music and lastly they don't often take into consideration the polysemic nature of music (Tagg 1999, p7-8). Western music has a long and

established signification system. This is mainly evidenced by the standardisation of musical notation. To understand the signification system, one has to understand the culture in which it occurs. This was not an issue for the composer of the film score analysed in this investigation, as he was a protégé of Hans Zimmer and in his younger years a choirboy (Buskin 2005, Composing For Films: Harry Gregson-Williams). Also, due to the Anglo-American domination of popular music forms, many members of the audience would have been aware of the signification system used in Western film.

The analysis goes into detail about the semiotic nature of music and the function music plays in a scene of the film *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008). The analysis demonstrates how the function and semiotic properties of film music are interdependent. When the music is meant to shock, the music displays shocking signifiers. One can see the polysemic nature of music in action and the importance of knowing the signifying 'language', as many 'conventional' musical techniques are exposed in this analysis. *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008) has been appropriately scored. There is a mix of traditional "…symphonic style…" (Cooke 2008, p456) orchestration and modern electronic instrumentation. Post the Classical Hollywood cinema era, composers have embraced new music forms and further diversified film music. This breaking down of conventional barriers has given directors, composers and sound designers greater freedom to present a more faithful musical representation of the action on screen. Through clever editing, scoring and use of foundational semiotic theories, the music aids the narrative of the film. Some parts are slightly distracting but I personally feel that the Director, Sound

Supervisor and Composer have made sensible decisions, making this an

enjoyable film to watch

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Appendix

i. Since the Renaissance, in Western culture:

"…a strict hierarchy became established between the fundamentals, so that any melody, whatever the harmonic progressions it traversed, had to return, ultimately, to the same predetermined note, the tonic." (Van Leeuwen 1999, p98).

Anything that interjects the decent to the tonic in Western music is considered an interruption (Day & Jarrett 2008, p115). Hence, why a cadence that descends to the tonic, is called a Perfect Cadence (Day & Jarrett 2008, p115).

ii. In 1962 Valentine (1962, p212) asked forty adults to distinguish and respond to a progression of major and minor chords. Many were found to not be able to distinguish between minor and major thirds and minor and major sixths (Valentine 1962, p212).

iii. This Composite Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p26) consists of a Kinetic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23), as the drums could be a representation of the fast beating of a heart when a person is tense. This Composite Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p26), also consists of a Sonic Anaphone (Tagg 1999, p23) because the drums also function as a musical representation, of a non-musical sound (Tagg 1999, p23). The non-muiscal sound being the beating sound a heart makes.

iv. These formations are similar to the infantry formations of the Ancient Roman Army, in which soldiers moved in sync and were equidistant from each other (Gabriel & Metz, p34). This is akin to the homophonic texture present here; strands are not independent but interdependent (Wright 2008, p53). This is just like the infantry formations seen in the film. Each soldier is interdependent on the other, each line is the same length and each line proceeds the same distance at the same time.

v. The association dissonance has with pain, anguish, death and cruel fate can be found in early music like the madrigals of the Renaissance. Madrigal composers indulged in Word Painting, the practice of depicting text "…by means of a descriptive musical gesture, whether subtly or jokingly as a musical pun…" (Wright 2008, p96). Since then, composers have merely continued the practice. All these qualities attributed to dissonance, makes it a suitable harmonic device to use as a sign to represent attempted murder, horror and to suggest to the viewer how they are to "…regard or feel about some aspect of the story…" (Levsinson 1996, p258).

vi. According to Van Leeuwen (1999, p108) experience shows that large animals and large people produce low-pitched noises; these large animals and people could potentially overpower you and therefore pose a threat. This works on the assumption that on the other hand, a small animal or person is easy to dodge and control, therefore, not so much of a threat.

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