Scoring Masculinity in Crisis:
Thomas Newman’s Sonic World and the Disintegration of the Indiewood Male

by

Edward John Sallustio

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Scoring Masculinity in Crisis: Thomas Newman’s Sonic World and the Disintegration of the Indiewood Male

Edward John Sallustio

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Signature:

Edward Sallustio, Student

Approvals:

Dr. Ewelina Boczkowska, Thesis Advisor

Dr. Paul Louth, Committee Member

Dr. Daniel Keown, Committee Member

Dr. Salvatore A. Sanders, Dean of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

Over his thirty-five-year career, film composer Thomas Newman has adapted his compositional approach to changing technologies and evolving narratives. Newman’s second period—the 1990s—coincided with the rise of the independent film spirit in Hollywood, known as Indiewood, and Hollywood’s evolving portrayals of “masculinity” on screen during a decade in which the traditional models of masculinity were themselves changing or, as Stella Bruzzi suggests, “in crisis.” The combination of Newman’s music, new narrative film structures and different constructions of the male image in Hollywood replaced the long-standing patriarchal model of the past by shifting focus onto the interiority of the male protagonist. Building on Bruzzi’s claim that the 1990s male in Hollywood was faced with inner—as opposed to external—struggles, I provide a reading into the sonic identity Newman creates for the male protagonists in four films, *The Player* (Robert Altman, 1992), *Scent of a Woman* (Martin Brest, 1992), *Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994), and *American Beauty* (Sam Mendes, 1999). I combine my hermeneutic readings of each film with graphical musico-narrative models, which I built based on Joseph Campbell’s monomyth theory. This approach allows me to situate Newman’s musical cues within the overall narrative arc of the films and identify cues that underline narrative crisis points for my textual analyses. In so doing, I trace stylistic continuities between films and demonstrate how Thomas Newman’s “sound” consistently helps represent the inner-horrors of the 1990s Hollywood male protagonist.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

A tall, well-dressed man is standing trial for the murder of his unfaithful wife and her lover. His blank stare and impassive responses to the prosecution masks the turmoil and horror boiling in his mind. A low, rumbling drone of sound rises between the dialogue—like thunder cautioning the arrival of an impending storm. With every question and response between the accused and the prosecutor, a subtle yet unsettling minor sixth dyad (F/D-flat) descends a minor second (E/C) over a thunderous A/E pedal tone. This motif repeats throughout the scene as a series of flashbacks retrace the steps of the accused on the night of the murder. His facial expression, vocal inflection, and flashbacks do not give us enough information to know the truth behind the crime. The scene’s score furthers the unknown: Is this music commenting on the action? The character? The landscape? The music sounds scary; is this a horror film?

Thomas Newman’s sparse and ambiguous scoring for this opening scene in The Shawshank Redemption raises these questions. From an audio-visual standpoint, the sustained drone helps suspend time, creates tension, and eases the transitions to and from the flashback sequences. It also comments on the antiseptic decorum of the courtroom and the rainy night throughout the flashbacks. Furthermore, the drone also mirrors the blank stare of the accused while the dissonant piano figures comment on the shock and horror behind his unfazed facade. Newman’s reliance on horror music devices—drones, synthesized timbres, and dissonance—conjures tension, anticipation, and the fear of the unknown and brings the genre of the film—a drama—into question. Arguably, this
music, independently of the visual image, could be associated with any contemporary horror-film antagonist.

I will discuss how Newman sets up his characters with moments of musical isolation to give the audience a sense of the character’s mental ruminations before their call to action. The music in such moments is harmonically ambiguous or avoids straightforward tonal relationships. Newman utilizes modal mixtures on top of eerie pedal tones (drones) to help create the impression of suspended time of the character’s dissociative “day-mare”—moments where time and space are called into question.¹ I will show how Newman’s scoring of this mental landscape combines electronic and acoustic timbres to distance the audience from known identifiers such as key (e.g., Major/Minor-Happy/Sad) and preconceived associations of instrument timbres (e.g., Brass=Heroic). I suggest that Newman’s processed sonic environment lacks the associative properties heard in 1930-40s Golden Age and 1970-80s’ Golden Age scoring revival, and it is through his construction of foreign sounds—unique timbres from world instruments processed in the studio and diverged into polarizing moods—that I argue becomes a soundscape which mirrors the dissociative state of the character for which he is scoring. Along with harmonic dissonance to create tension and harmonic deception—harmony that lacks enough information to constitute a definable tonal chord to create unease. I will also show how Newman reprieves the intensity with harmonic consonance to signify safety—devices that have a long tradition in the psychological horror genre. I further identify how Newman cleverly reiterates and repurposes cues throughout the film yet differently from traditional leitmotifs—these cues don’t identify a character; they live

¹ A daydream that takes on nightmarish qualities.
within (a) character(s), or at times, the overall film itself. Finally, I will trace the introduction and evolution of these cogitative “isolation” cues—and the contrasting musical moods that surround them—in four films situated within the “Indiewood” era of American film making.2

The youngest son of legendary film composer Alfred Newman, Thomas Newman (b. 1955) has scored over seventy-five feature films and has been nominated for fourteen Academy Awards for Best Score. The Newman family is somewhat of a film music dynasty in Hollywood, with three generations having scored music for a major motion picture. Alfred Newman (1901-1970) scored over two-hundred films and earned nine Academy Awards for Best Score while holding the office of Musical Director for Fox Studios. Upon Alfred’s retirement, his youngest brother, Lionel Newman, assumed the role of director until his retirement in 1985. Middle brother, Emil Newman, was also composer and musical director to a number of films throughout film music’s Golden Age. Thomas’s cousin, composer Randy Newman, brother David Newman, sister Maria Newman, and nephew Joey Newman all continue to contribute scores in contemporary Hollywood. Yet film scoring was not a given for the young Thomas Newman. His interests existed outside of music until the death of his father in 1970. Thereafter, he studied composition for two years under film composer David Raksin at USC, then finished his Master’s degree at Yale under Aaron Copland’s pupil Jacob Druckman. Upon graduation, Newman dabbled in musical theater where his friend and mentor Stephen Sondheim encouraged him to get into film after an early failed performance. His

2 The term ‘Indiewood’ was coined in the mid-1990s to denote a part of the American film spectrum in which distinctions between Hollywood and the independent sector appeared to have become blurred—a product of particular forces within the American film industry from the 1990s and 2000s. Geoff King, Indiewood, USA: Where Hollywood Meets Independent Cinema (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 2-3.
first work in film was orchestrating Darth Vader’s death scene in *Return of the Jedi* (1983) for family friend, John Williams. Newman’s foray into composing for film began in 1983 for the romantic drama film *Reckless*. Robert Altman’s *The Player* (1992) was a turning point in Newman’s career. The pressure of having to deliver a score that stretched his range caused Newman to mature quickly as a composer; thereby, he developed the electro-acoustic model we continue to hear in his music to this day.

In a time when lushly Romantic, sweeping melodies and large orchestral scores have been replaced by layers of ambient, highly processed sound, Thomas Newman has forged a sonic bridge between the two disparate styles to create the electro-acoustic sound that is highly sought after in Hollywood. Newman’s sound combines drones—sustained or repeated sounds or tone clusters—with pastoral and horror music devices. The open sonorities of the pastoral—harmonies built on the Perfect Fourth or Fifth with disjunct melodies—provide a distinct contrast to the eeriness fraught with dissonances heard in horror music. The effect of this sonic palette is at least twofold. On the one hand, I suggest his music functions to suspend and alter the temporality of the narrative to bring the audience closer to the inner strife of a character. On the other hand, Newman and his sound team’s use of different frequency drones may also trigger primal biological responses such as a fight, flight, or freeze instinct in the listener, as suggested by Stephen Porges’ Polyvagal Theory, which can explain the deep unease his music often brings to a film scene. Films by Newman’s longtime collaborating directors—Frank Darabont, Sam

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3 *The Polyvagal Theory* explores the neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation. Porges proposes that subjective responses to sounds are initially (before associative learning) based on two features of the acoustic signal: pitch and variation in pitch, and it is within those variations that social communication, safety, and danger cues occur. According to this theory, low frequency sounds without modulation will trigger a subjective fear response to flee, while high frequency sounds without modulation will trigger a subjective alerting response of pain or danger. Further,
Mendes, Todd Field, and others—generally center around ordinary male protagonists living in suburban society. These protagonists are typically haunted by the anxieties related to the ideals and notions of the American dream, normalcy, fatherhood, redemption, and temptation. These anxieties are compounded by Newman’s score at key points of the films’ narrative, most notably when the protagonist is freed from societal pressures in the form of redemption or actual death.

Newman’s second decade in the film music industry intersects with what Stella Bruzzi identifies as a time of “masculinity in crisis” throughout the 1990s and the “Indiewood” era in film history (1990-2008). I chose four films produced during this decussating moment that feature differing male archetypes. I argue that Newman creates the sound of paranoia in the 1992 crime thriller, The Player (Altman); he creates a sense of terror in moments of outrage in drama films like Scent of a Woman (Brest: 1992); he constructs the musical arc between imprisonment and redemption in The Shawshank Redemption (Darabont: 1994); and his music reinforces the inner-horror, dream-like state of characters trapped within the claustrophobic space of suburbia in American Beauty (Mendes: 1999). Protagonists of these films embark on their own respective quests only

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to be met with a horrific trial that decides their fates—redemption or death. As mentioned above, Newman consistently sets up his characters with moments of musical isolation before their launch into action. It is during these personal trials that Newman’s scores show some of the most interesting and ambiguous approaches to film scoring. These cues also can be heard as musical devices meant to highlight cautionary tales—reflective moments of subjective voiceover narration that elevate the film’s core message (e.g., hope and/or beauty). In particular, I build upon Joseph Campbell’s stages of “The Hero’s Journey” to identify turning points and patterns in the narrative of the films where Newman utilizes horror-music devices to enhance the protagonist’s harrowing leaps through his quest’s thresholds and trials. I will also use “The Hero’s Journey” to chart Newman’s use of Aaron Copland’s pastoral sound with horror devices that suggest a depiction of the character’s paradoxical emotional states.

By blending drones under short and repetitive motives with timbres such as piano, world instruments and electronic sounds, Newman delicately balances between the horrific, pastoral, and ironic functions of film music—never quite giving the listener too much information to determine a scene’s outcome. Often his drones are also felt more than heard, creating an instinctual unease as well as a blurred experience of time. This ambiguity begs the question: does the score become the landscape, the character, or somewhere between? These unknowns add effect to the narrative and drama of a film by creating a subtext of tension and release that the dialogue and visuals cannot evoke. Newman accomplishes this task, in part, by composing from a point of timbre instead of

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melody to set the atmosphere of the film—a trend that has gained momentum in contemporary Hollywood film scores since the pervasive use of synthesizers in film scores during the 1980s.\(^7\) The trappings of melody and leitmotif tend to represent a redundancy of the film’s narrative to Newman; instead, he chooses to create a color palette (timbre) for the overall mood of the film, then work toward any melodic features necessary.\(^8\) Newman’s additive approach to scoring a film typically begins from a point of solo improvisation at the piano before moving into a collaborative group improvisation where ideas are shared between a set of players he has worked with for most of his career.\(^9\) Ideas become more solidified into actual cues before Newman consults the director to compare multiple cues against the image. Once the cues are orchestrated, he conducts the studio orchestra where he then collaborates with long-time sound editor Bill Bernstein. Newman considers his film scores as “music for a recorded medium.”\(^10\)

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\(^7\) For a discussion on timbre and technology see: *Score: A Film Music Documentary*, Blu Ray, directed by Matt Schrader (2017; USA: Gravitas Ventures, 2017).

\(^8\) “Thomas Newman’s themes and leitmotifs tend to serve the subtext of the diegesis more than singular characters like most film composers’ approach preceding and during Newman’s first and second periods. Newman’s Leitmotifs do not apply to the characters directly, instead these themes and motives serve stages of psychological moments, abstract personality traits, or moral statements as they supplant themselves into each character as the narrative progresses evolving from a point of color and texture by the use of orchestration and layering instead of relying on pure melody. Newman’s scoring avoids commenting on the scene or informing the viewer of the top narrative; instead, he chooses to dimensionalize the subtext so as to not demean the actors or patronize the audience.” See: Michael Schelle and John Barry, *The Score: Interviews with Film Composers* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1999), 283.


Thomas Newman’s scoring of Hollywood films over the last thirty-five years has profoundly influenced the film music industry.\textsuperscript{11} Newman’s highly sought-after signature sound—particularly in films whose narratives situate themselves in a suburban sphere—not only underline the narrative, but also add an additional character to the film. His experimental, forward-looking approach to cinematic scoring is a culmination of unique electro-acoustic timbres with earlier pastoral and horror music tropes. This culmination results in a new subgenre I call \textit{suburban horror}—a seemingly innocuous filmic setting where character’s problems become embellished by horror music devices. By marrying the pastoral musical idiom with musical horror devices, Newman exploits the audience’s musico-dramatic cultural memory to widen the divide between tension (danger) and release (safety). Newman’s scores achieve this through abandoning classical character cues (or leitmotifs) for “\textit{leitharmonic}” treatments, adding modal ambiguity through intimate piano lullabies, pervasive drones, processed timbres, and cyclic ostinati used ironically or in a more ominous context against pastoral sounds and early popular songs that embody innocence. Finally, as mentioned above, by surveying the pastoral’s cinematic beginnings under the pen of Aaron Copland and exploring the shift from scoring the monster \textit{without} to the monster \textit{within} in 1960-1970s horror, I will show how Thomas Newman overcame the shadow of the “Newman Dynasty” by developing a distinctive sound that resonates throughout film and television.

The last forty years has seen the proliferation of film music scholarship emerge from the quiet corners of the occasional monograph or article into a well-established inter-disciplinary field. In 1977, Roy Prendergast’s *Film Music: A Neglected Art* prolifically stated, “seldom in the annals of music history had a new form of musical expression gone so unnoticed.” A decade later, Claudia Gorbman echoed this sentiment in her seminal book, which she titled *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, on the narratology of the cinematic score. This book laid the ground for the interdisciplinary field of film music scholarship today.

The film music of Thomas Newman has evaded much scholarly attention until Adam Schoenberg’s 2010 dissertation “Finding Newman: The Compositional Process and Musical Style of Thomas Newman” and Chelsea Oden’s 2016 master’s thesis “Reflection and Introspection in the Film Scores of Thomas Newman.” A small number of chapters also mention Newman’s music in some detail. The most significant is Peter Rothbart’s (2013) chapter in *The Synergy of Film and Music* that provides a chronological audio-visual breakdown of Newman’s score for *American Beauty*.

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12 Roy Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), ix. Commenting on the lack of emphasis on the study of film music, Prendergast explains that the antagonism from scholars and concert composers toward music in film stemmed from film composers’ use of late Romantic musical idioms (Strauss, Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini) in a modernist world that sought to let go of the past. Further, the insertion of popular music in film added to the dissention of film music’s viability of study by scholars.

13 Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: BFI, 1987). Case Western Reserve University held a special film music conference in Fall of 2017 celebrating the thirty-year anniversary of Gorbman’s publication—I had the honor of attending this event.


Rothbart’s analysis provided a thorough reading of the film’s soundtrack giving me a launching point at which to further research the film. Anthony Bushard cites Thomas Newman’s use of Aaron Copland’s pastoral tropes to depict anxieties attached to the American suburban ideal in *American Beauty* and *Revolutionary Road*.16 Bushard’s captivating analysis led me to look further into suburban anxieties and masculinity studies in conjunction with the film music medium. Much else of what currently exists in print on Thomas Newman are promotional and critical articles that provide slight biographical data and sweeping remarks about his released recordings.

My own interest in Thomas Newman’s sound has also been influenced by the recent work of horror and suburban-sphere music by K.J. Donnelly, Neil Lerner, Anthony Bushard and Stanley Pelkey. Donnelly’s *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* and *Film Music: Critical Approaches* emphasize the manipulative and ephemeral character of film music particularly through the lens of the horror film.17 Donnelly identifies key characteristics and devices of horror music that I found helpful in pinpointing moments of overt and hidden horror moments in Newman’s scores.

Neil Lerner, editor of *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear* examines the effects of music and its ability to provoke and intensify fear.18 This collection highlights distinct musical devices that provoke a haptic response to the visual image. In particular, Janet K. Halfyard’s chapter, “Supernatural Horror-Comedies and the Diabolus in Musica,” details many musical gestures—“the stinger to scare us, drones and sustained

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tremoland strings to create suspense,” as musical examples that evoke fear. Stan Link adds non-musical sounds to the list of horror devices: music boxes, ticking clocks, and other machine sounds perpetuate outside of the narrative—sometimes ironically—to add tension, similar to Newman’s use of ostinati in American Beauty and toy music boxes in The Player.\(^{20}\)

Anxiety Muted: American Film Music in a Suburban Age, edited by Pelkey and Bushard, explores the sociological and political concerns of the 1950s and 1960s in motion pictures and television of that era—and how music helped to support narratives concerning community and conformity.\(^{21}\) Bushard shows how the entertainment industry has capitalized on television shows and films that look back on the 1950s and 1960s with a mixture of nostalgia and criticism while drawing parallels to modern social anxieties. Newman’s scores for period films such as Shawshank Redemption provide a “nostalgia gone wrong” view of these earlier eras whose ill-fated narratives continue into contemporary suburban horror films like American Beauty.

Finally, Stella Bruzzi’s book, Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood, is the critical foundation for the thesis. Bruzzi traces the cinematic history of the male archetype presented in Hollywood from post-World War II through the early 2000s. From his humble beginnings as a beacon of conservative values and traditionalism (1940s-50s), the male—particularly, the father—underwent profound symbolic changes through the decades of feminism and gender politics (1960s-70s) and

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19 Halfyard, 21.
nostalgic conservatism during the Reagan era (1980s). This transformation culminated, according to Bruzzi, into a lost, crisis-ridden male/father figure portrayed in the 1990s. I argue that this male plight received a particular musical treatment in Thomas Newman’s œuvre in the 1990s.
Methodology

Following Ronald Sadoff’s model of textual analysis as a template for critical inquiry into the historical, visual, and intertextual analysis of film music, I begin each chapter like he does, listing the team—director, composer, cinematographer, and sound editor—involved in the making of a film and subsequently summarize the film’s plot and central issues. The film’s placement in a historical and cultural context follows the preview, situating the film around world events and cultural ideologies. Finally, the musical and visual (and sometimes character narration) syntax provides filmic stills along with notated music to add a visual component to the textual analysis. Film music’s “added value” (as Michel Chion refers to it) to film forces us to consider the multitudinous contributions to a motion picture that culminate into the finished product. In this view, film music does not exist outside of the picture; it is deeply tied to all of the constituent parts that synergize to make up a motion picture. Sadoff’s structuralist approach allows musos—audiences with some musical training—and non-musos—those with limited knowledge of music—a level platform on which to analyze scenes from a broad “musical-filmic vantage point.” In my discussion of the music, I explore Newman’s harmonic language and timbres—sometimes borrowed from disparate Hollywood film music tropes from the past—with the visuals in particularly significant cues that repeat and transform throughout the film. In some cases, I have chosen cues that

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22 Newman’s music is the result of a collaborative process between producers, directors, orchestrators, musicians, recording engineers, and other filmmakers as are most scores in Hollywood. The atomic-level credits of each cue and score are beyond the scope of this thesis.

are presented only once, but can be heard as reformulations of Newman’s cues from earlier films and heard in future films.24 Throughout the textual interpretation, the appendices will be referenced to identify key narrative points along the Campbellian monomyth, as described below.

Joseph Campbell’s Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949) outlines a seventeen-stage “monomyth” cycle in which protagonists typically traverse throughout a narrative. Adding this component allows the film to be understood as a whole before delving into individual scenes. Campbell’s “monomyth” adds depth to the three-act structure experienced in film. The comprehensive, yet broad terminology used in each cycle allows filmic moments—and musical cues—to be plotted on to more detailed locations along the hero’s journey. The “monomyth” also allows more explicit points on which to map a film’s teleology (flashbacks, flash-forwards and tools that exist throughout the temporality of the film to aid the hero) and character archetypes under the sonic umbrella of the score. The graphical appendices I have designed contain Campbell’s seventeen stages of the “monomyth” and are loosely based on Brian Edward Jarvis’ dissertation “Analyzing Film Music Across the Complete Filmic Structure: Three Coen and Burwell Collaborations.”25 Jarvis incorporates in his study the literary arcs of Gustav Freytag and Seymour Chatman, including Freytag’s pyramid model—a five part narrative structure that includes an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement (see

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Figure 1.4. I juxtapose Freytag’s pyramid against Campbell’s monomyth with time code placement of musical “moods” to create a color-coded graph that gives the reader a supplemental reference to the textual analysis.

Gustav Freytag’s concept of dramatic structure (1863), where the protagonist follows larger leaps in the narrative structure than Campbell’s monomyth, is graphed hierarchically over the course of a large work—in this case, film. As Jarvis explains, “Freytag’s Pyramid illustrates the chronological move from a low level of dramatic intensity to the work’s dramatic peak and then back down, following the resolution of the protagonist’s goals” (Figure 1.1 shows his original graphical pyramid with modern signifiers).26

![Figure 1.1. Freytag's original graph of dramatic structure (1863) with modern signifiers.](image)

The appendix is built on vertical (top-down) time stamps of monomyth and musical events (Figure 1.2).

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26 Jarvis, 28.
Figure 1.2. Excerpt from my full monomyth description from *Scent of a Woman*.

The Campbellian monomyth identifies a seventeen-stage process that most protagonists must traverse in order to be narratively redeemed at the end of a story.

Figure 1.3 outlines the monomyth following clockwise steps throughout the character’s development. Figure 1.4 provides action and emotional descriptors for each monomyth event:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monomyth Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:24</td>
<td>Fade in opening credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>01:18</td>
<td>Fade into Baird School for Boys. Images of 19th century graduating class memorabilia to establish long history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>02:29</td>
<td>Introduce Hero: Charlie Simms, student at Baird School. Looking at weekend job opportunities, finds future boon [job where he will meet his mentor].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>03:19</td>
<td>Meet the Herald: Headmaster Trank whose status is shown by driving a new Jaguar given to him by the Board of Trustees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>06:16</td>
<td>Hero traveling to meet the mentor. Trial with the Mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Meet the Mentor: Lt. Colonel Frank Slade, a bitter and blind retired military man. Sitting alone in a guest house. Mentor taunts Hero to save him up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14:49</td>
<td>Trial 1: Mentor turns on radio to allow Hero to leave after being berated. Hero passes trial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17:05</td>
<td>Hero accepts the job of watching over the Mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18:08</td>
<td>Shape-shifters get Hero to break rules and test his integrity [lends book from the library reserve; sees friends setup trap to vandalize Herald’s Jaguar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20:08</td>
<td>Shape-shifters’ trap is sprung putting Hero in a precarious position to either tell the truth (be a rat) or hold integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>22:10</td>
<td>Trial 2: Herald confronts Hero about inciting incident. Threatens to ruin his future if he does not rat out the inciters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26:06</td>
<td>Hero crosses 1st Threshold in the school world. [Headmaster: “You take the weekend to think about it Mr. Simms.”]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>28:25</td>
<td>Hero begins his time with the mentor. Isolation music shifts to Hero. Fear of the unknown at school and work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1.3. Clockwise graph of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth.27

Figure 1.4. Action and emotion signifiers for each stage of Campbell’s Monomyth.²⁸

Not every hero travels through each step, nor do they necessarily follow each step chronologically. Exceptions and omissions have been made in my analysis for both the monomyth steps and character archetypes (e.g., there is no “woman as temptress” in Shawshank Redemption; Ricky in American Beauty can be read as a “shapeshifter trying to supplant the phallus” instead of my distinction of him as the “mentor”). In turn, Campbell’s monomyth events can have liberal designations and are utilized here as a launching point for further analysis.

In the appendix, each key character is assigned their own Freytag pyramid following their photograph, outlining their rise and fall from their respective narrative climaxes (Figure 1.5).

²⁸ Subramaniam.
Figure 1.5. Character narrative arcs graphed with Freytag Pyramids (presented horizontally for space).

The cubes placed over the pyramids represent all music cues heard in the film. The cubes are color-coded to represent particular “moods” I interpret in Thomas Newman’s score and source music throughout the soundtrack. Cubes are placed over each character representing ownership of that particular cue. Cubes that span multiple characters represent a shared sonic space. Finally, cubes that exist outside of the character’s pyramid represent either no ownership from any character or an ownership by a character not given a graph. Each appendix is given a key at the top of the page that outlines the particular “moods” I hear presented over the course of the film (see Figure 1.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chaos/Cacophony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diegetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jazzy Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacing/Rhythmic Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fanfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genuine Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ticking/Countdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scheming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diegetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Diegetic Source Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isolation/Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conciliatory/Regret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.6. Musical “mood” key example found at the top of each appendix.
These color codes align with the cubes placed over each character’s pyramid creating a quick reference guide to identify the musical mood structure over Freytag’s pyramid and the Campbellian monomyth (see Figure 1.5).

The final component to the appendix is the musical event list to the left of the page. This section is a comprehensive list of every music cue in the film identifying its title, duration, mood, and brief musical descriptors (see Figure 1.7).29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;Main Title&quot;</td>
<td>Bucolic/Pastoral to rhythmic dulcimer over E and D at 1:18 end 3:06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. &quot;Main Title&quot; B section</td>
<td>Rhythmic dulcimer over E and D end 6:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;A Tour of Pleasures&quot;</td>
<td>Isolation: 3 note piano over drone end 9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Evangeline&quot; by Emmylou Harris sung by Robbie Robertson</td>
<td>Diegetic Radio pause 15:12 resume 15:41, end 15:49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. &quot;Main Title&quot; B section</td>
<td>Legato Strings over dulcimer-Consiliatory/Regret. end 17:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. &quot; Witnesses&quot; like &quot;Main Title&quot; B sec</td>
<td>Legato Strings over dulcimer-Mischievous end 19:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. &quot; Balloons&quot; like &quot;Main Title&quot; B sec</td>
<td>Legato Strings over dulcimer-Mischievous pause 20:25 resume 21:19, end 22:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. &quot;A Tour of Pleasures&quot;</td>
<td>Isolation: 3 note piano over drone end 29:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. &quot;Tract House Ginch&quot;</td>
<td>Adventure: B maj to B min pulsing under brass and string fanfare pause 34:43, resume 34:56, end 35:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. &quot;Beyond Danger&quot;</td>
<td>Bucolic English Horn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.7. Musical event excerpt from Scent of a Woman.

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29 Full analyses of cues pertinent to the thesis are contained in the textual analysis.
The above sections of the appendix unify into a gestalt-focused, musical/narrative model for exploring connections between individual scenes, pacing of the score, and pattern identification between disparate film genres by the same composer.
Tracing the Masculine Archetype in Four Films Scored by Thomas Newman

Thomas Newman’s sound and the use of his cues in scenes of character isolation and introspection, I suggest, align with Stella Bruzzi’s idea of “masculinity in crisis” presented in 1990s Hollywood films. Men’s fears and emotions that were once repressed began to move to the forefront of the narrative and were represented visually through longer shots of character’s pensively navigating their inner-thoughts. This new cinematic approach to male interiority gave Newman an opportunity to use music to alter the sense of the film’s temporality, break through the character’s stoic walls, and convey the fractured psyche of the male lead. Considering the importance of Bruzzi’s work as it applies to my argument about Newman’s music, I will spend the rest of the chapter contextualizing her concept as well as apply it to the four films under discussion.

America at the close of World War II brought with it the spoils of new economic structures that created new behavioral codes and competitive systems in middle-class America. Consumption rivalry (i.e., keeping up with the Joneses) encouraged conformity in America’s capitalist model. The dirty and unsafe streets of the city were no longer part of the economic ideal. Therefore, a new mode of thought oriented toward the happiness and security of the American family developed and the sprawl to the suburbs began. As affluent families migrated away from the cities, businesses soon followed. Shopping malls and drive-in movie theaters replaced the shops and downtown theaters of the city. As Pelkey and Bushard describe in Anxiety Muted, cookie cutter houses, white

30 “The diversity and quantity of recent American father films is linked to the dominant idea concerning contemporary masculinity: that men are in ‘crisis.’ Bruzzi, Bringing Up Daddy, 153.
31 Pelkey and Bushard, Anxiety Muted, 17.
picket fences, and 2.4 children were the panacea of the day to quell the strife of the war, and mass media’s outlets—film, television, radio, and advertising—quickly attached itself to the suburban migration narrative under the influence of government and corporate ideologues. Central to the depiction of the proper suburban-American family was the father and his dynamic leadership as he navigated his family through a multitude of narrative issues, thus saving them from peril.

Bruzzi describes how the archetypal male figure changed in Hollywood motion pictures since the end of World War II. Much of her analysis stems from Freud’s analysis of the father and the Oedipal struggles of the son. In one instance, she describes how Hollywood established settings in which fathers rarely went to war, and those who did were killed in battle; in turn, the sons who went to war that emerged as men at the war’s end to propel the image of a secure future for America. This notion of usurping the phallus to enter into manhood, gain the lead position in the family, and, in turn, restore the symbol of the archetypal male was seen—not just in war films—throughout family, crime, and western genres of Hollywood film in the 1940-50s. Themes of war trauma, weakness, and homosexuality were closely guarded secrets in film narratives during this time thus securing the new-male’s position to lead his family to their “suburban utopia.”

Bruzzi highlights another absent—though generally acknowledged—truism where “women (on both sides of the Atlantic) had become more financially and politically independent, leading to a steep rise in the rate of divorce and to more vulnerable, less secure images of masculinity.” Bruzzi goes on to explain World War II’s influence on the male image:

32 Pelkey and Bushard, 16.
33 Bruzzi, Bringing Up Daddy, x.
...the war...heightened the desire for a return to a more traditional patriarchal image. One compelling reason for this was the Depression of the 1930s, when many fathers found themselves unemployed and so confined to a more domestic role. As fatherhood became less defined by work and more identified with childcare so, some psychologists and sociologists have argued, men felt increasingly emasculated.34

According to Bruzzi, American society as a whole propelled the notion that the country had become a masculine nation with “our boys” ready to assume international control after its victory. She quotes Thomas Schatz’s who argued that “by 1950, ‘Hollywood went into a full-scale retreat from message pictures and prestige-level social problem dramas,’ citing as reasons events from 1949 such as the establishment of HUAC [House Un-American Activities Committee], the trial of Alger Hiss, the Soviet atom-bomb tests and the fall of China to the Communists.”35 As the Cold War continued to take hold of society’s anxiety (1945-1991), a new set of fears drove the narrative of the propaganda machine. McCarthyism left Americans leery of their neighbors’ political intentions and the Hays Code filtered what was seen and heard on the silver screen. Hollywood blacklists ruined careers and lives while anxieties of “science and technology gone wrong” added to fear’s perfect storm. “The id running rampant, machine anxieties, and the Cold War—they are all the same nightmare.”36 Fears of homosexuality, communism, surveillance paranoia, and annihilation permeated the American spirit in spite of tremendous economic growth and the Baby Boom. Hollywood responded to the beginning of the Cold War with several anti-communist films told through the lens of

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34 Pelkey and Bushard, 1.
36 Pelkey and Bushard, Anxiety Muted, 13.
science fiction and horror (e.g., communist takeover merged in the form of invasion from outside forces, as in *The Thing* [1951]).

As these anxieties washed over America’s psyche, Hollywood cinema and television were present to quell society’s fears and instill a sense of security by depicting a world of sameness for which all American families should strive. Christine Sprengler describes this historical moment:

...the 1950s was the first decade to represent itself on a mass scale through a *visual* mass medium. While cinema offered windows on other worlds, on how 'other' people lived, television purportedly reflected its audience back to itself through the representation of the 'ordinary', 'average' American family. Of course, this family was narrowly defined as white, middle-class, usually suburban, God-fearing (typically Protestant), patriotic and enthusiastically capitalist.

Cinema and television may have had a slight divide from a narrative construct, however one concept remained the same: the 1950s’ masculine mystique of the big patriarch and breadwinner was the cornerstone of the American family.

Of course, this portrayal of the male figure and father’s status began to waver in the wake of Betty Friedan’s illuminating monograph, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Friedan’s call to “the problem that has no name” attacked the 1950s’ model of the American family and brought to light the social and psychological problems associated with America’s mass-produced lifestyle. Women’s inner-prisons had been finally brought to light forcing a mass retreat in the number of father films produced in the 1960s and 70s compared to the previous decade. The 1960s and 70s also saw a dismantling of the

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37 Pelkey and Bushard, 12.
39 Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy*, 78.
image of archetypal masculinity where “the father must change if he is to survive.”

Bruzzi goes on to explain that, “by 1971, the influential British psychologist R.D. Laing talked of the ‘family’ as merely a fantasy structure. The nuclear family had become a concept instead of a working reality and the late 1960s and 70s saw a burgeoning of the debates around the values, role and validity of the traditional familial unit.” This grim reality forced writers to reconfigure masculinity to work for instead of against feminism (e.g., Coming Home). To accomplish this task, the old notion of “the father must change if he is to survive,” became usurped for a new form of exoneration where a father’s madness and eccentricity become the forgivable platform for male survival (e.g., Roy Neary in Close Encounters of the Third Kind). The reconstructed male that followed the women’s movement sought to “re-ignite belief in masculinity and patriarchy alongside having the urge to discard traditional masculinity as inadequate,” a paradox that took shape in Kramer vs. Kramer (1979).

As masculinity retracted, America struggled with the present moral dilemma of the long, drawn-out Vietnam War. American officials fought to save face in spite of its losing battle with the North Vietnamese. Society’s trust in their leaders was waning quickly, social unrest was at an all-time high, and the belief in American exceptionalism significantly declined. The early 1970s American propaganda machines knew of nostalgia’s ability to “help society and the individual cope with change, endure loss, deal with alienation and quell feeling of anxiety and uncertainty,” and began perpetuating Cold War nuclear fears and capitalist agendas on their state and corporate run airwaves.

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40 Bruzzi, 79.
41 Ibid., 94.
42 Ibid., 107.
43 Sprengler, Screening Nostalgia, 32.
By this time, the television was in nearly every American home and its advertising “only encouraged conformity to material values, and exploited emulative anxieties.” The conservative ideologues used nostalgia politically to falsify the past with selective embellishments; sever the past from the present; prevent historical continuity; foster disillusionment with the present; hinder attempts to improve present circumstances (Women’s Rights, Gay Rights, etc.); stifle creativity, innovation, and progress; commodify history; and exploit emotions for profit. By 1980, the dissolve of the nuclear family ideal was in peril as only fifteen percent of American households contained a father that worked and a mother who stayed at home. The late 1970s into the 1980s looked back to the 1950s as an ideological sanitized template for what the average American family should emulate. Nostalgia subsumed the ideological ether and became the platform on which Ronald Reagan, himself a 1950s Hollywood icon, was elected president of the United States.

The 1980s saw a rise in marriage rates and the media regarded the “family-man” to be the happiest and healthiest among his bachelor friends. The dominance of the action film also took precedence during this time, supplanting fatherhood narratives for an antipaternal role model (e.g., Rambo, Terminator, Commando, etc.). The weak father represented as a bumbling symbol of weakness (e.g., Marty McFly in Back to the Future) was replaced by characters possessing inhuman physical prowess as described by Bruzzi:

The flaunted presence of the male body in action cinema serves to displace the father, the paternal signifier as the encapsulation of hegemonic

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44 Pelkey and Bushard, Anxiety Muted, 17.
45 Sprengler, Screening Nostalgia, 31.
46 Bruzzi, Bringing Up Daddy, 114.
47 Sprengler, Screening Nostalgia, 41.
masculinity. This male body suggests a masculinity that is not only potent but pre-paternal, still bound up in its own narcissism.48

This pre-paternal portrayal of masculinity suggests the notion that action heroes are actually sons who are in need of a father figure themselves leading to a shift in Hollywood’s perspective of father narratives being from the son’s point of view. The absence of the father (and parenting in general) rose as teen comedies gained a foothold in the cinematic economy—flaunting an independence and wisdom beyond their years—thereby, commodifying youth and exploiting the spending power behind them (e.g., *Weird Science, Pretty in Pink, Sixteen Candles, Breakfast Club*, etc.). Many films leading up to the Indiewood era became a mass-produced engine of conservative ideals that reviled the working mother and sought to restore the fictitious model of the 1950s.

*Fatal Attraction* draws together various tenets of 1980s conservatism, not only the resurgent belief in 'family values' but also the vilification of the career woman and distrust of the welfare state. *Fatal Attraction* was credited with 'starting a monogamy trend', 'reinvigorating marriages' and 'slowing the adultery rate'.49

As the Reagan era began to run its course, the independent film genre—with its atypical narratives and experimental audiovisual treatments—began to seep into mainstream Hollywood. Stephen Soderbergh’s *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (1989) is credited with launching the Indiewood era for its brash honesty and intimate displays of the inner-workings of its characters. The driving force behind defining what constitutes an “Indiewood” film is mostly stemmed from economic factors coupled with artistic integrity. A film like *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* met a middle ground where the normal budget of a Hollywood film was less than a blockbuster, but more than an independent

49 Ibid., 131.
film. Further, the narrative quality was considered more “artistic” than a typical blockbuster, but not as artistic as a conventional independent film. This cinematic middle ground reinvigorated the auteur director (e.g., Quentin Tarantino and Stephen Soderbergh) allowing more autonomy and a sense of creative identity to form.

This time in history also saw a major shift in masculinity where, most of all, self-doubt became the core combatant to the American male. The fractured male psyche was on full display on talk shows (e.g., Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey), discussed in books—Lynn Segal’s *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (1997) and Anthony Clare’s *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis* (2000) for example—and depicted in films such as *Falling Down* (1992). Feminism moved to the background as the key male rival replaced by something far more threatening: that men’s greatest battles were becoming internal. The male became lost again in a world that began to let go the nostalgia of the 1950s as described by Bruzzi:

> the 'warrior/cop' of the 1980s was replaced by the 'more sensitive, nurturing, protective family men of the nineties'...once heroism ceased to be 'a male certainty', the 90s signaled that the 'really heroic struggle is now about facing inner obstacles, owning up to emotions in order to become a less repressed person.'

The male’s search for identity and meaning, letting go the bonds of repression, and the restoration of the human spirit are materialized in the four films surveyed in this thesis. *The Player* (1992) shows the “grey suited male”—a reconstruction of the 1950s male set in modern day Hollywood—as an emotionally repressed figure who navigates

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51 Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy*, 158.
the capitalist Hollywood machine in pursuit of power. The typified femme fatale of old becomes his love interest, showing as little emotion as the protagonist/anti-hero creating an obvious façade to which neither character is capable of true emotion. The Hollywood paradox of art verses commerce is represented by the power-play male’s hunger for dominance within the artistic world he inhabits. Robert Altman’s portrayal of this anti-hero who gets away with murder (literally), lends itself to the notion that the “man in the grey suit,” who symbolizes 1950s masculinities, is not to be trusted and should be discarded from feminine world of artistry. The film’s score personifies the freezing and melting of repression, sounds moments of control, and finally sells the reveal that the protagonist’s brand of male is a farce. The male in crisis can be heard in cues that feature music boxes and cues built around a “Benny Goodman-with-a-gun-to-his-head” free-jazz style.52

_Scent of a Woman_ (1992) explores a young man’s passage into manhood under the tutelage of a surrogate father-figure whose insolence and militaristic deportment serve to repress his emotion. We are witness to the struggles contained within both men; therefore, abandoning the single point-of-view-from-the-son narrative, prevalent in 1980s Hollywood films. The dual account of a young man who weighs morality and integrity against a blind retired military officer who has lost hope and the will to live show the inner-trials and crises in which male film protagonists of the 1990s must engage. What begins as a tenuous relationship between the two men transforms into an unspoken love for one another as both men discover qualities in the other which they wish to possess. The “male must change if he is to survive” archetype crystallizes as both men reveal their

52 Doug Adams, “Thomas Newman’s The Player,” *Film Score Monthly* #72, August 1996. 17.
vulnerability during the life-or-death climactic scene that forces the rigid older man to become the effeminate younger boy he has been mentoring. The young man also transforms during this moment into the righteous man the mentor had been grooming throughout the film. The score captures the inner-ruminations of thought that setup the psychological trials both men face throughout the film. The cues that are situated in each character’s “inner-landscape” in Scent of a Woman become a sonic template for the male in crisis portrayed in the remaining films studied in this thesis.

Shawshank Redemption (1994) has the most palpable mythic male-archetypal portrayal of the four films discussed. The male lead is, at first, feminized as he navigates a hardened prison world that serves as a literal and metaphorical trial-ridden arena that negotiates the balance between reality and hope. The friendship between the protagonist and his mentor shows a meaningful bond between men as opposed to the group of antagonists that harass and rape the male lead are referred to as “the sisters.”

Although female characters do not exist in this prison world, they symbolize hope and rebirth to the male lead as the images on his cell wall foretell. The posters of Rita Hayworth, Marilyn Monroe, and Raquel Welch are, at first glance, sex symbols that adorn any typical prisoner’s cell walls. However, as the protagonist’s escape sequence suggests, it is the final poster of a spread-legged Raquel Welch that becomes the doorway to redemption. It is through Welch’s pelvic region (as the warden’s hand penetrates to discover the escape tunnel) that the protagonist enters into a (re)-birth sequence through a five-hundred-yard birth canal to freedom. Thus, the image of the female infidel that led

53 “The job of any prison is to take men, who are typically incarcerated because of hyper-masculinized actions, and feminize them...in order to dehumanize inmates and thereby make them more compliant to the state’s patriarchal authority.” See: Maura Grady and Tony Magistrale, The Shawshank Experience: Tracking the History of the World’s Favorite Movie (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 71.
him to prison becomes transformed—by way of the Welch poster—into the ultimate boon that sets him free, thereby redeeming the female.\textsuperscript{54} The score captures the battle within the literal and inner-prisons represented in Shawshank Redemption, and are treated similarly—from a timbral and harmonic sense—to the score heard in Scent of a Woman. The score represents a key that slowly encroaches the characters’ psychological prisons, opening a window into the inner-workings of turmoil during the male protagonist’s crisis points. Further, the meditative treatment of the score invites the audience to gaze into the temporal construction of thought where hope and ennui battle for dominance within the human spirit.

American Beauty (1999) calls the integrity of the suburban American father into question by exploring an emasculated husband and father navigating a typical midlife crisis during his final living year. As the protagonist reaches inward to reinvigorate his sense of youth, he establishes a questionable infatuation for his daughter’s best friend—a desire that both awakens his spirit and gradually wreaks havoc on those around him. The film fixates on the protagonist’s carnal desires and fantasies and how the pursuit of such objects leads to the decay of the human spirit. By displaying the male lead’s inner-atrocities, the film delivers an exploitive cautionary message that perpetuated in many suburban-sphere, self-reflexive films prevalent in the 1990s and 2000s.\textsuperscript{55} The popularity of the film suggests that many Americans were in accord with the protagonist’s criticism

\textsuperscript{54} “[The protagonist] becomes a better man as a result of acknowledging his feminine anima.” See: Grady and Magistrale, Shawshank Experience, 101.

of traditional American values and moving towards a more satisfying, emotionally fulfilling existence.\textsuperscript{56}

The protagonist’s transparency unveils a weakness in the patriarchal model prevalent in the years leading up to the 1990s. As masculinity had become equated with emotional lucidity, Bruzzi describes \textit{American Beauty}—along with many other films released around the millennium—closed the 1990s with a suggestive purview of how it may have been the father all along who was the “cause of tragedy and the implosion of the family unit.”\textsuperscript{57} Like \textit{Scent of a Woman} and \textit{Shawshank Redemption}, the score treats the film’s core message with similar harmonic and timbral treatments. Ambiguous harmonies over whispering drones capture the fog-ridden inner landscape of the protagonist on his quest for meaning. Finally, the score assists Bruzzi’s notion that “present enlightenment can heal wounds of the past” by providing a sonic imprint of an earlier positive message onto the protagonist at the end of the film.

\textsuperscript{56} China Millman, \textit{American Beauty} (USA: GradeSaver, 2011), 8.

\textsuperscript{57} Bruzzi, \textit{Bringing Up Daddy}, 158.
Chapter Outline

Each of the four films discussed in this thesis focuses on distinct musico-dramatic structures that convey Bruzzi’s idea of “masculinity in crisis” in the first decade of the Indiewood era. Chapter Two explores Robert Altman’s The Player and the ways in which the score vacillates between film music styles of the golden age and modern electro-acoustic treatments, cumulating into the film-within-a-film’s fanfare that questions the film’s diegetic position of reality. By implementing horror music devices over film noir music, Newman transforms the film’s main theme and develops a roadmap that leads the listener to a false image of the preservation of masculinity by vindicating the anti-hero with a grand fanfare at the end of the film.

Chapter Three explores the multigenerational exchange between a blind father figure and young man on the edge of adulthood in Martin Brest’s Scent of a Woman. Newman exchanges the same ambivalent cues between the two lead characters as a narrative buildup to the redemptive climactic moment for both. All signature aspects of Newman’s sound are present: a harmonic treatment of pan-tonal meandering piano chords over floating pedal tones. This sound becomes a beacon to the fragility behind the male stoic guise in future films.

Chapter Four explores the sonic world of hope and reclamation of the human spirit in Frank Darabont’s Shawshank Redemption. Newman exchanges musical moods from earlier established film music tropes (horror and pastoral) to trace both the disintegration of hope and fight for absolution in the physical and psychological world of
the prison system. The music stands for both the unspoken mental ruminations of a caged spirit and serving as a backdrop to the film’s cautionary tales.

Chapter Five brings Newman’s music to the suburban sphere where the male crisis is on full display in Sam Mendes’ *American Beauty*. Two musical cues underpin the protagonist’s search for meaning and the film’s core message that beauty can be found everywhere if one “looks closer.” These cues rely on the audience’s sonic memory of the *mise-en-bande* heard at key crisis points of another male protagonist’s cautionary tale.

Unless otherwise noted, all analyses were based on the author’s transcriptions from the original soundtrack recordings. Aaron Schoenberg’s dissertation contains a handful of primary source scores obtained from the motion picture companies that own the copyrighted music that I will also reference. The titles of Thomas Newman’s cues are taken from each original motion picture soundtrack’s CD.58

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58 The extended soundtrack recording for *Shawshank Redemption* from LaLaLand Records (2016) was referenced for titles.
Chapter 2


Director: Robert Altman

Composer: Thomas Newman

Cinematography: Jean Lepine

Sound Editor: Michael Redbourn

Preview: An Open Viewing of the Film in Its Entirety

*Griffin Mill*: So, what's the story?


*Griffin Mill*: That’s more than twenty-five words and it’s bullshit. (00:45:05)

*The Player* is a self-reflective satire of Hollywood’s power structure embodied by a studio executive, Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), and an anonymous screenwriter whose career he callously derailed. The vengeful screenwriter vows to settle the score on behalf of all scribes left in the wake of Mill’s icy disregard. Taking the threats seriously, Mill grows overly suspicious of the many writers who have obsequiously pitched their scripts and he had rejected. Mill not only fears for his life; his ultimate dread lies in his loss of status atop the masculine empire of the Hollywood studio system. He settles on David Kahane (Vincent D’Onofrio), a writer whose magnum opus Mill treated with particular indifference, as the source of the threats. Mill meets Kahane in an attempt to quell the incessant threats by offering him a scriptwriting deal; but Kahane sees through the facade and the two of them tangle physically until Mill accidently drowns Kahane in a puddle of water. To Mill’s surprise, however, the threats continue but now Mill is guilty of
murdering an innocent man. Mill’s mounting pressures of corporate ambition, the police investigation into Kahane’s death, managing love affairs, and the escalating threats from the mysterious screenwriter leave him an insecure paranoiac. After narrowly passing a suspect lineup at the police station, Mill’s life takes an unexpected turn for the better: he lands a promotion at the studio, he marries Kahane’s girlfriend, and they are expecting a child—a facetious Hollywood ending that miraculously restores Mill’s threatened masculinity. In the closing scene, Mill receives a pitch over the phone from a man who calls himself “the postcard writer.” He pitches an idea about a studio executive who kills a writer and gets away with murder. Mill immediately recognizes the pitch as blackmail and gives the writer a deal. The writer’s title for the film is *The Player*—the movie we’ve just seen.

Griffin Mill’s facade is a caricature of the 1950s “man in the grey suit,” with his icy disregard, slicked back hair, and double-breasted suit. This visual cinematic code represents the male-dominated Hollywood machine that perpetuates an image of masculinity that is repressive to the will of emotion and, thus, creativity. Mill becomes a metaphorical guardian of conservatism where the antagonism of the creative world becomes his greatest threat. He thwarts the loving nature of his girlfriend for an undeveloped femme fatale who paradoxically shows no emotion but is an artist—an ideological bridge on which Mill seems to stand in his professional life. The characters in *The Player* are situated on various tenet points along the battle-line between art (the feminine) and commerce (the masculine).

The film is permeated with self-reviling themes depicting Hollywood as a boulevard of broken dreams, cutthroat executives, and inflated egos. The voyeuristic
complexion of the mise-en-scène—riddled with numerous A-list actor cameos and symbolic movie posters from Hollywood’s golden age that prophetically hint at the unfolding narrative shows a war-torn landscape of creative hope where the artist—the feminine—almost always comes out the loser. Altman’s satirical take on film noir delivers its sardonic thesis by utilizing chaotic, overlapping dialogue and abrupt, attention-shifting close-up shots over a soundtrack that is filled with stumbling waltz-like cues played by pianos, music boxes, and uniquely sampled sounds by Thomas Newman. Newman’s score underlines the characters’ psychological battle between moments of fight, flight, and freeze—with wind chimes and music boxes whose tempi imply the freezing and melting of icicles—throughout the battle between creativity (the feminine) and economy (the masculine).

Historical and Cultural Context

The Player’s reflexivity of a less than savory Hollywood is one in a long line of films negatively depicting the motion picture industry. Since the silent film era, films like Show People (1928) and Ella Cinders (1926) cautioned against the pitfalls of stardom, while “talkie” films like What Price Hollywood? (1932) and A Star is Born (1937, 1954, 1976, 2018) add more grave consequences to the price of stardom. The “art versus commerce” message in The Player also finds its roots in films like Sunset Boulevard (1950) and Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? (1960). Altman metaphorically uses these themes as a commentary of not just Hollywood, but capitalist Western civilization as a whole. The film’s dualistic architecture shows that good and bad coexist on both sides of
a paradox: repression tends to lead to self-reflexivity uncovering inner-turmoil, image and reality are thinly veiled endeavors, and creativity and commerce—while typically at odds—exist in somewhat mutual tolerance. The film’s awarded-critical success showed how more challenging narratives, masculinity’s inner struggles with repression, and auteurism under the Indiewood umbrella was gaining steam following the unexpected success of Steven Soderbergh’s *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (1989).

Altman presents the viewer with visual clues that simultaneously exist in the real world (A-list actor and writer cameos) and the fictional world (that even reference some of the cameo actors and films in which fictional characters have actually starred). Such signifiers constantly challenge the audience’s delineation between reality, the film, and the film-within-the-film. This visual inundation is accompanied by overlapping improvised dialogue between fictional characters and cameo actors presenting moments where identifying important narration from inconsequential conversation becomes difficult—an Altmanesque device to depict hyper-reality. Newman’s score functions in a way similar to Altman’s treatment of visual cues. The music helps refine these narrative incongruities with music that is both approachable and purposely off-kilter. The various musical themes underline moments where characters are in control (jazzy cues suggesting growing masculinity and power), devoid of emotion (icy cues identified with the repressed male) and having to react in a genuine, instinctual way (cues inspired by horror devices that free—or melt—the repressed). Tracing the film’s main title track, “Funeral Shark,” will show how the same theme can occupy divergent emotional spaces at once when the film is listened to in its entirety (See appendix).
The best-known scene of the film is the uncut, panning eight-minute opening shot that follows the film’s main cast and cameo writers pitching ideas for new films. The scene opens with a clapperboard that reads: *The Player*, a subtle hint that the movie the audience is about to watch is a film-within-a-film (Figure 2.1):

![Figure 2.1 (00:00:26) Opening still.](image)

Throughout this scene we are introduced to the main cast and witness the hustle and bustle of the Hollywood machine as groveling writers cower to the money-men (monomyth events 1-6, see appendix). Altman underlines his narrative with numerous golden age movie posters decorating the office walls (see appendix) while the chief of security (Fred Ward) grumbles about the MTV attention span in films today, “cut-cut-cut-cut, the opening shot of Welles’ *Touch of Evil* was six-and-a-half-minutes long!” Although this scene stretches the bounds of typical lengths—average shot length for movies in the 1990s was 3-6 seconds—Newman’s fast paced percussive cues interspersed with jazzy riffs and lilting waltzes keep the pacing of the shot mobile and
gripping as the camera pans from office windows to the parking lot and back.\textsuperscript{59} The camera pans to a golf cart accident involving a mail room worker sprawled out onto the parking lot with mail strewn about him (00:03:49). The camera settles onto a close-up of the first of many threatening postcards sent to the film’s protagonist Griffin Mill. Newman introduces “Funeral Shark,” a macabre waltz—initiated by a vibraslap stinger—whose lilting glissandi between each note suggests an obsessive madness behind the threats (Figure 2.2).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{funeral_shark.png}
\caption{“Funeral Shark” melody accompanying first postcard threat. Transcribed by author.}
\end{figure}

The melody revolves around a B minor/major seventh chord (Hitchcock Chord), a potential homage to the horror tradition of the Hitchcock/Herrmann collaboration; indeed, film posters of Hitchcock’s \textit{Notorious} and \textit{Rear Window} are presented at 00:40:42. The opening three measures outline a descending E Major chord whose lilting

notes transform a once majestic key into a smeared web of eeriness. The chromaticism beginning in measure eight leads to a weak cadence between a C# that sounds as if it is hanging on for dear life, until finally falling back to B. Newman unifies the film’s sonic meta-diegesis by repurposing “Funeral Shark’s” melody in eight variations throughout the film leading up to The Player’s ultimate reveal. Doug Adams describes the melody and its accompaniment as consisting of “an alternation between nervous piano phrases and the twisting waltz melody…layered behind these phrases are odd textural statements on clay marimba, struck water bottles, and prepared guitar among other non-traditional instruments.” The repetitive kinetic rhythms played by these unorthodox percussion instruments act as a hypnotic, ticking automaton foiled against the more approachable waltz melody “highlighting and punctuating the film’s architectural duality.” Adams expands on the duality of the film and the score’s added third dimension:

The theme becomes a musical counterpart for the Hollywood of The Player, as well as indicative of the executives’ characters—outwardly showy, inwardly turbulent. A theme supporting only one of these two attitudes could have portrayed Mill as an unfortunate Hollywood martyr or a black-hearted scoundrel, but here there’s more depth…With Newman, Mill is three-dimensional—even if his depth is his moral ambiguity.

The theme then returns three more times as a motive of imminent danger accompanying a visual threat. First, the same stinger and theme return when Griffin’s secretary hangs up on an angry writer who is insisting Griffin return his call. The camera immediately pans to a movie poster of the 1950 thriller Highly Dangerous (Figure 2.3):

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60 Meta-diegetic sound exists in the inner world of a character. I read The Player’s film-within-a-film as a character in itself possessing its own thoughts and motives.
62 Ibid., 16.
63 Ibid., 16-17.
The poster and Newman’s musical theme spell out an obvious threat that develops into an audiovisual placation to the audience. The same theme then returns with the revelation of the next two postcard threats and cementing “Funeral Shark” as a musical symbol of danger (Figures 2.4 and 2.5):

Figure 2.3 (00:09:14) *Highly Dangerous* film poster.

Figure 2.4 (00:13:56) Second postcard threat. Figure 2.5 (00:23:52) Third postcard threat.

The first postcard of the following pair (0:13:56) states “I told you my idea and you said you’d get back to me. Well?” Newman suppresses the melody and brings the accompaniment forward to allow space for the postcard’s question to be posed: what will Mill decide to do? The theme ticks away with improvised piano dissonances as Mill tucks the postcard into a drawer filled with similar threats further repressing his fear and vulnerability maintaining his masculine image. Here, Mill shows us that vulnerability

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64 The poster sequences show Altman indicting the audience for their part in perpetuating the capitalist/Hollywood agenda—after all, if the public would cease patronizing mindless blockbuster films, Hollywood would cease making them. See: Interview with Robert Altman, Criterion Collection DVD *The Player.*
cannot be tolerated in the masculine world of Hollywood and if the threats require resolution, only his pride will see it through.

Following the third postcard threat—the third appearance of “Funeral Shark’s” theme returns—at 23:52, Mill is called to action physically and musically, beginning the first of many inner-turmoils between the anti-hero’s id and ego (Figure 2.6). Newman’s score builds tension to mirror this narrative development echoing Mill’s resolve to identify his antagonist. During his frantic scouring of old ledgers and computer files, the nervous piano waltz devolves into the theme “Good Dog’s Water”—a theme that features struck water bottles, clay marimba, and manipulated samples of piano strings to sound like wind chimes over a strong C# pedal tone (see Example 1.1).


The transformed timbral qualities between “Funeral Shark’s” piano accompaniment into “Good Dog’s Water’s” wind chimes transform the macabre eeriness that accompanied the earlier post card threats into Mill’s descent to the “inmost cave” behind his repression.
The aleatoric rhythms throughout this cue have the indeterminacy of melting icicles, wind chimes, or toy music boxes that are rolled along the floor at varying speeds. Mill’s call to action seems to melt his icy veneer as the soundtrack gives us a glimpse into the fragile man behind his stoic guise. The cue lasts for nearly three minutes under an ominous drone as Mill identifies who he thinks is the perpetrator of the threats, David Kahane (Vincent D’Onofrio). Parked in front of his house, he calls David’s landline from his cell phone—a rarity in 1992 that shows Mill’s affluence. David’s live-in girlfriend June Gudmundsdottir (Greta Scacchi) tells Mill that David has gone to the movies to see The Bicycle Thief and they begin a flirtatious conversation as the drone fades. Telephones have a long history in Hollywood as a symbol of terror and harassment for women and Mill’s technological superiority reinforces the “man on the prowl” trope.\(^5^5\) Newman’s horror-inspired drone in “Good Dog’s Water” sets up Mill’s dangerous side, foreshadowing the crime he is about to commit.

Mill drives to the theater in an attempt to calm David’s anger and, in turn, stop the threats. David doesn’t concede to Mill’s attempted capitulation and storms out of the

karaoke bar, as a patron sings “Let’s Begin Again” written by Altman—an ironic tune
accompanying their failed meeting. Mill begins walking to his car when the marquee
lights for The Bicycle Thief go dark—a visual representation of Mill entering the “inmost
cave”—to the sound of a thunderous bass stinger followed by the introduction of “Six
Inches of Dirty Water,” an embellished restatement of “Good Dog’s Water” with heavier
bass stingers, church bells, and increased tempi in the music boxes.

The swirling chimes in “Six Inches of Dirty Water” present a clear point of
departure from “Funeral Shark’s” menacing melody—the threats are coming to fruition
awakening Mill’s fight or flight response. The cue thrusts Mill into crossing the threshold
from his former counterfeit existence of commerce toward the downtrodden art-world
that houses the many casualties of writers whose lives his disregard has ruined. His failed
diplomacy at the karaoke bar regresses the “man in the grey suit” back to the battlefield
of the War where physical force, not words, wins battles. Like bullets slicing the air,
Newman’s cue engulfs the sonic space around Mill. The incessantly chiming cue reflects
Mill’s surreal loss of control as his repression begins to erase. Low bass stingers match
key moments throughout Mill and Kahane’s struggle until the writer is finally drowned in
a puddle of water at Mill’s hands: “Six Inches of Dirty Water” has awakened the beast
within Mill and put-to-bed “Funeral Shark’s” threatening notions.

“Funeral Shark’s” twisting waltz does return, however, to enter new territory
during the scene where Mill—attending Kahane’s funeral—begins courting June at the
cemetery, foreshadowing an unfinished resolve on the part of the musical theme.
Newman’s lilting waltz—having been firmly imbedded in the audience’s memory as
danger—adds meaning by scene-association to show the three dimensions of Griffin Mill
as described by Adams above: The supportive martyr (throughout this scene) adding to the black hearted scoundrel and the morally ambiguous executive established earlier in the film. Here, Newman subtly delivers the melody in the form of plucked harmonics played on a double bass subtly reminding the audience that danger may still be lurking.

After Mill’s revelation of killing the wrong writer, the threats continue accompanied by “Six Inches of Dirty Water” instead of “Funeral Shark’s” melody. The audience must now reconsider the latter theme’s intent while further raising questions as to who the author is behind the threats. The combination of the visual harassment Mill endures with the horror-inspired audio component forms a sympathy between the audience and the anti-hero. The symbiotic bond between the audience and Mill conjures a sense of relief when he is acquitted of his crime, thereby indicting the audience as an accomplice to the murder.66 By replacing the danger behind “Funeral Shark” with the swirling chimes in “Six Inches of Dirty Water,” the filmmakers are able to setup “Funeral Shark’s” melody for the film’s ultimate reveal.

The last two sequences of “Funeral Shark’s” “cross-eyed waltz” (c.f. Thomas Newman) occur, respectively, as diegetic and metadiegetic end-credit fanfares for the movie Habeas Corpus (the film made by the characters) and the ending of The Player (the film we just watched). Newman adds a D# (Major 3rd) to lift the melody as he transforms the lilting phrases into triumphant orchestral flourishes decorated with confectionary percussion and ostentatious string runs to signal the all too happy—and unrealistic—Hollywood-endings of both films. Newman abandons the clay marimbas, glass bottles, and improvised piano for the traditional orchestra—an homage to the

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66 The murder of the writer can be a metaphor for the murder of artistry. Again, Altman is indicting the audience for their part in killing art films and perpetuating the success of the Hollywood blockbuster.
golden age of film scoring. The brash cymbal crashes initiate the regally transformed rhythms signaling the end of danger and, in turn, the end of the creative spirit: The anti-hero has won, the writer of *Habeas Corpus* has sold out, and capitalism has ousted artistic integrity.

Following *Habeas Corpus’* big finale, the score’s fanfare begins with the final fragment of “Funeral Shark’s” lilting melody as Griffin gets a phone call in his car from the writer who had been threatening him on his commute home. The threatening writer is
finally revealed vocally and musically. He pitches a story about a movie executive who gets threatening postcards from an angry writer who then kills the wrong writer and gets away with it...a film he calls *The Player*. The writer assures Griffin of a “happy ending” if the screenplay gets signed. After agreeing to the terms, Griffin pulls into his cottage where he meets his now pregnant wife Jane and kisses her—the happy ending he was promised. As Griffin embraces Jane, the lilting figure fades into the well-known taunting song: “Nanny, nanny, boo-boo,” or, “He’s a Dirty Robber” (2:00:19)—a collaboration between Newman and Altman as a “thumbing-of-the-nose” taunt to Hollywood—before segueing into the big waltz fanfare.67 The “man in the grey suit’s” audio-visual vindication becomes a half-hearted acquittal of Hollywood’s blockbuster regime where artistic expression is again repressed by the traditionalist constraints of capitalism.

Once the credits roll in *The Player*, it becomes evident the transformation of this theme has been delivered in reverse order—an audible reflexivity to the film within a film. As Adams states, “This waltz ends up almost as a theme developed backwards. It finds its roots in the last scene of the film while all the variations and their augmented complexity precede this.”68 Newman’s treatment of the waltz throughout the film reveals a borrowing of Charles Ives’ cumulative form where constituent parts coalesce into a fully formed work. Newman’s eight variations of “Funeral Shark” leading up to the finale, combined with four instances of “Good Dog’s Water” and “Six Inches of Dirty Water,”—themes built out of “Funeral Shark’s” accompaniment—capture the physical

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and internal battle between safety and danger, art versus commerce, and repression versus free will. The final fanfare’s repeat of Habeas Corpus’s diegetic fanfare detaches us from Griffin’s and The Player’s sound world to become a metadiegetic sonic indicator of the “film-as-character” through Altman’s sarcasm and filmic reveal. In essence, the score, and the film itself, has been lying to us all along as we traversed Mill’s “anti-heroic” journey elevating Altman’s critical commentary to be all the more meaningful by the end of the film.

Tracing “Funeral Shark” backwards presents many questions about the score’s overall diegesis: Does all the music in this film become metadiegetic once the audience realizes the movie they just viewed was a movie-within-a-movie when the film, itself, is a character? If, in turn, Habeas Corpus then becomes a movie-within-a-movie-within-a-movie, in what diegetic space does the fanfare arrangement of “Funeral Shark” occupy from a classification standpoint? Because of the film’s reflexivity, “Funeral Shark” becomes a theme that seems it could have almost infinite meanings: Like holding two mirrors against one another to get an infinite number of reflections. By manipulating the third in the B Major/Minor scale and orchestrating choices between electronic and acoustic instruments, Newman seamlessly vacillates between the light and dark spaces of the narrative preying on the audience’s collective memory of golden age film music.

Newman’s repetition of the swirling and lifeless music boxes embodies the uncanny by using processed and found sounds to which the ear has no reference or memory. When positioned against traditional orchestral/instrumental sounds, the sampled passages create a suspenseful listening experience underlining the narrative to show masculinity in crisis.
In many ways, Mill represents the 1980s “new male” version of the man in the grey flannel suit whose narcissism disavows compromise. The grey suited male of the 1950s rejected his personal, emotional, and sexual needs to maintain his paternity and maintain an image of control. Mill’s personal need for ambition consumes him and drives the film’s entire narrative. His emotional blueprint is riddled with paranoia, fear, and rage, while his sexuality-as-commodification suggests a mirroring of his throwaway mentality. Newman’s icy score embodies Mill’s lack of sentimentality and emotion—heard in a majority of his other scores—thereby underlining the emotional void of the “man in the grey suit.”

Altman’s caricature of the man “who pulls the levers” of the Hollywood machine reflects the sea change happening between the rise of the independent film in the face of the Hollywood blockbuster juggernaut. *The Player* represents a key moment in the Indiewood genre helping to reconstruct the 1990s male into a figure containing more depth than his predecessor. Guns and physical prowess can no longer conquer the antagonist as the 1990’s inner struggles begin to take shape.
Chapter 3

Alone in the Dark: Survival Through the Convergence of Multi-Generational Masculinities in Scent of a Woman (1992)

Director: Marin Brest
Composer: Thomas Newman
Cinematography: Donald E. Thorin
Sound Editor: J. Paul Huntsman

Preview: An Open Viewing of the Film in Its Entirety

Lt. Col. Frank Slade: Then I’m going to lie down on my big beautiful bed and blow my brains out.

Charlie Simms: Did I hear you right, colonel? You said you’re going to kill yourself?

Lt. Col. Frank Slade: No. I said I was going to blow my brains out.

Scent of a Woman is a father (figure)-son road film that juxtaposes a flamboyant blind retired Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade (Al Pacino) with a younger, quieter foil in boarding school student Charlie Simms (Chris O’Donnell). Charlie is hired by the colonel’s niece to help him while she and her family get away for Thanksgiving weekend. Promising to be an easy weekend job, Charlie finds out the Colonel, unbeknownst to his niece, is planning a trip to New York City to act out a bucket list of endeavors before ending his life. Badly needing the money and burdened by his own dilemma to snitch on his peers at school, Charlie reluctantly accepts the task of guiding the colonel down his dark path filled with many past regrets in hopes to save him from his personal doom. This multi-generational collision of the repressed male masked by anger and his younger, more unsure counterpart prove to be just what the other needed to survive.
In spite of Slade’s blind handicap and gruff exterior, he has earned a great deal of status in the political sphere in which he exploits throughout the film. He is a curmudgeon who carries a sophistication and confidence that makes him the quintessential urbane worldly man. Charlie Simms, a young student of roughly seventeen years, has none of Slade’s sophistication but carries a naïve, trusting, optimistic, and honest demeanor that creates tension throughout the film’s second act. The polar opposites of these characters come to a head when Charlie finds the colonel dressed in his military garb loading a pistol to end his life. Charlie intervenes and Slade threatens to kill him. Having confronted the precipice of death, they are both transformed by this experience together and find the will to cross the threshold of self-doubt into a life filled with hope. The cynical old Slade who had ridiculed Charlie’s naivety and simple honesty becomes inspired by it, in turn, he goes to Charlie’s aid by intervening in his disciplinary hearing at school, thus transforming him into a father figure for Charlie.

**Historical and Cultural Context**

Martin Brest’s remake of Dino Risi’s *Profumo di donna* (1974) adapted from Giovanni Arpino’s novel *Il buio e il miele* was transposed into the American landscape in 1992. The intense chauvinism portrayed in Risi’s original version of the film was severely toned down to better show the gruff protagonist more as an admirer of women than the preying lecher portrayed eighteen years earlier—a more convincing role model for a seventeen-year-old young man situated in the “masculinity in crisis” era of the 1990s. Both films present the blind and ill-tempered protagonists as older generation
father figures embittered by their handicap but Newman’s score in the remake helps shape a different understanding of the main protagonist.

Brest’s remake delves into the fractured psyche of a man “alone in the dark,” showing Slade’s quiet moments of solitude accompanied by Thomas Newman’s non-tonal piano-centric score. Slade’s repressive walls he has built around his psyche prove to be an impassable partition that only a woman and the maturation of Charlie can break through. Slade’s barriers hearken back to the repressive military man of the early 1960s; the era from which he served in high ranks for Lyndon Johnson. Two musical cues setup both the walls of Slade’s self-preservation and the razing of those walls: “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line” and “Cigars Part Two/Other Plans,” respectively.

Musical and Visual Syntax

Newman situates the non-tonal cues around a series of pastoral themes for English horn that provide a moment of repose following a threatening situation, and adventurous brass/string fanfares that propel the narrative to show Charlie’s youthful perspective (see appendix). This juxtaposition of cues containing opposing moods further dispirits the atmosphere of the protagonists’ moments of isolation and pull the listener deeper into each character’s mental landscape. Newman’s heavily reverbed piano, free rhythms, and parallel chord voicings alter the temporality of the scene, freezing the listener into the character’s mental space. Looking at the appendix, one sees “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line” (dark grey cubes) first mapped onto Lt. Frank Slade at Event 6, where we first meet Pacino’s gruff character (the Mentor). The isolation cue then shifts to the Hero
at Event 13. At Event 18, the cue is finally shared between both characters showing both men battling their inner thoughts as they await their personal trials. As Slade gets closer to his goal of committing suicide, the isolation theme returns two more times to set up the harrowing climax between Charlie, Slade and his gun (Events 40 and 47).

The first five measures of “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line” introduces Lt. Frank Slade sitting alone next to a window in a smoke-filled guest house. A ray of sunshine struggles to enter through the smoke—a visual metaphor for the fog forbidding any good to enter Slade’s life. This first trial for Charlie leaves him in serious doubt about taking the job to aid Slade for the weekend. “A Tour of Pleasures” sets up both Slade’s loneliness and Charlie’s fear of the unknown (Figure 3.1).

The homophonic and heavily reverbed piano voiced with parallel open fifths in the left hand accompanied by the third in the right hand has become a signature harmonic approach for Newman during, what Chelsea Oden calls, “moments of introspection and reflection,” and what I call “isolation.”69 “A Tour of Pleasures” is harmonically ambiguous, suggesting B-flat Mixolydian but not adhering to any traditional harmonic

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treatment. The floating and unresolved nature of the three chords that open this cue intimate the unknown between the two men about to meet for the first time.

Perhaps the most memorable scene where “A Tour of Pleasures” is heard is during a dinner conversation between the two protagonists as Slade reveals his plan to commit suicide (00:47:31). Following Slade’s entrapment of Charlie who misses his flight home, Slade reveals a bucket list of experiences he wishes to embark upon before his imminent suicide (Figure 3.2).

Slade: “It’s not really a plan. It’s more like a tour. A little tour of pleasures.

Stay in a first-class hotel. Eat an agreeable meal. Drink a nice glass of wine. See my big brother. Nothing like…

family ya know. And then make love to a terrific woman.

B-Section
After that…I’m gonna lie down on my big beautiful bed at the Waldorf and blow my brains out.

As Slade utters his last words, “brains out,” Newman ends his second statement of the cue’s B-section with a weak cadence between C-minor and B-flat major. This harmonic “resolution” sounds less like a cadence as it now becomes an ellipsis for Charlie to pour his efforts into saving Slade from his weariness.

Because “A Tour of Pleasures” is so tonally ambiguous, when it is restated in subsequent scenes, its ability to associate with those different narratives quickly takes shape. Like a musical chameleon, the transparency of the six chords swirling in the liminal space between the audience and the screen underlines the interiority of the character. The listener is then invited to make her/his own judgement of the character’s state: melancholy, pensive, peaceful, nostalgic, daydreaming, lonely, etc. Newman uses this technique in many of his scores to enable the listener to read the narrative in a personal way and, thereby, distance himself from placating the audience. Newman describes these types of pared down cues:
I tend to have a three-note piano style. It’s probably because you need three notes to really define harmony. I guess it was this whole feeling of wanting to reduce things down. Not wanting to be flowery. Not wanting to say too much. If I use three notes to make harmonic activity, I want to make sure that every note matters. Again, it’s trying to find the value of an idea and not be sentimental. In a way, it’s a reaction against sentimentality, but toward myself. How I see myself. In a way, I wish not to share myself with others. I think there is a real reason I’m a film composer more than anything else. Because I’m automatically moved to the background...I tend not to share my music with many people, and I think that’s why my piano style is so scaled back.  

Newman’s scaled back piano writing becomes a chameleon to the narrative in which it is associated, thereby raising more musico-dramatic questions than it informs: sentimentality, pensiveness, inner-turmoil, peaceful, ambient, relaxing, horror, reflective, and introspective—can be used to describe the same cue when commutated to a different scene. Scholars like Adam Schoenberg and Chelsea Oden have only begun to create a conversation to identify a unifying theoretical approach with which to analyze Newman’s non-traditional compositional oeuvre. Perhaps it is in Newman’s Rock and Roll background that we might find a clue into the structure of “A Tour of Pleasures.” The root-fifth-third parallel structure of the six chords intimate the way a guitarist might slide between chords up and down the neck of the guitar. While not adhering to the classical rules of Western art music, the natural motion between bar chords on a guitar easily emulates the motion between “A Tour of Pleasure’s” chordal structure. As a multi-instrumentalist, it could be entirely possible that Newman composed this piece on the guitar then transcribed it to piano simply due to its chordal motion.  

“Cigars Part Two/Other Plans” (red cubes drawn in appendix) represent horrific musical responses to the sonic isolation heard in “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line”—a call to action, so to speak, from the swirling thoughts ruminating in the characters’ minds. These cues are built over a C#-G#-E drone with swelling clarinet cells that answer to horror-inspired piano dissonances (pervasive minor seconds and tritones). Adam Schoenberg describes the piano cells as reflecting Newman’s “chromatic and quartal/quintal nature” heard throughout his career. The voicings heard in the piano, however, present a dissonance reminiscent of the horror music genre—a device Newman utilizes in future films. For example, measures 4-5, 9-10, and 15-16 present both a tritone and minor second over the sustained drone and E in the clarinet creating a deep unease to the listener (See Example 3.1).

Example 3.1: “Other Plans.” Transcribed by author from original score.

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71 Schoenberg, 64.
72 Ibid., 63-64.
The placement of the dissonances between long periods of quiescence adds to the tritone/minor second’s power to unsettle the space between character dialogue. As Stan Link points out that, “another strategy especially appropriate to the psychological effect of horror resides in the score’s structural relation to narrative when offering misleading rather than reliable musical narration.”73 Played following the bucolic English horn in “Beyond Danger,” “Other Plans” adds horrific value to heighten the seriousness of Slade’s corrective response to Charlie’s half-hearted salute underscored with the tritone and minor-second dissonances. Janet Halfyard describes the tritone’s deep association with evil:

The tritone’s position within the medieval study of music caused it to acquire an interestingly specific musical symbolism. Its numerological characteristics oppose all that is defined as good in Western theology and music: six is the number of the devil, while seven is the perfect number, the divine number. The demonic tritone falls on the sixth semitone above (and below) the tonic as opposed to the perfect fifth, which falls on the seventh semitone. The tritone is the sixth step on the circle of fifths away from the tonic; it is, harmonically speaking, as far from grace as one can fall, associations that led to it being christened the Diabolus in musica, the devil in music, and that have always made it exceptionally useful to composers who wish to convey the idea of evil, the Other, or the alien.74

The dialogue and the piano become locked in a call and response (Figure 3.3):

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The “Beyond Danger” cue returns immediately following the ominous warning by Slade and his music signaling a sense of safety for Charlie. The bookends of “Beyond Danger”—the bucolic English horn theme—imply the seriousness of Slade’s lesson.

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73 Schoenberg, 63-64.
coupled with the notion that Charlie’s weekend job will be more than simply a monetary venture.

The first ten measures of “Other Plans” returns a half-step lower in “Cigars Part Two” where Slade’s antagonizing nephew pushes him over the edge by disrespecting Charlie (01:06:15).\textsuperscript{76} With each snide remark pontificated by Slade’s nephew, the dissonant piano over the drone gets louder emulating Slade’s anger gaining pace as his blood begins to boil. Following the two statements of the dissonant piano, the drone harmony thickens adding upper voices depicting Slade’s inner pain beginning to show through his calm veneer. As the cue comes to a climax, Slade violently grabs his nephew by the throat putting him into a ranger choke hold when the cue fades (Figure 3.4).

![Figure 3.4. “Cigars Part Two” (01:06:15).](image)

“Cigars Part Two” firmly plants the dissonant piano theme as Slade’s “call to action” sonic identity as it prepares the film’s apotheosis.

“Other Plans” is plotted onto Charlie for a brief moment as he contemplates his impending disciplinary hearing upon his return to school (01:31:48). This sets up the climactic scene where “Other Plans” becomes attached to both protagonists in a moment of life or death (01:52:37). Leading into the fourth and final presentation of “Other Plans,” “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line” gets one last statement as Slade decides to

\textsuperscript{76} “Cigars Part Two” is presented in the original key of “Other Plans” on the soundtrack CD. It is a half-step lower on the DVD (1998 Universal Home Video).
go through with his suicide plans. Slade sends Charlie away to buy him cigars—an animalistic attempt at hiding to die alone. Dressed in his military officer’s blues, Slade is loading his gun when Charlie walks into his room accompanied by the drone in C#-G#-E as “Other Plans” begins. As the two protagonists converse, the score attaches itself to key dialogue, emotion, and instinctual listener responses. The tense drone becomes attached to Charlie’s fear and trepidation as he tries to win the gun from Slade. Ghost and ambient tones whistle through high registers intimating Slade’s inner pain dancing through the transom of his mind. The low bass stinger introduces the dissonant piano like thunder warning the listener of the danger and seriousness of Slade’s suicidal intentions. The more Charlie attempts to convince Slade to hand over the gun, the more Slade becomes angry. Slade turns the gun on Charlie, “I’m gonna shoot you too. Your life’s finished anyway,” as the drone builds volume intensifying the direness of the scene. Newman fades the cue for a brief moment as if the storm may pass. Charlie desperately appeals to Slade, “You’re not bad, you’re just in pain,” inciting Slade’s anger. The bass stinger, piano dissonance, and drone return in full force as Slade replies, “What do you know about pain, you little snail dart from the Pacific Northwest?” Charlie slowly approaches Slade pleading for him to surrender the gun. With every verbal exchange the bass stinger and piano dissonance builds volume. The drone voices begin to glissando downwards in horrific fashion as tremolandi strings ascend in pitch and volume as Slade begins a countdown from five. After slowly saying “one,” he listlessly says, “fuck it” and draws the gun to his head. Charlie rushes to grab the weapon as Newman begins a loud bass drum banging in quick pace. “Other Plans” has now reached complete chaos as they struggle over the gun. Slade wins the weapon and points the gun at Charlie screaming,
"get outta here!!! I’ll blow your fucking head off!" The pounding bass drum quickly fades and “Other Plans” has had its last attempt to fulfill Slade’s plans when Charlie rebuttals, “then pull the trigger you miserable blind motherfucker!” Slade realizes Charlie has crossed the threshold into manhood. A look of pride subtly washes over Slade’s intense guise. They both begin to cry as the horror has passed signaled by the gentle English horn in “Beyond Danger.”

Slade is now transformed from the mentor to the father figure. Having faced death physically and in the psychological “inmost cave,” Charlie and Slade are able to move forward into manhood and inner-peace respectively. The symbiotic transformation both characters persevered sets up the final trial for both men: the disciplinary hearing for Charlie at his school. It is here that both men return to the ordinary world with the “elixir” to survive their final trial. Charlie wields his newfound integrity, and Slade wields his father figure protectionism. After Slade’s long speech during Charlie’s defense, Charlie is absolved of his accusations and free to live in the ordinary world again. Following a climactic musical fanfare, the film ends with Charlie saying goodbye to Slade with the strong implication of a bond that will last forever.

Newman’s score for Scent of a Woman is an early example of his foiling of the pastoral, horror, and isolation styles he employs to deepen the dramatic focus of a film. The pacing between these styles—as shown in the appendix—shows a near even distribution of the moods employed between the three acts of this atypically long film (02:33:20). The non-tonality of “A Tour of Pleasures/Thin Grey Line” allows the listener an interpretive advantage where one could attach multiple meanings to the cue’s ambiguity and, in turn, the male protagonists many swirling emotions. The horror music
devices used in “Other Plans/Cigars Part Two” incite the use of high pitched “pain”
signifiers and low pitched “danger” signifiers over traditional horror music dissonances
to deepen the direness of the character’s mental state. The stark divide between the
moments of horror and calm heard in Newman’s cues intimates a profound complexity in
the male archetype signifying a shift of focus toward the interiority of the burgeoning
male. These devices, and foils to them, become a recurring stylistic pattern in Newman’s
dramatic scores throughout the Indiewood era.
Chapter 4

Repression Redeemed: The Caged Bird that Sings in Shawshank Redemption (1994)

Director: Frank Darabont
Composer: Thomas Newman
Cinematography: Roger Deakins
Sound Editor: Bruce Bell

Preview: An Open Viewing of the Film in Its Entirety

Andy Dufresne: That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you... Haven't you ever felt that way about music?
Red: I played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost interest in it though. Didn't make much sense in here.
Andy Dufresne: Here's where it makes the most sense. You need it so you don't forget.
Red: Forget?
Andy Dufresne: Forget that... there are places in this world that aren't made out of stone. That there's something inside... that they can't get to, that they can't touch. That's yours.
Red: What're you talking about?
Andy Dufresne: Hope.

Frank Darabont’s The Shawshank Redemption centers around Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), a banker by trade, who is found guilty and incarcerated for the murder that he did not commit of his wife and her lover. The film spans a near twenty-year period of Andy’s stay at Shawshank Prison. Along the way, Andy befriends Red (Morgan Freeman) who mentors him through the maze of prison life. Andy also utilizes his banking skills to win over the prison guards and, eventually, the warden (Bob Gunton). By setting up a complex web of fake names and credentials, Andy helps the warden embezzle funds from construction work performed by the inmates. Now on the side of the warden and his guards, Andy’s co-confined enemies are eliminated and Red and his
friends are given certain limited privileges such as the quasi autonomous handling of the library. Brooks Hatlen (James Whitmore), the prison librarian and Andy’s close acquaintance, eventually hands over the library to Andy. Under Andy’s watch, the library is then transformed into a den of hope where Andy can help other inmates enjoy education, the arts, and a sense of freedom. When Tommy (Gil Bellows), a much younger inmate joins the crew, it comes to light that he met the true murderer of Andy’s wife and lover. When Andy urges the warden to reopen his case, the warden pushes back nearly breaking Andy’s will and spirit. After months of solitary confinement, Andy emerges with dire determination to “get busy living or get busy dying.” Through undying determination, patience, and most of all, hope; Andy tunnels through a wall he dug over the course of nineteen years mounting his escape. He ends up withdrawing all the profited funds the warden had embezzled and reporting the illegal activity at Shawshank Prison to the media leading the warden to commit suicide. Red eventually gets paroled then follows Andy’s instructions to join him in Mexico where they embrace what future is left for them.

Historical Context

*The Shawshank Redemption* is a human drama that weaves hope, friendship, and the human spirit against suffering, solitude, and the desperation of the soul. Based on Stephen King’s 1982 novella *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*, Darabont’s screenplay is an allegory for one’s integrity in the face of hopelessness. Andy’s road to redemption and Red’s path to salvation, both grounded in Christian mysticism, echo
Joseph Campbell’s monomyth structure of the Hero’s Journey, as indicated in the appendix. Birth and baptismal sequences accompany Andy’s entrance to and exit from the prison. Red reclaims his spirit after having repented for his earlier sins manifest in his dialogue as he describes his younger self in the third person during his final parole hearing. Andy’s ultimate redemption and escape become visualized as baptismal rain falls on his outstretched pose emulating the crucified Christ figure. The seventeen stages of the Hero’s Journey are embellished with moments of repose for the audience to carefully witness the inner-strife swirling through the protagonist’s thoughts, having “all the time in the world to think about it.” The uncut visual stillness accompanied by Newman’s sad lullabies bring the crisis of masculinity to the forefront. The strength of will and indomitable hope rescues the hero, not violence—a departure from the 1980s male hero. Intelligence, cunning, and faith become the weapons needed to free the hero’s spirit.

Although the film initially struggled financially upon its release, it went on to garner seven Academy Award nominations, including Thomas Newman’s career-first for Best Score. Following the Oscar attention and word-of-mouth popularity, the film became a VHS home-rental hit and is held in esteem as one of the 1990s’ greatest films.

Musical and Visual Syntax

Thomas Newman’s score for The Shawshank Redemption stretches the polarity between jaunty and haunting melodies. A mostly orchestral score with the exception of electronic “ghost” and “ambient” pads, Newman’s serious cues—classified as isolation
and horror in the appendix—utilize horror music devices harmonically, rhythmically, and timbrally in the form of eerie piano dissonances, drones, and screeching woodwinds. He returns to his isolation cues in moments of fear and deep pensiveness. His lighthearted cues weave between moments of horror and isolation in the form of pastoral melodies over open voiced harmonies signifying hope and folk violin/guitar during outdoor sequences. In all, Newman’s original score utilizes seventeen pastoral and folk-like cues against seventeen horror/isolation cues (see appendix) reflecting a balanced narrative between opposing idioms. The assignment of the cues—both original score and source music—weighted toward individual characters also highlights the personal nature of each character’s experience in Shawshank Prison (29 cues assigned to individual characters against 13 cues shared between characters; see Figure 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character(s)</th>
<th>Cue Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andy Dufresne</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Character</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red and Andy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Characters</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Cue assignment chart.

The opening cue “Main Title/Courtroom” swells out of the Inkspots’ chillingly cheerful song “If I Didn’t Care” playing from Andy’s car radio. The cue begins with a thunderous low A bass stinger that fades into a quiet drone in A four octaves higher.
Andy’s blank, glossed-over stare is frozen in a state of fear—inner-horror—as the drone continues. A delicate F♯-F-C♯ dissonance in the piano falls to an unsettled C♯-E-C defining the horror lurking behind his glossy stare—a clear case of music’s additive ability to alter a visual narrative. As Andy recounts the night of his wife and her lover’s murder, flashback sequences are accompanied by an A-major arpeggiated piano ostinato intimating the nervousness and tension behind every word of his defense. The drone, piano dissonance, and bass stinger return as the scene shifts back to the courtroom. By visual association, the drone now becomes the courtroom itself, the two-chord piano dissonance suggests Andy’s terror, and the bass stinger echoes the prosecutor’s fervent accusations. The final flashback’s ostinato fades into the judge’s verdict. As the judge continues his polemic against Andy’s supposed revenge, agitato strings swell drowning out the ostinato. Andy’s verdict is to serve two life sentences for the double murder. The cacophony builds to chaos as Andy’s dread washes over his face. The judge closes with the line, “so be it!” The gavel strikes in a thunderous blow ending the swelling cue and the screen shifts to black. This instance of using horror music applied to unfolding inner-drama becomes a motif in itself throughout the entire film. Figure 4.2 outlines the musical and visual syntax:
The bass stinger, drone, and dissonant piano approach to underline horror is an established set of devices in the Hollywood horror genre. John Carpenter’s opening cue for *The Fog* (1980) similarly utilizes synthesized string pads as drones under a
meandering minimalist piano figure to immerse the audience into the opening ghost-story (see Example 4.1).

Example 4.1. *The Fog* “Main Titles” transcribed by author.

Throughout the film’s score, Carpenter utilizes fade-ins and crescendos in the drone voice to define the liminal space between the spectator and the *mise-en-scene* conjuring a sense of imminent threat. Pitch placement and musical busyness has also proven to help to define space where high pitches, counterpoint, and faster rhythms are perceived as nearby. Therefore, Carpenter’s score indicates the proximity of the Fog (threat) through his use of fade, volume, and pitch which become a staple of the horror genre throughout the 1980s and 1990s and a device Thomas Newman frequently implements into his scores as an indicator of approaching danger. The opening scenes of *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Fog* are musically treated quite similarly. By performing a commutation test between both cues and films, where soundtracks are swapped between films, I argue that both cues fit quite well outside their originally intended scenes as horror music.\(^7\) The *mise-en-scene* of the courtroom coupled with Newman’s horror music suggests a migration from the “monster without” to the “monster within”—an inner-battlefield between a man and his psychological landscape.

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\(^7\) A commutation test substitutes music to change meaning or to better set a mood or environment. I performed a commutation test by swapping both cues on 2/17/2018. Both scores adapted quite well to the opposing visuals.
Newman’s horror-inspired drone cues in *The Shawshank Redemption* serve as a backdrop to Andy’s antagonists: The Sisters who rape Andy (“First Rape” 00:31:14) and Elmo Blatch who is the actual murderer of Andy’s wife and lover (“Elmo Blatch” 01:29:58). The deep D bass note that rings throughout these cues can conjure a physical reaction of danger in the listener according to Stephen Porges’ Polyvagal Theory. The deep drone acts as far-away thunder triggering an instinctual fear response in the listener during the rape scene. As Andy fights back, the Sisters prevail over him as the drone swells. The narration quiets the music as the camera pans to a time stretch of Andy with fresh bruises and cuts from his fights with the Sisters. When Elmo Blatch is introduced during a flashback, the same low drone returns as the sinister psychopath giggles his way through his confession of Andy’s wife and her lover’s murder. His hissing laugh weaves through the drone elevating the menacing tone of his words that emanate from his rotten teeth. The electronically processed foreign sounds—ghost and ambient pads—contained in Newman’s drones add further discomfort to these shocking scenes. As Karen Collins explains,

Not only do the sound and music impact upon us physically, but, as has been shown, the sound also affects us psychologically and perhaps intellectually through the use of metaphor. The mechanical metaphor gives us suggestions of cause (technology) and effect (hell) in the film. While such metaphors may work on a subconscious level for most viewers...

The score and the sound, then, are in a sense carriers of an unannounced narrative, one which works not on a conscious level, but on a subconscious one—the level most disturbed by horror. Perhaps in itself, being unable to distinguish acoustically between the two also carries a particularly disturbing effect.

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78 Porges’ Polyvagal Theory posits that high frequencies suggest pain (like a baby’s cry), low frequencies suggest danger (a lion’s roar or thunder), and mid-range frequencies suggest safety (like the communication range of a child’s mother).

Newman’s choice of electro-acoustic timbres for *The Shawshank Redemption* reinforces the uneasy feeling about the prison. As K.J. Donnelly describes, “the horror film is often seen as a coherent atmospheric package that embraces both music and sound effects. In many cases, horror film music follows less the traditional leitmotif symphonic structure of the classical film score than creates a sound architecture combining a concern for ambience with intermittent shock effects.”80 By borrowing from the horror film music genre, Newman intensifies the dramatic weight of a film. He typically abandons what Donnelly calls “intermittent shock effects” that release tension. Instead, he chooses to foil his horror cues with natural orchestral timbres in the form of the pastoral and further blur the lines between safety and danger.

Unlike the traditional association of pastoral music with nature, Newman utilizes pastoral devices to convey the vast expanse of the human psyche in times of introspection, self-imprisonment and redemption. The first time a pastoral cue is heard in *Shawshank Redemption*, the camera’s wide shot of Shawshank Prison shows Andy and the new prisoners ushering into the old stone jail amidst the vast countryside adjacent to the prison. The “Stoic Theme” utilizes open fourths and fifths in the bass moving in contrary motion to the descending melody in the upper voices to highlight convicted felons’ last moments outside the prison walls. The descending melody has a choking effect with eight-rests on the “and” of beat four to show the siphoning pressure of the stone walls the prisoners will soon inhabit. The camera’s lingering shots of the prison insinuates the invisible prisons the inmates create for themselves (Figure 4.3).

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Red’s narration: “So when Andy Dufresne came to me in 1949...
Figure 4.3: “Stoic Theme” audiovisual syntax. Transcribed by author from original score.

... good work for a man as young as he was."
Anthony Bushard credits Aaron Copland as the indirect influence behind Newman’s pastoral style:

Newman accompanies the helicopter shot (and our first glimpse) of the prison with what Newman called the “Stoic” theme. Newman presents an ostinato in the low strings that outlines a minor seventh and opens with a perfect fourth. The upper strings then answer with a descending perfect fourth. This opening gesture in the “Stoic” theme’s bass should call to mind a similar bass progression from Copland’s *Quiet City*. In both instances, the strident arpeggiation suggests urban cityscapes whose facades rise ever upward.81

Bushard builds here on Neil Lerner’s description of Copland’s influence on Hollywood film music as an influence for Newman.82 Lerner describes Copland’s “tendency toward an imposed simplicity” of composition that appealed most to Hollywood directors in the late 1930s and 1940s.83 Lerner goes on to describe how Copland’s “open” sound strongly reflected the literary genre of the pastoral: “a work that contrasts and romanticizes the simple life with the complicated through a comparison of the rural with the urban.”84 The pastoral idiom in eighteenth-century instrumental music contained many of the same devices we associate with today: sustained pedal tones, repeated ostinat and simple melodies that represented a connection with nature. Copland utilized those same devices with drones (held pedal tones), sometimes at the fifth, bucolic disjunct melodies set against conjunct bass lines, parallel diatonic harmonies, homophonic textures, slow to moderate tempi, allure for fourths and fifths in harmony and melody, static or slow moving diatonic harmony, repetitive melodic motives, rhythmic ostinatos, and widely

82 Thomas Newman studied under David Raksin at USC. David Raksin studied with Aaron Copland.
84 Ibid., 482.
spaced voicings to form his pastoral style. Copland’s pastoral style embodied the
nostalgic “longing for a place that was no longer,” a “music of utopian desire.”
Example 4.2 shows Copland’s disjunct melodies and harmonic movement in the pastoral
style.

Example 4.2. Aaron Copland: “Ballet for Martha” Appalachian Spring Suite. Transcribed
by author.

The “Stoic Theme” returns to alter space and time through a montage sequence of
Andy’s first two years in prison. This reintroduction of “Stoic Theme” within the cue
“Sisters” following his first rape, is a time stretch narrated by Red showing the bruised
Andy living through the trauma of the repeated defilement. The cue is scaled down from
its full orchestral rendition into a thinner, forlorn sound played by a smaller ensemble.
This treatment aligns with the nostalgia and “longing for a place that was no longer.”
Newman’s diluted orchestration has taken what was once “stoic,” and broken through

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85 Lerner, 483.
showing a precipice in Andy’s psyche overlooking a chasm of broken spirits. There is no cadence to relieve the listener from this moment of melancholy, only Red’s narration and the pastoral cue “May” with guitar and fiddle pulls us out of this introspective moment and lightens the narrative.

Following the “Stoic Theme”’s dissolve, Andy is musically at terms with his reality—his emotional responses heard in the score now reflect his realities in prison: he no longer needs the cue to navigate prison—only to be free from it. The “Stoic Theme”’s four-note motive returns transformed into a repeated climbing phrase to free Andy from his bondage for the film’s climax heard in the film’s title track, “The Shawshank Redemption.” Red narrates Andy’s escape in a flashback sequence following a scene of introspection and isolation where Red worries Andy might take his own life. Andy sits quietly in his cell reflecting the film’s climactic statement: “Get busy living or get busy dying” as a low D-flat—A-flat—D-flat drone decorated with swelling agitato strings hums through the darkened jail cell. A gently rocking piano figure in D-flat entrains the listener to the pulse of the scene followed by a double-time ostinato to reveal Andy’s tools for escape: emptying chiseled rocks through his pockets from the tunnel he dug through his jail cell’s wall and the poster of Raquel Welch covering the escape tunnel. As Andy begins his escape, he enters the tunnel he has carved behind the spread legged poster of Raquel Welch, with a carving of “MOTHER” above her. Loud crashes of thunder allow Andy to puncture a waste pipe with a rock as if God was aiding his escape. After three hammer-strokes the pipe is broken and Andy gazes into the foul pipe accompanied by a screeching clarinet dissonance. He begins to crawl through the five-hundred-yard tunnel of waste emulating a birth canal to his new life. The climbing four-
note motive gains momentum and velocity as Andy’s rebirth comes ever closer to fruition. As Andy’s head crowns through the sewage pipe the French horns accentuate their two-note phrase repeatedly exposing his gleeful escape with the prison off in the distance. Andy runs through the shallow river stumbling over his every step as the strings gain fervor and the French horns accentuate a repeated high-E fanfare building up to his baptism into the new world. Andy rips off his clothes and stares into the rainy sky with his arms stretched in a Christ-like pose as the orchestra finally cadences its fanfare. The musical and visual syntax is outlined in Figure 4.4.
The transformation of the pastoral into fanfare has a long tradition in Hollywood’s golden age of film music. However, the nearly two-hour trajectory between Newman’s introduction of a pastoral cue to this fanfare finale coupled with the interspersed horror and isolation cues make Andy’s sonic triumph even more powerful. Newman’s electro-acoustic palette veers toward acoustic sounds to signify humanity and hope in his pastoral

Figure 4.4: “Shawshank Redemption” audiovisual syntax. Transcribed by author.
cues and toward electronic timbres for moments of horror and isolation. Electronic timbres offer a less associative correlation to the listener creating a sense of unease due to its “inhumaness.” Newman expands on timbral memory:

Usually the electronics come first. The minute you start putting an orchestra on top, you’re kind of doing that movie thing, which, in a way, is a requirement because, to a degree, people want to sit around as they did way back in the old days, watching their movie while listening to a full symphonic complement as it’s going down. I think that music for movies is so abstract that the orchestra has become a ludicrous ritual in a way, although it’s very effective, and huge orchestral sounds are great in movies. With electronics, the ear often has no reference to decide if a sound is too loud or too soft because you don’t know the source of the sound. Electronics are usually taken at face value. If you hear a loud trumpet, the ear has a reference for what a loud trumpet sounds like. With electronics, that doesn’t happen.86

Newman’s non-tonal quiescence heard in Scent of a Woman returns to Shawshank Redemption to alter the temporality of the film while showcasing the inner-struggles the three-main character must endure in prison. These musical moments of isolation that weave between the horror and pastoral cues serve as warnings, moments of adaptation, and moments of planning performed with synthetic drones under a highly reverberated piano. Like “A Tour of Pleasures” in Scent of a Woman, the stillness of two key cues heard in Shawshank Redemption suspends the film’s temporality and opens up the sonic space to invite the audience a glimpse into the male in crisis: “New Fish/Carves Names” and “Brooks Was Here,” each analyzed below. Although the topline narrative in these cues contain individual points of meaning along the film’s overall arc, the common catalyst that drives each of these cues is fear—fear of Andy’s new world in Shawshank Prison, fear of Brooks’ release into his new world, fear of carrying out Andy’s plans of escape, and fear of Red’s imminent release into his new world. Newman alters the film’s

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86 Schelle and Barry, The Score, 272.
temporality during these moments by utilizing whispering drones that meander around three-note piano motives that displace or remove the third of the chord to create tonal ambiguity. The drones and lack of harmonic weight suspend time and lift the listener into each character’s mental landscape. As with “A Tour of Pleasures” in *Scent of a Woman*, the listener is able to attach multiple meanings to each character’s fear.

“New Fish/Carves Names” is first heard following the new prisoners’ introduction into Shawshank Prison. Andy is ushered into a shower room where he is sprayed by a fire hose and deloused. This baptismal sequence begins his life in the new prison world accompanied by a slow rocking piano dyad between B—F# and B—F. The piano motive acts as a clock that has been slowed to an eternal pace gently interrupted by a single voice in the right-hand meandering around a B-lydian mode with a flat seventh. The melody seems to search for a home never quite finding enough comfort on the F-natural on which it attempts to rest its weariness. The utter loneliness heard in the cue mirrors the macabre decorum of the prison accompanied by Red’s narration: “The first night’s the toughest,” Red proclaims, “Somebody always breaks down crying.” The nightmarish breakdown of masculinity through this sequence’s realism shows men crying for their mother, obscuring hope, and having to accept the traumatic reality of the rest of their lives being spent behind these cold walls. The musical and visual syntax is outlined in Figure 4.5.
Red: “The first night’s always the toughest. No doubt about it…

They march you in, naked as the day you were born. Skin burning and half blind from that...

delousing shit they throw on you. And when they put you in that cell, and those bars slam home, that’s when you know it’s for real.

Whole life blown away in the blink of an eye.

Nothing left but all the time in the world to think about it. Most new fish come close to madness the first night.

Somebody always breaks down crying. Happens every time.
The eerie and unsettled melody reflects a child-like innocence and vulnerability hovering around these hardened criminals. Stan Link’s analysis of *Don’t Look Now* (1973) describes simple music like that heard in “New Fish/Carves Names:”

Simple music plays innocence, deepening our experience of it. The piece can be heard as a performance, both musical and symbolic, of youthful vulnerability. Such naive music makes defenselessness sensible—concretized in becoming audible. In its hesitancy, this music sounds inexperienced not only in its unassuming material, but in its execution, foregrounding the very notion of performance by way of uncertain dexterity. Bearing marks of developing ability, the music forces awareness of being played rather than presented, as a flawless performance might. Through its motoric immaturity, the beginners’ piece makes clear that musical simplicity encodes physiology. Leaving its trail in narrow melodic ranges hewing to the singing voice, in the reach of small hands in “five finger exercises,” and in regular rhythms affirming a palpable pulse, the young body imprints itself in childhood music. A sounding incarnation of her youth, musical simplicity fleshes out the girl’s body. Audibly embodied, innocence now lies further exposed, amplifying potential dangers.87

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87 Link, *Music in the Horror Film*, 40-41.
Newman’s strategy to implant such simple and ambient melodies early in the narrative allows the listener to visualize the blank canvas of Andy’s new world experience, like a child experiencing their first rite of passage. Andy’s sonic vulnerability and divorced masculinity allows the audience to now experience every detail along his path to redemption.

Along with the “Stoic Theme,” “Brooks Was Here” has received some scholarly attention for its ambiguous harmonic approach and atmospheric quality emblematic of Newman’s style. Like “A Tour of Pleasures,” “Brooks Was Here” (See Example 4.3) is a simple three-note passage that doesn’t function in a traditional western theoretical way. The cue hovers between A-major and A-minor with resting cadences on B-minor, F-major first-inversion, A/E dyads, G-major, and A-major. By omitting and manipulating the third (C/C#) and adding diatonic harmonies around A-major/minor, we hear a staggering passage that struggles to find a home on which to rest peacefully. Again, the child-like piano serves as a backdrop to the bedrock of fear that fills Brooks—an inmate that has become institutionalized by his near half-century spent at Shawshank Prison.

This side story is narrated by Brooks following his parole from prison and serves as a cautionary tale about hope, adaptation, and the world of rejection that awaits all men who leave the bittersweet confines of jail—a metaphor for the human spirit. The institutionalization Brooks relies upon can be read as a corollary to the repressed male archetype that, when faced with true emotions and a free spirit, he cannot cope.
Example 4.3: “Brooks Was Here.” Reduction of full cue transcribed by author.

The scene begins with Brooks grasping a seat on the bus with both hands like a child off to school for the first time. As he is ushered into his new world, he sees a humanity with a pace that’s passed him by: “I saw an automobile once when I was a kid, now they’re everywhere…the world’s got itself in a big damn hurry.” He struggles to sleep in the halfway house provided to him and fumbles to keep up with his job bagging groceries. Being free, but utterly alone, Brooks decides the outside world is not his home and he takes his own life. As Andy finishes Brooks’ last line of his letter to their friends, a look of reflection and sadness washes over their faces as Red proclaims, “He shoulda died in here…they send you here for life and that’s exactly what they take.”

Brooks’ suicide by hanging comes as a surprise as there is no musical buildup to indicate any danger. Newman’s cue lasts over five minutes at such a slow pace as to
entrain the listener into the sluggish tempo adding dramatic effect for when Brooks finally ends his life.\textsuperscript{88} Newman explains his approach to this scene:

The hardest thing about that scene was whether I should give away the fact that something bad was going to happen. Did the audience know by then that something bad was going to happen? Ultimately, I think I should have played the ending a little more. When I listen back, I wonder if I should’ve had a low, tremoloing bass drum... But I remember wanting to remain neutral because, well, he’s on the chair and you cut to his feet and you know he’s going to hang himself.\textsuperscript{89}

Newman’s neutral approach to this scene with ambiguous tonality and intimate piano adds to the shock of Brooks’ finality. The element of surprise following the subtle entrainment of pulse is a common device used in the horror genre and one that works on the dramatic level as I suggest in this cue. Newman’s treatment of the subtext is also heard in this scene. With fear as the basis of the cue, Newman adds subtle musical comments to the mise-en-scene in Brooks’ world that add narrative value instead of placating to the audience. Newman adds:

I like subtext, and I like dimensionalizing a scene as opposed to commenting on it or making sure you get it as it’s going down. I have worked with directors who say, “At this point, it’s a little more hopeful, so the music should change and be a little more hopeful right there…” I hate that, because I think it demeans the actors to a degree. It also patronizes the audience—they’re not going to get it, so you’d better tell them.”\textsuperscript{90}

Newman’s approach to scoring intimate moments of isolation acts as a “fly-on-the-wall” by subtly weaving in and out of the scene serving the internal conflict of

\textsuperscript{88} Music’s exploitation of the human capacity for entrainment allows participants to experience a sense of ‘shared intentionality’, whilst under-specifying goals in ways that permit individuals to interact even while holding to personal meanings and goals that may actually be in conflict. See Ian Cross, “Music and Meaning, Ambiguity and Evolution” in \textit{Musical Communication}, ed. D Micil, R MacDonald and D Hargreaves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 27-43.

\textsuperscript{89} Schelle and Barry, \textit{The Score}, 287.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 283.
“masculinity in crisis.” He reveals the essence of the “man behind the curtain,” who pulls the levers that lead the masquerade that hides his true self. He opens the door into the fragile psyche behind a stoicism that a place like prison perpetuates. By exploring the inner complexity of these characters, music adds a narrative layer that dwells heavily on the human spirit. The trials in which Andy, Red, and Brooks engage are treated similarly from a scoring perspective. However, only Andy and Red become sonically redeemed with longer life. Brooks’ inability to cope with freedom leaves him musically frozen in abeyance—trapped in Newman’s “isolated” sonic space.
Chapter 5


Director: Sam Mendes
Composer: Thomas Newman
Cinematography: Conrad L. Hall
Sound Editor: Scot Martin Gershin

*Preview: An Open Viewing of the Film in Its Entirety*

**Lester Burnham:** [narrating] Janie’s a pretty typical teenager. Angry, insecure, confused. I wish I could tell her that’s all going to pass, but I don’t want to lie to her.

Sam Mendes’ film tells the story of a corner of suburbia plagued by the pursuit of happiness. *American Beauty* centers on the Burnham family, whose crises propel each family member’s pursuit to free themselves of the bonds put on them from society, and most of all, from the inner prisons they create for themselves. Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey) is an atypical paternal figure who is emasculated by his wife Carol (Annette Benning) and daughter Jane (Thora Birch). Lester leads a mundane and repetitive life in a capitalist society that values image over living. He works as a marketing pawn in a company riddled with innuendo and nefarious supervisors that threaten to make financial cutbacks that imply a threat to Lester. He goes home to tense family dinners with his estranged wife and daughter. He plays a secondary role in the family. Carolyn is driven by a false image of success where feelings and pitfalls are repressed to perpetuate the impression that success is correlative with the pursuit of happiness. Jane represents the

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91 “Lester Burnham” is an anagram for “Humbert Learns.” A reference to Nabokov’s character in *Lolita.*
pervasive teenage angst that goes along with navigating a life around imperfect parents and low self-esteem. She considers breast augmentation and surrounds herself with Angela Hayes (Mena Suvari), the perfect, pretty, yet hollow, mentor she hopes to become.92

Each character’s pursuit of happiness becomes a straw man endeavor as Lester blackmails his supervisor, quits his job, then becomes infatuated with Angela’s beauty; Carolyn succumbs to her obsession with success and begins an extramarital affair with her real estate competitor; and Jane’s freedom comes at the cost of losing her father without ever knowing how much he loved her. Ricky Fitts (Wes Bentley), the seemingly “weird boy next door,” navigates the suburban chaos as an unassuming mentor to those around him with video camera in hand. He provides Lester with the key to unlocking his forgotten youth: the courage to quit his job and marijuana; he provides Jane, his romantic interest, her path to freedom: she finds inner beauty and can let go of her chaotic world; and he provides his father Colonel Fitts (Chris Cooper) a proverbial mirror to his abusive latent homosexuality. Ricky enlightens Jane with the notion that beauty can be found in every corner of the world if one just “looks closer.”93 He finds personal enlightenment by filming seemingly mundane moments—a dead bird, a grocery bag floating in the wind—that he deems profoundly beautiful.

As Lester frees himself from the chains of his unfulfilled life, he masks his fractured identity by acquiring symbols of youth: he gets a job with “the least amount of responsibility” at a burger joint, he purchases a classic Firebird, he begins working out to

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92 “Angela Hayes” is a respelling of Lolita’s main character’s real name, “Dolores HAZE.”
93 As Jane and Ricky appear as the only true enlightened characters in the story, writer Alan Ball’s reference to past literature may have chosen these names after the series Fun with Dick and Jane.
impress Angela, he smokes pot incessantly, and he masturbates frequently to the thought of Angela. As China Millman notes, “While this transformation could be dismissed as a run-of-the-mill mid-life crisis, Mendes conveys to the audience that the true crisis was Lester’s life: these odd new habits and beliefs are his redemption.”94 As Lester’s carefree actions further antagonize his wife, daughter and neighbor, they begin to see a man who needs put out of his misery. Carolyn becomes hateful and threatens divorce, Jane is disgusted by his infatuation with Angela, and Colonel Fitts suspects him of sexually engaging his son, Ricky.

After an argument with Jane, Angela finally reveals the hollow void behind her perfect veneer. She looks to Lester for reassurance and they begin to consummate their attraction toward each other. Just before Lester engages her sexually, she states, “It’s my first time.” This statement propels Lester out of his childish world to reassess his paternal obligations and true meaning to life. Mendes gives Lester a sublime moment to revel in a family picture taken years past. A look of peace and contentment washes over Lester’s face as a gun slowly propels toward the back of his head. The camera pans to the blank wall in front of Lester when a loud gunshot accompanies an explosion of brain matter onto the wall. The “man in crisis” has finally found peace in an afterworld told through Lester’s narration: “I guess I could be pretty pissed off about what happened to me. But it’s hard to stay mad when there’s so much beauty in the world.”

“It’s 1999, the year showbiz will remember for having an onslaught of films that attacked the office cubicle and encourage anti-capitalism,” proclaims Michael Jolls. Themes of non-conformity have been pervasive in Hollywood since the golden era, but the Indiewood era—and particularly *American Beauty*—complicated the moral complexity behind conformity as opposed to simply a “good verses bad” trope. Jolls goes on to state, ‘Mendes’ directorial debut was merely one of many films released in the late 90’s that addressed the themes of a suburban nightmare, hatred of corporate America, and teenagers.’ Stella Bruzzi explains that, “in the 1990s, masculinity and fatherhood became topics for discussion, as they never had been before.” Lester represents the “archetypal parable of how present enlightenment can heal the wounds of the past”—that by discovering his enlightenment by way of a paternal meaning, the audience forgives his transgressions at film’s end. Lester’s sexual awakening and search for youth through his crisis aligns with the dissipation of the traditional paternal role model pervasive at the turn of the century. “Men’s greatest battles were now the internal rather than the external ones,” Bruzzi explains. Lester’s crisis is on full display throughout the film, mirroring the self-reviling attitudes prevalent during the Indiewood era. Bruzzi sums up this period in motion picture history:

...after the victory in World War II, through the Cold War and the space race, an idea(l) of masculinity was formed in which men became the masters of the universe, the conquering heroes and in which fathers bequeathed to

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95 Michael Jolls, *The Films of Sam Mendes Under One Hour* (Not Identified: Under One Hour, LLC, 2016), 20.
96 Ibid., 21.
97 Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy*, 156.
98 Ibid., 143.
their sons a sense of certainty and purpose. However, when that image was, in the latter half of the twentieth century, quashed, men discovered they had nothing to put in its place, so, Faludi concludes, both fathers and sons were 'buffeted by the collapse of society's promise' and modern-day America proved to be a society 'deeded by the fathers, inhabited by the sons, but belonging in the end to neither'. Men, she concluded, had no idea how to 'mobilize for their own—or their society's—liberation' once feminism had precipitated them into crisis. This [is an] image of flailing men who belatedly discovered that society had changed around them and who no longer knew what their role in life was. Susan Jeffords believed in 1993, that the 'warrior/cop' of the 1980s was replaced by the 'more sensitive, nurturing, protective family men of the nineties'...once heroism ceased to be 'a male certainty', the 90s signaled that the 'really heroic struggle is now about facing inner obstacles, owning up to emotions in order to become a less repressed person.99

These masculine challenges have become a common thread throughout these analyses, however, American Beauty's narrative ferociously clamors the notion that the father is the cause of tragedy leading to the implosion of the family unit.

Musical and Visual Syntax

Thomas Newman’s score for American Beauty was his fourth Academy Award nominated score for Best Music, Original Score. The highly memorable percussive quirkiness of the score has become musical shorthand for suburban life, and the problems that exist behind the manicured lawns and white picket fences in cinema. Jon Burlingame’s interview with Newman describes the inspiration behind the score’s sound:

[The] initial inspiration for the sound of American Beauty came from director Sam Mendes. “Sam wanted things that hammered and thwacked a bit,” Newman says. “He was interested in percussion and mallet instruments, so I started working on various ideas that involved xylophones and marimbas.” The percussion (tablas, bongos, cymbals and more) plus guitars, piano, flute and various world-music instruments, helped to propel

99 Bruzzi, 154-158.
the film along without disturbing the "moral ambiguity" that Newman found so fascinating in Alan Ball's script. "It was a real delicate balancing act in terms of what music worked to preserve that ambiguity."

The "balancing act" Newman describes is outlined on the graph with musical-mood placement on Freytag's pyramids located in the appendix. Seventeen source cues subdivide the original score while the gamut of emotional opposites create a sine wave of variant moods throughout the narrative. Newman decorates the percussive elements with an array of varied string instruments—dulcimer, slide guitar, banjo, ukulele, and detuned mandolins (to name a few)—and electronic sounds to navigate Lester's transitions between reality and his dissociative dream world.100 Newman's shift between repetitive rhythmic cells and ambient "isolation" cues create an atmosphere ripe for trancing: "A process characterized by a diminished orientation to consensual reality, a diminished critical faculty, a selective internal or external focus, together with a changed sensory awareness and—potentially—a changed sense of self."101 The pervasive circular marimba throughout the score acts as a ticking clocking winding down to Lester's death. Under the

100 While dissociation is often associated with pathological conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), there is an increasing body of evidence pointing towards the presence of non-pathological dissociation in everyday life, functioning to provide temporary escape from internal and external pressures. See: Ruth Herbert, "Consciousness and everyday music listening: trancing, dissociation, and absorption" in *Music and Consciousness: Philosophical, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. David Clarke and Eric Clarke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 302.

101 "Trancing can focus on acoustic attributes of the music, such as repetitive loops, timbres, a pronounced repetitive beat, slow rate of change, layered / polyphonic texture, that is, overtly 'trancey' features, often leading to a reduction in thought. Trancing can focus on associations/memories. These might be triggered by extra-musical references in the music (words or non-musical sounds) or the social and cultural sources that the music specifies. This type of trancing often features an inward focus and rich imagery. Trancing can focus on emotion induced by the music. This mode can also blend with the two scenarios above. Trancing can focus on a fusion of modalities (aural, visual, kinaesthetic), for example composites of: music and movement (e.g. repetitive activity such as walking/running/dancing/doing craftwork); music and movement of other objects (e.g. blurred, changing views on a train); music and external surroundings (blending, heightened sensory effect)." See *Ibid.*, 297.
umbrella of Lester’s narration from the afterworld, the entire soundtrack unfolds and exists in his memory raising questions of ownership for cues that exist outside of Lester’s world: To whom does this music belong? Is it character? Is it landscape? Lester’s fantasies and daydreams, featuring string glissandi and ambient tones, become situated in a “dream within a memory” state where the temporal shift of the film’s teleology is most dramatic. Peter Rothbart describes the structure of the film’s score as follows:

Leitmotifs are more oriented toward texture and color than melody. Newman is able to create an overall musical ambience, a signature sound that becomes identifiable with the movie as a whole. In this sense, he creates a monothematic atmosphere, a singular, omnipresent air that permeates the entire film. Balancing these two seemingly opposite approaches to film music composition, a leitmotif-based approach and an atmospheric-based gestalt, is difficult, but Newman is able to accomplish it through his choice of instruments for the score and his compositional approach.\textsuperscript{102}

Perhaps the entire film’s narrated umbrella from Lester’s afterworld ties this “monothematic” notion together; however, Filippo Faustini hears three represented layers of musical material: the Americana landscape, Lester’s dream world, and the blurred space between the two.\textsuperscript{103} Faustini’s argument situates the score as a parody of capitalist society with Newman’s minimalist musical features operating as music heard in advertising where repetition is a core function. Chelsea Oden identifies the “American Beauty” cue as a statement of reflection and memory based on the alignment of the music and dialogue represented in both instances of the cue’s performance.\textsuperscript{104} I argue that

\textsuperscript{102} Peter Rothbart, \textit{The Synergy of Film and Music: Sight and Sound in Five Hollywood Films} (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 79.


\textsuperscript{104} Oden, “Reflection and Introspection in the Film Scores of Thomas Newman, 70.
Newman’s original score serves as a subtext between the character, landscape, and audience due to the pervasive source music\(^{105}\) that defines each character’s sonic identity throughout the film; a musical plane that does not serve a particular character, but for the atmosphere of the film itself.\(^{106}\)

Two cues, “Mental Boy/Angela Undress” and “American Beauty/Any Other Name”—each given an additional visual treatment later in the film—are emblematic of this mysterious liminal space that pulls the audience into a hypnagogic—and possibly oneiric—state.\(^{107}\) These slower isolation cues (similar to those heard in *Shawshank Redemption*) serve as cautionary tales under narration (like “Brooks Was Here”) and the turmoil hidden behind the façade of what is considered “normal.” In the case of “Mental Boy/Angela Undress,” Newman scores the non-dialogue action with three-note piano containing a left-hand harmony accompanied by an unassuming melody in the right-hand; whereas, “American Beauty/Any Other Name” is scored under narration with nontonal homophonic triads. This may be a pragmatic choice to avoid clashing with dialogue, but its origins in “A Tour of Pleasures” from *Scent of a Woman* through “Brooks Was Here” in *Shawshank Redemption*, and now in *American Beauty* shows a continuity in Newman’s “isolation” cues that shows a pattern that is indicative of an

\[^{105}\] Lester’s music is typified by various 1960-70s classic rock songs that would have been heard during his teenage years. Carolyn’s soundtrack contains many Bobby Darin songs with lyrics emulating her denial. Jane and Angela’s music is more contemporary with bands like Eels and Gomez. For a full source cue list, reference the appendix.

\[^{106}\] As I argued earlier in *The Player*’s analysis, because of the unique plane on which the film itself exists, we must consider the diegetic space of the score differently.

\[^{107}\] Hypnagogic states occur when the reality of the cinematic theater and the reality of the filmic space is blurred. Oneiric sounds alter audiences’ states of consciousness, a bridge between the audience and cinematic space is bridged. “The audience have entered the ‘immersive’ space of the film that utilises the senses in much the same way as they are used outside of cinema going, and allows them to suspend their disbelief and alter their state of consciousness.” See Beth Carroll. “Sound Space” in *Feeling Film: A Spatial Approach*, ed. K.J. Donnelly (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1516.
auteur’s musical treatment of a “hero/man in crisis.” I’ve categorized these cues under the “isolation” heading in the appendix.

“Mental Boy” is first heard when we meet the future “mentor” to Lester: Ricky Fitts, the eccentric boy-next-door whose maladjusted guise hides an enlightened spirit that sees beauty all around him. Ricky’s hobby is to film moments as they unfold to aesthetically recall and better understand them in the future. He uses the camera lens as a window to safely keep him from bursting with emotion as these beautiful events transpire before him. In this first visual of Ricky, we see him standing outside in the dark holding a video camera as he films Lester and his daughter Jane following an argument they had regarding their dissolving relationship. After Jane storms away, Lester remains at the kitchen sink ardently washing the dishes from dinner. Ricky’s point of view is from outside the house, filming into the picture window as a look of disgust washes over Lester’s face followed by his vacuous stare depicted as a portrait of a man imploding from the world’s pressures. The window serves as a picture frame capturing a reality riddled with hollowness and despair behind the house’s perfect exterior. Newman’s cue whispers into the scene with its childlike melody triangulated between Ricky, Lester, and the audience bearing an atmospheric quality as the subtle drones whirl through the ether. Lester and Jane appear in the frame separated by a muntin in the window frame and an American Beauty rose is situated between them (Figure 5.1. Still 1.).\(^{108}\) The shot shifts to Ricky staring into the viewfinder on his camcorder identifying the point of view from the grainy shot of Lester and Jane’s altercation (Figure 5.1. Still 2.). “Mental Boy” is heard

\(^{108}\) The American Beauty rose signifies the false, hollow, surface beauty omnipresent in the film’s mise-en-scene. These roses are considered a status symbol as they are expensive and sought after, yet very commonplace (i.e. the capitalist/suburban agenda itself). American Beauty utilizes the rose to signify what beauty isn’t and this is manifest in Lester’s pursuit of the wrong endeavors before his epiphany.
with the bowing sounds of crickets establishing the cue from Ricky’s perspective but then veers into Lester’s sonic space as we hear running water from him washing the dishes and the quality of the video shifts back into the representation of reality (Figure 5.1. Still 5.). The string accompaniment grows louder as the video shifts back to Ricky’s perspective as a look of deep interest washes over Ricky’s face. His furrowed eyebrows indicate there is more here than meets the eye: Lester and Jane have now piqued his aesthetic attention. Ricky walks away and the scene shifts back to Lester’s sonic world where he pauses his domestic duty to direct his gaze into the dark foliage outside his window (Figure 5.1. Stills 7-8). The scene shifts from the outside point of view once again as we see Lester cock his head, looking deeper into the dark to see if someone is there. Ricky has left, it is only us—the audience—voyeuristically looking into Lester’s life (Figure 5.1. Still 9.). He dries his hands with a dishtowel then arbitrarily throws it onto a countertop in front of an old family picture that shows a genuinely happy moment captured between Lester, Carolyn, and Jane. This happiness is forgotten and is as meaningless as the soiled towel situated next to it. The camera pans in to show that this family wasn’t always this way (Figure 5.1. Stills 10-11.). Something has been lost, forgotten, or taken for granted. What was once beautiful has been stained by the ennui and false ambition of suburban life. Figure 5.1 outlines the musical and visual syntax.
The sparse harmonic information in “Mental Boy” suggests E-minor, but the half cadence on D (in G-major) in measure four pulls the listener out of E-minor for a brief moment before finally landing on an open E in measure eight. Measure seven’s cadential setup built on a B-minor-add-6 anticipates an E-minor-add-2 on beat two building ambiguous harmonic tension before thinning to parallel notes B to E, thus releasing the uneasy, child-like melody that descends through the first eight bars. The simple ABA form (8mm-4mm-8mm) under the simple melody plays an innocence lost within the
imploding family unit. The cue can be heard as Jane’s broken connection with her father, Lester’s loss of his youth, and/or a warning to the audience of an impending peril.\textsuperscript{109} Newman’s “studied frivolity” establishes a deep impression that each of the three characters portrayed throughout this one-minute sequence bares some kind of inner-horror blocking them from the freedom touted by the American dream. Newman’s eerie descending melody reminds us that tainted youth and loss of innocence, in the end, blocks us from enlightenment and true happiness—an extension of Lester’s “man in crisis” motif.

“Mental Boy” returns, renamed “Angela Undress,” as a tension building device accompanying Lester and Angela’s near consummation. All of Lester’s fantasies throughout the film of Angela and her sexual prowess have finally come to fruition at this vulnerable moment. In the Burnham’s dimly lit living room lies a wide-eyed Angela as Lester slowly slithers his head forward toward her like a snake attacking unassuming prey. He gently slides his hand down her torso grabbing her waistband and slowly pulls off her pants. His hands guide their way up her legs resting on her porcelain face as she looks up in a stoic pose. His aged hand over her small face shows the stark division of age and foul awkwardness behind his infatuation. The scene shifts to Ricky and Jane lying in bed staring at the ceiling discussing their plans to escape the confines of suburbia and move to New York City. Jane asks Ricky, “Are you scared?” Ricky replies, “I don’t get scared.” Jane retorts, “My parents will try to find me.” Ricky assuredly replies, “Mine

\textsuperscript{109} Stan Link describes the banality of evil in horror films that setup tragedy. “Happy Birthday” in The Omen pretends not to notice the nanny plunging to her death to the anempathetic music box similar to “Muffin Man’s” prelude to death in Jaws. “The juvenile piano in Don’t Look Now, and most directly to the lullaby beginning Rosemary’s Baby, music deliberately looks away as tragedy approaches. It is not that the musical narration doesn’t know, but rather that it does know and won’t tell. “Studied frivolity” cannot be completely innocent.” See: Stan Link, “The Monster and the Music Box: Children and the Soundtrack of Horror” in Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear, ed. Neil Lerner (New York: Routledge, 2010), 46.
won’t.” Ricky’s unanimated determination shows an unflinching resolve and wisdom as the only adjusted character in this messy corner of suburbia. The scene shifts back to a close-lipped Angela restraining her fear as Lester begins to unbutton her shirt. Lester’s weathered 42-year-old face stares back at Angela as she gulps her breath trying to keep her composure. As Lester begins his descent to her chest, she quickly states, “This is my first time,” freezing Lester’s downward motion. Newman resolves on the E and the drone fades as Lester laughs with disbelief stating, “You’re kidding.” Angela innocently replies, “I’m sorry, I still wanna do it. I just thought I should tell you in case you wondered why I wasn’t...better.” Angela’s words thrust Lester back to reality where he realizes the gravity of his lecherous behavior prompting him to enshroud her body. Newman’s cue fades to allow the audience a moment of realism between Lester and Angela, therefore, giving us a chance to process Lester’s enlightenment and, in turn, forgive his past transgressions. Figure 5.2 outlines how an ambiguous cue can take on additional characteristics based on a visual/narrative change:
In this example, measure six is extended to line up Newman’s B-section with the scene shift to Jane and Ricky. Although the melody is not perfectly aligned with the visual action (a process known as Mickey Mousing), the melody’s pace seems to cascade along with Lester’s hands dragging along Angela’s body. The simple melody again highlights a loss of innocence and impending doom. In this scene, the parallel is clear: Angela is on the precipice of losing her innocence (virginity), while Lester stops himself
from enacting the ultimate perversion of youth. The cue doesn’t continue into horrific territory—it stops just shy of the point of no return. For Lester now sees the line between being youthful and being childish, and his healing can now begin.

The film’s apotheosis and exhortations are delivered during two scenes that share the “American Beauty” theme. We hear the cue’s first delivery during an intimate exchange between Ricky and Jane where Ricky’s strange demeanor is vindicated through his enunciation of how he sees beauty all around him. The scene is set up with Ricky asking Jane, “You want to see the most beautiful thing I ever filmed?” The scene shifts to a two-shot of the backs of Ricky and Jane’s heads staring at a TV screen. On the screen is a brick wall with fall leaves on the foreground and a plastic bag dancing in the wind. The camera gently chases the bag’s erratic rise and fall as Ricky begins his narration. Newman’s delicate grace notes in the piano melody resemble the wind ushering the bag in wild directions. Ricky personifies the bag’s intentions: “Like a little kid begging me to play with it,” as an allegory for “an entire life behind things.” He goes on to explain how a God-like “benevolent force” wants him to know there’s “no reason to be afraid.” He explains that filming this moment helps him to remember there’s so much beauty in the world. The video camera serves as a filter between these moments of beauty and Ricky’s vulnerability: “Sometimes I feel like I can’t take it, that my heart is going to cave in.” Jane quietly listens then gently grabs his hand to console him. She now sees the beauty within him giving her the perspective to also look inward. Realizing the poor self-image was a fruitless endeavor, Jane leans in to kiss Ricky in this delicate moment.

The Romantic image of seeing a person staring at an object or landscape becomes a motif in Sam Mendes’ films and a recurring theme in the two scenes featuring the
“American Beauty” theme. In the scene above, the audience is situated behind Ricky and Jane as if they were part of this intimate moment. Newman’s delicate homophonic piano over sweeping drones pulls the listener into this aesthetic moment, again, possibly forcing the listener into a hypnogogic or oneiric state. The subtle grace notes in the melody tap at the listener’s psyche like a hypnotist’s stopwatch as the carefree bag wisps through the air. Figure 5.3 outlines the musical, visual, and narration syntax:

Michael Sullivan stares through a window before he is shot in the back in Road to Perdition (2002), Swofford looks back on the war and the desert through his living room window in Jarhead (2005), and April Wheeler stares through a window before she dies from a self-inflicted abortion in Revolutionary Road (2008).
...for fifteen minutes...

...that’s the day I realized there was this entire life behind things...

...and this incredibly benevolent force

...that wanted me to know that there was no reason to be afraid...ever...

...the video’s a poor excuse, I know. But it helps me remember. I need to remember...

...Sometimes there’s so much beauty in the world. I feel like I can’t take it...

...and my heart...
Newman whispers into the scene with a delicate airy drone on a high C. The drone slowly crescendos and decrescendos intimating the wind’s control over the bag as it glissandos between the weaker notes of an F-Mixolydian scale using synthesized pads. At 01:02:33 when Ricky talks about the electricity in the air and how, “you can almost hear it;” Newman amplifies a louder, more steely sounding drone patch to respond to Ricky’s dialogue. The drone transforms to strings when Ricky’s dialogue personifies the bag “like a little kid begging me to play with it”—another example of Newman using acoustic instruments to signify humanity. Newman raises the drone to its highest point in a stepwise pattern when Ricky describes “this entire life behind things”—a reference to
God. Low string drones accompany the piano and high drones as Ricky continues to
describe the benevolent force that assures him there’s nothing to be afraid of. The
thunderous low frequencies that intimate danger become washed away by Ricky’s
dialogue and the benevolent force of which he speaks. The piano drifts away to give the
strings a moment to provide catharsis for Ricky’s “poor excuse” to use the video as a
spiritual tool. He reassures himself that it helps him to “remember…I need to remember.”
The piano returns for a brief moment to give Ricky a chance to catch his breath then
subtly backs away to the cathartic strings to provide one last moment of support. Ricky
begins to choke over his words as he describes his vulnerability to the beauty around him:
“Sometimes there’s so much beauty in the world, I feel like I can’t take it.” Newman
reintroduces the piano in its fullest force to reflect the gravity of Ricky’s feeling that his
heart will cave in. The grace notes become pronounced as Ricky and Jane’s fingers
interlock and Jane rescues him from mental sanctuary.

The near three-minute “American Beauty” cue represents a clear break in the
film’s pace and temporality, giving the audience a chance to regroup from all that has
unfolded in the film and be read the cautionary tale by Ricky like a bedtime story. The
rhythmic instability coupled with the ambiguity of Newman’s treatment of the tonic and
dominant gives a sense of a chordal line constantly looking for a home on which to rest—
like humanity’s search for true beauty. By rarely giving the dominant (C-minor) its third
(E-flat), the C/G dyad floats as a passing chord climbing its way to a lost plane,
encountering the flat-seventh dyad (E-flat—B-flat) on its way to finally meet F-major on
weak beats—as if the tonic were another passing chord along the search for a center (mm.
3-4; 10-11; 16-17; 21-22; 34; 48). Newman adds sixths and seconds to his “tonic” to
further blur the lines of stability and tonality (mm. 19; 24; 42; 44; 56-57). When he does rest on the “tonic,” he incorporates ticking grace notes (B-natural to C) to imply elements of a dominant chord searching for a window of strength (mm. 26-27; 53-54). He also treats these restful moments with quintal harmony to add to the floating unrest of Ricky’s narration (mm. 22; 31; 34; 36-40). Newman’s hypnotic cue seeps into the audience’s liminal space allowing Ricky’s narration to Jane to shift to the audience. The audience, in turn, can begin to “look closer” into their own lives to understand beauty’s omnipresence.

When the “American Beauty” theme returns slightly modified into “Any Other Name,” Lester has just been shot. Ricky and Jane slowly enter the kitchen to see the pools of blood on the table and floor. Jane quietly utters, “Oh my God” as Ricky approaches Lester’s corpse. He kneels down to “look closer” at the smiling Lester which he mirrors on his own face. He tilts his head to change his point of view at the beauty in Lester’s fate. He sees the hero who found the meaning of beauty before his ultimate demise. Lester’s narration from the afterworld begins as a montage of past reflections. The camera slides between each character’s perspective of the gun shot sound and Lester’s past reflections. The editing follows Newman’s slow and reflective cue with only the sound of the gunshots disrupting the rhythm. The montage reveals the murderer as Ricky’s father, Frank Fitts, wearing a blood-stained shirt that he anxiously removes. A new ostinato begins in the piano as Lester reflects on the beauty and insignificance of his life. The camera rises to an aerial shot of his suburban town as his last words utter, “You have no idea what I’m talking about, I’m sure. But don’t worry, you will someday.” Lester’s past, present, and afterworld become coalesced in this one moment to reiterate
the film’s apotheosis: Beauty can be found everywhere if you just “look closer.” Figure 5.4 outlines the musical, visual, and narration syntax.

01:51:56  01:52:21  01:52:32  01:52:37

Ricky: “Wow.”

Lester: “I’d always heard your entire life flashes in front of your eyes the second before you die…”

01:52:44  01:52:55
...First of all, that one second isn’t a second at all. It stretches on forever. Like an ocean of time...

...for me, it was lying on my back at boy scout camp watching falling stars...

...and yellow leaves from maple trees that lined our street...

...or my grandmother’s hands and how her skin seemed like paper...

...and the first time I saw my cousin Tony’s brand-new Firebird.

...and Janie...
...I guess I could be pretty pissed off about what happened to me. But it’s hard to stay mad when there’s so much beauty in the world...

...sometimes I feel like I’m seeing it all at once and it’s too much. My heart fills up like a balloon that’s about to burst...
The ostinato not contained in “American Beauty” shows up in “Any Other Name” as a setup to Lester’s afterlife when he describes how one second feels like “an ocean of time” in mm. 17-22. This is our first glimpse of Lester’s afterworld depicted as a sea of clouds that stretch for an eternity. His loss of temporality matches Newman’s chiming ostinato as it rises from the confines of its homophonic predecessor. Newman’s use of the ostinato to mark a temporal shift can be heard in Shawshank Redemption’s “Main Titles/Courtroom” and “Brooks Was Here” where the audience is shifted from one
dreamscape to another—most often in a flashback sequence. The apotheosis-driven cue reminds us of the plastic bag scene sonically and visually before becoming transformed to sadness during Lester’s narrated memories. With each memory he describes, the audience becomes propelled to forgive our morally ambiguous hero before looking at our own lives and the important memories we’ve compiled. Newman’s harmonically ambiguous scoring triangulates this forgiveness and sadness with the audience’s personal reflection, further dogmatizing our need to “look closer” at the beauty that surrounds each of us.

It is through Lester sharing his deepest inroads of crisis that allows us to forgive him in the end and resurrect his status as a “hero,” perpetuating the archetype that “the father must change if he is to survive.”\(^{111}\) The fact that American Beauty’s perspective is from Lester’s point of view breaks with the Hollywood tradition that, “The vast majority of Hollywood films about fathers are from the point of view of the younger generation.”\(^{112}\) This intimacy shared by Lester, and not the perspective of his family whose imperfections are also on display throughout the film, forces the audience to pick from the lesser evils; and because Lester carries the most narrative weight, we are forced to side with the “martyr” whose bloody end is neatly wrapped in narration from the afterlife. The sonic imprint of “Any Other Name” under Lester’s narration from the afterworld reminds us there is a “benevolent force” behind his words further raising his “hero” status. Had Newman scored Lester’s narration with an unassociated cue that didn’t carry the film’s deep apotheosis, Lester’s words would lack the gravity the

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\(^{112}\) Ibid., 51.
audience feels when the screen turns black and he proclaims, “You have no idea what I’m talking about, I’m sure. But don’t worry, you will someday.”
Hollywood’s constructions of “masculinity in crisis” during the Indiewood era (1990-2008) coincided with the height of Thomas Newman’s film scoring career. Newman scored forty-five feature length motion pictures during the Indiewood era, and thirty-one of those films were released in the 1990s. The “Newman-esque” sound became a vital part of the film scoring ethos during the Indiewood era inspiring directors to use Newman’s scores as temp-tracks at a profound rate. The subtle piano over whispering drones that constitute Newman’s signature sound found its way into other composers’ works throughout film and television. Newman has seemed to move on from this signature sound into more electronic based scores and continues to stretch his harmonic language and timbral palette to include world music in his scores for films that take place in foreign settings.


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113 These numbers do not count the numerous short films, documentaries, and television films and shows he had done.

114 Temp-tracks are existing scores placed over a new film to add cohesion to the film while informing the composer the type of music the director would like in the film.


*Real Genius* (1985), *The Man with One Red Shoe* (1985), *Gung Ho* (1986), and *The Great Outdoors* (1988). It was this “little guy” who would begin to show audiences in the 1990s a more multidimensional male figure who experienced a variety of emotions, heartbreak, loss, inner-struggles, and identity crises. As Newman’s musical language was evolving, so was the male figure, placing the two at a convergent point where one informed the other creating a distinctive moment in film scoring history.

The four scores researched in this thesis show an interesting progression in the depictions of the male figure throughout the 1990s. The repressed then redeemed “male in crisis” endured in these four films align with Stella Bruzzi’s description of the 1990s male archetype. Whether he was an executive bachelor, a father figure, a caged spirit, or an actual father, each male figure was given ample attention to his inner-crisis both visually and sonically. *The Player* represented a reminder of the repressed male who embodied the Hollywood studio system that jettisoned any impedance to financial gain (emotion, artistry, creativity, etc.). The only change Griffin Mill welcomed was his own upward mobility toward power in his executive world. The film showed us that a change was overdue: the blockbuster had grown tired as did the old male figure at its helm. Newman’s score reflected this sentiment as well by incorporating new sounds under a vast umbrella of musical topics. Altman’s derisive tale of the capitalist male becomes transformed into a fearful creature under Newman’s spiraling and repetitive metadiegetic score. Newman’s twisted waltz melody seems presented in reverse order to show the anti-hero’s redemption, during the Golden Age inspired fanfare at the end of the film, as a perpetual plague that continues to poison the Hollywood system. *Scent of a Woman* showed a changing of the guard between generations. By reaching a common ground on
which both the young and old male could coexist, a better life awaited both. Frank Slade showed us that the father figure no longer had all the answers; while Charlie Simms’ integrity allowed us to witness the father figure’s faults without rebellion. *Scent of a Woman* prompts us to cheer for the new diplomacy between young and old where tolerance is achieved through respect and listening. Possibly due to the length of the film, Newman’s score is given an opportunity to underline moments that show the protagonist’s inner-strife. By sharing the “A Tour of Pleasures” cue, both Frank and Charlie present their inner-turmoil to the audience, allowing us a more profound glimpse into each character’s development and challenges. The isolation cues heard in *Scent of a Woman*—like “A Tour of Pleasures”—become a sonic template for the male protagonist in crisis in Newman’s future films. *Shawshank Redemption* depicts how hope can free the caged spirit as the protagonist, Andy Dufresne, navigates the real prison and his psychological prison. Andy fights the urges of institutionalization that confines all people in prison and the outside world. Following Andy’s escape, his outstretched arms suggest that all men can shed the bonds of repression to live a meaningful life. Newman provides each protagonist moments of stillness as they traverse through their various trials. Andy and Red’s sonic worlds become vindicated from that stillness, while Brooks becomes trapped in the infinite abyss of Newman’s ambiguous pan-tonality. By combining electronic drones under a pan-tonal piano figure, Newman creates a haunting sound space that seems to create a sonic precipice on which each key character must traverse if they are to survive. Red and Andy are able to cross this escarpment celebrated by grandiose orchestral fanfares, while others, like Brooks, succumb to their trials, trapped forevermore in a musical purgatory. Finally, *American Beauty* displays a gamut of inner-
struggles imposed on the suburban male/father. The film urges viewers to “look closer” to find beauty in the world and to never squander our short time being alive. Lester’s imperfections bring us closer to our own images of ourselves as he perpetuates Bruzzi’s notion that “So often, in life as well as in movies, the real father is a disappointment.”

Newman weaves through one of his most source cued soundtracks to provide a sonic imprint in the audience to allow us to forgive this father who is a “disappointment. Again, Newman delivers a haunting sound space that lacks resolve to reflect the inner-ambiguity of a struggling mind.

The eight years between The Player (1992) and American Beauty (1999) chronicle the change in Hollywood’s depiction of the 1990s father and male figure. Bruzzi describes this evolution:

[Narratives that revolve around masculinity and...] Fatherhood became viewed as a process of personal development, the vehicle for teaching a man how to feel. Because of the need in the 1990s to equate masculinity with feelings and emotional articulacy, it became apparent why the male whose very role is defined by nurturing, sensitivity and expressiveness, became so central to these discussions.


117 Bruzzi, Bringing Up Daddy, viii.
118 Ibid., 157.

It seems Thomas Newman’s timely arrival to score the evolution of the “new” male becomes a “right man at the right time” ideal. His quiet demeanor, respect for the process of filmmaking, and sensitive nature embodies the transformed male figure for which he composes. It is an interesting coincidence that *The Player’s* soundtrack was used as the temp-score for *American Beauty*—two films with very few common threads. Another interesting coincidence is Bruzi’s Oedipal weight she attaches to the image of the dying father: “...the father’s death [Lester Burnham in *American Beauty*] either signals closure or a new beginning;”¹¹⁹ hence the closure of this thesis, or possibilities for future research.

Further research could examine how Thomas Newman scores “femininity in crisis” as a point of departure from this study. His scores for *Little Women* (1994), *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1999), and *How to Make an American Quilt* (1999) present all female casts whose moments of inner-struggle embody a soundscape of their own. Further, like Bruzi’s chronological study of the male/father in Hollywood films, further research could uncover how film scores adapted to these male figures throughout Hollywood history as well. Finally, Newman’s scores for *In the Bedroom* (2001), *Road to Perdition*...

¹¹⁹Bruzi, 62.
(2002), *Little Children* (2006), and *Revolutionary Road* (2008) continue the thread of the “masculinity in crisis” narrative that is beyond the scope of this project. Because Newman’s chameleon-like scoring is so adaptable to multiple narratives and moods, his music lends itself to numerous research opportunities.
12. "Six Inches of Dirty Water"  
Music box-Horror over Of Drone  
pause 29:03  
resume 30:27  
end 29:55

13. Unknown cue  
(in Anti-Hero's head)  
Low string followed by rushing church bells between F and D  
pause 43:48  
resume 46:06  
end 44:13

14. "That's All He Wrote"  
Low string followed by high drum to pulsing rhythm  
end 58:32

15. "Funeral Shark"  
Lifting theme played by string harmonics plucked  
end 55:48

16. "Icy Theme"  
Slow high strings ascending, Esus  
end 55:56

17. "St. James"  
Brisk paced piano ostinato between B minor and B flat  
end 1:01:45

18. end of "That's All He Wrote"  
Loungy cocktail piano to ominous theme at 1:02:35-1:04:30, back to lounge cocktail piano. Back to ominous theme at 1:03:42-1:04:45. Try piano film noir saxophone.  
end 1:04:18

19. "Six Inches of Dirty Water"  
Low string followed by music box  
Tempo quickens becomes more percussive.  
Free jazz saxophone added.  
Drove under music box  
end 1:11:20

20. "Good Dog's Water"  
Like "Six Inches of Dirty Water"  
Drove under slow swinging strings-Esus  
end 1:16:00. Returns 1:16:50-1:16:47

21. "Icy Theme"  
Drove under slow swinging strings-Esus  
end 1:20:19

22. Griffin's Plan  
Like "Icy Theme"  
Brisk paced piano ostinato between B minor and B flat  
end 1:20:19

23. 0:55:59  Approaches to the tram stop. Anti-Hero inadvertently follows The (fake) Shadow out of the bar.

24. 0:55:42  The tram (Birth through Death). The Anti-Hero and Shadow argue until the Anti-Hero kills the fake Shadow.


26. 0:40:22  Threshold Guardian becomes suspicious of Anti-Hero with Father Figure ("Remember that film D.O.A.? I think we have the same situation here.") D.O.A. is about a doomed man's quest to find out who's poisoned him and why.

27. 0:40:42  Shapeshifter established. Movie posters for Notorious and Rear Window over his shoulders. Both films involve three people involved in an espionage tale. Shapeshifter and murder of the Shadow became Anti-Hero's intermediate premise.

28. 0:41:32  Foreshadow of the storm with the wind. Movie posters for Boulevard du Cercau (Sunset Boulevard) over the shoulder of the Father Figure. Movie about an aging actress refusing to accept her career is ending.


30. 0:44:06  Threshold Guardian confronts Anti-Hero about the murder.


32. 0:44:23  Foreshadow of the Road to Trial. Movie poster of Laura is situated between them. Movie about the investigation of a malicious avenue murder of an executive.

33. 0:47:32  In Call to Adventure: Anti-Hero receives miss from the true Shadow.

34. 047:50  Symbolic flashback to The Ordeal scene with a dead fish floating in a pond with two lily pads growing on lily pads above.

35. 0:48:32.  Introduce Shapeshifter writer who is the ACTUAL Shadow. The film never overplays this away-only by matching the sound of his voice do you discover this fact.

36. 0:52:01  Woman as Temptress. False Shadow's girlfriend seduces Anti-Hero to her home. Temptress begins transformation into The Goddess.

37. 0:55:30  Anti-Hero and Temptress discuss their key vectors: "Nothing here-he's a thief and he's made of fire."

38. 0:56:21  Meet the Temptor: Detective DeLange meets the Anti-Hero throughout her investigation. Foreshadow of Temptor's agenda.

39. 0:56:33  Movie poster for Der Blaue Engel (The Blue Angel). Movie about a professor driven mad by jealousy and paranoia.

40. 1:00:51  Trial begins. Anti-Hero meets. The Temptator presents case to the Anti-Hero and to his colleagues who work together to solve the murder of a dead woman's mate. The Anti-Hero is situated under a movie poster for King Kong in a film about beauty killing the beast.

41. 1:01:45  "Six Inches of Dirty Water" end 1:11:33

42. 1:02:59  Temptor's 2nd Temptor is striking Anti-Hero. Anti-Hero begins duel to resolve Ultimate Boccon.
Trial 6: Mentor tests Hero by giving opposite advice.

"La Violeta" by José Padilla
Performed by The Tango Project and 6:08:49

"Po r u n a c a b e z a" by Carlos Gardel and Alfredo Le Pera
Performed by The Tango Project and 6:10:50

"Shapeshifters" reveal their lack of loyalty to the Hero. Use their financial prowess for their gain where the Hero lacks that sword.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:12:55

Mentor completes Mt. St.Helens. Make love to an enchant.

"E l R e l i c a r i o " by José Padilla
Performed by The Tango Project and 6:14:21

Hero's future trial while waiting for Mentor to return.

"Other Plan" Chorus under linesman piano Homer
Clarinet somewhere other Distance to
"La Violeta" by José Padilla
Meto Dep оста and 6:13:18

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:12:55

Additional fulfillment begins. Test drive.

"Park Avenue" Pastoral Strings built on "A Tour of Pleasures"

Hero's aid with a speech about the Hero's integrity.

Patrons applause sound off.

Hero makes love to an enchant.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:12:55

Hero discovers Mentor Tobias. Mentor now attempts to abandon Hero.

Hero's fear / Mentor's isolation to
end 6:18:06

"Park Avenue" Pastoral Strings built on "A Tour of Pleasures"

High-drawn and sad strings for self pity

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Hero is abandoned by shapeshifters.

"Park Avenue" Pastoral Strings built on "A Tour of Pleasures"

Hero spends time making Hero afraid.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Mentor realizes there is no more fulfillment after getting pulled over by the police ["No driving anymore."]

Hero's fear / Mentor's isolation to
end 6:19:38

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Mentor turns the gun on the Hero.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Mentor turns gun on himself! Hero incades to pull it from his hands. Mentor turns gun back onto the Hero.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Hero's fear / Mentor's isolation to
end 6:20:37

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Crossing the Future Threshold: Mentor surrender the gun to Hero.

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Hero's fear / Mentor's isolation to
end 6:22:48

"Beyond Danger" by Brando Espanol Horn and 6:18:06

Hero is master of both worlds.
"Power of Denial"  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:33:35</td>
<td>Approaches the Mentor. threshold Guardian confronts Mentor about his transgressions with the Hero in a dark room. Shape-shifter will not accept the truth as Mentor falsely admits guilt. &quot;I need cash for money.&quot; Shape-shifter throws Mentor out. Herald sits in car with his head down. &quot;I refuse to be a victim.&quot; Threshold Guardian and Tempress argue that dissolve their friendship. Shape-shifter confronts the Hero. Thinking he's homosexual, he leaves him. Herostage bails him into a room. His latent homosexuality must be kept secret...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:42:38</td>
<td>Insert Case: Hero finds Tempress listening to a song alone in the dark. Separated by RED rose vase, Hero answers into the case explaining his infatuation with The Tempress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45:91</td>
<td>Trail Hero begins uncrossing Tempress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:47:25</td>
<td>Passing Trail: Hero steps on the red rose in the car and says, &quot;It's my first time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:48:47</td>
<td>Crossing Return: Threshold Hero realizes his place as a father by asking Tempress about Threshold Guardian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:51:03</td>
<td>Hero reflects on his journey with mentor. Camera pans to the wall. The brain matter is sprayed onto the wall in front of a vase of RED American Beauty Rose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:53:05</td>
<td>Crossing Return: threshold Complete. Hero's remains reflected in his life. Temporarily changed. &quot;One second feels like an entire lifetime.&quot; The gun shot is replayed from each character's perspective. We discover the Shape-shifter as the murderer. Apotheosis reached: &quot;I guess I could be pretty pissed off about what happened to me. But it's hard to stay mad when there's so much beauty in the world. Sometimes I feel like I've seen it all at once and it's too much. My heart fills up like a balloon that's going to burst.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55:52</td>
<td>Fade to black. End Credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


**Filmography**


*Scent of a Woman*. Directed by Martin Brest. USA: Universal Studios, 2007. DVD.
