

Creating Small Worlds:
Approaches to a Nostalgia Driven
Concept Album

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Submitted for partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

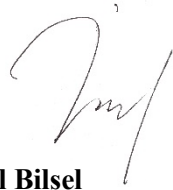
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2021

Declaration of Authorship

I, Inal Bilsel, hereby declare that the compositions and accompanying commentary comprised in this submission are entirely my own work. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signature



Name: **Inal Bilsel**

Date: **8 September 2021**

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Brian Lock for motivation and immense knowledge.

Thanks to all the wonderful musicians (whose names are listed on page 8) I have had the privilege to work with during the production of *Paradise Lost*. Thanks to mixing engineer and friend Emre Yazgın, and to one of the humblest persons I have ever encountered, Bob Katz. Murat Zengi for lending his talents in graphic design and technology.

I would also like to thank Mehmet Garip, Aycan Garip and Rahme Vezirođlu for sharing their thoughts during the final stages of my writing. I would like to thank my parents for their unrequited support and wise counsel. You have always been there for me. Finally, thanks to my wife, Hatice Dörtlemez, for understanding, patience and support throughout my studies and professional life. Also, my little daughter Luna for the happy distraction.

ABSTRACT

This commentary addresses the intersection of a narrative concept album and transmedial storytelling, focusing on my portfolio album *Paradise Lost*. The album represents, first and foremost, my passion for creating concept albums. I have adopted a working definition for a concept album as ‘an album that sustains a central message or advances the narrative of subject through the intersection of lyrical, musical and visual content’. This definition considers ‘narration’ and ‘visual content’, both of which I believe are essential ingredients of a concept album.

Taking inspiration from science fiction, particularly from the works of Philip K. Dick, *Paradise Lost* presents a transmedia narrative taking place in a fictional post-apocalyptic world. The album touches on issues surrounding Cyprus and in particular, growing up in 1980s in the aftermath of a war that divided the island. The core themes of the album are nostalgia, childhood, and the memory of place. Moreover, *Paradise Lost* takes cues from hauntology and retrofuturism as a stylistic approach to present its material. The narrative of *Paradise Lost* unfolds across different forms of media such as video projections, cassette tapes, postcards, booklets, blog posts and audio-visual installations, collectively generating a complex but interconnected storyworld.

In formulating the album's narrative, I have derived inspiration from Joseph Campbell’s ‘The Hero with Thousand Faces’, where he argues that certain universalities link all humanity. The book ultimately portrays a template of a mythological story, the *monomyth*. By analysing this template, I devised the structural and narrative plan of *Paradise Lost*. The album and its accompanying film demonstrate the culmination of my research and a representation of how concept albums can have a self-contained world of their own.

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List of illustrative materials on USB

Composition portfolio: Paradise Lost (Album, 2018) - 82 Minutes

Credits:

Inal Bilsel: Synthesizers and keyboards (all tracks), electric guitar (tracks 5, 8, 11), slide guitar (tracks 4, 8), vocals (tracks 5, 7, 8, 18), vocoder (track 15)

Emre Yazgın: Electric bass (tracks 4, 5, 15), electric guitar (tracks 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 18), fretless guitar (track 3), acoustic guitar (track 8)

Cahit Kutrafalı: Electric bass (tracks 7, 8, 17, 18, 19), acoustic bass (tracks 10, 12)

Uğur Güçlü: Drums (tracks 4, 7, 8, 12, 17, 18, 19)

Ahmet Zilci: Drums (tracks 5, 9, 9, 15)

Ezgi Akgürge: Vocals (tracks 5, 10, 17)

Naz Atun: Vocals (track 15)

Aycan Garip: Vocals (tracks 8, 18)

Fikri Karayel (track 17)

Oytun Küskü: Percussion (tracks 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 17, 19)

Istanbul Strings (tracks 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18) Violin: Hüseyin Kemancı, Mert Kemancı, Yunuz Uçar. Viola: Emir Kemancı, Hasan Şavlı. Cello: Şenol Arkun.

Engineering: Emre Yazgın

Sequencing and additional engineering: Inal Bilsel

Mastering Engineer: Bob Katz

Appendix C

Paradise Lost (Movie, 2018) - 22 Minutes

Written and Directed by Inal Bilsel. Director of photography: Ivan Charalambous.

Edit, colour grading and sound design: Inal Bilsel

Appendix D

Paradise Lost (Excerpt from concert performance, 2016) - 7 Minutes

Shot by Doğuş Özokutan and Vasvi Çiftçioğlu

Appendix E

Album booklet (PDF), Postcards and Cover Art (Image files)

Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Overview

‘Creating small worlds’ for me, is a new approach in building concept albums, characterised by the intricate interplay of music, narrativity and non-musical elements that unfold on multiple forms of media and platforms. Throughout the four years of my research, this notion arose out of a necessity to signify my composition and production methods. *Paradise Lost* represents, first and foremost, my passion for creating concept albums.¹ The album is the culmination of my research and a representation of how concept albums can have a self-contained world. Consequently, the pieces presented in this portfolio are the album's entirety, along with its accompanying 22-minute original film.

As my research and compositional output progressed, I was increasingly inspired by technostalgia, retrofuturism, and mythology as a narrative and compositional plan. With *Paradise Lost*, I intend to convey a sense of nostalgia through a subconscious level and to encourage the listener to piece together its narrative through lyrics, artwork, clues within the music and on other forms of media, including blog posts, physical objects such as cassette tapes, video projections, and multimedia installations.

While ultimately supplying a detailed analysis on *Paradise Lost*, this thesis deals primarily with nostalgia, concept albums, and transmedial storytelling. Nostalgia emerges in various forms: Technostalgia, the preference for old (mostly analogue) technologies; hauntology, the nostalgia for lost futures, and retrofuturism, how future utopian ideals were envisioned in the past. On the other hand, transmedial storytelling is a relatively new concept that was initiated with media studies but has since been used to define some of the more intricate concept albums in the last

¹ I did not intend *Paradise Lost* to be a reference, nor was I influenced by the epic poem by John Milton, carrying the same name. As it will be explained in Chapter 4, ‘paradise’ refers both to the state before the apocalypse, and childhood. ‘Lost,’ then, is the absence of both, while also hinting to nostalgia in a subtle way.

decades, particularly when other forms of media significantly widen the scope of the existing theme or storyworld of the album.

1.2 Retro culture

Instead of progress, the music of the 21st century is characterised by ‘aftermath, or afterglow’. According to David Stubbs, our age ‘embraces fragmentation, decay, disintegration, breakdown, the submerged and dormant past’.² In his book *Retromania*,³ aptly subtitled *Pop culture’s obsession with its own past*, Simon Reynolds argues that our time is dominated by the prefix ‘re’, ‘bygone genres revived and renovated, vintage sonic material reprocessed and recombined.’

While we are in an age where nostalgia is celebrated, cherished, and often exploited, this was not always the case. The earliest study on nostalgia dates back to 1688 with the publication of a dissertation by Johannes Hofer, a Swiss doctor, who considered it a physical illness. Unable to find the right word to describe the condition, he coined the word nostalgia, a combination of two Greek words: *Notos* (‘to return home’) and *algia* (‘ongoing, pain’).^{4, 5} Thus the name described a ‘longing for home’⁶ but with a bitter face. Hofer’s dissertation was republished in 1710 by Theodore Zwinger, who introduced the case of Swiss soldiers serving in France that became homesick on hearing *Kühe-Reyen*, a pastoral tune used by Swiss herdsmen to call their cows.⁷ During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

² Stubbs, D. (2018). *Mars by 1980. The Story of Electronic Music*. London: Faber and Faber.

³ Reynolds, S. (2011). *Retromania. Pop Culture’s Addiction to its Own Past*. London: Faber and Faber.

⁴ Boym, S. (2007). Nostalgia and its discontents. *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 07, 7-18.

⁵ Diego, F.F., and Ots, C.V. (2014). Nostalgia: a conceptual history. *History of Psychiatry*, Vol. 25, No. 4., 404-411.

⁶ The main title of Hofer’s dissertation is written in Greek, ΝΟΣΤΑΛΓΙΑ (Nostalgia) with a subheading *Heimweg*, a Swiss vernacular word meaning “grief for the lost harm of the Native Land” or homesickness. For details of Hofer’s dissertation, see: Anspach, C.K. (1934). Medical dissertation on nostalgia by Johannes Hofer, 1688. *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 2, No.6, 376-391.

⁷ Vallee, M. (2010). From disease to desire: The afflicted amalgamation of music and nostalgia. In: *Ecologies of Affect: Placing Nostalgia, Desire, and Hope*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

nostalgia was regarded as a medical illness associated with symptoms like sadness, weeping, irregular heartbeat, and anorexia.⁸

The philosopher Kant stated that although nostalgic people often experience an intense disappointment when they finally return home, they are cured. The disappointment follows from their feeling that everything has changed.⁹ With the arrival of the psychoanalytic movement in the first half of the twentieth century, nostalgia was developed as a discipline of psychology. However, the concept continued to be seen as opposing progress, always linked with sentimentality and melancholy. It has been conceived as ‘a defeatist retreat from the present, and evidence of loss of faith in the future’.¹⁰ In the second half of the century, nostalgia has acquired a status different from homesickness, and it was characterised as ‘bittersweet, indicating a wistful pleasure, a joy tinged with sadness’.¹¹ In this characterisation, nostalgia is a combination of bitterness (‘lost’) and sweetness (‘found’).

Music and nostalgia are strongly intertwined. Just as a scent reminds us of a distant memory, so can particular music have the potential to remind us of a specific place or event. Our everyday life is interlaced with music. Voluntary or not, we are surrounded by music everywhere. Referencing a case where a listener attached an emotional meaning to a song she heard in a particular time and on a particular stereo system, van Dijk states that ‘the experience of listening seems inextricably intertwined with the primitive equipment that first enabled its broadcast.’¹² The experience of the song has become part of a memory, and further listening will undoubtedly bring the ‘bittersweet’ sensation of nostalgia. However, despite the undeniable eminence of music in our culture, there are only a limited number of

⁸ Sedikides, C., Wildshut, T., Arndt, J., and Routledge, C. (2008). Nostalgia past, present, and future. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 17, No. 5, 304-307.

⁹ Kessous, A. and Roux, E. (2008). A semiotic analysis of nostalgia as a connection to the past. *Quarterly Market Research*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 192-212.

¹⁰ Pickering, M. and Keightley, E. (2006). The modalities of nostalgia. *Current Sociology*, Vol. 54, No. 6, 919-941.

¹¹ Batcho, K.I. (2013). Nostalgia: the bittersweet history of a psychological concept. *History of Psychology*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 165-176.

¹² van Dijck, J. (2009). Remembering Songs through telling stories: Pop music as a Resource for Memory. In: *Sound Souvenirs: Audio Technologies, Memory, and Cultural Practices*, edited by K. Bijsterveld and J. van Dijck. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp.107-119.

studies on how music evokes autobiographical memories. Going beyond anecdotal evidence, in one of those studies that aimed to probe music-evoked memories, it was demonstrated that, on average, 30% of song presentations had evoked autobiographical memories.¹³ In another study by Garrido and Davidson, it was revealed that people with tendencies of experiencing nostalgia were more likely to listen to heavy metal, RNB, or hard rock – genres that are associated with negative emotions.¹⁴ On the other hand, people with a low tendency of experiencing nostalgia preferred new age, rock or popular music. It is interesting to note that nostalgia is even related to our music listening preferences.

At the heart of *Paradise Lost* lies a deep sense of nostalgia. Everything surrounding the album draws from some form of nostalgia, from technostalgia for analogue instruments of yesteryear to the narration of a protagonist in pursuit of an experience that will make him re-experience his childhood. On a personal level, the idea of a nostalgia driven concept album occurred to me while I was contemplating a characteristically Dickian¹⁵ question of ‘what makes us human’, the nature of memories and the fact that I entertained the notion of finding answers to one’s personality traits and thought processes through their childhood. What if, I contemplated, there was a hypothetical device that could allow us to re-experience our childhoods? What would the experience teach us of our current self, what would we do differently, and where would that lead us?

Born as a Turkish Cypriot in the immediate aftermath of a turbulent and violent time in Cyprus, the 1980s have been about past events swept under the carpet. As a result of the military intervention of Turkey in 1974, Cyprus remains a divided island, where Greek Cypriots in the south are accepted to the European Union, and the unrecognised Turkish Cypriot state in the north still face sanctions, travel restrictions and a destabilised economy.

¹³ Janata, P., Tomic, T., and Rakowski, S.K. (2007). Characterisation of music-evoked autobiographical memories. *Memory*, 15 (8), 845-860.

¹⁴ Garrido, S., and Davidson J.W. (2019). *Music, Nostalgia and Memory*. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁵ Referring to science fiction writer Philip K. Dick.

The houses in which some Turkish Cypriots were raised were the houses left behind by our neighbours, the Greek Cypriots. Over time, some of us became haunted by this reality, as if we hijacked and were living in someone else's memory. This is especially true for Turkish Cypriots, such as myself, who spent their childhood next to an intimidating border with rusty barbed wires and deteriorated military signs. In an attempt to capture this state of mind and perhaps come to terms with it, I embarked on a journey to create an album that dealt with the issue but told through the veils of science fiction.

Jean Hogarty states that the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s represent 'a generation born after the future' and that they are 'a generation born after the death of social democracy, technocratic utopianism, the space race, new music scenes and subcultures'.¹⁶ He further states that we (as I belong to this generation) are "memory tourists" holidaying in the edited highlights of the mid- to late twentieth century while acquiescing the "right to remember" this time period to their parents' generation who actually lived through it'. Taking cues from Simon Reynolds's 'retro culture' arguments, I devote most of this thesis to form my judgement on the issue and, in the process, find my place within the 'retro culture.'

1.3 Concept album as a medium

The massive expansion of the Internet at the dawn of the 21st century signalled the downfall of the album as a relevant format.¹⁷ Since its introduction in 2003, iTunes online music provider made it possible for the first time to download songs individually, eliminating the need to purchase whole albums.¹⁸ When digital sales finally surpassed CD sales,¹⁹ the future of the album seemed bleak. Music consumption and listening habits were changing. Releasing singles instead of albums seemed like a better option. The inclination to download and stream songs also potentially undermine concept albums designed to be experienced as a

¹⁶ Hogarty, J., (2017). *Popular Music and Retro Culture in The Digital Era*. New York: Routledge.

¹⁷ Shute, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Wikström, P. (2009). *The Music Industry: Music in the Cloud*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹⁹ The success of this new model propelled the global online music market share of iTunes to 70%

whole.²⁰ Despite the demand, cost-effectiveness and, in general, providing a better business model in the short run, artists did not succumb to the single. Instead, they reacted with a renewed interest in concept albums.²¹ By doing so, they gave their listeners an exciting new way of discovering and experiencing music, as well as a reason to consider albums as a whole again. Despite the everchanging circumstances, the album remained relevant and stayed within popular consciousness. I consider *Paradise Lost* to be the continuation of this tradition.

Despite being free from the capacity constraints of vinyl or CD, the length of modern albums released solely on streaming platforms still relates to these medium-specific length constraints. Perhaps this is a shred of hidden evidence or an unspoken consensus on how long an album should be. In any case, artists continued the album tradition in the aftermath of the CD as the primary medium. While the Napster file-sharing craze of the 1990s and the iTunes era of the early 2000s prompted buying singles within albums instead of albums as a whole, the Vinyl revival indicates an inclination towards experiencing albums as a whole again. In fact, a re-discovery of a long-forgotten norm.

For Gareth Shute, the concept album goes ‘beyond a simple set of songs to become an interconnected unity’ through which ‘the listener is encouraged to trace out every ounce of meaning from the music, lyrics, and artwork to piece together the world that the musician has created in embryo’.²² This statement captures the essence and the primary goal of my creative output. Shute recognises concept albums in two categories: *thematic* and *narrative*. *Paradise Lost* is a narrative concept album that utilises a unique storyworld with characters, locations, and made-up brands. Moreover, the way its storyworld unfolds goes beyond the music and the album itself and into a wide variety of media: The accompanying short film, physical objects such as cassette tapes and postcards, and digital booklets and blog pages. The process of presenting a storyworld in different forms of media is defined as *transmediality*, ‘with each new text making a distinctive and valuable

²⁰ Hogarty, *op. cit.*

²¹ Shute, G. (2015). *Concept Albums*. Investigations Publishing.

²² *ibid.*

contribution to the whole'.²³ Transmediality is primarily a term used in media studies, for example, to account for the large storyworld of such a franchise as *Star Wars* and how different forms of media are used to expand and elaborate its various characters, locations, and events.

Considering this, it is possible to distinguish some concept albums within the understanding of transmedial storyworlds. Steven Wilson's *Hand Cannot Erase* (2015) has a concept built around a fictional version of a real-life story. The album's deluxe version was presented with an elaborate book, including pictures, a sketchbook, and a diary, all designed to enrich the storyworld. In another example, Radiohead's *The King of Limbs* (2011) promotional campaign included a free single-issue newspaper filled with artwork, poetry, and lyrics that were distributed at record shops. Coldplay's *Mylo Xyloto* (2011) brings various art forms into a coherent storyworld: Graffiti art, comic books, music videos, including an animated one, and even unique bracelets were offered at the promotional tour of the album that emitted light to the rhythm of the music using radio waves. More recently, *Humanz* (2017) by Gorillaz was promoted with an app offering an interactive experience for their fans to explore the world of the album through VR experiences, music videos and more.

1.4 Thesis structure

I initiate this study in Chapter 2.1 with a definition of Nostalgia as a broad term, its various annotations throughout history, and its current understanding within the literature. In Sections 2.2 and 2.3, I present several derivatives of nostalgia, namely technostalgia, retrofuturism and hauntology, and cite several artists associated with these concepts. Where nostalgia and its derivatives are the creative influence behind *Paradise Lost*, the album's narrative structure and the fact that it utilises various forms of media to portray its narrative are on a different discourse. As such, in the rest of Chapter 2, I examine concept albums, narrativity and transmediality. In

¹³ Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Collide*. New York: New York University Press, p. 95.

Section 2.4, I evaluate the approach in categorising concept albums as *thematic* and *narrative*. In Section 2.5, I define transmedial storyworlds with a brief literature survey encompassing other disciplines. Finally, in Section 2.6, I address the genres and artists that I have been influenced in the creation of *Paradise Lost*. I also examine two concept albums: *The Wall* by Pink Floyd and *Kamakiriad* by Donald Fagen.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of my composition and production methods. I begin the chapter by demonstrating how I use the studio as a compositional tool. Then I discuss how technostalgia and the pursuit for ‘analogue colour’ guided me in choosing which instruments, software plugins, and types of recording equipment to utilise during the production of *Paradise Lost*. Another key topic of this chapter is how I treat audio engineering as an integral part of my compositional process. I end the chapter with a step-by-step explanation of the entire production process of the album.

Chapter 4 explores the inner workings of *Paradise Lost*, its relationship with nostalgia and transmedial storyworlds. To provide a historical context regarding Cyprus, I begin the chapter with a brief history and current situation. I then account for my own experience growing up on a divided island after the war I was fortunate not to have experienced. In formulating the album's narrative, I derived inspiration from the works of Philip K. Dick and Joseph Campbell. One of Campbell's ‘The Hero with a Thousand Faces’ core themes is the argument that certain universalities link all humanity. The book ultimately portrays a template of a mythological story, the *monomyth*. Consequently, in Section 4.3, I describe the storyworld of *Paradise Lost* and how I treated science fiction to tell a tale primarily about our times, the nature of memories, childhood, and growing up in Cyprus. In Section 4.4, I demonstrate how the storyworld of the album is realised through visuals and the promotional campaign. Section 4.5 gives a track-by-track analysis of how nostalgia and particularly ‘memory of place’ played a role throughout the album. In Section 4.6, I illustrate how the archetypical story template of Campbell was used in the structure of *Paradise Lost*. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the results of my research.

Chapter 2 Chapter 2: Creative Contexts

'I'm someone for whom youth still seems more real than the present.'

Donald Fagen

2.1 Nostalgia

The interest in nostalgia has been growing since the advent of the past has become consumable. Our time is regarded as 'the age of nostalgia', characterised by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman.²⁴ Postmodernism provides a particularly suitable environment for the cultivation of nostalgia as it allows both old and new, past and present, to exist in a non-chronological timeframe. During the past decades, nostalgia became an industry, with music being an integral part of it, as music is the most powerful instrument for establishing connections with the past.²⁵ Based on survey studies, Juslin proposed that nostalgia is among the most common emotions aroused by music.²⁶ There is also a growing academic interest. For example, at the University of Southampton, the 'Nostalgia Group' has been active in research for over a decade.²⁷ Their research suggests that nostalgia can be used to 'establish the benchmarks of your biography, giving you a sense of meaningfulness and continuity, a connection with your past and optimism for the future'.²⁸

At the same time, nostalgia is an important yet underexplored concept that inspired music composition from Schubert²⁹ and Mahler³⁰ to Kraftwerk.³¹ At the same time, it has been a primary characteristic of Western literary tradition, long before the

²⁴ Bauman, Z. (2017). *Retrotopia*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

²⁵ Öztürk, T.A. (2015). Chronologic perception of postmodernism: The nostalgia trend in music. *Medeniyet Sanat – Journal of the Art and Design Faculty of Istanbul Medeniyet University*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 31-42.

²⁶ Juslin, P. (2011). Music and emotion: Seven questions, seven answers. In I. Deliège & J. Davidson (Eds.), *Music and the mind: Essays in honour of John Sloboda* (pp. 113–135). New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁷ Nostalgia Group's web page, <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/nostalgia/publications.page>.

²⁸ Scaletti, C. (2016). Looking back, looking forward: A keynote address for the 2015 International Computer Music Conference. *Computer Music Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 10-24.

²⁹ Taylor, B. (2014). Schubert and the construction of memory: the string quartet in A minor, D.804 ('Rosamunde'). *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 139, No. 1, 41-88.

³⁰ Kangas, R.R. (2011). Classical style, childhood and nostalgia in Mahler's fourth symphony. *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Vol. 8, 219-236.

³¹ Grönholm, P. (2015). When tomorrow began yesterday: Kraftwerk's nostalgia for the past futures. *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 372-388.

name ‘nostalgia’ was invented.³² In one of the earliest literary examples, Homer describes the yearning of Odysseus for his beloved home in Ithaca (also immortalised in C.P. Cavafy’s well-known poem ‘Ithaca’³³). One form of nostalgia then simply means a longing for a home, a land that may or may not have ever existed. It is a yearning of loss, yet it opens new spaces, wandering and feeding the imagination for lands we paint in our colours and sounds. Similar yearnings appear in the plays of Euripides. As Metzger has demonstrated, nostalgia is a critical and dramatic focus in Euripides’ plays.³⁴ Over the centuries, however, the connotation of nostalgia was transformed to embrace various concepts such as memory, passion, and *Zeitgeist*.

The evolution of psychology as an experimental science has contributed much towards depathologising nostalgia, separating the concept from the gloomy attributions to homesickness. Nostalgia even appears to be undergoing a process of ‘depsychologization’ as well.³⁵ This approach to nostalgia gained considerable support from the work of Fred Davis. His book, *Yearning for Yesterday*,³⁶ in which he studied the concept from a sociological perspective, has pioneered modern research on nostalgia. According to Davis, nostalgia is like an optimistic fantasy of a better time, ‘it assures us of a past happiness and accomplishment’.³⁷ It is inseparable from our identity, and thus, it reveals how we view ourselves in the past, present, and future. He proposed that nostalgia is prompted by self-discontinuity, a sense of interruption or disconnection between one’s past and present self. Any loss causes an identity-discontinuity, but nostalgia, according to Davis, has the repairing power to mend the lost one. Thus, nostalgia does not produce suffering, but on the contrary, it helps us to overcome our present social

³² Su, J.J. (2005). *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³³ Cavafy, C. P. (2007). *The Collected Poems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

³⁴ Metzger, G.S. (2006). *Euripides and the Poetics of Nostalgia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁵ Havlena, W.J., and Holak, S.L. (1991). ‘The good old days’: Observation on nostalgia and its role in consumer behaviour. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, 323-329.

³⁶ Davis, F. (1979). *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: Free Press.

³⁷ *ibid*.

discontinuities. It prepares the identity to overcome potential disturbances in harmony between the self and the world.³⁸

Davis distinguishes two domains of nostalgia. The ‘collective nostalgia’ refers to the state where symbolic objects are widely shared, ‘those symbolic resources from the past which can under proper conditions trigger off wave upon wave of nostalgic feeling in millions of persons at the same time’.³⁹ The patriotic and cultural dimension of nostalgia belongs to this category. On the other hand, ‘Private nostalgia’ refers to those symbolic images that are individual and biographic.

Criticising the minimised or overlooked centrality of place to identity, Milligan examined the identity discontinuity caused by displacement. Unlike some cultural anthropologists who believe that places in a globalised world are less important as far as the experience of nostalgia is concerned, Milligan argues that involuntary disruption of place attachment causes identity discontinuities that can be repaired by nostalgia.⁴⁰ Trigg argues that displacement ‘can have a dramatic consequence on our experience of who we are’ and that experience of nostalgia depends ‘as much on the evocation of place as it does on the time which that memory occurred’.⁴¹

In a recent study, Dwyer offers yet another aspect of nostalgia related to the unattainability of the past. We must recognise, Dwyer argues, that nostalgia ‘is not simply a romanticising or idealisation of the comforts of home’, but rather, nostalgia ‘arises when the desire for homecoming is simultaneously coupled with a recognition of its impossibility’.⁴² Essentially, nostalgia must be comprehended as ‘a response generated by reflection upon the conditions of its emergence’. This understanding leads Dwyer to conclude that temporal nostalgia is ‘the product of an affective engagement with the present that produces a sense of loss’.⁴³

³⁸ Vallee, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Davis, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ Milligan, M.J. (2003). Displacement and identity discontinuity: the role of nostalgia in establishing new identity categories. *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 381-403.

⁴¹ Trigg, D., (2012) *The Memory of Place. A Phenomenology of The Uncanny*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

⁴² Dwyer, M.D. (2015). *Back to Fifties. Nostalgia, Hollywood Film, and Popular Music of the Seventies and Eighties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴³ *ibid.*

The feeling of nostalgia necessitates an active reconstruction of the past. This action involves both conscious and unconscious selection of what to remember. Do nostalgic people want to go back in time physically? Instead, it is a longing to recapture a certain mood or spirit in the past, Wilson meditates, or a yearning to rediscover a former, true self.⁴⁴ She envisages that we have nostalgic emotions for things that symbolise what we wish for. From a dialectical point of view, Bolin argues that passion is a specific form of nostalgia that refers to ‘intense emotional engagement’ and pain and suffering.⁴⁵ He also maintains that present-day nostalgia is more related to time rather than space. It is a common experience that when people return to their homes after many years, they may find their home (if not changed by time) but not their childhood. In this sense, the loss of time is more profound. Since ‘lost time’ is irrecoverable, the nostalgic state is ultimately sad. Nevertheless, nostalgia carries joyful memories; it catches the bittersweet recollections of the past.

In her book, *The Future of Nostalgia*,⁴⁶ Svetlana Boym argues that the twentieth century started with utopian ideals and ended with nostalgia. To put it in her words, ‘optimistic belief in the future became outmoded, while nostalgia, for better or worse, never went out of fashion, remaining uncannily contemporary’. For Boym, nostalgia is not ‘antimodern’ but a ‘rebellion against the modern idea of time’. More importantly, nostalgia can be prospective and retrospective: ‘The fantasies of the past, determined by the needs of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future’.⁴⁷

Although an overwhelming majority of contemporary researchers describe nostalgia as a positive concept, a few consider it as negative. It is blamed for alienating the individual from the present.⁴⁸ Some even regard nostalgia as ‘the latest opiate of the people, a collective escape from the complexities of the present

⁴⁴ Wilson, J.L. (1999). “Remember when...”: A consideration of the concept of nostalgia. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, Vol. 56, No. 3, 296-304.

⁴⁵ Bolin, G. (2016). Passion and nostalgia in generational media experiences. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 250-264.

⁴⁶ Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.

⁴⁷ Boym, S. (2007). Nostalgia and its discontents. *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 07, 7-18.

⁴⁸ Loventhal, D. (1958) *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

in times of trouble and change'.⁴⁹ Table 2.1 gives a selection of definitions of nostalgia from the existing literature. Today, nostalgia is regarded as a complex and difficult concept because of the multitude of disciplines it involves.⁵⁰

Table 2.1 Selected definitions of nostalgia.

| Author(s) | Definition |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Baker and Kennedy ⁵¹ | 'A sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience, product, or service from the past.' |
| Belk ⁵² | 'A wistful mood that may be prompted by an object, a scene, a smell, or a strain of music.' |
| Boym ⁵³ | 'A longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed.' |
| Davis ⁵⁴ | 'A positively toned evocation of a lived past.' |
| Hemming ⁵⁵ | 'A mode of looking to the past for stability lacking in the present.' |
| Holbrook and Schindler ⁵⁶ | 'A preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favourable affect) toward objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth).' |
| ODE ⁵⁷ | 'A sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past.' |
| Sedikides, et al. ⁵⁸ | 'A sentimental longing for one's past.' |
| Stern ⁵⁹ | 'An emotional state in which an individual yearns for an idealised or sanitised version of an earlier time.' |

⁴⁹ Gabriel, Y. (1993). Organizational nostalgia: reflections on the golden age. In: S. Fineman (ed.) *Emotion in Organizations*. London: Sage. pp. 118-141.

⁵⁰ Kessous, A. and Roux, E. (2008). A semiotic analysis of nostalgia as a connection to the past. *Qualitative Market Research International Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 192-212.

⁵¹ Baker, S.M., and Kennedy, P.F. (1994). Death by nostalgia. A diagnostic of context-specific cases. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 21, 169-174.

⁵² Belk, R.W. (1990). The role of possessions in constructing and maintaining a sense of past. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 17, 669-676.

⁵³ Boym (2007), *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ Davis, F. (1979). *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: Free Press.

⁵⁵ Hemming, R. (2008). *Modern Nostalgia. Siegfried Sassoon, Trauma and the Second World War*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

⁵⁶ Holbrook, M.B. and Schindler, R.M. (1991). Echoes of the dear departed past: some work in progress on nostalgia. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 18, 330-333.

⁵⁷ Oxford Dictionary of English (2003). 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2.2 Technostalgia

Technostalgia is a manifestation of nostalgia, a preference or longing for outdated technologies. Nostalgia evolves through our interactions with such outdated instruments, as they are mediators in the memory process. The instruments are used as representations, voicing as van Dijck expresses, ‘a cultural desire for personal memory to function *as* an archive or *as* a storage facility for lived experience’.⁶⁰ Technostalgia is a ‘movement toward both new sounds and new interactions, whether aural, social, or physical, made concrete through combinations of the past and present’ and ‘beyond a return to an ideal past’.⁶¹ This argument is further supported by van der Heijden, who argues that technostalgia mediates between the past and the present, the analogue and the digital, the archival and the performative’.⁶²

The interest in outmoded media, sounds and equipment, according to Auner, is not merely an aim for a ‘retro aesthetic’ or simple nostalgia, but something which raises questions such as ‘how musicians and listeners use music to generate meaning, to locate themselves in a tradition, as well as to produce and transform that tradition’⁶³. In his opinion, ‘old machines can be made to speak in various interpretative frameworks: Authenticity vs. artifice, modern vs. postmodern, and human vs. mechanical’.⁶⁴ The interaction of similar contrasting and contradicting concepts informs my understanding and application of technostalgia in *Paradise Lost*.

⁵⁸ Sedikides, Wildshut, Arndt, and Routledge, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Stern, B. (1992). Historical and personal nostalgia in advertising text: the fin de Siècle effect. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 11-22.

⁶⁰ van Dijk, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Pinch, T., Reinecke, D. (2009). Technostalgia: How old gear lives on in new music. In: *Sound Souvenirs: Audio Technologies, Memory, and Cultural Practices*, edited by K. Bijsterveld and J. van Dijck. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp.152-166.

⁶² van der Heijden, T. (2015). Technostalgia of the present: From technologies of memory to a memory of technologies. *NECSUS – European Journal of Media Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 103-121.

⁶³ Auner, J. (2000). Making old machines speak: Images of technology in recent music. *Echo*, Vol. 2, No. 2.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

Technostalgia is also one of many attempts to verbalise the seemingly endless obsession with the past. Analogue fetishism⁶⁵ is another term to express a ‘love affair’ with outdated technology, such as multi-track tape recorders, tube-driven signal processors and analogue synthesisers. ‘There are many emerging artists who love old media with a sense of nostalgia’ argues Browning, that ‘borders on fetishism – especially for equipment they’ve often never used’.⁶⁶ Audio recording magazines, gear reviews and blogs are all crowded with such terms as ‘warm sound’ or ‘analogue warmth’. As Simon Reynolds observes, ‘we live in the digital future, but we’re mesmerised by our analogue past’.⁶⁷

Vintage signal processors and multi-track tape recorders add a certain amount of harmonic distortion or introduce an audible ‘hiss’. Such imperfections ‘have become integral to the quality of the recorded sounds that we all grew up with’.⁶⁸ Are we striving to replicate the sounds that we grew up with because of our nostalgic tendencies? Or is the analogue sound truly ‘better’? There seems to be no clear answer for this highly debated subject. However, from a technical point of view, if one asks an engineer's opinion, analogue over digital is simply a matter of ‘taste’.

From the consumer perspective, technostalgia can be observed in the revival of vinyl records and, albeit to a much lesser extent, the cassette tapes. For Hogarty, vinyl ‘acts as a physical emblem of and a portal’ to an ‘idealised’ time when all the memorable and celebrated music was released.⁶⁹ When the digital compact disc arrived in the early 1980s, consumers cherished the clarity of its sound; stripped from hiss, crackle and other unintended sounds of vinyl and tape. Perhaps less

⁶⁵ Stuhl, A. K. (2014). Reactions to Analog Fetishism in Sound-Recording Cultures. *The Velvet Light Trap*, Vol. 74, 42-53

⁶⁶ Browning, Y. (2014). Why does analog still feel good in a digital world? Available online: <http://theconversation.com/why-does-analogue-still-feel-good-in-a-digital-world-25609>

⁶⁷ Reynolds, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ Robjohns, H. (2010). Analogue warmth. The sound of tubes, tape and transformers. *Sound on Sound*, February 2010 issue. Available at <https://www.soundonsound.com/techniques/analogue-warmth>. It must, however, be mentioned that some believe there is no substantial evidence nostalgia driven usage of vintage technology and instruments. See, for example, Bennett, S. (2012). Endless analogue: Situating vintage technologies in the contemporary recording and production workplace. *Journal on the Art of Record Production*, Issue 07.

⁶⁹ Hogarty, *op. cit.*

obvious is the fact that CD empowered the listener, for the first time, with the ability to skip tracks, pause, resume, and even skip to a particular point within a track with unprecedented ease. Suddenly the timeframe of experiencing music has changed. One could argue that these were the early signs of heading towards an age where attention spans diminish and an ever-increasing demand for ultra-fast experiences takes hold. The famous scientist Michio Kaku once said, 'I would imagine that our pace of living would be absolutely terrifying for someone living a hundred years ago'.⁷⁰

Furthermore, when CDs replaced cassette tapes, something fundamentally has changed our listening experience. Reynolds likens the experience of a remote-controlled CD player to that of the TV remote, which 'brought music under the sway of channel-surfing logic'. As someone who is profoundly interested in concept albums and narratives, this poses a problem: It is now within the listener's reach to disturb the narrative and, consequently, how the album is meant to be experienced. This trend was carried over to the Mp3 era of the 1990s and the streaming era that followed in the 2000s. We have since become accustomed to this new digital-era way of experiencing music.

However, there is a flip side, as Reynolds points out, 'every gain in consumer-empowering convenience has come at the cost of disempowering the power of art to dominate our attention, to induce a state of aesthetic surrender'. Still, consumer empowerment did not stop there as the race to take the lion's share of the music market raged between music streaming services. Hogarty states that 'we wanted availability, but technology has delivered it to us in the form of ubiquity, and we wanted to access, but technology has delivered it to us in the form of excess'. In addition, Sterne notes that 'We have made recordings more portable and easier to store than ever before, but in so doing, we have also made them more ephemeral'.⁷¹ It seems like the repercussions of technological advancements are not as scrutinised at their onset.

⁷⁰ Kaku, M. (2006). The BBC series *Time*. First released on 26 February 2006.

⁷¹ Sterne, J. (2015). Space within space: Artificial reverb and detachable echo. *Gray Room*, No. 60, 110-131.

In light of this, it is no surprise that we are experiencing a resurgence of the old ways we experience music. From the record shop to storing it within your collection, vinyl is an altogether unique experience compared to Mp3's and streaming. For one thing, there is no paralysis of choice when it comes to vinyl. Confined within a set of owned vinyl records, one can spin and enjoy their favourite albums in their entirety and not just skim through the songs and shuffle them within a playlist. Moreover, music listeners prefer physical formats as it provides a sense of 'ownership' compared to digital media.⁷² Although the lifespan of each of these physical formats is limited, it does not 'feel' as ephemeral as a digital file comprised of ones and zeroes. In conclusion, technostalgia from the consumer's perspective should not be considered a mere retro appeal; as van Dijk argues, the listener 'want these apparatuses to re-enact their cherished, often magic experience of listening'.⁷³

2.3 Hauntology and Retrofuturism

For the last half of the 20th century, all kinds of electronic music were consistently associated with the future. Film directors hunted for electronic music to invoke anything related to the 'future.' However, as Mark Fisher observes, by 2005, it was clear that electronic music lost its 'futuristic' character and could not provide anything new invoking the 'future'. Fisher's worries go beyond the musical style that is lost in the future. For him, the vanishing future meant the 'deterioration of a whole mode of social imagination: the capacity to conceive of a world radically different from the one we currently live [...] the acceptance of a situation in which culture would continue without really changing'.⁷⁴ There appears a sadness, a kind of disappointment because the future is not what was anticipated.

Similarly, Hogarty exemplifies hauntology as 'longing for a supposedly more futuristic and authentic past that never quite materialised'.⁷⁵ It is precisely this

⁷² Hogarty, *op.cit.*

⁷³ van Dijk, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Fisher, M. (2012). What is hauntology? *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 16-24.

⁷⁵ Hogarty, *op. cit.*

deadlock, the ‘failure of the future’, that unites certain artists and new musical projects⁷⁶ around the concept of hauntology. Over the last decade, hauntology has been attracting considerable interest as a musical movement. Projects of a hauntological nature address our problem as ‘not so much that our memories of long ago seduce us, but that we cannot produce new memories’.⁷⁷

Hauntology, a term coined by Jacques Derrida in his *Specters of Marx*,⁷⁸ is a witty word on the ontology which describes paradoxical objects, such as specters, dwelling in the conceptual space between presence and absence. Derrida ponders around Marxism and the specters (implying political ghosts) that prevailed when writing his book. He starts with the discussion of the term in the context of a performance, and unlike the traditional western metaphysics according to which an event takes place in a particular place and time, he conceives the place and time of the event as necessarily indeterminate.⁷⁹ For him, interruptions do occur in temporal and spatial continuity.

Derrida’s theoretical work on hauntology and spectrality has inspired music and film studies and other humanities fields. The manner of adoption of Derrida’s concept of hauntology in music was somewhat different. Rather than the political connotation of Derrida’s work, musical hauntology ‘focused on the more ontological sense of hauntology: that being is itself haunted, constituted from a number of hidden traces whose presence is felt but often unacknowledged’.⁸⁰

The term is first applied to music at the beginning of the 2000s by Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds, focusing on artists associated with the UK based Ghost Box label. With a type of music forged with a mixture of digital and analogue: Vintage synthesisers and digital technologies; radio noise, spoken word and found sounds; inspiration from library music and particularly pulp-sci-fi movies and horror;

⁷⁶ e.g., the composer Philip Jeck, electronic musician Burial, the Caretaker, the Ghost Box label, etc.

⁷⁷ Fisher, M. (2013). The metaphysics of crackle: Afrofuturism and hauntology. *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 42-55.

⁷⁸ Derrida, J. (1994). *Specters of Marx*. New York: Routledge.

⁷⁹ Trill, S.L. (2006). *Hauntology in Humanities Studies*. PhD Thesis, University of Florida.

⁸⁰ Sexton, J. (2012). Weird Britain in exile: Ghost Box, hauntology, and alternative heritage. *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 561-584.

industrial drones and abstract noise.⁸¹ Retrospectively, I realised a strong connection between these methods and my methods in producing *Paradise Lost*. Modern digital technologies have provided easy access to past recordings and styles, a development from which musical hauntology perhaps emerged as a consequence.

Many contemporary artists use technology to revive the past and create new sounds of a haunted nature from historical audio artefacts. Any discussion of musical hauntology should mention the Scottish electronic music duo Boards of Canada, comprised of brothers Marcus Eoin and Michael Sandison. Their highly individual music significantly influenced me, particularly the nostalgia undertones and references to childhood. According to Reynolds, Boards of Canada ‘pioneered the hauntological approach to creating old-timey and elegiac atmospheres through the use of sound treatments suggestive of decay and wear-and-tear’.⁸² Though most of their music borrows from hip-hop elements and looped breakbeats, I am more interested in the sound design aspect of their music. Their sound world references many VHS era TV documentaries (in fact, their name comes from The National Film Board of Canada), deteriorated cassette mixtapes, cheap documentary-style library music, and the type of ‘found sound’ editing reminiscent of musique concrete. It is also possible to associate Boards of Canada with technostalgia; as Sandison states in an interview, ‘we’re definitely vintage hardware freaks [...] we’ll go to great lengths to get hold of a specific instrument just to get a particular sound’.⁸³

Another derivative of nostalgia is the concept of Retrofuturism. It is a term first introduced by Lloyd Dunn, referring to an uncertain fascination with past utopian visions of the future.⁸⁴ It is how the future has been seen in the past, a ‘half-

⁸¹ Reynolds, *op. cit.*

⁸² Reynolds, *op. cit.*

⁸³ Pattison, L. (2013). Boards of Canada: ‘We’ve become a lot more nihilistic over the years.’ *The Guardian*, 6.6.2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/jun/06/boards-of-canada-become-more-nihilistic>

⁸⁴ Sharp, S. (2011). Nostalgia for the future. *Science Fiction Film and Television*, Vol. 4 No. 1, 25-40.

nostalgic, half-sentimental memorialising of popular futurism'.⁸⁵ Unlike nostalgia, retrofuturism rejects sentimentality and the notion of a bygone golden age. As an example, Grönholm identifies retrofuturism in the music of Kraftwerk. According to him, Kraftwerk 're-imagines the past as a continuum of progressive development as a source of inspiration and ideas'.⁸⁶ Since the beginning of the 2000s, retrofuturism is realised in Synthwave and the niche web-based Vaporwave genres. For me, the manner in which these genres deal with nostalgia and that both have a strong visual element is of interest. Epitomised as 'retromania' by Reynolds, both genres can be considered the branching out of this larger cultural movement (i.e., retro culture), encompassing artwork, clothing, videos, and other media derived from popular culture.

2.4 Concept album and narrativity in music

If a collection of short stories is an album, a novel is a concept album. If an album is comparable to Baroque suites, a concept album is the nineteenth-century song-cycle. Schumann scholar Tunbridge acknowledges that the concept album and the song-cycle 'share an impulse towards gathering songs according to ever grander and more complex themes'.⁸⁷ In short, concept album should be considered as a framework that deals with larger statements.

In the broadest sense, a concept album is a collection of songs that cohere around a single idea.⁸⁸ In a more elaborate explanation, Martina Elicker defines it as 'an album by either one artist or a group which contains a unifying thread throughout the songs – be it musical, thematic, or both'.⁸⁹ A third definition that most closely

⁸⁵ Guffey, E. (2014). Crafting yesterday's tomorrows: Retro-futurism, steampunk, and the problem of making in the twenty-first century. *The Journal of Modern Craft*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 249-266.

⁸⁶ Grönholm, P. (2015), When tomorrow began yesterday: Kraftwerk's nostalgia for the past futures. *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 372-388.

⁸⁷ Tunbridge, L. (2010). *The Song Cycle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸⁸ Shute, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ Elicker, M. (2001). Concept Albums: Song Cycles in Popular Music, in Walter Bernhart et al.: *Word and Music Studies: Essays on the Song Cycle and on Defining the Field*. Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Word and Music Studies at Ann Arbor, MI, 1999, ed. Amsterdam: Rodopi, p. 229.

represents my understanding and creative output is: ‘An album that sustains a central message or advances the subject's narrative through the intersection of lyrical, musical and visual content’.⁹⁰ This definition considers ‘narration’ and ‘visual content’, which I believe are essential ingredients of a concept album.

Gareth Shute divides concept albums into two categories: (a) narrative, similar to a novel, stage musical or film, and (b) thematic, a collection of songs unified by a central theme through lyrics and musical material. Frank Sinatra’s *In the Wee Small Hours* (1955) is frequently cited as the first concept album (though Shute disagrees on this classification), while The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Band* (1967) is considered to have popularised the format. If we follow Shute’s classification, both are in the ‘thematic concept album’ category, as neither has a definite plot or storyline. *In the Wee Small Hours* is a collection of songs composed by different songwriters, brought together by the thematic unity of their lyrics. *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Band* also has a unifying theme, but in fact, Lennon openly declared his disinterest in the concept and that his contributions had ‘nothing to do with Sergeant Pepper and his band’.⁹¹ Though the significance of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Band* is indisputable, Lennon’s statement alone makes it difficult to consider the album as representative of the format.

The second type, the narrative concept album, has a plot and narrative across the whole album. This type interests me the most, as it is the category, I see my portfolio album *Paradise Lost* to fall under. Narrative concept albums have an explicit or implied plot and a central character. Frank Zappa’s *Freak Out!* (1966) is considered the first narrative-driven concept album.⁹² Early examples include *Tommy* (1969) by The Who, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974) by Genesis, and *The Wall* (1979) by Pink Floyd, all of which have a central character and a narrative. A relatively recent example of character and plot-driven album proving the prevalence of narrative concept albums is *American Idiot* (2004) by Green Day.

⁹⁰ Burns, L. (2016) The concept album as visual-sonic-textual spectacle: The transmedial storyworld of Coldplay’s Mylo Xyloto. *Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 91-116.

⁹¹ Shute, *op. cit.*

⁹² Gingerich, K. (2010). The Journey of the Song Cycle: From “The Iliad” to “American Idiot”. *Musical Offerings*, Vol., No.2, 65-76.

In the last decade, ‘concept album’ has become increasingly ambiguous and merely an umbrella term. Some popular music albums have been categorised in novel ways; Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* (2016) as ‘visual album’ and Bjork’s *Biophilia* (2011) as an ‘app album’ are the two striking examples.

While the lyrics of such albums effectively transmit the plotline, whether instrumental music can be considered ‘narrative’ in the same way has been an ongoing theoretical debate. ‘Can we say that when we hear a musical work, it is explicitly narrating something?’ asks the musicologist Jean-Jack Nattiez. He argues that if we intend to approach a musical work as a narrative, we need to know something verbal about the piece, such as its title. Nattiez concludes that music is not a narrative but ‘an incitement to make a narrative, comment, analyse’.⁹³ Jerrold Levinson identifies representation, events, and temporal relations as the three essential elements of a narrative. Applying this to music, he maintains that for music to be narrative: ‘(a) it must represent; (b) it must represent events or states of affairs; and (c) it must represent temporal and causal relations among those events or states of affairs’.⁹⁴ Adapting a simple, working definition of narrative as ‘a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change’,⁹⁵ the mind constructs the narrative by absorbing conscious and unconscious sensations and relating the memory of what has happened with the anticipation of what is to come.⁹⁶

Since music alone cannot carry a narrative, at least not explicitly, the introduction of non-musical elements can be a strategy to achieve narrativity. For Shute, non-musical elements are an essential feature of concept albums. Without this ingredient, Shute argues, any thematically coherent album and ‘every Christmas compilation ever put together’ could be considered a concept album. What type of non-musical elements come into play depends largely on the artist or the band. Be it

⁹³ Nattiez, J.-J. (1990). *Music and Discourse. Toward a Semiology of Music*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 127-128.

⁹⁴ Jevison, J. (2004). Music as narrative and music as drama. *Mind and Language*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 428-441.

⁹⁵ Herman, D. (2009). *Basic Elements of Narrative*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, p.2.

⁹⁶ Roads, C. (2015). *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.35, 323.

an elaborate stage show, printed material: Album artwork, an accompanying text, book or illustrations, web-based promotional campaign, a fictional plot, references to literature and philosophy. According to Lori Burns, the interplay of music and such non-musical elements remains under-theorised. In response, Burns applies the concept ‘transmedial storyworld’ to define the broader scope of some of the more intricate concept albums.

2.5 Transmedial Storyworlds

David Herman defines storyworld as a ‘world evoked implicitly as well as explicitly by a narrative’.⁹⁷ For example, it is the world conjured in our minds, quite vividly sometimes, when reading a novel. Transmediality, in simplest terms, is ‘the representation of a storyworld through multiple media’.⁹⁸ First proposed by Henry Jenkins, using the concept of convergence and *The Matrix* as a case study, ‘transmedial storyworld’ is a story that ‘unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole’.⁹⁹ It is an expansion of narratology beyond language-based narrative and into other forms of media. Transmedial storyworld, according to Burns, ‘has the potential to take the concept album to a new level of mediation, as a larger narrative is developed within and across a range of media texts’.¹⁰⁰ Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman argue that it is possible to find at least two possible ‘expansions’. One is media expansion and the other narrative expansion. Transmedia storytelling occurs when these two expansions converge into a single experience.¹⁰¹

Henry Jenkins’ scholarly articles have strengthened the academic writing on transmedial storytelling. Since the publication of his influential book *Convergence*

⁹⁷ Herman. *op. cit.* p.106

⁹⁸ Ryan, M., and Thon, J. (2014). Storyworlds across media: Introduction. In: Ryan, M., and Thon, J. (eds.). *Storyworlds Across Media*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. p.14.

¹⁰¹ Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Collide*. New York: New York University Press, p. 95.

¹⁰⁰ Burns, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Scolari, C.A., Bertetti, P., and Freeman, M. (2014). *Transmedia Archaeology: Storytelling in the Borderlines of Science Fiction, Comics and Pulp Magazines*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 3-4.

Culture, studies on transmedia storytelling have flourished, and many articles and books were published.¹⁰² Transmedia studies are not restricted to media studies and music but increasingly found applications in various disciplines such as marketing, fiction, education, and psychology.¹⁰³

Jan-Noël Thon proposed transmediality in three distinct forms: mediality, intermediality and transmediality. While mediality may refer to a medium-specific work, intremediality, as the prefix *inter* suggests, refers to a work that *crosses* to different media, ‘to multiple discourses and modalities of experience and representation’¹⁰⁴. Finally, transmediality is a work or a fictional world that does not have a specific medium but exists in various mediums, each contributing to the whole. In ideal transmedial storytelling, as Jenkins stresses, each medium contributes what it does best.¹⁰⁵

To put these into some context, *Music for Museum* (2014) by Air, is an album released solely on vinyl. Although various unofficial digital versions exist on the internet, the band did not intend this album to be available digitally. As such, we can speak of the *mediality* of *Music for Museum*, as it is only available on a specific medium. *Intermediality*, within the context of music, could be considered any music that exists in different forms of media, such as popular music releases with music videos, a trend that began with MTV and was further popularised by Michael Jackson in the 1980s.¹⁰⁶

Transmedia storytelling differs in its approach and purpose. Many authors agree that it is not possible to provide a single definition of transmedia storytelling. Part of the reason is, according to Phillips, that on the one hand, we have franchise

¹⁰² See for example, Freeman, M. and Gambarato R. R. (eds.), (2019). *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies*, New York: Routledge; Thon, J-N., (2016) *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Guynes, S. and Hassler-Forest, D. (eds.) (2018) *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Amsterdam University Press; Joyce, S. (2018). *Transmedia Storytelling and the Apocalypse*. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁰³ Freeman and Gambarato, *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Jensen, K.B. (2008). Intermediality. In: W. Donsbach (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, Vol. 6, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, p. 2385-2387.

¹⁰⁵ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 96

¹⁰⁶ MTV, cable television network. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/MTV>

transmedia, which consists of multiple big media. An example of this is *Star Wars* with multiple films, TV series, games, and books. On the other hand, transmedia can be more interactive and web-centric, overlapping with the traditions of independent film and interactive art.¹⁰⁷ In music, Brambilla argues that there is no clear-cut definition for ‘transmedia music’ and transmedia in the music industry can exist in different forms. For example, a live concert can be experienced in a cinema, or a band can exist in virtual reality only. She argues that a song, or an album, cannot be considered transmedia just because it can be relocated and consumed via multiple platforms; in the same way, any album with a coherent theme cannot be considered as a concept album.¹⁰⁸

Most recently, George Harrison’s magnum opus *All Things Must Pass* (1970) received a ‘lavish revisit’ with a completely new remaster that brought the dated sound quality to modern standards. Dhahi Harrison, the executive producer of the reissue, said their goal was ‘to make the album more sonically friendly to a new generation’.¹⁰⁹ The reissue has been presented in various versions, one of which is the ‘uber deluxe box set’. Housed inside a wooden crate, the set consists of a surprisingly large set of materials: The album on 8 LP records and 5 CD’s, a 96-page scrapbook, another 44-page book chronicling the making of the album, a wooden bookmark, replica figures of the album cover art, rudraksha beads, album poster, blue-ray disc. The set seems to be designed to overindulge the utmost fans of the album. While the material presented in the set may seem like crossing into transmediality, that is not the case. The album itself is not a concept album, and as such, there is no storyworld to elaborate. What we have here, is in fact, a collection of memorabilia.

Transmediality can be used to an excellent effect for purposes of world-building. It is a helpful way to understand some of the more intricate concept albums that have

¹⁰⁷ Phillips, A. (2012). *A Creator’s Guide to Transmedia Storytelling*. New-York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁸ Brembilla, P. (2019). Transmedia Music: The Values of Music as a Transmedia Asset. In: M. Freeman, R.R., Gambarato (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies*, New York: Routledge, pp. 82 – 89

¹⁰⁹ Browne, D. (2021) Massive George Harrison ‘All Things Must Pass’: Inside New Reissue. *Rolling Stone*, August 2021 issue.

been released in the last few decades. Perhaps a prime example of transmediality is Bjork's album *Biophilia* (2011) which is frequently credited as the first 'app album'. The album explores links between nature, music, technology, and creativity, utilizing multiple downloadable applications to provide an interactive experience. While the transmediality aspect of the album is groundbreaking, utilising apps and an educational program for children to explore music and creativity, it is ultimately not a narrative concept album, in the sense that the order of the tracks does not portray a linear story.

An essential requirement for music to be transmedial is 'that a music project must become a spreadable concept, the matrix of a narrative that unfolds through content streaming'.¹¹⁰ In the words of Summers, 'stories, characters and settings are transmedial when they cross borders between different media'.¹¹¹ In a transmedia storyworld, '*content* becomes immersive, and the *experience* becomes a product'.¹¹² The promotional campaign of *Paradise Lost* draws from this concept, in a process where different platforms and media types were used not only to establish but to familiarise the audience with the characters, made-up brands and the geography that make up the intricate storyworld of the album.

2.6 Discussion of genre

My music 'borrows' one or more defining elements of a genre and combines them with others. In the broadest sense, I draw elements from ambient, downtempo electronica, and rock. Such a range of genres are not intended, however, as a feature of polystylism. In *Paradise Lost*, the combination of these genres coalesces into a storytelling device, similar to how movie soundtracks serve to establish the changing moods of the narrative. In a statement that best captures my intention, Tremblay argues that, when confronted with stylistic gaps, listeners 'instinctively attempt to resolve them by the construction of a narrative'. The entire process is

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Summers, T. (2018). Music and Transmediality: The Multi-Media Invasion of *Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of the Worlds*. *Twentieth-Century Music*, Vol. 15/2, 231-258.

¹¹² Brembilla, *op. cit.*

somewhat intuitive, and thus, it is quite challenging to classify *Paradise Lost* under a single genre.¹¹³

Ambient

Aspects of ambient music can be traced back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century composers such as Mahler, Debussy, and Ives and later in the music of Cage and Tudor¹¹⁴ who, in one form or the other, aimed for an ‘immersive, environmental experience’.¹¹⁵ Ambient music, coined by Brian Eno, first appeared on the liner notes for *Music for Airports* (1978). Eno distinguishes ambient music from Muzak and other forms of ‘background music’, which, for him, are ‘stripped away of all doubt and uncertainty (and thus all genuine interest)’.¹¹⁶ According to Eno, the critics were initially sceptical, dismissing ambient music as yet another ‘arty joke’. Though the critics failed to recognise its potential at the time, ambient music has been with us since then and continues to be reinvented into various new forms by composers coming from all sorts of backgrounds.

Today, ambient music is considered a type of instrumental music focusing on atmosphere and mood rather than melodic phrases and conventional song structures. In my understanding of the genre, the inconspicuous beats, deemphasised chord changes, arpeggios or sequenced synthesisers, short repeated melodic patterns (i.e., Reich) are some of its defining elements. As a by-product, it is less attention-grabbing, and for me, the whole point of the genre. In its beginning, ambient music was defined by quiet, background sounds that even possessed meditative qualities. Today, elements of ambient music spawned into a variety of

¹¹³ Tremblay, J. B. (2007). *Polystylism and Narrative Potential in The Music of Alfred Schnittke*. PhD Thesis, The University of British Columbia

¹¹⁴ Holmes, T. (2008). *Electronic and Experimental Music: Technology, Music, and Culture*. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

¹¹⁵ Prendergast, M. (2003). *The Ambient Century: From Mahler to Moby – The Evolution of Sound in the Electronic Age*. 2nd edition. London: Bloomsbury.

¹¹⁶ Eno, B. (2004) The studio as compositional tool. In: C. Cox and D. Warner (eds.). *Audio Culture. Readings in Modern Music*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 96

sub-genres that departs from this definition, though ‘persistent rhythm and slowly evolving wash of sound textures’ is a unifying element across this variety.¹¹⁷

The soundtrack for the video game *Hyper Light Drifter* (2016) by Richard Vreeland (also known as Disasterpeace), has influenced me in numerous ways. Though Vreeland’s aesthetics are a nod to the early video-game music, his work in *Hyper Light Drifter* delves into the ambient territory. ‘I’m influenced by the past’, admits Vreeland ‘but I’m always trying to look forward’.¹¹⁸ In his score to *Hyper Light Drifter*, Vreeland has expressed that he drew influence from Debussy and Ravel,¹¹⁹ which can be observed in the opening track *Vignette: Panacea*. A prominent feature of the *Hyper Light Drifter* is an innate sense of ‘decay’ and digitised ‘lo-fi’ aesthetics. These lo-fi effects are achieved with various digital distortion algorithms such as bit reduction in unconventional ways. For example, we can hear these effects on the long reverb tails, when instead of naturally fading away, the sound starts to crumble into bits and fades rather abruptly. Much like the Vaporwave aesthetics, these digital distortion effects emanate a sense of nostalgia to the post-analogue or early digital age.

Space music

Space music, characterised by ‘long, meditative electronic works’ and evokes ‘spacey or dreamy’ moods, is often classified as another sub-genre of ambient music. The pioneers of the genre are artists such as Vangelis, Jean-Michel Jarre and Tangerine Dream. Since discovering it from a young age, the music of Vangelis has always been with me at various points in my life. At first, I was not interested in the fact that he was using a wide variety of synthesisers (such as the highly sought-after Yamaha CS-80), or the fact that he preferred spontaneous performance over overdubs and editing. Instead, I was mesmerised by his profoundly personal and evocative sense of musicality.

¹¹⁷ Holmes, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁸ Fact Magazine (2016). Best Albums of 2016, No. 39. <https://www.factmag.com/2016/12/13/best-albums-of-2016/>

¹¹⁹ Gordon, L. (2016). *It Follows* composer Disasterpeace on his intimate soundtrack for *Hyper Light Drifter*. *Fact Magazine*, 27.7. 2016. <https://www.factmag.com/2016/07/27/it-follows-composer-disasterpeace-on-creating-8-bit-nostalgia-for-video-game-hyper-light-drifter/>

One particular album remains inspirational; his soundtrack for the film *Blade Runner* (1982), an album that ‘stands as one of the twentieth century’s greatest achievements in sound’.¹²⁰ *Blade Runner*, adapted by a Philip K. Dick novel,¹²¹ has in its core the question of what makes humans human. Would an android, a machine with all the capabilities of human emotion, be considered human? The movie, though stripped from most of Dick’s ideas, still emanates such Dickian questions. Vangelis seems to be on the same page through his music, on a mission to accomplish ‘humanisation of electronic means’ resulting in a triumphant score that echoes ‘emotion over machine’.¹²² A similar ambition can be found in my music, where I always seek a balance between the human element and electronic means.

Downtempo Electronica

Electronica is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad range of genres derived primarily from popular and dance-oriented music. Downtempo is characterised by having a slow tempo (less than 120 bpm) and generally offers an easy-going background listening. French electronic music duo Air (Jean-Benoît Dunckel and Nicolas Godin) is one of the genre's pioneers. It is safe to say that Air had the most significant influence on my music. For me, Air is best defined as genre-bending outcasts; too experimental for the pop listener, yet too pop to be considered experimental. This is precisely the place, this state of limbo, in which I strive to establish my music.

Air, the ‘Pink Floyd of the twenty-first century’, as conveniently labelled by Prendergast, has strong connections with nostalgia and retrofuturism.¹²³ For Prendergast, they ‘summoned up a vision of the future by recombining elements of the past’. Dunckel reaffirms this: ‘I don’t renounce the past’ he declares on his web biography, ‘in fact I exploit it quite openly’.¹²⁴ Air’s first album *Moon Safari* (1998), is defined as ‘pre-millennial retro-futurist nostalgia for a simpler

¹²⁰ Prendergast, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ Dick, P. K. (1968). *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* New York: Random House.

¹²² Prendergast, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

¹²³ Prendergast, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

¹²⁴ JB Dunckel’s official website, <http://www.jbdunckel.com>.

tomorrow'.¹²⁵ One of the recognisable elements in their music is achieved by using analogue instruments and studio gear. Nicholas Godin remembers the band's early years in an interview: 'we bought the most affordable instruments available: analogue synths from the '70s. [...] So it's true we had a very personal sound, but it was by default'. Although this statement is clearly against a conscious technostalgia, their refusal of using modern gear throughout their career proves the opposite. In the most recent albums of Dunckel, *H+* (2018) and *Mirages* (2019, collaboration with Jonathan Fitoussi), one can still hear the humble beginnings of Air, dry and upfront drums, picked electric bass, Solina strings, MS20 and Moog synthesisers, among, no doubt, many other classic synthesisers and studio gear.

While Air has not shown an interest in concept albums, *Le Voyage Dans La Lune* (2012) can be considered the closest the duo has ever got to assembling an album around a central theme. *Le Voyage Dans La Lune* has been inspired by George Méliès' iconic silent sci-fi movie of the same name. Coinciding with the film's re-release in coloured form, the album brings 'some of the artistry back into their music'.¹²⁶ *Astronomic Club* opens the album with ominous sounds of the Mellotron male choirs with orchestral timpani, reminiscent of Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma*. *Seven Stars* introduces vocals on a backdrop of sci-fi oriented synth textures and a repetitive tom-drum pattern. *Sonic Armada* is an unapologetic MS-20 extravaganza, excruciating above a march-like rhythm with an unusually low tuned snare drum. Throughout the album, one could not help but feel that Air has once again set themselves free with this album, avoiding a specific genre or a style to guide them; they focus on creativity and sonic exploration. Though in the process, each track feels like a small snippet and lacks a meaningful thematic cohesion.

Rock

Since its inception around the 1950s, Rock has evolved into a myriad of styles and sub-genres. My music draws inspiration from some of its subgenres, namely, prog-rock (i.e., Pink Floyd), post-rock (i.e., Mogwai), and Jazz-Rock (i.e., Steely Dan).

¹²⁵ Irvin, J. (2007). *The Mojo Collection. The Ultimate Music Companion*. 4th edition. Edinburgh: Canongate Books, p. 645.

¹²⁶ Neyland, N. (2012). *Air – Le Voyage Dans la Lune*. Pitchfork.

Coined by Simon Reynolds, post-rock is the notion of ‘rock instrumentation for non-rock purposes’.¹²⁷ It is characterised by a tendency to be more experimental, an attempt at reaching the boundaries of traditional rock elements and song structures, and perhaps more importantly, the integration of computer technology, samplers and sequencers.¹²⁸

David Bowie’s *Low* (1977) album, produced in collaboration with Tony Visconti and Brian Eno, was labelled by critics as ‘art-rock.’ However, retrospective reviews claim it would have been labelled ‘post-rock’ had the album been released today. What interests me in *Low*, more than anything, is its production aesthetics. The drums, for instance, are distorted and heavily processed with Eventide H910 Harmonizer, a ground-breaking technology for its time. Other points of interest include the ring modulator effects on *Speed of life* and the video-game-like noises of *What in the world*. Even for Bowie himself, the album ‘captured, unlike anything else in that time’. Undertones of retrofuturism and hauntology resonate throughout the album. As acknowledged by Bowie, the album captures ‘a sense of yearning for a future that we all knew would never come to pass’.¹²⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, considering the involvement of Eno, the second side of *Low* probes the ambient territory. The second side has always been of particular interest to me, superimposed analogue synthesisers on *Warszawa*, sound design elements of *Art Decade*, repetitive, Reich-like elements of *Weeping Wall*, and the harsh, unmistakable sound of the Solina string ensemble of *Subterranean* have all been a significant source of influence.

In contrast to Bowie’s exuberant persona, another British artist, the reclusive Mike Oldfield, have played a significant role in my formative years as a musician. Released in the same year as *Dark Side of the Moon* by Pink Floyd, *Tubular Bells* (1973) fully demonstrates the impact and spread of Minimalism that started in the US, and it was the first commercially successful use of minimalism in rock.¹³⁰ This,

¹²⁷ Reynolds, S. (1994). The ambient rock pool. *The Wire*, issue 123.

https://web.archive.org/web/20011202075606/http://www.thewire.co.uk/out/1297_4.htm

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ Snapes, L. (2016). David Bowie. *Low*. *Pitchfork*, 22.1.2016.

¹³⁰ Pendergast, *op. cit.*

of course, is in reference to the introductory passage that has since become synonymous with Mike Oldfield. In an interview, Oldfield has stated that the passage has ‘the complexity of Eastern music, the repetitiveness of Terry Riley and the technique of Bach’¹³¹.

The absence of lyrics, its structure having two elongated, ever-evolving episodic passages spanning either side of the vinyl have caught my imagination at the time and perhaps accounts for the album's long-lasting novelty value. Oldfield has created something unique for its time by twisting and bending genres into his own needs, seemingly with a complete disregard for the norms. Performing all the instruments himself, Oldfield has made extensive use of the multi-track tape recording systems, layering and stacking track after track. Having listened to this album throughout my teenage years, I was mesmerised by the intricate layering of instruments and how it all came together. Consequently, I tried to replicate this technique on my very first home recording attempts. This is worth mentioning because it is due to these attempts that I got familiar with computer-aided multi-track recording technologies, which ultimately allowed me to produce my music.

While the music of Pink Floyd does not particularly influence me, the album which came at the peak of their career *The Wall*, is of particular interest because of its similarities with *Paradise Lost*, especially its narrativity. Being historically and culturally established as an ‘artefact’, the concept albums of Pink Floyd have been the subject of many books and research topics.

Throughout their career, Pink Floyd’s increasingly conceptualised albums culminated in *The Wall*, arguably the epitome of a concept album and the culmination of the British prog-rock era. On countless accounts, it has been argued that *The Wall* has failed to deliver the success of its predecessor, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, and that it is the victim of its own weight. For Mike Barnes, the album represents a ‘monolithic, ugly and practically useless structure of a huge wall [...] [a] monument to the end of the Seventies’.¹³² It was also dismissed as a ‘personal

¹³¹ Irving, op. cit.

¹³² Barnes, M (2020). *A New Day Yesterday: UK Progressive Rock & the 1970s*. London: Omnibus Press

antagonism' of Roger Waters.¹³³ While *The Dark Side of The Moon*, could be considered a thematic album, with a theme proposed by Roger Waters: 'Insanity and catalysts – the demands of modern life: work, money, deadlines',¹³⁴ *The Wall* is on an entirely different level of depth.

The Wall is a narrative concept album, complete with characters and a narrative that unfolds across the album. It follows the growth and transformation of its central character, Pink. The narrative is presented in various flashbacks of Pink throughout his life. Album opener *In the Flesh?* starts with the death of his father during World War II that led Pink to build a metaphorical 'wall' around himself. Pink is further traumatised by abusive teachers and symbolises them being *Another Brick in The Wall* in his youth. The narrative proceeds to complete his metaphorical 'wall' and consequently his total isolation from the outside world. *Comfortably Numb* opens the final quarter of the album, where Pink is in a hallucinatory state. In *Show Must Go On*, he believes to be a fascist dictator on a Neo-Nazi rally, while in reality, he is on stage at a concert. Eventually, Pink is out of this hallucinatory state, and he destroys the metaphorical 'wall'.

Despite the genre and stylistic differences, there are many similarities between *The Wall* and *Paradise Lost*, particularly how the narrative is delivered. Both utilise some form of 'sound design' - reminiscent of film and television post-production. Roger Waters, together with producer Bob Ezrin captured the album's sound effects. These include recordings of a phone call, street ambiences, and television broadcasts, which help deliver the premise and set the album's tone. While this is nothing ground-breaking or genre-specific, it is a timeless and effective tool to deliver a message. However, this is where I believe *The Wall* falls short of *The Dark Side of The Moon*, because the effort comes across more than the material it tries to deliver.

It is no surprise that *The Wall* has been on various occasions being labelled as a 'rock opera': The delivery of its subject matter is nothing short of grandeur. One

¹³³ Pendergast, *op. cit.*

¹³⁴ Irving, *op. cit.*

can undoubtedly misinterpret the record as a soundtrack to theatrical work, a rock musical. The theatrical quality of the work is reinforced with the seamless transition of songs. This evokes a cinematic or a narrative element; as such, I utilised the same technique on *Paradise Lost* with the same intention. Other similarities include instrumental interludes interspersed between lyrical songs, offering pockets of lightly textured material in between contextually demanding sections.

On the narrative side, Pink's hallucinatory state is comparable to the final act of *Paradise Lost*, in which a similar hallucinatory state disorients the listener and dissolves the linearity of the narrative (this has been explained in detail in Chapter 4.6). I think such hallucinatory passages bring joy to the storyteller as they can be effective tools to be creative, both musically and narratively. One can compare this to the famous passage from Berlioz's *Symphony Fantastique*, where it can be assumed Berlioz himself had some fun with orchestrating a Guillotine effect. On another note, the narrative arch of *The Wall* has a cyclic nature, suggested by the very ending, with the words 'isn't this where...' and that the same musical material opens the album. This was how I devised *Paradise Lost*, following the cyclic nature of the monomyth story arch proposed by Joseph Campbell.

Across the other side of the Atlantic, the music of Steely Dan is perhaps best described as 70s rock-jazz with a distinctive L.A sound. The debut album of Donald Fagen, *The Nightfly*, can be considered a 'thematic concept album.' There is no overarching narrative but a theme that unifies the songs. The theme is derived from Fagen's childhood memories; growing up in the American suburbs in the late 50s, the Cold War paranoia, fallout shelters, and the promise of a better future and the American dream.¹³⁵ 'Undersea by rail, ninety minutes from New York to Paris' speculates Fagen, in *I.G.Y.*, with a sarcastic optimism. *The Nightfly* emanates with nostalgia, future optimism, and paranoia of the Cold War era.

Fagen's second solo album, *Kamakiriad*, borders on the principles of a concept album while never fully embracing them; it has a loosely structured narrative, suggestive of a mythical journey; it blends science fiction, nostalgia, romance and

¹³⁵ Irvin, *op. cit.*

presents it from the familiar dry wit of Donald Fagen's pen. Both *The Nightfly* and *Kamakiriad* have been a significant source of influence for me, mainly how Fagen dealt with nostalgia and retrofuturism.

Unlike *The Nightfly*, *Kamakiriad* has a narrative across the album, delivered by its lyrics and a short introductory paragraph within the liner notes. This paragraph is crucial in understanding the whole narrative arch, a particular journey told in the first person by its protagonist. The album's name is a fictional car brand (or model) named Kamakiri, a futuristic steam-powered vehicle with a vegetable garden in its trunk. The album narrates the protagonist's journey, driving his Kamakiri in a futuristic landscape, where 'each song is a charming detour or dangerous adventure along the way'.¹³⁶ The word Kamakiri is Japanese for praying mantis, suggesting a future reminiscent of *Blade Runner*, where 'dazzling Japanese technology is triumphant', and with a stretch of the imagination, a time when 'lust, violence and disenfranchisement are as common as ever'.¹³⁷

A first-time listener could hardly tell this album has conceptual intentions, especially if not paying attention to its cover art, track names or liner notes. Apart from the cover art depicting a dashboard of a Kamakiri, there is no reliance on non-musical elements to explain its storyworld. There are no instrumental interludes, use of speech, or the like, to expand or elaborate on the narrative. While this approach contradicts what I aimed to achieve in *Paradise Lost*, I was nevertheless inspired by its sardonic premise, the abundance of made-up technologies, and hilariously titled locations: Five Zoos, Lake Nostalgia, Laughing Pines, Good Time Flats, to name a few. The whole underlying premise resonates with a sense of quirky science fiction storytelling that does not take itself too seriously while at the same time managing to cram in 'private nostalgia' and optimism for the future.

In the first track *Trans-Island Skyway*, an imaginary location, Fagen paints an almost visual image of a futuristic car he has just been handed the keys of. Repetitive guitar textures remind one of an almost comical steam-powered

¹³⁶ Hoskyns, B. (2017). *Major Dudes: A Steely Dan Companion*. London: Constable.

¹³⁷ Himes, G. (1993). Fagen Does Dan. *The Washington Post*, August 1993 issue.

contraption, while the laidback, blues-inspired groove gives an impression of a care-free lifestyle and the kind of childlike joy one might experience with acquiring a new car. Like every journey, this is the protagonist's point of departure, and the song sets the tone, both musically and narratively, of what will follow. Here we are introduced to the protagonist and that he is about to embark on his journey.

In *Springtime*, Fagen vaguely implies a sci-fi machine of some sort, 'a spicy new attraction on the Funway' which 'scans yourself for the traces of old heartaches', possibly leading one to experience memories through this device. There are not many musical allusions to this idea, except at the beginning of the song; a slow introductory sequence leads abruptly to a faster pace for the rest of the song. This transition could be interpreted as a transition to the experience of a memory sequence. Fagen introduces us to a different romantic encounter in each verse, crafting a humorous sci-fi oriented track. This kind of musical allusions are plentiful in my own realisation of the present day/memory duality in *Paradise Lost*.

Tomorrow's Girls is inspired by the Philip K. Dick short story, *Second Variety*. While acknowledged as being one of the most influential sci-fi writers of the mid-twentieth century, Dick's oeuvre is also filled with short stories published in pulpy science fiction magazines of his time. This is just another reminder of the pulp-sci-fi inspiration that stems from Fagen's childhood. According to a Steely Dan biographer Brian Sweet, Fagen decided against the idea to link all the songs on the album in a musical way as he 'feared it would become pretentious.'¹³⁸ This notion demonstrates Fagen's lack of interest in building a thoroughly cohesive concept album. Ultimately, Fagen seems to enjoy the possibilities of a concept album up to a certain degree. The fact that he is consciously drawing the line during the construction of his themes and how they relate to the music itself demonstrates his reluctance to explore new avenues in which the album format can be delivered. Even though Fagen explored some form of narrativity within *Kamakiriad*, he is content with the understanding of albums being a collection of songs and not much else.

¹³⁸ Sweet, B. (2016). *Steely Dan: Reeling in The Years*. Omnibus Press.

Moreover, Fagen states that ‘videos just make the listener a passive spectator’, eliminating any image that could be conjured inside the listeners' minds. ‘I used to love radio and records’, he declares, ‘they made the listener an active participant’. While these statements justify his reluctance to expand or elaborate the world of *Kamakiriad*, nevertheless, I cannot help but feel that it was a missed opportunity to realise the vivid, hilariously imaginative storyworld of *Kamakiriad* across different forms of media.

Table 2.2 below summarises the artists, albums, genres, and how they were influential in the creation of *Paradise Lost*.

Table 2.2 Albums and genres influential to Paradise Lost

| Artist | Album | Genre | Influence on <i>Paradise Lost</i> |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Vangelis | Blade Runner | Ambient/Electronica | Deeply electronic but emanates a sense of ‘emotion over machine’. Individualistic sound world. |
| Disasterpeace | Hyper Light Drifter | Ambient/Electronica | Hauntology. A sense of digital rust and deterioration. |
| Air | Le Voyage Dans La Lune | Downtempo/Electronica | Technostalgia and retrofuturism Use of vintage synthesizers in a new language. |
| Mike Oldfield | Tubular Bells | Folk-rock | A sense of journey. Disregard genre-specific norms. Layering of instruments. |
| David Bowie | Low | Art rock / Post-rock | Experimental rock, with hints of ambient music. |
| Pink Floyd | The Wall | Prog rock | Elaborate narrative with characters. Instrumental interludes between songs. Transmediality (<i>The Wall</i> movie). |
| Donald Fagen | Kamakiriad | Jazz rock | Retrofuturism. Quirky sci-fi theme and narrative. Simple song structures. |

Chapter 3 : Composition and production methods

'New is meaningful only in reference to the old. Original thought does not exist in a vacuum.'

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The key elements of my compositional method are (a) blending analogue and digital technologies, (b) studio experimentation to generate musical material, (c) assembling the recorded material, and (d) collaborating with an audio engineer, wherever necessary, to finalise the project. This list also serves as the chronology of my production process. This chapter illustrates this process using my portfolio piece *Paradise Lost*, discussing its relationship between music technology, creativity, and nostalgia.

3.1 Studio as an instrument

My area of work lies within the recorded music medium, where the master recording is the definitive document of the work. When comparing recorded music with live music, Brian Eno stated that recorded music 'takes music out of time dimension and puts it in the space dimension' and he adds that 'the effect of this on the composer is that he can think in terms of supplying material that would actually be too subtle for a first listening'.¹³⁹ I utilize such subtleties to convey a sense of nostalgia through a subconscious level, which is the primary goal of *Paradise Lost*.

Typically, music recording and production is a collaborative venture involving performers, composers, engineers, and a producer. Burgess classifies music producers into six 'subset typologies' but adds that the categories are not to be

¹³⁹ Eno, B. (2004) The studio as compositional tool. In: C. Cox and D. Warner (eds.). *Audio Culture. Readings in Modern Music*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 127-130.

taken as ‘buckets which all producers are identical’.¹⁴⁰ Burgess’ producer archetypes can also be considered a scale that measures the producer’s duties, from absolute control to advisory. Coming from a classical music background, I later evolved into being a self-producer,¹⁴¹ in the same vein as, for example, Kevin Parker (Tame Impala), Mac Demarco, Ariel Pink and John Maus.

Regarding Burgess’ producer archetypes, my approach to production is at the ‘absolute control’ end of the spectrum. I think this approach is akin to a classical composer striving to control every aspect of his or her work, from the minuscule performance detail on the score to, in the case of composer-conductor, preparing a piece of music for a performance or recording. For years, I controlled every aspect of my work, from composing to recording and mixing. However, this does not mean that I do not collaborate with other musicians, engineers or use professional recording studios if the need arises. Indeed, to produce *Paradise Lost*, I collaborated with session musicians, recorded live instruments in a studio, and employed a professional audio engineer. In such a production method, Albin Zak points out that duties often merge and overlap: ‘A vocalist may reshape the work of a songwriter through improvised embellishments. A mixing engineer can affect a track’s arrangement simply by manipulating the equalisation and loudness controls on the mixing console’.¹⁴²

Furthermore, I took an active role during the recording and mixing of the album, often overlapping with the engineer’s duties. This method provided me with the best of both worlds; the comfort of working in my home studio, at the same time, taking advantage of a professional recording studio and the technical knowledge of a professional engineer. Any attempt to categorise the duties of the involving parties is not ideal, as both Burgess and Zak observe.

¹⁴⁰ Burgess, R. J. (2013). *The Art of Music Production. The Theory and Practice*. Fourth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. The six subset typologies are: Self-producer, Auteur, Facilitative, Collaborative, Enablative and Consultative.

¹⁴¹ Burgess uses the term ‘artist’ instead, but this is not as descriptive a term, at least within this context. For Burgess, this type of producer is on the rise because of the ease of access to digital recording technology. In short, ‘artist archetype’ is someone who writes, produces and performs his/her own work.

¹⁴² Zak III, A. J. (2001). *The Poetics of Rock. Cutting Tracks, Making Records*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

My compositional method has its roots in what Brian Eno calls ‘in-studio composition’, a process where I piece together the music inside my DAW (digital audio workstation). It is a process that relies on experimentation and happy accidents, with minor to none-prior planning. When Eno spoke about this method in 1979, such a concept was relatively new. It should be noted that producer Joe Meek is one of the first to utilize ‘studio as an instrument’ as early as the 1950s; however, this method did not have a mainstream reach until recording equipment became more affordable. Today, this method is common practice, mainly due to the advent and ease of access to personal computers and the amount of available music-making tools from samplers, software synthesisers, and audio manipulation plugins. My compositional process exploits the ease of access to such tools. I spend a great deal of time discovering and learning new hardware or software to help me achieve the specific needs of a project.

3.2 ‘Happy Accidents’

Experimentation is undoubtedly a great tool for sonic innovation and one that is at the heart of electronic music production. Signal processors, effect units and synthesizers with their numerous knobs, buttons, inputs and outputs, are almost calling out for being experimented with. It is this inspiring feeling and the tactile nature of the hardware instruments that spark my creativity and guide me towards generating musical material. During such experiments, it is inevitable for the composer to experience serendipity. Many examples exist in the history of studio-driven music production where a vital component of a song came out of pure chance, a ‘happy accident’.¹⁴³ In her book *Recording Unhinged*,¹⁴⁴ Sylvia Massy states that a surprisingly large amount of ‘popular music is peppered with what were originally thought of as mistakes, later recognised as genius’. For example, on the hit record *Roxanne* by The Police, Sting accidentally sat on a piano keyboard

¹⁴³ The exact origin of the term is unknown. Bob Ross seems to have popularised the term through his instructional TV series *The Joy of Painting*.

¹⁴⁴ Massy, S. (2016). *Recording Unhinged: Creative and Unconventional Music Recording Techniques*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard.

resulting in a faint cluster of sound and him laughing at the fact. This mistake was preserved in the final recording, and the laughter became the iconic opener of the song. In another example, the famous ‘gated reverb’ drum sound of Phil Collins was achieved by pure chance while the engineers were getting themselves familiarised with a brand-new recording console.

Apart from sonic results, whole new sections of songs can be born out of serendipity. For example, while I was recording the drum parts of *Alive Again*, the drummer misunderstood my instructions and began playing on a section that he was not supposed to. The extended coda starting of the piece results from this ‘happy accident’ in the studio. Originally this section was planned to be much shorter and without drums, bass, and vocals. In another case, I wanted to use a real theremin on the track *Init. Sequence*. Due to practical reasons, I tried to mimic the theremin sound using a Moog synthesizer instead. This approach ultimately did not create satisfactory results. While experimenting in the studio, I came up with the idea to perform the same part with a fretless guitar using an e-bow. The resultant sound ended up being reminiscent of a theremin in a way that sounded more organic to me.

I relate serendipity to the experience of a vivid dream. Just like the way dreams conjure imagery that is otherwise not readily available to our conscious thoughts, serendipity can lead one to think ‘out of the box’. Surrealist painters, such as Dali, explored similar approaches to stimulate their creativity. Brian Eno’s Oblique Strategies cards are another example.¹⁴⁵ By its very nature, serendipity cannot be summoned at will. To counter this, I tried to create a situation where it most likely could occur. An example of such a situation is the use (and abuse) of signal processors or effects modules beyond their intended purpose. Kevin Parker (Tame Impala) utilizes a similar approach, where he connects guitar pedals in the order they were not meant to for sonic exploration. Being open to the creative input of the collaborating musicians is another way of achieving serendipity, as was the case

¹⁴⁵ Developed by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt, Oblique Strategies uses cards to promote creativity by offering a restriction on each card.

with *Alive Again*. I am always intrigued by the appearance of such unpredictable events and seek a way to incorporate the results into my music.

While there are many advantages of today's digital technology, such as the almost limitless potential of alternate takes and an unprecedented ability to alter these takes posthumously, these advantages also come with a price. Contrary to analogue recordings, virtual instruments or synthesizers offer an unmatched level of editing potential via MIDI. However, I often feel the urge to continually alter the music to the point that it distracts my creative flow. Accordingly, I prefer to record audio directly into DAW without the possibility of further MIDI editing. In this way, I maintain my creative flow, eliminating the often needless tampering with the MIDI editor.

Furthermore, I am against MIDI quantisation (i.e., snapping notes to the grid). Within electronic music productions, I believe quantisation gets rid of what little human element is left. Despite seemingly counterproductive, given the benefits of modern recording technologies, I think these approaches reinforce the element of unpredictability and the human factor. Perhaps more importantly, repetitive MIDI editing, for me, hinders the decision-making process, often ending up with countless takes and alternative versions. Over the years, I have developed the habit of capturing as few performances as possible and committing to one of them. This is evident on the *Mesaoria by Dawn*, where I captured the essential element of the track, the Moog synthesizer performance, in a single take. I started the recording and, at the same time, was trying out different sounds on the Moog synthesizer. What followed was a free-form performance only meant to be a demo recording. Pleased with the natural way the performance turned out, I decided to keep it and avoid any further takes.

On the contrary, the distorted Rhodes lead solo in *Long Lost* is a combination of many takes. This method does not always work and often leads to a creative dead-end. Searching for alternative ideas and takes can be a creative pitfall, sometimes to the extent that the entire production could come to a halt. This was the case of many Becker and Fagen's Steely Dan records, who are known to be notoriously meticulous and demanding in the studio.

3.3 Nostalgia for analogue instruments

Paradise Lost blends electronic and acoustic instruments, emphasising vintage synthesizers such as Solina string ensemble, Korg MS-20 and Moog Voyager, and signal processors such as Lexicon reverb, Roland space echo, and Eventide H910 harmoniser. For me, technostalgia for vintage gear does not necessarily mean getting back to a particular past or an aim for mere nostalgia. What fascinates me is the seemingly endless ability of analogue instruments to fashion new and exciting sounds and their superimposition with digital technologies to achieve a retrofuturistic sound world, which was not possible decades ago. Apart from experimenting with my recording techniques, I have also employed specific sound manipulation techniques by early electronic music pioneers. For example, on *Init. Sequence*, a technique known as ‘shimmer’¹⁴⁶ is applied to the piano, which Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois jointly pioneered.¹⁴⁷

I have never preferred to use software approximations of real synthesizers, partly because software lacks the psychological effect of touching and feeling, a phenomenon known as the ‘credibility gap’.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, I have always found the limitations of a synthesizer or a sampler to be inspiring rather than limiting. This is another reason that I am against using software synthesizers, where there can be an overwhelming amount of pre-made sounds to browse, often resulting in losing the creative moment. However, there have been a few exceptions. For example, I use Omnisphere¹⁴⁹ to access sampled instruments, such as kalimba, the classic tape sampler Mellotron,¹⁵⁰ for its distinctive and eerie flute sample,¹⁵¹ and the software recreation of the first digital sampler, the Fairlight CMI, for its low fidelity sampling engine. Most electronic instruments from the 80’s and 90’s attempt at some form or the other to mimic acoustic instruments. If

¹⁴⁶ This technique is achieved by a combination of FX plugins including pitch shift, delay and reverb; routed and set to specific configurations.

¹⁴⁷ Sterne, *op.cit.*

¹⁴⁸ Kaiser, C. (2017). Analog Distinction – Music production processes and social inequality. *Journal on the Art of Record Production*, Issue 11.

¹⁴⁹ Omnisphere is a sampler-synthesizer hybrid.

¹⁵⁰ Developed in 1963, Mellotron is an electro-mechanical tape sampler. Mellotron became obsolete by 1980’s, mainly due to the arrival of more advanced synthesizers.

¹⁵¹ Immortalized by The Beatles in the opening of ‘Strawberry fields forever’

we look at the default sound patches that come with Yamaha DX-7, one can see that most of its patches are named after acoustic instruments: Piano, guitar, flute, organ, etc. This is primarily the case with the synthesizers of this era and prior. Even for an untrained ear, these samples sound decidedly unconvincing. When I use these instruments today, in an era where there is an abundance of realistic software samplers, I use them for their distinct and recognisable tone. For me, these instruments have since become unique and not a mere imitation of the acoustic instruments they were designed to be. Moreover, they inherently resonate a sense of nostalgia, for they are the instruments used to shape the music of the past decades.

The process of generating complex and evolving sounds out of the basic sound of a synthesizer is a vital element of my production method. With various processing and effects chains, I depart from their original sound in search of unique sounds, usually without planning or knowing where I would end up. Solina string ensemble is perhaps the most frequently used synthesizer throughout *Paradise Lost*. I find its bright tone with rich harmonics a perfect starting point to alter and generate various pad-like evolving sounds.

I have also used acoustic and electroacoustic instruments, such as Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer, Pianet, Clavinet, guitars, and drums. The sounds of some of these instruments were extensively manipulated in ways that rendered them unrecognisable. In *Init. Sequence*, the use of e-bow on a fretless guitar made it sound more like a theremin instead. For drums, I have used a wide range of effects, such as ‘flanger’ for the overhead microphones (*Memory Initialized*); a guitar amp simulator with a built-in step sequencer for the snare drum (*Worn by Them All*); and a bit-reducer effect for the room microphones (*Vorticon Invasion*). Though the drums maintain much of their recognisable sound character, I intended to alter its sound in subtle ways and introduce more dramatic alterations as needed, such as supporting the narrative content of the songs.

Texturally, my music has always been on the opposite side of the ‘less is more’ approach. This is evident in my method of extensive superimposition of acoustic and electronic instruments. In *Alive Again*, the string arrangements are doubled with a glockenspiel-like sound and a synth pad. In *Worn by Them All*, the principal

melody is shared by piano, synthesizer, bass guitar, electric guitar (with rotary speaker effect) and Mellotron flute. Though the piano is in the foreground in the latter, the rest of the instruments blend to create a distinctive sound which could only be achieved with such superimposition.

Another example is the distinct percussive sound of the lower range of Rhodes when played with extreme pressure. This is illustrated in *Wait for Me*, in what sounds like a single layer is a combination of three layers; piano with a phaser effect, two Rhodes panned left and right and bass guitar. As a result, each instrument lost its distinctive timbre, though collectively obtaining a new one as a result. Through this method, I aim for complex timbral colours comparable to Phil Spector's production style, otherwise known as the 'wall of sound'.¹⁵² As an example from *Paradise Lost, Alive Again* is extensively overdubbed and textured, taking over 80 tracks inside the DAW (Figure 3.1).

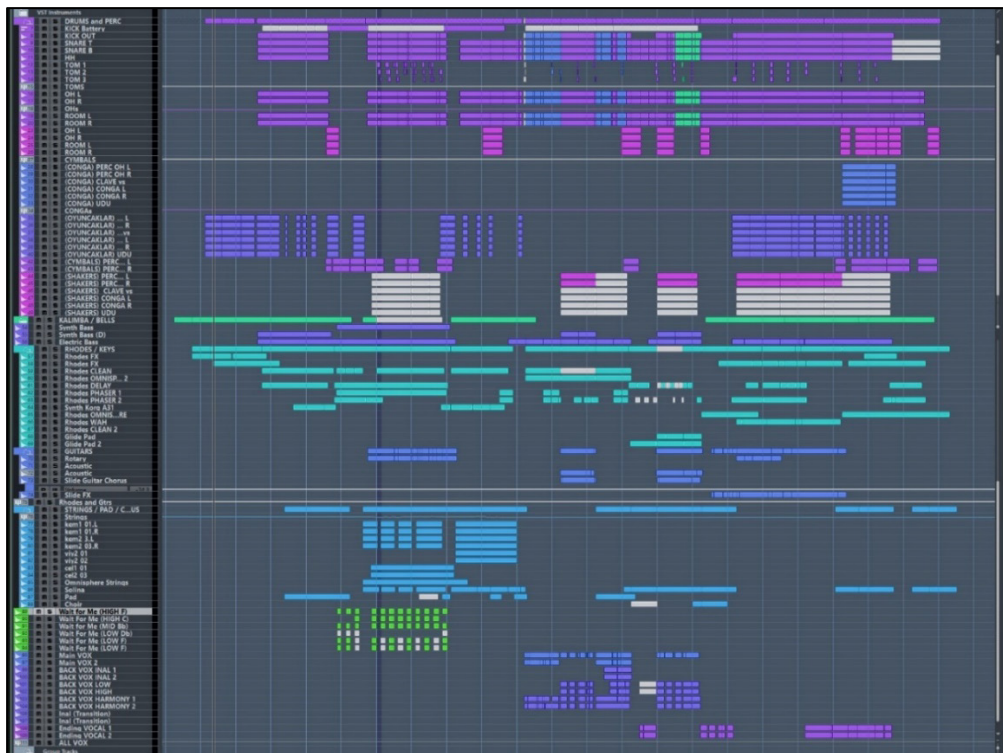


Figure 3.1 Cubase arrangement window of *Alive Again*.

¹⁵² 'Wall of sound' is constructed by overdubbing a melodic line with multiple instruments. This was then fed to an echo chamber to further enlarge the body of sound.

3.4 Nostalgia for analogue ‘colour’

Although mainly dependent on the context, ‘colour’ is a term that refers to specific sonic properties of a sound, particularly its timbre, which is determined by the overtone content of a given sound. Each orchestral instrument, for instance, has a unique ‘tone colour’. In another case, a classical orchestrator uses doublings of several instruments to obtain different ‘orchestral colours’. In music production, analogue gear such as compressors and EQs add ‘colour’ to the sound.¹⁵³ In essence, these devices alter the harmonic content of a given sound.

Another term used in the same context is ‘saturation’. A signal is saturated if it is altered in such a way to exaggerate its overtones or if new ones are added altogether. In audio recording technologies, any device or software plugin that adds colour to the signal is non-linear, and anything that does not add colour is named linear (transparent). Finally, analogue signal processors, such as compressors and limiters, alter the signal's frequency content as a by-product of their archaic technology. This is sometimes named ‘analogue warmth’ or simply ‘warmth’. Some of my research has been directed towards learning the use of such non-linear recording technologies to incorporate their by-products (warmth, saturation, etc.) into my music.

Many of today’s engineers believe that recording to tape yields more desirable results than recording directly to digital (i.e., recording inside a DAW). In simplest terms, analogue tape ‘softens’ the transients¹⁵⁴ and adds ‘hiss’ and a subtle ‘tone’ to the overall sound character.¹⁵⁵ Sexton argues that such noises can sometimes be seen as a hauntological strategy, in that it ‘signals decay and deterioration and can lend sounds a rather uncanny air’.¹⁵⁶ Recording to tape also allows some creative uses. If an input signal to tape reaches slightly higher than it should, the captured

¹⁵³ Robjohns, H. (2010). Analogue Warmth. The sound of tubes, tape and transformers. *Sound on Sound*, February 2010.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Dittmar, T. A. (2012). Audio Engineering 101. *A Beginner’s Guide to Music Production*. New York: Focal Press.

¹⁵⁶ Sexton, *op. cit.*

audio becomes ‘saturated’, in other words, slightly distorted in a desirable way. However, some argue that tape saturation is an artefact of misuse.¹⁵⁷

One of my initial plans for the recording of *Paradise Lost*, which was later cancelled, was to transfer a preliminary multi-channel mix of the whole album to analogue tape and bounce it back to the digital platform for the final mixing stage. I was convinced that this could reinforce the retrofuturistic aesthetics of the album, the marriage of old and new, albeit subtly. Although recording to analogue tape can be considered an obsolete technology, it most certainly has been rediscovered by many artists or bands for its unique tone colour, and sometimes, for its limitations. On recording *A Moon Shaped Pool* (2016), Radiohead band member John Greenwood commented that the restrictive nature of 8 or 16 track tape machines stimulated their creativity.¹⁵⁸ On the same issue, Brad Wood states that tape's limitations and structure are the ingredient missing from digital recordings.¹⁵⁹ As another example, Eric Valentine employs a hybrid setup where he captures a performance digitally and to tape simultaneously. Mac Demarco, a ‘bedroom auteur’ built his recognisable style and production method on tape technology.¹⁶⁰ We can conclude that modern producers and engineers still utilise tape technology, either entirely or in a digital-tape hybrid setup.

With similar ambition, I tried to look for a usable tape machine in Cyprus but discovered that most of the ones I found have been in use or maintained. I intended to mix and match high-quality tapes with used and deteriorated tapes. Perhaps use the deteriorated tapes as an effect for a few of the stems and have the new tapes record the essential stems, such as drums and vocals. However, I realized that any creative use of multi-track tape recorders would require full-time access to such a device and a great deal of time to experiment on, which I did not have.

¹⁵⁷ See for example Aaron Staniulis: In Defense of Digital: What You Actually Miss About Analog Tape. Available online: <http://blog.sonicbids.com/in-defense-of-digital-what-you-actually-miss-about-analog-tape>

¹⁵⁸ Brennan, C. (2016). Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood talks A Moon Shaped Pool on NPR podcast. <https://consequenceofsound.net/2016/08/radioheads-jonny-greenwood-talks-a-moon-shaped-pool-on-npr-podcast/>

¹⁵⁹ Massy, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁰ Berke, B., Mamana, J. (2017). Mac DeMarco: Varispeed and Beyond. *Tape Op*, Issue No. 120. <https://tapeop.com/articles/120/mac-demarco/>

However, even if I managed to find a working tape machine, most multi-track tape machines can only record up to 24 independent channels, which posed a problem for me. From multiple microphone setups of a drum set to dozens of overdubbed vocals, the number of tracks that make up a song can be well over 24 channels. With my engineer, we devised a plan to bounce like-sounding instruments into ‘stems’ to reduce the total number of tracks, a standard procedure since the beginning of the tape era. For someone who grew up in ‘the limitless undo culture’¹⁶¹ of the digital age, this was a terrifying prospect for me, as there would be no turning back for any fine-tuning. For this reason, I decided against recording directly to tape. We estimated that the sonic differences would be too subtle even for an educated ear to justify such a one-way commitment.¹⁶² After some research, I decided to use Slate Digital’s plugin Virtual Tape Machines (Figure 3.2),¹⁶³ a digital alternative that imitates the qualities of tape recording. We ended up using the plugin extensively throughout the mixing stage, particularly on the drums and the entire master bus. Ultimately, I failed to experience the creative potential of tape but have utilised its most important aspects through the software recreation; its unique tone, the way it shapes transients and the high-end while having the option to introduce tape hiss in the amount desired.

¹⁶¹ Douglas, J. (2018). Studio etiquette: everything your engineer wants you to know but is afraid to say. *Tape Op*, Issue No 128.

¹⁶² Since we would have to reduce the number of tracks down to 24, bouncing multiple tracks to stereo stems in the process, we would only have control over those 24 channels, and not to the individual tracks that were bounced together. This was, quite literally, a terrifying prospect for me, and as much as I liked to use real tape technology, I had to abandon the idea.

¹⁶³ The reel-to-reel tapes are animated that look like the tapes are spinning. It is interesting to see the extent to which these companies go to make the experience as authentic as it can possibly be inside the digital realm.



Figure 3.2 Slate Digital - Virtual Tape Machines.
(source: <https://www.slatedigital.com/virtual-tape-machines/>)

3.5 Software and plugins

The primary software I use to create music is Cubase, which is a typical DAW. Although each DAW may come with its own set of vital mixing tools, such as equalisers and compressors, numerous third-party plugins often surpass the quality and scope of the inbuilt ones. In short, these plugins imitate the operation and sometimes even the look of common mixing and recording equipment (as can be seen in Figure 3.1). I believe that the choice of plugins is almost as essential as the choice of instruments. When carefully done, the combination of plugins that are used gives an album its distinctive sound.

There has been a steady increase in the popularity of emulating outdated studio equipment in the form of digital plugins. The debate regarding the quality of these plugins compared to their hardware counterparts seems to have subsided in the last decade, particularly due to the increased quality of plugins. However, most high-end studios are still reluctant to switch to an all-digital workflow. Hardware such as Fairchild 660 and Teletronix LA-2A is still sought after by major studios, despite being expensive to obtain and maintain. On the other hand, the steady growth of plugins has provided professionals and home studios the only access to otherwise

inaccessible devices.¹⁶⁴ Plugins offer similar sonic results with no maintenance, and they cost only a fraction of the actual device. It is a trade-off most engineers are willing to take. For example, during my correspondence with Bob Katz,¹⁶⁵ who mastered *Paradise Lost*, I realised that he too preferred the use of plugins in conjunction with a limited number of hardware signal processors.

There are a few plugins that I have used extensively throughout the album, to the point that their sound characteristics became a key ingredient of the album. One of these plugins is Valhalla vintage verb, a reverb plugin that takes inspiration from vintage algorithmic reverb units. This plugin perfectly captures what I like a reverb processor to sound like a combination of realism and ‘otherworldliness’. The use of reverb is a fundamental aspect of mixing. While stereo panning establishes the location of a sound on a two-dimensional plane, reverb adds the third dimension by introducing distance. From a historical perspective, the initial use of reverb was to add depth in a realistic manner, such as imitating the reverberation of a large hall. In my methods, and generally in modern music productions, it is common to use reverb more freely, often aiming for unrealistic results in favour of creativity and innovation.

Reverberation technologies are in two distinct categories, algorithmic and convolution. The former relies on mathematical equations to calculate and reproduce a synthetic reverberation, and the latter derives reverb from the impulse response of a room, achieving more realistic results. The two have their advantages and disadvantages and, consequently, have different uses. Although it will be explained in more detail in the next chapter, I have exploited these differences as a storytelling device to differentiate between the two distinct sound worlds of *Paradise Lost*.

¹⁶⁴ For example, the highly valued vintage limiter LA-2A has been recreated and brought to the digital realm by such companies as Waves, Cakewalk, Native Instruments and UAD. The mere fact that so many different companies have gone through the effort to recreate this dated device demonstrates the level of demand to such hardware.

¹⁶⁵ Katz is a three times Grammy winning mastering engineer and a scholar. He proposed K-Stereo, an alternative method of measuring audio levels; wrote a popular book on audio mastering and played an important role in standardizing audio levels across music streaming services.

Another plugin that I have used extensively is Roland's famous tape delay machine: RE-201 Space Echo.¹⁶⁶ Like other vintage equipment, RE-201 has been modelled as a digital plugin by many plugin companies. Two of these recreations are the UAD Galaxy Tape Echo plugin and Boss RE-20, a hardware imitation in the form of a guitar pedal. For practicality, I used the pedal if I needed a hands-on approach, such as manual automation, or the plugin if I needed to sync the delay's tempo with the song.

3.6 Role of the audio engineer

Mixing is an integral part of my composition process. While I usually mix my work, I chose to collaborate with an engineer on *Paradise Lost*. Working with an engineer is comparable to handing a score to a conductor; the composer loses a certain amount of control over how the material is ultimately realised. This is an effect that Eno describes as 'transmission lost'.¹⁶⁷ Continuing with this analogy, consider this scenario: A composer who does not have the privilege (or the desire) to be the conductor himself needs to be fluent with the language of the conductor for efficient collaboration. If the composer is not sufficiently experienced with performance practices or absent during the rehearsals, the conductor undoubtedly takes the liberty to interpret the music as they see fit. Thus, there are several 'transmission' losses from the initial idea on paper to its delivery to the audience. In my experience as a composer-producer, I have found that to ensure precise control over the material and minimise the 'transmission losses', I needed to learn some studio terminology, basic knowledge of mixing and be informed of conventional studio equipment for an accurate translation of my often abstract, or descriptive ideas. As a bonus, this type of information can lead to creative experimentation, as was the case during *Paradise Lost's* production.

¹⁶⁶ Tape delays are bulky devices that require occasional maintenance and are somewhat cumbersome for practical use. The tape that runs inside deteriorates over time, not to mention the many intricate rotary components that are prone to inevitable failure.

¹⁶⁷ Eno, *op. cit.*

Even though an artist may strive to take total control over the material, from its inception to recording and eventually mixing, working with an engineer is ultimately a collaboration. Both parties must be on the same page from the start. Emre Yazgin carried out the recording and mixing of *Paradise Lost*. I specifically chose to work with him as we had a history of earlier collaborations, including my first album.¹⁶⁸ Also, my choice was guided by the fact that we have a mutual interest in specific production aesthetics, such as the choice of studio equipment to be used and various mixing decisions. This kind of partnership is described by Albin Zak as an ‘alter ego partnership’ where ‘both parties working on different aspects of the same picture’.¹⁶⁹

Fundamentally, an audio engineer is someone who mixes a record. His primary role is to assemble the recorded material into a coherent and balanced result (mixing), determine which microphones to use, adjust their positions, and record instruments in the studio (tracking). The contribution of engineers on a record, however transparent, as it may seem, cannot be underestimated. According to David Beer, engineers are ‘concealed agents’, who make ‘often unknown contributions to the sonic properties of culture’.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Beer points out that the engineer lives a ‘precarious double life’, juggling between ‘an artistic sensibility’ and technical know-how. In that sense, engineers are also translators between ‘creative ideas’ and ‘technical decisions’.¹⁷¹ However, it is safe to assume that a fair amount of information can be lost during this translation. Ultimately, it is the composer's responsibility to be well informed of studio equipment and terminology to ensure a more accurate translation of his ideas.

¹⁶⁸ *A new beginning*. Recorded in 2009, released in 2019 through Epic Istanbul, a division of Sony Music Turkey.

¹⁶⁹ Zak III, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁰ Beer, D. (2014) The precarious double life of the recording engineer, *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol.18, No. 3, 189-202.

¹⁷¹ Douglas, *op. cit.*

3.7 Production process

Table 3.3 illustrates the initial planning of the various production stages of *Paradise Lost* in chronological order. The production of *Paradise Lost* started with a preliminary visualisation stage, where the concept of the album and its general direction was established. I planned an approximate overall length by working out a basic plan for the whole album. The mood, general artistic direction, the choice of instruments and software plugins were also considered.

The initial direction and the goal were to create a story-driven album with an overarching sense of nostalgia. I strived to establish nostalgia as an omnipresent element throughout the production that would eventually translate to the finished work, both directly and indirectly. Accordingly, one of the first things I did was to delve into my childhood belongings, hoping to find some inspiration from any object, for example, pictures, writings, and sometimes even toys. I was convinced that this would put me into a nostalgic state of mind, one that could potentially influence my creative output. Some objects that stood out were a cassette tape filled with my childhood voice, a toy telephone, and a toy musical keyboard. At first, I did not know what to do with them but have ultimately found a way to incorporate them into my compositions in ways explained in the next chapter.

As the goal of *Paradise Lost* is to infuse a feeling of nostalgia on a subconscious level, every aspect of the album is planned to serve this purpose, even such technical aspects as mixing and mastering. Prior to the recording and mixing, a few general aesthetic and technical decisions were made. I wanted to achieve low fidelity aesthetics, characterised by the inferior analogue recording and playback equipment compared to their high-quality digital counterparts. Although low fidelity aesthetics can be achieved, for example, by inserting a vinyl emulator to the master bus, I was aiming for quite the opposite approach. Instead, I wanted to obtain low fidelity characteristics by accumulating non-linear signal processors applied to each constituent or layer of a given song. I also wanted to use compression infrequently and sparingly. I am firmly against the hyper-compression aesthetics that seems to be the norm of most modern productions, including, but not limited to, pop and electronic dance music. Finally, I needed a dynamic mix and

Table 3.1 Initial planning of the production stages of Paradise Lost.

| | Task | Notes |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Inception | Musical drafts, ideas, sketches |
| 2 | Tracking | Studio recordings and experimentation |
| 3 | Assembling | Assembling recorded material at home studio |
| 4 | Additional tracking | Additional tracking at home studio |
| 5 | Preliminary mixes | Pre-mixes as a reference for the mixing engineer |
| 6 | First mix draft | First mix draft |
| 7 | Second mix draft | Second mix draft with corrections |
| 8 | Final mixes | Final corrections, where necessary |
| 9 | Mastering | Final mixes are sent to the mastering engineer |

mastering to maintain the fluctuating dynamics of the songs within the album. The purpose of this was to achieve a similar dynamism of a film, which, I believed, could help reinforce the cinematic intentions of the album. At the beginning of the compositional process, I completed approximately twenty compositional drafts entirely within a software environment. Some of these drafts had only a simple chord progression without a formal structure, yet others had a textural approach, lacking harmonic progression. At this early stage, I approached the process as intuitively as possible, hoping to capture whatever musical material resided within my subconscious, especially in the immediate aftermath of delving into my childhood belongings. The resultant musical materials, however incomplete, were brought to the recording studio for further experimentation, possibly altering the initial direction of the material.

The tracking stage began in stage two. I collaborated with various musicians to record drums, bass guitar and vocals. The parts mainly were structured beforehand and communicated to the performers with a score or sometimes verbal fashion. At this stage, I maintained an open mind for any experimentation that could arise with the input of the musicians. At this point, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the sample-based strings that I used on some of the pieces. While I use Solina extensively, a synthesizer that imitates a string ensemble (unconvincingly at that), I use it for its distinctive colour, not for its realism. Around midway through the tracking stage, I decided to incorporate a live string ensemble instead of using sample-based strings. Whole new strings arrangements were suddenly needed, which halted the tracking stage. With the engineer's recommendation, I hired a studio and a small ensemble in Istanbul and recorded the arrangements. The subtle nuances, the imperfections, and the human factor of an actual ensemble had drastically changed the mood of the songs. Though using orchestral samples have become quite the norm, especially in TV and cinema productions, working with an authentic ensemble proved to me, once again, how invaluable authenticity can sometimes be.

Once the entire studio recordings were completed, the project files were brought to my home studio. I assembled the material inside my DAW and finalised the formal structures of the pieces. I had also recorded additional synthesiser parts. At this stage, I felt the benefit of the 'best of both worlds' approach, having done some of the more demanding recordings at a professional studio. I returned to my home studio to assemble the material, where I took as much time as I needed to perform and record the synthesizer parts without time constraints.

At the end of this stage, I prepared a preliminary mix to demonstrate my aesthetic approach to the engineer who would conduct the final mix. After a few meetings, we created a draft mix of the whole album before giving a short break to help us return to the project with fresh ears. After this short break, I listened to the album extensively and wrote a list of corrections and alterations. After amending these corrections, I took another short break to refresh my ears in preparation for another list of corrections to identify whether anything slipped past my attention on the first round. Once I was happy with the mixes, the files were sent for mastering.

Audio mastering can be likened to the polishing stage of car manufacturing: It is the final stage of the production, and it can either enhance what is already good or emphasise its low points. How the material is handled is usually left to the discretion of the mastering engineer. However, to maintain total control over the material, a composer must know what mastering is and what can (and cannot) be expected from a mastering engineer. The common concept of mastering is to maintain the balance of audio levels across a collection of tracks and increase their perceived loudness on par with the target levels of the desired genre or platform (CD or online streaming). A mastering engineer does not usually take the liberty to tamper with the creative aspects of the work unless otherwise instructed, although this is dependent mainly on the work principles and aesthetic values of the mastering engineer. During my research, I studied the tasks of the mastering engineer and searched for an appropriate engineer for my particular needs. Ultimately, I decided to work with Bob Katz, not only because he is an influential and authoritative voice in the world of audio engineering but more so because of his roster of works, including mainly classical and jazz albums. Therefore, choosing the right engineer for the job is a determinant of the results.

In classical music, for example, it is expected to maintain the dynamics of the recorded music, which is the opposite of what is expected from, for example, pop and mainstream music. Usually, the perceived loudness needs to be the same throughout an album, which is sometimes obtained at the mixing stage and further tweaked at the mastering stage. Unless otherwise stated, a mastering engineer usually assumes this is the desired result. In my case, I had explicitly asked to maintain the dynamics of the album. This was a deliberate decision to emphasise the cinematic aspect, inspired by the type of audio mastering done for film, which, like classical music, maintains a vast range of dynamics throughout.

Chapter 4 : Commentary on *Paradise Lost*

'Everything is destined to reappear as simulation. Landscapes as photography, woman as the sexual scenario, thoughts as writing, terrorism as fashion and the media, events as television. Things seem only to exist by virtue of this strange destiny. You wonder whether the world itself isn't just here to serve as advertising copy in some other world.'

Jean Baudrillard

4.1 Overview

Paradise Lost comprises twenty pieces built around a story that takes its inspiration from nostalgia, science fiction, mythology, escapism, the nature of memories and the perception of reality. These diverse concepts unfold across multiple media types, including booklets, web pages, illustrative graphics, and videos. Taking inspiration from transmediality and worldbuilding, I refer to the process as 'creating small worlds,' which invites the listener to comprehend the storyworld through music and the material found on various media. In this chapter, the constituent building blocks of *Paradise Lost* are presented in the following headings:

- 1. Historical Context:** To familiarize the reader with a brief history of Cyprus, focusing on matters that relate to *Paradise Lost*.
- 2. Storyworld:** A detailed commentary on the narrative of *Paradise Lost*.
- 3. 'We Create Worlds': Transmediality of *Paradise Lost*:** The multiple platforms and media types through which the storyworld unfold.
- 4. Haunted sounds and Nostalgia of *Paradise Lost*:** An account of the role of nostalgia and how it develops across the album.
- 5. Mythology as a structural plan:** The role of Campbell's mythological story archetype in shaping the storyline and compositional structure of the album.

4.2 Historical context and memory of place

Paradise Lost utilises many verbal and subtle references to the island of Cyprus with a strong sense of ‘collective nostalgia’ and ‘private nostalgia’. Located centrally at the crossroads of European and Middle Eastern civilizations, Cyprus has been one of the most important meeting places in world history. The earliest settlements date from the sixth millennium BC.¹⁷² Cyprus became a Roman province in 58 BC until the split of the Roman Empire in 330 AD. Cyprus then came under Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, for almost 900 years. In 1191, Richard Coeur de Lion conquered the island on the route to his third Crusade. A year later, Richard sold the island to Knights Templar, who resold it to Guy de Lusignan, the King of Jordan, in 1192. The Lusignan rule lasted until 1464. In 1464 the island was ceded to Venetians, who ruled the island until it was captured by the Ottomans in 1571. Afterwards, Cyprus became part of the Ottoman Empire for just over three centuries. In 1878 Cyprus came under British rule and remained so until 1960 when Cyprus became an independent republic. In 1963 fights between Greek and Turkish Cypriots began, and in 1974 Turkey’s intervention divided the island into two.

Today, the island remains divided; Turkish Cypriots occupy the north side under the de facto state Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, only recognized by Turkey. The south is occupied by Greek Cypriots under the Republic of Cyprus, a recognised and full voting member of the European Union. Due to the military intervention of Turkey and its continued presence, the north has been severely limited in prosperity due to embargoes, sanctions, and travel restrictions. In the north, there is also a prevailing notion that ‘uncertainty is the certainty’. This is further illustrated in how reluctant the majority of the population is for unification, as demonstrated in various polls, governmental and presidential elections. One repercussion of this notion is adopting a ‘carpe diem’ lifestyle, where little thought is given to the consequences of actions taken. The beautiful northern mountain range, ‘Beşparmak dağları’ (Five Finger Mountains), has been partly turned into a

¹⁷² Maier, F.G. (1968). Cyprus – From Earliest Time to the Present Day. London: Elek Books.

quarry, destroying natural habitat and an unpleasant sight even from far away. Deals are being made with investors from Turkey, building excessive amounts of seaside hotels and casinos and causing a controversy in the process. Urban planning is non-existent; each decision and action taken by the government, mostly at the eve of an election, has the implications of ‘saving the day.’ Bryant and Hatay’s book ‘Sovereignty Suspended’ handles the topic of life in the de facto state, in which they verbalise the psychology of Turkish Cypriots as ‘learned helplessness.’¹⁷³ Undoubtedly, these have adversely affected me and are subtly criticised throughout *Paradise Lost*, as explained later in the chapter.

Suggestive of hauntology, *Paradise Lost* utilizes archival sound recordings from documentaries and news reports. I do not intend for the political content of these recordings to be a statement, but rather, a gaze through, for example, an old photo album, where one can observe both the person and the world in which the person lived. More specifically, the album draws a picture of Cyprus from the eyes of a child growing up in the aftermath of the division. At various points throughout the album, the listener is informed of the history of Cyprus. Most notably in the piece *Worn by Them All*; Turkey’s intervention is noted in the piece *First Letter*; the divided state of the island is mentioned in *Stranded in Time*; Turkey’s continued presence and its control over the Turkish community is implied on *Dreamer’s Paradise*; the psychology of the Turkish Cypriots are indirectly noted in *Episodic Buffer*.

The album also references real-life locations in Cyprus, such as Mesaoria and Varosha. Located adjacent to Famagusta, what was once a coastal paradise town and an exemplary leisure landscape attracting major celebrities, Varosha is currently a military-controlled zone. What will become of Varosha is a political topic debated for decades.

Due to its attractive and advantageous location, Famagusta is no stranger to conflict. After the fall of Acre in 1291, Famagusta suddenly became the wealthiest

¹⁷³ Bryant, R., and Hatay, M. (2020). *Sovereignty Suspended. Building the So-Called State*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

city both in Cyprus and in the Mediterranean, a rendezvous place of wealthy merchants. During the first half of the 14th century, one could imagine the walled city as a flourishing building site of churches. The decline of the Famagusta was as rapid as its rise, and the city had undergone a rapid decline under the Genoese rule during the last quarter of the same century. The city never regained the importance and prosperity it once had.

Today, Famagusta is the principal port and the second-largest city in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Because of the economic and political embargos, minimal help is received from international organisations. The Walled City of Famagusta was only recently placed on the World Monuments Fund Watch List.¹⁷⁴ Before 1974, Famagusta embraced a Turkish Cypriot section (called *Mağusa* in Turkish) centred around the walled city and a much larger modern Greek Cypriot section (*Varosha* in Greek). Varosha became a no man's land after the dramatic division of the island. As the Turkish troops approached Varosha in 1974, the 30,000 Greek Cypriot inhabitants fled from the city.¹⁷⁵ Varosha became a no man's land after the dramatic division of the island.

The Turkish military fenced off the city, and the inhabitants were not allowed to return to their homes. Since then, Varosha remained a decaying ghost town with penetrating urban memories. Over time, such places 'define and structure our sense of self,' argues Trigg, 'such that being dis-placed can have a dramatic consequence on our experience of who we are'.¹⁷⁶ The house where I spent most of my childhood was located right next to the border of Varosha, enveloped in intimidating rusty barbed wires, large barrels, and deteriorated military signs. It was a house allocated by the University my parents were employed at. Little did I know that, in reality, it was a house left behind by its Greek owners just after the 1974-conflict. While the sight of abandoned buildings with bullet marks and pavements reclaimed by foliage provided the backdrop for our playground, anthems of

¹⁷⁴ Walsh, M. J. K. (2008). 'On the Princypalle Havens of the See': The port of Famagusta and the ship graffiti in the church of St George of the Greeks, Cyprus. *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, vol. 37, no. 1, 115-129.

¹⁷⁵ Pyla, P. and Phokiades, P. (2020). "Dark and Dirty" Histories of Leisure and Architecture: Varosha's Past and Future. *Architectural Theory Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 27-45.

¹⁷⁶ Trigg, *op. cit.*

nationalism and Turkish flags were never too far away. To this day, the previously mentioned mountainous range is tainted with a gigantic Turkish flag visible from space. This was the norm for the 80's generation, who were born right after the war and the self-declared de facto state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and especially true for those who spent their childhood next to such a border. Perhaps unintentionally, the consequences are a generation of Turkish Cypriots with an identity crisis, a strong desire to be recognised; and an ambition to prove their own validity, often through trivial accomplishments overseas.

While as a child, I did not question the reality of staying in someone else's house, I eventually began asking: To whom did this house belong? Where is he now? Why do we occupy this place? While there were no easy answers for this, what I got in return began to feel unsatisfactory as I grew older. These types of questions began to feel like a burden I could not get rid of. Consequently, *Paradise Lost* is in part initiated by a desire to unload this burden and come to terms with my own identity, my personal ideals for the island's future, and cherished childhood memories of growing up in these circumstances. However, it should be stated that I avoid a direct political statement by telling my story through the veils of science fiction.

4.3 Storyworld

In formulating the album's narrative, I have derived inspiration from the works of Philip K. Dick, whose novels and writings have profoundly influenced my creative output for the past decade. His witty and often surreal depictions of a future dystopia, in some ways mirroring our current society, has motivated me to write my versions of a future dystopia. In a letter to a friend, Dick argues that good science fiction 'unlocks the reader's mind so that the mind begins to create like the author's. For him, 'the very best science fiction ultimately winds up being a collaboration between author and reader, in which both create'.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Preface to *Beyond Lies the Wub*, The collected short stories of Philip K. Dick.

In his book, *We Can Build You*,¹⁷⁸ Dick's main character is sceptic towards the prospects of the so-called Hammerstein Mood Organ. 'There's nothing creative about it', he says, 'true, you can hit on new configurations of brain stimulation, and hence produce entirely new emotions in your head' which would never otherwise show up there. You might – theoretically – hit on the combination of nirvana [...] But that's not music. That's escape. Who wants it?'. Dick's unanswered question has lingered for long enough: 'We want it', responds Toop, hinting at a desire for escapism.¹⁷⁹ In his seminal work *The Principle of Hope*,¹⁸⁰ Ernest Bloch observes that many civilisations have dreamed of a 'better life' throughout history. Even today, we continuously seek the reward of 'escape'. Weekends are an escape; holidays are an escape; alcohol and drugs are an escape; TV, films, virtual reality headsets, video games, and countless other entertainment forms can be considered an escape. Clearly, one cannot indefinitely escape; ultimately, nothing would be left to escape from. So here emerges one of the dualities of the human condition, that of reality and escape, where one gives depth and reason to the other.

This line of thought led me to devise the fundamental concept of my story: An unquenchable desire to escape life conditions in the post-apocalypse. This premise can be related to Stern's definition of nostalgia, in which there is a 'yearning for an idealised or sanitised version of an earlier time period'.¹⁸¹ In this fictional world, I envisioned a device that can fashion computer simulations for the user to experience their cherished childhood memories in a half-awake, lucid dreaming state. Moreover, the device has the potential to be loaded with pre-programmed cassette tapes for a wide variety of experiences, as provided by the contents of the tape. For example, a user could be made to believe as if they are the key to the salvation of humanity. I further elaborated that this form of escapism could form into addiction and ultimately to an unwillingness to rebuild the world in the aftermath of total annihilation. This is relevant to Boym's and Hemming's

¹⁷⁸ Dick, P.K. (1972). *We Can Build You*. Hammersmith, London: HarperVoyager (p.10-11).

¹⁷⁹ Toop, D. (1995). *Ocean of Sound. Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds*. London: Serpent's Tail (p. 5).

¹⁸⁰ Bloch, E. (1968). *The Principle of Hope*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

¹⁸¹ Stern, B. (1992). Historical and personal nostalgia in advertising text: The fin de Siècle effect. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 11-22.

understanding of nostalgia; ‘a longing for a home that no longer exists’¹⁸² and ‘looking to the past for a stability lacking in the present’¹⁸³ respectively. This simple premise serves as a foundation for exploring nostalgia and escapism within a science fiction realm. These concepts are established with the following text that accompanies the album:

The nuclear war brought an uncharted business opportunity for the clandestine company Simex. Their simulated reality machines exploit the desire to escape the gloomy existence of the post-war. These highly addictive brain-mangling devices need pre-programmed tapes to work. In an unconscious altered state, each tape transports the user to a different ‘world’, sometimes even manufactured from memories. Although anyone can tamper with the contents of a tape, the original unaltered SimTapes - the most realistic of them all - are a lucky find.

Near the ruins of Fabulous Varosha -a post-apocalypse themed pre-war amusement park- a settler inadvertently acquires a SimTape from a travelling merchant. There is a closed society, governed by an elder committee who insist the world beyond their settlement is inhospitable. At the heart of the community is their sole SimEX machine, the only form of entertainment around. Realising the significance of this new tape, the elders send him on a quest to search for its origins.

All clues point to a place called Memory Lane, a street full of tape shops. During his quest to find this elusive place, he suffers from SimTape withdrawal symptoms. In a delusional state of mind, his perception of reality becomes a blur. Did he become a tapehead, experiencing a tailored simulation made from his fantasies? Or is he really the chosen one, destined to be the salvation of his people?¹⁸⁴

In this post-apocalyptic world, where little is left from civilisation, SimEx (Simulated Experiences) seems to be a remnant of capitalism, referring to the political theorist Fredric Jameson’s words: ‘It is easier to imagine the end of the earth than the end of the capitalism’.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, the ‘elder committee’ suggests a system otherwise known as Gerontocracy, which Plato famously

¹⁸² Boym (2007), *op. cit.*

¹⁸³ Hemming, R. (2008). *Modern Nostalgia. Siegfried Sassoon, Trauma and the Second World War.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

¹⁸⁴ Appendix E: Album Booklet.

¹⁸⁵ Jameson, F. (2003). Future city. *New Left Review*, Vol. 21, 65-79.

supported.¹⁸⁶ Here, the idea suggests that humanity has come full circle, or rather, returned to the old ways.

‘Tapehead’, which is the name of the read and write mechanism of magnetic tape players, is a wordplay to refer to the addicts of tape, or the addicts of simulation, those who prefer the ‘escape’ instead of rebuilding the world. The inability of the Tapeheads to find meaning in life can be compared to existential nihilism. The use of the word ‘tape’ serves yet another purpose. It is a declaration of one of the core themes and production aesthetics of the album. Besides being an idiom relating to nostalgia, ‘Memory Lane’ is presented as an actual street. The use of the word ‘memory’ is also crucial to imply the underlying childhood theme. There are also references to real-life locations such as Varosha.¹⁸⁷ The purpose of this was to establish the geography: Cyprus, where the story is taking place. Abandoned in 1974, in the aftermath of Turkish intervention, the current state of Varosha indeed evokes a sense of post-apocalypse. With a satirical outlook, I propose the future of Varosha to be some sort of an adult amusement park reminiscent of Michael Crichton’s *Westworld*.¹⁸⁸ In my story, the world actually goes through an apocalypse, and the idea of a theme park serves as an ironic subplot. In the last paragraph, the use of the words ‘destined’, ‘quest’ and ‘salvation of his people’ conclude the synopsis in a tone reminiscent of a heroic mythological tale, deliberately hinting at the monomyth structure of the narrative.

Regarding the name of the album, ‘Paradise’ refers both to the state before the apocalypse and childhood. ‘Lost’, then, is the absence of both, while also hinting to nostalgia in a subtle way, similar to Dwyer’s understanding of nostalgia: ‘The product of an affective engagement with the present that produces a sense of loss’.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Plato (2000). *The Republic*. Ed. by G.R.F. Ferrari. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 104.

¹⁸⁷ Varosha is currently a military-controlled zone which was once a coastal paradise town. What will become of Varosha is a political topic debated for decades.

¹⁸⁸ *Westworld* (1973). Written and directed by Michael Crichton.

¹⁸⁹ Dwyer, M.D. (2015). *Back to Fifties. Nostalgia, Hollywood Film, and Popular Music of the Seventies and Eighties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4.4 ‘We Create Worlds’: Transmediality of *Paradise Lost*

In this section, I will illustrate the transmediality of *Paradise Lost* through its promotional campaign. This campaign aimed to gradually familiarise the audience with the intricate storyworld of the album and prompt some anticipation towards its release.

Tales From the Future

Prior to *Paradise Lost*, I have been performing my music in various concerts and festivals under the name of *Tales from the Future*. These performances utilized video projections of repurposed ‘found footage’ of yesteryear and interspersed text, reminiscent of old computer screens. These texts have ultimately been a tool for me to communicate the concepts of SimTape and establish the storyworld. In other words, *Tales from the Future* and *Paradise Lost* exist in the same ‘storyworld’. Without getting into too much detail, I would like to focus on a particular segment of these video projections. The images below (Figure 4.1) are captured from the ending sequence of *Tales from The Future*. They were designed to bring the audience inside this imaginary world. In one of the images, there is a notable mention of *Paradise Lost*, which was neither announced nor completed when these images were presented. The rest of the images illustrate further worldbuilding, such as establishing what a SimTape is and that it can be dangerous to use and operate. This is a recurring stylistic element throughout the album that emanates a type of science fiction that does not take itself too seriously, one that prompts the type of humour Douglas Adams injected to *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*.

Cassette tapes

Another example of transmediality is the physical cassette tapes I produced and offered for sale in limited quantities during *Tales from the Future* concerts. Taking its inspiration from pharmacological products throughout various historical periods, I presented the cassettes on a purpose-built stand, much like an introductory campaign of a new medical product (Figure 4.2). The text on the product stands was written in tongue-in-cheek medical terminology, and marketing speak to further the illusion. The actual contents of these tapes were my music. It was vital

for me to create a physical object from the storyworld that could be bought and brought home, reinforcing the perception that SimTape *is* a physical product.

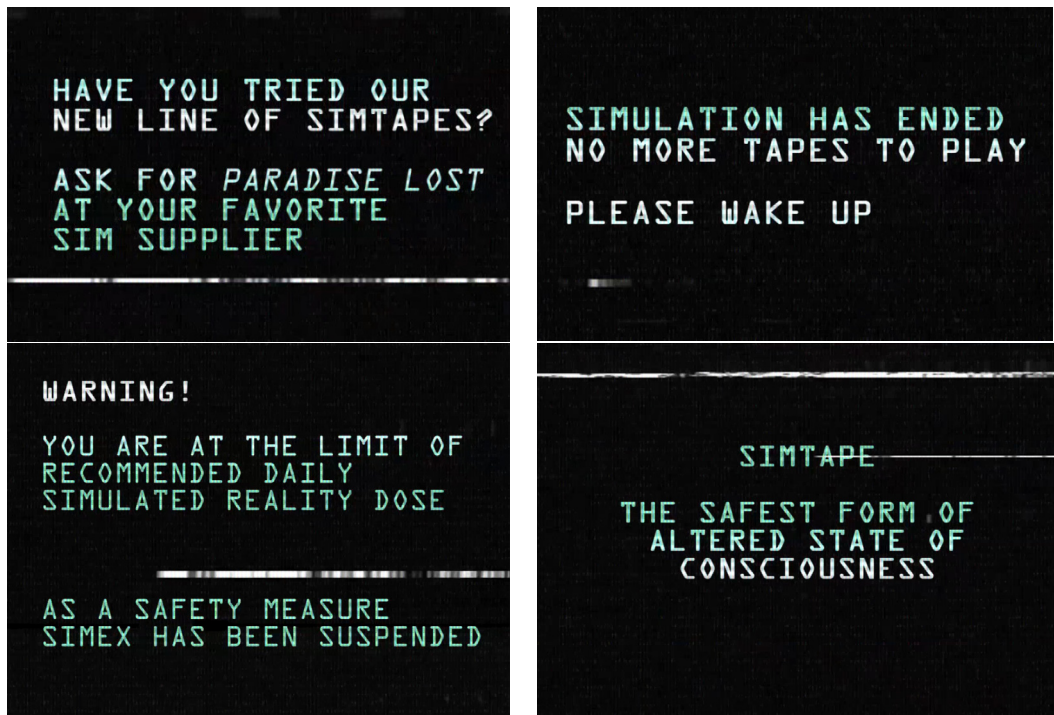


Figure 4.1 Screen captures from *Tales from the Future* audio-visual set.



Figure 4.2 Medical product inspired cassette tape designs.

These cassettes were eventually used as props later in the *Paradise Lost Movie*. Crossing over the digitised media of ‘present’ and into the physical media of the ‘past’ enhances the storyworld and provides the listener with more ways to experience this imaginary world. This incites the listener's imagination and perhaps makes them feel part of this world with the mere act of owning a piece of it.

Basement concert

After completing a rough sketch of my ideas for *Paradise Lost*, I decided to give a small pop-up concert with this new material and initiate a year-long promotional campaign with it. The concert took place in a residential basement (Appendix D¹⁹⁰), long before the album was announced or even completed. Unlike a traditional music venue, a residential basement provided an interesting environment to experience the music. Free from habitual interaction with our familiar environments, bringing an audience into an unlikely and unfamiliar zone has implications on how they perceive the music. Our brains habitually ignore to process familiar places. When placed in an unfamiliar and an unlikely place, one could argue that our subconscious takes the back seat while we process the environment and focus on the whole experience.

While there were no accompanying visuals, I have utilized a visual ‘feedback’ effect, which is achieved when a video camera is pointed towards its playback. For the concert, I have used a video camera pointed towards the stage; the playback of the video camera was connected to a projection, which was also pointing towards the stage (Figure 4.4). To my surprise, this initiated playful audience participation, where they danced and moved to the ripples of their movements (Figure 4.5). Another point of interest is the booklets that were handed out (Figure 4.3). The booklet was designed as a product demonstration of SimTape and provided an insight into the larger world of the album. As with cassette tapes, the intention is to create a ‘false memento’ of a fictional world.

¹⁹⁰ Appendix D: A video excerpt from the concert can be found on the accompanying USB stick.



Figure 4.3 Booklet from Paradise Lost basement concert.



Figure 4.4 Visual feedback effect on stage.



Figure 4.5 Audience reaction to the feedback effect.

Tapehead blog

After the concert, I published a blog titled ‘Tapehead’.¹⁹¹ The blog was designed and written in a diary from which a narrative slowly unfolded with each blog post. With the blog, I established the characters and the locations of the narrative while painting a general mood with depictions of life in the post-apocalypse. While detailing the protagonist's everyday life, the narrative depicts a series of events that lead to the primary narrative of the album, so in a way, it is an antecedent to the album itself. Each blog post was accompanied by photos taken with an almost toy-like analogue camera. Towards the end of the blog posts, the protagonist is about to commence its dangerous journey across the barren landscape, from which the narrative will resume from the album itself. Local folks sacrifice their prized possessions to support his journeys, such as pre-war antibiotics, a photo camera, and goggles. This is depicted in one of the final blog posts (Figure 4.6). We can also see the black cape the protagonist is seen wearing in *Paradise Lost Movie*. This is a custom-made cape complete with a branding: ‘Lands.cape.’ This minuscule detail demonstrates how much detail went into constructing a convincing storyworld.



Figure 4.6 A picture from the Tapehead blog depicting storyworld elements.

¹⁹¹ www.tapehead.tumblr.com

Born and Haworth link musical hauntology to blogging.¹⁹² Although I did not establish this connection consciously, there must be a correlation with the fact that I was young enough to have experienced the birth and rise of the internet and the various trends it went through in the beginning. Retrospectively, I have discovered that the rise of musical hauntology coincided with the peak of the blog as a cultural form in the mid-2000s.

Postcards

In the next stage, I published postcards that illustrate the brands and locations from the storyworld. The first of the postcards is an advertisement for the imaginary SimTape product (Figure 4.7). An interesting feature of this one is the subtitle ‘we create worlds’, which in fact is my hidden manifesto (i.e., ‘creating small worlds’) in the guise of an advertisement.

A theme shared by all the postcards is the mention of the street ‘Memory Lane’, which is the ultimate destination of the narrative (explained in detail in Section 4.6). Another point of interest is the cautionary text written in small print, warning the user that ‘improper operation is known to cause irreversible brain damage.’ The second one is a promotional postcard for the ‘Fabulous Varosha’ (Figure 4.7), one of the fictional locations that the story is taking place: The post-apocalypse themed adult amusement park, which turned into a shelter after the actual apocalypse. The final postcard is an advertisement for a tape shop: ‘Dreamer’s Paradise’, located in Memory Lane (Figure 4.9). In total, there were ten postcards with bits of information that expand the storyworld.¹⁹³ Some of the postcards were eventually used as props in the *Paradise Lost Movie* (Figures 4.14 and 4.15)

Plánites exhibition

I was invited to participate in Plánites, an exhibition in the European Capital of Culture Paphos 2017. I saw this as an opportunity for me to expand the post-

¹⁹² Born, G., and C. Haworth (2018). From Microsound to Vaporwave: Internet-Mediated Musics, Online Methods, and Genre. *Music and Letters*, Vol. 98, no. 4, 601–47.

¹⁹³ Appendix E: Postcards.

apocalyptic storyworld that I have created. While preparing for the exhibition, I created a visual representation of how a SimTape machine might look like (Figure 4.10), which was included in the exhibition booklet and later proved useful when I began working on the *Paradise Lost Movie*. Named ‘Tape Den’, my work for the exhibition took shape in the form of a multimedia installation with TV monitors, sound design for ambience and manipulated photographs (Figure 4.11). The room was designated as a museum exhibit, depicting a distant time frame from *Paradise Lost*, where SimTape has become a relic of the past (See Appendix B for an excerpt from the exhibition booklet).



Figure 4.7 ‘Simtape: We create worlds’ postcard



Figure 4.8 'The Fabulous Varosha' postcard.

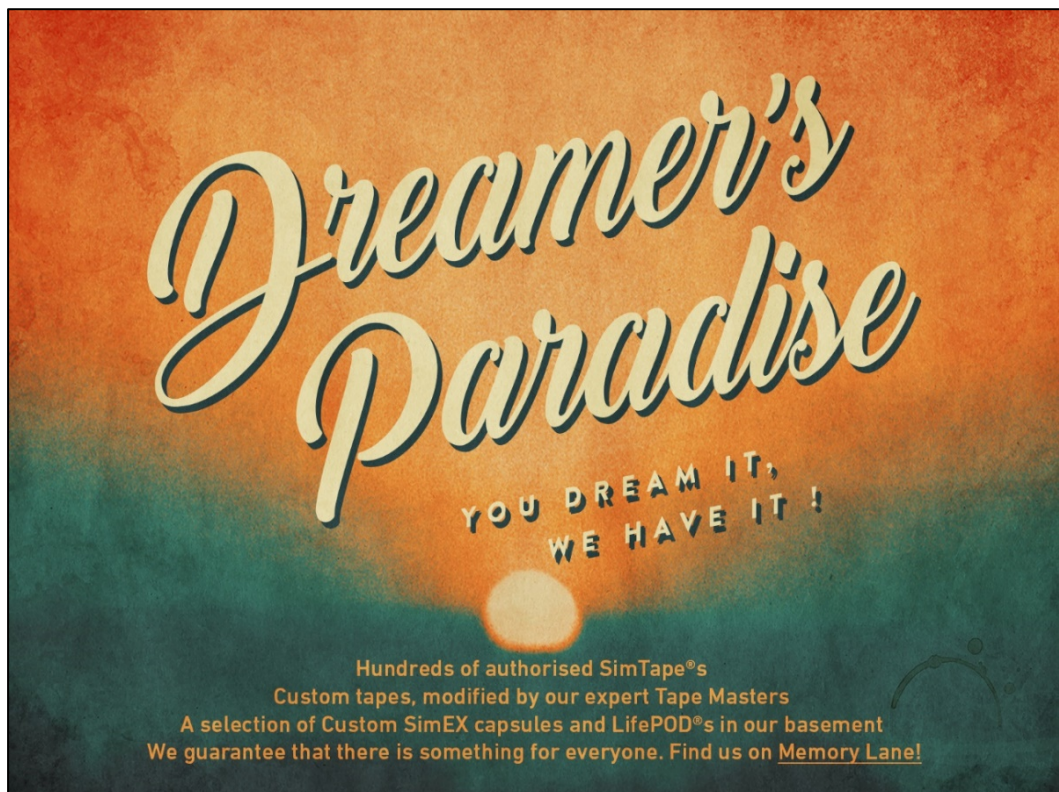


Figure 4.9 'Dreamers Paradise' postcard.



Figure 4.10 Artwork for Plánites exhibition.



Figure 4.11 'Tape den' multimedia installation on Plánites exhibition.

Paradise Lost Movie

An initial plan that later had to be cancelled was to create an ‘art book’ to be supplied with the album. Ultimately, the idea proved to be too ambitious. Since I am familiar with filmmaking and editing, I thought shooting a short film instead could be feasible. The short film aimed to bring the storyworld into visual terms. To create a convincing film with a limited budget, I studied some of the fundamentals of cinematography and editing to undertake most filmmaking duties myself, except for the camera work. The results can be best described as a 22-minute music-video short-film hybrid. The film's narrative takes off from the final blog post and ends where the album itself takes off. This was done to present the narrative progressively and utilize several types of media to do so.

The film was shot in three locations across Cyprus, ranging from an abandoned hotel in Larnaca, an abandoned military barracks in Nicosia, and an abandoned American military compound in the outskirts of Nicosia (Figure 4.17), all of which depict a post-apocalyptic feel. The film utilises visual communication and narration to establish the storyline in various plot points that are interspersed with musical interludes.

In the opening sequence, the SimEX machine, one of the primary concepts of the storyworld, is introduced with a series of close-up shots. In this sequence, two objects are emphasized: A cassette and a cassette player with an old laptop on top of it. When the device is turned on, and the tape is inserted, a text appears on the laptop screen that reads: ‘SimEx – Altering Perceptions Since 2153’. In a matter of seconds, the viewer is introduced to the SimEx which has an ‘R’ sign that suggests a registered product or a brand. The subtext ‘Altering Perceptions Since 2153’ also hints at the nature of this device and sets the timeline of the storyworld. During this introductory sequence, we also see a SimTape, the exact cassette offered during *Tales from The Future* concerts. The introductory sequence introduces how a person uses a machine to enter the ‘simulated world.’ The first musical excerpt follows, showing the protagonist walking in an open field (a reference to the track *Messaoria by Dawn*). In this sequence, we see military parachutes falling from the

sky, for example, at 2:35 (Figure 4.12). This is a reference to the Turkish intervention in 1974, a theme explored in *Stranded in Time* and *First Letter*.

At 3.36, we see the protagonist enter and walk around an abandoned building. Through narration, it is established that he is looking for clues for the whereabouts of Memory Lane. In the same building, he finds a seemingly old New Scientist magazine with the headline 'The Future' and a closeup shot that reveals the text 'World War III' (Figure 4.13). At 11.44, the image of a news reporter appears. This is the same segment used on *Episodic Buffer*.

The following segment is a collage that alternates between various segments of an abandoned building and darkness. There is a human figure within the darkness, who appears to be the same person using the SimEx machine from the very beginning of the film. This suggests that he is actually inside the machine experiencing the events that are taking place. Wandering through the abandoned building, he finds a mysterious toy telephone. The phone suggests that the protagonist is experiencing his childhood memories, yet something is amiss. Puzzled to encounter this in an unlikely place, he lifts its headset (Figure 4.16). He then abruptly finds himself in a dark environment. This scene is abruptly cut back to the initial scene, where the telephone is located, but this time, the vision seems distorted. Underneath the phone, he discovers a postcard with 'Dreamer's Paradise' written on it. The dreamy look is further reinforced with light rays coming off the postcard, which signifies the light at the end of the tunnel, his 'salvation'. We are then shown an abandoned building surrounded by green grass, a sight he has not seen before. This sequence ends as abruptly as it began when he wakes up, and we are once again led to believe that this was a dream instead. This whole dream sequence is the most crucial part of the film, as it is this uncertainty that the album strives to communicate to the listener. In the film's final portion, the protagonist finds a box filled with photographs (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). While browsing the photographs, he comes across some postcards advertising various 'tape shops' located in Memory Lane. We are led to believe that the postcards have provided some clue to the whereabouts of Memory Lane. He compares the clues to his map and resumes his journey towards the setting sun.



Figure 4.12 Military parachutes in reference to the Turkish intervention in 1974.



Figure 4.13 New Scientist magazine depicting a fictional 'World War III'



Figure 4.14 A box filled with photographs and postcards.



Figure 4.15 Postcards advertising various 'tape shops' within Memory Lane.



Figure 4.16 A mysterious toy telephone in an unlikely place.



Figure 4.17 Abandoned American military compound in the outskirts of Nicosia.

Cover art

For the cover art of the album, I specifically wanted to use a picture from my childhood. (Figure 4.18).¹⁹⁴ I was fortunate to find a picture of myself with a Walkman, a pleasant coincidence considering the significant role of the tape, both in production and story wise. The absence of the face is a deliberate reference to hauntology, in that the face is replaced by ‘the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive’.¹⁹⁵

The background of the image is altered to depict a post-apocalyptic scene while pastel colours establish the nostalgia element. Finally, the picture was desaturated and hand coloured digitally, resembling the hand-colouring technique of black and white photographs.



Figure 4.18 Album cover art.

¹⁹⁴ Appendix E: Cover Art. Prepared in collaboration with Murat Zengi.

¹⁹⁵ Davis, C. (2005). Hauntology, specters and phantoms. *French Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 373-379.

Table 4.1 is a chronological summary of multiple forms of media in which aspects of *Paradise Lost* and its storyworld have been unfolded.

Table 4.1 Transmediality of Paradise Lost.

| | Media type | Access type |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Tales From the Future | Video / Projection / Concert | Concert |
| SimTape | Physical cassette | Printed and sold in limited numbers |
| Paradise Lost (live at Bodrum) | Concert | Online streaming |
| Concert booklet | Physical / Text | Handed to concert attendees. |
| Tapehead blog | Digital / Text | Online |
| Postcards | Artwork | Online /Used as prop in film |
| Tape Den | Installation | Exhibition |
| Paradise Lost (movie) | Short film | Online streaming |
| Album booklet | Digital / text and images | iTunes album booklet |
| Album itself | Music | Online streaming |

4.5 Haunted sounds and Nostalgia of *Paradise Lost*

Nostalgia in *Paradise Lost* is a source of inspiration rather than an aesthetic. My goal is to convey a sense of nostalgia on a subconscious level. There are several recurring stylistic elements throughout the album to convey this, one of which is pitch and time-shifting, which often degrade audio quality as a result, and other forms of degradation, such as bit reduction and distortion. Another recurring element is the use of radio static and radio tuning-in sounds. These methods have often been identified as an implementation of hauntology in music. Another method that resembles hauntology is historical audio recordings, mostly taken from documentaries and news reports. In *Paradise Lost*, these audio materials represent a socio-cultural point of view, identified as ‘collective nostalgia’ by Davis. For me, historical recordings are a strategy to guide the listener into a particular time and geography. The following section is organized in the chronology of the tracks, where I illustrate the numerous ways in which nostalgia plays a role throughout the album.

Heads Out opens in mono, then gradually shifts to stereo, giving the impression that the sound is getting closer and embracing the listener. The radio tuning-in effects set the stage for the recurring historical audio snippets throughout the album. A heavily processed synthesizer, reminiscent of a Geiger counter, enters at 1:16 as a subtle reference to the post-apocalyptic theme of the story. At the very end of the piece, we hear what appears to be an old recording:

‘Cyprus is an island that feeds on itself... [segment edited out] ...the islander finds his simple necessities in the wide fields of the Mesaoria.’

Taken from the 1946 British documentary ‘Cyprus is an Island’¹⁹⁶, this segment is used to reference the colonial history of Cyprus, a theme that will be revisited in *Worn by Them All*. The phrase ‘Cyprus is an island that feeds on itself’ is cherry-picked within a larger sentence and edited in for social criticism; ‘the wide fields of

¹⁹⁶ *Cyprus is an Island* (1946). Directed by Ralph Keene. Narrated by Valentine Dyall.

the Mesaoria’ on the other hand, serves as an antecedent for the next piece in the sequence.

Private nostalgia is only hinted at but never obvious to the listener; the most striking example is the album cover art (childhood photograph). Nonetheless, the first instance of private nostalgia appears on the second track, *Mesaoria by Dawn*. Mesaoria is a sweeping flat plain in Cyprus with small settlements sparsely located. As a child, I occasionally travelled through Mesaoria with my family. In all probability, I was listening to Vangelis with my Walkman during some of these travels. The piece is a reference to his music in a deliberately direct manner. A brooding mono-synth line over a sustaining massive synthesizer chord is almost a musical quotation from ‘Dawn’¹⁹⁷ and ‘Blade Runner Blues’.¹⁹⁸ Towards the end of the piece, the use of a Doppler effect implies the passing cars on the highway. At the end of the piece, we hear a section of the song ‘Memleketim’ (my country) with loops, haphazard skips, and distortions suggesting a broken tape mechanism. The lyrics of the song tell the love of a country, an obvious reference to nostalgia. Due to its nationalistic overtones, the song was an anthem of nationalism amongst Turkish Cypriots during the 1974 Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. Moreover, it is a cultural artefact, and its use within the context of the album is of sarcastic nature that symbolises ‘the lost hopes of a community whose struggle for self-determination appeared to have been hijacked by those sent to save them.’¹⁹⁹

The dark mood set by the opening tracks is offset with the appearance of a machine-like talk on the third track *Init. Sequence* emphasising the pulp-sci-fi roots of the story. Moreover, the voice seems to come from an inferior machine (i.e., low-quality machine speech) is a nod to retrofuturism aesthetics (i.e., the blend of old and new technologies).

The fourth track *Memory Initialized* introduces a personal artefact, my childhood ‘toy keyboard’, an entry-level keyboard based on FM synthesis (Figure 4.19). This can be

¹⁹⁷ Vangelis, *The City* (1990), WEA International

¹⁹⁸ Vangelis, *Blade Runner OST* (1994), EastWest

¹⁹⁹ Hatay, M., Bryant, R. (2008). The jasmine scent of Nicosia: of returns, revolutions, and the longing for forbidden pasts. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 423-449.

heard midway through the piece with a harpsichord-like sound and an organ-like sound.



Figure 4.19 Childhood ‘toy keyboard’ - Yamaha PSS-280.

Long Lost is the first song in the album that features lyrics. It is structured using a conventional song form, with clearly defined sections: verse, chorus, and an instrumental bridge. The lyrics suggest a longing for a time ‘Long Lost’, of childhood, ‘a green world’, and in general, draws a picture of the unpleasant state of this fictional world.²⁰⁰ The sixth track, *Stranded in Time*, opens with radio tuning-in effects, upon which a voice emerges:

‘...on this, the third largest island in the Mediterranean [...] is still caught in the frozen moment of 1974 [...] ever since the Turkish paratroopers fell from the sky July of that year, and cut Cyprus in two, this has been an island stranded in time.’²⁰¹

In my opinion, the phrase ‘Stranded in time’ perfectly captures the psychological aftermath of the Turkish intervention of 1974.²⁰² With this piece, however, I wanted to offset this unpleasant reality with a touch of optimism. This optimism is portrayed by using a simple, almost melancholic, four-chord progression that repeats three times (Figure 4.20). With each consequent repeat, the orchestration gets denser. The

²⁰⁰ See Appendix A: Lyrics

²⁰¹ Audio excerpt taken from ‘Cyprus: Stranded in time’ Writer and presenter: Christopher Hitchens. Part of 1989 TV series ‘Frontiers’.

²⁰² Hatay and Bryant, *op. cit.*

second repeat of the progression starts at 1:06, where the harp and Rhodes introduce a melodic line (Figure 4.21 top stave). The combination of these instruments and the simplicity of the melody gives an impression of a lullaby. This lullaby is a metaphor for the aftermath of the Turkish intervention; it symbolises a state of ‘learned helplessness’,²⁰³ where the Turkish Cypriots are left with no option but to accept the division of the island and the de facto state they are forced to live in.

The image shows a musical score for Violin and Viola. The Violin part is in treble clef, and the Viola part is in bass clef. Both are in a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The Violin part starts with a 'div.' marking and dynamics of *pp* (pianissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Viola part consists of a simple melodic line with long notes and rests.

Figure 4.20 Chord progression from *Stranded in Time*.

The image shows two staves for Viola. Both are in bass clef, with a key signature of three sharps and a 4/4 time signature. The top staff has a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The melody consists of a series of long notes with some rests, creating a slow, lullaby-like feel.

Figure 4.21 Viola melody from *Stranded in time*.

The third and final repeat of the progression starts at 1:32. In this climactic section of the piece, the chords are slightly altered, and Viola takes up the melody (Figure 4.21 bottom stave). A cliff-hanger chord at 2:00 brings the piece to an abrupt change of mood, which could be interpreted as the vanishing of optimism.

The ninth track, *Warn by Them All* serves as an introduction to the history of Cyprus. The piece opens with Mellotron flutes playing a repetitive progression. Eventually, the string orchestra joins with a descending dominant chord progression (Figure 4.22). The following statement, taken from a historical documentary, ends the introductory section of the piece:

²⁰³ Bryant and Hatay 2020, *op. cit.*

‘Cyprus is like a ring that has passed from hand to hand of changing empires’

The voice then reappears, saying:

‘In 1878, came the British...’

At the end of this statement, I elongated the ‘sh’ of British with time stretching tool, and it is then blended with the cymbal hit just before the beat returns. The aim being nothing more than an interesting transition, the results give the illusion as if both ‘sh’ and the cymbal hit are the same sound.



The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The score is in 4/4 time and begins with a fermata over the first measure. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The dynamics are marked *p* (piano). The Violin part consists of chords in the treble clef. The Viola part consists of single notes in the alto clef. The Violoncello part consists of single notes in the bass clef. The progression moves through several chords and notes across ten measures, ending with a double bar line.

Figure 4.22 Chord progression from *Worn by Them All*.

My Toy Telephone is the longest and the second largest piece in terms of arrangement. Initially, I planned a short and melancholic piece, but it gradually extended and took an episodic structure. I used an upright piano and an upright acoustic bass to achieve an instrumental variety compared to the rest of the album. Moreover, for some reason, I have always felt that there is something melancholic about the sound of an upright piano. Another characteristic element of the piece is the extensive use of the bell-like sounds from my toy keyboard. The use of real strings further emphasises the melancholic tone of the piece (Figure 4.23).

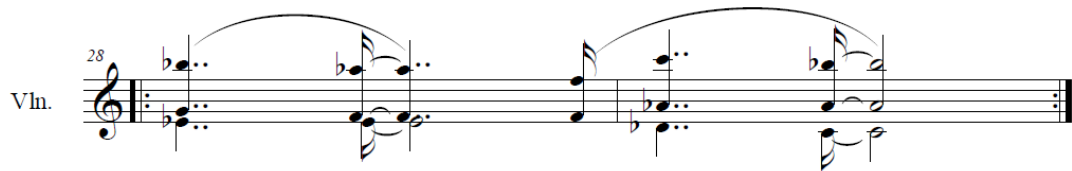


Figure 4.23 Strings arrangement from *My Toy Telephone*.

At several points throughout the album, I used audio snippets from home recording cassettes of my childhood.²⁰⁴ *Stranded in Time* is the first instance where we are introduced to the child voices. At 2:07, we hear the voice of a child. He says something to this effect:

‘Now we present you the news.’

After which, the voice of the presenter from the beginning of the piece returns:

‘The dead zone is patrolled by the United Nations [...] utterly divided [repeats]’

In *Episodic Buffer*, the child's voice returns at 1:27. We hear him say:

‘we heard the advertisements, and now it is time for the news.’

What follows is a collage of radio news snippets juxtaposed with radio static and tune-in effects. I have also constructed a musical extract meant to suggest a radio jingle that can be heard at 2:31.²⁰⁵ The radio snippets can be seen as a social critique:

‘...on these lands, we continue to produce world-class products.’

‘...the demonstration organised by the workers of Turkish Cypriot Airlines...’

²⁰⁴ The domestication of tape recording as a ‘memory device’ and its role in family sound album is explored in Bijsterveld, K. and Jacobs, A. (2009). Storing sound souvenirs: The multi-sited domestication of the tape recorder. In: *Sound Souvenirs: Audio Technologies, Memory, and Cultural Practices*, edited by K. Bijsterveld and J. van Dijck. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 25-42.

²⁰⁵ This ‘jingle’ is constructed from reversing and time stretching a segment from my previous album.

[presenter] Is it true that the name of the state is going to change? [guest] That kind of blasphemy did not cross our minds. Besides, such a thing is not in our power.'

'... and now we have an important announcement regarding Cyprus.'

After which the music fades away to make room for the punchline of these arguments:

'The 'dream of the century' is becoming a reality. The pipeline project that is to connect Turkey to Cyprus is almost finished.'

For me, combining such archival sounds with a child's voice puts the perspective through the eyes of a child growing up under those circumstances. However, as far as a child is concerned, nothing is more important than playtime. I tried to capture this notion with the animated and upbeat *Vorticon Invasion*, with several playful and quirky features. For example, I used software synthesizers to recreate the sounds of early video games and 8-bit sounds. I have also sampled a particular DOS game that I used to play in the early 1990s.²⁰⁶ For the non-synthesized parts, I used a bit reducer plugin to bring their sound closer to the rest of the synthesized elements. For example, the very beginning of the piece is a modern synthesizer that runs through a bit-reducer plugin. The use of the sounds from a particular video game is another example of the album's 'private nostalgia' element.

During my childhood, a common video game system was the Commodore 64, which worked with cassette tapes. Frequent use of the device sometimes caused its tape mechanisms to malfunction. One of the things you could do to fix it was the so-called 'head alignment'. Throughout this transitional piece, *Dropout*, we hear a robotic voice repeatedly saying the following:

'Error reading tape. Please align tape-head.'

²⁰⁶ Commander Keen in the invasion of the Vorticons (1990).

The intentional use of this phrase references the early cassette technologies and a form of infusing private nostalgia. Towards the end of the piece, it is implied that the malfunction is addressed:

'Thank you. Happy dreams...'

Here, I also used a segment from my childhood tapes. A frustrated kid is heard saying:

'You never record my voice!'

As I searched for inspiration from my childhood belongings, I found a letter I wrote to my grandmother at the age of nine. Reading the letter was an emotional moment. With this piece, I tried to capture the innocence I felt in the letter. The melancholic mood of the piece comes to an abrupt close at 1:12. From the story perspective, this section is a reality check for the protagonist, a reminder of the horrors outside of this dreamy-nostalgia state. Perhaps the device he is plugged in to re-experience his memories is having a mechanical malfunction (this is hinted at the end of the previous piece), and he might be in some sort of lucid dream state, coming in and out of this simulated dream.

This foreboding sequence ends at 1:41, after which the melancholia of the first section resumes. Here we hear fragments of a speech, distorted in such a way to suggest a broken tape mechanism. The speech eventually becomes intelligible. The voice belongs to prime minister Bülent Ecevit, declaring the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974. The speech also marks a return to the Cyprus theme. I used a fragment from the speech, which translates to something to this effect:

'I believe that our actions will bring peace to Cyprus.'

When my grandmother spoke about Bülent Ecevit, like many of her generation, one got the impression that he is the saviour of the Turkish community living in Cyprus. Considering the current state of Cyprus, Ecevit's use of the word 'peace' proved to be a fitting criticism.

Tails Out provide an extended coda for the whole album. Its structure resembles an elongated three-minute decrescendo. The constituent layers of the piece are carried on from the ending of the previous piece; piano, kalimba, vibraphone, and chimes. At the end of the piece, the goal was to create a sense of deterioration, to represent objects rusting, eventually becoming dust, and ultimately washed away by winds. To create this illusion, I used a reverb bus and gradually sent each of the constituent layers of the track into this bus. The underlying pad-like sound is also a result of this reverb. The unusually long decay time of the reverb accumulates the sounds that eventually coalesce into a dense cluster.

Moreover, each of the layers are gradually pitch-shifted, eventually losing their distinctive sound character. For example, the piano begins to sound a lot like a glass harmonica instead. Towards the end, each layer fades out one by one, bringing the reverberant cluster sound to the foreground. This segment is a good example of the sonic experimentation I carried throughout the album, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

4.6 Mythology as Structural Plan

Upon creating the world in which to set the narrative, I searched for inspiration to formulate the storyline. The search led me to the work of Joseph Campbell and his comparative mythology book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.²⁰⁷ One of the book's core themes is the argument that certain universalities link all humanity. Campbell supports his case by cross-examining various ancient mythical stories, fairy tales, fiction and even biblical writings of different cultures and outlines an underlying link. In his own words, the epitome of a mythological story is as such:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Campbell, J. (1968). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

²⁰⁸ *ibid*, p.28.

In Campbell’s study, the template of a mythological story, the ‘monomyth’ as he calls it, comprises 17 stages. By studying the thematic content of these stages, I devised the pacing and the overall compositional plan of the entire album (Table 4.2).²⁰⁹ Each of these stages and how they apply to *Paradise Lost* is discussed in Section 4.4. Vogler’s version of the monomyth, often adapted to fiction and screenwriting,²¹⁰ offers a more contemporary approach. Vogler argues that in a balanced story arch, Act I and III are similar in length while Act II is twice the size of Act I. Figure 4.24 is a linear arrangement of *Paradise Lost* that illustrates a similar consideration of balance. However, it should be noted that each act of *Paradise Lost* is not readily distinguishable through music alone.

The 17 stages of the monomyth are often illustrated on a circular diagram (Figure 4.25). Evidently, a prominent feature of this diagram is the division of the ‘Ordinary world’ and the ‘Special world’. In traditional mythological stories, special world usually represents the realms of the enemy. However, in *Paradise Lost*, it represents the artificially generated memories or the ‘simulated world’.

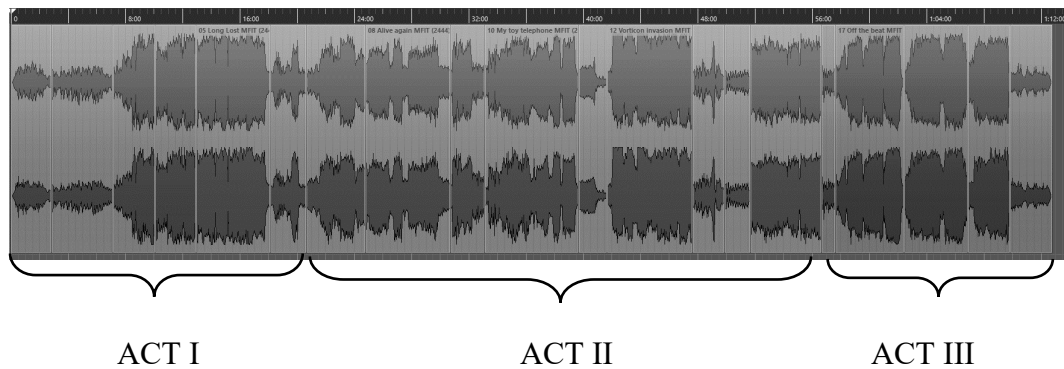


Figure 4.24 Illustration of the story structure of *Paradise Lost*.

²⁰⁹ Daniel Prandl, Karen Olson & Crispin Barrymore, Chris Dawkins, David Sherrington, Matt von Roderick, Beth Kinderman, Damein Rice, and no wonder many others, have produced albums inspired by the monomyth, and quite openly at that, as evident from their albums which are all named in some variant of ‘Hero’s Journey.’ Since Campbell’s book is not the focus of this commentary, I chose not to mention, analyse, or comment further on these artists and their works.

²¹⁰ Vogler, C. (2007). *The Writer’s Journey. Mythic Structure for Writers*. 3rd. ed. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

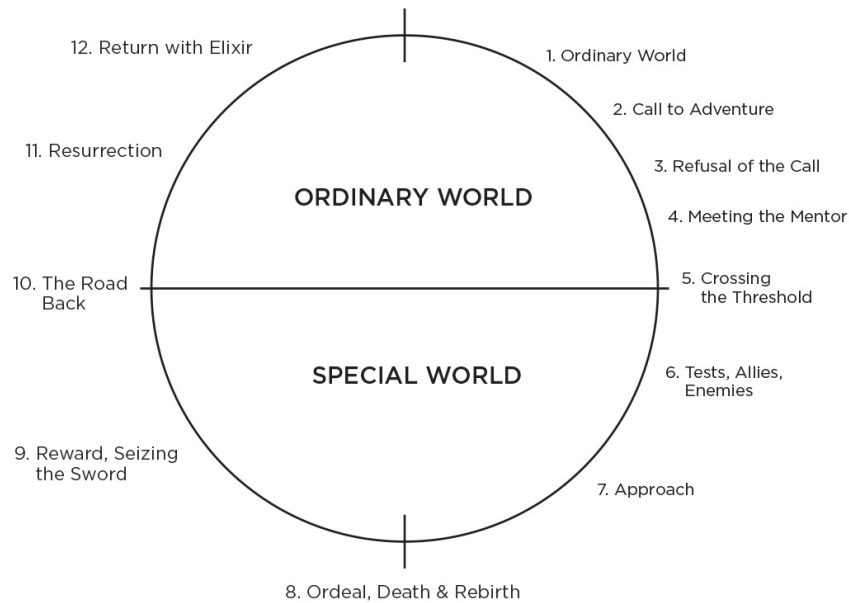


Figure 4.25 *The Hero's Journey*.
 (source: <http://www.thewritersjourney.com/graphictwo.gif>)

This duality informs one of the core themes of the album, which is represented by two distinct sound worlds. The ‘simulated world’ segments take up the main body of the album, while ‘ordinary world’ segments usually appear and disappear abruptly, breaking the linearity of the monomyth. Apart from thematic and harmonic content, to further distinguish between the ‘simulated world’ and ‘ordinary world’ segments, I have used two types of reverb plugins; ‘algorithmic’ and ‘convolution’. Being the most realistic, convolution reverbs proved to be the obvious choice for ‘ordinary world’ segments, while algorithmic reverbs, driven by mathematical formulas, proved to be a fitting choice for the ‘simulated world’ segments.

Chion shows the close yet dissimilar relationship between auditory and visual perceptions by pointing out how one could influence or even trick the other.²¹¹ Take away the visual element of any film, and we realise that a remarkable amount of information is still communicated to us through sound. Audio information

²¹¹ Chion, M. (1994) *Audio-Vision. Sound on Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press.

transforms into a visual image in our minds. It is possible to identify the position of the sound source and the size and nature of the room from which the sound has originated. In *Paradise Lost*, I exploited this intrinsic audio-visual relationship of the brain as a storytelling device. Though such subtleties can hardly reach the listener, nevertheless, it demonstrates the level of thought that went into the production and compositional process of *Paradise Lost*.

Situated at either end of the album, '*Heads Out*' and '*Tails Out*' are tape-era jargon, indicating whether the tape is rolled to the beginning or the end. The names refer to two aspects of the album: (a) the fact that tape technologies are a crucial part of the album, both in engineering and the narrative, and (b) they are reminiscent of 'prologue' and 'epilogue' sections of a novel, emphasizing the narrative element of the album. Musically, there is also a thematic connection between the two. *Heads Out* opens with a reversed audio fragment taken from the very ending of *Tails out*. Playing the album in repeat would create the illusion of an endless loop, symbolising the cyclic nature of the monomyth.

In the second track, *Mesaoria by Dawn*, we are introduced to the 'ordinary world', the point of departure of the story. This is the world the protagonist of the story inhabits. The name 'Mesaoria' purposely introduces specific geography. As demonstrated by Campbell, the point of departure is a crucial part of a mythological story. A famous example is the departure of Odysseus from his homeland Ithaca. The 'ordinary world' is free of conflict and tension, business as usual, just another day for its inhabitants. In *Mesaoria by Dawn*, the use of a simple minor-seventh chord held for the entire length of the piece, the static harmony and the simplicity of its texture exemplify this notion.²¹²

Init. Sequence introduces the SimEX machine, the device used for leaving the 'ordinary world' to enter 'simulation'. This transition is depicted in the two

²¹² In a recent empirical study, Lahdelma and Eerola found that minor and major seventh chords are relatively effective at conveying nostalgia. See Lahdelma, I. and Eerola, T. (2016). Single chords convey distinct emotional qualities to both naïve and expert listeners. *Psychology of Music*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 37-54; Lahdelma, I. and Eerola, T. (2015). Theoretical proposals on how vertical harmony may convey nostalgia and longing in music. *Empirical Musicology Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 245-263.

contrasting sections of the piece, primarily punctuated by a dramatic change of instrumentation. In the first section, the tonality constantly goes back and forth from major to minor. The idea was to avoid having any sense of direction or a

Table 4.2 The comparison of *Paradise Lost*'s storyline with the Hero's Journey.

| Comparison of the Monomyth with the structure of <i>Paradise Lost</i> | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| | Track names | Hero's Journey (Campbell) | Paradise Lost (Storyline) |
| ACT I | 1. Heads Out | | Prologue |
| | 2. Mesaoria by Dawn | Ordinary world | Actual place in Cyprus |
| | 3. Init. Sequence | | Introducing the SimEx machine |
| | 4. Memory Initialized | | Introducing the SimEx machine |
| | 5. Long Lost | The call to adventure / meeting the mentor | The protagonist is now aware of Memory Lane. |
| | 6. Stranded in Time | Crossing the first threshold | |
| ACT II | 7. Wait for Me | Belly of the whale | |
| | 8. Alive Again | The road of trials | Devoured by the thought of reaching Memory Lane |
| | 9. Worn by Them All | The road of trials | Journey begins |
| | 10. My Toy Telephone | The road of trials | |
| | 11. Sync Lost | The road of trials | SimEx machine malfunction |
| | 12. Vorticon Invasion | The road of trials | Memories |
| | 13. First Letter | The road of trials | Memories |
| | 14. Episodic Buffer | The road of trials | |
| | 15. Dream of the Century | The woman as temptress | SimEx advertisements |
| | 16. Dropout | | SimEx machine malfunction |
| ACT III | 17. Off the Beat | | Approaching Memory Lane |
| | 18. Memory Lane | Ultimate boon / Refusal of the return | The protagonist decides to stay in Memory Lane |
| | 19. A Crack in Space | Master of two worlds | |
| | 20. Tails Out | | Epilogue |

harmonic goal; instead, to create a sense of persistent duality, one that symbolises the duality of the ‘ordinary world’ and ‘simulation’. At the end of the first section, we hear a robotic voice say:

‘Please make yourself comfortable, your experience is about to begin’

openly demanding the listener's full attention; this proclamation is for both the protagonist and the listener.

Memory Initialised is comprised of three distinct sections. Each of the consequent sections gradually increases the energy of the piece through denser orchestration and louder passages. This build-up represents the gradual shift from the ‘ordinary world’ to ‘simulation’. At 0:50, we hear the words ‘memory initialised’. Here, it is suggested that the protagonist is about to enter the simulated world, where he will begin experiencing his childhood memories. The third and final section of the piece starts at 1:50 with a relatively sparse arrangement that gradually reaches a chaotic finale. To give an impression of a mechanical malfunction, the drums were distorted with a flanger effect. The chaotic ending of the piece depicts shifting realities, the disorientation one might experience in the immediate aftermath of entering the simulation. At the very end *Long Lost*, a previously unidentified person speaks:

‘...although you believe that everything is lost, there is one final hope. Find Memory Lane...’

This is an indication that the ‘hero’s journey’ is about to begin. There is now a goal, to reach ‘Memory Lane’; and a reason, to begin anew, because ‘everything is lost’. This is a critical point of the storyline where we are introduced to a mythological story's ‘mentor’ archetype. For Campbell, such a figure represents a kind and a protecting entity who ‘promise that the peace of Paradise [...] is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past’.²¹³ Vogler²¹⁴ proposes the mentor archetype in several variations, one of which is the ‘dark mentor’, who misleads or lures the hero into danger. Since *Memory Lane* is a

²¹³ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

²¹⁴ Vogler, *op. cit.*, p. 44

destination that offers an ‘escape’ instead of motivation for a rebirth, the guidance of the mentor in *Paradise Lost* falls under the ‘dark mentor’ archetype.

Another point of interest is the ending of *Stranded in Time* where the transition from ‘simulation’ to ‘ordinary world’ is suggested through an abrupt change of mood. The protagonist is in a lucid dream state, experiencing his childhood through the simulation machine and partly aware of his bleak surroundings. This half-awake state is a recurring theme that breaks the linearity of the story. In the same sequence, three different layers interact with each other. First, a tremolo Rhodes is introduced with a chromatic melodic line. Secondly, a drum sequencer is used to simulate the sound of gunfire. The remaining layer is a plain synth sound with an LFO altering its pitch. This can be heard at 2:28, panning from right to left. Combining these layers creates a dark, sound world with a purpose to inflict a sense of ambiguity. On the other hand, the childhood voices suggest the protagonist might have already found Memory Lane and is experiencing his memories through the facilities he found there. This theme will be revisited in *Sync Lost* and *Dropout*.

Wait for Me refers to the protagonist's journey, who is by now eager to reach the so-called ‘Memory Lane’. The idea was to create a sense of passage of time by implying a ticking clock without its literal sound. The simultaneity of two Kalimbas in a repetitive pattern represents a ticking clock. This can be heard from the beginning of the piece until 1:56. A transitional section led by the string ensemble (Figure 4.26) at 3:40 provides a seamless connection to the next piece. *Wait for Me* also acts as the transition to ACT II. In a mythological story, this is a threshold through which the hero travels from the ‘ordinary world’ to the ‘special world’. Campbell symbolises this transition as ‘the belly of the whale’,²¹⁵ though sometimes it is referred to as the ‘magical threshold’ or simply ‘crossing the threshold’. Often, the transition is not trouble-free, and the hero might appear to have died at some point. The name of the next piece, *Alive Again*, is a direct reference to this deception.

According to Vogler, the second act of a mythological story begins with ‘tests, allies and enemies’, where the hero makes new friends, meets a sidekick, or has to make a

²¹⁵ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

choice whom to trust.²¹⁶ In *Alive Again*, the protagonist assumes the job of a missionary, spreading the word about ‘Memory Lane’ of which he has come to believe to be the salvation of humanity. The use of two different vocalists depicts his followers or friends that he met along the way. Toward the end of the piece, the repetitive lyrical passage: ‘I’m going to find my way to Memory Lane’ guides the listener through the narrative and propels the story forward.

Starting from *Worn by Them All* and throughout a significant portion of ACT II, the linearity of the monomyth is abandoned until *Dream of the Century*, with a series of pieces that present various childhood memories of the protagonist. The purpose of this diversion is to question whether the protagonist has already found Memory Lane, experiencing these memories within a simulation machine, or whether he is still on his journey, reminiscing his childhood in anticipation towards Memory Lane. The listener is not presented with clear definitions until some clues appear in later pieces.



Figure 4.26 String arrangement from *Wait for Me*.

Sync Lost explores the simultaneity of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds. Chion defines diegetic as any sound in sync with the action on screen (such as dialogue) and nondiegetic as any sound not ‘heard’ by the actors on screen, such as background music.²¹⁷ To achieve a similar effect, I used several layers of sound that work independently using reverberation techniques to further the illusion. The bottom

²¹⁶ Vogler, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²¹⁷ Chion, *op. cit.*

layer, or the background, is filled by a low-pitched pitch-modulating synthesizer line. The heart-beat-like sound is also created using a synthesizer. A reverberant guitar provides the final layer. The idea of the guitar was to suggest the background music, such to be found, for example, in a waiting lobby. The EQ of the guitar is altered drastically to make it sound as if it is coming out from inferior speakers. The addition of the reverb also places this imaginary speaker into a rather large room.

There is a transition into a contrasting section midway through the piece, around 1:12. At 1:18, we hear a sound taken from the 80s cartoon sound libraries. This particular sound was most often used for scene transitions in sci-fi oriented cartoons. This section reintroduces the ‘lucid dreaming’ theme first heard at the ending of *Stranded in Time*. To give the illusion of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds appearing simultaneously, I created two distinct sound spaces. The first of which is achieved by the sound of Rhodes, which was recorded using the binaural recording technique. This creates an illusion of a small room, therefore, a relatable diegetic sound world. The rest of the sounds are non-diegetic; wind, worn tape noise and child speech. The use of two different reverberation techniques suggests two sound worlds are not in the same space, establishing the lucid dreaming state, where dream and reality coalesce.

Episodic Buffer takes its name from a component of Baddeley and Hitch’s working memory model, a study that investigates the nature of human memory.²¹⁸ The piece is built on two contrasting sections. The foreboding first section reintroduces the Geiger counter-like sounds from the first piece. The first section ends at 1:07. After a brief pause, we hear the ‘pop’ sound of the ‘2-pop’ audio-visual synchronisation method.²¹⁹ This subtle hint suggests that the protagonist is, in fact, inside the simulation, experiencing memory after memory, where the ‘pop’ sound is a transition to the next.

²¹⁸ Baddeley, A. D., and Hitch, G. (1974). Working memory. In G.H. Bower (Ed.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation: Advances in Research and Theory*. New York: Academic Press, Vol. 8, pp. 47-89.

²¹⁹ 2-pop is an audio-visual synchronisation method used in television and post-production. A short audio tone that sounds like a ‘pop’ is placed at the end of a visual countdown, synchronised at number 2.

Dreamer's Paradise corresponds to 'meeting with the goddess' of Campbell's mythological story structure. Here, the protagonist is tempted to abandon his quest in favour to indulge himself in more pleasurable activities. Here, we are also led to believe that he might have already found Memory Lane since such a place, a tape shop only exists in Memory Lane. The overall mood of the piece is meant to represent some sort of an advertising jingle of 'Dreamer's Paradise', a supposed tape shop located in Memory Lane. This is visualised on a postcard discussed earlier (Figure 4.9). The lyrics also reflect a sales pitch:

'Dream of the century, to wash away the nightmare, cleanse us of despair, let's dream on...'

'Let's put you under and wake up to a new world. One built just for you. Let's dream on, dream away!'

'Dream of the century' is a direct translation taken from a news snippet from the previous piece. At 2:12, we hear the same 'jingle' which first appeared in the previous piece, establishing a connection between the two pieces. At 2:29, the mood of the piece takes a dramatic turn. Here, the sales pitch style of the lyrics continues, trying to convince prospective customers that living inside a simulation is their only salvation:

'Live the life of your dreams by living the dreams of your life.'

Dropout serves as a short interlude, a dark sound world in contrast to the joyful mood of the previous piece. A machine malfunction wakes the protagonist from his simulated experience. In a half-awaken altered state, he hears voices from his childhood, though everything is in a blur, and he cannot make sense of his surroundings or the voices. This is depicted with an ominous atmosphere with tremolo Rhodes, which by now is established as a recurring element, appearing in similarly dark atmospheric sections of the album. We also hear the pitch-modulated chimes, another established recurring element.

Off The Beat is the beginning of ACT III. The protagonist is now nearing Memory Lane, the ultimate destination of the storyline. However, the journey has taken its toll, and he is suffering from altered state withdrawal symptoms. At this point, he is unable to distinguish reality from fantasy. To portray this, I have edited the vocals

with such effects as reversed reverbs, pitch and time-shifting to suggest a hallucinatory state. These effects can be heard in the section starting at 2:10. The piece gradually reaches its emotional climax, with the final chorus starting at 3:38. Towards the end of the piece, the lyrics suggest the hallucinatory state is suppressed:

'I can see the lights up ahead. The dream must be real. I made it home.'

Memory Lane is the climactic section of the album; it is the ultimate destination of the storyline. The piece combines two of Campbell's key mythological plot points into one, 'the ultimate boon' and 'refusal of the return'. This is reflected in the two structural sections that make up the piece. In the first section, 'the ultimate boon', the lyrics and the general mood are reminiscent of childish excitement. This is the prize in which the protagonist went on the journey to get. Since this is a significant plot point, I needed the music and the lyrics to be straightforward. Just before each chorus, at 1:14 and 2:08, we hear the words 'welcome to the Memory Lane', spoken by a robotic voice. The idea here was to imply a mixture of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds, where the robotic voice is a diegetic sound taking place within the real world.

At 2:40, we hear the words 'soon the world outside will cease to exist', after which the music and the entire storyline enters the final climactic section: 'refusal of the return'. At 3:06, the arrangement gets increasingly denser and energetic. The gradual appearance of various instruments culminates with these final words of the album:

*'I'll never go back to the world you made
I'll never return to your reality
I'll dream inside my world, time and time again
I'll dream upon a world...'*

We are led to believe that the protagonist has chosen the route of 'escape' and that he is not going back to his settlement to inform his fellow settlers of the wonders he has seen.

A Crack in Space is the conclusion of the storyline. The name of the piece is a reference to the novel 'The crack in space' by Philip K. Dick. In the novel, 'the crack in space' refers to a portal to a parallel world. I chose this name both as a homage to Dick and as an indication that the story of the album has taken an unexpected turn. Campbell epitomises this portion of the storyline as 'master of two worlds' where the hero 'no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity'. After finding and spending some time in Memory Lane, his ambitions are fulfilled; he transcends to achieve a balance between the 'ordinary world' and the 'simulated world'. The piece is based around an ostinato pattern, symbolising the spiritual awakening of the protagonist. Also, the repetitive nature of the entire piece is meant to halt the direction of the storyline. This suggests an uncertainty where we do not necessarily know whether the protagonist has decided to stay in Memory Lane or return to his home with this newfound information to share with his fellow settlers. We do not even know whether he left the settlement in the first place. In every practical sense, he might still be at his initial settlement, experiencing the whole journey through a simulation, believing to be on an important quest. This compares with the butterfly parable of the Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu.²²⁰

²²⁰ 'Once upon a time, I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither. Soon I awaked. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man.' Chuang Tzu (c. 369 – 286 BC).

Chapter 5 : Conclusion

5.1 Results

This portfolio and accompanying commentary addressed the intersection of the narrative concept album and transmedial storyworlds, exemplified as ‘creating small worlds’. It is an approach where diverse concepts, narrativity and visual aspects unfold across multiple forms of media, presenting an immersive and interconnected world for the listener to explore. For me, this is a new medium that is closer to a novel or a film than to a music album.

From 2015 to 2019, my research span from learning to work in a professional recording studio to improving my mixing and engineering knowledge; from studying storytelling methods to building an elaborate storyline of my own; and finally, from studying cinematography to creating a visual world and filming a short film. My portfolio piece *Paradise Lost* and the use of transmedial storytelling, including the accompanying 22-minute film, is the culmination of my research and the representation of a concept album having a world of its own.

In the light of my research, I consider *Paradise Lost* to be a nostalgia driven narrative concept album told across media. My research led me to define *Paradise Lost* as having the qualities of a narrative concept album, while its storyworld and promotional campaign fit with Henry Jenkins’ transmedial storyworlds and Jan-Noël Thon’s transmedial narratology. I have also identified that any music could be considered *transmedial* if it exists in different forms of media (i.e., Michael Jackson songs and their elaborate music videos and concert performances). On the other hand, albums that utilise *transmedial storytelling* are the ones that have a concept and a storyworld, to begin with. In most cases, record labels use different forms of media for promotional purposes and not as an artistic intention. While existing on different forms of media means they are transmedial; it does not necessarily mean that these works are conceptually transmedial storyworlds. What puts transmedial storyworlds apart is a conscious effort to enrich the experience and communicate the concept of the album to the listener.

The results of my research can be summarised in the following way: Firstly, I adopted nostalgia as the primary concept and aimed to project it indirectly. To achieve this, every intricate detail of the work, even at a technical level, such as mixing and mastering, involved some form of nostalgia. Secondly, I explored how narrativity could be used to interact with musical material. More importantly, I explored the usefulness of the monomyth as a structural and compositional plan for an album with cinematic qualities. Finally, I built a world (characters, imaginary locations, and brands) around the album's concepts and narrative. Adapting the concept of transmedial storytelling, the world comes to life through various forms of media; illustrations, postcards, booklets, cassette tapes, blog posts and a short film. Each of these is a piece of the puzzle, scattered through various forms of media. The listener is invited to build the bigger picture in the order and in the amount he or she sees fit.

5.2 The future

My next step would be to explore concept albums further, look for new ways of expression and innovation, and utilize technological advancements, such as virtual reality headsets, interactive apps, or audio-visual installations in exciting new ways. I plan to release several albums, each having a distinct world of their own, established by their individual production and visual aesthetics.

I would also like to explore and expand the storyworld initiated with *Tales from the Future* and further expanded with *Paradise Lost*. Perhaps a trilogy of albums that tell a different story but that take place in the same storyworld. Furthermore, I believe that nostalgia, one way or another, will always be an omnipresent element in my music. While nostalgia may seem to be a 'trendy' notion, particularly in popular culture, I believe that nostalgia is here to stay, though it will inevitably be reinvented and shall undoubtedly evolve into different forms. It is, after all, a fundamental human condition.

5.3 Omissions

What this research omitted regarding the concept album is the issue with surround sound. As early as the 1970s, engineers experimented with quadraphonic sound (i.e., four channels instead of the usual two). When home theatre systems became widely available due to the popularity of DVDs in the 1990s, engineers began experimenting with surround sound, and in the early 2000s, DVD-A was introduced. Since surround sound opens the doors to a potentially more immersive and cinematic experience, it is an ideal complement to concept albums.

Some artists have embraced and recognised the creative potential of surround sound, one particularly good example being Steven Willson. On the other hand, many engineers disliked the idea and did not know what to do with all the extra channels. Surprisingly, most of the surround sound mixes are not as imaginative and merely mimic an ambience from which the band or the music is playing. Perhaps due to this, DVD-A did not catch on, and with the rapid decrease in the interest in home theatre systems, it soon became a relic of the past. Although initially I was interested in surround sound, I ultimately decided against it as I too began to see it as a dead-end.²²¹ However, if circumstances change and surround sound would be widely available at homes in the future, I would still like to explore this immersive experience.

5.4 Epilogue

In *Retromania*, Reynolds observes that ‘sensation of moving forward grew fainter’ in the new millennium.²²² ‘Instead of being about itself, 2000s has been about every other decade happening again all at once’. One remembers a similar tendency in the neoclassicism of the 20th century. Perhaps the reason lies outside the field of music. Perhaps music, and contemporary art in general, is also subject to what archaeologists call ‘pattern exhaustion’, a phase of stylistic repetition rather than

²²¹ Although a new format called ‘Dolby Atmos’ has been developed in recent years, and has since found its way into music productions, we are yet to see how it will pan out in the long run.

²²² Reynolds, *op. cit.*

variation. The ramifications of this mean that collective conscious periodically reaches a creative dead end, after which past material is recycled.

In the early 90's, computer graphics seemed crude and lacked realism. Today, we rebrand it as 'pixel art'. It is now a style, not an inadequacy. Likewise, audio engineers of the tape era complained about the inherent shortcomings of recording to tape. When digital recording finally arrived, it is of no surprise that we see plugins that recreate tape 'hiss'. It seems nostalgia surrounds us like a heavy blanket, a 'warm' and cosy feeling we are unwilling to part with.

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Appendix A: Lyrics

Lyrics are written by Inal Bilsel and Ayca Garip

Long Lost

I can see a picture, but I just can't make it out
mnemonic contamination, the world I know is fading out
a few drops of solution, maybe this will clarify
I wonder why I stay, why don't I leave?
Even though I believe it's

Paradise lost
(the world I know, has ceased to exist)
paradise
(nothing is left of it)
long lost
(you can only Imagine)
paradise Lost
(how it must have been, a long time ago, when it was a...)
Paradise
(now try to remember...)
long lost
(...your childhood)

Take me to a time and a place my mind can recognize
like a colour I can't see or a taste I can't identify
all my senses fail to serve me
in a state of altered reality, this must be my...

paradise lost
(in a manufactured reality)

paradise

(we can only imagine)

long lost

(how it must have been to live in a green world)

paradise lost

(now gone forever)

paradise

(now try to remember...)

long lost

(...the end)

(I wonder why you stay, why don't you leave? Even though you believe that everything is lost, there's one final hope. Find Memory Lane...)

Alive Again

Left, to feel alive again
there's a place for us to go
a place for the seekers
a place of last resort
a destination for the lost survivors

I used to lie used to fly away
I refuse to live a life in a stoic haze
I'll rebuild and justify my reality
I choose to lie choose to fly away

Take the Earth as a token
a souvenir of what is nevermore
why should I refrain from my speculations
realizing a new beginning

I used to lie used to fly away
I refuse to live a life in a stoic haze
I'll rebuild and justify my reality
I choose to lie choose to fly away

I'm going to find my way to Memory Lane

Toy Telephone

I used to call you with my toy telephone
I used to call you “When are you coming back?”

I used to call you with my toy telephone
now I don’t hear from you “Please come back”

Blue eyes, red headset, yellow cable
My telephone where are you?

My telephone where are you?
I still remember how you looked
You got blue eyes, red headset, yellow cable

I used to call you, where are you now?
I still remember how we parted
Blue smiles, red teary eyes, broken promises
Blue smiles, red teary eyes, broken promises

Dream of the Century

'Dream of the century,
to wash away the nightmare!'
cleanse us of despair
let's dream on...

If only I could seal this cave for good
then I'll never be lost
content in my world

'Let's put you under, and wake up to a new world, one built just for you'
Let's dream on, dream away...

(What could you possibly live that would be better?)

'Live the life of your dreams by living the dreams of your life!'

(Your life begins with The Dream of the Century!)

If I could hide away inside this cave
shadows will serve me a new reality
if only I could seal this cave for good
then I'll never be lost
Content in my world

Off the Beat

Feeling always off the beat
Don't show me to my seat
I can't find my way to the secret
Just keep it
This feeling, bitter-sweet
Don't know how to stand the heat
The wisdom you may seek
You won't hear while you speak

I can see the lights up ahead
The dream must be real
I made it home

Get some sleep
Drive yourself home
Think something deep
Keeping stories under my feet
it's not a feat

Wide awake in dirty sheets
Expectations can be reached
Don't panic and get some sleep
This wisdom, bittersweet

I can see the lights up ahead
The dream must be real, I made it home
I'm here and now, this must be real
I made it somehow, all on my own
Just like a child, I feel the thrill
I made it home, I'm alive again.

Memory Lane

Strolling down the streets
Neon bathed sights
All the 'tape heads' swarm here at night
'Remembrance junkies' of the times
The stores are full of memories
and that's why we're all summoned here
Something tells me there'll be no way out
(Welcome to Memory Lane)

Memories from a long lost time
they keep calling, haunting me
Choices I've made; all the people, their faces
Places I've been, are waiting for my return

Staring at the shopfronts
There's one with a den of its own
Let the purists have it their way
But I'll be heading down
Shelves are stacked with thrilling tapes
"show me the one where I can fly"
there's little doubt that I'll be here to stay
(Welcome to Memory Lane)

Memories from a long lost time
they keep calling, haunting me
Choices I've made; all the people, their faces
Places I've been, are waiting for my return

The dim basement is almost full
Spinning tapes and flashing lights
Guide everyone in their sweet slumber
There's no time to waste

Show me to my pod

Soon the world outside will cease to exist

I'll never go back to the world you made

I'll never return to your reality

I'll dream inside my world, time and time again

I'll dream upon a world...

Appendix B

Excerpt from Plánites exhibition booklet*

The work of composer Inal Bilsel opens a window into an imaginary future dystopia, where human alienation and melancholia go hand in hand with new, artificial ways of enjoying emotions and experiences. Over the past few years, Bilsel has been developing a personal artistic universe that borrows elements from science fiction —where the main premise is that the world has been destroyed by nuclear warfare, attempts to colonise Mars have failed, and humans are now trapped on a desolate Earth with not much left to make their lives happy. As a result, a company called SimEx (Simulated Experience) emerged, that can offer people intense emotional and sensory experiences by connecting the human brain to a computer.

The SimEx machines work with SimTapes, which look like typical audio cassettes and allow users to choose what kind of experience they want to have, or even relive the same experience over and over again. For Bilsel, the people in this imaginary world use the SimTapes to “artificially escape the depressive realities they are faced with;” this whole concept informs Bilsel’s compositional work in many different media, from live audiovisual performances to video art and stand-alone music albums.

For Plánites, Bilsel revisits his SimTape dystopia with “Tape Den”, an audiovisual installation in the form of a fictional museum exhibition that shows different kinds of SimTapes. Writing a new chapter in Bilsel's storyline, the work is a nod to the early-19th-century opium dens found in London, Paris or the American East Coast, where people would gather and lay down to inhale the hallucinatory vapours of Chinese opium. With its quasi-museological layout, ‘Tape Den’ highlights the connection between fact and fiction in Bilsel's work, where temporalities blend and made-up objects are used as evidence for the existence of a future world in present tense.

**Kiriakos Spirou, Pafos2017, European Capital of Culture. Ed.: Elena Parpa.*