

A Mythical and Ritualistic Approach to  
Audiovisual Scoring, from Documentary  
to Multimedia

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Alfons Conde del Campo, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alfons', written in a cursive style.

Date: March 2, 2019

## Abstract

This research examines the multidisciplinary approaches to the matter of narrative and emotion in music for visual media, focusing on the mythical and ritualistic aspects that stand at the core of every audiovisual composition. Myth, ritual, and symbol, have a strong interconnection with narrative and consequently are frequently analysed in the context of the media arts. However, music is typically omitted from such analysis, or just tangentially mentioned. I aim to determine the validity of this approach in different audiovisual genres, from film to multimedia projects, through the presentation of the methodology I apply both to my academic teaching and in my compositional output.

First, I will look at the existing debates about the narrativization of music, and the known methodologies in composing for audiovisuals. Then, I will perform an in-depth analysis of narrative theory: classifying the different theories by chronologically introducing the theorists who formulated them, and showing how they are interrelated. Myth is a central concept in some of these theories, so I will explain the term and its relationship with narrative. I will then go one step further and explore myth-ritual theory, and analyse how myth and ritual can be applied to storytelling in audiovisual media. Music will then be integrated on that analysis, in the context of modern filmmaking and audiovisual theories, the works of others, my personal teachings, and my compositional portfolio.

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## **List of illustrative material**

The following illustrative material can be found on a separate bound document provided in addition to the main body of this thesis. A USB card accompanies such document.

### **1. Valltorta (2014)**

#### **▪ Audio**

- Electronic music:

CAVERN FIRST            6:26

CAVERN SECOND        7:11

- Woodwind Quintet:

FLASHBACK              3:27

SCENE 1                 0:56

SCENE 1B                2:06

SCENE 2                 1:48

SCENE 3                 0:57

SCENE 3B                1:35

SCENE 4                 0:52

SCENE 5                 1:07

SCENE 6                 2:05

SCENE 8                 1:10

- **Scores**

- VALLTORTA WOODWIND QUINTET SCORE

- VALLTORTA STORYBOARD

## **2. The Mystery of the King of Kinema (2014)**

- **Audio**

- DUSK I – Piano 2:19

- DUSK II – Orchestra 2:26

- MAX THEME I – Piano 2:33

- MAX THEME II – Orchestra 2:52

- NOONTIDE – Piano 3:18

- SEA WALTZ – Piano 3:44

- **Scores**

- DUSK I – Piano

- DUSK II – Orchestra

- MAX THEME I – Piano

- MAX THEME II – Orchestra

- NOONTIDE – Piano

- SEA WALTZ – Piano

### **3. The Harmony of the Spheres (2016)**

- **Audio**

THE HARMONY OF THE SPHERES      15:19

### **4. Whence Comes the Rain (2017)**

- **Audio**

WHENCE COMES THE RAIN      3:13

- **Video**

RAIN DANCE (Workprint)

- **Scores**

RAIN DANCE

### **5. Bluebeard (2018)**

- **Audio**

BLUEBEARD      15:16

- **Video**

BLUEBEARD KULTURTEMPLET VIDEO

- **Scores**

BLUEBEARD FOR CHOIR

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research rationale and outline

Throughout my career as a composer and audiovisual music professor, I have always tried to conjugate my own approach to scoring audiovisuals with the personal scoring methodology I was teaching my students. I devised those techniques after attending school myself and realising that I was still lacking a basic understanding of the mechanisms and interactions between music and narrative, and that such shortcoming was leading to inspirational blockages. I did extensive research on narratology and screenwriting theory, and came up with a series of tools that strongly related music to the cogs and structure of audiovisual narrative, as used on a screenplay or, for that matter, on any type of script. I examined the elements of archetypal screenplay structures, the narrative paradigms of story theorists, and also the more dedicated theoretical methodologies in film scoring—mostly focusing on the different functions of music when it is paired with visuals—as they are nowadays commonly taught.

I had initially charted a road map to be used at my own job as an audiovisual composer, but soon enough I started teaching. My compositional concerns resonated with my students, and the methodology I proposed seemed to be valuable for them. Over and above the more prosaic details, such as where the music starts or ends, or what instrumentation should be chosen, my focus was on the *conceptualisation of the narrative core in musical terms*. I used common screenwriting vocabulary, like *theme*, *plot*, *subplot*, or *subtext*. I delineated the driving forces in a story, namely the protagonist's internal or external goals, the obstacles hindering those goals, and the conflict aroused. We studied characterisation (when applicable) and structure. I

introduced master plots—originated on the narrative patterns, character archetypes, and symbols that conformed myths—realizing right away that the latter entailed a far more in-depth study. Furthermore, we observed how the stories of those master plots transformed when viewed through the lens of a different genre—for example, a comedy version of a forbidden love master plot, such as the myth of Cupid and Psyche, or Romeo and Juliet.

A few years ago, and coinciding with the commission of a project called *Valltorta*, I started delving into prehistory and archaeoacoustics, and learnt that only recently have archaeologists and anthropologists begun to ascertain the importance of sound in primeval societies. From that point, I tried to expose the analogies between the rituals of those societies and our modern audiovisuals, a matter that has only been tangentially approached in compositional research; ever since the onset of the earliest hominids and up to our era of 3D and Dolby Atmos, music and sound have always had a mystic, transcendental, infinite intent, whether in the form of ancient rituals performed in deep caverns, organ drones played in medieval cathedrals, silent films, modern cinema, music theatre, or electronics-based sonic art installations.

My research work led to a deeper exploration of ritual and myth through history, from ancient to modern times, and thereupon to a more thorough focus on the mythical and ritualistic aspects of audiovisual storytelling. Societies cannot exist without myth and rituals, since they establish our worldview. For that reason, any human narrative endeavour—and audiovisual music is no exception—will inevitably be shaped by them. This compositional portfolio, featuring works written between 2014 and 2018, represents the implementation of such mythical and ritualistic approach, as a means of solving the problem of narrative conceptualization in audiovisual music. *Valltorta* (30:00) is a multimedia project about time travel,

involving music, dance, and advanced 3D visuals. *The Mystery of the King of Kinema* (19:00) is a biographical documentary on the figure of Max Linder, a silent film comedian. *The Harmony of the Spheres* (15:20), about the visualisation of music, is the only project in the portfolio that was not commissioned, and it allowed me to explore aspects of myth that relate to science. *Whence Comes the Rain* (3:13) is an animated short with strong mythical links, and *Bluebeard* (13:16) is a personal vision of the famous fairy tale, created for an upcoming eponymously titled film production.

The chapters previous to the compositional methodology of the portfolio will introduce the framework for my musical journey. This dissertation does not intend to be a study on musicology, but it is important to establish a detailed research context, since my investigation is based on theories about myth, ritual, and narrative, from a diversity of disciplines, that have existed and been developed for a long time. It is essential, then, to start from the origins, and gradually unravel the path leading to the presentation of mythology and sacred or profane ritual as intimately linked to narratology. In order to maintain the focus on music, however, the examination of such vast areas of knowledge has been reduced to the main exponents, and to the part of their investigations that may be more relevant for the topic at hand.

## **1.2 The narrative nature of music**

The debate about music being a non-representational art form that is nonetheless capable of arousing precise emotions in human beings has been going on for a long time. In this regard, American philosopher Kendall Walton raises an interesting issue in his essay ‘Listening with Imagination: Is Music Representational?’:

Opera orchestras and music on the soundtracks of films frequently serve to ‘describe’ the characters and the action, reinforcing or supplementing or

qualifying the words or images. Mere titles often suffice to make music patently representational; indeed I cannot imagine music which an appropriate title could not render representational. Music stands ready to take on an explicit representational function at the slightest provocation. If music can be nudged so easily into obvious representationality, can we be confident that without the nudge it is not representational at all? Most, if not all, music is expressive in one way or another, and its expressiveness surely has a lot to do with its susceptibility to being made explicitly representational. To be expressive is to bear a significant relation to human emotions or feelings or whatever it is that is expressed. Why doesn't this amount to possessing extramusical 'meanings,' and why shouldn't expressiveness count as a species of representation? What is to stop us from saying that exuberant or anguished music represents exuberance or anguish, or instances thereof?<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of his essay, Walton questions formalist theorists who will disregard programme music as representational (i.e. depicting recognisable objects, people, actions, emotions) by arguing that pure, 'absolute' music is solely non-representational sound, and that what gives programme music the capacity to become representational is its association with extraneous narrative elements.<sup>2</sup> On this point, Walton objects that, first off, the audible boundaries between absolute and programme music may be blurred, and later concludes that sound by itself is an 'introspective' art with an even greater power to evoke emotions and feelings than visual arts.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, while music seems to get the listener to experience a certain (imagined) feeling without actually providing any fictional element, 'literary and pictorial representations establish fictional worlds'.

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<sup>1</sup> Walton, Kendall, 'Listening with Imagination: Is Music Representational?', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52 (1994), 47-61.

<sup>2</sup> 'When music—what taken by itself would seem to be 'absolute' music—teams up with words or images, the music often makes definite representational contributions to the whole, rather than merely accompanying other representational elements.' Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'Aural experiences may be better suited than visual ones to count as, fictionally, experiences of feelings or emotions; experiences of sounds, as we construe them, may be more naturally imagined to be experiences of feelings or emotions than experiences of sights are.' Ibid.

Audiences of audiovisual works—which extend the scope of literature and traditional visual arts—agree indeed on how moving fiction can be, and the narrative introduced by it has been the subject of numerous theories in a wide range of disciplines, some of them touching on the aforementioned fictional worlds. Assuming that ‘absolute’ music—or just *music*, as we have observed— doesn’t, in fact, need to combine with other art forms or the fictional worlds they suggest in order to generate emotions, the question arises as to whether music in visual media, which works, as Walton states, by ‘reinforcing or supplementing or qualifying the words or images’, is susceptible of being integrated into those theories.

### **1.3 Music in audiovisuals**

Considering the huge amount of theories and analysis about film and audiovisual narrative, the approaches of theoreticians on the subject of music in visual media are quite scarce. Among these, and on the time span of almost a century, the names of Theodor W. Adorno, Hanns Eisler, Claudia Gorbman, Royal Brown, Kathryn Kalinak, Irwin Bazelon, or Anahid Kassabian, stand out as deserving attention for the keenness of their scholarship. It is worth noting that, despite the fact that some of these earlier analyses were performed exclusively on film music—simply because cinema was the first format that associated music to images—most of the concepts discussed can be equally applied to other forms of audiovisuals. And although these scholars may disagree on important issues, there are elements of a mythological and ritualistic appreciation in many of their arguments, even if not always deliberately.

One of the reasons wielded by theoreticians to explain the origin of music associating to images is circumstantial, and has a short-term potential: back in the

days of the first movies, projectors were loud and music was needed to cover up their sound. However, once those projectors were confined to soundproof booths the problem disappeared, yet music remained, forever linked to images. This puzzling partnership music-image brings around the matter of music's non-representationality discussed above. Scholar Anahid Kassabian questions such notion—which even Stravinsky asserted—in the context of film music, arguing that the comparison between post-Enlightenment music (I would make it extensive to the whole Common practice period), intended in origin as 'absolute' music, and music written specifically for visuals—with meaning as a primary goal—is not legitimate<sup>4</sup>. If that wasn't enough, she states that years of exposition to audiovisual music have instilled into audiences a whole signification system that can operate with its own functions<sup>5</sup>. On that note, music psychologist John Sloboda and music semiotician Jean-Jacques Nattiez have both pointed out that music may not be narrative per se, but the *structure of music* can be related to the *structure of a narrative*—<sup>6</sup>perhaps a more clarifying point of view on the subject. But Kassabian's most interesting argument, and one that is relevant to the path of my research, calls upon musicologist Susan McClary's polemic allegation on the politics inherent to all music. Even 'absolute' music's conventions—on harmony, style, genre, rhythm, structure—, she claims, project ideologies on the audiences, because none of these elements can be oblivious to a given socio-cultural environment. At any rate, beyond the controversy about 'pure' or 'absolute' music's representationality, the fact is that these theories validate a duality in audiovisual music—the narrative and the ideological—that happens to be very

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<sup>4</sup> Kassabian, Anahid, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*, (London: Routledge, 2001), 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Sloboda, John, *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), and Nattiez, Jean-Jacques and Abbate, Carolyn, *Music and Discourse*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1990).

much in conformity with the qualities of myth.

Semiotician Marcel Danesi's thoughts on the subject convey the framework for my research:

As Barthes argued [in *Mythologies*], the themes of humanities earliest stories, known as myths, continue to permeate and inform pop culture's story-telling efforts. As in the myths of Prometheus, Hercules, and other ancient heroes, Superman's exploits revolve around a universal mythic theme—the struggle of Good and Evil. This is what makes Superman, or any action hero for that matter, so intuitively appealing to modern audiences...The word 'myth' derives from the Greek *mythos*: 'word,' 'speech,' 'tale of the gods.' It can be defined as a narrative in which the characters are gods, heroes, and mystical beings, in which the plot is about the origin of things or about metaphysical events in human life, and in which the setting is a metaphysical world juxtaposed against the real world. In the beginning stages of human cultures, myths functioned as genuine 'narrative theories' of the world. That is why all cultures have created them to explain their origins....The use of mythic themes and elements in media representations has become so widespread that it is hardly noticed any longer, despite Barthes' cogent warnings in the late 1950s. Implicit myths about the struggle for Good, of the need for heroes to lead us forward, and so on and so forth, constitute the narrative underpinnings of TV programmes, blockbuster movies, advertisements and commercials, and virtually anything that gets 'media air time.'<sup>7</sup>

Different functional techniques have been formulated to write music for audiovisuals.

Composer Earle Hagen standardised in his book 'Scoring For Films' the types of scoring used in commercial films—*dramatic scoring* (or underscoring, non-diegetic music), *source music* (diegetic music) and the hybrid *source scoring*, to which Claudia Gorbman added the category of *song scoring*. On top of these broad classifications, other theorists—including composer Aaron Copland—have included those based on the practical functions of audiovisual music. Peter Larsen listed the enhancing capabilities of music—'intensify or articulate moods already indicated with the aid of other effects: images, dialogue, camera angle, etc.' (which conforms to a physical role), as well as its psychological aspects—'indicate to the spectator how a

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<sup>7</sup> Danesi, Marcel, *Understanding Media Semiotics*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2002).

particular scene is to be understood and experienced’, both in a category of emotional functions.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, other composers/scholars, such as Richard Davies, have suggested a similar approach, and enriched it with additional categories and sub-categories.<sup>9</sup>

When interrogated about their own *modus operandi*, most audiovisual composers will discuss it empirically and in musical terms, for few have attempted to universalise—perhaps rightly so—their narrative approach. Composers are typically not concerned about seemingly remote concepts like myth and ritual, unless the project at hand requires such a specific approach according to the story—and not even then, since the inherent mythological nature of narrative is often concealed, except for experts or the authors themselves. John Williams commented that he had learned *after* scoring ‘Star Wars’ that ‘the success of this film must be due to some cross-cultural connection with the mythic aspects of the film that Campbell described to us later’,<sup>10</sup> which reveals that the work of experienced composers is highly intuitive, or simply based on different parameters.

Narrative is at the centre of our lives. Stories are used constantly as the vehicle of our cultures, to pass on knowledge, to establish behavioural benchmarks, to sway our social interaction. And because myths of all cultures have narrated our world and explained our genesis, in a reciprocal relationship, our omnipresent narratives—audiovisual ones all the more—are informed by myths, albeit incognito. That’s why mythology is so ubiquitous in our audiovisual media, although we may be unaware.

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<sup>8</sup> Larson, Peter, *Film Music*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Davis, Richard, *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, (Boston, MA: Berklee Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Byrd, Craig L., ‘Star Wars 20th Anniversary: Interview with John Williams’, *Film Score Monthly*, 2 (1997), 1.

## **Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Literature review**

#### **2.1.1 A review of narrative theory**

Storytelling has been with us since we experienced the need to explain our world, and has played a substantial role in the development of our culture. The scholarly attempts to decode the elements that constitute narrative start too in ancient times, and span all of history until the present day. For all that, scholars' diversity of disciplines—philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, literary theory—has had an inevitable ascendancy on their analysis; hence their focal point varies. Among these leading minds in narrative theory, we can highlight the names of Aristotle, Saussure, Peirce, Propp, Levi-Strauss, Barthes and Todorov. As we will see, some of these scholars began to assign a capital importance to ancient mythology in the development of narrative. Below we can find a brief description of their contributions on the subject, in an interrelated progression that will subsequently allow an informed approach to the subject of myth.

##### **2.1.1.1 Plot through imitation: Aristotle**

Considered the bedrock of all Western narrative theories, Greek philosopher Aristotle's *Poetics*, written around 330 BC and recovered in Europe around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, built its premise on the idea of imitation or *mimesis*, a term coined originally by Plato. Aristotle sees narration in drama and tragedy as a character performing an action, imitating an action. And through this 'simulated representation'—and the

arrangement of its events in a well-structured plot—we, the audience, are conveyed the same emotions the actor is portraying, thereupon purging them in a beneficial *catharsis* of emotions—a sort of acknowledgement of the might of fate. As in a modern screenplay, narrative cannot rely on what is told off-screen, but on what is done.

### 2.1.1.2 Language as a network of signs - using linguistics to examine narrative: Ferdinand de Saussure

Regarded as the father of Semiology—the study of signs—Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1923) delved deeper into the inner structure of the linguistic sign and proposed a psychological approach to it: a twofold, mutually binding segmentation into *signifier* and *signified*,<sup>11</sup> where the former would be the physical form (a word, an icon, an image, a sound image), and the latter its represented concept (an object, an instruction, an idea). An example of this would be the use of the word ‘music’—the written word or the sound we make when we pronounce it—to denote the concept we all know as ‘music’. With his binary opposition system—where he introduced also the syntagmatic and paradigmatic<sup>12</sup> relations of signs among other dichotomies such as langue-parole or synchrony-diachrony<sup>13</sup>—Saussure became the

<sup>11</sup> ‘Saussure demonstrates in his *Course in General Linguistics* that the relationship between signifier (the sound-image form or word, such as ‘cat’) and the signified (the concept or meaning) is arbitrary. There is no logical reason, other than convention and context, for the signifier/signified connection. As a community, we decide on rules (grammar, definitions, dictionaries) and we argue over these rules.’ Read-Davidson, Morgan, 'Structuralism and Myth: A Quick Introduction', *The Scribes Arena* <<https://sites.chapman.edu/thescibesarena>>.

<sup>12</sup> Syntagmatic structure opposes paradigmatic structure. In semiotics, syntagmatic analysis refers to the syntax or surface structure. Paradigmatic analysis is the analysis of elements whose value is determined by their place in the syntagm, and by the set of possible substitute elements (see table below).

|          | SYNTAGM      |              |                 |             |
|----------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| PARADIGM | GOOD<br>TRUE | GUYS<br>LOVE | ALWAYS<br>NEVER | WIN<br>DIES |

<sup>13</sup> ‘Saussure demonstrated that a sign's meaning is derived from its context (syntagmatic dimension) and the group (paradigm) to which it belongs. An example of this is that one cannot conceive of ‘good’ if we do not understand ‘evil.’ ‘Binary Opposition’, *Wikipedia* <<https://en.wikipedia.org>>.

father of Structuralism in linguistics, a doctrine that later extended to a broader approach, according to which culture is organised in structures or systems made of individual units that only acquire meaning in relation to other units.

### **2.1.1.3 Expanding the sign: Charles Sanders Peirce**

A contemporary of Saussure, Pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) proposed from the U.S. a threefold model that deemed sign as comprised of *representamen* or sign itself (Saussure's *signifier*), *interpretant* (similar to the *signified*), and *object*, the referent that determines the sign—the sign's subject matter. As an example, whereas in Saussure's dyadic proposal the word *music* would be the signifier and the concept of music the signified, in Peirce's triadic system the representamen would be the word music, the interpretant would be the meaning of the word music, and the object would be the music itself. He also established a threefold typology for signs, for the signifier itself: icon, with a physical resemblance to what it stands for, index, which is directly connected or adjacent to—and showing evidence of the existence of—what it represents (without resembling it), and symbol, of which there is no logical connection to the signified, but rather an arbitrary and culturally-learned one.<sup>14</sup> Peirce adopted for his studies the term Semiotics, which ended up integrating all currents of sign research, including Saussure's Semiology.

### **2.1.1.4 Recurrent narrative structures and patterns: Vladimir Propp**

Russian anthropologist and linguist Vladimir Propp (1895-1970) belonged to the

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<sup>14</sup> Examples include Index: frown representing concern (facial expressions representing moods). Icon: religious imagery. Symbol: words in a language.

Formalist school of thinking. Formalism favoured style over content, and set literature apart from other uses of language. Propp devoted himself to studying the narrative structure of 100 Russian fairy tales, where he found seven recurrent ‘spheres of action’ (character stereotypes) and 31 generic ‘narratemes’ (smallest narrative units) that appeared recurrently in all the tales in unchanging order—although some might be omitted on occasion.<sup>15</sup> This idea of archetypal patterns or *functions* in defined groups of elements falls within the framework of Saussure’s structuralism, and establishes the foundation of what it would be known from then on as Narratology<sup>16</sup>: the study of narrative from a structural point of view. Propp’s views on storytelling greatly influenced Joseph Campbell’s monomyth or Hero’s Journey, a mythological view on narrative patterns that also draws upon the theories of Carl Jung, James Frazer, Otto Rank or Lord Raglan about human myth.

#### **2.1.1.5 Structure can interpret all myths: Claude Levi- Strauss**

Social anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) was born in France, where, during the sixties, most of the development of structuralism took place. Dwelling upon Saussure, structuralists attempted to analyse any field of human knowledge as an elaborate system of interconnected elements, and so did Levi-Strauss by introducing in anthropology a structuralist theory of mythology: he analysed the deep structure of traditional myths and legends in societies throughout the world, and concluded that their narrative—i.e. their hidden, unacknowledged patterns of thought—was organised around an idea of *conflict* expressed in binary oppositions that contributed to ideology building (i.e. Good versus Evil, Young versus Old), a

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<sup>15</sup> Propp, Vladimir, *Morphology Of The Folk Tale*, (Eastford: Martino Fine Books, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> The actual term *Narratology* would be coined later by Todorov. By extension, Narratology is understood today as literary narrative theory.

dyadic approach reminiscent of that of Saussure's in his linguistics, and broadly akin to Propp's in that both based their research on folklore. However, whereas Propp used a linear, chronological approach to the narrative events he analysed (a Saussurean 'syntagmatic' structural analysis), Levi-Strauss focused on the organisational or relational aspects of the narrative, the underlying, non-sequential structure of myths ('paradigmatic' structural analysis).<sup>17</sup>

#### **2.1.1.6 Anything that conveys a message is a myth: Roland Barthes**

Resorting to Saussure's semiotic views on signs—the signified-signifier dyad, the dependency of a sign on an entire system of signs—French social and literary critic, linguist, and philosopher Roland Barthes (1915-1980) brought structuralism to post-structuralism by producing a new theory about narrative in media. On his 'Mythologies' (1957) first, then on subsequent works, he saw myth as a 'special type of speech', a *metalanguage* used to introduce an ideology, a certain interpretation of the world, in two levels of signification or meaning: *denotation*, based on the signifier-signified architecture of a sign, and *connotation*, an extension of the sign (as made of signifier and signified) onto an additional signified. Thus, the signifier (made of the sum of the original signifier-signified) plus the additional signified, create a new sign of double significance—a message or method of cultural communication that embodies modern myth and projects ideology.

Barthes suggested the following example to illustrate his 'mythical speech': in 1958—in the midst of the Algerian War of Independence—a black young soldier salutes (allegedly) the Tricolor French flag, on the front cover of the magazine Paris-

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<sup>17</sup> Propp and Levi-Strauss would eventually engage in an academic diatribe after the latter's criticism on Propp's methods, when he said: 'Tales are constructed on weaker oppositions than those found in myths.' Dundes, Alan, 'Binary Opposition in Myth: The Propp/Levi-Strauss Debate in Retrospect', *Western Folklore*, Winter (1997), 42-44.

Match. At the ‘first level’ of meaning, the picture of the soldier making the salute is the signifier, and the signified is precisely ‘a black soldier giving the French salute’. At the ‘second level’ of meaning, France is portrayed as a great multi-ethnic, undiscriminating empire where even the natives of the African purportedly oppressed colonies serve their country without any hint of resentment—this is where the myth of French imperialism is found. Barthes used this and many other examples on the media to demonstrate their capacity to project mythical messages in popular culture, ‘ideological positions as if they were natural and normative’,<sup>18</sup> through the use of signs to which they assign a symbolic meaning, additional to the literal or merely denoted.<sup>19</sup>

#### **2.1.1.7 The structure of time and narration: Tsvetan Todorov**

Formed under the influence of Aristotle, the formalists, and the structuralists, Bulgarian literary theorist Tsvetan Todorov (1939-2017) suggested in his analysis of Boccaccio’s Decameron that conventional narrative follows a linear structure—susceptible of being interpreted as a circular course—which develops in five stages: the story departs from a state of *equilibrium*, this is then disrupted by some event (*disequilibrium*), the disruption is acknowledged, an attempt is made to repair the damage, and a new equilibrium is restored. Todorov also called upon Saussure’s langue-parole dualism<sup>20</sup> to represent the contrast between *story* and *plot*. In the syntax of narrative, the chronological order of events would be the story, the langue, the primary system—a syntagmatic approach. Conversely, the different kinds of possible

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<sup>18</sup> Fulton, Helen with Huisman, Rosemary, Murphet, Julian and Dunne, Anne, *Narrative and Media*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Saussure established a duality between Langue, the structured system of conventions and rules in a society’s language, versus Parole, the individual use of that language in actual speech.

plots—that is, the way linear time is altered for narrative purposes, a common technique in films—would be equivalent to the parole, i.e. the unique, personalised telling of the story; the paradigmatic. Although originally thought for written fiction, Todorov’s approach has been widely used to analyse a variety of audiovisual narratives.

Propp’s functions and character stereotypes, Levi-Strauss’s binary opposites, Barthes’s codes and levels of signification on modern myths, or Todorov’s equilibrium and plot’s structural analysis—all of them owing to the semiotic principles introduced by Saussure and Peirce—aren’t by any means the only proposals in structuralist narratology, but they serve as a solid starting point to understand the role of myth, and, subsequently, of ritual, in visual media.

### **2.1.2 Myth**

The definition of myth is elusive, because, as with narrative, each academic branch of knowledge—such as anthropology, psychology, or sociology—looks at it from a different perspective. Robert A. Segal says, in his book ‘Myth: A Very Short Introduction’: ‘Each discipline harbours multiple theories of myth. Strictly, theories of myth are theories of some much larger domain, with myth a mere subset’<sup>21</sup>. He adds: ‘Theories need myths as much as myths need theories. If theories illuminate myths, myths confirm theories’.<sup>22</sup>

In origin, myths (from the Greek μῦθος, mythos, story) were traditional stories of a symbolic nature that referred to some supernatural events or beings. They were part of the belief system of a culture or a community—often shared by different ones too—and their purpose was to give an explanation (non-scientific, as per the times) to

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<sup>21</sup> Segal, Robert A., *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

the phenomena that exist in the world, thus revealing a worldview, and providing sets of values to such a community. But, far from being considered mere legends of the past or consigned to oblivion, myths seem to have transcended the boundaries of ancient culture, and to have pervaded modern society, its art, and its narrative. What's more, lingering not only on their narrative but also on their cognitive functions, they are still in force nowadays in their capacity to interpret, set the moral philosophy, and define the cosmology<sup>23</sup> of our world.

Whether concerned with the birth of the universe, the fear of death, or the life of a hero, ancient myths were not just fairy tales in essence, as their chief aim went beyond pure entertaining. Although at the outset they might have been 'tales of the gods', such as the stories of Homer, Hercules, the Garden of Eden, or Oedipus, in which 'the setting is a metaphysical world juxtaposed against the real world',<sup>24</sup> myths—Barthes said it in his *Mythologies*—also inform contemporary narrative in any kind of media, written or audiovisual, where Levi-Strauss's binary opposites—such as Good versus Evil—may also still apply. The fact is that, just as in a pre-science era the narrative of myths served as an explanation of the world, like a sort of primitive science, in modern times we may use them to—albeit just temporarily—offer a truth that disengages us from our inexplicable reality. Incidentally, though, myths have not only become the vehicle of collective narrative tradition but, often times, modern media have made a deviant use of them in order to captivate their audiences. Japanese professor Yoshiko Okuyama states in her book, 'Japanese Mythology in Film: A Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime', that 'film is modern-day myth making'<sup>25</sup> yet she further argues that—as the

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<sup>23</sup> Cosmology deals with the laws governing the universe.

<sup>24</sup> Berger, Arthur Asa, *Media, Myth and Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Okuyama, Yoshiko, *Japanese Mythology in Film: A Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime*, (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), 47.

aforementioned ‘mythical speech’ by Barthes already revealed—film uses narrative to ‘manipulate or confuse our perception of reality’ and we may ‘mistakenly take movies as true history’.

Semioticians Saussure and Peirce informed the theories of structuralists Propp, Levi-Strauss, Barthes or Todorov on narrative—or ‘narratology’, as structuralism revamped it—which made an extensive study of myth. But theirs is not the only approach to it: psychology and sociology are two related disciplines that have also attempted to decipher the role of myth in society, both individually and collectively.

### **2.1.2.1 Psychology in myth**

Father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) thought that ‘myths’—such as the constantly referenced one of Oedipus—‘reflect strong fears and desires that are taboo and usually unable to be expressed in society’<sup>26</sup>, thus many Greek myths were interpretations of our personal subconscious through our wish-fulfilling dreams; our personal conflicts—sexually-arisen, repressed impulses—channeled through the universal issues exposed by mythology.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, Carl Jung (1875-1961), a psychiatrist who founded analytic psychology—and once a student of Freud—stated that myths and dreams revealed the ‘collective unconscious’ of humanity through ‘primordial images’ or ‘archetypes’ (the wise man, the rebel, the lover, the hero, and so on), universal patterns or tendencies of behaviour that are inherit to human nature, and have been the recurrent main elements of myths and their narrative in a diversity of cultures worldwide. Although myths appear to be concerned with visible

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<sup>26</sup> Csapo, Eric, *Theories of Mythology*, (Oxford: Blackwell, Wiley, 2005), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Contemporary Freudianism has a different view: ‘Where for classical Freudians myths are like dreams, for contemporary Freudians myths are unlike them. Dreams still serve to satisfy wishes, but myths serve either to deny or to sublimate them. For classical Freudians, myths are simply public dreams. For contemporary Freudians, myths, because public, serve to socialise.’ Robert A. Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 71.

phenomena, Jung clarifies:

All the mythologised processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection—that is, mirrored in the events of nature.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.1.2.2 Sociology in myth

One of the pioneers of sociology, French social scientist Émile Durkheim (1887-1917), set out to demonstrate, from atheism, that religion is a product of society, a way for individuals to identify themselves in the collectivity. Myth, in turn, is ‘one of the essential elements of religious life’,<sup>29</sup> and men ‘have based their conduct upon them’.<sup>30</sup> In consonance with Jung’s concept of collective consciousness, Durkheim had coined the term ‘collective representations’—aspects and practices of a society that reveal its ideology and values—of which myths and rituals are an important exponent, in the context of a belief system that Durkheim regarded as split into the realms of the profane and the sacred. Also worth noting, he stated that myths are realised as rituals,<sup>31</sup> hence setting out the dichotomy myth-ritual that has been the subject of an extensive discussion among scholars.

British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) was the founder of functionalism, which enriched traditional anthropology with the fields of psychology and sociology, and with an innovative emphasis on fieldwork. Stating, after his numerous field studies of primitive cultures, that ‘humans have a set of universal

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<sup>28</sup> Jung, Carl, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>29</sup> Durkheim, Émile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman, (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 100-101.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Very frequently, the rite is nothing more than the myth put into action’. Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 100-101.

biological needs', and that 'customs developed to fulfill those needs',<sup>32</sup> he set forth the idea that myths in those primitive cultures represent a set of social and cultural values:

Myth fulfills in primitive culture an indispensable function: it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilisation; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom.<sup>33</sup>

Just like Mircea Eliade and other anthropologists, Malinowski attached a great importance to the association between myth and ritual. Despite the prevalence of the latter, a claim shared with Eliade, he believed that myths are crucial in order to understand ritual's signification and role.

Mircea Eliade, Romanian-born historian of religion, (1907-1986) goes further than Durkheim when he states in his work 'The Sacred and the Profane' that, nowadays, even non-religious people live their lives mythically.<sup>34</sup> What's more, it is erroneous to think that mythology belongs exclusively to ancient times, since our modern life is, in fact, still profoundly attached to it. Myths—which are timeless and function crosswise, as similar ones are echoed in different times and cultures—shape our lives, our morals, our customs, our institutions, our storytelling, our entertainment, our media, and our society in general. Be that as it may, Eliade's strong religious beliefs (with a questionable attachment to the European fascisms of the thirties) impel him to see even the non-religious people as still subjected to the

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<sup>32</sup> Kottak, Conrad Phillip, *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity*, (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2011), 65.

<sup>33</sup> Malinowski, Bronislaw, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, (The Free Press, Boston, 1948), 79.

<sup>34</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard Trask, (Melbourne: Harcourt Australia, 1959), 204-205.

sacred,<sup>35</sup> claiming also that it is through ritual—for him the reenactment of the myth, as Durkheim had also stated—that religious people free themselves from their mundane lives and revert to a mythical time. In Eliade’s strictly religious view of myth, the profane ought to become sacred.<sup>36</sup>

As we have seen, the interdependence of myth and ritual seemed established since early stages in the study of mythology. But a heated controversy about the chapter and verse would raise the matter to a level of analysis without parallel in modern anthropology.

### 2.1.3 Myth and ritual

Robert A. Segal defined myth, in his aforementioned book ‘Myth: A Very Short Introduction’, as ‘simply a story about something significant’,<sup>37</sup> that can take place in the past, in the present, or in the future. Although this may sound over-simplified—compared to the extent to which theoreticians have approached the subject—he claims that all theories about myth revolve around that idea. And yet myth does not, for most scholars, function in isolation, but seems to exist inescapably attached to ritual, if always in the context of ancient and primitive religion. If myth is thought, ritual is action. Where myth is a *story* about something significant, ritual is the actual *performance* of certain actions following a prescribed form,<sup>38</sup> and that form could—but only could, and here scholars disagree—be defined by the narrative within the

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<sup>35</sup> ‘The ‘irreligious’ still behave religiously, even though they are not aware of the fact.’ Ibid., 204.

<sup>36</sup> ‘This is the reason for the fundamental importance of myths...for the myths narrate the [deeds] of the gods and these [deeds] constitute paradigmatic models for all human activities.’ Ibid., 105.

<sup>37</sup> Segal, Robert A., *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> For an expanded view of ritual see also: 1.1.5 Ritual and narrative.

myth. Literary critic Marie-Laure Ryan states, negotiating the cause and effect dilemma:

While narrative can make ritual part of its content, in an inverse metonymic relation it is narrative that forms the content of ritual. Many rituals around the world involve a representation of events, which are also narrated by a myth; the recitation of this myth may be an integral part of the ritual, or the participants in the ritual may impersonate the heroes of the myth in a dramatic enactment.<sup>39</sup>

As per their functionality, religious-studies scholar William Doty asserts, summarising the thesis contained in American anthropologist's Clyde Kluckhohn's 'Myths and Rituals: A General Theory':

Myths and rituals can be studied in terms of their functional ability to provide social solidarity, to transmit cultural values, to provide a firm standpoint in a threatening world, to reduce anxiety, to show relationships between cultural values and particular objects, to explicate origins, and so forth.<sup>40</sup>

Ritual and myth are indeed affiliated, although the preponderance of one above the other—if not their frequent independence—has been long, vehemently debated. It is through a preliminary commentary of the conspicuous and multi-layered myth-ritual theory that we can determine the relevance of those two in our lives and, hence, in our narrative. Table 1, on the next page, illustrates the different approaches to the theory.

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<sup>39</sup> Ryan, Marie-Laure, 'Ritual Studies and Narratology: What Can They Do For Each Other', *Ritual and Narrative: Theoretical Explorations and Historical Case Studies*, ed. Vera Nünning, Gregor Ahn, Jan Rupp (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 39.

<sup>40</sup> Doty, William G., *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 133.

| PRIMARY                            | SECONDARY | THEORY  | PROponents   |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|
| MYTH                               | RITUAL    | Myth is a story that attempts to explain the world. Ritual is a mere application of myth.   | E. B. TYLOR (1832-1917)  |
| RITUAL                             | MYTH      | For Smith, rituals were performed first for circumstantial reasons, then were justified with (replaceable) myths allegedly dictated by the gods, once those original reasons had been forgotten.<br><br>Frazer divides culture into magic, religion, and science, and somehow links the duality myth-ritual to the duality religion-magic.<br><br>Harrison & Hook see myth as the explanation of ritual, not its origin (Smith) and, like Frazer, consider ancient myth-ritualism analogue to modern science. | WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (1846-1894)<br>JAMES GEORGE FRAZER (1854-1941)<br>JANE ELLEN HARRISON (1850-1928) &<br>S.H. HOOK (1874-1968) |
| MYTH AND RITUAL NOT INTERDEPENDENT |           | Rituals are the reenactment of myths, but myths are associated with other cultural activities as well.  | BRONISLAV MALINOWSKI (1884-1942)<br>MIRCEA ELIADE (1907-1986)  |

Table 1: Myth and ritual theories

Myth and ritual have resisted, along the way, all attempts to establish a hierarchy; achieving consensus over the primacy of one over the other—sometimes even by virtue of the inconsistency of some theories—may be an unattainable objective. As Clyde Kluckhohn states, in line with Marie-Laurie Ryan’s remarks<sup>41</sup>: ‘Whether belief (myth) or behaviour (ritual) changes first will depend, again, both upon cultural tradition and upon external circumstances.’<sup>42</sup>

In the end, the research of more contemporary historians and anthropologists over time seemingly yields the conclusion that the key to the myth-ritual debate may be flexibility. Says Kluckhohn:

In sum, the facts do not permit any universal generalisations as to ritual

<sup>41</sup> Ryan, Marie-Laure, ‘Ritual Studies and Narratology: What Can They Do For Each Other’, *Ritual and Narrative: Theoretical Explorations and Historical Case Studies*, 27-50.

<sup>42</sup> Kluckhohn, Clyde, ‘Myths and Rituals: A General Theory’, *Harvard Theological Review*, 35 (2011), 53.

being the ‘cause’ of myth or vice versa. Their relationship is rather that of intricate mutual interdependence, differently structured in different cultures and probably at different times in the same culture.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, notwithstanding the manifold views of scholars on the subject, what remains is the fact that myth and ritual, ritual and myth, in combination or separately, have determinately informed not only our literature, but all narrative arts. And when framed with narrative, the relationship between myth and ritual concedes a new signification and approach: that which involves the creation of alternate worlds, a factor known in narratology as *worldmaking* (which will be discussed in greater detail further down).

#### **2.1.4 Myth and narrative**

Societies’ behaviour is driven by sacred and profane mythology that has evolved and mutated over time, i.e. our marriage (not romantic love) as ‘the reunion of the separated duad’<sup>44</sup>, or our beliefs about death and resurrection—which emanate from myths that happen to be mirrored on different cultures. If our life takes place in a mythological framework, as Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye (1912-1991) declares in his course ‘The Mythological Framework of Western Culture’—in the context of his human imagination theory—then literature is the bearer of such mythology, and they together inhabit our world. As per Frye—and Jane Harrison too (see Table 1 above)—all genres of literature draw out from myth<sup>45</sup>, and it is

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<sup>43</sup> Kluckhohn, Clyde, 'Myths and Rituals: A General Theory', *Harvard Theological Review*, 35 (2011), 56.

<sup>44</sup> Campbell, Joseph and Moyers, Bill, *The Power of Myth*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 13.

<sup>45</sup> ‘It is part of the critic's business to show how all literary genres are derived from the quest-myth.’, Frye, Northrop, ‘The Archetypes of Literature’, *The Kenyon Review*, Vol. 13 (1951), 105.

specifically from hero myths—such as ‘The Odyssey’—that he and other scholars have developed narrative patterns which have in fact transcended literature and made it to all kinds of modern media.

The first one to propose a pattern approach to narrative structure (in literature) had been the aforementioned Propp with his ‘narratemes’ and archetypes, but he had tied it all to Russian fairy tales—which, in turn, might have been derived from older myths. Moving forward from literature, there is agreement upon the fact that film and its derived media represent the modern mythology of our society. Whether analysed from psychological, psychoanalytical, or narrative-criticism points of view, cinematography—and, by extension, the rest of audiovisual media—can be streamlined to its mythological essence.

From the field of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung offered a complementary way to approach our unconscious. As already mentioned, where for Freud the personal conflict (‘neurosis’) is derived from the childhood sexuality and aggressiveness manifested at the Oedipus myth, for Jung it is the ‘collective unconscious’—universally inherited human thought—which allows us to experience dreams through archetypal characters and images found in myths, and later rise all those to consciousness in our art, our music, our literature, or our audiovisual media.

Myth inspires dreams; the narrative in myth informs our unconscious. And, just like dreams, expression of our unconscious, the symbols in audiovisual media can be studied through the myth prism. Psychology scholar William Indick notes, in his book ‘Movies and the Mind: Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film’: ‘Film, as a medium, is the closest reproduction of the dream state because it creates

similar visual sequences using similar techniques.’<sup>46</sup>

From a psychoanalytic point of view, the universal narrative themes expressed in our audiovisual media, music, and art in general, would be an attempt to achieve ‘self-realisation’—therefore, they could be seen as a kind of therapeutic endeavour from the community.<sup>47</sup> On that matter, professor of communication Gordon Coonfield discusses at great length in his article ‘Storytelling as Communication and Ritual: Addiction Narrative Through a Blue Lens’ how narrative has been used as scholarship in modern medicine.<sup>48</sup>

Once a *protégé* of Freud, Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank’s (1834-1939) ‘The Myth of the Birth of the Hero’, which provides an insight into mythical lives like those of Jesus or Lohengrin, laid new groundwork in the psychoanalytical study of the relationship between myth and dreams. For Rank, the life of the hero—the symbol at the crux of every mythological narrative—becomes a universal pattern from which our psychological conflicts emanate, and can also be framed in specific stages. Rank’s ‘hero pattern’ and, later, British folklorist and amateur anthropologist Lord Raglan’s (1885-1964) ‘hero archetype’, converged into the so-called Rank-Raglan ‘mythotype’, a comparative set of traits assigned to heroes in different cultures. Rank had followed his mentor Freud’s view on the Oedipus’s myth (although he applied his myth pattern to many more) yet concentrated on the ‘trauma of birth’, the first half of the life of the hero, and his relationship with parents. Lord Raglan, a myth-ritualist inspired by Frazer (albeit, unlike Frazer, Raglan sees myth as a supplier of the ritual’s inspiration, and equals both in importance), addressed with his archetype not half but the whole hero’s life, which he connected to the life of the rituals’ characters (for him,

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<sup>46</sup> Indick, William, *Movies and the Mind: Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2004), 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>48</sup> Coonfield, Gordon, ‘Storytelling as Communication and Ritual: Addiction Narrative Through a Blue Lens’, *Storytelling, Self, Society, An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies*, 5 (2009), 177.

the gods).

Jung had resourced to his ‘archetypes’ to project divine qualities (built in our unconscious) onto a character, in order to make him or her a hero. It would be American-born Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), one of the most renowned mythologists, who—not admittedly—would expand the Jungian hero archetypes on his ‘monomyth’ or ‘hero’s journey’. In his 1949 famous book ‘The Hero With A Thousand Faces’, Campbell described the basic narrative template of the heroic journey—a repetitive mythical pattern found across all cultures—as following the three-stage epic structure (separation-struggle-return) of the rites of passage of adolescents into adulthood.<sup>49</sup> He also set forth four functions that modern myth has in our societies: *mystical*—about our sense of awe and wonder before the mystery of existence; *cosmological*—for which myth tries to provide explanations to the unfathomable universe we live in; *sociological*—dealing with validating the ethics and moral conduct of our society; and *pedagogical*—the most important function of myth, of ‘how to live a human lifetime under any circumstances’, from childhood, into maturity, until death.<sup>50</sup>

Hollywood screenwriter Christopher Vogler wrote his book ‘The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters’ after Campbell’s work, and offered a more practical, empirical approach to the matter of character archetypes, and the stages of the hero’s journey. Many films—especially Hollywood-made, such as ‘Star Wars’, ‘The Matrix’, or ‘The Lord of The Rings’ (adapted from literature) can be somewhat decoded attending to Rank, Campbell, or more recently Vogler’s

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<sup>49</sup> Anthropologist Victor Turner describes ‘liminal rites’, the second of rites of passage’s three stages: ‘Such rites are found in all cultures, and are seen as both indicators and vehicles of transition from one sociocultural state and status to another - childhood to maturity, virginity to marriage, childlessness to parenthood, ghosthood to ancestorhood, sickness to health, peace to war and vice versa, scarcity to plenty, winter to spring, and so on.’ Turner, Victor, ‘Frame, Flow and Reflection - Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality’, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 6, (1979), 466.

<sup>50</sup> Campbell, Joseph, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*, (London: Penguin, 1976), 609.

hero patterns. Together with Vogler, other renowned story theorists have developed their own story paradigms, broadly inspired on Campbell's Hero's Journey: Syd Field, Robert McKee, Linda Seger, and John Truby.

The following table outlines Campbell and Vogler's Hero stages:

| <b>Stages of the Hero's Journey</b> |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Act</b>                          | <b>Joseph Campbell</b>  | <b>Christopher Vogler</b>  |
| <b>I. Departure</b>                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The call to adventure</li> <li>2. Refusal of the call</li> <li>3. Supernatural aid</li> <li>4. Crossing the threshold</li> <li>5. Belly of the whale</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ordinary world</li> <li>2. Call to adventure</li> <li>3. Refusal of the call</li> <li>4. Meeting with the mentor</li> <li>5. Crossing the first threshold</li> </ol> |
| <b>II. Initiation</b>               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The road of trials</li> <li>7. The meeting with the goddess</li> <li>8. Woman as temptress</li> <li>9. Atonement with the father</li> <li>10. Apotheosis</li> <li>11. The ultimate boon</li> </ol>                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Tests, allies and enemies</li> <li>7. Approach to the inmost cave</li> <li>8. The ordeal</li> <li>9. Reward</li> </ol>   |
| <b>III. Return</b>                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Refusal of the return</li> <li>13. The magic flight</li> <li>14. Rescue from without</li> <li>15. The crossing of the return threshold</li> <li>16. Master of two worlds</li> <li>17. Freedom to live</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. The road back</li> <li>11. The resurrection</li> <li>12. Return with the elixir</li> </ol>  |

Table 2: Stages of the Hero's journey

The personal and collective conflicts of our existence revealed in our unconscious, the archetypes that once dramatised myth, and all the associated symbolism, conform the plot and character design of modern narrative art. The concurrence of different fields of study—psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, screenwriting—around the mythologist approach to the hero narratives, has supplied a rich breeding ground from which contemporary narratology, especially in audiovisual media, has distilled many features. But the generalisation inherent to the monomyth's story structure paradigm, the mythical transformation of characters within what should be a solid template but often isn't, and the alleged otherworldly transcendence of the whole model, has been

the object of controversy among some writers and screenwriters, as well as academics. Religion scholar John Lyden has criticised the Jungian reductionism of Campbell's theories, arguing the limitations of the archetypal psychological patterns, and the simplification of all myths and their meanings to one and only 'monomyth', which is insufficient. Lyden also disapproves of theorists that reduced myth to a mere sociological function, like Durkheim, Malinowski, or Levi-Strauss, which I discuss at greater length in the following section, Ritual and Narrative.

Notwithstanding the criticism to the strictly psychoanalytic/sociological approach to myths in narrative, their connection between the two seems legitimate.

William Indick writes, in the introduction of his book:

Our fundamental notions of a good story and character come from the elemental building blocks of our culture— our myths. Just as letters and words constitute the bases of our language, myths and legends constitute the bases of our modern characters, literature and art. Film is only the latest mode of storytelling in a long line of literary heritage. In a sense, there are no new stories, merely new ways of retelling the ancient themes and characters that have been told and retold for thousands of years. So, if we wish to analyse the movies that influence our minds and lives, we must break them down to the most basic elemental level— the level of myth.<sup>51</sup>

### **2.1.5 Ritual and narrative**

The development of separate narratological and anthropological studies about the cultural phenomena of ritual and narrative, has elicited the matter of the vast interdependence that exists between the two. In order to illustrate such tight relationship, it is imperative to achieve first an unabridged definition of ritual—as elusive a feat as the definition of myth. Just as with myth, the multiple scholarly approaches make for an often-contentious scenario.

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<sup>51</sup> Indick, William, *Movies and the Mind: Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film*, 3.

Durkheim thought that ritual works establishing a ‘sacred object’ whose communal veneration in a shared space generates a ‘mental state’ among the attendees, which, in turn, provides meaning to the individual, and reinforces social agreement. British anthropologist Victor Turner (1920-1983) defined ritual as ‘a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests’.<sup>52</sup> On a newer approach, professor and researcher Eric Rothenbuhler states that ritual is ‘the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behaviour to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life’<sup>53</sup>. For anthropologist Bobby Alexander, ‘Ritual is a planned or improvised performance that effects a transition from everyday life to an alternative framework within which the everyday is transformed’<sup>54</sup>.

Old and new rituals coexist in modern society. Rituals we could find in the past, such as protective rituals, curative rituals, sorcery, rites of passage, etc., have nowadays their parallels and updated versions in watching television or going to see films, religious, seasonal or academic ceremonies, funerals, festivals, traditional games or sports, and a long etcetera. In contemporary societies, ritual does not materialise as the rehash of a rigid, ancient practice; on the contrary, it’s alive, open, and ubiquitous. In fact, even new rituals are constantly being designed.

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<sup>52</sup> Turner, Victor, *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, ed. J. L. Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer, D. M. Schneider, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 183-194.

<sup>53</sup> Rothenbuhler, Eric, *Ritual Communication: From Everyday Conversation To Mediated Ceremony*, (Sage Publications, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> Alexander, Bobby C., *Pentecostal Possession and Grotowski’s Ritual Projects as Social Protest: A Critical Assessment of Victor Turner’s Theory of Ritual Anti-Structure as an Interpretive Tool* (Columbia University, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 21)

There is no complete agreement on the classification of rituals. Catherine Bell describes in her book *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*<sup>55</sup>, six types of rituals or rites:

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Rites of Passage                 |
| Calendrical Rites                |
| Rites of Exchange and Communion  |
| Rites of Affliction              |
| Feasting, Fasting, and Festivals |
| Political Rites                  |

Other classifications expand or reorganise the categories:

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Technological rituals    |
| Rites of intensification |
| Protective rituals       |
| Therapy rituals          |
| Anti-therapy rituals     |
| Ideological rituals      |
| Rites of passage         |
| Coming-of-age rituals    |

Although rituals may be profane and not necessarily sacred—a disjunction that Durkheim, Malinowski or Eliade would have stated—there is agreement on the fact that no religion functions without ritual. On that note, Scholar S. Brent Plate states,

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<sup>55</sup> Bell, Catherine, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

equating religions and films:

Religions and films each create alternate worlds utilising the raw, abstract material of space and time, bending them each in new ways and forcing them to fit particular standards and desires. Film does this through camera angles and movements, framing devices, lighting, costuming, acting, editing, and other aspects of production. Religions achieve this through setting apart particular objects and periods of time and deeming them ‘sacred,’ through attention to specially charged objects (symbols), through the telling of stories (myths), and by gathering people together to focus on some particular event (ritual). The result of both religion and film is a re-created world: a world of recreation, a world of fantasy, a world of ideology, a world we may long to live in or a world we wish to avoid at all costs. The world presented at the altar and on the screen connects a projected world to the world of the everyday. As an alternative world is presented at the altar and on the screen, that projected world is connected to the world of the everyday, as boundaries, to a degree, become crossable.<sup>56</sup>

Rituals and narratives seem to share features and purposes. In a reciprocal relationship, narrative is often part of rituals, whereas rituals are frequently depicted in stories. Hence, such relationship has been approached by narratologists and humanistic scholars of diverse fields—as it happens with myth—but without having so far attained a theory that covers the whole. In fact, structuralism, discussed earlier, happens to be one that focuses on the interconnection between narratology and ritual.

From a structuralist point of view, like that of Levi-Strauss, rituals and narrative can be defined by the patterns and more superficial structures—as did Propp with his Russian fairy tales—which reveal their underlying ‘deep structure’ of cultural meaning and universal thought. An expanded anthropological approach allows finding basic concordances between ritual and narrative that appeal to the social processes, the cultural fabric of societies. This ‘social normalisation’ is described below. Here is an account of its features and functions:

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<sup>56</sup> Plate, S. Brent, 'The Altar and the Screen: Filmmaking and Worldmaking', *Religion and Film: Cinema and the Re-Creation of the World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23

**Social normalisation (collective)** – Based on the structural functionalism<sup>57</sup> initiated by Durkheim, and developed further by anthropologists like Malinowski, Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957), or Clifford Gertz (1926-2006), rituals are regarded to their social utility. The formats of rituals are therefore not randomised. Structure, framing (the explicit designation of a beginning and an end),<sup>58</sup> patterns, and rule-governance<sup>59</sup> are key to create, maintain, and transform a group identity, its values, regulations, and social order, as well as to overcome the chaos in our lives and provide equilibrium to the group when conflict arises. Our reality is socially built; the social dimension is quintessential for the human species. Group bonding helps us to make sense of the universe we inhabit. Seeking order and obtaining balance is our way to settle, both individually and collectively, in that universe.

Rituals will use patterns and structure, whereas narrative may integrate the latter into a plot. The story archetypal patterns relayed to narratives that seem to be more common are the ones from rituals that have a definite plot component, such as the mentioned rites of passage (including rites of initiation, or coming-of-age rites, among others).<sup>60</sup> In these cases, though, we often find a sort of counterintuitive way to give rise to structure, as Turner suggested. Turner brought a new vision to the traditional functionalism of ritual, in the context of the rites of passage that he and Arnold van Gennep studied. According to Turner, liminality—the temporarily transitional state in ritual passages, where individuals’ identity and social status are

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<sup>57</sup> Structural functionalism in social sciences takes the concept of structuralism—the interdependence of parts within a system—and applies it to society, resulting in a theory that considers all dimensions of society—institutions, norms, roles, relationships—instrumental and indispensable for the continuity of the group and its individuals.

<sup>58</sup> *Framing* could also be equated to the concept of *situatedness*.

<sup>59</sup> Rule-governed behaviour—in which we learn indirectly and by instructions, as opposed to contingency-shaped behaviour, in which we learn by the direct experience of its consequences—refers to a type of essential conduct in humans, described by psychologist B.F. Skinner. Many plot patterns in narrative, notably in genre narrative, are rule-governed. However, narratives often feature plots that purposely diverge from rule-governance.

<sup>60</sup> Examples of this would be the films ‘American Graffiti’, or ‘Cinema Paradiso’, which describe the so-called initiations of puberty, where young people transition from child status to adult status.

suspended—brings about ‘communitas’, an ideal, equal, solidary, unstructured society: the anti-structure. Temporarily stepping out of social order during these rituals, and allowing the community to enjoy a common experience, serves to reaffirm that same social order once the rite ends. John Lyden gives two examples of this in his book ‘Film As Religion’—one in the context of ritual and one in audiovisual narrative: children threats of ‘trick or treat’ in Halloween, and an adolescent Tom Cruise challenging authority in the film Risky Business. In this latter example, teen audiences do not perceive the characters challenging authority and structure as a social model, but as an anti-structure that expresses a longing for an alternative, better society. Turner states:

I have used the term ‘anti-structure’...to describe both liminality and what I have called ‘communitas.’ I meant by it not a structural reversal, a mirror-imaging of ‘profane’ workaday socioeconomic structure, or a fantasy-rejection of structural ‘necessities,’ but the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses.<sup>61</sup>

Also, a related paradox occurs, in regards to plot: while rituals—which may sometimes follow a plot, such in the case of the stages in rites of passage—usually pursue a more or less ordered syntax in order to ‘subdue the world’s chaos’, narrative seeks the contrary in plots: unpredictability and uniqueness, unless the story is purposely following the conventions of *genre*<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, it could be considered that the anti-structure described by Turner (as in the temporary challenge of authority), which somewhat evokes Todorov’s ‘equilibrium-disequilibrium-equilibrium’ narratologist theory, mentioned in an earlier section, does equate rituals and narratives on their inner architecture.

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<sup>61</sup> Turner, Victor, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage*, (East Sussex: Concept Publishing Company, 1979), 40.

<sup>62</sup> This topic will be further discussed in section 2.2.4.

**Symbolism** – According to Victor Turner, symbols in ritual ‘can be objects, activities, words, relationships, events, gestures, or spatial units’.<sup>63</sup> As in audiovisuals, these meaningful visual or narrative symbols reveal ‘the crucial values of the community’,<sup>64</sup> but also, from a semiotic point of view, they establish a direct, culturally-learned connection with their ‘signified’, be it social relations, spaces, activities, or emotions. For example, fire may be a symbol for healing and purification, telephones may be symbols of communication, or people touching strangers a reverse symbolisation of the loneliness in a large city. Nevertheless, whereas rituals rely heavily on symbols to reveal values and cultural standards, or to institutionalise a set of conducts, (acted) narratives can also embody these in the special circumstances and actions of characters.

**Experientiality (personal)** – Tying Aristotle’s aforementioned mimesis to cognitive narrative theory, *experientiality* describes, on one side, how the performers, participants or spectators in rituals perceive the story through their own experience (‘the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’),<sup>65</sup> and, on the other hand, how audiences make sense of the narrative—inevitably, not only by their own direct relation to the story, but also vicariously, through the experience that *characters* have of the story. The key point here is the inner emotional response that rituals and narratives may elicit; still, being involved in a ritual or an audiovisual narrative in any capacity is never a lone activity, but a sort of intimate collectiveness that strengthens the individual’s personal identity.

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<sup>63</sup> Turner, Victor, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 19.

<sup>64</sup> Turner, Victor, *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 2.

<sup>65</sup> Fludernik, Monika, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, (Oxford: Routledge, 1996), 12.

**Performance** – Audiovisual narratives and rituals are performed, enacted, embodied—as long as the audiovisual involves characters. Stories are communication vehicles between a performer and an audience, in a communal socio-cultural context (‘situatedness’) that allows for the depicted events to have significance, to be intelligible. There is no objectivity from the performer of the ritual or the teller/author of the story, but an interpretation of the symbology utilised, a perspective—which may be more diverse in audiovisual narrative than in ritual, in so far as we add that of the characters—, a moral standpoint, a subjective view of what the society’s foundations must be.<sup>66</sup> This aspect of ritual, the subjectivity of its providers, is directly linked to the concept of *worldmaking*.

**Worldmaking** – American philosopher Nelson Goodman (1908-1998) and Austrian sociologist Peter Berger (1929-2017) defined in their respective works ‘Ways Of Worldmaking’<sup>67</sup> and ‘The Social Construction Of Reality’,<sup>68</sup> the way different societies cope with the world they live in. Worldmaking—not a one-time feat, but a continuous endeavour—is an essential feature in rituals and audiovisual narrative alike, and somehow epitomises all of the functions described so far. As pointed out, although myth and ritual have been traditionally approached jointly, there has been a heated debate as to which one derives from the other. When paired with the worldmaking features attributed to narrative, and in the context of sacred activities, an opportunity arises to clarify their standing.

Sacred rituals, such as those in religions, concur with narratives in their aim to make sense of the world. In order to achieve that, myth and rituals, the two

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<sup>66</sup> It is worth noting, as Mircea Eliade describes, that performers of a ritual enacting a myth are not actors: they actually experience a temporary identification with the creature or hero in question.

<sup>67</sup> Goodman, Nelson, *Ways of Worldmaking*, (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 1978).

<sup>68</sup> Berger, Peter L., and Luckman, Thomas, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

constituent components of religion, create alternative worlds by means of altering—re-focusing, re-organising, re-framing—our ‘real’ world.<sup>69</sup> The temporary immersion in these alternative worlds is necessary to provide us individuals a sense of meaning and belonging, alleviate the alienation and anguish caused by the uncertainty of fate, and to strengthen the bonds of the community; this can be seen from a psychoanalytic as well as sociological point of view, as discussed earlier.

Where myth portrays the world as it should be—paradoxically, the ‘real world’, for a religious individual—rituals enact such a world<sup>70</sup> and, by doing so, supply the tangible, simultaneous connection between the ordinary and the ideal.

Scholar S. Brent Plate states:

‘If done correctly at the correct time and place, rituals promise to provide passports between worlds, and the transformation is effected by performing special activities: maintaining the correct chant, the right frame of mind, or the perfect body posture; taking place in particular spaces; wearing special clothing; keeping the right rhythm.’<sup>71</sup>

The intrinsic power of rituals and narratives lies in the subjectivity of the worldviews they operate: everything from the focus applied to different events (including a camera framing in the case of film), to the symbols utilised, the narrative point of view, the backstory of the characters if present, or the values and ethics expressed, project a set of moral principles that the community accepts and legitimises. Debatable or not, our consistent visits to these fabricated, yet meaningful, worlds—and the fact that the elements of ritual maintain a solid link between *that world* and *this world*—eventually build in us strong inner mechanisms and behavioural models

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<sup>69</sup> For Eliade, for example, this would mean going from the profane world to the sacred world. Whereas in ancient cultures many activities could be included in the realm of the sacred, modern society has desacralized most of its behaviour. However, even the agnostics are subjected to the same needs as the religious, and seek mythical and ritualistic experiences.

<sup>70</sup> This assumes as valid Malinowski and Eliade’s proposal of ritual as an enactment of myth.

<sup>71</sup> Plate, S. Brent, *Religion and Film: Cinema and the Re-Creation of the World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

that facilitate the transit through our workday reality.

Engaging in ritual, sacred or profane, supposes entering ‘liminality’<sup>72</sup>—a state of transition, in between our mundane world and the created world—and a dimension of different space and time, where a series of symbols evoke either supernatural beings or powers (typically in the case of sacred myth/rituals) or the moral foundations of a community. Rituals and audiovisuals are managed similarly as to what time and space is concerned. In audiovisual narrative, especially in film, the spatial and temporal alteration to create and re-create worlds is very patent through the process of *editing*. But other elements, many of them acting as symbols, are akin to both rituals and audiovisuals on the worldmaking endeavour: settings, lighting, movement, colour, sound. Eliade stated that ‘the most avowedly nonreligious man, still, in his deeper being, shares in a religiously oriented behaviour’.<sup>73</sup> Although we may not acknowledge them as sacred, many of our ‘profane’ activities—from getting married, to experience nature, to watch a film, or attend an installation—may be ritualistic, in that we seek a mythical fulfillment, a connection with the sacred (as in ‘a different world’), a transcendent signification beyond the surface, a feeling of rebirth or renewal.

In modern society, audiovisual narrative may be ancillary to ritual. And attending to the mythical and ritualistic aspects that stand at the core of every audiovisual media, it can be also argued that every single audiovisual attempt is capable of having a narrative essence.

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<sup>72</sup> The concept of ‘liminality’ was introduced by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his study of rites of passage, and later revisited by Victor Turner.

<sup>73</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 210.

## 2.2 Myth and ritual in audiovisual music

According to Eliade or Barthes, our everyday story telling—in literature, film, television, advertising, multimedia—is still imbued by mythology: the Jungian identification with the hero archetype, the Oedipal complex Freud claims we all carry, the social rituals Durkheim sees as reenactments of myths, Levi-Strauss' struggles between good and evil; myth is in our stories and, with ritual, shapes our lives, but, because it happens unconsciously, it is not regarded that way. The arguments substantiating the crucial role of music in all these claims can be exposed through different points of view: semiotics, culture, ideology, psychology, or sociology.

### 2.2.1 Semiotics

Revisiting the topic of semiotics, we can now approach music's narrativity from a different angle, looking at the *signs*. Besides the obvious, audiovisual narrative has an important semiological difference with its direct predecessor, literature: recalling Peirce's system of signs, whereas in written text words have an arbitrary relationship with their meaning, based on variable linguistic conventions—they are symbols—the images on visual media are unequivocally linked to the object they describe—they are icons. As an example, the feature film 'Viento en Contra', a thriller that I scored, opens with a scene of several people skydiving. The (arbitrary) word *skydive* is a symbol of such action, which would actually change to *paracaidismo* in the original Spanish version of the film. The images of the skydive, which make the action totally recognisable—as they represent the physical properties of it—are iconic. However, the music I used for that scene provided a narrative message that went beyond the

realism of the scene, gently anticipating the suspenseful tone of the plot<sup>76</sup>. For one thing, the iconic direct connection makes visual media universally latched onto everyday reality. But when music joins those ‘representational’ visuals, it does more than what ‘realistic’, iconic sounds (sound effects, foley<sup>77</sup>) can do; ‘non-representational’ (and non-iconic) music helps to narrativise the images, it helps to transcend the strictly realistic information provided by the visual icon, facilitating the liminal transition into the world of fiction: in mythical and ritualistic terms, it helps in the aforementioned *worldmaking*.

### **2.2.2 Culture and ideology**

Myth is narrative, it is poetics, but it is also used to explain our world. From a socio-cultural point of view, the alleged conformation to reality of an iconic image (what some scholars call ‘historicity’)<sup>78</sup> is reshaped, becomes *mythified*, by the music applied to it, resulting in a culturally-biased narrative—a capacity that has been conceded by some scholars, like McClary, even to ‘absolute’ music. This customises the visual narrative with cultural mythologies, what Barthes calls ‘bourgeois myth’, and which he defines as the modern myth, a type of communication that seeks to create and/or pass on ideology, to naturalise (arbitrary) cultural beliefs, to deviate from the reality (in this case the iconic image), to provide audiences with the meanings they need to interpret the sign, therefore ‘simplifying their life’. This prevents the spectators from approaching the situation *paradigmatically* (having a set

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<sup>76</sup> Links to the sound recordings or videos of this and other musical examples, including those of other cited composers, can be found in Appendix III of this thesis.

<sup>77</sup> Foley is considered a sound image, a subcategory of icon defined by Peirce.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Historicity is the historical actuality of persons and events, meaning the quality of being part of history as opposed to being a historical myth, legend, or fiction.’ ‘Historicity’, *Wikipedia*, <[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)>.

of possible substitute interpretations, discussed earlier in this text) and funnels instead their emotions into a single particular reading, which is one of the reasons why many regard negatively the ‘manipulating effect’ of music in audiovisual—although, needless to say, it could also be used with positive connotations. To illustrate it we resort again to semiotics. For Leni Riefenstahl’s 1935 German propaganda documentary film ‘Triumph of the Will’, composer Herbert Windt married the images of Berlin masses cheering their Nazi leaders with radiant, larger-than-life, brass-loaded orchestral music. Conversely, the images of right-wing French troops wearing Nazi uniforms marching towards the East front, as portrayed in National Geographic’s documentary ‘World War Two: The Apocalypse’, are joined with gloomy synth pads playing drones and minor chords. Taking the latter as an example, this semiological process—the aforementioned Barthesian ‘mythical speech’ introduced earlier—will consider that, on a second level of signification, the sign made of the images of the marching troops (signifier) and their natural acknowledgement as such by the viewers (signified) becomes in turn—by the action of the music—a newer mythic signifier, with its mythic signified being the *disappointing treason of citizens of the occupied France joining the Nazi enemy*, mythified precisely by the use of that specific scoring approach. The music here suggests an ideological view radically different from the one showed by Windt, as does French composer Patrice D’Ollone’s polytonal, harmonically dense approach for his orchestral scoring of the 2017 National Geographic series ‘Dans la tête des SS’. Racist ideologies, such as the Nazi concept of a superior Aryan people, became bound up with the idea of myth creation because, according to academics Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, myth is an ‘identificatory mechanism’.<sup>79</sup> National Geographic

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<sup>79</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, Nancy, Jean-Luc, trans. Brian Holmes, 'The Nazi Myth', *Critical Inquiry*,

documentaries on Nazi Germany feature musical soundtracks that play on the drama surrounding this ‘new’ mythical construct—based in turn on other ancient mythologies—by casting Nazis as the epitome of evil within our democratic cultural myth. The diagram below illustrates the semiotic link between myth and language, as viewed by Barthes.

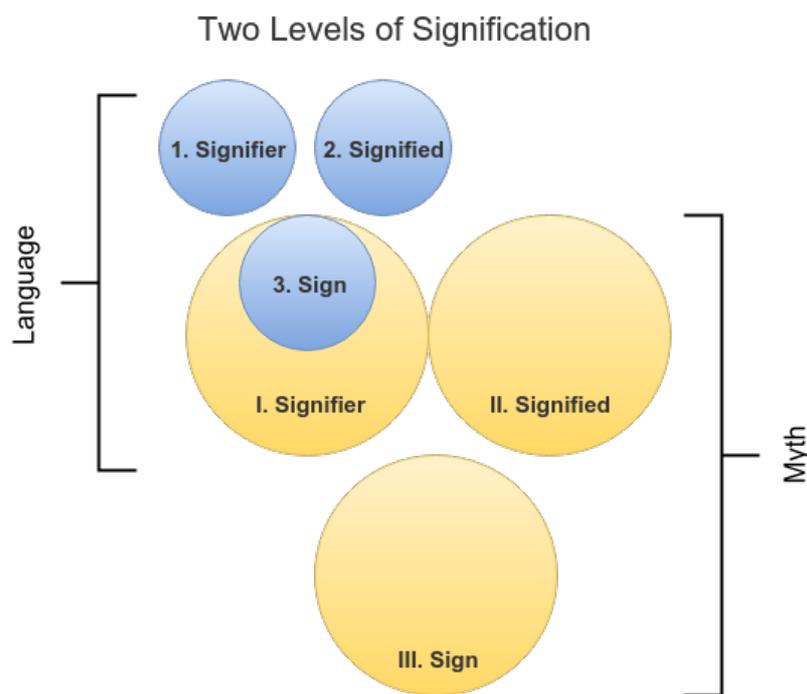


Figure 1: A Barthesian model of semiosis. (C) Katya Bogomol, used with permission under the Wikipedia Creative Commons licence.

Another good example is the approach of composer John Williams to the scoring of the film JFK, as described by Frank Lehman.<sup>80</sup> Film director Oliver Stone, a self-

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16 (1990), 296.

<sup>80</sup> Lehman, Frank, 'Scoring the President: Myth and Politics in John Williams's JFK and Nixon', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, (2015), 409-444.

recognised ‘myth-maker’, portrays the figure of president John F. Kennedy through a combination of the Shakespearian myth of ‘killing a rightful king’,<sup>81</sup> the ‘family curse’ Greek myth,<sup>82</sup> and the Camelot myth,<sup>83</sup> in what became one of the quintessential American cultural myths: the tragedy of Kennedy’s assassination. Composer John Williams, very familiar with the myth-making process in music, had a two-fold approach on his score, differentiating between the Americana style for the archetypal hero characters, and the non-tonal, more rhythmically oriented techniques for the antagonistic, yet imprecise—hence the use of non-leitmotivic music—American politics.

Eisler and Adorno, members of the Frankfurt School,<sup>84</sup> had a political take on the subject of music in audiovisual narrative, ascribing to film and documentary music a soothing power capable of desensitising an audience to the covert capitalism in the images—for them, music per se is abstract, non-descriptive.<sup>85</sup> Claudia Gorbman even compares film music’s diversionary efficiency to that of muzak’s (easy-listening music of the kind found in malls and doctors’ offices).<sup>86</sup> She refers to the *emotion* that music can convey to the audiences and a resulting ‘identification’ that prompts the proper response—but she fails to explore the mythifying psychological or social mechanisms responsible for such response,<sup>87</sup> and neither does Kassabian, when she compares the somehow forced identifications of ‘composed

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<sup>81</sup> The regicide of King Hamlet in *Hamlet*, or King Duncan in *Macbeth*. It should be noted that Shakespeare himself was inspired by other authors, and even Greek tragedies. Only *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Tempest* are considered to be his original plots.

<sup>82</sup> Such as the myth of Agamemnon and the Cursed House of Atreus.

<sup>83</sup> The idea of the Arthurian myth was, in fact, brought up in an interview by widow Jackie Kennedy, who, taking the reference from the Broadway musical *Camelot*, compared the Kennedy administration to an idyllic kingdom that was destroyed when King Arthur, an almost supernatural leader, was killed.

<sup>84</sup> Also known as the Critical Theory, the Frankfurt School was a Marxist intellectual movement.

<sup>85</sup> Adorno, Theodor W. and Eisler, Hanns, *Composing for the Films*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>86</sup> Gorbman, Claudia, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, (New York: Wiley, 1987).

<sup>87</sup> Incidentally, Kathryn Kalinak claims a relationship between images and music that operates not unidirectionally but two ways, with music also obtaining specificity by the image to which it is anchored.

scores' (underscores), with the immediate identifications of 'compiled scores' (song scores).<sup>88</sup> On that note, it comes to mind that I have experienced such dichotomy myself, trying to convince the producer of the TV commercial I was scoring that the difference between using a composed jingle, or using a pre-existing song, would be minimal for an audience, after three days of being pounded on every channel during all commercial breaks. But nowadays, advertising is an expeditious process—for producers, the audience's recall of the applicable cultural myth must be instantaneous and deeply rooted in society.

No matter the vocabulary used on these theories, and despite the fact that the implication of cultural myth may not always be registered as such, these and other theoreticians agree on the way cultural ideology is transmitted through music in audiovisuals—by means of subconsciously pausing our objectiveness—, which leads to reviewing a psychological perspective.

### **2.2.3 Psychology and sociology**

In order to achieve the desired signification, listeners need to associate their musical perception within a certain cultural mythology, and that of course may lead to cultural stereotypes. These may sometimes be ill-informed, such as the use of a Mexican mariachi band to evoke a Spanish setting, but in American film, for example, it is typical that the culture chosen for identifications, regardless of the worldwide release of a film, is exclusively the Anglo-Saxon—composer Jerry Goldsmith used to say that the universal meaning of *ethnicity* was marked out in Hollywood. Stereotypes are

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<sup>88</sup> Kassabian, Anahid, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*, (London: Routledge, 2001).

powerful cultural preconceptions. A recent field study in psychology of music showed how listeners of music genres process their emotions greatly through their biased appreciation of the associated cultural stereotypes, and not only by the mere characteristics of the music, or their own personal associations.<sup>89</sup>

Although a good part of the enjoyment of music in audiovisuals is conscious, it is unconsciously that we get the most of it, because subconscious is so much powerful. Some psychoanalysts, developing Freudian concepts, argue that film music acts as a bridge to our unconscious, taking us to a psychic state of satisfaction reminiscent of our mother-child bonding—although cognitive theorists will firmly contend that our conscious perception must be considered without question. While, to this day, the debate continues, theoreticians like Gorbman, who had also upheld the alleged power of audiovisual music to make us gravitate from the conscious to the unconscious, and back—for scholar Kathryn Kalinak, the bridge would be between the *reality world* and the *fiction world* —<sup>90</sup> sees too another type of bonding: that which music forms among an audience gathered to attend an audiovisual *spectacle*. The image of a group watching an audiovisual—like the audience of a movie theatre, which, incidentally, isn't by any means the only way to watch/listen to an audiovisual, more so in the era of smartphones—evokes Durkheim's aforementioned concept of collective representation; the audiovisual narrative acts as a modern myth, and the communal event comes through as a ritual that spurs a sense of group identity.

Following religion scholar Axel Michaels' definition of ritual, it would be plausible to consider audiovisuals or any kind of multimedia event as rituals, because they meet all the requirements:

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<sup>89</sup> 'Cultural stereotypes may trigger automatic emotional associations with the music associated with a particular culture...'. Susino, Marco and Schubert, Emery, 'Cultural stereotyping of emotional responses to music genre', *Psychology of Music*, March (2018).

<sup>90</sup> Kalinak, Kathryn, *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

...the qualities that determine whether an activity is to be recognised as a ritual or not, namely *performance, form, framing, transformation* and *transcendence* ('Dynamik von Ritualkomplexen' 4f.). Thus, when an activity is recognisable thanks to a certain formality; when it involves particular agents and is framed in space or time so that one can know when and where this action takes place; and when the activity also transforms an item by oftentimes elevating it beyond the immanent world, we may refer to it as a ritual.<sup>91</sup>

As previously seen, Jung described how our collective unconscious is unveiled in our dreams and myths—and psychologist William Indick equated audiovisual media to myth-inspired dreams as per their comparable visual representations; in the spirit of Jungian theory, this collective unconscious is made of human archetypes that inform practically all of our character-based audiovisual narratives. Filmmaker George Lucas admits he was inspired by Joseph Campbell's 'monomyth'—the 'Hero's Journey' proposed in his book 'The Hero With A Thousand Faces'—to put together the 'Star Wars' story. Interviewed by Bill Moyers, Campbell alludes to the Faust myth to discuss the machine-form 'totalitarian state' in 'Star Wars', (apropos, also present as Skynet in the 'Terminator' saga, or in 'The Matrix'):

Certainly Star Wars has a valid mythological perspective. It shows the state as a machine and asks, 'Is the machine going to crush humanity or serve humanity?' Humanity comes not from the machine but from the heart. What I see in Star Wars is the same problem that Faust gives us: Mephistopheles, the machine man, can provide us with all the means, and is thus likely to determine the aims of life as well. But of course the characteristic of Faust, which makes him eligible to be saved, is that he seeks aims that are not those of the machine. Now, when Luke Skywalker unmasks his father, he is taking off the machine role that the father has played. The father was the uniform. That is power, the state role.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Hammer, Stephanie, 'How To Commemorate a Fallen Soldier', *Ritual and Narrative: Theoretical Explorations and Historical Case Studies*, ed. Vera Nünning, Gregor Ahn, Jan Rupp (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 250.

<sup>92</sup> Campbell, Joseph, and Moyers, Bill, *The Power of Myth*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1991).

John Williams used also a mythological approach to the score, including several leitmotifs for the main characters—Jungian archetypes—of the film. He actually referred unambiguously to those archetypes of the collective unconscious, and to the mythical qualities of the film, when interviewed in 1997 about his musical concept:

... the combination of the audio and the visual hitting people in the way that it does must speak to some collective memory—we talked about that before—that we don't quite understand. Some memory of Buck Rogers or King Arthur or something earlier in the cultural salts of our brains, memories of lives lived in the past, I don't know. But it has that kind of resonance—it resonates within us in some past hero's life that we've all lived...the success of this film must be due to some cross-cultural connection with the mythic aspects of the film that Campbell described to us later. The fact that the Darth Vader figure may be present in every culture, with a different name perhaps, but with a similar myth attached to it. The films surprised everyone I think—George Lucas included—in that they reached across cultural bounds and beyond language into some kind of mythic, shared remembered past—from the deep past of our collective unconscious, if you like. That may be an explanation as to why it has such a broad appeal and such a strong one.<sup>93</sup>

Conversely, scholar John Lyden, always critical with Campbell, argues that 'Star Wars' is not, at least exclusively, based on the Hero's Journey, but drinks from many sources:

Lucas has taken ideas from numerous religions of the world and combined them into a syncretistic mix which works. Just as he freely borrowed from various genres in constructing Star Wars—the western, swashbucklers, samurai films, film noir, world war two films—so he also shows his skill as a filmmaker in his ability to synthesise mythological and religious concepts from around the world. Again, this is not Campbell's monomyth, I would claim, but a polyglot of religious languages in which each contributes something to a pluralistic whole of diversified parts--albeit with a western interpretation.<sup>94</sup>

This statement provides the opportunity to introduce the concept of cinematographic genre.

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<sup>93</sup> Byrd, Craig L., 'Star Wars 20th Anniversary: Interview with John Williams', *Film Score Monthly*, 2 (1997), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Lyden, John C., 'The Apocalyptic Cosmology of Star Wars', *Journal of Religion & Film*, 4 (2000), 8.

## 2.2.4 Genres

Narratives are often grouped in formulaic subclasses: genres. Of all kinds of audiovisuals, genre feature films have been more closely associated with myth due to their peculiarities. Genre films share a culturally accepted set of conventions and codes with other films of the same kind. Audiences learn what to expect in terms of themes, plots, narrative structure, settings, and, of course, music. And because predictability is such an important feature of genre, the resolution of conflict—which stands at the core of all narratives—is deliberately brought to a plausible resolution following distinctive patterns that can satisfy the audience’s expectations. Genre films have therefore modeled our social values and registered our collective concerns the same way myth has, and music has collaborated in a ritualistic manner: by functioning in prescribed modes. Audiences become ‘competent’ in the understanding of cultural codes, learn to associate by experience certain musical elements with visual elements—become experts in identification. Looking once again back to semiotics, we can find an element in music, the leitmotif, which performs these associations by acting as a sign—referring to extra-musical elements such as characters, emotions, or settings—and always grounding its efficacy to repetition, and to the assumed competence of the audience in the given cultural codes, the cultural myth. Incidentally, author James Buhler brings up in his book ‘Music and Cinema’ the little musical independence, due to their strict attachment to cinematic action, that film leitmotifs have in comparison to the more extensive and musically self-governing Wagnerian leitmotifs, from which they have evolved.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Neumeyer, David, Flinn, Carol and Buhler, James, *Music and Cinema*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000).

## Chapter 3. Compositional portfolio

### 3.1 Compositional methodology

On this compositional portfolio, I am exploring a mythical and ritualistic approach to my acknowledged concern about the narrative conceptualisation of audiovisual music. In that regard, I had somewhat addressed already, in my teaching, the subject of master plots; this research is an attempt to deepen far more into that aspect of my own method, expanding its scope in virtue of a well-known kinship between myth and ritual, universalising it to a variety of audiovisuals, and contextualising it according to the multidisciplinary procedures detailed on my research background chapter. In addition, other techniques, such as the referred screenwriting-related tools, or the traditional functional view, may be occasionally employed to manage particular instances of my portfolio's works.

William Indick declares that 'there are no new stories, merely new ways of retelling the ancient themes and characters that have been told and retold for thousands of years'.<sup>96</sup> With that premise, and the acknowledgement of a newer cultural mythology, I aim to incorporate music into the set of narrative elements that are subjected, in audiovisuals, to the fertilisation of myth and ritual. Towards that end, I am taking into account the array of classic and modern myths, rituals, and archetypes that have shaped those themes and characters. Next, I propose a list of these, as contributed by different theoreticians. One of them, British author Christopher Booker says, in his book *The Seven Basic Plots*:

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<sup>96</sup> Indick, William, *Movies and the Mind: Theories of the Great Psychoanalysts Applied to Film*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2004), 3.

The more familiar we become with the nature of these shaping forms and forces lying beneath the surface of stories, pushing them into patterns and directions which are beyond the storyteller's conscious control, the more we find that we are entering a realm to which recognition of the plots themselves proves only to have been the gateway. We are in fact uncovering nothing less than a kind of hidden, universal language: a nucleus of situations and figures which are the very stuff from which stories are made. And once we become acquainted with this symbolic language, and begin to catch something of its extraordinary significance, there is literally no story in the world which cannot then be seen in a new light: because we have come to the heart of what stories are about and why we tell them.<sup>97</sup>

The following basic master plots are each compiled from different myths, classic literature, legends and archetypes from different cultures:

Christopher Booker<sup>98</sup>

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <i>Overcoming the Monster</i> |
| <i>Rags to Riches</i>         |
| <i>The Quest</i>              |
| <i>Voyage and Return</i>      |
| <i>Comedy</i>                 |
| <i>Tragedy</i>                |
| <i>Rebirth</i>                |

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<sup>97</sup> Booker, Christopher, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 6.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

Ronald Tobias<sup>111</sup>

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Quest</i>          | <i>Adventure</i>       |
| <i>Pursuit</i>        | <i>Rescue</i>          |
| <i>Escape</i>         | <i>Revenge</i>         |
| <i>The Riddle</i>     | <i>Rivalry</i>         |
| <i>Underdog</i>       | <i>Temptation</i>      |
| <i>Metamorphosis</i>  | <i>Transformation</i>  |
| <i>Maturation</i>     | <i>Love</i>            |
| <i>Forbidden Love</i> | <i>Sacrifice</i>       |
| <i>Discovery</i>      | <i>Wretched Excess</i> |
| <i>Ascension</i>      | <i>Descension</i>      |

Georges Polti (after Carlo Gozzi)<sup>112</sup>

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Supplication</i>                              | <i>Deliverance</i>                        |
| <i>Crime Pursued by Vengeance</i>                | <i>Vengeance for kindred upon kindred</i> |
| <i>Pursuit</i>                                   | <i>Disaster</i>                           |
| <i>Falling Prey to Cruelty of Misfortune</i>     | <i>Revolt</i>                             |
| <i>Daring Enterprise</i>                         | <i>Abduction</i>                          |
| <i>The Enigma</i>                                | <i>Obtaining</i>                          |
| <i>Enmity of Kinsmen</i>                         | <i>Rivalry of Kinsmen</i>                 |
| <i>Murderous Adultery</i>                        | <i>Madness</i>                            |
| <i>Fatal Imprudence</i>                          | <i>Involuntary Crimes of Love</i>         |
| <i>Slaying of a Kinsman Unrecognised</i>         | <i>Self-Sacrificing for an Ideal</i>      |
| <i>Self-Sacrifice for Kindred</i>                | <i>All Sacrificed for Passion</i>         |
| <i>Necessity of Sacrificing Loved Ones</i>       | <i>Rivalry of Superior and Inferior</i>   |
| <i>Adultery</i>                                  | <i>Crimes of Love</i>                     |
| <i>Discovery of the Dishonour of a Loved One</i> | <i>Obstacles to Love</i>                  |
| <i>An Enemy Loved</i>                            | <i>Ambition</i>                           |
| <i>Conflict with a God</i>                       | <i>Mistaken Jealousy</i>                  |
| <i>Erroneous Judgment</i>                        | <i>Remorse</i>                            |
| <i>Recovery of a Lost One</i>                    | <i>Loss of Loved Ones</i>                 |

<sup>111</sup> Tobias, Ronald, *20 Master Plots: And How to Build Them*, (Blue Ash, OH: F+W Media, 1993).

<sup>112</sup> Polti, Georges, *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, (Ridgewood, NJ: The Editor Company, 1917).

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <i>The Redeeming Love</i><br><i>Beauty And The Beast</i>   | <i>The Forbidden Love</i><br><i>Romeo And Juliet</i>                     | <i>The Hunger For Power</i><br><i>Macbeth</i>                             |
| <i>Treasure Hunt</i><br><i>Jason And The Argonauts</i>     | <i>The Martyr And The Tyrant</i><br><i>Antigone</i>                      | <i>The Pact With The Devil</i><br><i>Faust</i>                            |
| <i>Homecoming</i><br><i>The Odyssey</i>                    | <i>The Old And The New</i><br><i>The Cherry Orchard</i>                  | <i>The Unfolded Being</i><br><i>Jekyll And Hyde</i>                       |
| <i>The Foundation Of A New Nation</i><br><i>The Aeneid</i> | <i>The Voluble And Changing Love</i><br><i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> | <i>Self-Knowledge</i><br><i>Oedipus</i>                                   |
| <i>The Benefactor Intruder.</i><br><i>The Messiah</i>      | <i>The Adulterous Woman</i><br><i>Madame Bovary</i>                      | <i>The Creation Of Artificial Life</i><br><i>Prometheus And Pigmalion</i> |
| <i>The Destroyer Intruder</i><br><i>The Evil One</i>       | <i>The Tireless Seducer</i><br><i>Don Juan</i>                           | <i>The Descent To Hell</i><br><i>Orpheus</i>                              |
| <i>Inside The Labyrinth</i><br><i>The Castle</i>           | <i>The Ascent For Love</i><br><i>Cinderella</i>                          | <i>The Revenge</i><br><i>Orestiadia</i>                                   |

My compositions are approached from a perspective that contemplates the intersections between narrative and ritual. In that sense, some of the projects may rely on the actual representations of ritual in narrative—such as *Valltorta*—all the while music, through the portfolio as a whole, is informed by the possible archetypal patterns of ritual, and its features and functions, as previously discussed in the section on Ritual and Narrative. Likewise, Jungian archetypes, ubiquitous in all myths, may be brought

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<sup>113</sup> Balló, Jordi and Pérez, Xavier, *La Semilla inmortal. Los argumentos universales en el cine*, (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1997).

to a conscious level in order to musically deal with the narratives.<sup>114</sup> In any event, whereas these and other materials may be a good source of information, they cannot constitute a sort of colour-by-numbers *vade mecum*. As Joseph Campbell states, ‘There is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing’.<sup>115</sup> On the same note, professor Mark P.O. Morford contends, in the frame of interpreting the myth of Ganymede:

There is, of course, no single ‘correct’ interpretation of a great myth. Myth is protean by nature, most gratifying because it forever changes through the personality and genius of each and every artist, in any medium at any time, to provide pleasure and enlightenment in our search to find in the work of art our own individual meaning and enrichment.<sup>116</sup>

I must address my compositions with a broader scope—one that observes the universality of myth, ritual, and human psychology from all the angles exposed on this research, while it allows music to participate in the narrative of visuals in the most efficient and truthful way.

The following portfolio of original creative works presents a combination of MIDI pieces and live recordings. For the sequencing of the MIDI I have used Digital Performer, and a variety of software libraries—on Kontakt—and synths. The details are specified for each project. With regards to the recordings, different instrumental ensembles have been used. Some projects may feature a hybrid MIDI and live approach.

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<sup>114</sup> The original four Jungian archetypes, mentioned in the section on Jung, have been revisited and augmented by a number of authors; a hefty list of character, situational, and symbolic archetypes, of untraceable origin, has been made available in academic circles (see Appendix I).

<sup>115</sup> Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2005), 353

<sup>116</sup> Morford, Mark P.O. and Lenardon, Robert J., *Classical Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 116.

## 3.2 Valltorta

### 3.2.1 Introduction

In 2014 I was approached by Vicent Ros, currently director of the Palau de la Música in Valencia, Spain, to carry out the musical and artistic direction of a multimedia project based on the caves of Valltorta, a prehistoric rock art site from the Neolithic and Mesolithic located in Castellón. The project had the requisite of incorporating a wind quintet score, to be performed by a local quintet ensemble, as part of the musical work. Unfortunately, the project finally fell through due to budget constraints.

Given my growing interest in the prehistoric world and the parallels between its rituals and modern multimedia projects, the commission had my immediate interest. I set out to investigate the Valltorta site's specifics, and soon learnt about its acoustic properties, a characteristic studied in Archaeoacoustics.<sup>117</sup> In Valltorta, several researchers have found that the paintings are often located in places where sound has unusual properties. For example, areas with rock paintings have better acoustics than areas that are not decorated, suggesting that the choice of locations to create the paintings has to do with the sonic features of each space. This has led to speculation that the cave paintings of the site had the function of increasing the perceptual impact of rituals that incorporated music, dance, and sound and visual effects, to be held in locations chosen according to acoustics. In other words, these areas may have been used for primitive forms of multimedia events.

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<sup>117</sup> Archaeoacoustics is a field of research on the use of sound by past civilisations. The use of sound design through history in relation to human-made spaces has been explored in Tony Gibb's book *The Fundamentals of Sonic Arts and Sound Design*, and in Paul Deveraux's *Stone Age Soundtracks*.

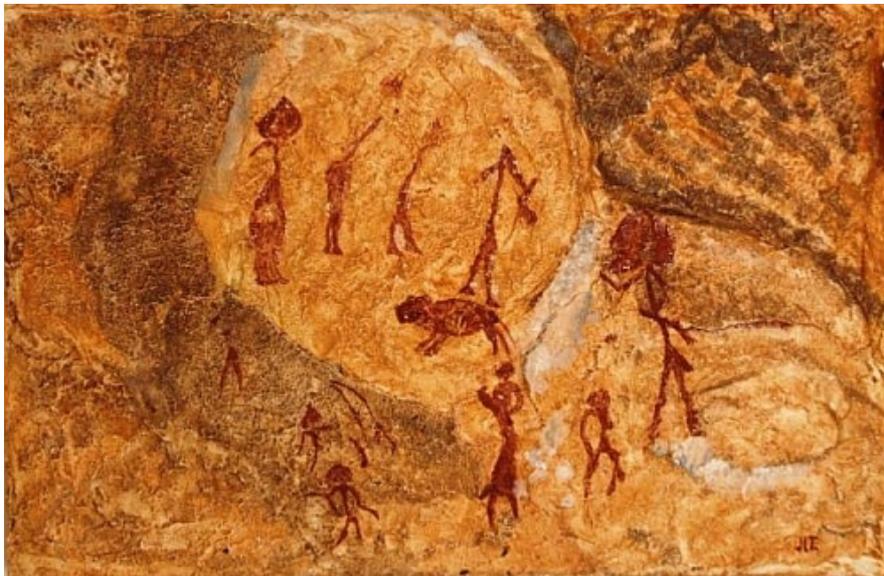
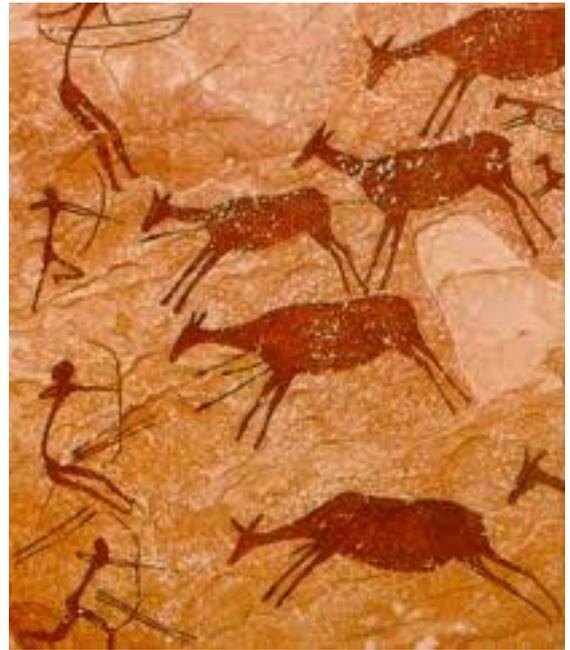


Figure 2: Rock art in Valltorta

Being in charge not only of the musical direction but also the artistic direction of this project, I soon decided I needed a story. It wasn't enough with a succession of events more or less connected by the concept of modern versus ancient multi-disciplinary art. There had to be a narrative thread that provided a human drama to empathise with, something an audience could relate to in order to regard the premise as plausible.

For this project I was therefore wearing two hats: one as composer, one as scriptwriter. Storyboard artist Francisco Rodríguez de la Fuente created a detailed film-oriented storyboard after my script, available as Appendix II. It contained the customary indications for shot framing and camera movement, which would serve as a guide for the development of the visuals and the choreography. As per my instructions it was formatted in three columns, the second one ('visuals') framed in a circle in anticipation of the use of a spherical screen (*Puffesphere*).

### **3.2.1.1 Sound contributes to art through trance**

Caves would therefore be places where art, the vision of the world of spirits, and sound are combined to provide a religious experience. This type of magical rituals might have been supported by a number of sound elements that contributed to create a state of collective alienation. Chants and drones in just intonation—creating harmonics and intensifying frequencies—synesthetic abilities (perception of colours when listening to certain sounds) or using various percussion instruments, which could produce infrasound and consequently physical and conscience alterations, would increase the induction to a trance. It has been speculated that in certain lighting conditions and a cloudy atmosphere (smoke, steam) sound waves may even be visible—just like in the water—suggesting the rippling decorative motifs that are found on the walls.

### **3.2.1.2 Musical elements**

The musical concept of the project is dual: on one side, abstract and electronic, using digitally-modified period percussion—originally intended to be modified in real time—and drones generated in a sequencer (Digital Performer), all with the purpose of stimulating auditory sensations in the audience, without neglecting the narrative. On the other side, acoustical, in the format of a woodwind quintet (flute, oboe/English horn, clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, bassoon). The latter was originally based on the performance by the quintet of a series of sound events that were closely related to the visual. Through the use of MAX / MSP or similar software platform, the performance of the quintet would trigger various events (video / electronics), in close collaboration with the choreography and visual elements—which are themselves a combination of real video and CGI, using various techniques, such as generative graphics, or 3D.

### **3.2.1.3 Other elements**

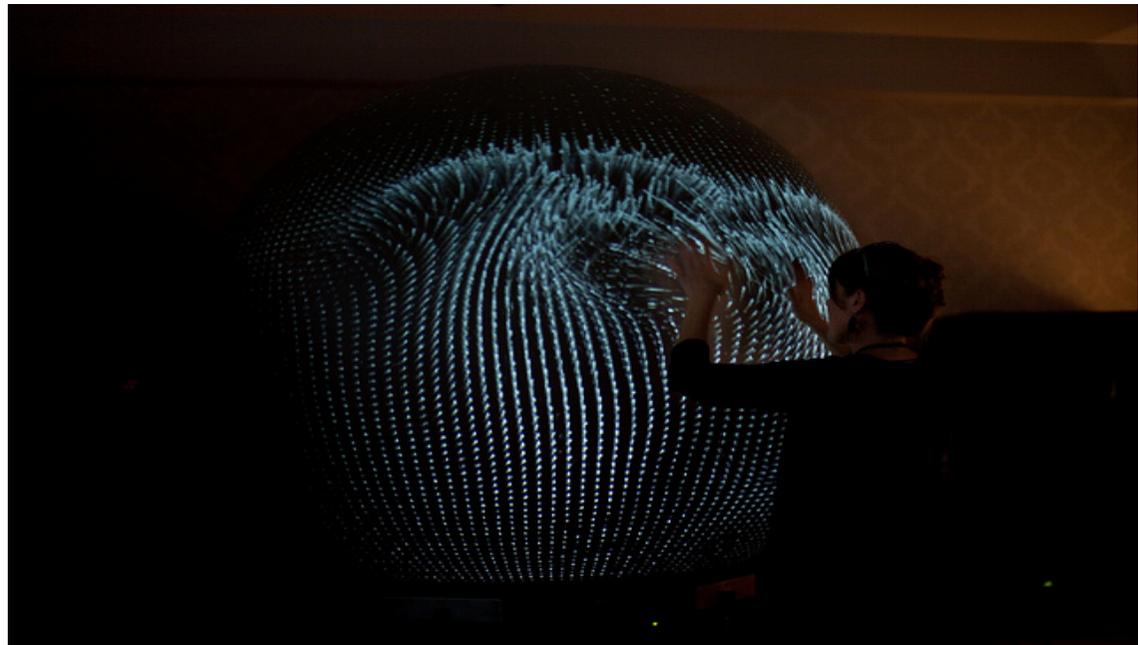
The project proposes a story of discovery that is told through choreography. The story itself features a reduced dance ensemble, interacting, on one hand, with mechanisms generating visual elements (PufferSphere, monitors) and on the other with the performers of the soundtrack themselves, as each other modify—alternatively or simultaneously, with their actions and performance—the development of the visuals. The two main characters in the story had to be designed first. Although the Primeval Man was quickly defined, finding an appropriate shape for the Orbenaut was trickier. Certain aspects in the story as well as wardrobe considerations for live performances were taken into account.

The visuals in this project define, firstly, the roughly linear storytelling, and in that sense are inspired by real images of Valltorta, caves, shelters, paints, and the natural environment. This figurative part was based on the use of *prosumer* type cameras 360° (casing Freedom 360 + 6 cameras GoPro or similar) for shooting and editing visual content suitable for spherical projection.

Moreover, figurative art was combined with video—in any of its varieties and techniques—also designed for 360° projection, representing the world of dreams and mysticism, magic, all that is supernatural, spiritual and ritual, and the whole of emotions generated by the sonic art of these multimedia events of the past. The project contemplated two modes of exhibition, fixed and itinerant:

- **Fixed.** The concave. In film format for Immersive Fulldome, like the Hemisferic of the Palau de les Arts i de les Ciències in Valencia. Optionally can be projected on smaller-scale portable spherical theaters. In this mode all content is pre-recorded—therefore the original visual content is complemented with footage of all the choreographic and scenic elements and the audio track of the music and sound design.

- **Itinerant.** The convex. Multimedia project format, in which all elements are live, including music performance, choreography and all the visual assembly. Suitable for a variety of scenarios. In this mode, the original visual content is shown on an internal-projection video inflatable sphere like the PufferSphere XL from Pufferfish. Suited with a movement and gesture recognition device such as Microsoft's Kinect, the visual content of the sphere can interact with dancers and musicians in real time, enhancing the narrative.



\_\_Figure 3: Hemispheric in the Ciutat de les Arts in de les Ciències, Valencia, and PufferSphere

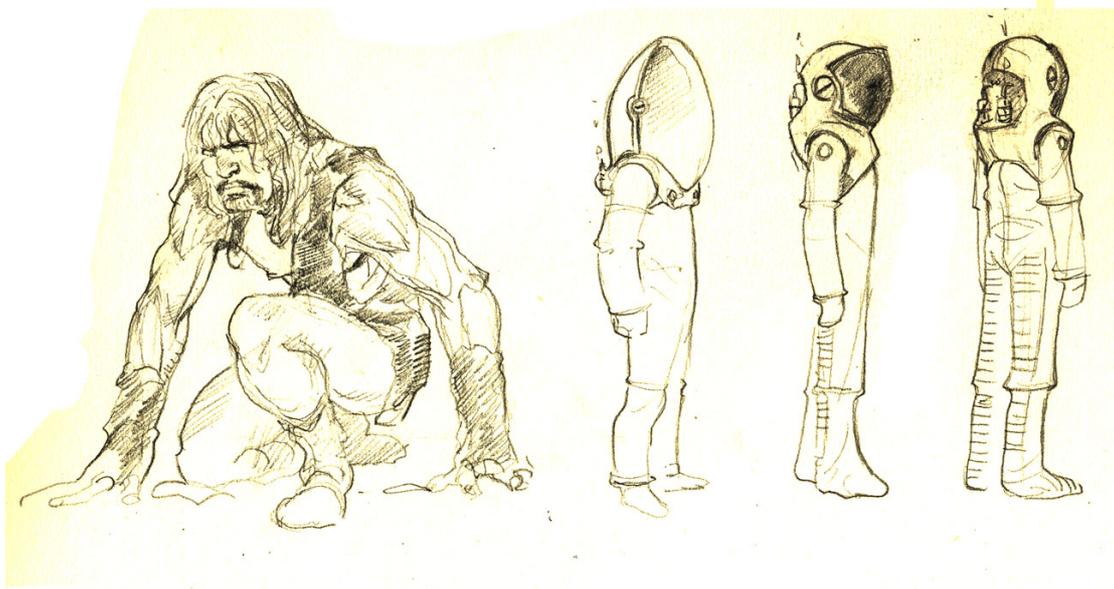


Figure 4: Sketches of the Primeval Man and the Orbenaut

### 3.2.2 Myth and Ritual in Valltorta

This story can deepen its roots in more than one myth. To begin with, the plot of time-travel has its foundations in mythologies of different civilisations, singularly in the Hindu Mahabharata. According to it, a king and his daughter visited Brahma at his home of Brahmaloaka, and during the 20 minutes they waited to see him, 27 chatur-yugas (about 120 million years) passed on Earth. In ancient Hindu mythology, time runs in different planes, which closely connects with Albert Einstein's concept of time dilation as explained by his theory of General Relativity. Einstein demonstrates theoretically that we could travel back and forth in space-time through a quantum wormhole connecting two points of the Universe. This contemporary concept of the relativity of time, which was already part of Hindu mythology some 2.500 years ago, has been used in numerous audiovisual contemporary narratives, notably films, such as the 'Terminator' and 'Back To The Future' franchises, 'Contact', or 'Interstellar', among many others. The 'causal loop' or 'circular causation'—a sequence of events (actions, information, objects, people) in which an event is among the causes of another event, which in turn is among the causes of the aforementioned event<sup>118</sup>—experienced by the Orbenaut featured in the script of *Valltorta*, assume that the time traveler cannot change history in any way, except their own (hence the loop). The cyclic view of time is present in mythologies from the Greek, the Hindus, and in Buddhism, implying an illusory quality, an infiniteness to linear time, that matches the postulates of modern cosmology about space-time.

'Jason and the Argonauts', a mythological master plot embodied in Tarkovski's

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<sup>118</sup> 'Causal loop', *Wikipedia*, <[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)>.

sci-fi film ‘Solaris’ (1972)—or its Soderbergh’s remake of 2002—featuring space travel, would probably not be completely ad hoc in *Valltorta*, since the hero here, the Orbenaut, has not embarked voluntarily in any kind of quest. The myth of The Odyssey, however—the framework for the hero’s journey—appears to be more suited to the story—although its last stages, those of the *homecoming*, will be in this case recast into the Orbenaut’s dream, which closes the loop of the aforementioned cyclic time-travel.

The ritual aspect of *Valltorta* is, in a metanarrative manoeuvre, part of the story itself. At a certain moment, the Primeval Man engages in a shamanistic, sacred ritual, where he enters sacred space and time. His only audience is the Orbenaut, but the text describes how he enters liminality (Eliade’s sacred space), and the situation is recreated through the same elements (visuals, light, music, dancing, plus chanting) that a modern multimedia piece might feature.

### **3.2.3 Compositional approach**

The story is divided in 26 scenes. Music has been composed for 12 of them, which for the time being can be edited and re-positioned (much as it is customary in films, and even more on TV series); there is plenty of material to draw from. However, I have always had a personal issue with that approach in my film work, because of the extreme importance I attach to narrative-influencing factors such as structure or character development. Indeed, this *multimedia live performance* has many characteristics that differ from a film project, and the narrative can be treated in a more abstract way, but I am still aiming to extend the composition of woodwind quintet material, if only for concert purposes.

The incidental combination of a very *acoustic* sound, like that of the woodwind quintet, with the electronics, provide an extra—if not correlative—layer of significance

that adds to the dualism of ancient ritual versus modern performance, of which *Valltorta* is an instance: a sort of metanarrative exercise in which a modern vehicle like a multi-disciplinary performance (involving music, visuals and dance) is used to set forth the idea of parallelism between ancient and modern rituals, by means of introducing in its audiovisual narrative a detailed depiction of a prehistoric ceremony in which members of two distant eras participate. However, the compositional material is, beyond that generic idea, assigned differently as per the dramatic intent: the woodwind quintet is used globally, in relation with the main story and the embodied time-travel myth, as well as to develop the subplot established between the two characters. The electronics tracks, by contrast, are reserved for the actual instances in which the Primeval Man engages in a ritualistic practice.

The music composed for the *Valltorta* project falls therefore into two strongly linked categories:

#### Woodwind Quintet material (16 min.)

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| FLASHBACK | 3:27 |
| SCENE 1   | 0:56 |
| SCENE 1B  | 2:06 |
| SCENE 2   | 1:48 |
| SCENE 3B  | 1:35 |
| SCENE 3   | 0:57 |
| SCENE 4   | 0:52 |
| SCENE 5   | 1:07 |
| SCENE 6   | 2:05 |
| SCENE 8   | 1:10 |

Electronic material (14 min.)

CAVERN FIRST 6:26

CAVERN SECOND 7:11

### 3.2.3.1 The use of a woodwind ensemble

The traditional scoring approach for audiovisuals featuring any sort of journey in space-time has frequently involved the use of electronics—inasmuch as the plot often deals with a futuristic way of achieving such journey—but rarely by themselves. A look at the mythology at hand, such as the Mahabharata, shows how the concept has a mystical origin prior to modern technology; perhaps judiciously, Hans Zimmer’s score for ‘Interstellar’ made use of woodwinds, some soft synths like Zebra, and essentially a pipe organ, a suggestion of director Christopher Nolan. Zimmer declared that both him and Nolan started from what they consider the heart of the story—the relationship between the protagonist and his daughter—and the grandeur of the cues devoted to the journey evolved from there. The composer was playing the theme of the story, a human theme, and the mythology of the transcendent journey was expressed in great part by music that minded such humanity: ‘The other part of that metaphor is that a pipe organ can’t make a sound without breath. In that regard, it’s incredibly human’.<sup>119</sup> Thus, the organ accomplishes the dual goal of playing the human drama while mythifying the space-time voyage. On the other side of the spectrum, Edward Artemiev’s score for ‘Solaris’ (1972) favored the use of the Russian synthesiser ANS—although, coincidentally, it featured as well, even if to a lesser extent, variations on Bach’s Chorale Prelude in F Minor, a piece

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<sup>119</sup> Fortner, Stephen, ‘Hans Zimmer on Scoring ‘Interstellar’’, Keyboard Magazine, March (2015).

for solo organ—a unique photoelectronic instrument capable of interacting with the visible image of a sound wave. Unlike Zimmer’s deliberately simple and static harmony, Artemiev’s rendition of space travel, or, rather, human psychology, is essentially atonal and abstract.

In *Valltorta*, the requirement of a woodwind quintet, part of the embryo of this project, has given me the opportunity to explore a new type of ensemble and to stylistically evolve into a personally uncharted language. My musical approach to the narrative, in terms of the personal journey that both characters experiment in the space-time mythical framework—akin to the aforementioned films—relies too on a two-fold quality contributed by the woodwind music: on one side, woodwinds are the most timbrically diverse of all orchestral sections, and a woodwind quintet (featuring also a French horn) provides innumerable possibilities colour-wise, which translate narratively into a wide semiotic range; on the other side, I have tried to conceptualise the mythical time-travel, including cyclic time, into a harmonic language—polytonality, atonalism, symmetrical modes such as octatonic, quartal and quintal chords—that brings forward the inherent beauty and equilibrium of the journey, as well as the apparent irrationality of the causal loop paradox. The music excerpt in the following page illustrates an example of bitonality in *Valltorta*, making use of the symmetrical augmented scale (hexatonal) against a variety of minor modes.

4

Melody: C# M7(#5) - augmented scale  
Accompaniment: E b minor

Melody: B b M7(#5) - augmented scale  
Accompaniment: E b minor

Figure 5: Valltorta, scene 2. Woodwind quintet.

For presentation purposes, all woodwind quintet music has been recorded on MIDI using a top-quality sample library. Still, there are always certain deficiencies—mainly missing articulations and extended techniques—in all libraries’ renditions of acoustic instruments. Therefore, the result is only about 80% consistent with the compositional intention.

### 3.2.3.2 The concept behind the electronic material

On his article ‘Chanting in the Gallery: Ritual Sound and its Phenomenology in Contemporary Art’<sup>120</sup>, Professor Megha Rajguru explores ritual singing in the context of video art. Raiguru puts several examples which are analogous to my rendition of the Primeval Man’s connecting ritual to the spirits of the wild animals: in his work ‘Journey to the Lower World’, artist Marcus Coates ‘employs chanting inspired by Shamanic rituals that are mimetic of animal sounds and birdsongs’, and, as with *Valltorta*’s Primeval Man with his audience—the Orbenaut—‘does not make an attempt at transferring the viewers into a trance-like state with him. The communion with the animal world through emitting sounds is limited to him’<sup>121</sup>. Coates uses the sounds to establish a threshold to the sacred space and time. Furthermore, in her piece *Panda Chant*, composer Meredith Monk uses a chanting in increasing tempo and dynamics, and repetitive, rhythmic abstract sounds, much in a shamanistic way, in an attempt ‘to slow down time’—in order to generate ‘a state of mind akin to meditation’. Having investigated the procedures of shamanistic rituals myself, I used on the portrayed ritual of *Valltorta* very similar compositional techniques, methods of worldmaking that mirror the effect of music in modern audiovisuals, where, Claudia Gorbman states, ‘music lessens defences against the fantasy structures to which narrative provides access. It increases the spectator’s susceptibility to suggestion. The cinema has been compared to hypnosis, since both induce (at least in good subjects) a kind of trance.’<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Rajguru, Megha, ‘Chanting in the gallery: Ritual sound and its phenomenology in contemporary art’, *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 12 (2013), 181-193.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>122</sup> Gorbman, Claudia, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, (New York: Wiley, 1987), 5.

The main purpose of electronics in the present project is to help listeners attain the whole experience of a trance-like state in an environment such as the one described in the story. As referenced on the script in narrative style, some researchers have stated that the steady, monotonous drumming that is part of nearly every deity-invoking ritual, has the function—or perhaps collateral effect—of bringing the performer and listeners to the brain state characteristic of lucid dreaming, pre-REM stages, meditation, or hypnosis, all without the need of hallucinatory drugs. This is achieved by aurally reproducing the pulse of the brain's Theta waves or rhythms (4 – 7 Hz) so that the pattern is progressively absorbed until the mind enters a deeper level of consciousness. Although the original theory—which goes back to the '60s—still has its detractors, there has been a relatively recent commercial exploitation of the so called 'brainwave entrainment' (BWE), in which recordings of more or less pure Delta, Theta, Alpha, Mu, SMR, Beta, or Gamma waves are supplied for a fee. By listening to audio encoded at a specific frequency (each of those waves is related to a certain mind state) our own brainwaves are allegedly synchronised to such frequency, therefore shifting our state of consciousness.

Being as it is a cross-disciplinary art form, the *Valltorta* project is intended to provide entertainment. Thus, the musical values provided by the quasi-minimalistic approach of the repetitious drumming—which gets deliberately altered as it progresses, as if recreating the immersion in an altered state of consciousness (ASC)—are more relevant than the strict use of certain frequencies on those tracks. Still, the whole effect on the listener, with the combination of the four types of seeds or elements, is certainly convincing and evocative. For an improved experience it is recommended the use of headphones.

### 3.2.3.2.1 Electronic material

The characteristics of the story and the planned visuals on the performance demanded also a musical approach that was coherent with the use of electronics. The sonic peculiarities of the rituals in Scenes 19-20 and 21 have been carefully considered, in an effort to recreate the trance-like state that both characters get into. For this purpose I have used a number of sound sources (*sound seeds*) that I manipulate and process extensively in the sequencer.

#### Sound seeds

There are four types of sound seeds, which have been subjected to manipulation prior to their digital processing:

- a) Proprietary electronic tracks, elaborated with synths and samplers.
  - Descriptive cataloging of the tracks (*dreamy, eerie, ringy, ghostly, dramatic...*), editing, and positioning accordingly.
- b) Live shamanistic drumming tracks.
  - These tracks have been edited and time-stretched to conform to a) the right tempo and b) the required drum size.
- c) Live ritual chanting tracks.
  - All tracks have been thoroughly cleaned of background noise, edited, and mostly *reversed* to avoid the recognition of a particular (modern) language—but they still retain much of their ritualistic feel while providing an unearthly, spectral quality.

d) Solo licks and phrases from the woodwind quintet instruments.

- Again, for presentation purposes these are MIDI. A total of seventy-seven phrases have been created and arranged as short snippets, although not all of them have made it to the final mix.

## Processing

All tracks have been heavily processed making extensive use of plugins, not as direct inserts but always through auxiliary tracks for automation control. The following images illustrate the track setup, mixing console setup, and signal flow of each group of sound seeds:

Notes:

1. The use, according to the action in the script, of a bigger drum in ‘CAVERN 2’, implies a different equalisation, in order to enhance the lower/subsonic frequencies featured in scene 21. No subsonic frequencies are noticeable when listening with headphones (recommended), but the difference with the sound of the smaller drum is obvious.
2. Some sound seeds have also been panned for an enhanced acoustic experience when listening with headphones.
3. The amount of effect assigned to each particular seed is controlled by volume or *send* automations. Parameters like panning or the seed volume itself are also automated. Finally, the mix is compressed on a Multi Leveler preset in a master track, and applied a generic reverb via a general auxiliary track.

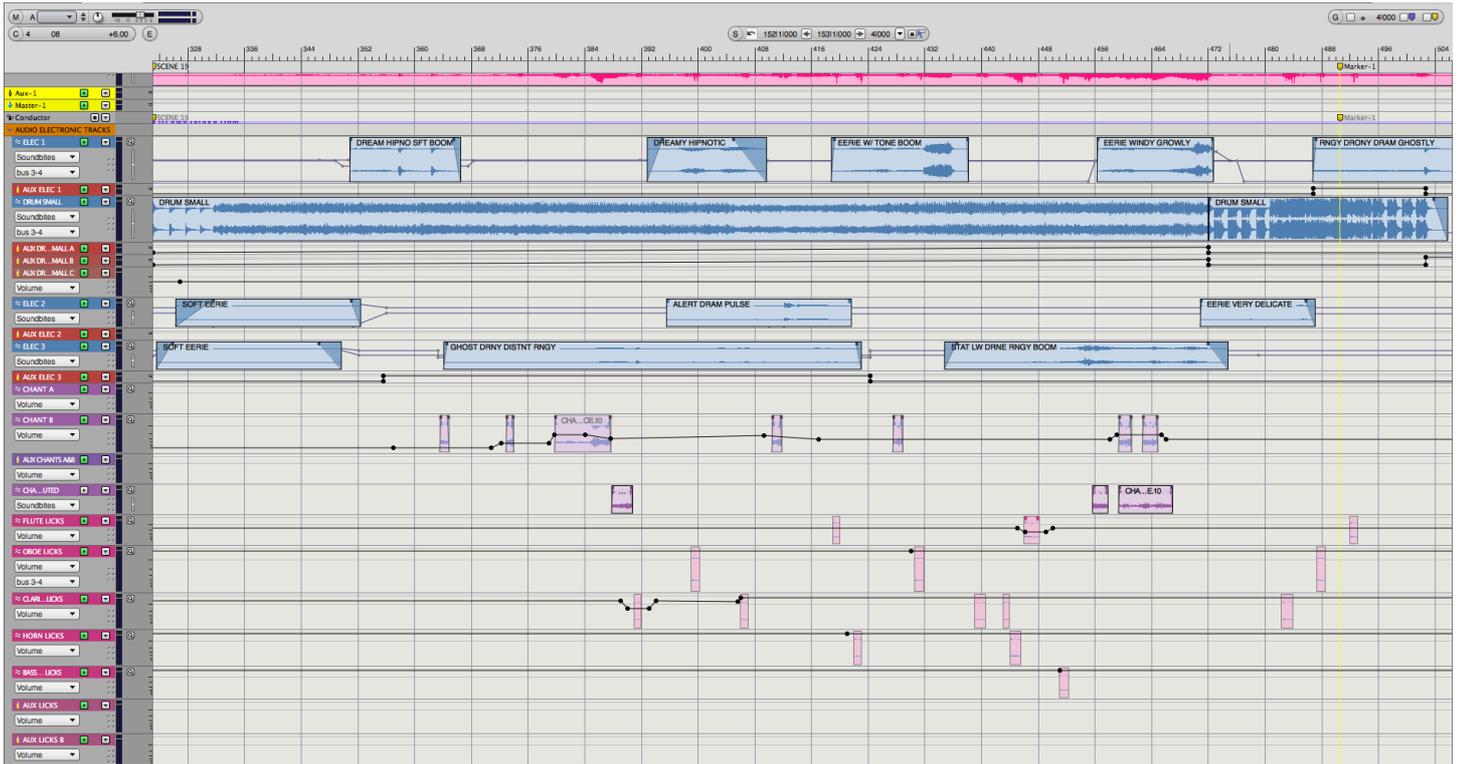


Figure 6: Valltorta project 'CAVERN 1' - Sequence window, Digital Performer 7

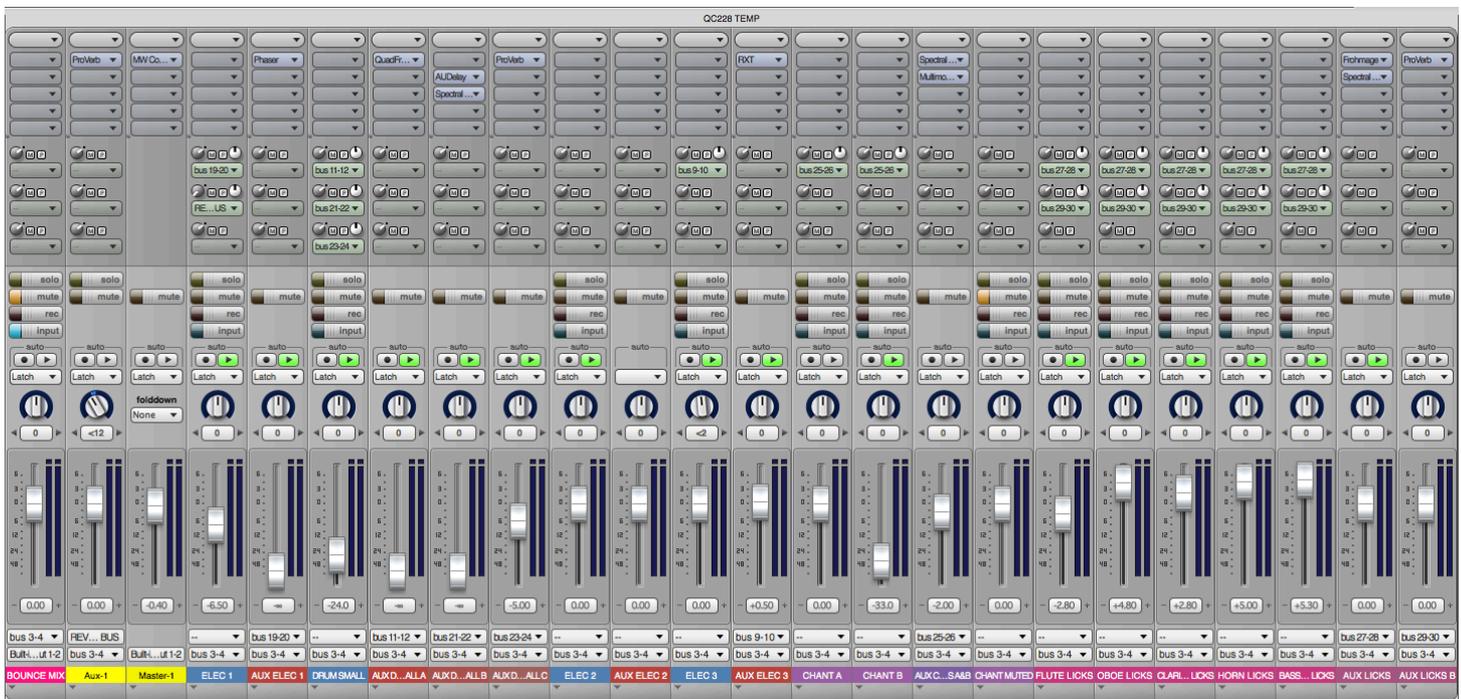
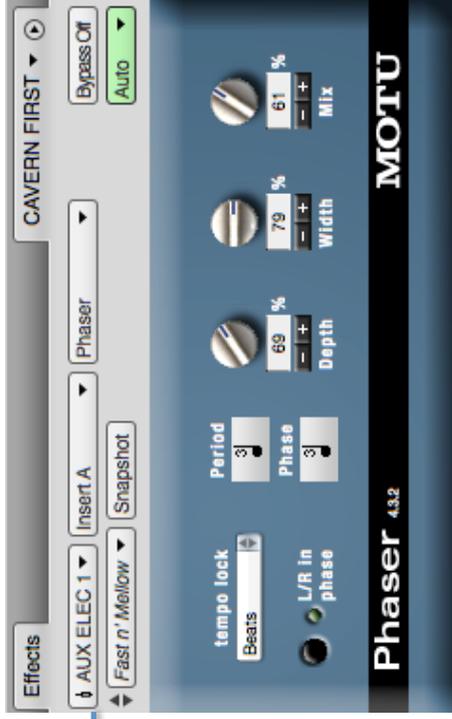


Figure 7: Valltorta project 'CAVERN 1' - Mixing board, Digital Performer 7

SOUND SEEDS: ELECTRONIC TRACKS

ELEC 1



AUX: PHASER

ELEC 2

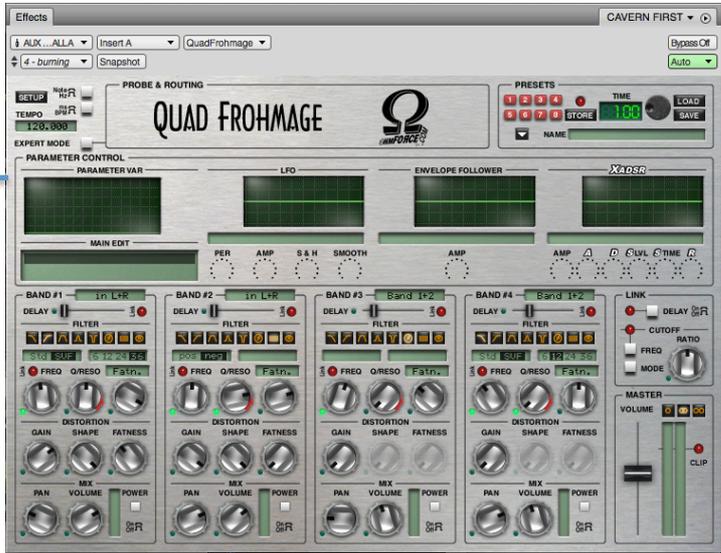


AUX: DISTORTION

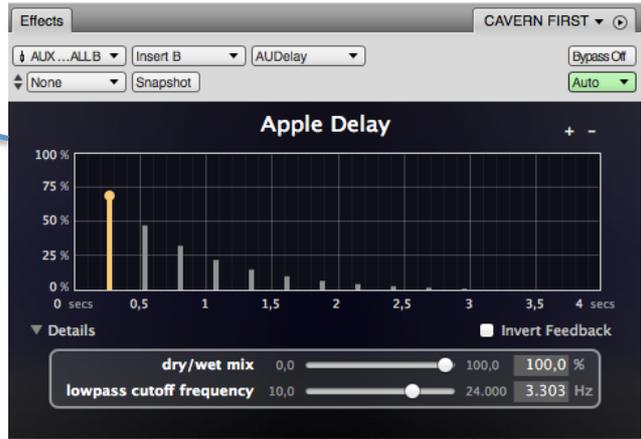
ELEC 3

**SOUND SEEDS: DRUMMING**

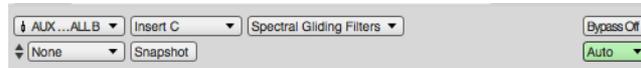
SMALL/BIG DRUM



AUX A:  
4-CHANNEL  
MULTI-  
FILTER



AUX B:  
DELAY  
+  
SPECTRAL  
GLIDING  
FILTER



Audio Unit: Spectral Gliding Filters      Manufacturer: Michael Norris

Parameters

|                            |        |        |            |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Number of filters:         | 1,0    | 100,0  | 10,0       |
| Filter width:              | 1,0    | 50,0   | 5,0        |
| Start frequency:           | 20,0   | 24.000 | 1.200,0 Hz |
| Start frequency variation: | 1,0    | 12.000 | 1.200,0 Hz |
| Pitch glide per second:    | -1.200 | 1.200  | 0 Cents    |
| Pitch glide var:           | 0      | 1.200  | 100 Cents  |
| Filter duration:           | 0,0    | 20,0   | 5,0 Secs   |
| Filter duration var:       | 0,0    | 10,0   | 2,0 Secs   |
| Silence duration:          | 0,0    | 20,0   | 2,0 Secs   |
| Silence duration var:      | 0,0    | 10,0   | 1,0 Secs   |
| Wet dry mix:               | 0,0    | 100,0  | 100,0 %    |
| Lo bin cutoff:             | 0,0    | 100,0  | 0,0 %      |
| Hi bin cutoff:             | 0,0    | 100,0  | 100,0 %    |

Randomize phases

FFT Size: 2048

Gain: -40,0      40,0      1,74 dB



EQ: LOW  
FREQ  
BOOST (BIG  
DRUM ONLY)



AUX C:  
CONVOLUTION  
REVERB  
(LARGE  
CHURCH)

SOUND SEEDS: CHANT

CHANT

**Parameters**

- Interpolation length: 30.0
- Interp length variance: 10.0
- Comb filterbank level: 100.0
- Comb filter fundamental: 2000.0
- Scale type: Fifths
- Number of octaves: 10.0
- Filter resonance: 99.0
- Flanger amount: 100.0
- Flanger depth: 15.0
- Flanger rate: 5.0
- Gate level: -60.0
- Lo bin cutoff: 100.0
- Hi bin cutoff: 100.0
- FFT Size: 2048
- Gain: -40.0

AUX: SPECTRAL DRONEMAKER + MULTIMODE FILTER

SOUND SEEDS: SOLO WOODWINDS

SOLO WW

AUX B: CONVOLUTION REVERB (LARGE CHURCH)

**Parameters**

- Grain length: 0.1
- Grain length variance: 0.0
- Grain delay: 0.1
- Grain delay variance: 0.0
- Bin shift: -200.0
- Bin shift variance: 0.0
- Bins per grain: 1.0
- Fade amount: 0.0
- Lo bin cutoff: 0.0
- Hi bin cutoff: 0.0
- FFT Size: 2048
- Feedback: 0.0
- Gain: -40.0

AUX A: MULTI-BAND RESONANT FILTER + SPECTRAL GRANULATION

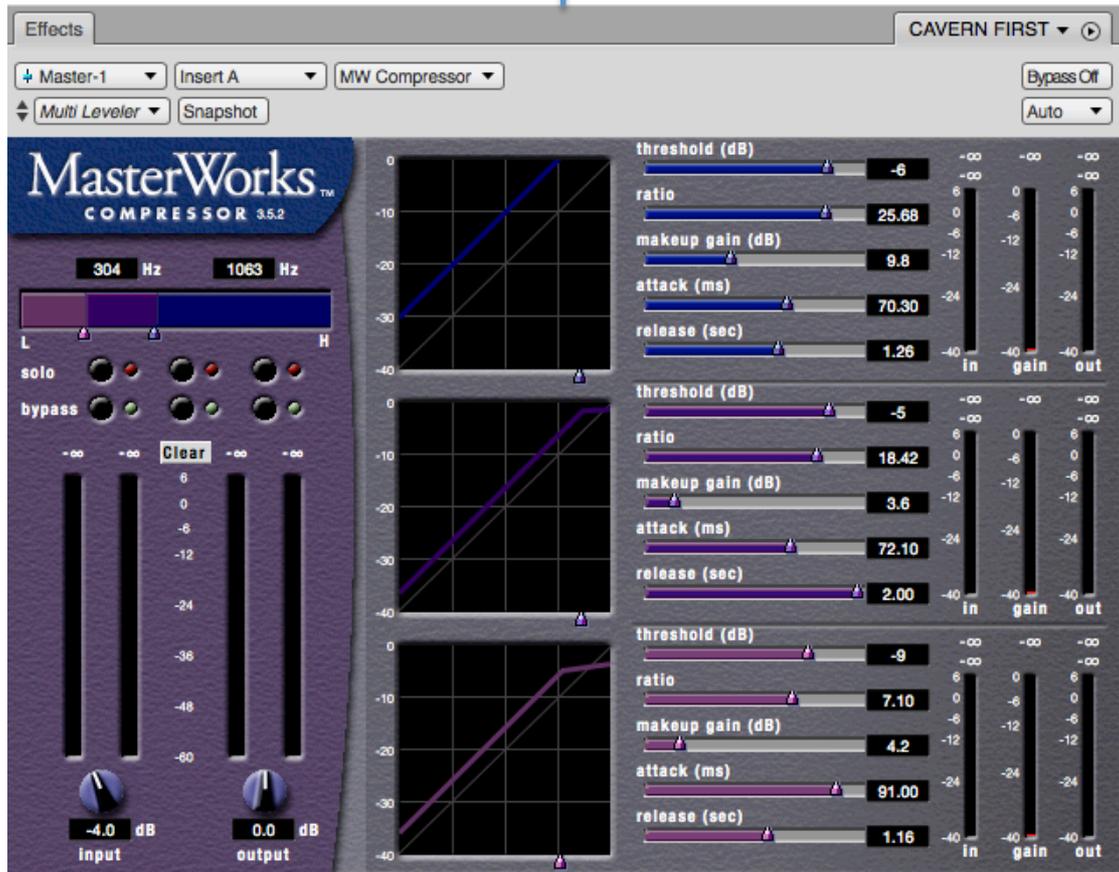


Figure 8: Valltorta project - Signal processing (pages 80 to 83)

## 3.3 The Mystery of the King of Kinema

### 3.3.1 Introduction

In 2014 I was commissioned by director Elio Quiroga to compose the score for his documentary ‘The Mystery of the King of Kinema’<sup>123</sup> Quiroga defines this short film as a ‘creative documentary’ with experimental features:

‘The Mystery of the King of Kinema’ is the story of a man and his daughter. Max Linder was the first movie star. He was known as ‘The King of Cinema’. He was forgotten after his death, and his films were lost. His daughter, Maud Linder, struggled for more than 70 years, until she passed away in 2017, to find the films her father made, and to recover his legacy. Maud never met Max.<sup>124</sup>

It's hard to answer the question of who Linder really was as a person, but this documentary project aims to shed some light on who may have been the great film pioneer—and certainly the most neglected of all. Max Linder, above all, is a mystery. Born near Bordeaux in the late nineteenth century, Gabriel–Maximilien Leuvielle, later known as Max Linder, was the most successful of all silent film actors. He starred in over 300 films, many of them written, directed and produced by him. In 1912 he was the highest paid actor in the world, winning a staggering amount of one million francs per day. He worked with the greatest filmmakers of his time, developing one of the most influential personalities of comedy film. His long shadow extends to the present day. Directors like Martin Scorsese have honored him, and Charles Chaplin himself referred to him as ‘his teacher.’ His style influenced the entire film industry: from Mack Sennett to Stan Laurel, to Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chase or Charlie Chaplin himself, Fatty Arbuckle, Abbot and Costello,

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<sup>123</sup> The full documentary can be watched here: <https://vimeo.com/118810964> Password: oriol123

<sup>124</sup> Personal communication, 2014

the Marx Brothers or The Three Stooges. His famous ‘mirror gag’ has been honoured in dozens of films and series, from the Marx Brothers in ‘Duck Soup’ to ‘The Simpsons’ and ‘X-Files’. Max's fame was such that he made his imitators popular; thus, the American comic actor Raymond Griffith was known as ‘The American Max Linder’. His visit to Barcelona, where he filmed ‘Max Toreador’, one of his biggest hits, caused riots, and the eldest in town still remember ‘the day Max came to Barcelona’. Pathé Frères, the production company that brought him to stardom, gave him the noble title of ‘King of Cinema’, an honour that no one else has ever gotten since.

But in 1925 everything ended abruptly. Max and his young wife took their own lives in an apparent suicide pact, and afterwards his memory started to fade away. Currently Max Linder is sadly relegated to the attic of film memory, and as a result hundreds of his films have been lost forever. His daughter Maud struggled until her own death to get his memory revived. Something truly amazing, considering that her parents abandoned her when she was 15 months old. This film wants to tell the story of Max and his daughter, who dedicated her life to revive her father’s figure, a loyalty that transcends time. In addition, it tries to put a spotlight on the final tragedy in the fascinating life of one of the three most influential personalities of early silent films.’

Getting into the specifics of the filming techniques, Quiroga continues:

The idea of creating a fiction based on reality with the use of Max Linder speaking by voice of an actor—all he says are Max’s actual statements to the press of the time, memorized verbatim, hence the actor is just giving voice and body to the word of the real person—arose from the lack of recordings of radio broadcasts with Max's voice, or filmed interviews, given that he died four years before the advent of sound movies. Such technique engages the audience emotionally, since they are in front of a real person. Archive images were also used, in an experimental style; for example we found some footage of one of his films, heavily degraded by

the ‘vinegar syndrome’,<sup>125</sup> which was stored in the Library of Congress. That unprocessed picture, on the edge of abstraction, symbolizes the character’s own degradation, and that of the relationship with his partner. There are other moments, on a couple of his films, where we used large digital zooms that took us to a tremendously noisy and intense image, which provides an interesting metanarrative aspect to those parts of the documentary. We also have a making off of one of his films—maybe one of the first that were made—in which he simulates a suicide, and which we use, with music and sound effects, as a premonitory moment. Another aspect is the use of pop music, songs that, together with the score, accompany the many silent images of the documentary. This gives contemporaneity to the drama and life of Max, who lived a century ago.<sup>126</sup>

### 3.3.2 Myth and Ritual in *The Mystery of the King of Kinema*

Although documentaries are intended to strictly represent reality, fiction and non-fiction share many characteristics; not only semiotic—in their relation between signifiers and the signified—but in all methods applied to the development of narrative: emotional engagement, use of language, dramatic arc, camera techniques, editing, sound, or music. These are some of the aspects of audiovisuals that are used for *worldmaking*, also a purpose of myths and rituals alike. The handling of space and time is the same in fiction and non-fiction, and in that regard psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) famously declared that ‘truth shows itself in a fictional structure’.<sup>127</sup> In a similar vein, media and communications scholar Roger Silverstone stated: ‘Television programmes, as all culture, have the status of ‘as-if’ constructions. Even in their claims to present reality they present fiction.’<sup>128</sup>

Because of this kinship, psychoanalysis—which, with its focus on the unconscious approach to fiction, might consider the documentary format as too

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<sup>125</sup> ‘Vinegar syndrome’ is a chemical reaction that decomposes cellulose triacetate film.

<sup>126</sup> Text provided by the director to the composer.

<sup>127</sup> Lacan, Jacques, ‘The Youth of Gide, or the Letter and Desire’, in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 625.

<sup>128</sup> Silverstone, Roger, ‘The Right to Speak: On a Poetic for Television Documentary’, *Media, Culture and Society*, 5 (1983), 137.

rational and consciously perceived—may include documentary in its criticism;<sup>129</sup> as in fiction, characters and events in documentary can be mythologized, because not only it tells a story, but it does so by having the audience respond to the same mechanisms of identification as any other type of audiovisual.

Just like in the documentary ‘Roses in December’ (Ana Carrigan and Bernard Stone, 1982), about the murder of four missionaries in El Salvador—with a very scarce score by Chris Adelman—‘The Mystery of the King of Kinema’, also a television documentary, faces the common problem of featuring an already deceased character. The director incorporated an actor playing Max Linder, but in static fashion, just to have a real body saying Linder’s original lines. As scholar Bill Nichols says, apropos the missing bodies in ‘Roses in December’:

Unlike historical fiction films, documentary films lack the problem of finding themselves with a body too many. When an actor reincarnates an historical person, the actor's very presence testifies to the gap between the text and the life to which it refers. A second individual assumes the place that was occupied by another, yet can neither become that other nor offer a performance that disregards it.<sup>130</sup>

Besides the historical aspect inherent in the documentary format—the *mimesis* of reality formulated by Aristotle and revised by Frye<sup>131</sup>—Quiroga must combine the presentation of the mythical figure of the comedian—a well-known archetype—with the reality of his daughter and her struggle. In a way, then, our vision of the Linder myth is also culturally mediated: Max first abandoned his daughter, and then committed ‘double’ suicide, with his wife; it is inevitable that an audience processes the narrative not only from the collective unconscious, but from their social structures as well.

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<sup>129</sup> Renov, Michael, 'Introduction: The Truth About Non-Fiction', *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. Michael Renov, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 6.

<sup>130</sup> Nichols, Bill, 'History, Myth, and Narrative in Documentary', *Film Quarterly*, 41 (1987), 9-20.

<sup>131</sup> Silverstone, Roger, 'The Right to Speak: On a Poetic for Television Documentary', *Media, Culture and Society*, 5 (1983), 139.

Like film, television shares a mythical quality with other aspects of modern life, such as art or religion. Liminality is present in the ritual of watching it—from our ‘profane’ daily life we enter (then exit later) the realm of a new, ‘sacred’, time and space. In documentary, however, these have to be handled with care: as opposed to fiction, historic reality can in no way be disregarded, hence mythical time and space need to be constantly related to the present. In ‘The Mystery of the King of Kinema’, this is resourcefully done by interspersing accounts of Linder’s life, through enactment or movie footage, with interviews to living persons.

### **3.3.3 Compositional approach**

In the days of silent film, and through the first two decades of the last century, very few scores were written specifically to accompany the pictures. Instead, existing compositions were compiled by the musical directors of the theatres where films were shown,<sup>132</sup> assembled into a score, and then performed by an orchestra, if one was available. Most of the times, though, the size of the ensembles would range from small groups to only one pianist, depending on the theater. IMDB’s biographer Michael Brooke writes about Max Linder: ‘At an early point in his career, while movies were still silent, Linder discovered the importance of adding the right music to films in order to put an audience in the perfect mood; he frequently sent notebooks with music he considered fitting for his films. The compositions could be amusing, dramatic or romantic.’<sup>133</sup>

Composer Robert Israel has become an expert in silent films, for which he has

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<sup>132</sup> Some anthologies were published as ‘cue sheets’, like Erno Rapee's *Encyclopedia of Music for Pictures* in 1925.

<sup>133</sup> Brooke, Michael, IMDb Biography of Max Linder, *IMDb*, <https://www.imdb.com>.

composed and orchestrated new scores. Although Max Linder's original music suggestions may be unknown, Israel compiled pieces for a revamped 2003 version of Linder's 'Seven Years Bad Luck' (1921), which included piano pieces and orchestral arrangements—most of them in a recognizable early-1900s style—closely marrying the action in the same fashion silent films were originally scored. Aware of genre procedures, and knowing that adhering to the traits of period music would at some point be inevitable, I decided to address 'The Mystery of the King of Kinema', a biography of Max himself, by expanding the stylistic boundaries, avoiding an exclusive musical enhancement of the action, and focusing mostly on the inner aspects of the characters.

In order to fully grasp the intricacies of this 93-minute film, I investigated the private and public persona of Linder. Jung had defined different types of comedians: jesters, fools, and tricksters or clowns. Max Linder was a clown. Ritual clowns have existed in all cultures from time immemorial,<sup>134</sup> all the way to the present day. They had, and have, a crucial role in society, in capacities ranging from the religious to the cultural, and even political. According to Jung, this character represents a primary side of our personality; so undeveloped in its own self-knowledge and so simple-minded that can sometimes appear as unpleasant and insensitive to others. He states: 'Now if the myth were nothing but an historical remnant, one would have to ask why it has not long since vanished into the great rubbish-heap of the past, and why it continues to make its influence felt on the highest levels of civilization, even where, on account of his stupidity and grotesque scurrility, the trickster no longer plays the role of a 'delight-maker'.'<sup>135</sup>

The trickster archetype is found in many myths, usually crossing social

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<sup>134</sup> Bala, Michael, 'The Clown: An Archetypal Self-Journey', *Jung Journal*, 4 (2010), 50.

<sup>135</sup> Jung, Carl, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 469.

boundaries and breaking rules. Clowns, tricksters—usually male figures—are iconoclasts, free thinkers, and ultimately noble. They introduce disorder, challenge conventions, transgress rules, shatter taboos, deride authority, and expose our hypocrisy by publicly pointing at the worst parts of us, which our subconscious usually keeps concealed. Clowns tell the truth, uncomfortable as it may be.<sup>136</sup> Culturally and religiously, tricksters are the subversive critics of morals, and by these constant incursions in the anti-structure—as explained by Turner—they collaborate to strengthen the ties of the community.

But apart from the above, mythological or fairy tale tricksters—and modern-time comedians—share an essential, defining characteristic: a duality, a Levi-Strauss-formulated condition of binary-opposites in their identities. Freud considered humour an adaptive ego mechanism that helps us cope with the unknown. Yet the humorous defiance of the established order, and the embrace of the irrational, has consequences: on one side, tricksters are in constant touch with the dark side of the human soul, which they aim to satirise and unclothe—and the reactions to such actions may be of acknowledgement, but also of hostility. On the other side, they seek laughter, and do so by confronting their audiences not only with the good or banal, but also with the repressed secrets, and often tragedies, in their unconscious. They have to be wise—perhaps the wisdom of the simple-minded, if Jung’s archetype is considered—but that clairvoyance, which works in healing the group, may lead in turn to personal suffering. The mask, real or virtual, that clowns sometimes wear is not only a prop: just as some Japanese studies revealed that forced, artificial smiling may result in a depressive psychological disorder called the ‘smile mask syndrome’<sup>137</sup>, the ‘sad

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<sup>136</sup> ‘In King Lear, Shakespeare employs the Fool judiciously as a speaker of profound truth.’ Bala, Michael, ‘The Clown: An Archetypal Self-Journey’, *Jung Journal*, 4 (2010), 56.

<sup>137</sup> Sumairu Kamen Shōkōgun is a psychological disorder proposed by Japanese professor Makoto Natsume where depression and physical illness arise as a result of prolonged, unnatural smiling.

clown' paradox reveals a reality of loneliness, addictions, depressions, and even suicide: a bi-polarity that swings from euphoria to bleakness, from happiness to misery, from life to death.

For this project I have also studied the figure of Maud Linder, concentrating on her psychological aspects. I have established a correlation between the psyches of both father and daughter, developing the aforementioned duality, which is shown in the comedian and in the abandoned daughter, already in her maturity. Finally, I have taken into consideration the historical time we enter in the story, which becomes mythologized by the use of certain styles and musical elements, easily identifiable by an audience as pertaining to the France of the early twentieth century.

### **3.3.3.1 The characters**

There are two central characters in this story:

- Max Linder. Actor. Silent film star.
- Maud Linder. Director. Daughter of Max Linder.

Narratively speaking, central characters can be catalogued:

1. **PROTAGONIST.** The one who experiences the personal journey, with whom the audience establishes emotional identification, experiencing the story through his point of view.
2. **MAIN CHARACTER.** The character whom the story is mostly about.

In this documentary, the real Max is played by an actor, in a meta-game of narrative described above. Both father and daughter go through their personal journeys. Max is the protagonist, but he is portrayed as a fictitious being. Maud is real. Sometimes the character categories are not as clear as in, for example, Steven

Spielberg's 'E.T. The Extra Terrestrial', where the alien is the main character that the story is mostly about, and Elliot is the boy whom the audience is rooting for. Strictly speaking, Maud is the one who wants something at the start of the tale, and who will find obstacles on her way, hence making her the protagonist. In 'The Mystery of the King of Kinema', however, Max seems to be the protagonist too. He grows and changes. We see his rise and fall. Hence both of them are treated with equal care, and characterized not only attending at mythical archetypes—which would include a genetic temperament and an acquired character—but also by other features such as the use of language, social and intellectual status, or mannerisms. Max is outgoing, bright. Maud is choleric and intellectual. Both father and daughter belong to a well-off social class.

For Max, the obvious objective is to be successful in his career. His inner self, though, struggles with eternal unhappiness and an obsession with death, probably as a result of a post-traumatic shock after World War I. The obstacle to that is the continuous need to maintain a comedic façade, a smiling mask. This aforementioned paradox is the main conflict of Max's story. As for Maud, it's all about abandonment, loneliness, and an obsession for recovering the unrecoverable—her dead father, and for conceiving the reasons that led him to commit suicide. Maud will have to fight not only with the inexplicable forgetfulness of French society towards her father, but also with her own personality, her aging, and her sexuality, hence dealing with the lack of recognition not only of her father, but of her own self.

### **3.3.3.2 Instrumentation**

This project features six pieces, four for piano and two for orchestra. The latter are

constructed from two of the piano pieces. They share the basic melodic and chordal structure, but become new pieces by virtue of the textural and extended harmonic treatment. These two orchestral pieces are MIDI mockups; they are a rendition in the notation software Sibelius via its dedicated orchestral library Note Performer, which does not reach the minimum broadcast standards. Although in the beginning the documentary was temp-tracked with those electronic versions, hoping to eventually record a real orchestra, budget constraints made that impossible in the end, and the sampled orchestra was maintained, unfortunately, on the broadcast film. The piano pieces were performed and recorded live on a Steinway grand in Capellades, Barcelona, except *Max Theme I*, which was sequenced in Digital Performer, then played though a Yamaha Disklavier (without an actual performer) and recorded live as well.

In a fictional project, all the aforementioned information about characters plus other aspects like structure, genre, localisation, and so forth, would help me in the organisation of my compositional map. As discussed above, non-fiction shares most of the characteristics of fiction, except perhaps the treatment of time; therefore the present case should follow the same parameters. However, since in this particular instance I anticipated less control over the music editing, I did not follow my regular work process, but instead I used the series of pieces described below as self-contained works, which could be edited and positioned on the film in different ways.

The pieces are:

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| DUSK I – Piano      | 2:19 |
| DUSK II – Orchestra | 2:26 |
| MAX THEME I – Piano | 2:33 |

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| MAX THEME II – Orchestra | 2:52 |
| NOONTIDE – Piano         | 3:18 |
| SEA WALTZ – Piano        | 3:44 |

### **3.3.3.3 Six sources of material**

As explained above, the musical pieces assigned to this project do not intend to create a strictly synchronised musical story line. The idea would be to create a fabric of musical emotions that appeal strongly to the features of each character and their personal conflicts, and at the same time provide a time-space wrapping that would automatically establish the appropriate frame for the audience. Then all this music will be placed strategically in the film by the editor and director, much in the way that soundtracks are put together today in TV series.

Without sacrificing my personal style and input, all music in Max evolves stylistically around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The six pieces are examined separately, below:

#### **DUSK I**

*Dusk I* drinks from the sources of French Impressionism, as well as pandiatonicism, polytonality, and jazz. All that harmonic lavishness and contrast in colour take us back to the turn of the century in Paris, which were turbulent but culturally exuberant times. *Dusk I* is intense yet elegant, like Max. Romantic but sour, defining the battle between his effervescence and his melancholy, the ill-fated combination that eventually took his life. The continuous modulations and alterations bring us close to the restless, tempestuous mind of the genius:



## DUSK II

The orchestral texture of *Dusk II* provides additional layers of significance. In this particular passage, it is worth noting that *Dusk II* is equally efficient in depicting Maud's sense of loneliness and 'abandonment', which eventually she will catalyse towards 'forgiveness'. The orchestral excerpt and the piano harmony can be seen side by side below:

The image displays two musical scores side-by-side. On the left is a piano score for measures 12-15, marked 'Meno mosso' and 'mf sostenuto'. A red arrow points to measure 12 and a blue arrow to measure 14. On the right is an orchestral score for the same measures. Above the orchestral score, a red arrow points to measure 12 and a blue arrow to measure 14. The tempo markings 'Meno mosso, sostenuto' and 'rit.' are positioned above measures 12-13 and 14-15 respectively. The orchestral score includes parts for Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Eng. Hn., Cl. 1, Cl. 2, Bsn. 1, and Bsn. 2. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include 'To Ob.', 'To B. Cl.', and 'solo'.

## MAX THEME I and II

Because of the format of the project, I knew that this was partially going to be a song-score, so I wanted to make sure I would provide the right underscore as well. All my pieces for Max have a tertiary feeling. *Max Theme* is a light waltz in the line of the *Bal-mussete* so much in vogue in the Paris of that era—minus the accordion, which would most likely be featured in many of the songs selected for the soundtrack. The

tempo is medium-fast, and it even has a certain aura of the Spanish music that originated in the French Impressionism and quickly took a strong nationalistic identity. *Max Theme* is outgoing and bright, representing one part of Max’s duality. It also has a merry-go-round quality, portrayed by the *recurrent tremolo*. It’s Max at his prime, Max the filmmaker, the star, the best comedian in the world. The piece is entitled *Max Theme*—with a solo piano and an orchestral approach—but it does not represent the underlying subtext of self-destruction in Max’s personality, nor the universal idea of obscurity in the individual’s psyche—that is mostly left to *Dusk I* and *Dusk II*. ‘Max Theme’ deals, it may seem, mainly with the surface, with the external plot:

**Tempo di Valse, rubato (♩ = 140)**

*mf*

However, at some point *Max Theme* will stall and its buoyancy will give way to a more introspective section, better rendered by the solo violin in *Max Theme II*. Again, it’s the inescapable duality of Linder:

**Tempo I, più mosso (♩ = 180)**

*mp* *p leggiero*

## NOONTIDE

Rhythmic, passionate, somewhat unsettled—and of course in a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature—*Noontide* is my homage to Max's visit to Barcelona, my hometown. Like *Max Theme*, it is a priori plot-oriented, but as with the former it will eventually plunge into a more subtext-minded atmosphere. The style is highly modulating and chromatic, and it makes use of superposed triads that provide a constant edge:

Musical score for *Noontide*, measures 7-13. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The piece is characterized by superposed triads in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 7 is marked with a '7' above the staff. The chord G/E is indicated below the staff. Measure 13 is marked with a '13' above the staff.

*Noontide* a very pianistic piece, and the style is reminiscent of that of the Spanish composers of Max's time. It has a steady pulse, but when it loses it, it can become quite *rubato* and evocative:

Musical score for *Noontide*, measures 14-16. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The piece is characterized by superposed triads in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 14 is marked with a '7' below the staff. The dynamic marking *pp poco rubato* is present. The piece is characterized by superposed triads in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 16 is marked with a '3' below the staff.

## SEA WALTZ

The most personal and unique piece of the group, *Sea Waltz* is difficult to catalogue stylistically. It is harmonically dense, and it has a strong jazz flavour, which takes us back to the Jazz Age that Paris hailed on the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Maud is the character most benefitted from the features of this piece. Its more contemporary sound fits well the time in which the film locates the subplot recounting Maud's acceptance of her father (the years of World War II):



Also, from a characterisation point of view, its more sophisticated contour matches Maud's complex personality and intellectual demeanour. *Sea Waltz* also possesses musical qualities that can bring about her personal conflicts. The *brillante* passage at the end of the piece illustrates, better than any other, Maud's victory: recognition, however small, and perhaps, through this, forgiveness:



This music can serve as a bond between father and daughter; a connection that never existed, which thanks to the careful analysis of Max and Maud's own paths, can be brought to life. In a way, we are the interpreters of their absence.

## 3.4 The Harmony of the Spheres

### 3.4.1 Introduction

This project was not a commission, but a personal journey into the music of the past, a result of my interest in the parallels that multimedia actions of our days could have had in ancient times. The idea to approach the harmony of the spheres came in 2016 after further investigating concepts such as sound, colour, light and movement, and their relationship in the context of archeoacoustics. That led to the subject of music visualisation through vibration, and Cymatics, which I explain in my compositional approach.

### 3.4.2 Myth and ritual in The Harmony of the Spheres

The recently investigated cosmic microwave background (CMB) is arguably the closest we have been to the harmonies that allegedly rule our Universe. Egyptian cosmology (or Kemetic science), as described by Egyptologist Moustafa Gadalla<sup>138</sup>, had attempted to unify the Universe according to those harmonies, in a theory of everything that not only related the movement and distances between planets to music, but also included colours, body chakras, and the effect that all this has on us humans. More recently, Swiss mathematician and musicologist Hans Cousto<sup>139</sup> revisited those ideas in his law of the Cosmic Octave, updating ancient alchemy with

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<sup>138</sup> Gadalla, Moustafa, *Egyptian Harmony: The Visual Music*, (Greensboro, NC: Tehuti Research Foundation, 2000).

<sup>139</sup> Cousto, Hans, *The Cosmic Octave: Origin of Harmony*, (Mendocino, CA: LifeRhythm, 2015).

heaps of modern equations.

But early Egyptians are not the only ones to have explored the subject of universal harmonic laws. The Harmony of the Spheres is one of the classic *trending topics* that have fascinated mankind ever since Pythagoras, making regular comebacks through hundreds of years. The idea is simple, as author Joscelyn Godwin synthesises quoting Plato in his book ‘The Harmony of the Spheres: The Pythagorean Tradition in Music’<sup>140</sup>: there is something musical in cosmos, and something cosmic in music. This bi-directional link had been further formulated in Trismegistus’ ‘Emerald Tablet’<sup>141</sup>, the Hermetic source of European alchemy, according to which earthly music is the key to cosmic harmonies (*upwards*)... at the same time that those cosmic harmonies are revealed in our music (*downwards*). The main illustration of this argument would be the notion that the distances between planets correspond to musical tones.

In his work, ‘Timaeus’, Plato introduced his own cosmology in a mythological way, inspired by the mathematics—harmonic ratios—of Pythagoras. He proposed an arrangement in which the Demiurge—a godlike ‘craftsman’— created the spherical universe as a living being, and endowed it with a World Soul—which is musical, as its harmonic proportions organize the whole cosmos. Then the human soul was created, with less pure ‘ingredients’, from that primary element of the universe; we still are made of the same harmony, yet of inferior quality, so we need to connect with the divine and imitate the music of the spheres in order to bring harmonic order to our soul. For Plato, ours is ‘the kind of soul that dwells, as we said, in the summit of our body, and it raises us up from the earth towards the heavenly region to which we are

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<sup>140</sup> Godwin, Joscelyn, *The Harmony of the Spheres: The Pythagorean Tradition in Music*, (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1992).

<sup>141</sup> Hermes Trismegistus is a mythological character, syncretism of Egyptian god Thot and Greek god Hermes, who created alchemy and developed a system of metaphysical beliefs known as Hermeticism. He is the alleged author of the Emerald Tablet, the foundation of those doctrines.

naturally akin, since we are not soil-bound plants but, properly speaking, creatures rooted in heaven'.<sup>142</sup>

The aforementioned interrelation between the divine and the human, which Plato saw as a harmonic connection, has been also approached from a sociological perspective. Peter Berger, who defines 'nomos' as a society's customs and ethos, explains how religion considers nomos to be embedded in the universe, in the cosmos, since the nomos is a reflection of the cosmos. He uses Eliade's concept of a cosmos split in two, when he describes 'the conception of the institutional order as directly reflecting or manifesting the divine structure of the cosmos, that is, the conception of the relationship between society and cosmos as one between microcosm and macrocosm'.<sup>143</sup> S. Brent Plate substantiates this very same idea in the context of audiovisual worldmaking, when he claims that films provide 'a cosmology that evokes a 'looking up' to where the wondrous things are. In this way cinema offers a glimpse of the heavens, of other worlds above and beyond earthly existence, even as these other worlds must be relatable to the visible worlds on earth'.<sup>144</sup>

### **3.4.2.1 From ancient science to esotericism**

Since Pythagoras and Plato, the laws of astronomy, mathematics, music, medicine and astrology had been intertwined in the antique cosmology's idea of universal harmony, but later developments through centuries never actually agreed on a standard model.

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<sup>142</sup> Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

<sup>143</sup> Berger, Peter L., *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, (New York: Anchor, 1990), 46.

<sup>144</sup> Plate, S. Brent, *Religion and Film: Cinema and the Re-Creation of the World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 33.

Despite Boethius's classifying of the *musica mundana*<sup>145</sup> (music of the Universe) as the highest kind of music, all revisions of the Pythagorean cosmology after the rationalistic age of the Enlightenment acquired a more mystical tint, and the Harmony of Spheres' eccentric unification of all those areas of knowledge became questionable. Eventually, with the advent of modern science and technology, the subject of a pervasive universal harmony has evolved into a matter of faith, sustained only by a handful of authors whose theories are deeply rooted in Western esotericism. Still, intricate mathematical formulas have been deployed to argue concepts like the superiority of a A=432 Hz tuning over A=440 Hz<sup>146</sup>—or the other way around—in order to tally complicated calculations that would accommodate planet orbits with notes frequencies, colour wavelengths, and body-healing energy.

The basic channel for the concordance between the spheres (the planets and stellar objects) and the musical tones, is the number, and the number is what we use to measure intervals, modes, frequencies, orbits, distances, and even light wavelengths. The core of the theory infers that all of this is interwoven and belongs to a unified system, and, predictably, for some authors, that includes pseudo-scientific areas of knowledge such as Astrology or—less predictably—Ayurvedic medicine, all made to be sizeable by numbers. The fact that we have never heard the actual 'sound' of the stars, on the other hand, is readily explained as part of our nature: the sound has always been with us; it's true silence what we do not recognise.

It could be argued that the Harmony of the Spheres is nothing but fringe science, based on a vast number of formal fallacies. However, for the neophyte, the

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<sup>145</sup> In his work *De Institutionis Musica*, the sixth century Roman philosopher Boethius classified music in terms of *musica mundana* (music of the World, harmony of the spheres, cosmic music), *musica humana* (spiritual music, harmony of the body and soul), and *musica instrumentalis* (instrumental music).

<sup>146</sup> There has been, in recent years, a musical movement by a passionate group of pseudoscientists and their followers, who advocate a change of pitch in music from 440 Hz to 432 Hz, claiming a connection between the latter and the alleged 'harmony of the Universe'.

standard model of cosmology that our modern science observes, and some relatively recent discoveries, might have, at least on the surface, some affinities with the more or less esoteric postulates of the past. Cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation is the way in which the enormous energy density of the Universe expanded right after the Big Bang, some 14 billion years ago. For some reason, this thermal radiation produced random fluctuations—much like sound waves—which resulted in temperature variations across the sky. But that’s not the only cosmic music source in the skies. In the past years, plasma wave instruments allocated in space probes such as the Voyager 1 and 2 or the Rosetta have been able to record electromagnetic vibrations (plasma waves)—which occur at human-audible frequencies measurable in hertz— and send them to Earth, where they can be amplified and played back. These are relatively low- quality samples obtained at the planetary encounters of the probes, yet the sounds are not originated at the planets themselves, but in the magnetosphere surrounding them—they are typically electromagnetic fields produced by moving charged particles (plasma), or bouncing radio waves. Additionally, space telescopes such as Kepler have identified internal vibrations in distant stars, which reveal themselves as a slight, rhythmic flickering in the star’s brightness. These sound-wave oscillations, which in fact occur on the objects’ surface, penetrate into its core, setting up resonating oscillations at frequencies that vary as per its size, density and rotation, thus providing intrinsic information about it. The question of course arises whether all this celestial vibration, be it a fingerprint of the expanding Universe in its very early stages of formation (380 thousand years after the Big Bang), or the recently discovered electromagnetic vibrations of celestial objects, account for the ‘unified harmony’ preconised by the Harmony of the Spheres’ advocates.

### 3.4.3 Compositional approach

After Kepler, the myth of the Harmony of the Spheres was consigned to oblivion. During the 20th century the interest was rekindled, as many composers were attracted to the cosmos. Rued Langgaard composed in 1916 a newfangled orchestral work called *Music of the Spheres* for choir, soloists and orchestra. In later years, many other composers got their inspiration in the celestial objects and their alleged harmony. Paul Hindemith composed the opera *Die Harmonie der Welt* (1957)—which also has a symphonic version—based on Kepler’s work on the *Harmony of the World*, using a tonal system that he described in his own book ‘The Craft of Musical Composition’.<sup>147</sup> Oliver Messiaen’s *Meditation I ‘The Father of the Stars’* for organ, from his work *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969), used a set of pitches provided originally to him by an astrologer, where each pitch and its relationship with others is ‘derived from the position and resonance of the planets’.<sup>148</sup> George Crumb claimed he had been inspired by the Music of the Spheres in his works *Star-Child* (1977), a piece for orchestra and choir, and *Makrokosmos* (1972-1979), a series of four volumes of piano pieces referenced by Bartok’s *Mikrokosmos*. The *Symphony n.2* (Copernican, 1972) of Henryk Gorecki, written for choir, soloists and orchestra, was dedicated to the homonymous astronomer, hence part of its text comes from his book ‘De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium’ (On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres). These and some other classical pieces would be complemented years later by works from rock and pop artists, such as Mike Oldfield’s conceptual album *Music of the Spheres*, Ian Brown’s (from The Stone Roses) album *Music of the*

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<sup>147</sup> Hindemith, Paul, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, (New York: Associated Music Publishers Inc., 1937), 53.

<sup>148</sup> Shenton, Andrew, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs: Notes Towards Understanding His Music*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 102.

*Spheres*, or Björk's song *Cosmogony*.

### **3.4.3.1 The shape of ancient sound**

My own approach to the subject of the celestial harmony draws from the premise that vibration is in the origin and unfolding of the Harmony of the Spheres, since Pythagoras first studied it on strings, and then it was attributed to all celestial bodies. Intrigued by how vibration might be perceived in ancient times, even prior to the first postulants of the harmony of the spheres, I set out to delve into some issues studied by archaeoacoustics.

If perhaps not directly related to the frequencies of the stars, sound (music) is indeed dependent on the frequencies in which waves vibrate in the air. And it is reasonable to envision that in ancient societies like those of the Paleolithic or Neolithic silence would be so omnipresent that any aural event and its derivations would have had infinitely more preponderance than today. Therefore, sound waves would have bigger chances to be perceived not only by our ancestor's ears, but—fortuitously or not—also by their eyes. Like ripples in a pond—an image that would have been quickly engraved as normal in the brain of earlier humans—the vibration produced by any of the earliest musical instruments—flutes, drums, roarers, singing bowls, the human voice itself—would also have been able to become visible if the circumstances were adequate, such as the presence of mediums like smoke or water. That would certainly have a remarkable impact on individuals and groups for whom art, spirituality and magic—the *unexplained*—were part of the same unique experience.

### 3.4.3.2 Visualising music

The visible materialisation of sound is a matter that has been scientifically addressed since the turn of the 18th century, when physicist and musician Ernst Chladni wrote the first treatise<sup>149</sup> of what later came to be called ‘Acoustics’. In his experiments, Chladni discovered that sand spread on a square, round, or differently shaped metal plate would physically react when the plate was made to vibrate with a violin bow, creating symmetrical patterns.

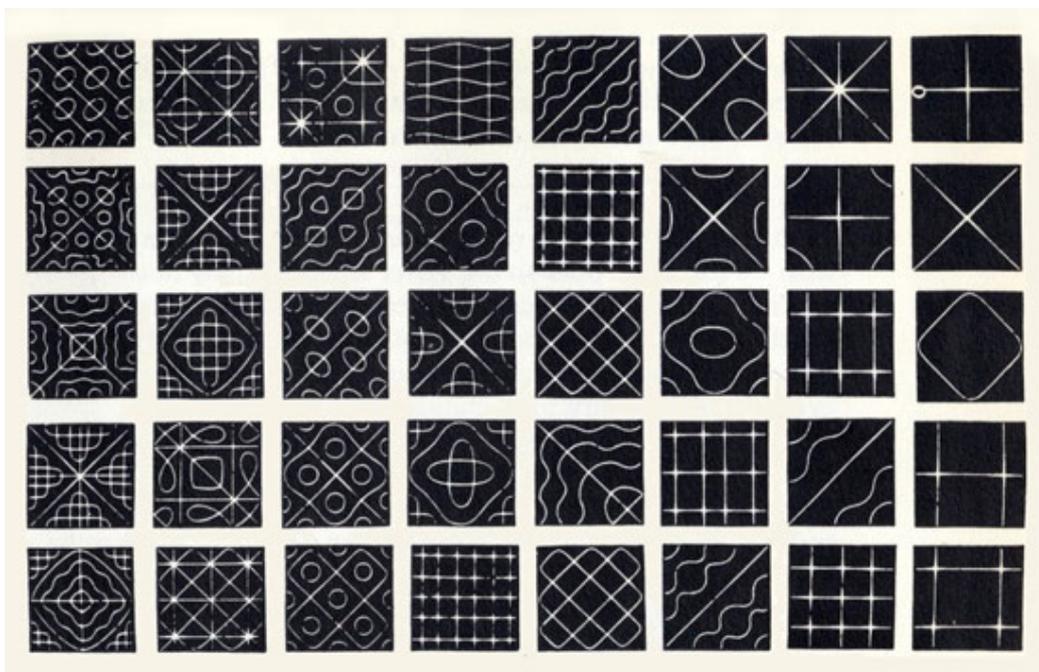


Figure 9: Chladni patterns

Grounding his doctoral thesis on Chladni’s nodal theories, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century French physicist Jules Lissajous further developed the studies on the visualisation of sound waves and vibrations, working first with tuning forks in the water, then with light beams and mirrors—a precursor of the modern oscilloscopes. It

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<sup>149</sup> Ernst Chladni, *Entdeckungen über die Theorie des Klanges*, (‘Discoveries in the Theory of Sound’), (Leipzig: 1787).

wasn't until a century later, in our 1960s', that Swiss physician, natural scientist and anthroposopher<sup>150</sup> Hans Jenny investigated waves phenomena by conducting a series of experiments based on those of Chladni's. He used precisely measured vibration in the form of crystal-oscillator generated pure sine waves to set into motion various materials, such as sand, lycopodium powder, water, or pastes. Then he photographed and filmed the singular results and published them in two consecutive volumes entitled 'Cymatics'<sup>151</sup> (from the Greek *kyma*, 'wave').

Jenny's partly metaphysical approach to his findings, and the holistic vision of his revisionist *science* on vibrational phenomena quickly caught the attention of those devotees of the universal harmony creed and its associated disciplines:

An investigation of the world in terms of Cymatics throws an interesting historical light on earlier philosophies resting upon mathematical order and the relationship of sounds, musical tones and words (Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Archytas, Plato, Aristoxenos, down to Kepler and many others). Connections are revealed between such philosophies and the knowledge of Cymatic phenomena independently acquired through modern scientific research....Now it is beyond doubt that where organisation is concerned, the harmonic figures of physics are in fact essentially similar to the harmonic patterns of organic nature.... In the first place, we have the certain experience that harmonic systems such as we have visualised in our experiments arise from oscillations in the form of intervals and harmonic frequencies. That is indisputable...if biological rhythms operate as generative factors at the interval-like frequencies appropriate to them, then harmonic patterns must be necessarily forthcoming.<sup>152</sup>

But beyond spirituality or the increasing enthusiasm for the mythical healing power of sound, where Cymatics have had a notable influence is on art. The undoubtedly fascinating geometry that sound waves provide has inspired many a contemporary

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<sup>150</sup> 'Anthroposophy: philosophy based on the premise that the human intellect has the ability to contact spiritual worlds'. 'Anthroposophy', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <<https://www.britannica.com>>.

<sup>151</sup> Jenny, Hans, *Cymatics: A Study of Wave Phenomena & Vibration* (Boston, MA: MACROmedia Publishing, 2001).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

artist for their installations, paintings, photography, music, or laser projections, to name a few. A lead in Cymatics-derived art, researcher and photographer Alexander Lauterwasser published in 2002 his book ‘Water Sound Images’, which contains spectacular images of vibrating fluids that he obtained using diverse sound sources, from pure sine waves to music. Composer Nigel Stanford has also explored the subject of visualising audio frequencies, illustrating on a musical video the effects of vibration on chladni plates, water, and even fire.<sup>153</sup>

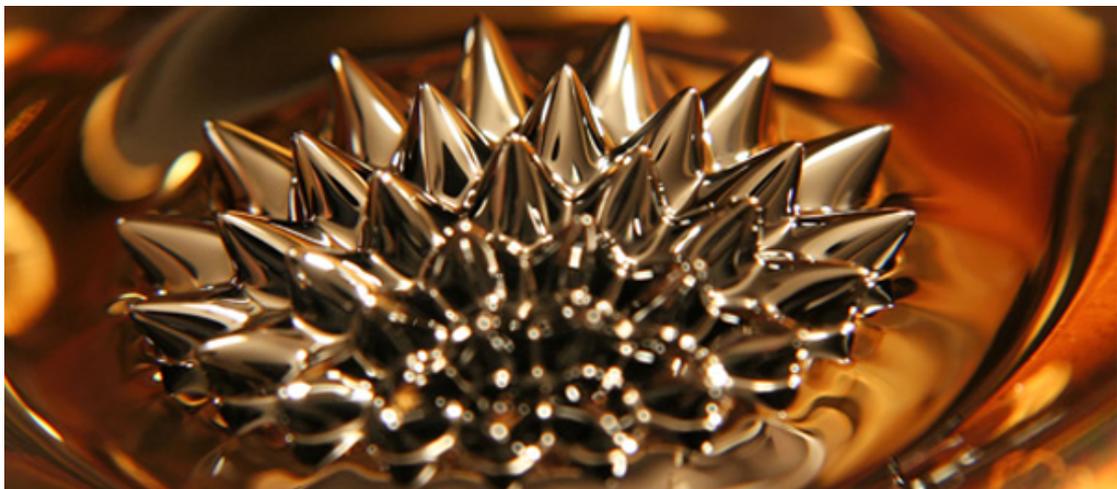


Figure 10: Cymatics: ferrofluid shapes created by sound vibration. Source unknown.

### 3.4.3.3 A compositional outline

The music for this project is a ritual journey. It is a single 15-minute long piece, constructed analogously to a film’s *plan-séquence* (sequence shot), which evolves from a prehistoric realm to a contemporary one, showing along the way the association between ritual and myth, liturgy and narrative.

The piece serves as a framework for the visual materialisation of sound, and will illustrate an array of human-made and natural occurrence instances of vibration.

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<sup>153</sup> Stanford, Nigel, *Nigel Stanford - Cymatics*, <<https://www.nigelstanford.com>>.

It is intended to play alone, with no visual accompaniment; the listener is transported through a succession of vibration-generating performative and non-performative events—playing instruments, singing, natural phenomena, electromagnetic cosmic waves—which recreate a process of connection between the man of the past, then modern man, and the higher instances of the universe.

In the fictional story of my *Valltorta* project I already made an allusion to the proven subject of sound waves' visualisation: 'The primitive man is chanting loudly, first in a low register that adds to the already dreadful rumble, then rising the pitch as he tries to ascend closer to the sacred presences. He hits several stalactites and their intense ringing echoes beyond the entrance of the chamber. Then he moves next to the lake, where the steam column still floats above the water creating a canvas of mist. There, the infrasound waves have been made visible in the moonlit vapor, which shakes rhythmically in an undulant, magical spin. The spirits have responded.'

All performances are MIDI, sequenced in Digital Performer. No acoustical instruments were recorded. All tracks were processed selectively through reverb in auxiliary tracks, and volume automation was implemented.

The sound elements on the piece can be catalogued as:

a) Human-performed (MIDI)

- Lithophones
- Frame drums
- Shells
- Bowed metals
- Ney flute
- Singing bowls
- Udu drum
- Glass harmonica

- Mbira
- Mandolin
- Waterphone
- Ritual singing
- Overtone singing

b) Electronic backgrounds

c) Nature sounds

- Thunder
- Sun vibration

Many of the featured instruments and human performances in *The Harmony of the Spheres* are capable of generating vibration and overtones in a similar way. For example, rubbed singing bowls—which are filled with water—generate sound waves that disturb the surface of the liquid, forming shapes, and even splashing—the same effect could be achieved by putting a sound source powerful enough next to the bowl. Benjamin Franklin’s glass harmonica follows the same principle, which was researched by Chladni and developed further as Cymatics.

The Sun vibration, featured as a background, is actually a satellite-recorded image of the star’s vibrating coronal loops, converted into audible sound after some processing. The strings used for the more ‘conventional’ parts of the piece do not have a justification in terms of visible vibration—although technically any instrument could be used for such purpose—but collaborate on the musical structure and general continuity.

## 3.5 Whence Comes the Rain

### 3.5.1 Introduction

The short film ‘Whence Comes The Rain’ (2017)<sup>154</sup>—formerly ‘Rain Dance’—is an animated story penciled by Francisco de la Fuente, who uses original character sketches by artist Santiago Verdugo from Sopa de Sobre Animation. The script was developed by director Elio Quiroga. From the original drawings, Quiroga and editor Luis Sánchez-Gijón, at ETECH, fine-tuned the animation, using Adobe After Effects to arrange the different images in layers. Quiroga describes the project as ‘a small animated cameo, a chamber piece—like the music that illustrates it, created by Alfons Conde, regular collaborator of the director’.

Quiroga goes on to say:

[‘Whence Comes The Rain’] tells a small story, a penciled tale animated with traditional techniques at its starting point, but using the newest digital technologies for its final finishing. ‘Whence Comes the Rain’ is the story of a predator and its prey, of the secret stories that happen above our heads, where the fairies live; and when they cry, it rains on us. It’s also a tale about fate, about beginnings and endings, about the chain of senseless and random events that constitute the life of those sharing the world.’<sup>155</sup>

### 3.5.2 Myth and Ritual in Whence Comes The Rain

Approaching an audiovisual project as a composer always involves a dichotomy. On the one hand, the author of the story—or typically the director, in charge of bringing the author’s narrative intent to visual life—often has, more or less, a clear idea of what needs to be portrayed. On the other hand, the composer must be able to adhere

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<sup>154</sup> The original working title was ‘Rain Dance’.

<sup>155</sup> Personal note to the composer.

to the wishes and guidelines expressed by the director, but without renouncing a personal narrative vision, tied to his or her own identity as an artist.

Whereas Quiroga, author and director, had expressed a broad outline in terms of story significance, I set out to identify a mythical and ritualistic frame of reference that would allow an informed musical approach. This task was carried out by identifying and evaluating the characters in the narrative: the fairy, the eagle, and the hunter. None of them seemed suited to be typecast as a Jungian archetype, but they did have other mythological connotations.

Scholars commonly regard fairies as the mythological evolution of pagan goddesses and gods from ancient times. Although cognate versions of this kind of beings can be found in Indian, Greek, Arabian, or indigenous American cultures, it seems that our average fairy stems from the earlier Celtic fairies, which may have been blended with the nymphs of the Greco-Roman mythology, upon arrival of the Empire in Europe. These and other traditions would have merged to produce a character that evolved from an ugly, dangerous creature, to a lovely one, strongly bonded to nature and possessing supernatural powers. In fact, there is a common mix-up between fairies and nymphs: the latter are the true nature spirits, beautiful human-sized, benevolent females who love to dance and sing, are not immortal and, after the publication of the Victorian tale 'Peter and Wendy' in 1911, were even capable of flying. But the original nymphs go back to Greek mythology, where one particular group, the Hyades, daughters of the Titan Atlas, mourned so much the death of their brother Hyas—coincidentally, a hunter killed by his prey—that their tears of grief brought rain to the earth. In view of all this, the traits of the fairy character in 'Whence Comes The Rain', defined as such by the filmmakers, seem to be definitely closer to those of a nymph, although with certain deviations from their prototypal

physical features.

Contemplated in the mythology of cultures in which drought had traditionally been a survival issue—such as the Greek, African, or Native American—rain, always provided by deities inhabiting the heavens, is a powerful symbol of life and rebirth, renewal, and growth. In modern, more accommodated urban societies, the cultural myth changes, and rain often acquires a negative significance—which has been used extensively in audiovisual narrative. Still, even in our contemporary culture, rain can be also a symbol of cleansing. Moreover, every civilisation, ancient or modern, has had rituals about rainmaking; invoking rain, usually through rain dances, is one of the most universal weather modification rituals.

The eagle, one of the oldest symbols of mankind, represents the most important gods in mythology—such as Zeus, or the Aztec sun and war god *Hiutzilopochtli*—and has been the ensign of the most important empires in history, from Rome to the United States. It is associated with strength, power, and war, but also with honor, leadership, spirituality, hope, and rebirth—hence, in some cultures, hunting an eagle was culturally unacceptable. Hunters in mythology are, in turn, classified into two categories: those who hunt for a living, like the Greek goddess *Artemis*, respectful of nature and its sacredness, and those who hunt a specific prey with the only purpose of slaying it, like the ones featured in northern European myths. Such distinction has translated into modern culture, where hunting for survival no longer applies: it can be viewed as gratuitous cruelty, or as a spiritual reconnection to nature.

### **3.5.3 Compositional approach**

#### **3.5.3.1 String Quartet**

The music for this project was composed to be performed by a string quartet. The members of the ensemble were Evgeny Moriatov (first violin), Lelia Iancovici (second violin), Andrey Ovchinnikov (viola) and Alex Friedhoff (cello). It was first sequenced and synchronized to picture in Digital Performer using the Cinematic Strings library, then recorded live and mixed by Pablo Schuller, of SchullerSound.

##### **3.5.3.1.1 The survival of the fittest**

Levi-Strauss's structuralist method of analysis contends that myth must be understood as a sum of components, because its narrative can be approached from different angles. One of these is the sociological aspect, which he views as based on the binary structure of human mind; binary opposites, such as the above-mentioned 'good versus evil', or 'young versus old', work in mythical thought towards a resolution of the aroused social conflict, and for that we must focus on the essential structure shared by different versions of a myth. Professor Robert J. Lenardon argues, in 'Classical Mythology':

From this it follows that no one version of a myth is the 'right' one; all versions are valid, for myth, like society, is a living organism in which all the parts contribute to the existence of the whole. As in an orchestral score certain voices or instruments play some sounds, while the whole score is the sum of the individual parts, so in a myth the different, partial versions combine to reveal its total structure, including the relationship of the different parts to each other and to the whole.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Morford, Mark P.O. and Lenardon, Robert J., *Classical Mythology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 12.

Numerous narratives exist in universal culture that describe an individual meeting the same fate that they inflicted to another individual. The ‘hunter versus hunted’ binomial in ‘Whence Comes The Rain’, where the predatory eagle falls down shot by the hunter, is actually not only a matter of opposing extremes, but a paradox capable to be developed ad infinitum, in the same way that artist M.C. Escher explored a sort of fractal, or sequential, infinity in his drawings. This continuum design does not refer to the circular narrative pattern that Campbell defined in ‘The Hero With A Thousand Faces’, and that can be seen as reminiscent of Todorov’s ‘equilibrium, disequilibrium, equilibrium’ narrative theory; those outline a looped template and, in both, the closing of the circle implies a certain change on the characters of the narrative. The present pattern rather conjures up sequential, unending stories such as ‘A Dream’, a short tale by Argentinian poet Jorge Luis Borges that I happened to use as a narrative source for composition exercises in my classes, and which explores what could be considered as a ‘facing mirrors’ effect, or perhaps a straight fractal plot, where the successive repetition of an event tends towards infinity:

In a deserted place in Iran there is a not very tall stone tower that has neither door nor window. In the only room (with a dirt floor and shaped like a circle) there is a wooden table and a bench. In that circular cell, a man who looks like me is writing in letters I cannot understand a long poem about a man who in another circular cell is writing a poem about a man who in another circular cell...The process never ends and no one will be able to read what the prisoners write.<sup>157</sup>

As additional examples, in feature films like ‘Moon’ (2009), or ‘Oblivion’ (2013) the protagonists are continuously and endlessly replaced by versions of themselves, a scenario that somehow resembles the fractal ‘hunter versus hunted’ plot paradox

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<sup>157</sup> Borges, Jorge Luis, *A Dream*, trans. Suzanne Jill Levine, *The New Yorker website* <<https://www.newyorker.com>>.

showed at ‘Whence Comes The Rain’, in that the hunting sequence is prone to an infinite repetition. Whereas Joseph Trapanese’s score for ‘Oblivion’ follows mainstream criteria for Hollywood blockbusters, composer Clint Mansell uses a mostly abstract and electronic style on his score for ‘Moon’, which helps recreate not only the outer-space atmosphere, but also the paradox of the ceaseless renovation of existence. It would seem that non-tuned, aseptic, synthesis-based sonic landscapes have a better chance at conceptualising those unfathomable questions and their narrative pattern. However, for this project I decided that I would use a purely acoustical, traditional ensemble such as the string quartet to focus on the subjacent matter I believe is brought up by the opposite binaries ‘hunter versus hunted’: the cultural myth of Social Darwinism, or the ‘survival of the fittest’, a highly controversial issue that has been subjected to biased interpretations by different societies, and by different groups and individuals within those societies. Although Darwin was actually an optimistic liberal-progressive who foresaw a high-principled, non-belligerent evolution of mankind, the aforementioned extract of his evolution theory has often been criticised for depicting humans as imperialistic, hard-wired killing machines in a selfish, ruthless world. I therefore addressed the hunter/hunted paradox by managing the mythical figures of the eagle and the hunter according to two possible social paradigms, applicable to both characters—the cruel murderer versus the kill-for-food living creature—and, in view of the contrasted mythological traits assigned to the eagle in particular, I went for a harmonic language and design that would, on the one hand, endorse those divergences in the socially constructed myth, and on the other, acknowledge the narrative plausibility of an infinite hunted-hunter recurrent pattern. The instrumental choice is also justified: for me, the ensemble sound of the string quartet has, among other assets, a human quality to it, a



in rapid succession, and exploiting the metallic, harsh timbre of a *sul pont* bowing:

Musical score for measures 39-44, featuring Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The score is marked "molto sul pont." and includes dynamic markings such as *ff sub*, *fp < ff*, and *f ff*. The Vln. I, Vla., and Vc. parts feature triplets of eighth notes. The Vln. II part features a melodic line with a sharp dynamic change at the end of the section.

The purported infinite quality of the hunted-hunter paradox is illustrated towards the end of the piece, once all the killings have occurred, with the non-literal repetition of a short motif—rather a melodic contour—featured alternatively, in a canonic way, among the different instruments:

Musical score for measures 96-100, showing a canonic repetition of a melodic motif across Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The motif is marked *mf*. The Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla. parts play the motif in a descending sequence, while the Vc. part plays it in an ascending sequence. The score is marked with a page number 13 in the top right corner.

### 3.5.3.1.2 Crying nymphs

Most mythologies around the world, such as the Aboriginal Australian, Incan, Mayan, Aztec, Norse, Chinese, and Persian, have deities identified with rain. Those same deities may sometimes be associated with clouds and thunder too, and quite often with life and fertility. Such is not the case with the Greek Hyades, who create rain non-intentionally, out of grief. Nevertheless, in order to give meaning to the narrative, it is necessary to invoke the structuralist concept that different elements, different versions of a myth, combine to form a unique mythical thought: rain is a symbol of life and rebirth, of cleansing and renewal.

When the nymphs in ‘Whence Comes The Rain’ cry over the death of one of them, they are performing a rite of mourning, following the rite of passage that the deceased just went through. Eliade says: ‘Death itself is (now) interpreted as a rite of passage to a new model of existence, both for the group and for the individual who has died.’<sup>158</sup> And religion scholar Theodor H. Gaster (1906) states, in the context of such ancient rites of passage—which could be updated to a universal time: ‘As the initiation ceremony is often one of rebirth, or rather as rebirth in its final stage, this concept is also transferred to the dead who, like the ‘one about to die’, is a neophyte, ‘newly planted’, reborn to new life.’<sup>159</sup>

In this collective funerary event—which occurs because the author of the story superimposes on the heavenly nymphs the same social normalization procedures as in our human civilization—the tears of sorrow are a symbol that transcends their world

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<sup>158</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. W. R. Trask, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 510.

<sup>159</sup> Gaster, Theodor H., *Thespis: Ritual Myth & Drama in the Ancient Near East*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1961), 43.

and ends up transforming ours, in a beautiful narrative artifice: their grief becomes our rain, a cleansing blanket of water that signals the renewal and continuity of life, substantiating the idea of an ongoing evolution brought up in the plot by the ‘hunter versus hunted’ paradox. The effect of this is musically articulated as an epilogue, not on the actual footage, but on the closing credits. The texture changes dramatically and for the first time becomes chordal, more static; the harmony moves slowly, in parallel fashion:

104 **Più mosso** ♩=125

Vln. I  
*mf*

Vln. II  
*mf*

Vla.  
*mf*

Vc.  
*mf*

14

108

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

### 3.5.3.2 Sound design

As an art form, sonic art has a wide margin for interpretation. It actually embraces a large array of forms in a myriad of creative attempts, amongst which music is just one: installations, film, performance, and any field of the contemporary cross-curriculum artistry are also part of its medium. Sonic art's ownership is equally claimed by music and by fine art. In his book 'The Fundamentals of Sonic Arts and Sound Design', scholar Tony Gibb makes an interesting distinction between sonic 'art' and sound 'design': whereas art 'seeks to represent ideas for their own sake',<sup>160</sup> design is applied with a purpose. Without specifying whether it is diegetic or non-diegetic, he goes on to note that most sound designers carry out their work in the realm of film and television:

Good sound design can subtly support the structure and storyline of the film, underlay the rhythm of the editing and can provide both contrast and reinforcement at every level. In doing this, the relationship between sound designer and composer is a particularly important one: the decisions of one can dramatically affect the work of the other.<sup>161</sup>

Significantly, Gibb includes muzak—discussed earlier in the context of the audiovisual music theories—as a further use of sound design, to 'help mask unwanted noise and create an overall ambience', a function somewhat in line with the utilitarianism of muzak asserted by Claudia Gorbman (in line, in turn, with Eisler and Adorno), for whom the goal of this type of easy-listening music is 'to render the individual an untroublesome viewing subject: less critical, less 'awake'.<sup>162</sup> Like Brian Eno with his pioneering creation of sound 'designed to be part of an environmental

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<sup>160</sup> Gibbs, Tony, *The Fundamentals of Sonic Art & Sound Design*, (Lausanne: AVA Publishing, 2007), 36.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>162</sup> Gorbman, Claudia, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*, (New York: Wiley, 1987), 5.

background’, with works such as *‘Discreet Music’* (1975) or *‘Music for Airports’* (1978),<sup>163</sup> it is obvious that Gibb’s main focus is the utilitarian aspect of sound design, in contrast with the absoluteness of sonic art, inasmuch as he considers music a variety of sound;<sup>164</sup> but from all of the above it stems that he might not only accepting the inherent diegetic, iconic qualities of sound design—sound effects, ambient sound, foley—as attached to precise visual events, but he may also be acknowledging that it can affect the listener mythically, providing meaning—because that may happen even subconsciously. This broadens the aforementioned statement about the relationship between the sound designer and the composer in contemporary audiovisuals: not only their decisions can affect each other, but the creative boundaries between both have been more and more blurred. Sound designers are becoming composers de facto, although a dilemma may arise from the fact that sound design is rarely subjected to the same narrative analysis, development, and tight scrutiny, as the composer’s work. On the film *‘The Abandoned’* (2006) I experienced this first hand, when the appointed sound designer created, without regard to the footage, a series of ‘atmospheric’, utterly abstract, synth-constructed tracks, which ended up replacing orchestral cues because of the narrative significance they gained at the moment they were applied to the moving pictures.

It was clear from the beginning that the three minutes of narrative in *‘Whence Comes the Rain’* would need work on its diegetic sound. As the person solely responsible for the soundtrack, I set out to create a minimum content of sound effects; enough to fill the diegetic void of the narrative wherever the music—which incidentally worked very tightly with the images, providing not only emotion but also

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<sup>163</sup> Gibbs, Tony, *The Fundamentals of Sonic Art & Sound Design*, 39. We should be aware that Eno’s work may have not been groundbreaking in comparison with how ancient cultures treated sound.

<sup>164</sup> However, Gibbs has previously compared only music and sonic art, as he states: “‘all music is sonic art but (as we shall see later) not all sonic art is music!’, Gibbs, Tony, *The Fundamentals of Sonic Art & Sound Design*, 8.

enhancing the action—would not suffice. I started by developing a suitable ambience for the nymphs' home, the world above the clouds; that and the rest of effects, such as the eagle's shrieks and wing flaps, thuds, and gunshot, were edited and processed in Pro Tools from conventional sounds. Then they were transferred to Digital Performer as soundbites, where they were mixed with the music tracks.

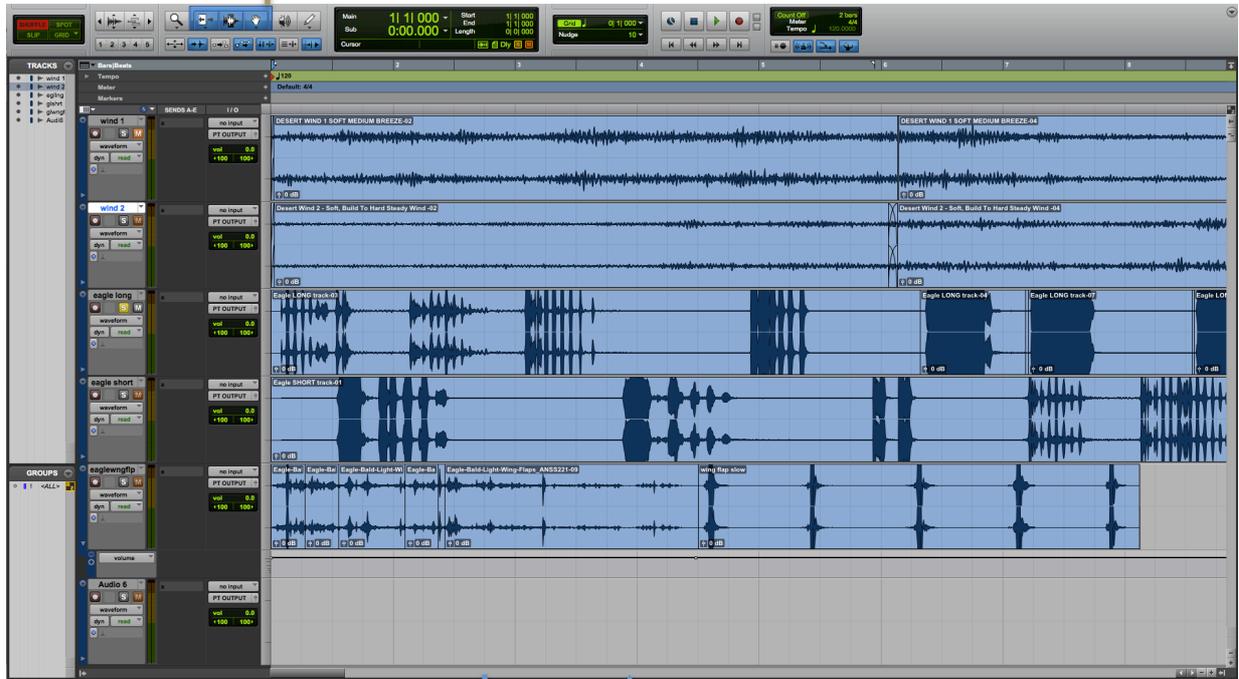
Aside from purely diegetic sound effects, I explored some electronic sound libraries and sound design tools in order to blend with the string quartet and enhance the eagle's attack in the terms expressed—an incursion into the mythical, which I include on this section in keeping with the non-diegetic qualities of sound design. These and the other non-acoustic tracks, together with the string quartet, were processed selectively through reverb in auxiliary tracks, and volume automation was carefully implemented—not so to the live music track, whose variations in loudness were strictly managed by the dynamics of the piece. The images on the following page illustrate the steps of the editing and mixing procedure through the signal flow.

LIVE STRING QUARTET



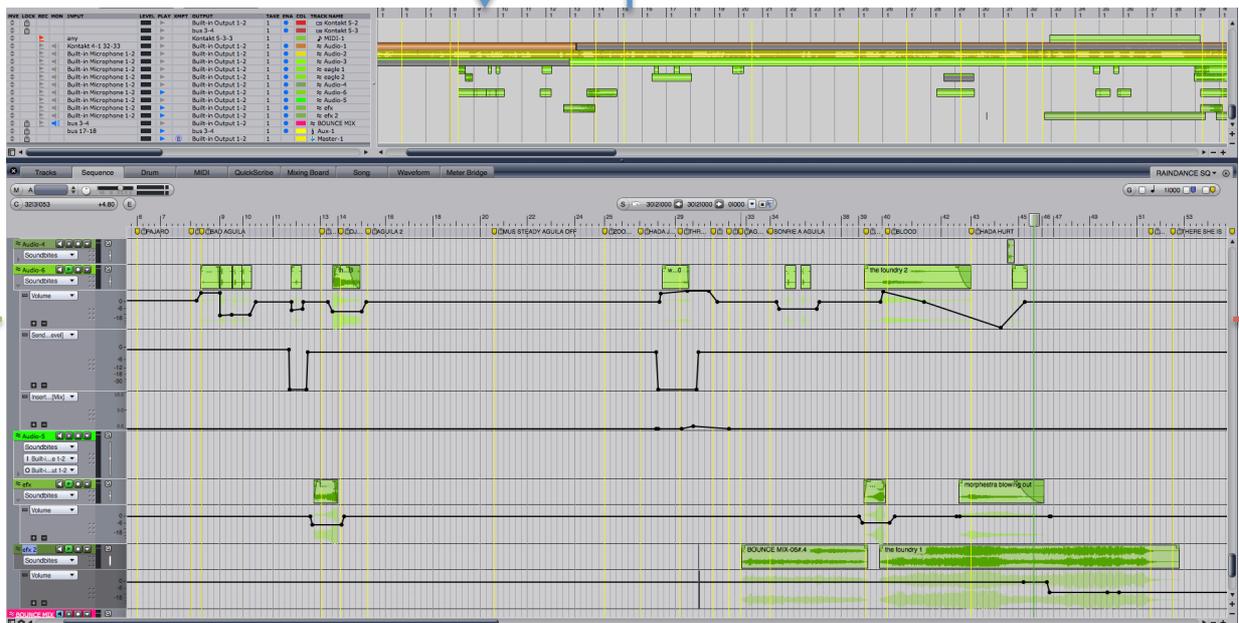
SOUND DESIGN –  
NARRATIVE

SOUND DESIGN –  
EFX



PRO TOOLS – SOUND EFFECTS EDITING

DIGITAL PERFORMER NARRATIVE SOUND DESIGN CREATION AND GLOBAL PROCESSING



AUX: ANALOG DELAY

AUX: CONVOLUTION REVERB



Figure 11: On the previous page: Whence Comes the Rain - string quartet and sound design processing

Although I have been working on a blend of acoustic and electronic tracks on other projects of my portfolio, the great disparity between a live string quartet and the electronic sources used in ‘Whence Comes The Rain’ offered an opportunity to briefly abound on the matter of the distribution of roles, outlined earlier. Following its definition as discussed above, sound design on this project was not limited to mere diegetic effects, but it had also a narrative aim. As stated, had this not been a one-person endeavour, it might have become an issue to establish whose responsibility it was to work on ‘sonic’ abstract tracks. Although ideally it could be a collaborative effort, it is my experience that a problem emerges when a composer is working primarily on acoustic music, since everything else sound-wise seems to automatically become a sound designer’s task. On ‘Whence Comes The Rain’ there was no predicament, as I could manage the whole narrative approach, irrespectively of the sound origin.

## 3.6 Bluebeard

### 3.6.1 Introduction

Paula Ortiz directed in 2016 the multi-award winning feature film *La Novia*, based on García Lorca's *Bodas de Sangre*, in which I orchestrated the original themes by Shigeru Umebayashi. For her new project, a film freely based on Charles Perrault's 1697 fairy tale 'Bluebeard', I applied for the composer position by preparing a demo track. It was a 10-minute choral piece, recorded by an ensemble of six singers—Sara Sjöberg and Lina Bjarnegård Carlsson, sopranos, Julia Eckerstein, alto, Albin Rydberg and Mikael Carlsson tenors, and Erik Gustafsson, bass—at the Kulturtemplet in Gothenburg, Sweden, a venue well known for its otherworldly acoustic resonance. Mikael Carlsson also took care of conducting, recording and editing.

Ortiz had declared, at the San Sebastian Festival:

This new project is a very personal revision of the original story, a fable on love and female revolution. It's the story of man who enamours women because he wants to capture their magic, which he lacks. The film aims to reflect the processes of domination between men and women, and what are the small spirals of dependencies and subordinations in which we find ourselves. These processes have specific characteristics in the West, and Bluebeard tells them archetypally.<sup>165</sup>

The director was very explicit about the mythological, psychological and sociological features that she wanted the film to elicit. Therefore, I set out to analyse the framework that would appropriately inform my composition.

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<sup>165</sup> Hopewell, John, 'Morena, Get in the Pictures Team for Paula Ortiz's English-Language Debut 'Bluebeard', *Variety*, <<http://www.variety.com>>.

### 3.6.2 Myth and Ritual in Bluebeard

Bluebeard is a fairy tale. Morford and Lenardon define those, in their work ‘Classical Mythology’, as a specific kind of folktale: ‘Short, imaginative, traditional tales with a high moral and magical content’.<sup>166</sup> The magical bleeding key on the narrative, and the moral—which is open to interpretation—are what gives Bluebeard, whose character was in fact based on historical members of early nobility and royalty, its fairy tale status.

There are three major classification systems used for folktale preservation, two of which, focusing on content, usually work together: the system by Antti Aarne, and the one by Stith Thompson, based respectively on type and motif-index. A third system, in declared opposition to the previous one, is the aforementioned one proposed by Vladimir Propp, a structuralist, ‘paradigmatic’ analysis of 31 functions. In the more common Aarne-Thompson system, the Bluebeard tale has three related plots—the most famous being the first one, popularised by Perrault—classified as type ATU 312 (Maiden-Killer), ATU 311 (Rescue by the Sister), and ATU 955 (The Robber Bridgeroom), the two latter originated in the brothers Grimm’s tales from ‘Kinder-und Hausmärchen’.<sup>167</sup> These tale ‘templates’ have differences in their main focus: whereas in ATU 312 the emphasis is on the regretful female curiosity and sexual transgression, in addition to the sexual symbolism of the bloody key, in ATU 311 it’s on the heroic act of the sister, rescuing herself and her siblings (as opposed to ATU 312, where she needs to be rescued by her brothers). In ATU 955, narratively closer to ATU 311, the heroine escapes, brings evidence of the evil man’s crimes, and

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<sup>166</sup> Morford, Mark P.O., and Lenardon, Robert J., *Classic Mythology*, (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 4.

<sup>167</sup> Heiner, Heidi Anne, *Bluebeard Tales From Around the World*, (ebook: SurLaLune, 2011), 2.

has him captured. All three plots have numerous variants in other folktales around the world; next are a few. ATU 312: ‘Barbe Rouge’ (France), ‘The Chosen Suitor’ (Antigua, British West Indies), ‘The Brahman Girl That Married a Tiger’ (India). ATU 311: ‘How the Devil Married Three Sisters’ (Italy), ‘Fitcher’s Bird’ (Germany)—by the Grimms. ATU 955: ‘The Robber’s Bride’ (Germany), ‘The Story of Mr. Fox’ (England).<sup>168</sup>

Resourcing to the classifications of master plots, as seen in my methodology and compositional approach, the Bluebeard story can be found in Polti’s ‘Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations’, under the types of ‘Deliverance’—containing the elements of an Unfortunate, a Threatener, and a Rescuer—and ‘Murderous Adultery’—which involves a Betrayed Husband or Wife.<sup>169</sup> Other folktale specialists, such as Maria Tatar or Graham Anderson,<sup>170</sup> have recognised common traits and motifs between ‘Bluebeard’ and ‘Beauty and the Beast’, or have identified it with Greek and Roman myths, such as ‘Cupid and Psyche’. The fatal female curiosity plot can also be found in myths like the Abrahamic Adam and Eve, the Jewish Lot’s wife, or the Greek Pandora’s box.

The question thus arises as to whether fairy tales can be equated to myths. Graham Anderson illustrates the lack of consensus on this, when he declares, on the introduction of ‘Fairytale in the Ancient World’: ‘I have set out to address this study to several different audiences simultaneously: to classicists, for whom, on the whole, fairytale exists only as a kind of degenerate mythology, if it exists at all.’<sup>171</sup>

Anderson goes on to state:

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<sup>168</sup> Ashliman, D.L., *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language*, (Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1987).

<sup>169</sup> Polti, Georges, *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 17 and 51.

<sup>170</sup> Anderson, Graham, *Fairytales in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.

Tatar, Maria, *Secrets Beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and His Wives*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 247.

<sup>171</sup> Anderson, Graham, *Fairytales in the Ancient World*, 9.

The general name used to describe folktale, fairytale or myth, as we should understand them, is the considerably flexible term in Greek mythos ('tale'). Already this term tends to carry a degree of doubt about the truthfulness of what is being recounted, a nuance paralleled in such English expressions as 'telling stories'.<sup>172</sup>

Folklorist Jack Zipes explains how Mircea Eliade postulated that supplementary fairy tales, which replaced myth's supernatural deeds with magic and dreamlike mysteries, might at some point have taken up the initiatory ritual aspect of sacred myth in ancient cultures. Myths and fairy tales hence coexisted, as secular fairy tales still covertly appropriated sacred elements—serious religious experiences, mythical structures and motifs—from myth, to the point of becoming difficult to differentiate. Fairy tales would have been 'mythicised', and thereby made it to our days.<sup>173</sup> Other scholars have offered different—yet somewhat complementary to Eliade's—perspectives on the similarities between myths and fairy tales. From a psychological point of view, the Freudian and Jungian approaches to the unconscious content of myths can be applied to fairy tales, especially by the use of symbolism. However, there may be essential differences, as child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990) states in his work *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*.<sup>174</sup> First, the extraordinary phenomena that occur in both are usually presented as something godly in myths, whereas in fairy tales they are humanly conceivable. Second, myths are often pessimistic and have tragic endings—which provide the Aristotelian catharsis of tragedy—while fairy tales are optimistic and for the most part end happily—a good vehicle for the moral of the story. All in all, the humanity in fairy tales seems to be of better value for the personality growth of children—their usual recipients—than the overwhelming, unattainable superhuman

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<sup>172</sup> Anderson, Graham, *Fairytales in the Ancient World*, 2.

<sup>173</sup> Zipes, Jack, *Fairy Tale As Myth/Myth As Fairy Tale*, (Lexington, KN: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 1-5.

<sup>174</sup> Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 37.

deeds of the mythical heroes.

Joseph Campbell explains that, from the ‘no-time’ mythological instant of the creation—Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden—everything evolved as Levi-Straussian pairs of opposites: man-god, man-woman, evil-good, life-death. And, on the note of the original sin, he moves on to discuss the ‘forbidden thing’ folktale motif, with its subsequent ‘disobedience’, which is so pervasive in all cultures. Campbell attributes the origin of this to the Jungian archetypes of the unconscious and to the Freudian manifestations of complexes, which he defines respectively as ‘biological’ and ‘biographical’—the latter being, consequently, ancillary to the former.<sup>175</sup> Christopher Booker, who described folktales as ‘anonymous products of the collective imagination of mankind’,<sup>176</sup> has also discussed the matter of disobedience, which appears, in addition to the fruit of The Tree of Knowledge, in folktales like The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Prince Ivan and the Firebird, and of course Bluebeard.<sup>177</sup> Attending to the aforementioned classifications of plots, the list can be extended to numerous other folktales and myths.

From the field of psychology, Bettelheim proposes a number of interpretations for the plot of the female disobedience and her subsequent punishment. In order to draw up his proposals he analyses the story’s symbolic content—which Campbell so much emphasises in fairy tales. According to him, the Bluebeard tale is about the dangers of sexual attraction, of marital infidelity. To reveal those, a series of symbols are used: the key to the forbidden room may have to do with the male organ—while the egg in the similar Fitcher’s Bird tale, a slightly different ATU 311 master plot, represents the untouched female sexuality; the non-washable blood on the key comes

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<sup>175</sup> Campbell, Joseph and Moyers, Bill, *The Power of Myth*, 46.

<sup>176</sup> Booker, Christopher, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 640.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

from defloration, and the contents of the room are the female's fantasies. The moral of the tale is double: falling into temptation is dangerous and should be repressed, but 'the person who seeks cruel revenge for infidelity is deservedly undone, as is one who experiences sex only in its destructive aspects'.<sup>178</sup> In the 17th century, Perrault wrote about the forgiveness of sexual transgressions in Bluebeard, stating that the jealousy and cruel revenge of husbands was 'a story of times past'. Perrault's view that Bluebeard's story is an anachronistic one is a touch ironic, considering he lived in a time when gender inequality and extreme male dominance was the norm. In her book 'Women Who Run With Wolves', Jungian psychoanalyst and author Clarissa Pinkola Estés makes a more profound analysis on human psyche, focusing on a Jungian process of individuation: first, we establish a pair of opposites between our instincts (our nature, our biology) and our psyche (our mind, our spirit). Individuation comes to solve the problem of unbalance between those two, to provide completeness and self-realisation. This is achieved in three stages of psychological development, which can be ascribed to three archetypes: the Shadow, representing the repressed side of ourselves; the Animus and Anima, which are, respectively, the unconscious masculine component of a woman, and the unconscious feminine component of a man—also deharmonised; and the Self, which is the goal of the process, the union of the conscious and unconscious, the achievement of completeness. In the tale, Bluebeard is a 'failed magician', a spiritless outcast who needs to steal the energy from his wives. Estés identifies Bluebeard as a psychological complex, the shadow, a predator inhabiting the psyche of women and men who, due to naiveté or inexperience, yield to self-repression. For her, our creative, intuitive self, represented in the tale by the younger sister, is captured by Bluebeard, our inner predator, until we are liberated by

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<sup>178</sup> Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, 302.

gaining access to the secret room. The key to the room is the ‘permission to know the deepest, darkest secrets of the psyche’,<sup>179</sup> and once we see what is in there we are ready to be transformed and set free, to reach the self. Acquired self-knowledge and maturity will prevent the inner predator to strike again.

### **3.6.3 Compositional approach**

The screenplay of this particular film, by Paula Ortiz and Javier García Arredondo, omits certain aspects and characters of the original Bluebeard tale, and incorporates new musical elements; on this modern revision, the two main parts, Bluebeard and Daniela, as well as the former wives, are or were professionally involved in music: Bluebeard is a musical producer, and all the females are singers. This allows the incorporation of a new narrative element, the ‘music of the spheres’,<sup>180</sup> which brings together the activity of the characters around a common goal: a vocal sound that, when achieved, transcends the present and takes the singer and the listener to a mystical state of total knowledge—the sound of the cosmos.

#### **3.6.3.1 Bluebeard for voice**

Bartok, Dukas, or Offenbach used the story of Bluebeard as the basis for the libretto of their homonymous operas, and the character has named several pop songs as well. The story has also been featured in different ways on a large number of theatre plays, films, television programs, and even video games. Béla Bartok’s Bluebeard’s Castle (1911), with a libretto by poet Béla Balázs, is a personal approach to the tale, whose great amount of symbols has given rise to different psychological interpretations of

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<sup>179</sup> Pinkola Estés, Clarissa, *Women Who Run With The Wolves: Myths And Stories Of The Wild Woman Archetype*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 42.

<sup>180</sup> Incidentally, I am addressing the subject of the ‘music of the spheres’ on another project of this portfolio, but in an unrelated way to Bluebeard.

the score. Bartok used a big orchestra in a variety of harmonic languages, from polytonality to a more tonal style, giving a ‘symbolic’, special prominence to the minor second interval. Paul Dukas’s *Ariadne and Bluebeard* (1907), an earlier work, was based on a play by symbolist<sup>181</sup> playwright Maurice Maeterlinck, and went as well for a psychological, rather than aesthetic, significance. Maeterlinck combined two antagonistic mythical figures: the Greek feminine hero Ariadne, and the killer of women Bluebeard. Influenced by Debussy’s *Pelléas and Mélisande*, the opera was a good portrayal of Dukas’s style, which *Financial Times* music journalist David Murray described as ‘post-Wagnerian in harmony, post-19<sup>th</sup> century Russian in its sumptuous sound, but still recognisably in the tradition of Franck and Saint-Saëns’.<sup>182</sup> But Dukas revealed later his discrepancies with the narrative vision: in ‘*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue: (A Story with a Moral after the Manner of Perrault's Fairy Tales)*’, an essay where he discussed his approach to plot and characterisation, he expressed his disagreement with Maeterlinck’s view of the libretto, since on his score he had interpreted musically a quite more assertive Ariadne.<sup>183</sup> The earliest work of the three, Jacques Offenbach’s operetta ‘*Bluebeard*’ (1866), was a re-interpretation of the genre of *opéra-bouffe*, typically based on much lighter librettos. This burlesque revision of the tale, with effervescent orchestrations, had obviously nothing to do with its successors—the works of Dukas and Bartok—but the concept can be regarded as one of the referents for modern works like the folktale adaptations of filmmaker Tim Burton and composer Danny Elfman.

Despite the fact that the present audiovisual project attaches great importance

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<sup>181</sup> Symbolism, a literary and artistic movement of the late 19th century, sought to express ideas, emotions, and psychological impulses through symbols.

<sup>182</sup> Murray, David, ‘*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue (Ariane and Bluebeard) (1907)*’, *American Symphony Orchestra* <http://www.americansymphony.org>.

<sup>183</sup> Caswell, Austin B., ‘Maeterlinck's and Dukas' ‘*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*’: A Feminist Opera?’ *Studies in Romanticism*, 27(1988), 213.

to diegetic music, to the point of turning it into the central element of the film, I set out to elaborate a proposal that would rather focus on the non-diegetic side of the score. It is significant that two of the most iconic musical pieces written after the Bluebeard tale would not only be operas, but would revolve, due to the nature of their librettos—Balázs was an admirer of the symbolist Maeterlink—around the universal symbols of myths and dreams, archetypes, and consequently, psychology. For this project, I chose to work not just on the character archetypes, or the more obvious interpretations of sexual transgression and gender violence, but also on the internal aspects of the psyche, one psychoanalytic step beyond the symbolism inherent to Bluebeard's external plot.

### **3.6.3.2 Inside the cavern of the psyche**

Kulturtemplet is an abandoned water reservoir built in 1901 in Gråberget, Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden. It's a dark place inside, with no electricity, and a singular architecture that produces unique acoustics: an uncontrollable reverberation time of more than 16 seconds. Like in the archeological sites, natural and man-made, which the field of archaeoacoustics investigates, Kulturtemplet provides a space whose acoustical properties can be used to experience sound in a way reminiscent of the ancient rituals and ceremonies.

For this project, however, I am turning this dark, vaulted chamber and its extraordinary resonance into a symbol of the psyche. It's the frame for the rite of passage that our repressed creative power goes through, in order to acquire a new status of empowered self-knowledge. This black and dreary space, with its eerie reverberation, is the forbidden room that keeps the most obscure secrets of our minds.

The mythical story of Bluebeard can also be seen, attending to Campbell, as possessing a pedagogical function, for it shows how to overcome our inner predator. And it poses a conflict that can be addressed as a staged journey, from separation, to struggle, to return, where using the magical key to open the door gives us the possibility to reclaim ascendancy over our renovated self. Or I can use as a reference the three-stage process of Jungian individuation, which has a clearer inner focus. In working on a concept like this, I would typically try and think ‘concept’, not ‘time’. I would not go for a chronological sequence of the actions depicted on the script, but I would work instead on a global, non-action-oriented musical approach, based on a well-balanced blend of all the narrative elements. In this case, however, the stages are part of the concept; therefore I can assign different sections of the music to different stages in the process of individuation:

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system begins at measure 26, marked with a 'B' in a box. It features dynamics of *fp* and *pp*. The second system begins at measure 33 and features dynamics of *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The use of seconds and quartal/quintal harmony characterises the Shadow archetype in Bluebeard’s process of individuation.

98 **G**

S. *mp*

A. *mp*

T. *mp*

B. *mp*

6

105

S. *f* *pp* *mf*

A. *f* *pp* *mf*

T. *f* *pp* *mf*

B. *f* *pp* *mf*

Ascending chromaticism and modulation depict the realisation of the Self.

### 3.6.3.3 Integrating the acoustics

The extremely long reverberation time of the recording space has a direct influence on the composition of this piece. Tempo has to be slow, to allow for the tail of each note—or chord—to fade out before the attack of a new one. A piece consisting of only whole notes would be, however, very monotonous; therefore, long pitches and sustained harmonies abound, but in combination with voice movement—a compromise that adds an extra layer of significance, when consecutive chromatic notes blend inevitably, creating dissonance. Also, the space is extremely sensitive to pitching, depending on the role of the pitch on the chord. For example, at some point the second soprano had to sing a C which was first the pedal of the chord, then a B

which was the minor third, then back to C, but this time it would be the fifth of the chord. The pitch of the first and second C's could not be exactly the same, as the room responds to such details with its overtone-loaded resonance. It is worth noting that the natural reverb of the space cannot be stopped, hence any wrong notes sung that ruin a take must fade away completely before a new take is recorded; a time consuming process. A sample video of a take has been recorded as well.



Figure 12: Choir recording at Kulturtemplet, Gothenburg

## Chapter 4. Conclusion

For some time after I started writing music for audiovisuals—and with greater frequency when I had to start teaching the techniques to others—I strived to identify the processes that take place below the surface whenever an audience becomes immersed in an audiovisual experience, be it a film, a television programme, a multimedia, multi-disciplinary event, or even an installation. I was reluctant to approach my compositional tasks without having a clear idea of what music was supposed to achieve, and felt that such disorientation was, firstly, an issue that could not be solved exclusively by intuition, and secondly, was sufficiently widespread among students and professionals to justify a deeper investigation. This would not only be beneficial for me, but would also become academically transmittable knowledge.

The most useful devices that I had found to establish a conceptual correlation between visuals and music were the screenwriting theories of American scholars such as Christopher Vogler, Syd Field, John Truby, or Robert McKee, who incorporated the concepts of structure, character, and story development. I also examined the studies of Earle Hagen and Claudia Gorbman, among other theorists of film music, looking for more precise guidelines to address the use of music in terms of specific emotional functions. Whereas most of these theories were valuable and already dealt with some of the issues that I would be researching later, such as the psychology of audiovisual music, I was still lacking a universal vision that would aid me with narrative conceptualisation; a key to integrate any audiovisual story into a frame of conscious and unconscious meanings that would bring about instant identification in

an audience. The interest that I had developed in archaeoacoustics, and the plausibility of similarities between modern multimedia events and multi-layered rituals of the past—featuring music, sound, light, and any type of performance—led me to the study of myth and ritual as fundamental components of narrative. This thesis, the compositional portfolio of five pieces, and their commentaries, aimed at exploring the feasibility of a mythical and ritualistic approach to the composition of music for different types of audiovisuals.

I started by looking into the debate about music's representationality in the context of its association with images. Then I went on to review some of the main narrative theorists in history—Aristotle, Saussure, Peirce, Propp, Levi-Strauss, Barthes and Todorov, as well as the semiologists whose work was seminal for the development of later postulations, Saussure and Peirce—and found how their essential contributions, irrespective of their field of study, were unfailingly linked to the analysis of myth. The association of the latter with ritual would be quickly established, although it became obvious that the debate about the ascendance of one above the other could only be solved by adopting a compromise approach.

Not only did a structuralist strategy help me organise the items of a narrative discourse, but the psychological and sociological aspects of myths were of enormous value as they established two facts: all societies are bound to live their lives mythically, because myths reveal our values and ethos. Also, myths address universal issues unconsciously, whether at a personal level, as explained by Freud, or as part of a collective unconscious—postulated by Jung—that generates archetypal patterns of conduct. These are portrayed commonly in our rituals, whether sacred or profane, on a temporary alteration of our 'real' world: the enactment of an alternative world in

what is called *worldmaking*. Immersing in an audiovisual narrative is an example of this.

I had already tackled the Jungian archetypes in my study of screenplay theories, but this broader framework has been instrumental in finding new directions in the conceptualisation of music. I have devoted a chapter to the interpretation of myth and ritual on each of the projects of the portfolio, and I have always been able to find the connective link that would allow the main narrative subject of the audiovisual story to resonate with an audience in those terms.

The mythical and ritualistic vision of storytelling has inevitably inspired the narrative of *Valltorta* and *Harmony of the Spheres* in that both scripts—one written by me and the other somehow dictated by the course of music—feature ancient times, at least in part; and yet there has always been a nexus with our modern times and technology, since that is one of the subjects that I wanted to explore in the first place. The Barthesian ‘mythical speech’ has also been referred to in order to explain how music can apply layers of significance to visuals that then lead to cultural identifications, as it has been the case with *The Mystery of the King of Kinema* or *Bluebeard*. And the binary opposites of Levi-Strauss, as well as the archetypes that inform plot and character design, as described by Campbell, have been examined respectively in *Whence Comes the Rain* and in practically all of the projects.

When analysing the work of other composers, I have found that the mythical and ritualistic approach is not common; only in narratives of a clear mythic nature has there been an obvious musical intent towards that end. The elusive narrative motivation that I have come to find in the depths of our mythological unconscious seems to be overlooked, or perhaps not even considered, as it departs indeed from the averageness of music representationality. That is not to say that other compositional

approaches in audiovisual are wrong or incomplete; other professionals may have felt less need to reach the narrative core of a given project, or simply have achieved that through other means.

There are two aspects of the present research that I would like to explore further in the future. On one side, I believe that sonic art has not been properly represented in the research, except in reference to the sound design of *Whence Comes the Rain*. However, the debate of the representationality of music in sonic art is a very interesting one, and I hope I will be able to work on an installation soon, in order to test the parameters of my investigation on such a format. Another concern has to do with the use of a hybrid approach—acoustic and electronic—on some of the projects. In my opinion, electronic music is of such relevance that it should never be used as a mere replacement of acoustic music on small budget productions. A hybrid compositional approach must be deliberate and meditated, since instrumental texture has the same narrative weight as melody or harmony. In *The Mystery of the King of Kinema* I was hoping that the orchestral pieces would be able to be properly recorded, but in the end it was not possible, and the mock-ups made it to the broadcast programme—a situation that typically escapes the control of a composer.

The exploration of myth and ritual in the context of audiovisual scoring has expanded my views on music conceptualisation, providing a new set of tools that I can use effectively in my professional composition career and in my teachings. In view of the potential of the approach, it is my intention to expand my research to the furthest extent possible, and to continue to explore myth and ritual in additional projects.

# Appendix I

## Archetypes

Carl Jung first applied the term archetype to literature. He recognized that there were universal patterns in all stories and mythologies regardless of culture or historical period and hypothesized that part of the human mind contained a collective unconscious shared by all members of the human species, a sort of universal, primal memory. Joseph Campbell took Jung's ideas and applied them to world mythologies. In *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, among other works, he refined the concept of hero and the hero's journey—George Lucas used Campbell's writings to formulate the Star Wars saga. Recognizing archetypal patterns in literature brings patterns we all unconsciously respond to in similar ways to a conscious level.

The term **archetype** can be applied to:

- An image
- A theme
- A symbol
- An idea
- A character type
- A plot pattern

**Archetypes** can be expressed in

- Myths
- Dreams
- Literature
- Religions
- Fantasies
- Folklore

## Heroic Archetypes

1. Hero as warrior (Odysseus): A near god-like hero faces physical challenges and external enemies
2. Hero as lover (Prince Charming): A pure love motivate hero to complete his quest
3. Hero as Scapegoat (Jesus): Hero suffers for the sake of others
4. Transcendent Hero: The hero of tragedy whose fatal flaw brings about his downfall, but not without achieving some kind of transforming realization or wisdom (Greek and Shakespearean tragedies—Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth, etc.)
5. Romantic/Gothic Hero: Hero/lover with a decidedly dark side (Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*)
6. Proto-Feminist Hero: Female heroes (*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin)
7. Apocalyptic Hero: Hero who faces the possible destruction of society
8. Anti-Hero: A non-hero, given the vocation of failure, frequently humorous (Homer Simpson)
9. Defiant Anti-hero: Opposer of society's definition of heroism/goodness. (*Heart of Darkness*)
10. Unbalanced Hero: The Protagonist who has (or must pretend to have) mental or emotional deficiencies (*Hamlet*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*)
11. The Other—the Denied Hero: The protagonist whose status or essential otherness makes heroism possible (*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan)

12. The Superheroic: Exaggerates the normal proportions of humanity; frequently has divine or supernatural origins. In some sense, the superhero is one apart, someone who does not quite belong, but who is nonetheless needed by society. (Mythological heroes, Superman)

## Types of Archetypal Journeys

1. The quest for identity
2. The epic journey to find the promised land/to found the good city
3. The quest for vengeance
4. The warrior's journey to save his people
5. The search for love (to rescue the princess/damsel in distress)
6. The journey in search of knowledge
7. The tragic quest: penance or self-denial
8. The fool's errand
9. The quest to rid the land of danger
10. The grail quest (the quest for human perfection)

## Stages of a Hero's Journey

- Stage 1: Departure:** The hero is called to adventure, although he is reluctant to accept.
- Stage 2: Initiation:** The hero crosses a threshold into a new, more dangerous world, gaining a more mature perspective.
- Stage 3: The Road of Trials:** The hero is given supernatural aid, endures tests of strength, resourcefulness, and endurance.
- Stage 4: The Innermost Cave:** The hero descends into the innermost cave, an underworld, or some other place of great trial. Sometimes this place can be within the hero's own mind. Because of this trial, the hero is reborn in some way—physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Through this experience, the hero changes internally.
- Stage 5: Return and Reintegration with Society:** The hero uses his new wisdom to restore fertility and order to the land

## Characteristics of the Hero's Journey

- The hero is naïve and inexperienced
- The hero meets monsters or monstrous men
- The hero has a strange, wise being as a mentor
- The hero yearns for the beautiful lady who is sometimes his guide or inspiration
- The hero must go on a journey, learn a lesson, change in some way, and return home
- The hero often crosses a body of water or travels on a bridge.
- The hero is born and raised in a rural setting away from cities
- The origin of the hero is mysterious or the hero loses his/her parents at a young age, being raised by animals or a wise guardian
- The hero returns to the land of his/her birth in disguise or as an unknown
- The hero is special, one of a kind. He/she might represent a whole nation or culture
- The hero struggles for something valuable and important
- The hero has help from divine or supernatural forces
- The hero has a guide or guides
- The hero goes through a rite of passage or initiation, an event that marks a change from an immature to a more mature understanding of the world

- The hero undergoes some type of ritual or ceremony after his/her initiation
- The hero has a loyal band of companions
- The hero makes a stirring speech to his/her companions
- The hero engages in tests or contests of strength (physical and/or mental) and shows pride in his/her excellence
- The hero suffers an unhealable wound, sometimes an emotional or spiritual wound from which the hero never completely recovers.

## Situational Archetypes

| Archetype                    | Description   | Example |
|------------------------------|---|---------|
| The Quest                    | What the Hero must accomplish in order to bring fertility back to the wasteland, usually a search for some talisman, which will restore peace, order, and normalcy to a troubled land.  |         |
| The Task                     | The nearly superhuman feat(s) the Hero must perform in order to accomplish his quest.   |         |
| The Journey                  | The journey sends the Hero in search of some truth that will help save his kingdom.   |         |
| The Initiation               | The adolescent comes into his maturity with new awareness and problems.   |         |
| The Ritual                   | The actual ceremonies the Initiate experiences that will mark his rite of passage into another state. A clear sign of the character's role in his society   |         |
| The Fall                     | The descent from a higher to a lower state of being usually as a punishment for transgression. It also involves the loss of innocence.  |         |
| Death and Rebirth            | The most common of all situational archetypes, this motif grows out of a parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. Thus morning and springtime represent birth, youth, or rebirth, while evening and winter suggest old age or death. |         |
| Battle between Good and Evil | Obviously, a battle between two primal forces. Mankind shows eternal optimism in the continual portrayal of good triumphing over evil despite great odds.   |         |
| The Unhealable Wound         | Either a physical or psychological wound that cannot be fully healed. The wound symbolizes a loss of innocence.   |         |

## Character Archetypes

| Archetype                                  | Description  | Example |
|--|--|---------|
| The Hero                                   | The Hero is a protagonist whose life is a series of well-marked adventures. The circumstances of his birth are unusual, and he is raised by a guardian. He will have to leave his kingdom, only to return to it upon reaching manhood. Characterized by courage, strength, and honor, the hero will endure hardship, even risk his life for the good of all. Leaves the familiar to enter an unfamiliar and challenging world. |         |
| Young Man from the Provinces               | The Hero returns to his home and heritage where he is a stranger who can see new problems and new solutions  |         |
| The Initiates                              | The Initiates are young heroes or heroines who must go through some training and ceremony before undertaking their quest.  |         |
| Mentor                                     | The Mentor is an older, wiser teacher to the initiates. He often serves as a father or mother figure. He gives the hero gifts (weapons, food, magic, information), serves as a role model or as hero's conscience.   |         |
| Mentor - Pupil Relationship                | In this relationship, the Mentor teaches the Hero/pupil the necessary skills for surviving the quest.  |         |
| The Threshold Guardian                     | Tests the hero's courage and worthiness to begin the journey   |         |
| Father - Son Conflict                      | In this relationship, the tension is built due to separation from childhood or some other source when the two meet as men.   |         |
| Hunting Group of Companions                | These are loyal companions willing to face hardship and ordeal in order to stay together.  |         |
| Loyal Retainers                            | The Retainer's duty is to reflect the nobility and power of the hero.  |         |
| Friendly Beast                             | An animal companion showing that nature is on the side of the hero   |         |
| The Shadow                                 | A worthy opponent with whom the hero must struggle in a fight to the end. Must be destroyed or neutralized. Psychologically can represent the darker side of the hero's own psyche.  |         |
| The Devil Figure                           | This character is evil incarnate.  |         |
| The Evil Figure with Ultimately Good Heart | A devil figure with the potential to be good. This person is usually saved by the love of the hero.  |         |

|                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| The Creature of Nightmare      | A monster usually summoned from the deepest, darkest part of the human psyche to threaten the lives of the hero/heroine. Often it is a perversion or desecration of the human body.  |  |
| The Scapegoat                  | An animal, or more usually a human, whose death in a public ceremony expiates some taint or sin of a community. They are often more powerful in death than in life.  |  |
| The Outcast                    | A character banished from a social group for some real or imagined crime against his fellow man, usually destined to wander from place to place.   |  |
| The Platonic Ideal             | A woman who is a source of inspiration to the hero, who has an intellectual rather than physical attraction to her   |  |
| Damsel in Distress             | A vulnerable woman who needs to be rescued by the hero. She is often used as a trap to ensnare the unsuspecting hero.  |  |
| The Earth Mother               | Symbolic of fruition, abundance, and fertility, this character traditionally offers spiritual and emotional nourishment to those with whom she comes in contact. Often depicted in earth colors, has large breasts and hips symbolic of her childbearing capacities. |  |
| The Temptress or Black Goddess | Characterized by sensuous beauty, this woman is one to whom the protagonist is physically attracted and who ultimately brings about his downfall. May appear as a witch or vampire   |  |
| White Goddess                  | Good, beautiful maiden, usually blond, may make an ideal marriage partner; often has religious or intellectual overtones.  |  |
| The Unfaithful Wife            | A woman married to a man she sees as dull or distant and is attracted to more virile or interesting men.   |  |
| Star-Crossed Lovers            | Two characters engaged in a love affair fated to end tragically for one or both due to the disapproval of society, friends, family, or some tragic situation.  |  |

## Symbolic Archetypes

| Archetype                            | Description   | Example |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Light vs. Darkness                   | Light usually suggests hope, renewal, or intellectual illumination; darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair.  |         |
| Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity | Some characters exhibit wisdom and understanding of situations instinctively as opposed to those supposedly in charge. Loyal retainers often exhibit this wisdom as they accompany the hero on the journey.                                       |         |
| Supernatural Intervention            | Spiritual beings intervene on the side of the hero or sometimes against him.  |         |
| Fire and Ice                         | Fire represents knowledge, light, life, and rebirth, while ice, like the desert, represents ignorance, darkness, sterility, and death.  |         |
| Nature vs. Mechanistic World         | Nature is good while technology is evil.  |         |
| The Threshold                        | Gateway to a new world which the hero must enter to change and grow   |         |
| The Underworld                       | A place of death or metaphorically an encounter with the dark side of the self. Entering an underworld is a form of facing a fear of death.   |         |
| Haven vs. Wilderness                 | Places of safety contrast sharply against a dangerous wilderness. Heroes are often sheltered for a time to regain health and resources  |         |
| Water vs. Desert                     | Because Water is necessary to life and growth, it commonly appears as a birth symbol, as baptism symbolizes a spiritual birth. Rain, rivers, oceans, etc. also function the same way. The Desert suggests the opposite.                           |         |
| Heaven vs. Hell                      | Man has traditionally associated parts of the universe not accessible to him with the dwelling places of the primordial forces that govern his world. The skies and mountaintops house his gods, the bowels of the earth contain diabolic forces. |         |
| The Crossroads                       | A place or time of decision when a realization is made and change or penance results  |         |
| The Maze                             | A puzzling dilemma or great uncertainty, search for the dangerous monster inside of oneself, or a journey into the heart of darkness  |         |
| The Castle                           | A strong place of safety which holds treasure or princess, may be enchanted or bewitched  |         |

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| The Tower        | A strong place of evil, represents the isolation of self  |  |
| The Magic Weapon | The weapon the hero needs in order to complete his quest.   |  |
| The Whirlpool    | Symbolizes the destructive power of nature or fate.   |  |
| Fog              | Symbolizes uncertainty.   |  |
| Colors           | <p>Red: blood, sacrifice, passion, disorder</p> <p>Green: growth, hope, fertility</p> <p>Blue: highly positive, security, tranquility, spiritual purity</p> <p>Black: darkness, chaos, mystery, the unknown, death, wisdom, evil, melancholy</p> <p>White: light, purity, innocence, timelessness (negatives: death, horror, supernatural)</p> <p>Yellow: enlightenment, wisdom</p> |  |
| Numbers          | <p>3—light, spiritual awareness, unity (holy trinity), male principle</p> <p>4—associated with the circle, life cycle, four seasons, female principle, earth, nature, elements</p> <p>7—the most potent of all symbolic numbers signifying the union of three and four, the completion of a cycle, perfect order, perfect number, religious symbol</p>                              |  |

## **Appendix II**

VALLTORTA

by

Alfons Conde

Final Draft

November, 2014

## SCENE 1

At the break of day, the primeval man lies in the sandy soil of his cave, squirming in a restless sleep. He wakes up suddenly and sharply sits up, squinting his wary eyes, scanning the surroundings. Then, cautiously, he begins to walk on the rocks toward the mouth of the cave.

A thick fog envelops the pre-dawn light, and from the altitude of the mountain area he inhabits, the man notes the disappearance of his familiar landscape, now completely obscured by the vast whitish cloud. He sharpens his senses, because deep inside his mind this phenomenon is a harbinger of an unknown danger, perhaps an evil spirit hidden in the mist, so he must be on the lookout and on his guard. He keeps moving forward slowly, blindly, listening, even scenting out the silent outline of this place he knows every corner of, inch by inch. He is filled with the sense of walking in a vacuum. Seeing neither ground nor sky, only this dense, freezing haze, he moves relentlessly forward, penetrating the fluffy sheath suspended in the atmosphere, and skillfully crosses the rugged stretch up to the edge of the huge plate.

## SCENE 2

And with no signs, with no visible traces along his route, the man suddenly stops: he knows he has reached the end of the road and should not take even one step further. He lies still, motionless, amidst the white and thick void that insists on obscuring the magnificence of the landscape.

For the primeval man this condensed mass has always been a curse, an unbeatable enemy, in anything resembling the wild preys he routinely hunts and sacrifices. And yet he doesn't worry now, and stands still and expectant, because he knows exactly where he is at: right on the edge of a sheer vertical cliff, in front of a succession of ridges and valleys stretching into the distance to where the eye cannot reach. The man stays upright in this place, static and patient, aware of the mutations of the atmosphere, of the course of day and night; confident that sooner or later the damn fog will disappear. And he, the primeval man, will achieve victory with the first glimpse of the emerging rays of sunlight—that red and unreachable sphere up there, in the immense blue, and its extraordinary glow, which will gradually spread down here. Hence the man stands by. He awaits the mystery of solar epiphany, which will bring back the glorious landscape that he owns. He then raises his head and stares keenly at one slightly glowing point somewhere in the fog.

### SCENE 3

It has been barely half an hour and the first sunrays sparkle already, penetrating through the evanescent brume. Slowly and gradually another fabulous day is reborn, and the huge cloud dissolves lazily, in a languid fainting into the bottom of the valley. As if for the first time, the man marvels at the wonder of the early blazing sun and the reappearance of the scenery—now crisp and dazzling under the light, in its infinite extension. He spends some time enjoying the show. Finally, the primeval man feels triumphant against the evil spirits that cause the fog and muddy his everyday life.

After a few moments of contemplation, the primeval man is peaceful again. He has ceased to wonder about the reason for his strange awakening and being drawn to the gorge, so he decides to return to his shelter. But as he is preparing to work his way back, he suddenly perceives a faint murmur, barely audible, which fails to identify. Looking around defensively, he tries to find on the rocky ground the traces of some wounded animal. Finally he gives up. He turns around to resume his journey, but this time, under the intense sunlight, he clearly discovers a shadow cast on the ground, from behind a large rock, a few steps from where he is.

Intrigued, the man crouches down quietly and tries to identify the shade, which looks just like a cave painting embodied on earth. Again and again he mentally traces the outline of this figure that looks human but does not correspond at all to any of the individuals around him. He feels a great curiosity, and instinctively moves toward the rock until he can touch it. With feline prowess he begins to climb, reaches the summit, and then slides down the opposite side, until his feet feel again the harsh heat of the soil. And it's only then, unveiled his intrigue, thrown into utter astonishment, when the primeval man loses his poise.

### SCENE 4

His discovery is shocking. Right in front of him lies the answer to the big incognita about the unfathomable shadow. Indeed, it's there and it's authentic, and yet the man is not able to identify the nature of the being in front of him, partially lying against a rock wall. However, his perplexity carries no concern. The uniqueness of this indefinable being does not frighten him or awakens his aggressiveness. The primeval man keeps examining the newcomer from top to bottom, while going round it in small steps, almost on tiptoe, as if to make sure it is real. He does not dare to touch, but he is sure that there is life in it; that, although hard to believe considering his appearance, it may be a subject of the same species. And he feels invaded by a pleasant feeling. He's been alone for too long. Still, the looks of the being and the strange garment concealing its entire body from head to toe leave him entirely bewildered. He just knows he feels fascinated by this white, unspeakable figure that, in his eyes, flashes in a thousand colors.

## SCENE 5

After a while, they both have gotten to communicate without words, by means of a gestural exchange between the two. The body language in this nascent contact has awakened in the primeval man a sensory delight he had never experienced before.

Cautiously, he moves a step closer to the unknown being, and slowly extends his arm to touch his body with his hand. Suddenly he hears a muffled shriek, and right when the tip of his fingers reach the surface of the nameless being, he is struck by a lightning-like fire entering his hand and going through his body—something that he had already seen happening to a deer once during a big storm. A huge burst of the whitest light blinds him as he is slammed against the rock behind by a tremendous invisible force, and at the same time he feels like his brain is disconnected and his world blacks out. The last thing he hears is a loud, unbearable high-pitched shrill noise. Then he passes out.

## SCENE 6

When he wakes up shivering, the being is kneeling by him, holding his arm. The primeval man turns his hand slowly to grab him, and noticing the rough and cold touch of the stuff that covers his body, he gets a bigger chill and groans, squeezing his eyes shut tight. The being's answer is immediate: reaching out with the other arm, the gloved hand lightly caresses the cheek of the primeval man, who reacts with another groan. Then he passes out again.

When he comes around this time, the sun is already low and everything has a reddish tone. He feels dizzy and exhausted. His whole body aches. The being is lying next to him, face up, motionless. The primeval man sits up slowly, still in pain, and looks at him.

The only thing he has been unable to do is look at him straight in the eye. He tries, getting really close to his strangely sheathed body and his face, hidden under a sort of head-covering rigid sphere. But although he remembers having been able to touch the being's arm without getting hurt after the lightning, this time he keeps a safe distance. The fire that went through his body came from it, he is clear about that. But for some reason he does not bear him any grudge, as if he had pricked himself with the quills of a peaceful porcupine. When he woke up, the being had not fled or taken advantage of his unconsciousness. He was holding his hand.

Only a transparent barrier frames his eyes, but they still are completely obscured inside the frame, remaining invisible from the outside. The primeval man guesses that, from the inner darkness of this quirk package, the being can indeed see the outside and therefore look at him without any hindrance. This setback makes him uneasy, and he starts thinking about the way to overcome

such barrier, which prevents their eyes from meeting and speaking their minds. Then suddenly, the being moves his head towards the primeval man.

The moment is awkward, while both stand up carefully, without touching the other. They stand still, facing each other, as if trying to decide what to do next. The primeval man makes a final decision to keep next to him this entity of unknown origin, whose sudden appearance has upset the routine of his everyday life. Without a second thought, he takes his hand, slightly pressing it. He is convinced that he is watching, and to provide reassurance he looks directly at the screen that obscures his eyes, smiling and nodding. Thus, hand in hand, they start walking, the primeval man steadily, and his like obediently following him though the route that leads to the cave. Since the being has some difficulty walking and moving in such a rocky territory, unsuitable for his mobility-limiting garments, he occasionally emits an imperceptible moan, drowned out in the strange shell that imprisons his head. Whenever the tuned ear of the primeval man perceives a slight lament, they stop and rest for a while. Until finally they reach the cave.

## SCENE 7

The anonymous being has remained quietly in a corner since he entered the cave, while the primeval man was busy lighting a fire. When it's ready, he lights a torch and signals the visitor to follow him. They walk a few meters deep into the room they are in, the nearest to the entrance of the cave, and the being, in an unmistakable attitude of amazement, stops in front of one of the rocky walls. By the movement of his hidden head one can guess that he is glancing at the wonder scenes painted there: dozens of brightly colored paintings showing archers fighting, dancing or hunting deer and wild boar; wild goats, horses, oxen and other animals, some with arrows stuck in their bodies; women and children marching in a group with warriors, and strange geometrical patterns whose meaning cannot understand. A marvel that prehistoric humans have created for their own pleasure and also to leave a lasting record of their lifestyle; the daily life and mythology of societies always subjected to harsh conditions, which learned to enhance their skills towards survival. Compared with the remains that made it to his time, these paintings are full of color and life.

For the first time the being shows great admiration, ostensibly opening his arms as if wanting to embrace the immense treasure embodied in those walls, and the talent of those who have made it possible. Deeply moved, he grabs the arm of the primeval man and the two sit in the sandy soil. The man is ecstatic when the character bends down and starts drawing in the sand two eyes under which a couple of tears slip. He responds by clearing the tears with his hand, and then, facing the hidden face of the being, stares at him while bringing his fist on his chest.

## SCENE 8

The primeval man is proud to show the newcomer this place. Unable to contain the euphoria, he gesticulates theatrically in order to be understood. Unfortunately, no shared language allows him to explain as he would wish everything that makes up the small but yet so large universe of his life. The cunning to confront and overcome the worst dangers –at what his peers did not succeed, hence he is now alone–, the strength to go hunting and return to the cave laden with the most desirable prey, the expertise to find and distinguish edible plants among the wild vegetation at faraway places. And especially, he doesn't know if he will be able to convey without words the weight of his history, and how much he has suffered. For a moment, he lowers his head and his face darkens.

The day progresses, and so does the way to express and make themselves understood by non-verbal language, emerged from the wit of both. Whether through body gestures, expressive hand signs, or the use of drawings in the sand, as time goes by communication improves. The primeval man, now relaxed and happy, would have never imagined that this mysterious being would become so receptive to him.

The event has touched him so much that it begins to take shape in his mind a plan to convince the being that there should be no barriers to their mutual knowledge. With this simple but reasonable reflection is as if the primeval man had suddenly advanced a link in the atavistic chain of his limited capacity of comprehension.

## SCENE 9 - FLASHBACK

The village is in the bottom of the valley, next to the grasslands. Its young head is a convinced advocate of peace and brotherhood among villages. Sunk into deep sleep, people are unaware that sixty men from the nearest settlement, at the other side of the mountains, have walked all night and before dawn are at their doors. They move towards the walls, which rather than as protection have been constructed to prevent livestock from escaping. At that time the unguarded village is occupied by women, children and elderly people. Almost all men are out hunting deer and wild boar. At a signal, half the warriors scale the low wall and storm in, starting the plunder. They advance burning houses, destroying crops and killing animals. In the midst of all the running and screaming, people who leave their huts barely awake become targets of their arrows. Others are forcibly dragged out and put to death in the middle of the street. Women and children run to the trough for their lives, and are hunted in their flight. Warriors are merciless to all without distinction, killing babies in their mothers' arms and maiming the elderly. Some run to take refuge in the sanctuary hut, but it is burned with them inside.

The glow of fire and smoke in the distance warns hunters that something terrible is happening, making them abandon the expedition and return in a hurry. When they arrive, most of the village is already consumed by fire. The

place is sown with dead and wounded. Upon entering they are greeted by the invaders, who are equal in number. But as they prepare to engage in battle, the other warriors, who had been lurking outside the village, come from behind. They have run into a clever ambush. They fight bravely, but after a few minutes none of them is left alive.

The rest of the day is dedicated to pillage, ignoring the bodies that pile up everywhere. That night the temperature drops low and the wounded lying on the floor among the charred remains of their village freeze to death in the darkness. But at dawn, when the enemy has already left the village, a man rises from under a pile of corpses. He is wounded, but he can walk. He shouts, but gets no answer. There is only an eerie silence. He searches for his family and finds their lifeless bodies in front of what had been their shed, the biggest in the place. The waist-length, sandy blond hair of his female companion has mostly burned, and she is still tightly holding hands with their little son. Torn up by grief, he walks to the exit of the village whose fate was unable to avoid. From now on he will live alone, far away. And he will never return.

#### SCENE 10

It is already dark. The being sits in a corner of the cave staring at the man, as if waiting for his reaction. The primeval man sits next to him and touches his sheathed shoulder. He fixes his gaze on his imagined eyes and begins his story with a first gesture, pointing his index finger back and forth, and then joins his two index fingers as a sign of unity. The invisible being nods. Then the man gets up, raises both arms, turning on itself draws an invisible circle that covers the entire cave, and folds his hands, palms up, to his friend, simulating an offering. And the character nods again. When the primeval man kneels on the ground to draw a new picture, his partner leans showing curiosity. The man doesn't find it easy to pass this test; he tries a few times until finally he gets to draw a figure that resembles the one near him, capturing the image of a human being completely covered with a strange wrap, from head to toe. The being watches attentively. The primeval man continues in his efforts, and now spreads with his fingers the sand in which the lines of the garment were outlined, deletes them and then redraws the silhouette of a naked body with his head uncovered. It's a simple, single stroke, a sketch that follows the outline of a human being, faceless and with no physical traits.

#### SCENE 11

The reaction of the mysterious being, who has closely followed and understood the meaning of the drawing, has been of absolute disapproval. He has stood up immediately and has vigorously wiped with his feet all traces of the proposal formulated on the sandy soil.

The primeval man, despondent, does not understand this rejection. Now it is the being who takes him by the hand and makes him sit down. For the first time, the character takes the initiative: he wants to tell something important to

break the mystery and clarify the situation. He doesn't want to hurt the feelings of this man who he believes innocent and good, but ignores how he will be able to understand his message, because of his cognitive limitations.

The being begins its gestural story with great skill and tact, speaking slowly, using body movements and variety of signs, and drawing in the sand those elements of his history that are inconceivable for the candid mind of the primeval man. First, he attempts to describe his origin, the reason for his outfit, and how he got here from his world; an incalculably distant world, at least in secular time, because he ignores what the coordinates of his current geographical location are. He also wants to show the nature of his feelings, which are of gratitude and respect. But he doesn't want to deceive him, and needs the primeval man to understand and accept the unbridgeable dimension that separates them. Two worlds, past and future, inherent to the history of mankind.

He has actually told more or less the truth, albeit very synthesized. That is, that he belongs to an advanced society that owes to the progress of earlier civilizations. That his robe and strange shell are essential to survive in the space where his ship was traveling, about to cross the atmosphere after a long journey. And he wants to emphasize, tracing a large drawing in the sand, that orbenaunts too feel in their capsules the constraints of cosmic loneliness. But if all these concepts seem impossible to even imagine for the primeval man, it is still more complicated to explain why the possible existence in the environment of deadly pathogens force him to keep wearing the suit and helmet. As it is also difficult to put across the growing anxiety about the fact that the breathable gas reserves in the life support system, integrated into the texture of his biotech suit, are not unlimited.

## SCENE 12

The being from the future finally realizes the absurdity of his pedagogical intentions. Despite the effort to be understood, it has all been in vain. Confusion and discouragement are evident in the face of the primeval man. But after a few moments, he shrugs, raises his eyebrows and extends his arms with open hands, interrogatively: Why? Why are you here? It's the big question that the being cannot answer as he would like, because he only recalls a big bang in the ship, a horrible explosion that violently threw his body into space. And he remembers nothing else. He is not sure how he has crossed the distance of all times, but he does know that he has gone back in time to very remote ages, a possibility that the science of his era foresaw. He describes the event by drawing on the floor the destruction of the ship... and his waking up in the middle of a rocky site located on top of a thrilling cliff. And that he was very scared, a whole night awake, thermally stable thanks to his suit but surrounded by predators, until he could get the primeval man to meet him, directing his steps; a mental skill that every human brain possesses, but that man took tens of thousands of years to develop. In the era where the being comes from, quantum mechanics has been breaking down boundaries, and such communication skills, now considered normal, are but just one more. For his

scientific mind, this time travel and its current situation, although amazing, are simply a state of the universe, that theory considered plausible. Only now is real, and he's not sure what to do.

Finally, he tries to make him understand that he feels guilty for failing to prevent the discharge of its system of self-defense, automatically armed that night when it detected the presence of hostile elements. At the end of his story, the primeval man's expression has changed. Beyond the perplexity and incomprehension, he now has a grave countenance. It's like he were trying to fit the images conveyed by the being, which his brain is physically unable to process, into his own life experience. Somehow he does understand, after all, that his sudden awakening and finding of the being weren't accidental.

### SCENE 13

Although the entrance is out of sight, a faint glow on the distant walls and a direct ray of light penetrating the cave through a crack in the dome heralds the dawn of a new day. When the being wakes up, the primeval man is already awake, engrossed in the preparation of what seems to be his hunting equipment. A few stone-tipped arrows, a medium-size wooden bow, a hand ax, and a spear taller than himself, with a nicely ornamented bannerstone attached to the upper end of its thrower, are all neatly arranged on the floor. He is also putting a few fishbone-made pieces, small stones and a rudimentary net inside a leather bag. Then he puts on the full gear, nods his head at the being, and waves his hand indicating to follow him out.

Outside, the day is grey and foggy again. The being follows the primeval man with difficulty, but this time the latter is not slowing down to wait for him. On the contrary, he walks briskly though the mist, and the creature tries to keep up his pace barely seeing the ground he is treading... until finally he trips on an invisible rock and falls. Only then the primeval man stops, retraces his steps and helps him get up on his feet. Then he turns his back and resumes his fast-paced walk.

They walk for what it feels like an eternity. The being, exhausted, is tempted to stop, but they are now too far from the cave and he fears he might get lost in the mist if he loses visual contact with his companion. At this point he is not sure he would come back for him, so he finds the strength to keep walking. They descend a hill and arrive at a narrow creek, and keep marching single line in the shallow creek bed to avoid the tall brush. Walking in the water makes it even more difficult. After a while, the primeval man disappears in the fog. Disoriented and wearied, the being finally stops.

### SCENE 14

The primeval man is concentrated on the hunt. All his senses are alert, inspecting the environment as he advances confidently in terrain well known. The fog does not bother him, though he is extremely cautious. He's not afraid of animals, but knows he is at the mercy of the spirits. And he keeps sharp ears to make sure that being is still there. Soon he enters a wooded area through which passes the creek, where he is hoping he will find a deer.

Then he perceives a familiar scent. For the intensity, it must be quite a big one. And indeed it must have smelled him already. It's not exactly what he hoped to find, but there is no time to think. The fog is slowly starting to fade out, so he plants the spear into the ground, grabs the bow from his back, places an arrow on it, and prepares for direct contact. He waits in total silence for a few minutes, but sees nothing. Then he realizes it's been a while since he last heard the being's clumsy steps behind him, and gets alarmed.

Suddenly, next to a big tree to his right, he notices a brownish mass partially hidden in the brush. He turns to yell to his companion, but the bear erupts out of the brush fast as lightning and rushes toward him, reaching him from behind and knocking him face down into the water. Immediately it bites the back of his leg, and begins dragging his body into the brush. The man has dropped his weapons into the creek, and knows he has no chance to get them back. Despite the excruciating pain of the bear's teeth sinking into his flesh, he offers no resistance, playing dead. Then the bear releases its hold on him and pulls back a bit, and he takes the opportunity to spring to his feet. Blood dribbles profusely down his calf. The bear is showing a predatory behavior, he is not making threatening noises or bluff charging. Instead, he is quietly staring at his prey and calculating his next move. His intentions are clear. He starts walking again toward the man, but this time the latter stands his ground, shouting loudly while waving his arms in the air. Yet the bear doesn't retreat, and keeping eye contact charges again. The man engages in a ferocious battle, but he is dealt a brutal blow on the chest with an enormous clawed paw and gets knocked down again. The bear has him pinned to the ground, face up, and he can feel the animal's jaws clamped around his skull, and even hear the sound of bones cracking, although he feels no pain. He still tries to put up a fight, but the heavy beast is standing on top of him, so big that it blocks the sun, finally shining in the sky. He is starting to get weakened and realizes the end is near.

Then, suddenly, the bear's huge body arches with a tremendous roar and the sun blinds the man for a second. When the animal falls heavily on his side, narrowly crushing him, he can see the long shaft of his own spear sticking out of its back's dense fur. At the other end, with his legs widely spread to maintain his balance, the being is still clinging to it with a stiff two-hand grip.

## SCENE 15

The road back is long and painful. They have to climb the hill back up to the plain, and this time the burden is heavy. But they did have to leave the place before more predators showed up. The being has loaded the primeval man on

his back, arms crossed over his own chest. The man's head lies inert on his left shoulder, and the blood flowing from the injuries slides down his white suit. There is severe blood loss, and possibly he has a fractured skull too. And the chest wound, which the being has briefly examined before sitting back to load him up, is not superficial. With the diminished ability of touch, he has only been able to make a rough tourniquet with a branch and some ends of the network the other carried in the bag, to stop bleeding from his leg.

The primeval man is of medium height but very sturdy constitution, and his semiconscious state does not help to lighten the weight. The being walks slowly, one foot after the other, trying to balance the load and not collapse. In a superhuman effort he gets to the top of the hill, and stops for a second to regain strength, leaning on a tree. If he unloads the injured, he will have a hard time putting him back on his shoulders. The primeval man remains silent.

He resumes travel, and has only walked a few minutes when the man articulates an unintelligible sound, while slightly pulling at his hand. He has had his eyes open for a while now, and wants the being to stop. Then he painfully lifts one arm and points to a nearby bush. The being puts on guard, waiting for the appearance of another animal. He couldn't carry any weapons, so they are both defenseless. But the man urges him to get closer to the bush. When they are near it, he points his finger at some stalks filled with leaves, and has him strip some and put them in the bag.

During the long road they stop up to four times to collect leaves, stems and roots, at the request of the primeval man, who knows well their medicinal properties. Unable to bear the weight, the being unloads him on all occasions. He often finds that, when he is ready to load the man back up again, he has fainted.

## SCENE 16

After long hours of arduous journey, they finally arrive at the cave when the sun starts to set. It's cold. The being is fully exhausted and can barely move, but he must stay awake to care for the primeval man, whom he has dropped gently onto the rocky floor. His condition is serious, but there is nothing there to help administer first aid. Although unconscious, the breathing and pulse are quite stable. But occasionally he scowls, shakes, and grunts, probably reliving, in his feverish state, his recent fight with the beast. The being is faced with a difficult dilemma. He could try and heal the injuries somehow, but that would imply taking off the suit, which reduces his sensory abilities. And with a body not adapted to viruses and bacteria from the environment, that could be lethal. On the other hand he cannot let the untreated lacerations become infected, and although the man no longer bleeds, it is clear that he needs immediate care or he will die. Those thoughts haunt him, but he is worn out—he tries to resist, but finally exhaustion overcomes him and falls asleep.

The primeval man shakes the being, who wakes with a start. He does not know how long he's been asleep. The moonlight penetrates through the crack in the

vault. The man has lit a fire next to them, probably without even getting up, and is sitting up, holding his leather bag. He is not looking very good. His sunken eyes reveal the trauma to his head, and his wounds need urgent attention. He signals the being to help him stand. Then, leaning on the other, the arm around his neck, limps toward a recess in the wall where he stores some objects. He chooses a piece of stone with a hole in the center that contains something like fat, and puts it aside. Then he strikes together two small, differently colored stones that he has pulled out of his bag, and sparks ignite the marrow-dipped wick. Immediately it starts to burn, producing a warm and smokeless flame. Holding the lamp in one hand, he leans back on the being and together they walk toward the dark depths of the grotto.

This is the first time that the being goes so deep into the cavern. The primeval man leads him through a narrow corridor to another small room. On a ledge in the rock there is another lamp, whose wick he lights up with the one he is holding. They leave that room behind and go through another corridor until they reach a point where it widens. There, the primeval man stops and looks around in the rock walls. He locates a spot the size of a walnut, painted bright red, and reaches over to touch it. Then he starts singing.

## SCENE 17

It's not a complex melody, but rather a single, hummed low pitch. The primeval man concentrates on the sound, eyes half-closed. He pauses briefly and hums another pitch, slightly sharper. Another pause, another pitch. And this time, all of a sudden, the air begins to vibrate. The man keeps humming the drone, and the resonance continues to grow, as if other voices adhered to the chant—as if the cave had come to life. He keeps at it for nearly a minute, and suddenly goes silent. Everything continues to resonate for a few seconds, gradually fading out.

The being is astonished. The helmet's microcells allow him to get the same auditory and olfactory experience as if he had his head exposed. And he is not only impressed by the extraordinary sonic effect, but also with the confidence with which the primeval man is able to manipulate it. They keep walking, and arrive in a larger room. Again the man traces the walls by candlelight, in search of a sign. He quickly finds it, and makes them get close. This time it's a group of moving deer, painted at a certain height on the rock. The primeval man is too frail to reach them, so he makes a gesture to the being, signaling a protrusion on the stone wall to perch on and put his gloved hand over the paintings. While he obeys, the man leans on the wall so as not to fall, and begins humming a drone. This time it takes him a little longer, but eventually he finds the pitch that connects him with the spirits of the animals. And they respond, roaring, sublimating the song of the primeval man to fill the entire room, pounding on the walls and shaking the small particles of sand as if a herd were crossing it.

Despite his technical training, the being is excited. Of course it's not his specialty, but he has some knowledge of acoustics and knows the principles

on which such resonance is based. What strikes him is how rock-art is directly linked to sound, and how the primeval man has integrated both concepts into his own spirituality. It is unknown, however, whether all this has been transmitted by his ancestors, or the individual who is next to him personally intervened in creating paintings or even the acoustic cataloging of these spaces.

The man suddenly interrupts his chanting and rests one hand on the wall, breathless. He is clearly weakening fast. But he is determined to continue, and the being can't offer anything but help, although he is beginning to worry about the pitch-black darkness and his disorientation. The echo still resonates in the tunnel when they finally arrive, with difficulty, at their destination.

## SCENE 18

The chamber is relatively large, about 50 meters in length and 10 meters in height. But nothing is really noticeable until the primeval man, his battered body always supported by the being, slowly walks along the rocky perimeter and one by one lights the lamps whose location in the dark he knows by heart. Up to twenty light spots glimmering at different heights give the room a magical appearance, revealing wonderful formations of stalactites and stalagmites of the most suggestive shapes. At one end there is a small lake of subterranean water, illuminated by a ray of moonlight that filters through a crack in the ceiling, similar to that at the entrance of the cave. Next to it are the remains of a fire, and in front of this a big and heavy circular stone.

The primeval man sits beside the stone holding on to the being's arm, places his lamp on top of it, and signals the being to help him draw from behind it a heavy bundle and a couple of long sticks. When he opens the bundle it's full of rudimentary musical instruments: several drums, rattles, wooden and bone flutes, and a series of flat stones joined together with vegetable rope. There is also concave containers made of clay, some empty and others full of fat, and various gadgets: bone needles, spatulas, a cylindrical stone, a flint knife with wooden handle and a ball of hemp fibers.

Next he lights a fire. When it is well stoked, he asks the being with gestures to take some round stones, which are piled in a corner, and place them on the coals. The stones are quite heavy, so this takes the being a few minutes. Then he handles him a big bowl to be filled out with water in the lake. He opens his bag, and begins to carefully separate over the stone the different types of plants collected. The being, having completed his chores, watches seating closely. Using his utensils, the primeval man crushes and diligently mixes the leaves and roots, without hesitating in the proportions. Occasionally he stops and closes his eyes tight, holding a wince. He boils some plants, and mixes some others with grease, heating them in a water bath. While letting the ointments and concoctions cool, he cuts and threads some fibers and prepares several sutures of different measures.

The being is amazed at the skill with which the primeval man has been smearing his lacerations in the head, torso and leg, with different potions. Others have been ingested, and the being could almost swear that the swelling of his head has subsided visibly in a matter of minutes. But what has touched him most has been the bravery with which this man has been able to sew his own wounds without uttering a single cry, though he figures that some of the substances may have also acted as a local anesthetic.

## SCENE 19

The primeval man takes a shell-made rattle and fixes it around his right wrist. Then he grabs a middle-sized drum, takes a deep breath, and closing his eyes begins drumming with a thick wooden stick. The rhythm is slow and steady. By auditioning this constant pulse, he is purposely lowering the rate of his brain's electrical activity—to theta waves—in order to reach a trance state. For him, it's just a way to descend into the Lower World, through a tunnel that leads to the spirit. This will be an animal from the forest, and will protect him and guide him towards the entrance. Today he needs to talk to the spirit of the bear, and come to good terms with it.

The being observes at a distance, unaware of what goes on. He knows that the primeval man has entered an altered state of consciousness, but he has no idea of where his journey is taking him. He does, however, feel the drowsiness that the drumming is provoking, enhanced by the natural resonance of the cave.

The primeval man is now chanting and whistling along with beating the drum, while with his other hand he hits different parts of his body. Everything is very rhythmic, monotonous. It maintains the mind-altered state that the man needs to reach the otherworldly realms, to complete his journey.

At some point he begins altering his beating pattern. Although the main beat continues, here and there it gets faster and more articulated, as if enacting a conversation. The melodic profile of his chanting becomes progressively more spaced, and the register subtly higher. The spirit is talking to him. He keeps doing this until he engages in a faster drumming, as a call back, and then opens his eyes, regaining consciousness of his surroundings. He puts down his instruments and prostrates himself.

The being has also gotten out of his strange lethargy with the changing drum pattern. He is not intervening in anything, and the primeval man doesn't seem to be paying much attention to him. At last, he stands up and points at the stones over the coals. With the help of the sticks, they both push the heated stones out of the fire and lead them toward the edge of the lake. With a final push, they throw them all in, causing a crackling blast of steam that goes up curling and flows through the crack just above.

## SCENE 20

The primeval man lights some short sticks in a bowl, and the being notices how the light smoke and intense citron scent spreads around the cave. A bigger drum is chosen this time, and the man moves a few steps away from his prior location, looking around as if trying to find visual references. Then he sits down with the drum on his lap and hums a low drone for a few seconds. Immediately, the chamber starts resonating in a low frequency, echoing as far as the distant walls. The man starts drumming. The sound is loud and deep. After a few minutes, again a state of sedation takes over from the being's mind, but this time is accompanied by some physical reactions. The drum is being beaten in different parts of its skin drumhead, from the edge to the center, and each particular tone seems to affect his body differently. The cave is reverberating tremendously, and the sound waves seem to enter his head, his chest, and his stomach... inducing a state of dizziness and an increasing, alarming difficulty to swallow. He tries to move around, but changing positions only gets to switch the throbbing from one organ to another.

The primeval man is again immersed in a hypnotic trance-like state. It's time for him to expand his journey into the Upper World, where he can meet the spirits of light and hopefully understand their message. He has a clear purpose for this next journey—to meet his lost companion for a last time. They may be able to help him find her.

In order to reach the higher realms, he has to climb upward. The man stands up and with the drum hanging from his shoulder walks around the cave, drumming continuously. His walk quickly turns into a dance, with no apparent suffering. It's as if the infrasonic vibration had sealed his body from pain. The being is dazed, not knowing whether or not what he sees is due to his own trance. He has a terrible headache, and he is starting to see around him strange shapes, colors, and geometric patterns much like those he had contemplated on the walls of the cave. The primeval man is chanting loudly, first in a low register that adds to the already dreadful rumble, then rising the pitch as he tries to ascend closer to the sacred presences. He hits several stalactites and their intense ringing echoes beyond the entrance of the chamber. Then he moves next to the lake, where the steam column still floats above the water creating a canvas of mist. There, the infrasound waves have been made visible in the moonlit vapor, which shakes rhythmically in an undulant, magical spin. The spirits have responded.

## SCENE 21

The primeval man has been instructed to proceed to the Middle World, where he will be able to meet his long time companion, and say goodbye to her in the event he parts to a different universe. In the meantime, the being is trying to cope with his own trance, but his own inexperience has prevented him from managing calmly the adverse effects on his body. He feels very sick, and the nausea is becoming unbearable.

The drumming continues, as well as the chanting and rattling. The primeval man moves around in a frenzied dance, unaware of his environment. He is frantically searching for his loved one in the Middle World, where everything, breathing or not, is alive. The chamber now roars like an animal, the subsonic waves intoxicating the space and travelling as far as the mouth of the cave. The being cannot stand it any longer. His head is about to explode, and he can barely breathe. His legs are barely responding, and he cannot see the exit, immersed in darkness. And worst of all, he is feeling terribly sick to his stomach, and needs to vomit. But he can't do that inside his helmet.

He knows this may be his death sentence, but there is nothing else he can do. He walks stumbling towards the lake, where the primeval man has started rising his arm to an invisible presence. When he arrives, he falls to his knees right in front of him. Then, with a slight pressure on two spots in his collar, he unlocks and raises the sphere, which comes out with a quiet gas hiss.

## SCENE 22

She would not know what she looks like now. Her blondish hair has grown a little—her once shaved head showing a few dirty strands. The smoke from the explosion has left some traces on her face, partially blackened. Unable to hold it longer, she retches and immediately throws up on the cave's soil.

The primeval man is standing in front of her, speechless. He has stopped drumming and chanting. Some sound still reverberates around, like the final chord of an organ in a cathedral, but is quickly fading. He opens his mouth, but not a murmur comes out of it. He hasn't had time to come back from his trance, and he doesn't know what part of this Middle World, which comprises ordinary and non-ordinary reality, he is at. He falls on his knees too, his eyes wet with tears. The orbenaut has forced herself into a situation that has no turning back. And the primeval man would have finally achieved what he so much longed for the past hours—to see his new friend's face. But he is not seeing that. The guides have been benevolent to him. In what might be his last hours, he has been granted the grace to reunite for the last time with his life companion. She looks very much like the last time he saw her in the village, with burned hair and a smudged face. It's her spirit. Blank, wide-eyed, and enthralled in a rapturous bliss, he stands up and takes a step toward her, grabs her from her suit and pulls up. The orbenaut lets out a scream and tries to stop him, opening the palms of her hands in a futile gesture of self-protection.

## SCENE 23

The man needed only one hand to hold the woman's hands. And by dint of pulling her elastic, rough suit with the other, he managed to strip it. For a

moment he stares at the naked woman, who runs away in panic, into the darkness of the cave.

The primeval man picks the woman's garment and puts it on. Then he covers his head with the helmet. It is the skin of her protective animal, which she has left behind. If the spirit imbues him, maybe they will be able to reunite forever. Wasting no time, he starts a frenzied race through the dark corridors of the cave. He runs as fast as his new skin allows, in order to regain his mate. The heavenly guides have brought her to him, replacing the mysterious being, and they must complete the journey together. He protects the lamp's flame with his hand while going through chambers and galleries, where still resonate the echoes of the woman's anguished voice. Finally, exhausted by the burdensome garment, he arrives at the entrance of the cave.

The orbenaut has entered the blackness without further shelter than the walls around her, nor more guidance than her memory. Completely exposed, her mind tries to get rid of the hallucinations, tracing the way back to ordinary consciousness. She breathes deeply, trying to restore the balance in her body—while running frantically through the various galleries, sliding, running into the walls, tripping up on the edges, the sharp rocks hurting her bare feet. She tries to be guided by her own voice, giving out cries every few steps and trying to figure out through echo the size of the environment and the openings in the rock. Her eyes slowly adjust to the dark until she reaches a bend where, in the distance, finally distinguishes the flickering light of the almost extinguished lamp that they had lit a few hours earlier. From there to the outside, the journey is much faster.

## SCENE 24

As every day, the fog seizes the early hours of the mountainous terrain. The primeval man keeps moving forward as quickly as he can, sensing behind the fog all the hidden contours that he recognizes even without seeing. And when he finally reaches the edge of the huge rock, he intuitively stops, as usual. He remains standing there, waiting. With the first sunrays the man feels much more comfortable. Soon the landscape will reappear and he will be able to examine every corner in broad daylight. But his feet stumble against an obstacle that had never been there. He immediately takes a step back and looks down. It is she, her body covered with scratches, hunched over the rocky ground at the edge of the ravine, still shaking from the damp chill of dawn. The primeval man stoops to wrap her in his arms, but the woman, with bleary eyes, shakes his head again and again, horrified at the sight of this man dressed in her spacesuit. The man insists and tries to hold her hand, but she, blinded by panic, shrinks back and plunges off the cliff while the echo of a terrifying scream resonates throughout the valley.

Paralyzed, the primeval stays squatting, outstretching his arm into the void. He slowly removes the hull, closes his eyes and clenches his fists. The heavenly guides brought his companion to him, and he has not been able to retain her. For the second time he has had to see her being snatched away by the spirits.

Plunged into an infinite pain, he covers his face with his hands and moans like a wounded animal.

He has been quiet, sitting in the same place for a long time, not even noticing the hiding sun. Black clouds now darken the sky and the whole landscape he used to delight in. The rumble of thunder gives way to the fury of torrential rain. The primeval man knows that he has been cheated. He gets up, leaving aside the soaked garment. He wants to get rid of his anger, take the force of the rain on his body and challenge the evil spirits, which now reappear as a storm. An impressive lightning illuminates the landscape and highlights the figure of the man, standing in a stance of defiance. But he does not flinch, waiting imperturbable.

## SCENE 25

And suddenly a bright aura appears before him—a halo suspended in the air, which repels rain. And they are in there. It's the evil spirits, dancing ominously in that sort of bubble, curling in absurd ways. They are like reptiles entangled in a multi-colored beam of light, and they keep laughing spasmodically. They guffaw nonstop. They make fun of the primeval man.

An uncontrollable trembling convulses the man's body. He hears their cries and laughter mixed in a frenetic music. He covers his ears, about to go crazy. The tragic farce of these spirits, which had often come to disturb his dreams, has defeated him, and he feels stuck in the ground. They are the cause of his misfortune, and this time a superior force compels him to contemplate their perverse spectacle. The primeval man, who just suffered the greatest adversity in his life, has run out of courage. Having spent all his might, he lowers his head in absolute surrender.

When the storm begins to subside, the martyrdom of the spirits is also extinguished. The hallucinatory vision disappears; it vanishes into a mist out of nowhere. But by then the primeval man has lost his resilience. He doesn't realize that the rain has stopped and the sun begins to shine again. He doesn't feel anything. He starts staggering in circles, but some inner spring force brings him back to the place where he saw his beloved disappear. Like a robot, he reaches the edge of the cliff, but no longer recognizes the limits. With his eyes fixed on the horizon, he takes a last step and falls into the void. The lifeless body of the primeval man sinks into the abyss until it becomes an invisible point in his sublime landscape.

## SCENE 26

A steady-pulse, low frequency acoustic signal has been sounding for a while through all the speakers of the spacecraft. The orbenaute lies in her cabin,

squirming in a restless sleep. She wakes up suddenly and sharply sits up. The biosensors integrated in her underwear show on a side screen an elevated blood pressure, heart and respiratory rate, a muscular contraction and mild hypertension. Sitting on the mat, she breathes deeply, sets off the general alarm and resets the bio-generative life support system's monitor. She spends a few moments in that position to compose herself, and then goes to the flight deck.

The disturbing images of her dreams were so vivid that still make her hair stand on end. She is bewildered and dazed. But as the central computer has warned, it's time to start the reentry manoeuvre. She sits at the holographic display, which shows a 3D checklist of all systems. She hauls down the solar sails and tests one by one the plasma thrusters, which will be activated shortly. The computer checks the reentry parameters, offering a virtual image of the vehicle in space and the corresponding data in an annex listing. Kinetic energy, potential energy, angle of attack, rotational control, deceleration... Other security protocols analyze meanwhile the outer configuration, locking cargo gates and hatches, and reviewing the pressure sensors, the auxiliary fuel tanks, and the thermal shields. Everything seems to be correct.

The orbenaute calmly puts on her spacesuit, obviating the heavy autonomous life support backpack, only required for extra-vehicular activity. She fits her helmet, goes back to her seat, and checks on the display that all systems integrated into her suit are activated. Then she buckles her seat straps and turns off the artificial gravity. The computer continues the pre-programmed reentry routine, offering a succession of figures and diagrams. The plasma engines start with a slight jolt, and the descent begins. With a wave of her gloved hand, the orbenaute brings the hologram closer to see it better. She stays rapt a few minutes, unable to withdraw from her recent dream, staring at the large windows the extraordinary show of incandescent plasma surrounding the ship. Suddenly, a very sharp alarm sounds in the deck, which the display accompanies with a bright-red flashing diagram and a cascade of digits: *failure in the auxiliary fuel tank.*

\* \* \*

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