Rock’n’Roll Cinema

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains, as its main content, work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Adam Trainer
Refereed Publications

Adam Trainer. ‘“Well I Wouldn’t Buy the Merchandise”: David Bowie as Post-Auteur’ in *Senses of Cinema* 28. September/October, 2003. [http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/28/bowie_postmodern_auteur.html](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/28/bowie_postmodern_auteur.html) This journal article was derived from Chapter Five

Adam Trainer. ‘The Business of Living: *Secrets & Lies*’ in *Australian Screen Education* 36. September, 2004. pp. 127-129. This journal article was written in association with research on cinematic realism, as featured in Chapter Four.

Adam Trainer. ‘“They Made Me Do It”: The Mad World of *Donnie Darko*’ in *Australian Screen Education* 37. January, 2005. pp. 138-142. This journal article was derived from Chapter Three.


Adam Trainer. ‘A Crooked Crooked Reign’ in *Liverpool of the South Seas: Perth and Its Popular Music*. Tara Brabazon ed. Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2005. pp. 155-162. This chapter was written in association with research on indie rock, as featured in Chapter Six

Conference Papers

‘The Cinema of the Everyday’. *Everyday Transformations: The Twenty-First Century Quotidian*. Cultural Studies Association of Australasia Annual Conference. Murdoch University: Murdoch, Australia. 9th – 11th December, 2004. This conference presentation was written an association with research on cinematic realism, as presented in Chapter Four.


‘You Are a Target Market’. *Sonic Synergies/ Creative Cultures*. International Association for the Study of Popular Music Conference. University of South Australia: Adelaide, Australia. 3rd – 6th July, 2003. This conference presentation was derived from Chapter Six.
Abstract

Popular music and film are separate media, framed by specific discourses, histories of distribution and reception, semiotic relationships and literacies. Through these divergent manifestations and ideologies nodes of convergence exist. At moments of connection, new and innovative textual and contextual possibilities emerge, transforming the ways in which audiences both engage and read these media. Whilst often driven by capitalist goals, both popular music and film capture and tether personal expression and collective memory. Through these processes of signification, popular cultural texts belonging to both media forms are able to resist their commodified origins to inform and construct both collective and individual identities.

This thesis charts the movement of popular music across cinema. Rock’n’Roll is utilized not only as an amalgam of texts made up of sounds and images, but also as a critical and interpretative apparatus through which specific cultural identities are configured. This work is concerned with various manifestations of political resistance in popular culture, and the ways in which this resistance is moderated through cultural commodification. Using an interdisciplinary approach – converging film analysis, popular music studies and music journalism – this thesis constructs an ideological framework through which film and popular music can be aligned, and through which this alignment can be researched.
Through an engagement with myriad cinematic and popular cultural texts, executed through interdisciplinary methods, this thesis establishes a theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing the convergence of popular music and cinema. Its original contribution to knowledge is an evaluation of the ways in which these media are changed through their alignment and how they inform each other both structurally, as tangible manifestations of specific media codes and structures, and politically, in the ideological embodiment of particular identities and representational realities. This goal is achieved through the selection of specific research materials, especially those which have not been subject to detailed investigation in other scholarly studies. Specific filmic and musical texts are discussed because they embody the aesthetic and political synergy of these two media forms as well as demonstrating the cultural processes through which this synergy is enacted.

This thesis offers interdisciplinary dialogue as a valid strategy to understand the processes involved in the creation and reception of texts which are cinematic in nature but utilize the language and discourse of popular music. The textual and contextual manifestations of this process are a primary concern. Emphasis is placed on the implications for film form in terms of the structure of texts and their existence within specific genres, the shifting position of the auteur and the renegotiation of the term and its meaning to film and popular music, and the conjunction and interaction between creativity and commerce. In addressing the political and aesthetic possibilities of the film and popular music hybrid, as well as the cultural implications of their convergence, this thesis provides new perspectives for the analysis of both forms.
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