The paradox of tranquility and brutality: Soundtrack dissonance in Squid Game Series

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Abstract

Music has been a fundamental element of the art of film since its earliest examples. The "soundtrack", as a recorded song or composition used to support film scenes, usually has features that coincide with the theme of the film, the emotion of the scene in which it is used, or the film images. However, sometimes it can be seen that film producers and directors choose music to accompany film scenes that is completely contrary to the dominant emotion in the scene. They use music that has a cheerful character for a drama scene, sad for a happy scene, fun for a horror scene, etc. According to the theorists of different historical periods of film literature, the aim of these choices, which shake the viewers 'expectation of harmony between the scene and music, is to try to offer new and different perspectives to the viewers perception through the paradox of scene atmosphere and music. With this kind of use, considered as soundtrack dissonance in the study, brand new meanings can be produced from the combination of opposing elements that neither the film scene nor the music alone can produce individually. This study aims to analyse the game scenes selected from "Red Light, Green Light", the first episode of the Squid Game series broadcast on the Netflix digital platform in 2021, as an example of soundtrack dissonance.

Keywords: Film music, soundtrack dissonance, Squid Game, paradox.

Introduction

Music has been one of the main elements of the art of cinema since its earliest examples to support, emphasise or complement different aspects of the film experience. The semiotic relationship between visual and auditory elements and how music shapes our experience of watching a film in this context is an issue that has been of interest to many academic fields, including musicology, since the silent film era. A glance at the historical process reveals that music was used in a relatively pragmatist framework during the silent film period as a practical way of masking the sound of the projector as well as accompanying the image. With "The Jazz Singer", which was released in 1927 and went down in history as the first sound film, spoken dialogues were introduced to the film medium. This revolutionary change in cinema brings about a review of the existing paradigm regarding the sharing of aural space with the "new" film element and the contribution of music to story and cinematography. When the relationship between music and film is considered in its simplest form, the potential of music to create an emotional experience is

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obvious. The question of how to utilise this potential varies from the views of different schools of cinema on ideal editing to the artistic creativity and preferences of producers and directors. The common denominator of this diversity, which makes the function of music not monotonous, is that as Lexmann (2006: 56) states, when film and music are brought together as "autonomous systems", they produce meanings that they cannot produce individually. Many authors have put forward ideas about the use and function of music in film and proposed various classifications. According to Polish musicologist Zofia Lissa, one of the first researchers to discuss the functions of music in film in detail, music has functions such as emphasizing movement or real sounds, indicating location, making comments, expressing the emotions of the actors, and conveying these emotions to the viewers and predicting certain events (1959: 115-256). Music can fulfill these functions in a way that sometimes does not even attract our attention, while at other times it can make itself felt at the maximum level with an attitude that challenges what we watch on the screen. The unobtrusiveness of music generally applies to situations where, as Pauli puts it (1976: 16), "music whose character is derived directly from the character and content of the images" is used. What is meant by music challenging the image is that the music contradicts the dominant emotion in the film scene. Playing cheerful music in a sad scene or vice versa can be an example of this. This kind of use of music manipulates our audiovisual emotional coherence. Theorists provide different conceptual explanations at different times, carefully considering situations where music and image content do not overlap or contradict each other. The reason and function of the music-scene dissonance, which is dealt with in this article as "soundtrack dissonance", is to invite the viewers to explore deeper meanings beyond what they see on the screen, as theorists have stated. Music can create various effects on the viewer's mental world through the dissonance in its relationship with the images. Thus, it can provide a different perspective than the image alone or the music alone.

In 2021, the cheerful jazz hit "Fly Me to the Moon" accompanying the massacre scene in the first episode "Red Light, Green Light" of the Korean drama Squid Game, shown on the Netflix digital platform, is a typical example of a soundtrack dissonance. This study aims to examine the concept of soundtrack dissonance by taking the aforementioned scene of the series as an example and to analyse how and under what effects the dissonance exists. Firstly, the concept of soundtrack dissonance will be discussed as the theoretical framework of the study and the background of the concept will be questioned. Then, how the concept works will be analysed in terms of the scenes selected as examples from the series.

Theoretical Framework: Soundtrack Dissonance and Its Background

In its simplest definition, soundtrack dissonance is "the use of music to accompany any film scene that contradicts the dominant emotion in the scene" (Il Um, 2020: 96). However, in order to examine the concept in more detail, it would be useful to consider the words "soundtrack" and "dissonance" separately. Defining film music doesn't seem like an arduous task. Simple definitions referring to the music accompanying moving images in films can be found in many sources. When analysed in more detail, it is seen that there are music uses that accompany the image and do this with different techniques, so there may be different definitions for film music. Film music is sometimes used to denote "film score" and sometimes "soundtrack". Scoring refers to the original music that accompanies a film, while the soundtrack is usually used to refer to the selection of recorded songs that accompany a film (MasterClass, 2021). Associating the other word "dissonance" with music directly points to its already existing place in music terminology. In the context of music theory, dissonance can be roughly defined as the absence of harmony between musical notes. Defines the vertical and horizontal relationships between musical sounds, especially in Western art music. The conditions under which music creates a sense of harmony have been one of the main topics of music theory since the Ancient Greeks. There are many theories on this subject, taking into account the role of nature and the contribution of culture. According to these

theories, vertical harmony is associated with spectral compatibility (Stumpf, 1883), temporal smoothness (Helmoltz, 1863), and cultural familiarity (Cazden, 1945); horizontal harmony is associated with pitch commonality and proximity (Parncutt, 1989). Consequently, many aspects of consonance and dissonance are based on learning and recognising familiar pitch patterns in speech and music (Terhardt, 1974) and include both sides of the nature/culture dichotomy (as cited in Parncutt and Hair, 2011:119). The combination of the two terms, soundtrack, and dissonance, implies that the soundtrack applied to the film is dissonant. The meaning of harmony in the context of this study is "harmony" with non-musical elements such as film image, plot, and characters' emotions accompanied by music. The musical harmony used in the context of the film experience is not the harmony between the musical sounds themselves, but the harmony sought in the relationship between the moving image and the accompanying music. Accordingly, concerning the opening sentence, soundtrack dissonance refers to the contradictory situation of the music with the accompanying film images and the emotion of the film scene.

The use of music in a film that is incompatible with the image and the sense of the scene is one of the issues that theorists pay attention to. Many theorists consider the paradox of visual and aural imagery as part of their classification of the functions of film music. Lissa (1959), who lists the uses of music in films in detail, categorises the incompatibility of music and scene under the title of "interpretation and counterpoint". This category is for situations where the music contradicts the connotative field of the visual action and comments on the images by distancing itself from them. For example, sad music playing in a joyful scene, or horror music playing in a love scene. This category is for situations in which the music contradicts the connotative field of the visual action and comments on the images by distancing itself from them. For example, sad music for a joyful scene or horror music for a love scene. Lissa defines the contrapuntal use of music as "music that is independent of the images". Lissa's expression of independence is possible in at least one of three different ways: Rhythm, emotional expression, and lyrics. From Lissa's statement, it is understood that counterpoint can be possible not only with the characteristics of the music itself, such as melodic-harmonic structure, rhythm, tone, and tempo but also with lyrics that are added to the scene and are independent of the sense of the scene. Some theorists, on the other hand, instead of making long lists for the definition and functions of film music, argue that the main issue that needs to be addressed is only the relationship of harmony or disharmony between the music and the film scene in which it is used, as in Lissa's aforementioned category proposal. Schneider (1986: 79-89), one of these theorists, primarily focuses on the definition of film music. He argues that film music is neither a genre nor a style of music; the use of sounds other than dialogues in a film for dramaturgical reasons is sufficient for the definition of "film music". In parallel with this idea, Schneider, instead of defining film music and its functions one by one, proposes a bipolar model representing different ways of working in the context of music's relationship with the image. On one side of the model, music is entirely orientated towards image and action. The film music is closely related to the image and the plot; therefore, the overall aim is unity of expression and/or content between image and music. Conversely, film music is completely independent of image and action. Image and music utilise the independence of expression and content between each other. Here, film music creates a contrast to the image and opens a window of interpretation of the image. The complete dependence and complete independence of music on the image are the extremes of a continuum (Beller, 2015: 537-538). What Schneider refers to as "independence", as in the definition in the first sentence, is that music and film images do not support each other, that is, they are incompatible. A similar attempt at conceptualisation belongs to Chion, who divides film sounds into "empathic" and "anempathetic" according to their use in support and non-support of the image. What he describes here by using the word "empathy" is that the voice understands and feels the events in the scene. According to this definition, the opposite of an empathic voice is that the voice used in the film does not empathise with the events in the scene, in other words, it is "indifferent" to the events.

Another classification model focusing on the relationship between music and visuals comes from Pauli (1976). Pauli attempted to simplify the detailed classifications of the functions of music made by previous theorists (as in Lissa's classification), and categorised the relationship between music and image under three headings: "paraphrasing", "polarisation" and "counterpoint". By "paraphrasing", Pauli means "music whose character is derived directly from the character of the images". Here music and image content must overlap. "Paraphrasing" has existed since the origins of film music and primarily serves to facilitate the viewers' empathy with the film and identification with the characters. Conversely, there is also opposing music that contradicts the content of the image. While "polarisation" means that music pushes images that are neutral or ambivalent in terms of content "in the direction of a definite expression", counterpoint, on the contrary to "interpretation", is when "the clear character of the music contradicts the clear character of the images". The concept of soundtrack dissonance is based on the concept of counterpoint, which has an important use in film theory (Lachance and Zander, 2014). Therefore, it is important to consider the concept of counterpoint to understand the basic philosophy of meaning arising from "dissonance". Considering the concept within the framework of the visual-music relationship takes us back to its origins in the history of Soviet cinema and helps us to understand both the cause and the functioning of the incompatibility in the music-visual relationship discussed by many theorists.

The first quarter of the 20th century witnessed the historical-ideological tension between Hollywood cinema and Soviet cinema. According to Beller (2015), the different perspectives created by this ideological tension are represented by two groups. The first group had a revolutionary point of view, guided by Sergei Eisenstein, who introduced the colliding montage based on the dialectic of opposing images, and Bertold Brecht, who argued that a film should arouse "the pleasure of thought", the "delight in knowledge" and the "passion in producing". The other group is traditionally seen as belonging to the consumption-oriented mainstream of the "Hollywood-made" studio system. The first group advocates "alienation" and "counterpoint" against the harmonious melodic sound of commercial cinema. While the Soviet filmmakers' concept of montage in silent film demanded conflict through the collision of different frames, Hollywood filmmakers sought smooth, unobtrusive editing. The viewer is not supposed to notice that he or she is watching a film; instead, the viewer is expected to immerse himself or herself in the events of the film, next to the actor, or even in his or her place. Thus, while the nature of montage in Hollywood films is to be unnoticed, the method of montage pioneered by Soviet cinema continues to be recognised as a method that makes you notice and reflect on yourself. The debate between these two different schools of thought intensified with the arrival of sound films in the late 1920s. Soviet filmmakers, who stressed the importance of montage, were concerned that the new film element of spoken dialogue could negatively affect the meaning of montage and ultimately damage film aesthetics. The solutions they found to these concerns formed the basis of Soviet montage theory, a film movement radically opposed to the Western understanding of editing. Soviet montage theory objected to Hollywood continuity editing, that is, combining related shots or different components cut from a single shot into a sequence to direct the viewer's attention to a narrative coherence. The most remarkable proposal in this context is Eisenstein's theory of "Collision Montage" (Eisenstein, 1929), which he put forward against the understanding of montage based on unobtrusive harmony and coherence. The method of colliding two contrasting visual sources to create an unpredictable third result lies in the editing of unrelated scenes to create the effect of "collision". Eisenstein's theory proposes a dialectic of visual and auditory elements with singular meanings based on the "counter-movement" underlying the counterpoint technique. Accordingly, a thesis (1st shot) and antithesis (2nd shot) leading to a synthesis in the mind of the viewer is the way to reveal the meaning of montage (Mullik, 2015: 1). The new meaning (synthesis) thus created can mobilise the viewer's subconscious. The same principle is then applied to shots in which the antithesis of the image is music or sound. The use of sound in counterpoint with the visual montage provides a new possibility to develop and perfect the montage. According to

Huberson (2016), the opposition of image and music, that is, the contrapuntal relationship, is a source for deciphering the hidden meanings in the scene. Music enriches the meaning of the film by creating a complementary mood in its paradoxical relationship with the image (its opposite). It also develops the viewer's perception to achieve a higher state of consciousness by demanding active participation in the (re)construction of meaning. In this way, the viewer acquires new interpretations of both the film and his/her own subjective experience. "Soundtrack dissonance", described as the use of music that contradicts the dominant emotion in the scene, can be defined as a method that shakes the viewers' perception of the relationship between narrative elements based on the emotional integrity that emerges in the context of familiarity.

As there are many examples in the history of films, filmmakers can use soundtrack dissonance in different ways, with different strategies, to convey different messages. To date, many researchers have examined this technique from different angles by analysing the purposes of its use in films. To better understand the concept, let us consider a few examples of films famous for their scenes in which the visuals and music are in marked contrast. One of the first film scenes that comes to mind is the famous torture scene in Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992). A police officer is tied to a chair and brutally beaten after being kidnapped by gang member Mr Blonde after a robbery. One of the primary functions of film music is to create mood, an important component in the viewers' reaction. Therefore, what is expected from such a scene, which usually involves blood and violence, is background music that will support the negative mood it will create on the viewers. Tarantino subverts this expectation and replaces the inherent tension of the situation with a disturbing irony by adding Stealers Wheel's "Stuck in the Middle with You", which encourages the viewers to dance with joy. The song is so powerful in changing the expected mood and distracting the viewer from the thought of violence that when Mr Blonde momentarily steps outside the warehouse where the torture takes place and the song ends, his mood suddenly changes with the same striking effect (Kalinak, 2010: 2).In another example, in his legendary film *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), Jonathan Demme applies this formula of mental shock to Hannibal Lecture's escape scene; the elegant, gentle, and tender "Aria" from J.S. Bach's "Goldberg Variations" accompanies Lecture's intensifying cannibalistic urges as he is about to escape from his prison cell. The officers entering the cell to serve food are subjected to a sneak attack by Lecture. The music continues with its usual gentleness, despite the savage images of the officers whose flesh is separated from their bodies. Lecture's pleasure in committing the act of cannibalism is shared with the pleasure he takes in listening to the Aria, which he accompanies by waving his hands as if conducting an imaginary orchestra. The commonality of pleasure reveals the extent of Lecture's extraordinary brutality and causes the viewer to experience the horror more deeply. Classical music fulfils its function as an effective means of dissociation. For directors, taking advantage of the incompatibility of music to the scene is a way of giving the viewers the opportunity to comment on how to interpret what they see instead of passing the scene emotion directly to the viewers. It is clear from the examples given that they are trying to create an unpredictable, different, disturbing, sarcastic point of view or effect on the viewers, which they cannot realise with only scene emotion or only music. The examples show how music can have a controlling power in determining our reaction to a film. With this study, a new one will be added to the examples of soundtrack dissonance. In this context, the game scene selected from the first episode of the Squid Game series, which is an example of this study, that has intense images of violence, was watched and described in detail. The effects of soundtrack dissonance were analysed by investigating how the film sounds and music match the tragedy in the scene.

Soundtrack Dissonance in *Squid Game*

The South Korean production Squid Game, which sets an example for the study, became the most-watched production in the history of the platform in a short time after its broadcast on Netflix (Netflix, 2021). Placing economic problems such as unemployment, income inequality, and

household debt ratios in South Korea in the background, the series deals with the deadly competition in which 456 people participate as the "last hope" to get out of debt, consisting of six different games they played as children, and the winner will receive a very large amount of money when the last game "squid game", which gives the series its name, ends. The competition is deadly because the losing players are killed and eliminated from the game. Later in the series, it is revealed that the cruel games are organised by a few bored billionaires who enjoy pitting debt-laden players against each other. The themes such as the gap between the classes, the desperation of each player in debt, the tough competition conditions, the desire to win, and the survival of the fittest are a representation of modern capitalist society.

The first episode begins by focusing on the story of the main character Seong Gi-hun. Gi-hun, who lives a life of constant financial difficulties with his mother, with whom he lives in the same house, is revealed to have problems with his ex-wife and daughter in the following scenes. When the character, portrayed as a "prodigal son" and "irresponsible father", loses the last of his gambling winnings to a pickpocket at the railway station on his way home to pay off his debt to a loan shark and buy a birthday present for his daughter, he is forced to accept the tempting offer of a well-dressed stranger who tells him that he can play a few games and win a considerable amount of money in return. The next morning, Gi-hun wakes up in a dormitory resembling a prison ward with 455 other people in the same economic situation as him. In the dormitory, which director Hwang Dong-Hyuk describes as "like objects stacked on warehouse shelves" (Keskeyes, 2021), Haydn's trumpet concerto in B-flat major is blaring from the loudspeakers. The joyful and energetic main theme of the concerto creates a bright and optimistic atmosphere that contrasts with the dystopian imagery in the image. However, according to some sources (Park, 2021), the meaning of this scene may be slightly different for the local viewers. The concerto was used as the soundtrack for a TV show called "Janghak Quiz", which started on South Korean state television in 1973, in which high school students competed for university scholarships. The competition became a kind of cultural phenomenon from the 1970s to the 90s when the country went through a period of economic development. It is no coincidence that this melody, which is identified with competition in the cultural memory of South Koreans, especially in a certain age range, was chosen for this scene. The director, who wants to take advantage of this powerful symbolic aspect provided by the music, gives the first aural sign, especially to the local viewers that tough competition awaits the contestants. On the other hand, the cheerful character of the melody, which symbolises a naive competition such as a quiz show, is an ironic representation of the preparation for the tragic surprise that will take place a few scenes later, namely the scenes of the massacre for the actors and the viewers, who do not yet know that elimination means death. Haydn continues to play in the background, followed by an introductory scene in which the other characters meet each other and hints at the conflicts to come. After the gloomy atmosphere of the dormitory, the actors are taken to the exercise area and pass through the labyrinth-like steps to the area where they will play the first game accompanied by J. Strauss II's "The Blue Danube". In an interview, director Hwang Dong-Hyuk stated that he used the steps inspired by Dutch painter Maurits C. Escher's "Relativity", which depicts a world where the laws of gravity do not apply (Fernandez, 2021). What is striking about the steps in the series is that they are painted in soft, pastel shades of pink, yellow, and blue, reminiscent of children's rooms. The paradox between the visual elements that ground the story is striking. The primary paradox is, of course, that the games on which all the contradictions are based, in which the contestants play to death to get rid of their debts, are children's games in Korean culture. The games that they used to play for fun in the innocent years of childhood in the neighbourhood are now played to fulfil the conditions of competition, the ultimate result of which is death, with the ambition of prize money beyond their comprehension. The director uses visual and auditory elements creatively to represent these contrasts. As pleasant as the image of the contestants gliding down the colourful steps to the graceful waltz of J. Strauss II is to the senses, the drawing that inspired the steps is just as eerie. This dichotomy represents

the two poles of childhood fun and the deadly reality of current games. The positive effects that music and colours alone can have on the viewer's mind and the classical elements of dystopian literature (Mahida, 2011) such as communal life, strict rules, and strict hierarchy are combined based on an unsettling paradox. The story, like an army's chain of command, features VIPs who fund the game, a mysterious frontman who controls the organisation of the game, and pink-uniformed soldiers who serve under him to keep the players in line and ensure that the rules are enforced. The vivid pink colour of the soldiers' uniforms contrasts with the rigid and brutal attitude of the actors - just like the stairs in the drill ground. The director creates a language with his audience about the meaning of the visual and auditory paradox that awaits them in the following scenes. In the meantime, the players are led to the playing field to play their first game under the supervision of the frontman and his soldiers who are watching them from the cameras. The mysterious frontman, dressed in black, gets the first game ready to start as the manager, notifies the necessary places by phone, and heads to his room to watch the life-and-death battle of the players on the giant screen.

For the first game, the players gather in a hangar-like space with a picture of the sky on the walls. This first game is called "Red Light Green Light", where the characters and the viewers are introduced to the deadly adventure that awaits them in the rest of the story. The game is directed by a giant robot doll. The giant doll, which is the "it" in the game hierarchy, will recite a nursery rhyme that gives the game its name. Accompanied by this nursery rhyme, the players are asked to reach the specified finish line within the given time, provided that they move forward when the robot doll is not looking at them and stop when it is. The announcement informs the players that those who move when the baby is looking and those who cannot reach the finish line in the given time will be eliminated. The players are surprised to learn that the games they will play for the money promised to them are children's games. As the game is about to start, two players, overcome by their ambition to win, make a bet with each other as to who will complete the game first. Until that moment, the players think that the worst-case scenario is not to win the promised money. However, one of the betting characters loses his balance, gets caught in the robot doll's motion sensor, and is sniped to death with the announcement that he has broken the rule. From this moment on, players are confronted with the blood-curdling reality of their adventure. The players, who suddenly start running for their lives, unfortunately, become the target of the robot doll, whose only defined task is to indicate the people whose movements it detect during the game. The playground suddenly turns into a battlefield with the screams of the players fleeing for their lives and blood spurting everywhere and becomes the scene of a massacre where dead bodies are stacked. While more than half of the players are "eliminated", those who manage to keep their cool have a much more fundamental motivation than the money they will earn; to save their lives. One of the most fundamental points of the story in the series is that the brutal reality of class difference and inequality hits the viewers in the face with a frustrating allegory of wild capitalism. On the one hand, there are unhappy and desperate people in debt who are willing to die for money, and on the other, there are VIPs, a brilliant metaphor for the criticism of imperialism, who derive entertainment from people's need for money and their competition for this cause, and who buy this competition as if they were buying a computer game. To reinforce its criticism of modern capitalist society and the messages it conveys, the series makes creative use of a soundtrack dissonance, that is, the paradox of visual and auditory elements, which has been evident since the dormitory scene.

Effects of Dissonance: *Indifference, Estrangement, and Irony*

The soundtrack dissonance can offer deeper layers of meaning than those visible to the viewers by directors and art directors. The simultaneously seen and heard elements have an action that is far from reconciling with each other. In this way, it brings to mind Chion's aforementioned indifference of sound to image, that is, the lack of empathy. Chion gives the famous shower scene

in Hitchcock's Psycho (1960) as an example of the anempathetic use of film sound. In the scene where the character Marion Crane is stabbed while taking a shower, the fact that the water continues to flow and the sound of water continues to be heard as if nothing had happened is described as the sound's lack of empathy for the scene. Chion applies this classification of film sound to film music, stating that music can also have a determined and indomitable "indifference" to the scene. Music does not empathise with what is going on in the film scene and directly informs the viewers that it does not empathise. In the author's opinion, the indifference of music to the events taking place on the scene does not freeze emotions but rather intensifies them. Watching the scene through a counterpoint aesthetic with the principle of "visual versus aural" reinforces the viewers' emotions, which makes the scene more realistic (1994: 8-9). In short, in a montage created between image and music, the meaning of the scene can be manipulated by creating a purposeful indifference to music. In this way, a new and different meaning is obtained from the viewers' expectations based on familiarity. In this context, using an anempathetic sound/music is an effective way of transforming emotions into new meanings by encouraging the viewers to think about the scene. The frontman, whom we last see retreating to his room to watch the great tragedy of the play on the screen, is comfortably sprawled on his armchair, calmly pouring his drink into his glass. The dominant sounds of carafe, glass, and ice in the scene can be perceived as an auditory sign of an action taken by the character to relieve fatigue or stress or to enjoy himself. In this context, it fits into what Chion describes as anempathetic sound; the sounds emanating from the glass and ice are in a state of complete *indifference* to the meaning of the gunshots we hear simultaneously on the screen. Watching the life and death battle on the field indirectly through his screen and from his point of view, on the one hand, causes the viewer to feel his own emotions indirectly, on the other hand, it gives the viewer the distance to look at the cruelty and brutality that the players are drawn into from a different perspective. After most of the players have been eliminated, the survivors and those who continue the game, between the fear of moving and the concern that the clock is ticking, focus all their attention on getting closer to the finish line without getting caught by the robot doll. The re-emerging tension of the scene is largely created by focusing on Seong Gi-hun's movements. Gi-hun, who has fallen to the ground during the rough and tumble, is warned by his childhood friend Park Hae-soo, one of the main characters of the game, how to continue. While the tension is heightened by threatening showdowns between the other players, Frontman continues to watch the competition with the pleasure implied by the ice clinking from his glass. As the clock ticks down, one of the players, shot but not yet dead, grabs Gi-hun by the leg as he tries to pull himself together. The injured player begs for help, but the robot baby's accelerating voice leaves no time for soul-searching. Quickly deciding between the fear of death and his conscience, Gi-hun continues the game, and we hear with him the fatal blow received by the player he left behind. From this moment on, the director directs our attention back to the carefree and calm atmosphere of Frontman's room. In the meantime, Frontman performs another act that climaxes his indifference on the scene. He presses the remote control of the little jammer in his room and the calming and ethereal music, which drowns out the impact of the previous atrocity on his mind, fills the room. The choice of Haydn and Strauss compositions, which we hear in the scenes leading up to the playground, directs attention to the audiovisual contradictions. However, the scene in which the purpose and effects of the discordant soundtrack are most characteristically felt is undoubtedly the one in which the Bart Howard composition *Fly Me To The Moon*, popularised by Frank Sinatra, is included in the game sequence with the Korean Joo Won Shin's voice as calm and soothing as possible. The music, which is expected to coincide with the breathless struggle against death in the play, is a music of tension. The first sensation of the music, when it is heard, is the state of indifference to which Chion refers, which leaves the impression that it was accidentally edited into the scene.

On the other hand, Huberson (2016) tries to explain the effect of music has an atmosphere that is far from representing the action on the screen by using Shklovsky's concept of "estrangement" Shklovsky considers alienation as one of the important means of expression in artistic creativity. From this point of view, the artistic object is endowed with a complex and unusual form to disrupt the habitual perception of the world by the automatised senses. In the present example of Shklovsky's approach, the apparent dissonance between visuals and music leads to a feeling of alienation from familiarity, i.e. *estrangement*. Despite the apparent dissonance between visuals and music, both lines share a kind of connection. The heterogeneity between music and scenery creates an alienation in the viewer's mind that destroys the expectation of familiarity, reconfiguring the impact of the traumatic experience that Gi-hun and all the other actors are going through; the viewer is forced to think about the film from a new perspective. The meaning that the viewer is expected to produce from the new perspective is the product of subjective experiences of how the music-scene mismatch can affect sensory impressions that go beyond the visible level on the screen. While the usual expectation at one end of the pole is to understand the scene through empathy and identification, the director invites the viewers to the action at the other end of the pole; to reflect on the scene. The alienating effect of soundtrack dissonance carries this polarisation to the aural level (Beller, 2015: 540). As the scene continues, the rhymes of the giant robot baby and the sounds of bullets, each signaling the death of a contestant, fade into the background and Shin's voice becomes the main focus of the scene. While the little jammer, who assumes Shin's soft voice, sings the song "tranquility", the brutality continues on the screen on the left. Instead of alleviating the impact of the atrocities that are shown to be going on right next to it, the song makes you feel the weight of the drama experienced by the actors in a deeper layer. As the camera zooms out, the scene slows down and the rhythm of the objective brutality in the image begins to move in slow motion to match the joyously emotional rhythm of the song. The slow motion intensifies the effect of the paradox the director is trying to create, by diluting the polarisation of emotions between what we see and what we hear.

The contrast between the pleasantness in the music and the unpleasantness of the scene is also found in the lyrics. The lyrics offer a perspective that insists on the sarcasm that it is not only the music that does not coincide with what we watch and feel. "Irony" in the dictionary meaning is defined as "a situation in which something intended to have a certain result has the opposite or very different result" (Cambridge dictionaries online, 2023). According to Lissa (1959), the "independence of music from images" is possible when the rhythm, emotional expression or lyrics of the accompanying music are independent of the images. In the scene, the romantic demands in the lyrics "Fly me to the moon/ Let me play among the stars /Let me see what spring is like/ On Jupiter and Mars" in Shin's soft voice, matched with the intense tragedy experienced by the players, transforms the expressive aspect of the scene into a strong *irony*. The words "In other words, hold my hand/ In other words, darling, kiss me" accompany the relentless shooting of dozens of players on the playing field in slow motion. The dissonance achieved with the lyrics brings to a climax the suggestive paradox initiated by the other scenes that precede it, which contain only music. Just as Shin, who sings the song, underlines in an interview, "the romantic and beautiful lyrics and melody of the song make the scene even more brutal than it already is"(Messina, 2021). The montage of both the music and the lyrics of the song with an extremely brutal life-and-death battle embodies the increasingly polarised capitalist society in a compressed and cynical way. The soundtrack dissonance, which deliberately triggers the viewers' tides of sharp contrasts, takes on an ironic, sarcastic, disturbing, and haunting function.

Conclusion

In this study, soundtrack dissonance is discussed as an extraordinary use of film music, which is one of the most important narrative complements of film art; facilitates the viewers' identification with what is happening on the screen, thus conveying the credibility of the reality

constructed in the film. Since the silent film examples, the lines of visual depiction and auditory depiction have been predominantly parallel. However, as stated in the study, in some cases, it is observed that directors or art directors use their music preferences in a way that completely contrasts with the events taking place on the scene, the emotions given by the events and the visual material used to express the emotion. This contrast is contradictory and sometimes perceived as "unreasonable", with an opposition linking different objects (visual and aural elements). It therefore conflicts with the viewer's usual expectation of coherence for visuals and music. Although the dissonance that causes this conflict makes the music that deviates from the nature of the scene seem randomly chosen, examples of soundtrack dissonance are the product of a planned, calculated formulation that tries to draw the viewer's attention to the meaning of the scene by shifting the viewer's relationship with the film away from the automatising effect of consonance. In other words, soundtrack dissonance is not a simple concept of dissonance, but a method that, through its dialectical nature of constructing common value from contradictory singularities, adds new and creative strategies to the directive that emerges in the viewer's mind to interpret the film. The most general contribution of soundtrack dissonance to a film is that it reveals the manipulative power of music in terms of its use and effects. However, factors that vary from film to film, such as the emotion of the scene in which it is used, the place of the scene in the overall story, the characters in the scene and the backgrounds of the characters, determine the preferences regarding the conditions under which the music can achieve its paradox with the scene. This shows that soundtrack dissonance can fulfil its purpose, function and power in different ways and that in order to reveal the meaning of the scenes in which it is used, it is necessary to analyse the scene and the music both separately and together.

In this study, the concept is exemplified by its striking use in the Squid Game series, one of the most globally successful productions of the last few years, if indexed by the viewing rate. Although the series is dominated by local themes, metaphors expressing the ways in which capitalism distinguishes between "people who have" and "people who don't have" are used with their universal meanings. The transformation of games, which should remind the players of the happy, peaceful and calm times of childhood away from all evils, into the bloodiest experience they risk for money in their lives, combines tranquillity and brutality at their most extreme points. The contrasts created in the viewer's mind by the visual narrative that feeds the story, when the opposition of the music to the scene is added, captures the viewers with a highly effective synthesis of meaning. The soundtrack dissonance, which begins with the western art music pieces used, carries a cheerful jazz song, recognised by everyone, to its new context, which is a brutal and ruthless game of life and death. The first game sequence, which the study takes as an example and which the director frames with a conscious paradox, opens a new perceptual space for the viewers to keep their emotions at a more dynamic level with the soundtrack dissonance, inspiring them to understand, read and interpret the proposed idea.

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