Adventures in Time and Sound: Leitmotif and Repetition in *Doctor Who*

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the intersections between repetition, leitmotif and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze in the context the BBC television series *Doctor Who* (1963-1989; 2005-). Deleuze proposes that instead of the return of the same, repetition, by its constant insertion in a new temporal context can produce difference as part of the process of the eternal return. He also rejects the concepts of being in favour of becoming. I argue his framework on repetition allows us to broaden the definition of the leitmotif and embrace the role of repetition. I analyse the leitmotif of three characters: Amy Pond, River Song, and the Doctor. In all three instances, the leitmotifs are an active participant in the process of becoming while, simultaneously, undergoing their own becoming. For River, the leitmotif also works as a territorializing refrain, while for the Doctor, use of leitmotif paradoxically gives the impression of being.

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Introduction

On March 26th 2015, *Doctor Who* celebrated the tenth anniversary of its return to the small screen. Though the show has seen significant turnover in its production team since the reboot in 2005, one constant has been composer Murray Gold. When asked why he was still working on the show after so long, Gold had this to say:

If you had asked me then if I'd be writing music in 10 years' time for *Doctor Who*, I'd probably have said no - but it keeps replenishing itself, and you never feel like you've done it right, you just want to do it better every time. Each year, I learn more about writing music, orchestrating music - and where would I learn more about music than doing *Doctor Who*? I did *The Musketeers*, and that was OK, but it wasn't fun in the same way as *Doctor Who* is. It's just... would you rather do a new season of something coming up that's really exciting, or the 10th season of *Doctor Who* and the choice is always the 10th season of *Doctor Who*, because it never *feels* like the 10th season, it always feels like the start of something new.¹

Gold's statement that *Doctor Who* never feels stale echoes a sentiment held by many fans of the show. John Tulloch and Manuel Alvarado referred to the program as an "unfolding text," which "in terms of the production context, range of characters and characterizations, generic form, range and size of audience, [...] represents a site of endless transformation and complex weaving."² As explained by former showrunner Russell T. Davies, the generic flexibility of the

¹ Murray Gold, "Doctor Who's composer Murray Gold on 10 years with the Time Lord," by Morgan Jeffrey, *Digital Spy*, April 1st 2015, <http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/tv/s7/doctor-who/interviews/a639100/doctor-whos-composer-murray-gold-on-10-years-with-the-time-lord.html#ixzz3lYK3Nczw>.

² John Tulloch and Manuel Alverado, *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 5-6.

time travelling format has allowed for great variability even from one episode to the next. This, for many, lies at the heart of the appeal of the show:

It's a remarkable show, because it's different every week. That's the whole point. It's not just a different place, it's a different style every week. You can land in the 1920s and have an Agatha Christie murder mystery. You can land in the far future at the end of the universe and have a very bleak story. You can have comedies, you can have chases, you can have philosophical episodes.³

The argument, however, that *Doctor Who* is constantly re-inventing itself obscures how repetition is also embedded into the series. Despite many changes, the show has stuck to its core time travelling format, in which the Doctor is called upon each episode to save the day. Several features – such as the Doctor's blue time travelling telephone box or his go-to gadget, the sonic screwdriver – have served as constants throughout the years. In addition, despite this potential for infinite diversity and the continual evolution of *Doctor Who* since 1963, new *Who* has in practice tended to favour certain formats and generic codes, suggesting that the program is perhaps more uniform than fans profess. As Matt Hills explains,

Science fiction and horror predominate as generic roots for the BBC Wales series. What of the political drama, the spy thriller, personal/societal parables, or even crime fiction? [...] The televised Doctor has yet to cross swords with MI5, has yet to bring down a corrupt council leader and his all-too-human thugs, has yet to follow the lives of a group of friends across decades, shaping or breaking their destinies, and has yet to apprehend a human serial killer.⁴

³ Russell T. Davies quoted in Christopher Bahn, "Russell T. Davies," *A.V. Club*, July 27th, 2009, <http://www.avclub.com/article/russell-t-davies-30869>.

⁴ Matt Hill, *Triumph of a Time Lord: Regenerating Doctor Who in the Twenty-First Century* (London; New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010), 7-8.

Though, in theory, *Doctor Who*'s format is able to support these divergent generic conventions, in reality the program has retained a certain degree of consistency in the stories it chooses to tell. This is not to suggest that the program does not exhibit change, but rather I argue that *Doctor Who* is continually caught between the tension of the old and the new, the need to repeat and the need to differ.

I see the music in *Doctor Who* as emblematic of these contradictory tendencies. In particular, I am interested in how the leitmotifs associated with characters – a staple of *Doctor Who* scoring for Series 5 to 7 – challenges traditional conceptions of repetition as the static return of the same. To discover how the leitmotif productively utilizes repetition, I turn to philosopher Gilles Deleuze. His theorization of repetition lays it open to the emergence of difference within the process of the eternal return. I will demonstrate how we might use Deleuze to reimagine the boundaries of the leitmotif to embrace its repetitive nature. In addition, I will be following Deleuze's suggestion that we think of "becoming" rather than "being." I see the leitmotif as both shaped by, and implicated in, becoming. The leitmotif, I argue, is never static and instead capable of serving multiple, sometimes contradictory, roles: of emphasizing the return of the past, of signalling a moment of change, of outlining the emotional growth of a character, and of leading us through a radically fractured version of time. Throughout, another strand that I will follow is how music in *Doctor Who* is informed by its televisual context. The leitmotif does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, it is moulded by the repetitive nature of the television format and the medium's commercial, technological, and budgetary constraints. I hope to illustrate how a Deleuzian lens provides an ideal forum to discuss television music.

Doctor Who (1963-1989; 2005-present) is a science fiction program produced by the BBC which follows the adventures of an alien simply referred to as the Doctor who travels

through time and space with his TARDIS, a spaceship disguised as a 1960s British police telephone box. Initially conceived as educational children's programming in 1963 by Canadian expat Sydney Newman – with episodes set in the past designed to serve as history lessons, and episodes in the future to teach science concepts – the show eventually adopted a stronger science fiction tone, with an undercurrent of camp, geared towards an adult audience. Following declining ratings, *Doctor Who* was cancelled in 1989. With the exception of an unsuccessful television movie that aired in 1996, the show did not return to the airwaves until 2005.⁵ Since then it has grown into an international multimedia franchise, with the 50th anniversary in 2013 simulcast in 94 countries and drawing over 10 million viewers in the UK alone. Integral to the show's longevity is the concept of regeneration, where the Doctor, when faced with death, is able to take on a brand-new body. This has allowed for the periodic replacement of the actor playing the Doctor without disrupting the narrative of the show, with the twelfth Doctor, Peter Capaldi, having taken the role in August 2014. The program generally follows a “monster-of-the-week” format in which each episode sees the Doctor and his companions in a fresh location and time period facing an alien threat. The episodes in each season are also loosely linked together with an overarching story arc, which is resolved in the final episode.

Episodes are on average forty five minutes in length, with each series containing twelve or thirteen episodes plus an annual Christmas special. *Doctor Who* has consistently aired on Saturday evenings since its return to television, ranging between a 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM time slot. This early evening primetime spot “indicates its intended status as mainstream family television *and* as science fiction cult fare:” early enough to be watched by children, but late enough to

⁵ Fans usually refer to episodes aired between 1962 and 1989 as “classic *Who*,” while those aired since 2005 are generally referred to “new *Who*.”

appeal to the show's core cult audience.⁶ In the UK, the show is also available on the web via BBC iPlayer for up to 30 days after its initial broadcast. The program is currently accessible for streaming on Canadian, British, and American Netflix, approximately six months after release.⁷ In short, it has never been easier to be a fan of *Doctor Who*.

With over 800 episodes having aired since the show's inception – as well as a wealth of official and unofficial audio adventures, comic books, novels, video games, and two major spin-off series, *Torchwood* (2006-2011) and *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (2007-2011) – talking about *Doctor Who* as a consistent and coherent whole proves almost impossible. Even limiting oneself to the television series, it quickly becomes evident that the show has undergone significant evolution since the first episode aired in 1963. For my purposes, I will be focusing my attention on Series 5 to 7. This corresponds with the tenure of Matt Smith in the role of the eleventh Doctor and thus the unfolding of a closed narrative arc. More importantly, the beginning of Series 5 also signaled a veritable turnover in the senior production team behind *Doctor Who*, headed by Steven Moffat who took over the position of executive producer and head writer (usually glossed by fans as “show runner”) from Russell T. Davies. These changes were also felt aesthetically: episode 1 of Series 5, “The Eleventh Hour,” introduced a redesigned logo and opening credits, a newly orchestrated theme song, as well as a complete redesign of both the interior and exterior of the Doctor's TARDIS. If Series 1 to 4 looked to back away from *Doctor Who*'s science-fiction heritage in favour of the generic codes of soap drama and action-

⁶ Lorna Jowet, “Representation: Exploring Issues of Sex, Gender, and Race in Cult Television,” in *The Cult TV Book: From Star Trek to Dexter, New Approaches to TV Outside the Box*, ed. Stacey Abbott (New York; Berkeley: Soft Skull, 2010), 108.

⁷ This applies to the rebooted series available. A selection of classic *Who* episodes are currently available on Netflix. Fans who wish to watch all of the earlier episodes can purchase them on DVD and, in the case of episodes missing from the archives, as audio soundtracks supplemented by narration. Several fans have uploaded classic *Who* episodes, as well as fan-made reconstruction of missing episodes, onto various streaming and file sharing sites.

adventure,⁸ Steven Moffat's era has privileged the gothic fairy tale genre.⁹ As such, Series 5 to 7 not only feel different, they also *sound* different, moving to slightly less bombastic scores, and signaling an increase in the use of leitmotif.

My choice of *Doctor Who* as a subject is partially predicated on the sheer volume of music present in the show. Barely a moment goes by without being accompanied by music. Unlike many television composers who must manage with small ensembles or computer synthesizers, Murray Gold is given access to a full orchestra, which speaks to the importance the producers of the show place on music. In addition, fans are aware of the music in *Doctor Who*. Numerous concerts featuring the music of *Doctor Who* have been staged. Fans write blog posts listing the "best of" Gold's music. Others have posted tracks on YouTube, or present their own renditions. The extensive use of the leitmotif is also unusual for television,¹⁰ making *Doctor Who* an ideal candidate for my analysis of the device.

Scholarship on *Doctor Who* has experienced significant growth since the revival of the show, with numerous monographs and anthologies appearing in recent years. Of these, a limited quantity has been concerned with music and sound. A handful of authors have focused on the role of music and sound in the classic era of the show. These include two essays on music by Lee Barron¹¹ and K. J. Donnelly 2007,¹² as well as discussions by Louis Neibur focused more

⁸Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord*, 97-115.

⁹ For a discussion of gothic approaches in the writings of Steven Moffat, see Frank Collins, "Monsters under the Bed: Gothic and Fairy-Tale Storytelling in Steven Moffat's *Doctor Who*," in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O'Day (London: I.B Tauris, 2014), 31-51. It should also be noted that the most recent series of *Doctor Who*, featuring Peter Capaldi, has moved towards darker narratives with less of a fairy tale feel.

¹⁰ Robynn Stilwell, "'Bad Wolf': Leitmotif in *Doctor Who* (2005)," in *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 123.

¹¹ Lee Barron, "Proto-Electonica vs. Martial Marches: Doctor Who, Stingray, Thunderbirds and the Music of the 1960s' British SF Television," *Science Fiction Film and Television* 3:2 (2010).

¹² K. J. Donnelly, "Between Prosaic Functionalism and Sublime Experimentation: *Doctor Who* and Musical Sound Design," in *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: Critical Perspectives on Doctor Who*, ed. David Butler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

specifically on the role of “special sounds” provided by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop.¹³ While not directly relevant to my interests, they do provide needed historical context. Most relevant for my purposes are those who have discussed the use of leitmotif in the show. Robynn Stilwell’s article “‘Bad Wolf:’ Leitmotif in *Doctor Who* (2005)” tracks the use of “Rose’s Theme’s” throughout Series 1.¹⁴ She concludes that in conjunction with the words “Bad Wolf,” which form a visual motif, and the Doctor’s catchphrase (Fantastic!) *Doctor Who* makes meaningful use of the leitmotif. While David Butler questions Stilwell’s assessment of “Rose’s Theme,” he does see more genuine leitmotivic development in the music associated with companions¹⁵ Martha Jones and Amy Pond.¹⁶ Vasco Hexel’s chapter “Silent Won’t Fall: Murray Gold’s Music in the Steven Moffat Era,” provides the most in-depth glimpse at the later series of the show, and gives insight into how the program has embraced character motifs as a means of overcoming increasingly complex narratives.¹⁷ His analysis includes brief summaries of the themes associated with Amy Pond, the Doctor and River Song, though he resists classifying them as leitmotifs. These three essays on the leitmotif in *Doctor Who* will provide a starting point for my own discussion. Matt Hill’s book, *Triumph of a Time Lord: Regenerating Doctor Who in the Twenty-First Century*,¹⁸ includes a chapter on the music composed by Murray Gold, arguing that Gold’s soundtrack strives to code *Doctor Who* as a mainstream product, rather than

¹³ Louis Neibur, “The Music of Machines: ‘Special Sound’ as Music in *Doctor Who*,” in *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: Critical Perspectives on Doctor Who*, ed. David Butler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Louis Neibur, *Special Sounds: The Creation and Legacy of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Stilwell, “‘Bad Wolf:’ Leitmotif in *Doctor Who* (2005).”

¹⁵ The term “companion” is generally used by both producers and fans of *Doctor Who* to describes any character who travels for an extended period of time with the Doctor.

¹⁶ David Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes, Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New Doctor Who,” in *Music in Science Fiction Television: Tuned to the Future*, ed. K. J. Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁷ Vasco Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall: Murray Gold’s Music in the Steven Moffat Era,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2014).

¹⁸ Matt Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord: Regenerating Doctor Who in the Twenty-First Century* (London; New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010).

a cult television show. His essay “Listening from Behind the Sofa? The (un)Earthly Roles of sound in *Doctor Who*” explores how sound design “warps ordinary, naturalistic voices and rhythms into extraordinary, SF narrative threats.”¹⁹ Anne Cranny-Francis tackles how sound emphasizes the de-humanizing of the Cybermen (cybernetically upgraded humans), providing a case study of how sound in the series can construct monstrosity.²⁰ With the exception of Hexel’s chapter, due to the relatively recent transmission of Series 5 to 7, none of the publications cited above have engaged significantly with the Steven Moffat era of the show.

In this thesis, I will bring *Doctor Who* in contact with the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze. While Deleuze penned not one but two books on the subject of cinema, he had relatively little to say about television and even less that was complimentary. Deleuze understood television as primarily a social medium, perfectly engineered to fulfil its function of surveillance and control, which tends to “stifle its potential aesthetic function.”²¹ For Deleuze, television, unable to transcend the present, remains largely inferior to cinema “except when it is directed by great cineastes.”²² Still, I hope to show how we might move beyond Deleuze’s pessimistic assessment of popular television, and demonstrate how television is in fact a medium which embodies many of the principles put forward by Deleuze.

As noted by Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt, Deleuze – often in collaboration with Félix Guattari – devoted considerable attention to music, though his thoughts on the subject were not

¹⁹ Matt Hills, “Listening from Behind the Sofa? The (Un)Earthly Roles of Sound in BBC Wales’ Doctor Who.” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 29.

²⁰ Anne Cranny-Francis, “Why the Cybermen Stomp: Sound in the New Doctor Who,” *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 42:2 (2009): 120-134.

²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations* [1990], trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press): 11.

²² Gilles Deleuze, “The Brain is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze [1983],” trans. Marie Therese Guirgis in *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 372.

always explicitly linked to his overall philosophies and could sometimes prove contradictory.²³ Michael Gallope identifies two main philosophical approaches to music by Deleuze. In the first, metaphysical philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari relate the repetition found in life to that found in music, until music does not so much imitate life but, rather, is immanent to it and vice versa.²⁴ In particular, they expand the concept of the refrain from its usual musicological definition of a returning block of musical material to encompass “any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into territorial motifs and landscapes.”²⁵ The second philosophy which Gallope identifies is ethical or aesthetic, and in brief, functions as a more prescriptive approach to music making in which autonomous music can orient us away from the actual to the rich potentiality of the virtual, and thus closer to the cosmos.²⁶ As with television, Deleuze was decidedly modernist in his taste in music, and rarely dealt with the popular in his work or, at worst, derided it as complicit in the conformist project of capitalism.²⁷ Still, as argued by Ian Buchanan, this does not mean that we might not use Deleuze productively when discussing music in a popular context.²⁸ The initial links that Deleuze forges between music, repetition, and difference provides us with an invitation to listen closely to the score of *Doctor Who* to uncover how music, through repetition, is involved in the production of difference. Throughout this thesis, I will draw both his theory of the refrain, which refers explicitly to music, as well as his other

²³ Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt, “Introduction,” *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory of Philosophies of Music*, ed. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), xv.

²⁴ Michael Gallope, “The Sound of Repeating Life: Ethics and Metaphysics in Deleuze’s Philosophy of Music,” *Sound the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory of Philosophy of Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010): 85.

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 323. Emphasis removed.

²⁶ Gallope, “The Sound of Repeating life,” 85.

²⁷ See for example the following comment: “What happening with pop videos is pathetic: they could have become a really interesting new field of cinematic activity, but were immediately taken over by organised mindlessness” (Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 60).

²⁸ Ian Buchanan, “Deleuze and Popular Music, or, Why is There So Much 80s Music on the Radio Today?” *Social Semiotics* 7:2 (1997): 177.

core philosophies, such as the eternal return and the theory of becoming, in describing music in *Doctor Who*.

Despite the privileged position that Deleuze reserved for music, much of what has been written on the intersection between music and Deleuze has stemmed from disciplines outside of musicology.²⁹ Recent works which have looked to close this gap include *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music*, edited by Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt,³⁰ and the slightly more accessible *Music After Deleuze* by Edward Campbell,³¹ which provide a broad exploration of Deleuze's writing on music, and how we might begin to apply his other philosophies to the discipline. Applications of Deleuze's theories to film music have been even sparser. A notable exception is Gregg Redner's book *Deleuze and Film Music* which proposes Deleuze's philosophies as a means to build a methodological bridge between musicology and film theory.³² Another example is Amy Herzog's monograph *Dreams of Difference, Song of the Same* which identifies the "musical moment" in film – instances in which music inverts the typical hierarchy between image and sound – as embodying the contradiction between "identical repetition and a movement toward transformation, difference, and excess" which for Deleuze allows films to transcend the limits of representation.³³ While these sources provide useful examples of some of the many ways we might productively use Deleuze's theories to talk about music – both on its own and in conjunction with film – they do not touch on their relevance to television. In addition, their discussion of leitmotif remains limited. What I

²⁹ See for example, Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (London; New York: Routledge, 200 and Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda, eds, *Deleuze and Music* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

³⁰ Hulse and Nesbitt, *Sound the Virtual*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

³¹ Edward Campbell, *Music after Deleuze* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

³² Gregg Redner, *Deleuze and Film Music: Building a Methodological Bridge between Film Theory and Music* (Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2011).

³³ Amy Herzog, *Dreams of Difference, Songs of the Same: The Musical Moment in Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 2-3.

would like to explore is how leitmotif – music that not only returns again and again, echoing the eternal return, but also often explicitly linked with character development – is implicated in the process of becoming, as well as how Deleuze might help us refresh the well-trodden concept of the leitmotif, and tailor it for the small screen.

Chapter 1 will provide a contextual background for the rest of my arguments. I will explore some of the structural differences between music in television and in film. Though both are audio-visual mediums, the unique history of television, and in particular, its roots in radio, have encouraged the foregrounding of music. In addition, television rewards music which is not necessarily unique, but rather efficiently draws from other established sonic codes. I conclude that repetition is a crucial part of television, and thus should inform analysis of television music. Following this, I will explore general strategies employed for composing music for Science Fiction, which are generally aligned into two camps: that of the otherworldly avant-garde, and those drawing from more conventional romantic idioms. Classic *Who* preferred the first of the two scoring strategies, operating as a popular avant-garde. By contrast, new *Who* aligns itself with the second by utilizing largely orchestral scores, in an attempt to position itself as quality, mainstream programming. Despite this, the music of *Doctor Who* retains some cultish tendency, and thus sustains the show's paradoxical positioning as mainstream cult TV. Though the music of *Doctor Who*, in its orchestral approach and more sustained usage of leitmotif, might emulate the sound of Hollywood, it ultimately remains a product of its televisual context.

Chapter 2 will focus on the leitmotif. I will begin by exploring how the leitmotif has been used in both television and film. This discussion will involve unpacking how repetition has frequently been perceived as one of the weaknesses of the leitmotif in film and television. Following this, I will outline Deleuze's philosophies of the eternal return and becoming. These

theories locate repetition as not the static return of the same, but rather a site in which difference is continually produced and precipitates the process of becoming. I argue that these theories provide us with a means of understanding the power of repetition of the leitmotif. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the leitmotifs of Amy Pond, which accompany her process of “becoming-woman.” I see the leitmotif as one of the many forces that participates in the assemblage of Amy Pond. Simultaneously, I propose that the leitmotif itself is capable of becoming. Leitmotif and character are locked in perpetual dialogue as part of the eternal return.

Chapter 3 will consist of two additional case studies, that of River Song and the Doctor. Because both characters are capable of regenerating, becoming provides an even more compelling metaphor to understand their development over the course of the series. For the Doctor, leitmotif serves to ground the character in a singular identity, while simultaneously foregrounding moments of becoming. I use as my point of departure Amy Herzog’s observations that musical “moments” are often the locus of paradoxical tensions between repetition and difference. I conclude that the process of becoming can thus be punctuated by brief “moments” delineated by the leitmotif, which create the impression of being. By contrast, I identify River Song’s leitmotif as a refrain, which territorializes the timeline of the narrative in order to situate the audience in her own timeline. The leitmotif also serves as a tool to emphasize the multiplicity of River Song’s identities, by drawing lines between her several incarnations and thus exposing her process of becoming.

Throughout this thesis, I hope to demonstrate how music plays a crucial role in both defining *Doctor Who* as a television show, but also in its presentation of character. The leitmotifs in *Doctor Who* are not simply redundant signposts: they both delineate and expand characters. Repetition, I argue, is key to this process. Though ultimately the leitmotif in *Doctor Who* can

transport the listener to anywhere in time and space, I propose that we begin our exploration of the leitmotif a bit closer to home: within the medium of television.

Chapter 1

Bigger on the Inside: The music of *Doctor Who* in Context

In August 2013, the music of *Doctor Who* was featured in an hour and a half concert as part of annual BBC Proms, a series of over one hundred classic concerts held over eight weeks during the summer at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Featuring the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and hosted by Doctor Who actors Matt Smith and Jenna Coleman, the concert consisted of a selection of music from the series, alongside a handful of classical pieces that were deemed to be complementary to the program, such as Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Claude Debussy's "La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin," and George Bizet's "Habanera" from *Carmen*. The concert was attended by six thousand people in total, and later broadcast on BBC One to an audience of over 1.2 million. This was, in fact, the third *Doctor Who* Prom, with two previous concerts of a similar format having been produced in 2008 and 2010, all to sold-out audiences. The success of these concerts brings up two main points. The first is that audiences are not only aware of but are also interested in listening to the music of *Doctor Who*. This signals the degree to which music has been pushed to the foreground in the new series starting in 2005, allowing it to be instantly recognizable to audience members.³⁴ Second, is the success of the *Doctor Who* BBC Prom concert signals the shift in cultural prestige attributed to television music. In the 1990s, *Doctor Who* was largely known for its dated special effects and stereotypical "weird" sci-fi music, hardly an appropriate fit for a prestigious classical music festival. How then can the music of a program, once strictly in the hands of a dedicated cult audience, shift to a position in which it is deemed worthy to be played alongside such classical giants as Debussy and Bach, at one of the largest classical music festivals in the world?

³⁴ Classic *Who* ran from 1963 to 1989. New *Who* began broadcasting in 2005 and continues to the present.

Certainly, this type of hybrid classical and popular concert, designed primarily to attract new audiences to the sometimes inaccessible world of classical music, is not unique. The choice to feature television music, rather than film, however, is less common.³⁵ As I will explore below, television music has been constrained traditionally by both budgetary and technological limitations, which has frequently prevented it from adopting the type of extended orchestral scoring typical in film and perhaps more easily transplanted to a concert setting. This is not to say that television music cannot or does not frequently demonstrate remarkable ingenuity in scoring the action on screen. In fact, television's roots in broadcast radio has often meant that sound has enjoyed preferential treatment. Rather, I argue that the medium's history has shaped how television music is composed. Television music has tended to privilege smaller ensembles, shorter cues, efficient cues, and encouraged the repetition of material.

In this thesis, I will explore repetitive thematic material associated with Amy Pond, River Song and the Doctor. In order to do so, it will first be useful to situate the use of music in *Doctor Who* in the larger context of music in television, music in science fiction, and finally music in cult television. While classic *Who* largely employed scores with an otherworldly feel, inspired by the avant-garde, the program's more recent attempt to position itself as "quality television" has preferred a sound closer to classical Hollywood cinema.³⁶ or what Murray Gold terms colloquially in interview the 'Korngold' sound, after influential composer Erich Korngold.³⁷ . While new *Who*'s approach has helped increase the appeal to mainstream audiences, as I will

³⁵ See for example Jon Burlingame, "Score One for Movie Maestros: Audiences Grow for Film-Music Concerts," *Variety*, Nov 14th, 2013, <http://variety.com/2013/biz/news/score-one-for-movie-maestros-audiences-grow-for-film-music-concerts-1200827772/>.

³⁶ By classical Hollywood, I refer to the period from the release of the *Jazz Singer* in 1927 to the early 1960s, which was largely dominated by the major studios and cultivated a certain aesthetic style which privileged linearity and continuity. For an in-depth discussion of classical Hollywood style see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (New York: Columbia Press, 1985).

³⁷ Matt Bell, "Interview with Murray Gold: Composing for *Doctor Who*," *Sound on Sound*, June 2007, <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/jun07/articles/drwho.htm>.

argue, the show's positioning as cult TV has not been completely displaced. Though classic and new *Who* are sonically quite different, in both cases music has worked within the limitation of television to create a product that transcends the confines of the screen to feel, like the Doctor's time travelling machine, bigger on the inside. How music achieves this will be explored below.

Music on the Small Screen

Perhaps because television's ephemerality has been equated historically with a lack of quality, the medium has not enjoyed as sustained academic coverage as film. With the exception of such pioneering works as Philip Tagg's dissertation "Kojak: 50 Seconds of Television Music – Towards an analysis of Affect in Popular Culture,"³⁸ relatively, little attention has been paid to the use of music in television. Only recently have publications such as Ronald Rodman's *Tuning In: American Narrative Television Music*,³⁹ James Deaville's collected essays *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*,⁴⁰ and K. J. Donnelly and Phillip Hayward's *Music in Science Fiction Television: Tuned to the Future*⁴¹ begun to reverse this trend, giving television music a growing academic legitimacy.⁴²

Though both are audiovisual mediums, film and television have many integral structural differences which make equating the two problematic. According to Donnelly, "[t]elevision's lower production values, married to its technical differences, have dictated that television should

³⁸ Philip Tagg, "Kojak: 50 Seconds of Television Music – Towards the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Göteborg, 1979.

³⁹ Ron Rodman, *Tuning In: American Narrative Television Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ James Deaville, ed., *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, (New York; London: Routledge, 2011).

⁴¹ K.J. Donnelly and Phillip Hayward, ed., *Music in Science Fiction Television: Tuned to the Future* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013).

⁴² For an in depth overview of the emergence of the field see James Deaville, "A Discipline Emerges: Reading Writing about Listening to Television," in *Music Television: Channels of Listening*, (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 7-34.

not be simply film music for a small screen.”⁴³ This is not to say that television music does not frequently rely on filmic conventions (and vice versa) – a convergence which, in fact, might be accelerated by the increasing dominance of on-demand television through commercial-free platforms such as Netflix, and the increasing sophistication of television technology at both an audio and visual level. However, as suggested by Hilmes’ the medium’s unique history requires “a mode of analysis that draws on categories and concepts based on film study, but is not limited by them.”⁴⁴ Thus, in this thesis, while I do reference filmic techniques such as leitmotifs, it is crucial that they be understood in a televisual context.

Unlike film, which assumes a captive audience and an uninterrupted viewing experience, television, by virtue of its default domestic setting, has historically worked harder to maintain the attention of its viewers. Rick Altman, in his essay “Television/Sound,” discusses how television producers, having inherited the “free” network distribution model from radio, treat audiences as their main commodity, to be sold to advertisers, rather than the television show.⁴⁵ As Altman explains,

[s]ince network strategists aim not at increasing viewership but at increasing ratings, and since those ratings count operating television sets rather than viewers, the industry has a vested interest in keeping sets on even when no viewers are seated in front of them.⁴⁶

Sound, which is capable of following the viewers when their gaze is turned elsewhere, must therefore provide the necessary incentive to keep the television set running. A well-crafted

⁴³ K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: BFI, 2005), 112.

⁴⁴ Michele Hilmes, “Television Sound: Why the Silence?,” *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2:2 (2008): 160.

⁴⁵ Rick Altman, “Television/Sound,” in *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 41.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

soundtrack makes it “possible to follow the plot of a soap opera from the kitchen – or the score of a football game from the bathroom.”⁴⁷

Many audio interventions such as title songs, which introduce programs, and bumpers which announce the beginning and end of commercial breaks and which have no direct equivalent in film, are precisely designed to herald the viewer’s attention back towards the screen. They often perform what Philip Tagg terms the “reveille,” the “preparatory,” and the “mnemonic” function. If the reveille function simply announces the beginning of something new (and thus must distinguish itself audibly from what came before), the preparatory function glosses the listener on what to expect by employing appropriate musical codes.⁴⁸ The mnemonic identification function narrows the field of expectation of the listener by serving as a “musical signature” for the show in question.⁴⁹ Devices such as the title theme are not meant to blend into the background: they must be memorable in order to draw the listener back towards the television screen.⁵⁰

Much of this preferential treatment of sound is compounded by the medium’s roots in radio. Early television in particular imitated many of the sound codes first developed in radio, such as telegraphing actions through dialogue or extensive use of sound effects.⁵¹ Michel Chion even goes so far as to claim that “television is illustrated radio. The point here is that sound, mainly the sound of speech, is always foremost in television. Never offscreen, sound is always *there*, in its place, and does not need the image to be identified.”⁵² While the continual advance of technology and the changing landscape of television distribution and consumption means that

⁴⁷ Altman, “Television/Sound,” 42.

⁴⁸ Tagg, “*Kojak*: 50 Seconds of Television Music,” 61.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 63.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Rodman, *Tuning In*, 6.

⁵² Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision : Sound on Screen* [1982], trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York : Columbia University Press, 1994), 157.

Chion's metaphor might no longer be completely accurate,⁵³ this history still shapes how television is sounded, if only, as will later be discussed, as a point of departure.

Television also borrowed from radio the practice of continuous programming and the use of time slots.⁵⁴ This has in turn shaped the way television narratives are structured. Jane Feuer identifies two main narrative formats which dominate television: the episodic series and the continuing serial. In the first, an initial stable narrative state is established and returned to by the conclusion of the episode, resolving any disequilibrium introduced. Every episode performs some sort of a reset in order to allow for the next one to develop and sees the return of a fresh narrative problem, with only a limited reference to what came before. In the second format, there is no state of equilibrium to which to return: every episode ends with a fresh articulation of a narrative problem.⁵⁵ Though they may initially seem to stand in opposition to each other, Feuer argues that television series are not always so repetitive and the serial not always progressive. For example, the former can see development in character while, in the second, characters "perpetuate the narrative by continuing to make the same mistakes."⁵⁶ In addition, as opposed to cinema, "where the end of the film is normally the end of the character," characters in television "have a future:" there is an understanding that they will return in the subsequent episode.⁵⁷ Both formats exemplify "the need to repeat and the need to contain" in television.⁵⁸ These shorter, repetitive formats, usually interspersed with commercial breaks, require more economical use of

⁵³ See Carolyn Birdsall and Anthony Enns, "Editorial: Rethinking Theories of Television Sound," *Journal of Sonic Studies* 3:1 (2012). <http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol03/nr01/a01>.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁵⁵ Jane Feuer, "Narrative Form in American Network Television," in *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film*, ed. Colin MacCabe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 107-114.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 112.

⁵⁷ John Fiske, *Television Culture*, 2nd ed, (New York; London: Routledge, 2011): 151.

⁵⁸ Feuer, "Narrative Form in American Network Television," 114.

music, with cues usually lasting less than a minute, leaving little room for sustained musical development.⁵⁹

Tight production schedules and limited budgets have also moulded the use of music in television, with scores typically employing smaller ensembles (or sometimes, fully electronic scores, which do not require the use of musicians) and more frequent reliance on stock music. In some instances, such as *Star Trek*, a television show might feature cues composed expressly for the program which are then recycled during successive episodes, sometimes augmented by a limited amount of freshly composed material.⁶⁰ This could also be interpreted as a continuation of the serial and series formats, as music, like character or plot, return from week to week. For Ron Rodman, this tendency towards repetition and to draw on pre-established musical topics calls for different frames of analysis than those of traditional musicology, which often seek to establish the “uniqueness” and thus the “cultural value” of a piece. This is because “[t]he strength of a television score lies in its ability to convey, enhance, or expand the message that the other sensory channels [...] attempt to portray on the small screen,” which it accomplishes by utilizing “a musical language that is understood by and accessible to the recipients of that text – the viewer.”⁶¹ The goal is not to create a unique product: repetition and familiarity are instead understood as tools with which music can say a lot with very little. Any framework which seeks to understand how television music functions must embrace repetition (whether within individual episodes, or in the repetition of previously established topics) as one of the medium’s core defining features. This is precisely the approach this thesis takes, as Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the role of musical repetition.

⁵⁹ Rodman, *Tuning In*, 108

⁶⁰ Ibid, 109.

⁶¹ Ibid, 14-15.

Out of This World: Music in Science Fiction

How do you score for television which is set in an imagined future? Music in science fiction must characterize otherworldly settings, while also providing a point of emotional identification for viewers. Despite Ron Rodman's observation that "[c]onvention holds that music in sci-fi is dissonant and usually has some electronic sounds, such as the theremin and-or the vibraphone,"⁶² a closer look at the genre reveals that scoring strategies in sci-fi vary wildly, with some composers adopting an electronic approach, often influenced by the musical avant garde, and others, a more familiar, romantic "Korngold" sound. Philip Hayward identifies the proliferation of experimental scoring in science fiction film as arising following the Second World War.⁶³ Exemplified in films such as *The Forbidden Planet* (1956) and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), these scores employed unusual orchestration and electronic instruments and often rejected tonal harmony in order to produce scores that were quite distinctly "out of this world." The "Korngold" approach to scoring in science fiction is perhaps best exemplified in John William's music for *Star Wars* (1977) and its sequels, which embraced classical Hollywood conventions. Keeping with standard scoring procedures allows a work of science-fiction to minimize the alienation of its viewer. As stated by Clara Marisa Deleon:

Within a genre that is already strange, a familiar score provides a level of comfort and a solid foundation, which is firmly established and its meaning known to the viewer... In

⁶² Ron Rodman, "'Coperettas,' 'Detecterns,' and Space Operas," in *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 49.

⁶³ Philip Hayward, "Introduction: Sci-Fidelity – Music, Sound and Genre History," in *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Philip Hayward (Bloomington, IN: John Libbey; Indiana University Press, 2004): 2.

essence, the film states that these characters, while placed in new and strange worlds, are relatable and thus the action and narrative understandable.⁶⁴

These more mainstream scores might then be supplemented with “out of this world” sound effects, such as the whirring of space ships or the garbled speech of aliens.

The 1960s saw an increasing production of science fiction programs on television, several of which have since become iconic such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64), *Star Trek* (1966-1969), and of course, *Doctor Who* (1963-1989). Plagued by lower budgets than their film counterparts, these series had to work hard to convince viewers to overlook less than desirable special effects. Music often proved a useful tool in monumentalising and lending credibility to otherwise mundane scenarios.⁶⁵ Though atonal electronic scoring was becoming increasingly common in sci-fi cinema, the majority of these television shows relied on post-romantic musical idioms and traditional orchestration, though on a smaller scale than film, and more stereotypical sci-fi timbres were largely absent or reserved for sound effects.⁶⁶ For some, steering away from these tropes was a deliberate tactic, such as with the original *Star Trek* series.

Star Trek provides a useful counterpoint to *Doctor Who*. Its original run began only three years after the start of *Doctor Who* and while it has experienced more frequent gaps in television production, the *Star Trek* franchise has been in continual expansion for nearly 50 years. In addition, the shows are often pitted against each other in the minds of science-fiction fans. Initially merging “technological utopianism associated with ‘hard’ science fiction, the social

⁶⁴ Clara Marisa Deleon, “A Familiar Sound in a New Place: The Use of the Musical Score within the Science Fiction Film,” in *Sounds of the Future: Essays on Music in Science Fiction Film*, ed. Mathew Bartkowiak (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2010), 14.

⁶⁵ Ron Rodman, “John Williams’s Music to *Lost in Space*,” in *Music in Science Fiction: Tuned to the Future*, ed. Kevin Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London; Routledge, 2013), 40-42.

⁶⁶ Donnelly, “Between Prosaic Functionalism and Sublime Experimentation: *Doctor Who* and Musical Sound Design,” 201.

utopianism of 1960s ‘soft’ science fiction,” and “the action adventure of the space opera,”⁶⁷ *Star Trek* has since gained a reputation for its attempt at scientific realism. Interestingly, despite the fact that some fans consider *Star Trek* “one of the few ‘real science fiction series’”⁶⁸ it does not feature music that might be stereotypically related to the genre. Composer Alexander Courage speaks about the direction given to him by the series creator: “Roddenberry told me, listen, I don’t want any of this goddammed funny-sounding space science fiction music, I want adventure music.”⁶⁹ Neil Lerner describes the opening theme for the original series – with its sequence of perfect fourths, and soaring, disjunct melody – as “part Mahlerian world-weariness, part Coplandesque pastoralism, and part space-age bachelor pad randiness.”⁷⁰ Electronic instruments, such as electric guitar, and occasional use of chromaticism were reserved to denote alien “otherness.”⁷¹ In some instances, classical music was even used “to lend apposite prestige to *Trek*’s vision of a utopian future.”⁷² This “timeless (certainly not futuristic) classical orchestral sound world” soon became such an integral feature of the show, that when *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-2005) adopted the song “Where My Heart Will Take Me”⁷³ as its title track – a song “too specifically temporally located in contemporary pop music culture” – fans overwhelmingly saw it as betraying the musical spirit of the show.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ John Tulloch and Manuel Alvarado, *Science Fiction Audiences* (London; New York: Routledge 1983), 179.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 219.

⁶⁹ Alexander Courage quoted in Jeff Bond, *The Music of Star Trek* (Los Angeles: Lone Eagle Publishing co, 1999), 64.

⁷⁰ Neil Lerner, “Hearing the Boldly Goings,” in *Music in Science Fiction Television*, ed. Kevin Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 54.

⁷¹ Tim Summers, “*Star Trek* and the Musical Depiction of the Alien Other,” *Music, Sound, and the Moving image* 7:1 (2013): 19-52.

⁷² Daniel Sheridan, “Sarek’s Tears: Classical Music, *Star Trek*, and the Exportation of Culture,” in *Gene Roddenberry’s Star Trek: The Original Cast Adventure*, ed. Douglas Brode and Shea T. Brode (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 178.

⁷³ Written by Diane Warren, the song was originally recorded as “Faith of the Heart” by Rod Stewart for the soundtrack of the movie *Patch Adams* (1998). The *Star Trek* version was recorded by Russel Watson.

⁷⁴ Janet K. Halfyard, “Boldly Going: Music and Cult TV,” in *The Cult TV Book: From Star Trek to Dexter, New approaches to TV outside the Box*, ed. Stacey Abbott (New York; Berkeley: Soft Skull, 2010), 125.

In contrast, despite the show's reputation for shoddy special effects and a looser affiliation with science fiction as a genre, the music of classic *Who* married "art music experimentation and the exigencies of cheap television drama,"⁷⁵ creating a futuristic soundscape that was far removed from the timeless Copland-esque approach preferred by *Star Trek*. Sound production for the British series is principally associated with BBC's Radiophonic Workshop which, operating from 1958 to 1998, was founded by Daphne Oram (1925-2003) and Desmond Briscoe (1925-2006) to provide the necessary facilities to produce electronic music for radio and television. Highly influenced by the production of *musique concrète* by Pierre Schaeffer at the Studio d'Essai for French Radio, the studio relied greatly in its early years on manipulating sound via tape recording and would later embrace advances in audio technology, such as synthesizers.⁷⁶ As an incubator for experimental sound, the Radiophonic Workshop was not unique. Other notable examples including The Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music in West Germany (associated with Pierre Boulez and Karl-Heinz Stockhausen), the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) in Paris (founded by Pierre Boulez), and the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in the US (directed from 1959 by Milton Babbitt). Yet, unlike many of these centres, the "Radiophonic Workshop was very much an experiment within the mainstream."⁷⁷ Music and sound effects produced by the composers, engineers, and technicians were created specifically for consumption within mass media such as *Doctor Who*. Though the Radiophonic Workshop provided sound and music for a multitude of other programs, such as *Blake 7* (1978-1981) and *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* (1981),

⁷⁵ K. J. Donnelly, "Between Prosaic Functionalism and Sublime Experimentation: Doctor Who and Musical Sound Design," in *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: Critical Perspectives of Doctor Who*, ed. David Butler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 201.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 196.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

its work for *Doctor Who* – in particular, the opening theme written by Ron Grainer, and realized using tape manipulation by Delia Derbyshire – is perhaps its most iconic.

Kevin Donnelly identifies four main musical approaches taken during the classic series of *Doctor Who*:

- 1963-69 (Season 1 – 5) – Scores contracted out to freelance composers, augmented with library or stock music and occasional use of western “art” music; music often has a “avant garde” feel, influenced by *musique concrète*; Radiophonic Workshop provide sound effects, or “special sounds” as they are credited.
- 1969-80 (Season 6 – 17) – Music scores mostly provided by Dudley Simpson; small, traditional ensembles subsequently “enhanced” by the Radiophonic Workshop, and later with synthesizer.
- 1980-86 (Season 18 – 22) – Music produced solely by BBC Radiophonic workshop; scores almost exclusively electronic; music and sound effects integrated to create a complete soundscape
- 1986-89 (Season 19 – 23) – Return to division of production between music and sound effects; music contracted to freelance composers and realized exclusively on electronic keyboards in variable styles.⁷⁸

Throughout these periods, the “special sounds” were provided by Brian Hodgson from 1963 to 1972 and Dick Mills from 1972 to 1989, an acoustic category which often blurred the distinction between sound effects and music.⁷⁹ As remarked by Matt Hills, similar to the

⁷⁸ Donnelly, “Between Prosaic Functionalism and Sublime Experimentation,” 191-195.

⁷⁹ See Louis Niebur, “The Music of Machines: ‘Special Sound’ as Music in *Doctor Who*,” in *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: Critical Perspectives of Doctor Who*, ed. David Butler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 204-214.

humming lightsabers in *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*'s shimmering transporters, many of these sounds have since become iconic from decades of repetition and now form an integral part of the franchise's branding strategies, such as the TARDIS' (de)materialization sound, created by Hodgson by manipulating the sound of a key rubbing on a piano string.⁸⁰ The otherworldly music in *Doctor Who* compensated "for cheap sets, effect, monsters and saturation lighting," by helping spectators to "imagine the unimaginable."⁸¹ Sound and music were capable of a level of experimentation that image could never achieve. In addition, this more integrated approach to sound effects and music in some ways seems to anticipate later strategies of sound design found in newer television shows such as *The X-Files* (1993-2002) where the distinction between the two becomes almost non-existent.⁸²

However, as Kevin Donnelly stresses, "it should never be forgotten that the musicians [for *Doctor Who*] produced relatively cheap functional music."⁸³ Ensembles – when utilized – were small. Cues, once composed, could be recycled from episode to the next. A handful of episodes contained no music at all, relying solely on the sounds provided by the Radiophonic workshop. Thus, the music and sound of *Doctor Who* was simultaneously operating within the cutting edge of the avant-garde and the constraints of mainstream public broadcasting. The tension between the two worlds creates a paradox in which, similar to that found in sci-fi films, "instruments and sounds were adopted from the musical avant-garde into a popular genre and that these elements remain truly avant-garde while being truly popular."⁸⁴ Nonetheless, if the

⁸⁰ Matt Hills, "'Listening from Behind the Sofa?' the (Un)Earthly Roles of Sound in BBC Wales' *Doctor Who*," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 31.

⁸¹ Donnelly, "Between Prosaic Functionalism and Sublime Experimentation," 199.

⁸² Robynn Stilwell, "The Sound is 'Out There': Score, Sound Design and Exoticism in *The X-Files*," in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 63.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 198.

⁸⁴ Lisa Schimdt, "A Popular Avant-Garde: The Paradox Tradition of Electronic and Atonal Sounds in Sci-Fi Music Scoring," in *Sounds of the Future: Essays on Music in Science Fiction Film*, ed. Mathew Bartkowiak (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010), 37.

original music of *Star Trek* seemed to transcend time, the futuristic approach of *Doctor Who*, ironically, gradually became dated and lost all connotations of the avant-garde. By the 1990s, the program had garnered a reputation, especially among Americans, as “a campy, low-budget sci-fi program for geeks.”⁸⁵ In order to successfully regenerate itself into the 21st century, the program needed a new approach to music.

Music in New *Who*

Since the show’s reboot, music for the series has been exclusively written by composer and occasional script writer Murray Gold (1969 –). Originally trained as a pianist, Gold began scoring theatre productions and TV documentaries while still studying History at the University of Cambridge. He received his first big break when director Mark Mondon, with whom he had previously collaborated on a documentary, asked him to score BBC1’s *Vanity Fair* (1999). This piqued the interest of future executive producer of *Doctor Who* Russell T Davies, leading to the first of several collaborations on the Channel 4 show *Queer as Folk* (1999-2000). Despite new *Who*’s strict retention of many of the sonic cues from the original show – such as the whirring of the Doctor’s versatile sonic screwdriver, or the distinct ring tone modulation of his long time enemy, the Daleks – music in the revived series distanced itself from its Radiophonic heritage, with explicit instructions from the producers of the show echoing those of *Star Trek*’s Gene Roddenberry fifty years ago:

⁸⁵ Barbara Selznick, “Rebooting and Re-Branding: The Changing Brands of *Doctor Who*’s Britishness” in *Ruminations, Peregrinations, and Regenerations: A Critical Approach to Doctor Who*, ed. Chris Hansen (New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010), 68.

There was only one type of music they specifically didn't want, and that was Radiophonic Workshop-style electronic stuff. They said they wanted an orchestra. Or rather... the *sound* of an orchestra — there wasn't the budget for a real one!⁸⁶

As Matt Hills argues, production discourse surrounding new *Who* positioned “‘the mainstream’ as an audience identity strongly opposed to SF.”⁸⁷ Music which “semantically stresses melodrama *not* science fiction, fantasy-horror *not* science fiction, and action-adventure *not* science fiction,” was seen as a means to attract a wider audience who might otherwise feel alienated by the program’s cult status.⁸⁸ The result is a score which draws liberally from the codes of Hollywood and provides a familiar grounding to the otherworldly scenarios of the show. In order to strike a balance between the continuation of the mnemonic identification function of the title theme and the show’s new sonic direction, Gold re-orchestrated Ron Grainer’s and Delia Derbyshire original track, adding horns, timpani and strings to the iconic soaring melody. Later rendition of the title theme saw Derbyshire’s contributions recede further into the mix, as the new series became more confident in its sonic direction.⁸⁹

Though Gold’s compositions are perhaps more classic Hollywood than sci-fi, they are still, like their counterparts from the classic series, informed by their televisual context. Cues for Series 1 (2005) adopted many of the money and time saving strategies found in other television shows, with most tracks being produced electronically and cues sometimes returning on multiple

⁸⁶ Murray Gold quoted in Bell, “Interview with Murray Gold: Composing for *Doctor Who*.”

⁸⁷ Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord: Regenerating Doctor Who in the Twenty-First Century*, (London; New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010), 180.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 179.

⁸⁹ David Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes, Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New Doctor Who,” in *Music in Science Fiction Television: Tuned to the Future*, ed. K. J. Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 166.

occasions unaltered.⁹⁰ After an increase in the budget following both Series 2 (2006) and 3 (2007), Gold was given access to recording sessions with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Since then, the task of orchestrating Gold's piano scores has been left to conductor, composer and orchestrator Ben Foster, who has also contributed to the music of *Doctor Who*'s spin off series *Torchwood*. These expanded resources point to the perceived importance attributed to orchestral music by the producers of the show, as few television programs are allowed such an expense. Part of the rationale for this larger sound is once again rooted in the logic of television broadcasting. Far from the "unheard melodies" of film,⁹¹ music in the first couple of series is often foregrounded in the mix, sometimes even at the expense of dialogue. Former show runner Russel T. Davies saw this as a method of keeping the attention of the ever important fickle television viewer: "We're drama competing with the sheer noise of light entertainment shows. We've got to match them. Audiences will stay with the louder show."⁹² Furthermore, while production values of *Doctor Who* have risen dramatically since the program's original run, so have the expectation of spectators:

Who remains confined to a limited amount of sets and protagonists per episode – a circumstance that *Doctor Who* has traditionally tackled with wordy and static delivery rather than action-filled, cast- and prop-reliant settings. In moments of peril and contest, music steps in to heighten the dramatic charge and helps compensate for what might otherwise be an obvious lack in production resource. Daleks thus become frightfully villainous creatures [...] and when the Doctor is shouting at obviously computer-

⁹⁰ See for example David Butler's analysis of "Rose Theme" in David Butler, "The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New *Doctor Who*," in *Music in Science Fiction Television*, ed. Kevin Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 163-178.

⁹¹ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington; London: BFI publishing, 1987).

⁹² Russel T. Davies, quoted in Butler, "The Work of Music in the Age of Steel," 164.

generated visual of space ships above [...] the opulent and distinctly *filmic* accompanying score lends gravitas to his word and performance.⁹³

Music in new *Who* is thus still a means of transcending the practical limitations of the small screen.

Episodes in *Doctor Who* are extensively scored, often containing over 30 minutes of underscoring, which Vasco Hexel argues goes against the increasing trend in mainstream television drama to silence music all together.⁹⁴ Certainly, it is an unusual strategy for British dramas which—owing to the BBC’s “financial exigencies and a closer proximity to radio production” and “a social-realist tradition in which ‘serious’ television largely avoids music as aestheticization”—have left British television with generally more subtle (and sometimes non-existent) scores than their American counterparts.⁹⁵ Russell T. Davies openly acknowledges the influence of American television, and, in particular, Joss Whedon’s *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) on new *Who*. The lengthening of episodes from 22 minutes to 45, eschewing the traditional four part serial format, the addition of pre-credit sequences and end teasers, two part stories, event episodes (such as the Christmas specials), and build towards a season finale, were all part of Russell T. Davies project to give *Doctor Who* core format “a very American kick up the arse.”⁹⁶ Simone Knox sees this Americanisation as a response to the changing landscape of broadcast television, “marked by deregulation and an opening up of the international television market, in which, due to growing commercial pressures, securing overseas funding and sales had

⁹³ Vasco Hexel, “Silence Won’t fall: Murray Gold’s Music in the Steven Moffat Era,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2014), 174.

⁹⁴ Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall,” 159-160.

⁹⁵ Robynn Stilwell, “‘Bad Wolf’: Leitmotif in *Doctor Who* (2005),” in *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 124.

⁹⁶ Nichola Dobson, “The Regeneration of *Doctor Who*: The Ninth Doctor and the Influence of the Slayer,” *Flow*, April 28th, 2006, <http://flowtv.org/2006/04/doctor-who-buffy-the-vampire-slayer-british-tv/#>.

acquired crucial significance, including for public service broadcasters such as the BBC.”⁹⁷

While *Doctor Who* does not adopt *Buffy*’s signature use of either diegetic or non-diegetic popular music, limited partially by *Doctor Who*’s time-travelling premise,⁹⁸ it shares in the series’ strategy to use music as an emotional backbone. As explained by Murray Gold: “This show is, in a very un-English way, incredibly passionate. It ... came back to the screen, and it has this very emotional voice. Slowly, the music became its companion in that sort of emotiveness, and that’s the style that we’ve stuck with.”⁹⁹ Rather than creating other worlds, as did the music in classic series, new *Who* uses music to bring the narrative back down to earth by re-enforcing the emotional content of the show.

Since the appearances of Steven Moffatt as showrunner and Matt Smith in the title role, music in *Doctor Who* has experienced subtle changes with Murray Gold’s compositions shifting away slightly from the bombastic orchestral scores preferred by Davies towards “more low-key, atmospheric cues.”¹⁰⁰ Music has receded further in the mix and electronic synthesizers are used more liberally to provide discrete, unmelodic, and often eerie underpinnings to the actions on screen. This corresponds with Moffatt’s preference for a gothic fairy tale mode of storytelling. Series 5 to 7 see the “spectacularity of the Russel T. Davies *Doctor Who* [...] comparably lessened”¹⁰¹ and replaced with the insertion of “the uncanny and the monstrous in a familiar domestic viewing environment.”¹⁰² Still, despite this shift, music has not completely faded into the background, nor has music been abandoned completely as a tool for aggrandizing otherwise

⁹⁷ Simone Knox, “The Transatlantic Dimensions of the Time Lord: *Doctor Who* and the relationships between British and North American Television,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London: I.B Tauris, 2014), 107.

⁹⁸ Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord*, 193-194.

⁹⁹ Murray Gold quoted in Anne Cranny-Francis, “Why the Cybermen Stomp: Sound in the New Doctor Who,” *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 42 no.2 (2009): 122.

¹⁰⁰ Butler, “Music in the Age of Steel,” 175.

¹⁰¹ Knox, “The Transatlantic Dimension of the Time Lord,” 109.

¹⁰² Frank Collins, “Monsters under the Bed: Gothic and Fairy-Tale Storytelling in Steven Moffat’s *Doctor Who*,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London: I.B Tauris, 2014), 34.

mundane scenarios. Increasingly, character leitmotifs have taken centre stage, with almost all major characters being given a theme. Here, the orchestral Hollywood sound still reigns supreme.

Vasco Hexel discusses the challenges Gold faced in composing for Series 5 to 7, which have featured increasingly complex story lines. While Series 1 to 4 did present overarching storylines, these tended to only come to the fore during the season finales and to feature a fairly unambiguous dénouement.¹⁰³ By contrast, Series 5 to 7, while still featuring arcs with a slow build-up to a season finale, have incorporated plot threads which carry over the course of the entire tenure of Matt Smith as the Doctor, only to be resolved in his final episode “The Time of the Doctor” (Christmas special 2013). Ongoing questions which serve as the focal point of the final episode of each series – such as the identity of the Doctor’s time-travelling love interest, River Song, or why the order “The Silence” are seeking to eliminate the Doctor – are addressed more frequently throughout, with fewer episodes serving as obvious filler.

This increase in narrative complexity, Hexel argues, has serious implications for the music of *Doctor Who* as “effective narrative film music traditionally functions within teleological narratives with clear causal links and coherent emotive aims.”¹⁰⁴ Gold’s music, according to Hexel, employs two strategies to assist viewers through these intricate televisual narratives. The first approach involves providing incidental music that is “at times nostalgic, sentimental, generally unambiguous, perhaps manipulative, often over-the-top, even bombastic”¹⁰⁵ – that is music which tells viewers how to react to the screen, drawing liberally on previously established style topics. The second strategy consists of employing reoccurring

¹⁰³ Nichola Dobson, “The Regeneration of *Doctor Who*: The Ninth Doctor and the Influence of the Slayer,” *Flow*, April 28th, 2006. <http://flowtv.org/2006/04/doctor-who-buffy-the-vampire-slayer-british-tv/#>.

¹⁰⁴ Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall,” 166.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 173.

character leitmotifs which ground otherwise near-incomprehensible plot twists.¹⁰⁶ How these leitmotifs function will be expanded upon in Chapters 2 and 3, but for now it will suffice to say this scoring style helps the program to maintain its dual status as both “popular Saturday tea-time family viewing in Britain” and “authored, US-influenced, narratively complex quality drama.”¹⁰⁷ If music in classic *Who* operated as a “popular avant-garde,” the music in new *Who* simultaneously positions the program as accessible to the mainstream and as prime cult television, a paradox I will explore in the final section of this chapter.

***Doctor Who* as Mainstream Cult**

Doctor Who’s extensive use of orchestral scoring, though unusual for its scope and scale in mainstream programming, is not so exceptional when considered in context of what is often termed “cult” television. Considering the wide generic range which the label “cult TV” envelops – such as supernatural teenage drama *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2001), fantasy thriller *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), and mobster melodrama *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) – pinning down an exact definition is difficult. However, most agree that the term “should be predicated on audience practices, not textual characteristics.”¹⁰⁸ Generally speaking, “cult shows attract loyal fans but in fewer numbers than the more highly rated shows that constitute the mainstream.”¹⁰⁹ Though the term “cult” in reference to fandoms can at times seem arbitrary – we talk about the “cult following of Star Trek” or the “cult of Wagner” but rarely the “cult of Jane Austen” despite the author’s long lasting appeal and dedicated fan base – there are still some general characteristics which unite cult fandom. Matt Hills suggests that what sets it apart from normal fandom is “not

¹⁰⁶ Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall,” 168.

¹⁰⁷ Knox, “The Transatlantic Dimension of the Time Lord,” 118.

¹⁰⁸ Roberta Pearson, “Observations on Cult Television,” in *The Cult TV Book: From Star Trek to Dexter, New approaches to TV outside the Box*, ed. Stacey Abbott (New York; Berkeley: Soft Skull, 2010), 8.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

the intensity, social organisation or semiotic/material productivity of the fandom concerned, but rather its duration, especially in the absence of ‘new’ or official material in the originating medium.”¹¹⁰ This is certainly the case for *Doctor Who*, as the fan base continued to flourish during the fifteen years it was off the air.

While fan engagement might be the prime determinant of whether or not a television show is classified as cult, certain aesthetic tendencies, which encourage the formation of a dedicated fandom can be observed. For example, cult television is often “characterised by textual plenitude: cult TV shows support aesthetic analysis.”¹¹¹ In other words, shows that produce cult fandoms tend to reward active engagement by providing viewers with material that can withstand close scrutiny and interpretation. Matt Hills also identifies “auteurism” as one of the three “family resemblances” that can often be identified in cult text. That is, cult texts tend not to be anonymously authored, but instead present an “*auteur* which acts as a point of coherence and continuity in relation to the world of media cult” and gives the text “an ideology of quality.”¹¹² Decisions surrounding production – including music – are *read* as deliberate choices that have been designed to fit with the overall stylization of the program, rather than simply a product of convenience and budgetary constraints (even if the reality is far more complex).

Music often plays into these characteristics of cult TV. While scoring strategy in cult TV can vary, as Janet K Halfyard notes “[t]he most obvious aspect that unites the various series that come under cult TV’s aegis is that they tend to use a lot of music and they tend to use it in a way very close to the manner in which it is utilized in film.”¹¹³ Ronald Rodman situates the rise of

¹¹⁰ Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), ix. Emphasis removed.

¹¹¹ Rhonda V. Wilcox, “The Aesthetics of Cult Television,” in *The Cult TV Book: From Star Trek to Dexter, New approaches to TV outside the Box*, ed. Stacey Abbott (New York; Berkeley: Soft Skull, 2010), 31.

¹¹² Hills, *Fan Cultures*, 98-99.

¹¹³ Janet K. Halfyard, “Boldly Going: Music and Cult TV,” in *The Cult TV Book: From Star Trek to Dexter, New approaches to TV outside the Box*, ed. Stacey Abbott (New York; Berkeley: Soft Skull, 2010), 123.

cult TV in the 1980s and 1990s as part of a general trend of narrowcasting as television markets became increasingly fragmented.¹¹⁴ With television now an established medium, new musical strategies are needed in order to remain fresh and innovative. The seven strategies he identifies that are used to “relativize music” in post-modern television are outlined in Figure 1 below, and provide a useful framework from which to consider music in cult TV. This is partially because of the increased convergence between cult and quality television. Roberta Pearson remarks that audiences of both cult and quality television “position their tastes outside a perceived mainstream and actively support their favourite shows [...] many cult fans would assert that edginess and sophistication have long been the preserve of cult television; cult and quality are constructed through similar rhetoric.”¹¹⁵ Although some cult film favourites, such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) or Tommy Wiseau’s *The Room* (2003), are celebrated precisely

Rarefaction	Where the presence of <i>music</i> is limited or rarefied. Another form of rarefaction is where a sense of musical motion is attenuated
Proliferation	Where the soundtrack is bombarded with music, perhaps overpowering dialogue or other sounds on the screen
Narrative commentary over dialogue	Music overlaying theatrical speech. For music this would entail an intrusion of music into the narrative, especially during dialogue. This music could be either diegetic or intradiegetic.
Multilingualism	The use of diverse style topics in one television text, or the use of non-Western or foreign (to a specific culture) music, or perhaps where the musical style is not understood by many viewers
Submerged music	A situation similar to proliferation, only the soundtrack is submerged in a mass of sound and becomes unintelligible
Loss of intelligibility	Or the viewer’s inability to track the flux and reflux of music in a soundtrack, where intelligibility of music fades in and out
Re-centering	Where music becomes a central feature of the narrative television text. This situation could occur diegetically or intradiegetically, where music plays a more prominent role in the narrative discourse than in traditional narrative television

Figure 1 – Techniques for “Relativized Music” reproduced from Rodman, *Tuning In*, 262.

¹¹⁴ Rodman, *Tuning In*, 259.

¹¹⁵ Pearson, “Observations on Cult Television,” 15.

because they are considered “bad” or “campy,” much of cult TV relies on an aura of quality to lure in a dedicated fanbase. The strategies for “relativizing music” outlined by Rodman therefore work to differentiate cult TV from an imagined mainstream other.

The tendency for abundant scoring that Halfyard notes in cult TV, and often embraced by *Doctor Who*, is most clearly aligned with the category of “proliferation.” That is, music in new *Who* is not only used profusely, but also often refuses to remain unheard. This is however not the only musical strategy to be used by cult TV shows. For example, another cult favourite known for its dense soundscape is *The X-Files*. Rather than “proliferation,” Rodman identifies the show as exemplifying the strategies of both “submersion” and “loss of intelligibility.” As many of the cues “are limited to long, sustained chords on [composer Mark] Snow’s synthesizer,” they are often indistinguishable from the electronic sound effects, also provided by Snow.¹¹⁶ As another example, “The Body” (5.16) from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* famously did away with all music in order to underline the grief felt by Buffy following the death of her mother, exemplifying “rarefaction.” The series also featured “Once More with Feeling” (6.7) in which music was “re-centered” to create a full-on musical.¹¹⁷

These novel approaches to music help bolster the reputation of these shows as being somehow different (and thus of a higher caliber) than their mainstream counterparts. In turn, this encourages one of the favourite pastimes of any dedicated fan: close reading. Careful use of music rewards fans who are able to spot the connections. This is facilitated by television growing increasingly less ephemeral. No longer limited to a set date and time on the television screen,

¹¹⁶ Rodman, *Tuning In*, 273.

¹¹⁷ Discussions of both of these episodes (as well as many other from the series) can be found in Paul Attinello, Vanessa Knights and Janet K. Halfyard (eds.), *Music, Sound and Silence in Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

episodes are increasingly accessible on demand, whether through digital video recorders, DVD box sets, or online streaming services such as Netflix. This marks a shift away from an “appointment-based” model to an “engagement-based” one which encourages viewers to follow content across various multi-media platforms.¹¹⁸ This new model of television viewing – in which viewers might not only watch an episode multiple times but also consume entire seasons within a single sitting – supports more intricate narrative arcs which may span several episodes.¹¹⁹ Shows such as *Doctor Who*, while accessible to the casual viewer, seem increasingly designed with the fan in mind by rewarding close readings. Within this new paradigm of television, the possibilities of scoring expand. Leitmotifs can now be developed over the course of entire series, and more subtle musical cues become accessible to the attentive fan.

Robynn Stilwell, for example, discusses the use of gamelan music in the episode “Ghost in the Machine” from *The X-Files*. In addition to suggesting “that the designer of the rampaging computer at the centre of the story has a deep interest in Eastern philosophy,” the strange rhythms, “alien to the gamelan,” later synchronize with the lift’s mechanical voice.¹²⁰ Though Stilwell acknowledges that the percentage of viewers who might recognize the connection is small, the potential for a more sustained engagement with the text still remains. Rhonda Wilcox presents an example from *Buffy* in which her mentor Giles is shown listening alone to Cream’s “Tales of Brave Ulysses” in “The Body” (5.16) following the death of her mother Joyce. Astute fans of the shows might notice that this piece had previously played years before when Joyce and Giles made love.¹²¹ As Wilcox adds, “the music and sound of cult series can take advantage of a

¹¹⁸ Henry Jenkins, Joshua Green, and Sam Ford, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 16.

¹¹⁹ Mareike Jenner, “Is this TVIV? On Netflix, TVIII and Binge-Watching,” *New Media & Society* (July 2014): 10.

¹²⁰ Robynn Stilwell, “The Sound is ‘Out There,’” 72-73.

¹²¹ Wilcox, “The Aesthetics of Cult Television,” 33.

playful complexity supported by the audience's attentiveness and willingness to see themselves and their art object as different."¹²² In this case, the reference stretches back several seasons and assumes an audience not only capable but willing to remember what might at first glance appear to be an insignificant detail. Also playing into this discourse of cult TV as quality TV is the previously mentioned tendency towards "auteurism." Rodman remarks that both "Mark Snow of *The X-Files*, and Angelo Badalamenti of *Twin Peaks*" have "become the next auteurs of television music."¹²³ Though the title of *auteur* in *Doctor Who* is better reserved for Steven Moffat, who is routinely touted as the driving force behind the series, by retaining Murray Gold as the sole composer, the program also presents the image of music being the deliberate creation of a single creative force. Gold himself sometimes furthers this illusion by stating in interviews that he is usually unwilling to rework scores when told to do so by executives of the show.¹²⁴ In the case of new *Who*, the allure of "quality" is compounded by a score which is allowed the lavish luxury of being interpreted by a full orchestra.

However, this new found level of musical "textual consistency," absent from classic *Who*,¹²⁵ works two ways: not only does it support arguments by fans that their object of adoration is one worth paying attention to (and thus encourages the production of more intense forms of cult fandom) but paradoxically, for casual audience members, it also distances the program from its campy sci-fi heritage and thus makes *Doctor Who* feel *less* cultish. Similarly, while the employment of the language of Hollywood remains accessible to a wider, mainstream, audience, its transplantation into a televisual context (and its proliferation) retains for fans some distance between the show and an imagined mainstream "other." Though seemingly in

¹²² Ibid, 34.

¹²³ Ibid, 279.

¹²⁴ See for example his comments in "Murray Gold: Conversations With Composers," by BAFTA Guru, *YouTube*, Nov 6th, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v133oYcNlo>.

¹²⁵ Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord*, 181.

opposition, the music of *Doctor Who* is thus capable of supporting both a casual viewership and an active cult fandom.

Conclusion

In the opening paragraphs of this chapter, I discussed how music in *Doctor Who* has been relocated to a concert setting. I see a large part of the success of these concerts as a result of the mainstreaming process of the music of *Doctor Who*, which has embraced the big orchestra, and “Korngold” style of scoring that is more typical of Hollywood. Though this shift might seem to suggest that *Doctor Who* has somehow transcended the limitations of television to reach the greener pastures of filmic scoring, such a reading not only does a disservice to television music’s frequent ingenuity, it also discounts how music is still shaped by the realities of a broadcast setting. Far from being simply the poorer cousin of cinema scoring, music in television has continued to respond to the demands of its medium – whether it is the realities of tight production schedules or limited resources– while maintaining centre stage. Good television music is not necessarily unique. Rather, it efficiently builds upon established musical codes in order to convey its message. Now that technological limits are changing and (at least in the case of *Doctor Who*) budgetary constraints lessened, television scoring is able to access a larger Hollywood sound. Still, music in *Doctor Who* never ceases to be television music.

Contextualizing the music of *Who* is essential, because it demonstrate how music in the show is still informed by the televisual medium. I emphasize *Doctor Who*’s relationship to cult TV, because it is emblematic of a larger paradigm shift in television in which narrowcasting is the new norm. Music must do something new if it wants to get noticed in the increasingly crowded television market. The rise of the leitmotif in *Doctor Who* can be understood as

analogous to the increase in narrative complexity which has been evident in much recent cult TV, as it assumes an audience which is capable of drawing links not only throughout a single episode, but also throughout entire series. The theorization put forward in this thesis of repetition in television assumes an audience that is engaged, that is willing to pay attention to the small details. Music is still fighting to make you pay attention. But it is doing so in a radically different landscape than those of the 1980s or the 1990s. Rather than simply heralding you to the screen, or providing you with a sonic link for when you look away, music in *Doctor Who* is actively trying to distinguish itself from its competitors and to provide you with an extensive sound world that promises rewards for those who are willing to dig a bit deeper.

Both classic *Who* and new *Who* demonstrate the willingness of music to take on sometimes contradictory roles. For classic *Who*, music functioned as an avant-garde signifier within the popular setting. In new *Who*, the paradox lies between music being both accessible to a wider audience, through the language of classic Hollywood, and distanced from standard television scoring practices marking it instead as “quality” television worthy of a cult following. In the following chapters, I will continue to tease out how music sustains such dissonances by exploring how the leitmotif simultaneously brings difference while remaining the same. Music in *Doctor Who* never functions in just one way. It can be a cost saving device, cover up less than desirable CGI, or provide unambiguous style topics. It can provide material for examination to fans, serve as an emotional backbone, or a means of navigating complicated narratives. These functions are not necessarily exclusive: music can fulfill one or several, or sometimes even all of these tasks. It can also, as I will explain, participate in the eternal return.

Chapter 2

The Girl Who Waited: Leitmotifs and the Eternal Return

Classic *Who* made limited use of thematic material, which David Butler identifies as a side effect of the constantly shifting roster of composers, such as Malcolm Clark, Peter Howell, Tristram Cary, Paddy Kinsland, and Roger Limb, during the 1960s and 1980s and “reflective of the lack of sustained character development and story arcs running across seasons.”¹²⁶ Some notable exceptions include themes for the Doctor (as played by Tom Baker) and his arch-nemesis the Master, which arose during Dudley Simpson’s long tenure as sole composer for the show during the 1970s. By contrast, as previously discussed, leitmotifs have been a common fixture of the soundscape of new *Who* and have gained increased prominence in Series 5 to 7. However, there has been some debate among those who have previously written on the subject of music in *Doctor Who* over whether or not these reoccurring themes should actually be classified as leitmotivic. Robynn Stilwell treats both “Rose’s Theme” and “The Doctor’s Theme” in Series 1 as such, arguing that they serve as narrative signposts for the series, along with the visual motif (the words “Bad Wolf,” which are scattered across the series) and the Ninth Doctor’s catchphrase (“Fantastic!”).¹²⁷ By contrast, David Butler criticizes Stilwell’s initial assessment of “Rose’s Theme,” arguing that looping the same theme three times in a row in the episode “Doomsday” (2.13) undermines its emotional effectiveness. He does, however, see in Series 5 “moments of genuine leitmotivic development.”¹²⁸ Vasco Hexel states more firmly that character

¹²⁶ David Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes, Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New Doctor Who,” in *Music in Science Fiction Television: Tuned to the Future*, ed. K. J. Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 167.

¹²⁷ Robynn Stilwell, “Bad Wolf: Leitmotif in Doctor Who (2005),” in *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville, (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), 123-124.

¹²⁸ David Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes, Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New Doctor Who,” 164.

themes in Series 5 to 7 of *Doctor Who* “serve indexically to identify, delineate and amplify characters” but that they “do not function as fully developed leitmotifs.”¹²⁹ In addition, he questions whether or not leitmotifs are well suited to the medium of television: “Serial television as a repetitive format deals largely with familiar characters and plot configurations. Recurring leitmotifs (or themes), constitute an added layer of repetitiveness. When heard repeatedly in the on-screen presence of the character they accompany, leitmotifs are a redundant device.”¹³⁰ This echoes a general distrust for repetition which runs through much of the discourse surrounding leitmotif in film, and, to a lesser extent, television. Yet why must these layers of repetition be understood as redundant? Must leitmotifs work *against* the repetitive nature of television in order to be effective? If, as Rodman suggests, “repetition is at the foreground of musical signification on television,”¹³¹ perhaps the two are instead capable of forming a symbiotic relationship.

In my previous chapter, I outlined how television scoring often performs functions which are specific to the medium. In discussing the leitmotif, I would like to take a similar approach and argue that when assessing the effectiveness of leitmotifs in television, it is imperative that we adopt a framework which accounts for the peculiarities of television formats. To do this, I turn to the philosopher Deleuze and his idea of the eternal return. I contend that by applying his reconceptualization of repetition to the leitmotif, we might begin to expand the meaning of the term to embrace its repetitive nature. I also see in the eternal return a useful tool for understanding the underlying structure of television. In addition, I will draw upon a second concept, that of becoming. Instead of *being*, Deleuze talks of *becoming* through the process of the eternal return. Leitmotifs, I argue, are an ideal vehicle to illustrate this process and assist

¹²⁹ Vasco Hexel, “Silence Won’t fall: Murray Gold’s Music in the Steven Moffat Era,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2014), 168.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 167-168.

¹³¹ Ronald Rodman, *Tuning In : American Narrative Television Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 109.

characters through their becomings. As the leitmotif was a musical device primarily borrowed from film, rather than directly from opera, my investigation will start with some of the discourse surrounding the leitmotif in cinema, before investigating how it has been utilized in *Doctor Who*. The labelling of what is or is not a leitmotif has been a contentious subject, which I see as part of a larger unease with the role of repetition in music. Next, I will lay out Deleuze's theories and explore how they provide a new way of thinking about the leitmotif. Finally, after broadly outlining how leitmotifs have been used in Series 5 to 7 of *Doctor Who*, this chapter will conclude with a case study of the leitmotifs associated with one of the Doctor's most prominent companions, Amy Pond, to illustrate how music both mirrors and supports her becoming.

Leitmotif in Film and Television

Considering how reminiscent Murray Gold's scores are of classic Hollywood, it is perhaps not surprising that leitmotifs feature so prominently in his compositions. Certainly, themes and leitmotifs have been a staple of cinema scoring since its inception, with early Hollywood composers steeped in the Romantic tradition, seeing in the narrative driven genre of opera an ideal model for producing film scores. In this account of film music history, no figure looms as large as Richard Wagner who, by seeking to unite music and drama within the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, seemed to anticipate the fusion of image and sound in cinema. One critic wrote as early as 1911 that "[e]very man or woman in charge of music of a moving picture theatre is, consciously or unconsciously, a disciple or follower of Richard Wagner."¹³² So ubiquitous is Wagnerian language in the history of film music that Scott Paulin argues that Wagner's name, along with his signature musical techniques – the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, "endless melodies" and of course the leitmotif – have developed into "fetish objects" invoked to dispel the

¹³² Stephen Bush quoted in Ron Rodman, *Tuning In*, 110.

“material heterogeneity of the cinematic apparatus.”¹³³ In other words, by aligning themselves with the Romantic era, composer, filmmakers, composers and critics alike were able to distance film from its dubious capitalist underpinnings and instead claim artistic and aesthetic legitimacy, even if the actual execution of these techniques often differed significantly from their inspiration. The ontological relationship between leitmotifs as found in classical music and the appropriation of the technique for film has been the subject of ongoing debate.

Stephen Meyer distills leitmotivic technique down to two defining characteristics: First, that “various individual motives are related to each other through an organic process of growth and development,” and second, “that these processes of musical transformation reflect and articulate the drama.”¹³⁴ Leitmotifs in film, however, frequently follow looser definitions of the term. In her discussion of film music practices, Claudia Gorbman is hesitant to apply the term “leitmotif,” instead distinguishing between a theme and the more specific motif. Themes consist of “any music – melody-fragment, or distinctive harmonic progression – heard more than once during the course of a film,”¹³⁵ while a motif is “a theme whose recurrences remain specifically directed and unchanged in their diegetic associations.”¹³⁶ Rick Altman also questions the routine equation of themes and leitmotifs in discussion of film music, arguing that it “does not stand the test of historical research.”¹³⁷ Still, whether or not the use of the term leitmotif is appropriate to describe the typical usage of thematic material in film, it is in common usage among film composers.

¹³³ Scott Paulin, “Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity: The Idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the History and Theory of Film Music,” in *Music and Cinema*, ed. James Buhler et al. (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 200), 59.

¹³⁴ Stephen Meyer, “‘Leitmotif’: On the Application of a Word to Film Music,” *Journal of Film Music* 5 no1-2 (2012): 101.

¹³⁵ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington; London: BFI publishing, 1987), 26.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 27.

¹³⁷ Rick Altman, “Early Film Themes: Roxy, Adorno and the Problem of Cultural Capital,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 222.

For example, Stephen Meyer notes that while film composer Max Steiner (1888-1971) – who scored over 300 films including *King Kong* (1933), *Casablanca* (1942) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939) – clearly states in interview a connection between Wagner’s deployment of leitmotifs and his own scoring techniques, Steiner fails to

provide a particularly rich or nuanced account of Wagner’s technique. Instead, Steiner typically references the idea of linking a particular character or dramatic idea with a recurring theme: an idea that can be found in the work of countless other composers besides Wagner.¹³⁸

Similarly, Richard Davis’ *Complete Guide to Film Scoring* defines leitmotif rather broadly as “themes, specific instruments, or both for a certain character or idea in the story.”¹³⁹ In the same way that “classical music” in common parlance has come to designate the entire Western Art tradition rather than a specific period of musical history, “leitmotif” has seeped into the vocabulary of film composers with a much broader definition in mind, one that embraces repetition rather than necessarily seeking to emulate the more organic development evident in the western classical music tradition.

The classification of a theme as leitmotivic rests primarily on one feature: repetition. As pointed out by Stephen Meyer, “[it] is not only the practice of leitmotivic technique that is inextricably enmeshed in shifting cultural hierarchies, but our understanding of this technique as well.”¹⁴⁰ Scott Paulin similarly argues that Wagner’s conception of the leitmotif has been held up “as a talisman set up to ward off the ghoulish threats of film’s material heterogeneity,

¹³⁸ Stephen Meyer, ““Leitmotif,”” 100.

¹³⁹ Richard David, *Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 2nd edition (Milwaukee; Boston: Berklee Press, 2010),

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Meyer, ““Leitmotif,”” 105.

discontinuity, mass production and mechanical reproduction.”¹⁴¹ That is, music analysis has traditionally tended to favour film music which behaves like Wagnerian leitmotifs, and labelled music which takes a more repetitive approach as ineffectual commercial imitations. Perhaps the most famous of these critiques comes from Adorno and Eisler, who protested the use of rote repetition of themes in film, arguing that “the leitmotif has been reduced to the level of a musical lackey, who announces his master with an important air even though the eminent personage is clearly recognisable to everyone.”¹⁴² Their assumption is that nothing is gained from this wholesale repetition of themes, that they do little more than provide a redundant sonic signifier for the character already on screen. Repetition, as Lee Brown points out, is in fact a central feature of Adorno’s critique of popular music:

First, a piece of popular music is constructed out of repeatable elements. Since the materials of popular music come from a standardized stock, the basic patterns are bound to be repeated [...] Second, pop record releases are intended to be played over and over again [...] Eventually repetition reveals the shallowness of the music. The love affair ends. But at this point, we can amplify Adorno’s analysis [...] Weary of the stale item, the consumer is ready to go out and replace it with a new one. Finally repetition plays its role one more time – when the rejected item is recycled as a ‘golden oldie.’¹⁴³

Repetition, in Adorno’s view, is a symptom of popular music’s capitalist origins, rendering it inferior. As Richard Middleton notes, Adorno’s comments on repetition were not strictly limited

¹⁴¹ Scott Paulin, “Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity,” 79.

¹⁴² Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* [1947] (London; New York: Continuum, 2007), 6.

¹⁴³ Lee Brown, “Phonography, Repetition and Spontaneity,” *Philosophy and Literature*, 41:1 (2000): 112.

to popular music: Adorno's discussion of repetition in the music of Stravinsky takes on a psychoanalytical angle, viewing repetition as primitive or regressive.¹⁴⁴

Discussion of leitmotifs and repetition of music in television has not been as disparaging, though it could be hypothesized that the tendency of television to repeat cues wholesale more frequently than film, and the medium's closer ties to commercialism, contributed to the long academic silence on the subject. Robynn Stilwell sees the substantial use of character themes in *Doctor Who* as an uncommon feature for television music, where themes usually function "as some sort of identifier, such as a fragment or development of the theme music, or an atmospheric cue that gives a sense of mood, location, or ambience."¹⁴⁵ Ronald Rodman identifies the leitmotif, which he describes as "a musical figure (a chord, a melodic gesture, a phrase) that through repetition in a narrative text (like an opera, film, or television program), becomes identified with a character, an idea, or a situation," as figuring among the many musical devices that television has inherited from film.¹⁴⁶ Its usage has been adapted to accommodate not only the limited resources typically allocated to television composers, but also the smaller scale of television narratives:

Due to the ephemerality of the television text, leitmotifs tend to be more economical and draw more from the competencies of the audience to express meaning. Where a two-hour film has sufficient diegetic space to develop its modes of signification between music and drama, a 30-minute television program must rely on repetition of a limited number of musical leitmotifs of signification.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Middleton, "Play it Again Sam," 241.

¹⁴⁵ Stilwell, "Bad Wolf: Leitmotif in Doctor Who (2005)," 123.

¹⁴⁶ Ronald Rodman, *Tuning In*, 110.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 116.

Leitmotifs in television function as “ascriptors” which simultaneously denote elements of a dramatic narrative by becoming associated with a character, setting, or theme (to name a few possibilities) through frequent superimposition, and connote additional extramusical details by drawing on pre-existing style topics.¹⁴⁸ For Rodman, successful television scoring must largely rely on the second of these capabilities, of connoting, as television’s small scale only allows for limited correlation between narrative and music. By contrast, “topics are ideological types represented by a potentially infinite number of musical tokens,” meaning that a large amount of information might be conveyed without the need for audiences to have a prolonged engagement with the text.¹⁴⁹

If, however, Rodman does not hesitate to label themes as leitmotifs in television, he still argues that “music cues beyond a particular program’s theme music must rely heavily on musical conventions that are meaningful to the audience, whether these conventions are gestures or musical styles.”¹⁵⁰ In other words, he implies that television producers cannot depend on their audience members recognizing a cue from a previous episode. Therefore, the repetition he discusses is largely limited to the appearance of leitmotifs in a single episode and to the ways in which they reiterate style topics previously established in other medium such as film. This, however, disregards how frequent repetitions of a musical cue, which are *not* variations of the main theme, can become just as familiar, though perhaps on a more subconscious level. Kevin Donnelly notes, for example, how repeated blocks of music in the original *Star Trek* became familiar through use week after week, becoming crucial to the overall feel of the program: “the music comes to represent the idea behind the action more than it supports the action itself. The

¹⁴⁸ Rodman, *Tuning In*, 112-118.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 118.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 109.

logic is that whole series of programmes are based upon *stylisation*.”¹⁵¹ The repeated musical cue gives an added layer of structural and aesthetic coherence. Donnelly however ultimately concludes that “[w]hile their use is expedient, dramatically, they proceed from the assumption that – broadly – dramatic situations are the same, or have the same emotional and dynamic tone – and thus we can think of television drama as a successive repetition with, perhaps even inconsequent variation.”¹⁵² While it is true that music in *Doctor Who*, as discussed in the previous chapter, was initially conceptualized with an eye towards giving aesthetic coherence to the program, I would argue that character leitmotifs are scored with much more in mind. Instead of arguing that leitmotifs in television, and in particular in *Doctor Who*, are effective *despite* their repetitive nature, I would contend that it might instead be useful to think of leitmotifs as effective *because* of repetition.

One of the problems with the Adornian critic of repetition, for example, is that labelling it as regressive ignores how repetition is crucial to all forms of music. Whether Beethoven or the Beatles, music relies on some degree of repetition to be understood as coherent. Traditional music analysis hinges on repetition of core features – from fundamental elements such as pitches and rhythm, to the entire phrases, chord progressions or sections – to be able to identify form and internal organization. Middleton takes this a step further by arguing that repetition is in fact what allows us to draw the line between music and nature, and that “[a]t the (theoretical) ultimate, then, music reduces to total redundancy,”¹⁵³ with musical syntaxes operating on a sliding scale between “monad” and “infinite set.”¹⁵⁴ To draw a clear distinction between the

¹⁵¹ K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: BFI, 2005), 124. Emphasis original.

¹⁵² Kevin Donnelly, “Television’s Musical Imagination: *Space: 1999*,” in *Music in Science Fiction Television*, ed. Kevin Donnelly and Philip Hayward (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 115.

¹⁵³ Richard Middleton, “‘Play it Again Sam’: Some Notes on the Productivity of Repetition in Popular Music,” *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 236.

¹⁵⁴ Middleton, “‘Play it Again Sam,’” 237.

types of “simplistic” or “primitive” repetition found in popular music (and, by extension, television) and more “sophisticated” uses in classical music quickly becomes a futile exercise. It soon becomes clear that we are dealing with differences in degree rather than kind. Though Middleton talks of repetition within music, rather than repetition of a particular leitmotif, I believe that the same applies to much of the “is it or isn’t it” debate surrounding leitmotifs in both television and film. For my own purposes, I employ the term “leitmotif” whether or not musical development is evident, to imply not only that the themes in question are of a recurring nature, but that they also form strong ties between character, narrative, and music. In addition, even if the music that returns might be more or less unchanged, I do not view these leitmotifs as static. Leitmotifs, even in their most repetitive form, can still dynamically reflect the development of characters on screen. In order then to resolve this seemingly paradoxical situation, we arrive at last at the eternal return.

The Eternal Return

Philosopher Gilles Deleuze dispenses with the idea of “being” altogether and, instead, talks of “becoming.” As Cliff Stagoll explains, “[t]he human subject, for example, ought not to be conceived as a stable, rational individual, experiencing changes but remaining, principally, the same person. Rather, for Deleuze, one’s self must be conceived as a constantly changing assemblage of forces.”¹⁵⁵ Becoming ceases to be a transitory state through which fixed beings evolve. Instead, it is the continual act of becoming which defines them: “it is doubtless to say that there is only becoming... But we also affirm the being of becoming, we say that becoming

¹⁵⁵ Cliff Stagoll, “Becoming” in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 22.

affirms being or that being is affirmed in becoming.”¹⁵⁶ With this affirmation of constant change – which for Deleuze is activated through the continual production of differences – there is in no sense an ideal “end goal.” Instead, “the only ‘thing’ that ‘is’ is difference, with each repetition of difference being different. Only difference returns, and it returns *eternally*.”¹⁵⁷ This forms the basis of the eternal return, which Deleuze draws from his interpretation of the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962).¹⁵⁸

Importantly, the eternal return is *not* simply the “permanence of the same, the equilibrium state or the resetting place of the identical. It is not the ‘same’ or the ‘one’ which comes back in the eternal return but return is itself the one which ought to belong to diversity and to that which differs.”¹⁵⁹ In the act of returning, difference must be produced, even if only by virtue of the unique temporal context in which the return occurs. The eternal return “must be thought of as a synthesis; a synthesis of time and its dimension, a synthesis of diversity and its reproduction, a synthesis of becoming and the being which is affirmed in becoming.”¹⁶⁰ Repetitions are thus no longer simply pale imitations of an original event; each return is unique and meaningful in itself. Deleuze thus celebrates repetition as that which holds the potential for “reinvention”: “To repeat is to begin again; to affirm the power of the new and the unforeseeable.”¹⁶¹ Again, while each repetition is a new beginning, these do not imply a linear progression: each repetition is equal and part of the eternal process of becoming.

Ashley Woodward outlines why Deleuze’s interpretation of the eternal return might in fact reflect a misreading of Nietzsche, who most likely did not understand it as a “return to the

¹⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [1962], trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London; New York: Continuum, 1986): 23.

¹⁵⁷ Lee Spinks, “Eternal Return” in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, *ibid*, 83. Emphasis original.

¹⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [1962].

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid* 46.

¹⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 49.

¹⁶¹ Adrian Parr, “Repetition” in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, 223-224.

same.” For Woodward, Deleuze in fact fails in his goal of establishing the eternal return as the key to overcoming nihilism, as his reading “evacuates value from the actual world,” relies on an “existential guarantee, a satisfaction of the desire for security,” and poses significant ethical and political problems which suggest that such a project must ultimately be abandoned.¹⁶² Though such criticisms may hold weight, for my purposes I am choosing to adopt Deleuze’s elaboration of the concept as a useful tool for thinking about both narrative and music, and shall leave aside more detailed philosophical debate.

The eternal return is useful when thinking about television series because, unlike film or a novel, where narratives must almost always come to a singular, definite end, television resists such conclusions. As Jane Feuer explains, “[t]he television apparatus works against logical notions of causality and closure.”¹⁶³ By resisting narrative closure, episodic series and continual serials provide a concrete illustration of the eternal return. While many of the constituent elements, such as characters, setting, or even structure of plot, might return, each episode is a unique synthesis of the potential of these diverse components. In some ways, *Doctor Who*, which features a protagonist who travels through time and space, is a program that by its very nature eschews a teleological conception of narrative, a refutation which lies at the core of Deleuze’s theory of the eternal return.¹⁶⁴

What might happen then if we applied becoming and the eternal return to the leitmotif? Deleuze, in collaboration with Félix Guattari, does in fact briefly discuss the leitmotif, though not in relation to becoming or the eternal return. They begin by rearticulating the critique that

¹⁶² Ashley Woodward, “Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Overcoming of Nihilism,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 46.

¹⁶³ Jane Feuer, “Narrative Form in American Network Television,” in *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film*, ed. Colin MacCabe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 102.

¹⁶⁴ Deleuze writing on cinema is particularly concerned with the manipulation of time. Though the ways in which *Doctor Who*’s time travelling format might provide a compelling metaphor for Deleuzian time lies outside the scope of this thesis, those interested in exploring how time travel can be linked to his philosophies should consult David Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

leitmotifs are nothing more than redundant narrative signposts before arguing that while that might initially be true,

as the work develops, the motifs increasingly enter into conjunction, conquer *their own plane*, become autonomous from the dramatic action, impulses, and situations, and independent of characters and landscapes; they themselves become melodic landscapes and rhythmic characters continually enriching their internal elations.¹⁶⁵

Here Deleuze and Guattari comment on the ability of leitmotifs to transcend their original attachment and to take on a life of their own. I believe, however, that we might be able to take this a step further. I argue that repetitive leitmotifs are not only implicated in defining characters through their semiotic baggage, but because each occurrence accumulates new meanings by being inserted in a unique context, they are also capable of participating in their continual becoming. The eternal return allows us to reclaim the repetitive nature of leitmotifs as a site of potential rather than a limitation. To illustrate how this process might unfold, I'd like to finish this chapter by turning my attention back to *Doctor Who*. After briefly outlining how leitmotifs have been used in *Doctor Who* to date, I will examine how the leitmotifs associated with the character Amy Pond accompany her through the process of becoming.

Amy Pond Grows Up

As previously discussed, *Doctor Who* makes considerable use of leitmotifs, a trend which has seen growth in Series 5 to 7. While certainly present in Series 1 to 4, the frequency and variety of character themes expands significantly. For example, "Rose's Theme," analyzed by both David Butler and Robynn Stilwell, only appears in four of the 28 episodes of Series 1 and 2,

¹⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London : University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 319.

while the “Doctor’s Theme” similarly makes five appearances. By contrast, the leitmotif “I am the Doctor” and its associated variations can be heard in almost every single episode of Series 5 to 7. Companion Amy Pond is treated to not one but two principle themes – “Little Amy” and “Amy’s Theme” – both of which feature multiple variations, as well as several other leitmotifs which follow her throughout her tenure on the show. The enigmatic River Song, who turns out to be not only the Doctor’s wife and the missing child of Amy and Rory, but also his killer, is similarly associated with several linked musical themes. The proliferation of leitmotifs in *Doctor Who*, according to Murray Gold, can be partially attributed to fan reception:

[I]t’s a very easy show to write thematically... I think that the themes are very important because people tell me they are, the fans of the show, it helps them... *Doctor Who* is full of themes and it seems to be what people want, people identify with themes, they find them helpful and so they are important.¹⁶⁶

In another interview, Gold elaborates on how music might “help” listeners by providing an “emotional drive” to the characters.¹⁶⁷ His suggestion that themes create strong, emotional links between music and character supports the idea that they move beyond simply re-articulating what is already on screen and are instead an integral part of defining character.

In Table 1 below, I have tracked the use of each principle leitmotif and in which episodes they appear, using the titles provided by the official soundtrack releases. In many cases the leitmotifs are used verbatim, that is they are treated as “music blocks” - music that is written specifically for a show, but is treated as library music, in that the cue might be reused wholesale

¹⁶⁶ Murray gold, “Composer Talk: Interview Murray Gold,” by Tim Horemans, *filmmusicsite.com*, Sept 31st, 2013. <http://www.filmmusicsite.com/composers.cgi?go=interview&coid=328&firstname=Murray&lastname=Gold>. Though Gold references “themes” rather than leitmotifs, I have chosen to label them as leitmotifs to emphasize that they do more than simply

¹⁶⁷ Murray Gold, “Murray Gold: Conversations With Composers,” by BAFTA Guru, *Youtube.com*, Nov 6th, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vI33oYcNl0>.

Leitmotif	Associated Character	Episodes
“Little Amy”	Amy Pond	5.1; 5.8; 5.12; 6.2; 6.7; 6.8; 6.10
“Little Amy” – Fragment and variations	Amy Pond	5.12; 5.13; 6.14; 7.5
“Little Amy – The apple”	Amy Pond	5.1; 5.3; 5.7; 6.7; 6.10
“Can I come with you?”	Amy Pond	5.1; 5.5; 6.3; 6.8; 6.10; 6.11; 7.4
“I am The Doctor”	The Doctor	5.1; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8; 5.9; 5.11; 5.12; 5.13; 5.X; 6.1; 6.2; 6.4; 6.7; 6.8; 6.9; 6.10; 6.11; 6.12; 6.13; 6.X; 7.1; 7.2; 7.X; 7.9; 7.10
“I am the Doctor” – variations	The Doctor	5.2; 5.3; 5.6; 5.7; 5.9; 5.10; 5.11; 5.12; 5.13; 5.X; 6.1; 6.3; 6.4; 6.5; 6.7; 6.8; 6.9; 6.13; 6.X; 7.2; 7.3; 7.5; 7. X; 7.6; 7.7; 7.8; 7.9; 7.10; 7.12; 7.13
“Mad Man with a Box”	The Doctor	5.1; 5.3; 5.5; 6.8; 7.1
“Amy in the Tardis”	Amy Pond	5.1; 5.3; 5.5; 5.8; 5.9; 6.4; 6.7
“Amy’s Theme”	Amy Pond	5.2; 5.7; 5.13; 6.10
“Amy’s Theme” – variations	Amy Pond	5.3; 5.6; 5.8; 5.9; 5.12; 5.13; 6.1; 6.3; 6.6; 6.7; 6.10; 6.11; 6.12; 7.5
“River’s Path”	River Song	5.4
“River Runs Through it”	River Song	5.12
“A River of Tears”	River Song	5.13; 6.8
“A River of Tears” – Variations	River Song	5.13; 6.13
“The Sad Man with a Box”	The Doctor	5.13; 6.4; 6.10; 6.12
“The Sad Man with a Box” – Variations/Fragments	Amy and the Doctor	5.13; 6.13; 6.X; 7.5
“The Wedding of River Song”	River Song	6.13
Untitled River’s Theme	River Song and the Doctor	6.1; 6.2; 7.13
“Melody Pond”	River Song	6.1; 6.2; 6.7; 6.12; 6.13
“Impossible Astronaut”	River Song	6.1; 6.7; 6.8
“Clara Lives”	Clara Oswald	“7.1; 7.X; 7.13
“Clara” – Fragments and Variations	Clara Oswald	7.X; 7.6; 7.7; 7.12; 7.13
“Amy and Rory Together”	Amy and Rory	7.1; 7.4
Amy and Rory Together - variations	Amy and Rory	7.5
“Clara”	Clara Oswald	7.6

Table 1 – List of leitmotifs which are clearly associated with a particular character in order of appearance. All titles taken from the officially released soundtracks for the series with the exception of untitled River’s Theme, which was never independently released. Variations which only appear once or twice or fragments which do not appear as separate tracks have been grouped together in order to emphasize their connection to the original theme. Christmas specials are marked with the respective season and an X.

on multiple occasions.¹⁶⁸ In these instances, entire pieces serve as leitmotifs, though in practice only certain portions might be sampled to fit the needs of the scene. Variations, usually consisting of a change in orchestration, do occur on occasion and have been indicated in the table separately. Finally, in some instances, leitmotifs which started their life as variations return with enough frequency to become leitmotifs in their own right. This is the case for example with “The Sad Man with a Box,” which takes the melody from “The Mad Man with a Box,” slows it down, and pares down the accompaniment. Subsequent variations clearly reference the slower version of the two, rather than the original. In cases such as these, I have elected to list them separately. Finally, those leitmotifs which only appear once – such as “The Wedding of River Song” – are also listed in Table 1 separately as they reference material from several sources.

Of all companions, Amy is given the most extensive network of leitmotifs, which follow her from her first appearance in Series 5 to her final in “The Daleks Take Manhattan” (7.5). All of Amy’s principle leitmotifs are introduced in “The Eleventh Hour.” In this episode, the Doctor crash lands in the small English village of Leadworth and meets young Amelia Pond. After briefly investigating a crack in her bedroom wall, the TARDIS’ cloister bell compels the Doctor to rush back to perform a quick five minute hop into the future in order to prevent his time machine from phasing out of existence. But, as is commonly the case with the Doctor, who only maintains marginal control over the TARDIS, five minutes turns into twelve years. When he returns, he is confronted by Amelia as a young woman – now going by the name Amy – who was left waiting in vain. The leitmotifs linked to Amy are not only linked musically, but also play during crucial moments in which her relationship to the Doctor is first forged, thus highlighting her childhood dream of running off with the Doctor. I will first provide a description of how these relationships are established in “The Eleventh Hour” before following the

¹⁶⁸ K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound : Music in Film and Television* (London, BFI, 2005), 119.

development of both “Amy’s Theme” and “Little Amy – The Apple” in subsequent episodes to demonstrate how their unfolding can be understood as part of Amy’s process of becoming.

The first two leitmotifs to be introduced are “Little Amy” and its close variation “Little – Amy – The Apple” (Examples 1 and 2). Both of these are broadly tied to innocence and childhood dreams. “Little Amy” plays as Amy prays to Santa to send someone to investigate the crack in her wall. Her prayer is interrupted by the sound of the crashing TARDIS in the backyard. The “Apple” variation accompanies both appearances of a red apple, carved with a smiley face by a young Amy, which provides proof that the Doctor has indeed travelled forwards in time, by still being as fresh as the day she gave it to him twelve years ago.

Example 1 – Melody from “Little Amy”

Example 2 – “Melody from “Little Amy – The Apple”

The cues share the same key signature of D minor and feature very similar opening melodic contours, with “The Apple” variation inverting the opening interval of a perfect fifth. In both cases, the melody is played on celesta, an instrument whose delicate sound easily evokes childhood, and doubled by a female vocalist over sustained strings. If “Little Amy” represents her asking for help, the “Apple” variation serves as an answer to her fears in the form of the Doctor. The leitmotifs initially emphasize that he has not forgotten her and was always planning to come back.

They are linked to three other leitmotifs which appear in the same episode: “Amy in the TARDIS,” “Can I Come with You,” and finally “Amy’s Theme.” The concluding cascading piano section from “Little Amy” (Example 3) provides the main impetus of “Amy in the TARDIS” which, as the title suggests, accompanies her as she first steps into the Doctor’s blue police box as an adult, and underscores her wonder at the discovery that the machine is bigger on the inside. The connection to “Little Amy” suggests that the moment is a realization of her childhood dream of running away with the Doctor. This link to her childhood is further cemented as “Amy in the TARDIS” also contains a slow stepwise descending motif over a pedal note (Example 4), which mirrors almost exactly the concluding section of “Little Amy – The Apple.” This same section also serves as the middle segment of “Can I Come with you?” which is first heard as young Amy asks the Doctor if she can accompany him on his voyage. “Amy in the TARDIS” thus serves as the sonic fulfilment of years of waiting. That these leitmotifs all play during her interactions with the Doctor links them not only to her childhood, but also her relationship with the Doctor.

In the final moments of this scene, in which she waits in vain for the Doctor’s return, we are also treated briefly to the melody of Amy’s second main leitmotif “Amy’s Theme.” Written

Example 3 – “Amy in The TARDIS” – Also recurs in “Little Amy”

Example 4 – “Can I Come with You?” – Also recurs in “Little Amy – The Apple” and “Amy in the TARDIS”

Example 5 – “Amy’s Theme”

in the relative major of the previous examples, F major, the leitmotif shares with “Little Amy” and “The Apple” a wordless melody sung by a female vocalist, though this time in a lower register, suggesting a more mature version of the character (Example 5). The transition in the “The Eleventh Hour” from “Can I Come with You?” to “Amy’s Theme,” more strongly linked to her adult self, foreshadows the fact that she will have to wait until adulthood to travel with the Doctor. At the same time, its musical links to her childhood themes and its appearance while she waits for the Doctor suggest just how formative her encounter with the Doctor was. Even during adulthood, she cannot shake her childhood dream of running off with the Doctor.

My analysis so far has largely concentrated on how these leitmotifs are connected musically to each other and what meanings they first accumulate by being juxtaposed with the action on screen. I will now explore what happens when these leitmotifs return. David Butler argues that, like “Little Amy,” “Amy’s Theme” is initially tied to “Amy and her childhood dreams,” but later expands “to include Amy’s adult dream and emotional needs through her relationship with Rory,”¹⁶⁹ an assessment that I agree with. Though his analysis is limited to Series 5, this development continues in Series 6 and 7, culminating in Amy and Rory’s final episode “The Angels Take Manhattan” (7.5) in which they jump to their death in order to create a paradox in time. After time resets itself, they awake in a graveyard. At this moment, the cue “Together or Not at all,” which had played as they plunged to their death, transitions to a variation of “Amy’s Theme.” This time, the melody is played on violin with a sparse accompaniment on celesta. If anything, this variation is semantically even more closely aligned with “Little Amy,” which also utilizes the celesta, and returns the leitmotif back towards its childhood associations. We can use Deleuze to reconcile what at first appears to be a disjuncture

¹⁶⁹ Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel,” 173.

between the mature act of sacrifice and her ultimate show of dedication to her husband, and the link to Amy's childhood dream of running off with the Doctor.

Edward Campbell points out that in a Deleuzian framework musical "[v]ariation is dependent on the repetition of a given unit such as a motif, theme, melody, chord sequence, bass line or rhythmic figure that is modified and transformed in a number of ways."¹⁷⁰ That is, variations can only occur when there is something that returns. In this iteration of the leitmotif, the return of the melody from "Amy's Theme" and an instrument from "Little Amy" opens up a space in which the past can create the present. As Deleuze reminds us, "[i]f 'being' is above all difference and commencement, Being is itself repetition, the recommencement of being. Repetition is the 'provided' of the condition which authenticates the imperatives of Being."¹⁷¹ The importance of Amy's decision to jump with Rory is only fully understood when put into dialogue with her previous fixation on the Doctor. The viewer is reminded of how far Amy Pond has come from her first encounter with the Doctor. In this way, music which once signified childhood now, conversely, acts as a symbol of maturity.

Deleuze talks of several forms of becoming: one can become-plant, become-animal, or, most relevant to Amy, become-woman. These forms of becoming should not be understood as a process with the goal of arriving at "animal" or "plant" or "woman." Rather, as Rosi Braidotti explains, "[t]here are no systematic, linear or teleological stages of becoming; each plateau marks a framed and sustainable block or moment of transformation that is actualised

¹⁷⁰ Edward Campbell, *Music after Deleuze* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 27.

¹⁷¹ Gilles Deleuze, *"Difference and Repetition"* [1968], trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 202. Deleuze here distinguishes between uppercase and lowercase "being." Though he does not explicitly explain his rationale, the quoted passage references Heidegger and possibly reflects the standard practice of distinguishing between "Being" (referencing the German *Sein*) and "beings" (as in entities, for *Seiende*) where "the meaning of Being is concerned with what it is that makes beings intelligible *as* beings." (Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/heidegger/>). Ultimately, as the distinction is not crucial to my own argument, my own usage of the term employs the lowercase.

immanently.”¹⁷² We might recall Jane Feuer’s statement from Chapter 1 that within the highly repetitive, sometimes formulaic, format of television series, change is often most easily found at the level of the characters.¹⁷³ I do not want to suggest, however, that Amy Pond is simply an evolving being that passes through a fixed setting. Instead, the character is continually being assembled by her surroundings: “‘becoming-woman’ is a moment, a passage, a line of flight which bypasses empirical woman per se. Processes of becoming are not predicated upon a stable, centralised ‘self’ who supervises their unfolding. Rather, they rest on a non-unitary, multilayered, dynamic subject.”¹⁷⁴ The leitmotif does more than simply mirror her process of becoming: it is part of the process, one of the many forces which for the viewer come together to define Amy in that instantaneous moment.

As a further example, we can look at “Little Amy – The Apple” which largely returns without providing any new musical variation. In “The Eleventh Hour,” it accompanies both appearances of the red apple, carved with a smiley face by a young Amy. The leitmotif plays again as the Doctor re-appears, after yet another accidental hop into the future (this time only two years), reminding viewers that the Doctor has not forgotten Amy. Unknown to the Doctor, the night Amy runs away with the Doctor is the eve of her wedding. Despite this, Amy’s relationship with the Doctor verges on the romantic on numerous occasions. In “Victory of the Daleks” (5.3), as part of an effort to override the programming of the android Edwin Bracewell, by drawing out the human memories that have been implanted in him, Amy asks him if he’s “ever fancied someone he shouldn’t’ve,” stating that “it hurts, doesn’t it?” After asking this question “The Apple” enters, suggesting that she is speaking from experience and dealing with conflicting emotions regarding the Doctor. This is confirmed when, two episodes later in “Flesh

¹⁷² Rosi Braidotti, “Woman,” in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, *ibid*, 303-304.

¹⁷³ Feuer, 112.

¹⁷⁴ Rosi Braidotti, “Woman,” 303.

and Stone” (5.5), Amy attempts to seduce him. “Little Amy – The Apple” recalls her relationship with the Doctor, which is otherwise absent from the screen, and works to define her in this moment.

This, however, is not a one-way street, as her question about “fancying someone” also transforms the meaning of the leitmotif from symbolizing a childhood infatuation with the Doctor to more adult romantic feelings. The leitmotif, by constantly returning, is itself becoming. “Little Amy – the Apple” returns for the last time in Series 5 in “Amy’s Choice” (5.7), in which Amy must attempt to discover which of two realities is real: the first, in which she is living in the small town of Leadworth with her husband Rory and heavily pregnant; or the second in which they are still living on the TARDIS with the Doctor. Faced with a mortal danger in both worlds, Amy, Rory and the Doctor must die in the dream world in order to survive the perils of the real world. The episode implies that the choice between the two worlds is linked to whether she wants to be with Rory or the Doctor. “The Apple” plays near the end of the episode as Rory, not remembering having died in the Leadworth world, asks Amy how she knew it was the dream world. She responds that she didn’t know, but knew she didn’t want to live in a world without Rory. The leitmotif is once again presented without variation. But like Amy, the leitmotif is a dynamic entity, composed of a synthesis of instantaneous forces. The music is simultaneously constituted of its past association and the new setting in which it is used. This transition is completed in Series 6, as the leitmotif plays as she holds her newborn child, Melody Pond, and reassures her that she is loved by both herself and her father Rory. The leitmotif transforms its childhood association and confers them instead to her daughter.

Conclusion

Rather than viewing the characters and leitmotifs in *Doctor Who* as static entities which return from week to week, Deleuze's theory of the eternal return allows us to envision both as dynamically shifting in the continual process of becoming. Repetition is key to becoming as, within the eternal return, repetition is not simply "the return of the same." The leitmotif, by repeating, is instead a site that brings the possibility of difference and the potential for something new. The transition of Amy Pond from the girl who waited patiently in her garden for the Doctor, to a grown woman in a mature relationship with Rory is mirrored through both "Little Amy – The Apple" and "Amy's Theme." The verbatim re-use of the leitmotif might initially seem to suggest that they function solely as signposts. However, I instead argue that repetition is precisely what makes Amy's leitmotif so successful. In addition, leitmotif does not highlight this process. It is an active participant, one of the several forces – along with her dialogue, her clothes, her voice, her actions etc. – which define Amy. Finally, throughout the course of the series, these leitmotifs also undergo their own process of becoming, whether or not musical variation is present, as they accumulate new meaning through their narrative context. Amy, by association, does not exclusively define the meanings of her leitmotifs, nor is she simply shaped by their use. The two are instead involved in parallel processes of becoming which continually intersect and build off of each other.

Becoming is perhaps especially well-suited for television, as the format continually brings together characters, setting, plot, even aesthetic stylisations, from week to week and synthesizes them into something new. Television's repetitive format thus encourages the formation of difference through repetition. Even the broadcasting of Amy's final episode does not stop this process, as fans can re-watch previous episodes with the knowledge of what comes

later. Amy's leitmotifs can be decontextualized and listened to on CD or on YouTube. The eternal return is never complete. Both Amy and her leitmotifs are continually becoming.

The case of Amy Pond is fairly straight forward, as audiences can trace a more or less linear progression from 1) her early fascination with her Doctor, 2) the shift to a romantic attachment, and finally 3) her realization that she wants to be with Rory and no longer needs the Doctor. To substitute the words "emotional growth" with "becoming" might seem like a mere exercise in semantics, as it is quite obvious that there is change and that despite this change, we are still dealing with the same character. In the following chapter, I will complicate matters by taking a closer look at two characters who undergo physical, as well as well psychological, transformations: The Doctor and River Song. Becoming is the key to understanding these constantly shifting identities.

Chapter 3

Wibbly-Wobbly, Timey-Wimey: The Doctor and River Song

How can music help us navigate the increasingly complex time travelling scenarios of *Doctor Who*? Like many modern television programs, *Doctor Who* has not shied away from presenting audiences with intricate narratives spanning several seasons. Charles Tyron sees the increase in narrative complexity in television as a result of “new viewing technologies and viewing practices like streaming video, portable entertainment, DVD collections, and DVRs.”¹⁷⁵ Though evident in other programs, such as *ER* or *The Sopranos*, Tyron singles out science fiction television as being located on the forefront of this shift.¹⁷⁶ As outlined in Chapter 1, though Series 1 to 4 of *Doctor Who* did borrow from American television the practice of using series arcs, Series 5 to 7 pushed narrative complexity to a new extreme. For Vasco Hexel, the narrative complexity of *Doctor Who* is partially countered by unambiguous musical cues and strong character themes.¹⁷⁷ In short, “Murray Gold’s music helps guide the audience through the proverbial choppy waters of seemingly disjointed narrative *vignettes*.”¹⁷⁸ My previous analysis of Amy Pond accords well with Hexel’s assessment, as the leitmotif accompanies the character through her process of becoming, neatly outlining moments of emotional growth. However, her journey from little girl to mature woman gives a fairly well defined arc for her leitmotif to follow. For this chapter, I’d like to turn to characters who exhibit more complicated patterns of becoming, the Doctor and River Song. Part of my discussion will be building on Hexel’s insight

¹⁷⁵ Charles Tryon, “TV Time Lords: Fan Cultures, Narrative Complexity, and the Future of Science Fiction Television,” in *The Essential Science Fiction Television Reader*, ed. J. P. Telotte (Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 305.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 305-306.

¹⁷⁷ Vasco Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall: Murray Gold’s Music in the Steven Moffat Era,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2014), 167-168.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 175.

on the role of the leitmotif in *Doctor Who* as antidote to narrative complexity. However, I also argue that the leitmotif can paradoxically do exactly the opposite, bringing us face to face with the multifaceted nature of the characters they are linked to.

I have already discussed how the music of new *Who* helped position the show as both mainstream television and cult TV. For this chapter, I'd like to extend this argument to the leitmotifs of the Doctor and River Song, which I see as emblematic of the need to both remain accessible to the casual viewer while maintaining the interest of the dedicated fan. Both characters explicitly eschew traditional definitions of "being" by taking up multiple bodies and personalities, making a more compelling case for becoming: how else are we to understand all of these versions as a single, coherent, character? For the Doctor, the issue of his shifting identity is a core ongoing question in the show. Even the title can easily be read as the question "Doctor *Who*?" River Song's identity is questioned from her first appearance in "Silence in the Library" (4.9) in which it becomes obvious that she is well acquainted with the Doctor, even though it is his first time meeting her. Her mysterious identity later provides the impetus for Series 6, when it is revealed that she is also the Doctor's killer, his wife, as well as Melody Pond, the daughter of Amy and Rory. There is, however, one key difference between the Doctor and River, despite their shared capability of regeneration: the knowledge of the viewer. River's regenerations are a mystery, while the audience already knows that the Doctor is prone to change. I argue that the leitmotif thus undertakes two separate functions: for the Doctor, the leitmotif assures the audience that we know exactly who we are dealing with, downplaying the change inherent in the process of becoming; for River, while helping to locate her for the audience in time and space, the leitmotif destabilizes the character in order to uncover the scope of her becoming. As with Amy, repetition is central to the effectiveness of the leitmotif in both these tasks.

My exploration of the dual capabilities of the leitmotif will pull from two main concepts. The first is the “musical moment,” which Amy Herzog identifies as highlighting the contradictory forces of repetition and difference in film.¹⁷⁹ I use the concept of the musical moment in my analysis of the Doctor’s primary leitmotif “I am the Doctor.” Though the eternal return and becoming emphasizes the malleable and transitory nature of subjectivity, I locate the leitmotif as creating “musical moments” in which the Doctor’s identity is more firmly pinned down. The second concept I will introduce is the refrain, forwarded by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which creates territories through repetition.¹⁸⁰ Though the leitmotif, acting as a refrain, allows us to briefly step into the timeline of River Song, repetition also draws connections between her multiple regenerations, deepening the mystery surrounding her enigmatic identities. For both the Doctor and River Song, the leitmotif shapes how we perceive and understand the character.

“I am the Doctor”

What does it take to become the Doctor? On April 3rd, 2010 *Doctor Who* returned to television screens after a year of sporadic specials with the first full thirteen part series since 2008 in the opening episode “The Eleventh Hour” (5.1). The episode culminates with the recently regenerated Doctor confronting the extraterrestrial Atraxi police force on a rooftop for having threatened Earth with destruction, and affirming his identity as protector of the planet. While trying on different neckwear, he challenges the Atraxi to consider the fate of those who have come before: “You’re not the first lot to have come here. Oh, there have been *so* many. And

¹⁷⁹ Amy Herzog, *Dreams of Difference, Songs of the Same: The Musical Moment in Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 8.

¹⁸⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: London : University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 3

what you've got to ask is 'What happened to them?'" The Atraxi, consulting their databases, project the image of each of the Doctor's previous regenerations, until they reach the most recent, played by the actor David Tennant. At this point, the Doctor walks through the projection and calmly states "Hello, I'm the Doctor. Basically — *run*." At this point, his leitmotif "I am the Doctor" enters in full force. In this scene, we are reminded that, while different in appearance, the eleventh Doctor is still *the* Doctor. He might now have a new face and be sporting a bowtie but he's still the same character that audiences across the world have grown to love since 1963. It is in this key scene that the eleventh Doctor truly *becomes* the Doctor. And like so many other key moments in the series, the leitmotif "I am the Doctor" is in the foreground as he takes on this role.

Regenerations are now a well-established mechanic of *Doctor Who*. Regeneration episodes such as "The Eleventh Hour" (5.1) highlight the central ideas behind the eternal return by focusing on the re-articulation of the Doctor as a character who is at once radically different, and also a returning, familiar face. As such, the identity of the Doctor is a central concern of the episode. Following the Doctor's crash landing in the backyard of young Amy Pond, the first scenes are centered around the (re)discovery of *who* exactly is the Doctor. For example, famished, he requests an apple, only to discover after taking a bite that he hates the taste and immediately spits it out. Several other foods are tested and rejected until the perfect combination is found: fish fingers and custard, an unusual meal which subsequently returns in later episodes as a symbol of his and Amy's friendship.

Becoming the Doctor is in this scene a process of trial and error. Several other motifs that are to follow the Doctor throughout the following seasons originate in this episode, such as his catch phrases "Geronimo" and "bow ties are cool." This process of becoming culminates in the

rooftop scene described above, in which the eleventh Doctor explicitly assumes the mantle of the Doctor. It is not, however, simply a matter of establishing the outlines of the character which are then to repeat from one episode to the next. The Doctor is continually becoming the Doctor: It is an endless process without an ideal end goal. After all, there is always the possibility for yet another incarnation of the Doctor. In some ways we might argue that the Doctor in fact eschews “being” altogether by refusing to give us his real name. A name suggests being: a title, however, suggests a role, that the identity for the Doctor consists of the assemblage of his actions, rather than an immutable identity.

Some transitions, however, are more contentious than other. In many ways, the episode “The Eleventh Hour” was a clean break from the previous four series, introducing not only a new Doctor, but also a new show runner Steven Moffat, a new companion Amy Pond, new interior and exterior for the TARDIS, a redesigned sonic screwdriver (the Doctor’s gadget of choice), a new logo, and a fresh orchestration of the opening theme. With the exception of the transition from the classic to the new series, such a major turnover is unparalleled in the history of *Doctor Who*, where either traveling companion, show runner, or TARDIS design have usually dovetailed from one Doctor to the next.¹⁸¹ Such a major shift did not occur without protest among fans, for whom the casting of a new Doctor is almost always a divisive choice. Brigid Cheery describes reactions towards the casting of Smith as “ambivalent at best and hostile at worst,” with criticism ranging from his young age and inexperience to his “unusual” physical appearance.¹⁸² With so much uncertainty at hand, it was crucial that the 11th Doctor establish himself as both a continuation of what has come before, and something new and exciting.

¹⁸¹ Piers Britton, “‘It’s All-New Doctor Who’: Authoring New Design and Redesign in the Steven Moffat Era,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 149.

¹⁸² Brigid Cheery, “‘Oh No, That Won’t Do At All ... It’s Ridiculous!’ Observations on the *Doctor Who* Audience,” in *Doctor Who: The Eleventh Hour*, ed. Andrew O’Day (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 212.

As Murray Gold explains, the ubiquity of the Doctor's new leitmotif "I am the Doctor" is best understood in this context:

The 'I Am The Doctor' theme is definitely more thematic than anything we've had before ... partly because Stephen [Moffat] loved it so much. The producers wanted to use it all of the time. They were probably proud that they had that theme because they had a difficult job to step in at that moment. They had to decide what they were going to keep from a very successful show, and if they were going to just keep everything, how would they be doing anything differently. They had lots of choices to make, and I think one of the things that helped them was that theme because they knew that it had never been heard previously. It was distinctive enough for people to recognize it.¹⁸³

Certainly, of all the character themes to feature in *Doctor Who*, none return as insistently as "I am the Doctor."¹⁸⁴ As Murray Gold explains, it very quickly became emblematic of Matt Smith's take on the role: "the Who theme is always going to be *Doctor Who*, that's what it is, but when 'I am the Doctor' represents Matt Smith, it will always represent Matt Smith for people, that's just done."¹⁸⁵ This leitmotif also gained a higher profile due to its extensive use in paratext for the show, such as TV teasers and trailers, often displacing the show's main theme. On one hand, it seems obvious that "I am the Doctor," repeated constantly, engages in the Doctor's process of becoming. Yet Gold's insight into the theme's use as a key identifier for the Doctor, and its wider association with both Matt Smith and the series as whole, suggests that "I am the Doctor" is also implicated in pinning down the Doctor into a single cohesive identity.

¹⁸³ Murray Gold, "Doctor Who? An Interview with Murray Gold," by Tillman Cooper, *Target Audience Magazine*, Nov 4, 2013, <http://targetaudiencemagazine.com/doctor-who-an-interview-with-murray-gold/>.

¹⁸⁴ See Table 1 for a list of episodes in which both the original track and variations appear.

¹⁸⁵ Murray Gold, "Murray Gold: Conversations with Composers," by BAFTA Gury, *YouTube*, Nov 6, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v133oYcNlo>.

Robynn Stillwell described “The Doctor’s Theme,” shared by the ninth and tenth Doctor, as an ethereal “lament performed over a vaporous synth pad by a female vocalist,” which emphasized the alien nature of the Doctor.¹⁸⁶ This was the result of the choice of electronic instruments and the disjunction between the female vocalist and the male protagonist. The long legato phrases over a static drone, however, are far from catchy and not easily adoptable for use in other contexts. By contrast, “I am the Doctor” displays more conventional orchestration, shying away from electronic instruments, and a much more vibrant tempo. The opening minor motif features a quick rising and falling violin line in 7/8 (Example 8) interweaved with long horn notes which is followed by a syncopated melody in the clarinet before finally culminating in a triumphant brass fanfare. The next section shifts to 4/4 time as strings perform a four note ostinato (Example 9) now accompanied by dry percussion incessantly beating out the eight notes. This section continues building in intensity as the orchestration expands to include horns and chorus, until it returns to the fanfare. As the leitmotif nears its conclusion, we are given a sweet sounding motif in major, now propelled forward by cascading flutes before finally returning to 7/8 for a quick coda in minor.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 7/8 time. The first staff is labeled with a Dm chord and a Bb key signature. It contains a repeating eighth-note pattern: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The second staff is labeled with a Gm chord and a C key signature. It contains a repeating eighth-note pattern: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4. Both staves have a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature.

Example 6 – “I am the Doctor” opening section

¹⁸⁶ Stilwell, ““Bad Wolf”: Leitmotif in *Doctor Who* (2005),” 129-130.

Example 7 – “I am the Doctor” middle section

“I am the Doctor is frequently played during what Amy Herzog terms “the musical moment.” In short, these are instances in which music “inverts the image-sound hierarchy to occupy a dominant position.”¹⁸⁷ While Herzog limits her investigation of the musical moment largely to musical numbers in film and music videos, we can easily extend her description to instances in which diegetic music comes to forefront without necessarily forming a musical number. Kevin Donnelly, for example discusses the ability of music to dominate the screen, producing the type of inversion that Herzog suggests: “At times, it is almost as if the images are *emanating* from the music. This is most evident in sequences containing musical excerpts of substantial duration, where the dynamics of the action (dialogue, movement, editing) appear to match the dynamic development of the music (rhythm, tempo, intensity, sound quality).”¹⁸⁸ Herzog pinpoints musical moments as generating “patterns of representational repetition that are, simultaneously and uniquely, open to the intervention of difference.”¹⁸⁹ Music highlights and enables contradictory tendencies in film, moving “away from linearity, causality, rationality, and self-same identity in favour of fluidity, multiplicity, irrationality, and the contradictory

¹⁸⁷ Herzog, *Dreams of Difference, Songs of the Same*, 7.

¹⁸⁸ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 46.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 8.

juxtapositions of the virtual reality.”¹⁹⁰ Because musical moments are able to sustain such contradictions, I propose that they can also create instances in which becoming is briefly set aside in favour of putting forward a definitive version of the Doctor.

I see television as an ideal medium to locate the “musical moment.” In fact, it bears resemblance to what Matt Hills calls a “self-conscious textual ‘moment,’” which, he argues, have been largely neglected by scholars who usually prefer to focus on textual wholes or on specific themes or tropes.¹⁹¹ Yet these “moments” are an integral part of how both industry insiders and fans understand television. Show runner Steven Moffat emphasizes the importance of “moments” to the success of the show:

I love a good plot, a good twist, a good gimmick, but character and emotion are more important. And most important of all? Moments! Give them moments! People will forget over time – over a *week* – the story, the characters, and who ended up with who ... but moments cut through and live forever. *Doctor Who* specialises in moments.¹⁹²

These moments can range from pure spectacle, such as the Doctor having his TARDIS lowered into Trafalgar square in the 50th Anniversary special *The Day of The Doctor*, to more emotional moments, such the Doctor saying goodbye to companion Rose Tyler in *Doomsday* (2.13), or to moments which work to expand the diegesis of *Doctor Who*, like the introduction of a new Sonic Screwdriver in *The Eleventh Hour* (5.1). Robert Fink suggests that highly repetitious genres such as electronic dance music and minimalism, through the adding and subtracting of layers and indulging in minute variations, are able to create momentary climaxes, building tension and

¹⁹⁰ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 203.

¹⁹¹ Matt Hills, "The Dispersible Television Text: Theorising Moments of New Doctor Who," *Science Fiction Film and Television* 1, no. 1 (2008), 25.

¹⁹² Steven Moffat in Hills, "The Dispersible Television Text," 27.

release in music that on surface appears to simply emphasize hypnotic sameness.¹⁹³ “Moments” in television function the same way, creating a sense of arrival in the continuous cycle of television broadcast. They are not a true end point. Instead, they provide a focal point which give audiences a momentary sense of satisfaction. As Hills describes, these “moments” are among the most easily extracted from their context and are widely circulated and sometimes reimagined by fans. Increasingly, television producers create television programs with this type of modularity in mind.¹⁹⁴ *Doctor Who*, like many other television programs, thus exhibits a continual tension between fragmentation and being understood as a continual whole, of presenting individual “moments” and points of narrative closure while maintaining the inherent openness of television texts.

There are obvious parallels to be drawn between the musical moments discussed by Herzog and the televisual “moments” which Matt Hills argues are essential to the construction of modern television, as both describe self-contained units within a larger audio-visual text. In fact, in many instances one is indistinguishable from the other. This is partially because music has the potential to “monumentalize” what is already on screen, that is, to “transform a scene, an image into something impressive (e.g. more spacious, more opulent)” and “invest an image with a grandeur that (in effect) it does not possess.”¹⁹⁵ In addition to music’s ability to aggrandize image, I would also point to music’s ability to heighten other sounds present in the soundtrack and, in particular, speech. Bringing music to the forefront is a cue to audiences to listen closely. An example of a musical “moment” would be the song sung to save the universe by Abigail (Katherine Jenkins) in *A Christmas Carol* (6.X) which was described to Murray Gold by

¹⁹³ Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2005), 39-43.

¹⁹⁴ Hills, “The Dispersible Television Text,” 29.

¹⁹⁵ David Huckvale, “*Twins of Evil: An Investigation into the Aesthetics of Film Music*,” *Popular Music* 9:1 (1990): 4.

executive producer Beth Willis prior to his composition of the leitmotif as aiming to be “one of those kind of iconic moments of British television.”¹⁹⁶ With its power to “monumentalize,” music is an ideal tool to delineate “moments” from the larger narrative. This is aided by the temporal dimension of music which can provide convenient signposts of where these moments should begin and end. Most importantly, both mark moments of excess which simultaneously refuse to be contained within the borders of a teleological narrative and give their respective texts coherence and structure.

“I am the Doctor” seems almost specifically built to be fragmented and re-used in these types of televisual and musical moments. Through its fast paced tempo, its expansive orchestral sound and its frequent crescendos, this leitmotif invokes the adventurous, epic, and fantastic, perfectly suited to monumentalize whatever is on screen. This corresponds with the leitmotif’s entry on the fan generated wiki, the TARDIS data core, which describes it as playing “when the Doctor is being heroic or when a problem is solved.” More conventional than “The Doctor’s Theme” associated with the 10th Doctor, “I am the Doctor” works easily in a variety of contexts. The structure of the leitmotif also allows for a higher degree of modularity as it consists of several clear sections that can be easily broken apart while still being identifiable.

The rooftop scene with which I opened this section is among the many televisual, turned musical, “moments” throughout Series 5 to 7 in which the “I am the Doctor” leitmotif appears. That this is one of the more iconic moments in *Doctor Who* is confirmed by its heavy circulation among fans. Not only is the segment easily found on YouTube, but a quick search on Google reveals that the central catchphrase from this scene – “Hello, I’m the Doctor. Basically — *run*” – is readily available on memorabilia such as posters, T-shirts and mugs. Though this scene is most

¹⁹⁶ Murray Gold, “Murray Gold: Conversations with Composers,” by BAFTA Guru, *YouTube*, Nov 6th 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vl33oYcNlo>.

well-known for another sonic element, the Doctor's speech, I still classify it as a "musical moment" because in many instances music seems to direct the action on screen. For example, a symbol crash prompts his statement "I am the Doctor," while an ascending horn line accompanies the Atraxi's retreat into the sky and a return to the opening leitmotif coincides with a shot of the glowing TARDIS key nestled in the Doctor's hand. In the first two examples, the music precedes the action on screen, leading the way. In the third, the opening leitmotif resolves the tension created by the ascending horn line, making it appear as if the key was also conjured as part of this musical resolution. This is in contrast to other earlier uses of the "I am the Doctor" leitmotif in the episode in which it fades easily in the sonic background.

"I am the Doctor" is used several times over the course of "The Eleventh Hour," prior to the rooftop confrontation. The first instance follows the release of the escaped Prisoner Zero from a hidden room in Amy's house. After attempting to bluff his way through the encounter, the Doctor resorts to telling his companion to run. The phrase, though not quite a catchphrase, would be a familiar refrain to long time viewers of the show. Most famously, it was the first phrase uttered by the Doctor in the opening episode of the new series to his future travelling companion Rose Tyler in *Rose* (1.1). The phrase thus works to provide a verbal and sonic link to previous versions of the Doctor. As Amy and the Doctor run out of her house, the final coda of "I am the Doctor" plays. The second appearance of the leitmotif takes place when the Doctor executes a plan to catch Prisoner Zero before the alien Atraxi police destroy the planet. Hacking into a high security call conducted by international authorities, the Doctor demonstrates his intelligence in order to gain their trust. The scene concludes with the Doctor giving a pep talk to Jeff, whose laptop he has just commandeered before leaving him in charge of supervising the dissemination of the computer virus that the Doctor has written, telling him "Today is the day you save the

world.” This time we are given a longer portion of the leitmotif with the addition of the middle string section (Example 7).

We only hear the opening section (Example 6) in “I am the Doctor’s” third iteration. Following the recapture of Prisoner Zero, the Doctor recalls the Atraxi to question their threat to destroy earth and heads to the roof of the hospital. First, however, he takes a detour to the staff changing room where he begins rummaging through clothes in order to find a suitable outfit. While the costume of each Doctor does vary to a certain extent throughout their tenure, each is given an iconic look. “I am the Doctor” plays as the Doctor sheds clothes worn by the 10th Doctor (a pinstripe suit with a blue tie and Converse shoes) in favour of a red dress shirt, tight black pants with suspenders and lace up boots. Once the Doctor is dressed, “I am the Doctor” stops abruptly. The selection process continues on the rooftop, as he tries on various ties before settling on what was to become the 11th Doctor’s most iconic fashion statement: a bowtie. The Doctor begins his rooftop speech without music, but as he builds momentum, so does the soundtrack. Again, the “I am the Doctor” leitmotif does not start from the beginning, but instead elects for a slow build up as he asks the Atraxi to consider whether or not Earth is protected. The first couple of sentences are uttered over sustained strings. This is followed by the entrance of timpani. Finally, a chorus begins chanting a repeated motif in 4/4 (Example 8), creating a sense of anticipation. As he steps through the projections of all previous Doctors, the music pauses as he states: “Hello, I’m the Doctor. Basically — *run*.” Here the tables have turned: no longer is the Doctor telling his companion to run from danger. Instead, the phrase is now intended as a warning to enemies. “I am the Doctor” enters once again, this time from the beginning and is allowed to reach a climax – a full brass fanfare – before starting over once again as the Doctor runs off to investigate his newly rebuilt TARDIS.

However, I see an additional strand which is especially evident in the rooftop scene. Though his speech does reference his older selves, the Doctor emphasizes how he represents a continuation of what comes before – as a protector of this planet – rather than how he is different. This “moment” does not so much focus on the malleability of the Doctor, but rather affirms an immutable part of his identity, almost distilling the essence of the Doctor to a single trait. In this instance, we feel that despite his slippery nature, we do in fact know him. This is reinforced by “I am the Doctor” which makes the scene feel bigger on the inside and thus raises the profile of the Doctor’s firm delineation of his identity. The difference produced by the varying narrative contexts in which the leitmotif appears and the numerous identities of the Doctor are glossed over in favour of repetition of the leitmotif. As “I am the Doctor” continues to return from one episode to the next, it provides continuity for the audience, assuring us that we know exactly who we are dealing with. Sometimes, however, that trust is betrayed.

In the penultimate episode of Series 5, “The Pandorica Opens” (5.12), the Doctor once again delivers an epic scale speech supported by another variation of “I am the Doctor,” “Words win Wars,” with the intent of warding off the collected armies who, he assumes, are looking to steal the legendary prison:

Hello Stonehenge! Who takes the Pandorica takes the universe. But, bad news, everyone – cuz guess who? Ha! [...] The question of the hour is, who’s got the Pandorica? Answer, I do. Next question. Who’s coming to take it from me? Come on! Look at me. No plan, no back up, no weapons worth a damn. Oh, and something else. I don’t have anything to lose! So, if you’re sitting up there in your silly spaceship, with all your silly guns, and you’ve got any plans on taking the Pandorica tonight, just remember who’s standing in

your way. Remember every black day I ever stopped you, and then, and then, do the smart. Let somebody else try first.

Once again, the Doctor identifies himself vocally and recalls his past accomplishments. Once again, the enemies retreat. The return of “I am the Doctor” assures the listener that everything is in order. The music however, is not quite the same. The leitmotif has been slowed down considerably, with horns doubling the strings and lending the main motif greater weight. Unlike the rooftop scene from “The Eleventh Hour” the leitmotif ends decisively rather than simply fading out. In addition, moments later, the entire setup is revealed as a trap. The mysterious Pandorica is not an object to be stolen, but rather designed by his enemies as the perfect prison. The illusion that the narrative problem has been resolved is revealed as a myth. “I am the Doctor” participates willingly in this deception, creating a sense of finality where none in fact exists. Even as all the constituent elements return – the Doctor, his enemies, a speech, leitmotif, an invocation of being – things change. Once again, we return to the endless repetition and production of difference of the eternal return.

“Spoilers:” The Enigmatic River Song

In the case of the Doctor, the leitmotif creates “musical moments” which obscure differences produced as part of the process of becoming. For River Song, however, mystery is part of the allure. When River Song first steps on screen in “The Silence of the Library,” it is almost immediately clear that she has known the Doctor for a very long time. This is confirmed when she whispers into his ear what no one else but the Doctor knows: his name. The catch? She is from his future and neither we, nor the Doctor, recognize her. Though the episode ends in her death, her opposing timeline insures that we meet her again. Added to the confusion of her

complicated chronology is the mystery surrounding her relationship to the Doctor. Eventually, it is revealed that she is the daughter of Amy and Rory, Melody Pond, who was abducted at birth by the order of the Silence, and conditioned to kill the Doctor. Finally she escapes and regenerates on the streets of New York, before eventually finding her parents who, due to the time travelling nature of the show are of the same age as her. She grows up alongside them under the name Mels. When she meets the Doctor as an adult, she falls in love and resists her conditioning, creating a time paradox, as the Doctor's death is a fixed point in time. The paradox is resolved following their marriage, and River, trapped in an astronaut suit, finally succumbs and kills him.¹⁹⁷ After serving time in prison for her crimes, River eventually studies archeology and becomes Dr. Song, while continuing her occasional adventuring with her husband. Their relationship perhaps best exemplifies the non-teleological nature of the eternal return as they never meet in the correct order: her last time meeting him is the first time that he meets her. There can be no conventional temporal progression of their relationship because their experiences of time are vastly different. Whenever pressed by the Doctor for details concerning their future, River Song uses the phrase “spoilers” to indicate that she cannot reveal any more, heightening the anticipation of what is to come.

The leitmotifs of River Song help ground this otherwise elusive character, briefly bringing her own conception of time in line with our own. This is accomplished though the leitmotif. But this time the leitmotif constitutes a refrain. Of all concepts proposed by Deleuze – this time in conjunction with Félix Guattari – the “refrain” is most explicitly tied to music. However, while its inspiration might be musical, Deleuze and Guattari widen the scope to encompass “any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into

¹⁹⁷ In true *Doctor Who* fashion, the Doctor concocts a last minute plan which insures his survival, as it would hardly suit an ongoing television serial to kill off its title character.

territorial motifs and landscapes.”¹⁹⁸ That is, “the refrain is our means of erecting, hastily if needs [sic] be, a portable territory that can secure us in troubled situations.”¹⁹⁹ Some of the examples they invoke include birdcalls, which delineate a domain, or the humming of a child of a familiar song to remind themselves of home.²⁰⁰ This process is referred to by Deleuze and Guattari as territorialization. The territories created by these refrains are not physical locations, but rather they constitute “an act that affects milieus and rhythms, that ‘territorializes’ them [...] A territory borrows from all milieus; it bites into them, seizes them bodily (although it remains vulnerable to intrusions). It is built from aspects or portions of milieu.”²⁰¹ Though territorialization is usually understood in a spatial dimension, I would also like to think how a refrain can territorialize *time*.

Throughout the series *River Song*’s timeline runs counter to the general unfolding of narrative time on screen. I contend that her leitmotifs can be understood as territorializing refrains which briefly insert *River*’s timeline into the dominant narrative flow. This, in turn, allows us glimpses into her identity. Vasco Hexel points to some of the ways in which Gold’s music gives us clues to *River Song*’s identity. The untitled *River*’s Theme in “Day of the Moon” (6.2) underscores the Doctor’s first kiss with *River* and, consequently, her last (Example 9). The leitmotif shares with “Melody Pond” (played as we witness Melody Pond regenerating on the streets of New York) not only a similar melodic contour, but the mordent (D-C#-D) that begins the latter also ends the former (Example 10).²⁰² The musical link hints that the young girl and

¹⁹⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 323.

¹⁹⁹ Ian Buchanan, Introduction to *Deleuze and Music*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 16.

²⁰⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, “A Thousand Plateaus,” 311-312.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 314.

²⁰² Hexel, “Silence Won’t Fall,” 172.

Example 9 – Untitled River's Theme²⁰³

Example 10 – Second section of "Melody Pond"

River Song are separate regenerations of the same character. Hexel also notes that the mordent figure reappears in the episode "A Good Man Goes to War" (6.4) just as River begins to reveal her identity to both her parents and the Doctor:²⁰⁴ Amy's stolen child has, in fact, been standing in front of them the whole time. These repeating elements form a refrain, which territorialize the time on screen to align with her own. If in "A Good Man Goes to War" the loss of Amy and Rory's infant child happened only moments ago, from River's perspective this event is a but a distant part of her past. The refrain thus opens up a milieu from which we can begin to unravel her mystery. The appearance of the mordent figure is reinforced by other production codes which briefly emphasize her perspective of time, rather than the Doctor's. For example, when she and

²⁰³ This leitmotif does not appear on the official soundtrack, and hence remains untitled. I follow Hexel's lead and refer to it as River's Theme.

²⁰⁴ Hexel, "Silence Won't Fall," 172-173.

the Doctor kiss in “The Impossible Astronaut,” the Doctor is obviously out of his element. When River comments that he is acting like they’ve never kissed before, the Doctor responds that they haven’t. Not according to his own timeline at any rate. As he stumbles awkwardly into the TARDIS he tells her “You know what they say, there’s a first time for everything.” Once the door of the TARDIS is closed, she responds “And a last time.” Throughout, we hear the untitled version of River’s Theme (Example 9) complete with the mordent figure. The leitmotif underscores her sadness as she realizes that from that point onwards, every time she sees the Doctor, he will know her less and less.

If Hexel interprets the inclusion of the leitmotif as a clue intended by Gold for the attentive audience, I see things a bit differently. While it is true that we can trace the migration of the theme from one scene to the next, in the end, the viewer is left with more questions than answers. The girl on the streets has not yet been identified as Melody Pond, let alone River Song, and how she gained the ability to regenerate is still unexplained. And while it is made clear from the scene described above that from River’s perspective she will never kiss the Doctor again, this territorializing effect is only momentary. Later episodes show a younger River Song kissing the Doctor on multiple occasions. In addition to River’s leitmotifs serving as refrains, like Amy, they also are implicated in her process of becoming.

The refrain’s relationship with actual music is perhaps not as straight forward as one might assume at first glance. The refrain restricts music by giving it form. At the same time “it is the end-goal of music to deterritorialize the refrain... The concept of deterritorialization suggests music’s attempt to establish a quality of dis-equilibrium in the refrain, thus creating an ongoing flow of becoming.”²⁰⁵ Music thus functions as a double articulation, bringing “together a block

²⁰⁵ Gregg Redner, *Deleuze and Film Music: Building a Methodological Bridge between Film Theory and Music* (Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2011), 21

of content (the refrain) and a form of expression (becoming).”²⁰⁶ In the case of River Song, the leitmotif contributes to her process of becoming by creating a line of flight - “a path of mutation precipitated through the actualisation of connections among bodies that were previously only implicit”²⁰⁷ – between her multiple regenerations. Rather than serving as guide, the leitmotif is complicit in the creation of narrative complexity.

Beyond the musical links identified by Hexel above, River’s leitmotifs actually stretch back even further to “The Big Bang” (5.13), in which “A River of Tears” accompanies three separate scenes. The leitmotif consists of a two note ostinato which repeats over sustained strings, cycling through the chord progression D min-Bb-E-A (Example 11). In the first appearance, River Song, deducing the Doctor’s plan, explains to Amy and Rory how the Doctor intends to pilot the Pandorica – a device originally designed as a perfect prison and equipped with powerful life support system – into the heart of the exploding TARDIS in order to reboot the universe. In the second, Amy’s receipt of River’s blue notebook triggers her memory of the Doctor thus bringing him back to life. While these first two do forge some initial links between the leitmotif and River, it is its later return during a conversation with the Doctor, in which he asks if she is married, that solidifies its connection with both the character. After her ambiguous answer leaves it unclear whether she is confirming that she is married or inviting the Doctor to ask her, he entreats her to divulge her identity:

Doctor: “River, who are you?”

River: “You’re going to find out very soon. And I’m sorry.”

²⁰⁶ Buchanan, Introduction to *Deleuze and Music*, 16.

²⁰⁷ Tamsin Lorraine, “Lines of Flight,” in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 145.

Example 11 is a piano piece in B-flat major, 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of four measures each. The first system is labeled with chords Dm/A and Bb. The second system is labeled with chords E/G# and A. The melody in the right hand is a continuous eighth-note line. The bass line in the left hand features sustained chords with a tremolo effect, indicated by a wavy line under the notes.

Example 11 – “A River of Tears”

Example 12 is a piano piece in B-flat major, 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of four measures each. The first system is labeled with chords Dm and Bb. The second system is labeled with chords E and A. The melody in the right hand is a continuous eighth-note line. The bass line in the left hand features sustained chords with a tremolo effect, indicated by a wavy line under the notes.

Example 12 – Untitled theme from “Impossible Astronaut” (6.1)

This exchange prefigures the Doctor’s discovery that although River is indeed his future wife, she is also his killer, as she was unable to overcome the conditioning she received while she was kidnapped as a child. This third appearance, coupled with River’s admission that her identity will soon be revealed, opens the possibility for something new. And indeed, the next time the leitmotif returns, the refrain has been destabilized, retaining only the chord progression which is

not only reused for the untitled River's theme discussed above, but also four other related leitmotifs. It appears in: the first section of "Melody Pond," played not only during her regeneration, but also when we learn that River killed the Doctor in "Closing Time" (6.12); the untitled music to a scene in which River, Amy, and Rory set aflame the body of the Doctor on a boat in "The Impossible Astronaut" (6.1), following his shooting by what we later learn is an earlier incarnation of River Song (Example 12); "Tell me Who you Are" from "A Good Man Goes to War" (6.7) which accompanies her admission that she is Melody Pond; and finally, in "The Wedding of River Song," played in the episode of the same name (6.13), in which River finally weds the Doctor. The repetition of the chord progression creates a line of flight between all of these scenes, as well as the multiple versions of River located in time and space. Rather than presenting a linear trajectory, the leitmotif continually complicates her becoming, pushing her in new directions. Music, supported by the refrain, opens up the possibility that she is in fact all of these people at once. This is reinforced by the explicitly musical references in both of her names, Melody Pond and River Song. The producers almost seem to be telling the audience to listen closely, that music is key to understanding her. And while it is true that the chord progression follows her throughout many of the major events in her life, it does so without the need for a chronological conception of time. Leitmotifs occasionally invite the audience to experience time as she does, and to untangle her process of becoming. Until then, we are left in the dark. The leitmotif thus simultaneously acts as a guide while remaining complicit in the narrative complexity demanded by the show.

Conclusion

In an attempt to explain how time travelling can affect our unidirectional perspective of time in “Blink” (3.10)²⁰⁸ the tenth Doctor had this to say:

People assume that time is a strict progression of cause to effect, but actually – from a non-linear, non-subjective viewpoint – it’s more like a big ball of wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey... stuff.

This approach to time is emblematic of much of *Doctor Who*, which demands a dedicated viewer who can disentangle all of the threads. The leitmotif must adapt accordingly. River Song’s becoming is complicated by a timeline that is at odds with both the timeline of the Doctor and the presentation of the narrative. Repetition is thus given a secondary task, that of creating a refrain. This refrain gives rhythm to the action on screen, structuring our encounters with River. In addition, her leitmotifs construct a temporal territory in which we are invited to take part, grounding an otherwise elusive character. However, just as we think we have River pinned down, the leitmotif creates lines of flight between what we thought were previously disconnected characters, fragmenting her into many pieces. For the Doctor, the leitmotif seems to do the opposite. “I am the Doctor” creates musical “moments” in which we are briefly given the illusion of a stable identity. Repetition, rather than difference, is emphasized. These instances work against the open nature of television to provide fans with easily quotable segments, investing in the television series and the process of becoming, a teleological nature which they do not really possess.

²⁰⁸ Though aired during the Russel T. Davies era of the show, this episode was written by Steven Moffat and, as well as being widely considered by fans as one of his best, is emblematic of his approach to complex narrative storytelling.

These two approaches accord with the tension identified earlier between the need to provide enough material to placate fans and the need to remain approachable enough for mainstream consumption. As “I am the Doctor” takes possession of the screen, creating a musical “moment” and insisting on the repetition of the same, the leitmotif downplays the qualities of the Doctor which are in flux, and the need of the audience to have an in-depth knowledge of the Doctor’s other regenerations. This helps increase the accessibility of the show to those who are not necessarily in the know. For fans who remain engaged throughout, the “I am the Doctor” leitmotif provides a constant thread throughout the ever-shifting landscape of the show. The leitmotif helps us to come to terms with the Doctor’s past and future regenerations, reconciling the multiple versions of the Doctor into a single hero. Yet, at the same time, River’s leitmotifs heighten the potential for close readings by fans by providing far reaching musical connections. Her leitmotifs participate in the propagation of narrative complexity, highlighting progressions of time which go against the audiences’ experience and give fans the opportunity to connect the dots. The leitmotif continues to adapt to the needs of television, able to fulfil both of these functions as need be.

Conclusion

Music in *Doctor Who* is very much entrenched in the scoring practices associated with the medium of television. But the possibilities of television are continuing to shift and to expand. Accordingly, the role of music in *Doctor Who* has also continued to evolve and to take on new possibilities. In this thesis, I have taken what has traditionally been a maligned feature of the leitmotif —repetition — and argued that it is precisely repetition that makes the use of leitmotif so effective. I began my discussion by highlighting how music in television must be understood on its own terms, and not simply understood as a less developed cousin of film scoring. Repetition emerged as one of the defining features of both television and its music. However, situating *Doctor Who* within the more modern emergence of cult TV, revealed that the program, though designed to be musically open to mainstream intelligibility, also encourages the formation of a more intimate cult fanbase. The leitmotif is one of the devices that has been able to thrive in this new televisual landscape, which assumes an engaged audience.

Though the leitmotif has been a staple of both film and television scoring, many theorists have been wary of its repetitive nature. Through Deleuze, I identify repetition as a site of potential, one which, through the articulation of the eternal return, creates the necessary conditions for becoming. The leitmotifs associated with Amy Pond do more than simply provide commentary on her becoming; they are also active participants. Though the leitmotif can be static in terms of musical content, I contend that it is still capable of engaging in its own process of becoming, through its juxtaposition with a new narrative context. Character and leitmotif are thus locked in constant dialogue, one informing the other. River Song and the Doctor provide examples in which the leitmotif must work to assemble together multiple, sometimes disjunct

identities into a single flow of becoming. The end result of this process, however, is not always the same. The leitmotif for River provides us with a window into her timeline, acting as a refrain which briefly territorializes the time on screen. Her leitmotifs also reveal the multiple dimensions of her becoming through its association with her varied regenerations. For the Doctor, the leitmotif simultaneously facilitates the process of becoming, as well as momentarily pushing it aside to create an impression of a more stable identity. In all three cases, however, the power of repetition is crucial in understanding how the character on screen relates to his or her assigned leitmotif, as only through repetition can becoming unfold. Without a point of reference, these characters have no past or future: the leitmotif gives them both, simultaneously looking back and forwards.

There are numerous other ways in which I might have expanded my analysis that, for the sake of space, remain outside of the scope of this thesis. For example, several other characters are assigned leitmotifs in *Doctor Who*: one of the most notable is Clara Oswald who travels with the Doctor for the second half of the 7th series. Like River, Clara long remains a mystery. The Doctor is puzzled by the fact that he encounters several versions of Clara, only for each one to die in turn. It is eventually revealed that she jumped into the Doctor's time-stream in order to save him, fracturing herself into countless echoes. Her leitmotif "Clara's Theme" follows her throughout. A closer analysis might reveal the way in which the leitmotif is able to not simply draw together a character who has changed through time, but also follow multiple offshoots of the same character. Other potential lines of inquiry would include the use of leitmotif to designate reoccurring monsters such as the Dalek and the Cybermen, and how other reoccurring cues, not explicitly tied to character, might still benefit from a Deleuzian analysis. Matt Hills, for example, notes how sound effects (unlike music) from the classic series – such as the whirring of

the sonic screwdriver or the materialisation sound of the TARDIS – are carefully reproduced in new *Who*, becoming part of the brand identity of the show.²⁰⁹ The repetition of familiar sounds might be read as a refrain which territorializes the new series. Without the repetition of these sounds, *Doctor Who* is not quite *Doctor Who*. In addition, in the fall of 2014, a new Doctor, played by Peter Capaldi took over from Matt Smith for Series 8 and Series 9 (beginning Fall 2015). Murray Gold provided the twelfth Doctor with his own leitmotif, in order to match the transition to a new body and face. I will be interested to see how this new Doctor navigates the process of becoming sonically.

There are also some limitations to my analysis. For example, in the classic series, the Doctor is certainly still engaged with the process of becoming, but the lack of clear leitmotifs renders this process more or less silent. Further scholarship might find other ways in which the music of the classic series intersects with Deleuze. In addition, my focus on leitmotifs that are clearly associated with specific characters largely leaves aside other instances in which music is repeated. One example would be the piece “Infinite Potential” which plays both during the 11th Doctor’s regeneration scene in “The Time of the Doctor” (7.X) and a speech made by Clara Oswald in “The Rings of Akhatan” (7.7). However, I believe that the trend towards narrative complexities in recent television series such as *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), or *Orphan Black* (2013–) makes a Deleuzian imagining of music increasingly compelling. My thesis has limited itself to a handful of the concepts that Deleuze puts forward: many others, such as the “rhizome” or “the virtual” might also prove fruitful grounds for investigation. As a philosopher who loves to disrupt normative patterns of teleological time, Deleuze seems especially useful to analyses of the new televisual landscape and soundscape. In doing so, it is essential that we develop

²⁰⁹ Matt Hills, “Listening from Behind the Sofa? The (Un)Earthly Roles of Sound in BBC Wales’ Doctor Who.” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 29-32.

methodologies that are sensitive to the specific context of television, especially as the format continues to evolve. I hope this thesis provides some initial direction for how that might be accomplished.

Throughout this thesis, the music of *Doctor Who* has been the site of numerous contradictions: it situates the program as both mainstream hit and cult TV, the reverse of its previous position as a popular television program with an avant-garde score; it simultaneously recalls Amy's past and propels her towards emotional growth; it assists the Doctor in his process of becoming at the same time that it obscures that process; it grounds River in time and space while providing new levels of narrative complexity. Through repetition and difference, the leitmotif is able to sustain these paradoxes, without necessarily looking to resolve them. Instead they are able to thrive, providing *Doctor Who* with a rich sonic texture.

When asked what it feels like to regenerate, the 10th Doctor says this: "even if I change, it feels like dying. Everything I am dies. Some new man goes sauntering away.... And I'm dead." The 10th Doctor is here clinging on to his identity and describes change as a force that kills. Compare this to the final words of the 11th Doctor in "The Time of the Doctor" (7.X):

We all change. When you think about it, we're all different people all through our lives, and that's okay, that's good, you gotta keep changing so long as you remember all the people you used to be. I will not forget one line of this. Not one day. I swear. I will always remember when the Doctor was me.

Regeneration is no longer compared to death. Instead, it seems that the Doctor himself has embraced the fact that we are always in the process of becoming. The Doctor also reminds fans not to forget his previous regenerations: memory – that which brings about the return of the past, if only in the mind – keeps the Doctor alive. As television and *Doctor Who* continue to evolve,

entrenched in their own process of becoming, it seems unlikely that music will stop accompanying the Doctor in his adventures through time and space.

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