

Introduction

Carol Vernallis: Intensified Movements

Once again, everything seems to have changed, and *Transmedia Directors* seeks to somehow capture this. Over twenty years ago, scholars like David Bordwell, Jeff Smith and Carol Vernallis began noting that directors and practitioners were producing work across multiple media—feature films, commercials, music videos, fashion photography (Smith and Vernallis have chapters in this collection).¹ It wasn't unusual for some of this work to be commissioned by production houses like Anonymous Content, Partizan, and Good Company. Many of today's biggest directors, like David Fincher and Francis Lawrence, developed their styles out of these contexts. We can see their stylistic traits—hyper-control, line, glide, and a sensitivity to audiovisual relations—as derived from these experiences.

The roles of transmedial directors and practitioners have only intensified, as have those of production houses, which serve as hubs for all kinds of media-making, including feature films, long-duration, streaming web series, mini-docs, commercials, music videos and fashion photography, Instagram and Facebook posts, and their accompanying commercial

¹ Bordwell, "Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film," *Film Quarterly* 55 no.3 (Spring 2002): 16-28; Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 199-205; Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 35-37; Vernallis, "Music Video, Songs, Sound: Experience, Technique and Emotion in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*," *Screen* 49, no.3 (2008): 277-297.

spots (now shot in batches with a range of durations, say, from fifteen seconds to seven minutes, to be distributed across multiple platforms), VR and augmented reality. Much of this is now filmed in Los Angeles (not only because talent is deep, but because everyone can drive within a day's notice to almost any location—the beach, the mountains, the desert, and to those who are wealthy or impoverished), but a good amount is also shot in suburbs and cities like Cape Town, Vancouver, and Rio de Janeiro, because they can look American or European. For these locations, a handful of first-line talent (the director, cinematographer, and some of the performers) can be flown in, and the rest of the talent and labour can be local. Much of the work we see today isn't of anywhere specific, and only certain types of directors succeed (those who work quickly, have interpersonal skills, and can survive jet lag). Jonas Åkerlund has bragged that he enjoys circulating globally and collecting experiences, as he drops into and out of micro-communities.²

Catching this intensified media swirl seems daunting. It involves so many strands of production, from Instagram impresario Jay Versace's thirty-second cell phone content (consumed by an audience of millions), to Michael Bay's global billion-dollar financing of his *Transformers* franchise, but it is essential. In this volume, we look at directors, drawn to the way that many seem intoxicated by the possibilities of this media swirl. Wes Anderson, Lars von Trier, Michael Bay, and David Lynch (who are discussed in the chapters) have designed theme parks, restaurants, museum exhibitions, speakers, furniture, wallpaper, and diamonds, as well as fashion design, opera stagings, commercials, virtual reality, and streaming television. We think, perhaps, that the reach beyond every moving media format

² Vernallis, conversations with directors: Åkerlund, Spring 2016; Abteen Bagheri, Spring 2018; Joseph Kahn, Spring 2018.

into material objects is a drive to try everything possible, or a desire to touch, finally, a material shore.

In putting together this collected volume, we had quite a few questions: What is it about these directors and practitioners? Do they have better lives than us? Can we somehow emulate them? Do they know how to negotiate neoliberalism, precarity, austerity, and work speedup in ways we can adapt and use? Were they just producing content, or did they think deeply about platforms, genre, and form? Were music videos their favourite medium (because here experimentation, voice, and imagination could resound), or was it narrative streaming series that beckoned them, because characters could be subtly and contradictorily constructed? And how did they voice their work through practitioners? Did they hold them close and adapt to them? What happened when talent changed? Because many of our directors work across the same media, might they contribute to a new style? Could we assume that film and television (with its potential for world-building and sense of the past and future), music video (with its audio and visual aesthetics and rhythm), commercials (with their ability to project a message quickly), the internet (with its refreshed concepts of audience and participation), and larger forms like restaurants and amusement parks (with their materiality alongside today's digital aesthetics) added up to something new? Senior directors, through their experience and influence, might project this new style, and students and younger artists would emulate it. The production houses seemed to share commonalities (i.e., what Ryan Staacke of Pomp&Clout called "a wan Terrence Malick filter").³ How much did they shape style? Instagram would need to be a piece. Would we wish to reassess concepts of authorship, assemblage, transmedia, audio and visual aesthetics, and world-building?

³ Interview with director, winter 2019.

Other tacks for our collection seemed attractive—some sort of Latourian actor network, where we also tracked agents, signal and objects, or an in-depth look at one or two directors from a wider range of perspectives. Our title’s term “transmedia” (directors] called for a synonym (like “cross,” “traverse,” or “through”), because transmedia is more often defined as a franchise aimed at monetizing a concept (Henry Jenkins and others are responsible for this scholarship; we find their notions of world-building particularly helpful, but we’re focused on the portability of the director and her style).⁴ Our instincts, we’ve realised, were good. We’ve captured much of what we were seeking, including confirmation concerning intensified audiovisual aesthetics centrality today. All our directors and practitioners are *auteurs mélomanes* (in Claudia Gorbman’s phrase), “music-loving directors [who] treat music ... as a key thematic element and a marker of authorial style.”⁵ They seek novel realizations of the soundtrack in relation to the image. We assert that we need a new discipline, perhaps one called audiovisual studies.

Our approach—which features individual chapters and several modules on a number of today’s directors and practitioners—helped us feel closer to our moment, and more aware of unfolding trends. Insights emerged as chapters came in. Our “big” directors, projected something odd in relation to scale, and we suspect their use of scale links intimately with

⁴ Jenkins, “The Reign of the ‘Mothership’: Transmedia’s Past, Present and Possible Futures”, in *Wired TV: Laboring Over an Interactive Future*, ed. Denise Mann (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 244.

⁵ Gorbman, “Auteur Music”, in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 149.

their success: skills in modulating scale may be crucial if one wishes to span the media swirl (from the Instagram pic to the streaming web series and big-budget film). As his module shows, Wes Anderson embraces the hyper-groomed, curated, and miniaturized style (though he can quickly break out of this, like *The Royal Tenenbaums*'s family friend Chas's lurid murals and extravagant car crash). Michael Bay's images, on the other hand (as our author Mark Kerins notes, and he intends this as a compliment) could be seen as *advertisements for Michael Bay*. As Kerins observes, Bay's stripped-down characters and plots flatten the director's work, but they also make his products flexible and transportable. Lynch (and we're aware that this sounds impressionistic) seems to release his projects synchronized to his format; his pitched audiovisual emanations, porous and oscillating in time, are tuned so that his commercial's rhythms differ from a long-running TV show like *Twin Peaks*; both, however, feel as if they'd pre-existed as other points in the galaxy and were tied to one another—they are slices of Lynch. Barry Jenkins and his collaborators can suggest a heart-piercing humanism in one sustained shot (having African-American actors directly addressing an audience is new for many), and his use of rhyme, poetic form, and memory are equally important. Lars von Trier seems caught in some light/dark opposition, with works asserting greater grandeur than the forms can contain. His favourite techniques, including diagrams, plays with digital surfaces, and tightly curated swatches of pop and classical music, facilitate these effects. Bowie, one of the most shapeshifting auteurs here, resembles a magpie, embracing a loose continuity; these contribute to his ability to cast a shadow even after death. Sofia Coppola's scalar visions may be the hardest to describe. Much of her work suggests an oscillation between presence and absence, with the "now" momentarily peeking into view. An inaccessibility and timelessness beguiles through her languid figures, handsome costumes, subtle lighting, and pastel colours. We'd wish to provide similar descriptions for more of our volume's subjects, like Steve Wilson, Jess Cope, Jay Versace,

and Sigur Rós. These are our descriptions; you can catch your own from reading the modules. We're excited about our short chapters, which place perspectives right up against one another. Overlaps and different facets quickly emerge.

Surface features appear to connect closely to scale (director Emil Nava's and producer Calvin Harris's structures against surfaces come quickly to the fore in their module). Our directors are good at what Richard Dyer calls the intangibles of media practice: color, light, gesture, movement, music sound.⁶ Readers might keep an eye out for Wes Anderson's bright yellow, Coppola's soft pastels, Bay's "blorange" (saturated hues, with darks skewing blue, and skin skewing orange), and Lars Von Trier's deep red and dull beige.

Our collection seeks to illuminate how directors work with both sound and image, and across various media. It also aims to show how they work in different contexts and how their practices adapt over time. Uhlin's and Connor's chapters show the ways auteurs and practitioners work within the industry, and the ways technologies' affordances facilitate this. Uhlin captures David Fincher's deep ambivalence, his role's (or function's) requirement to project himself as an auteur, but also his desire to vanish, as a practitioner, from view. His recent work becomes possible not only through current, specialized forms of digital workflow (which Fincher helped design), but also through the collaboration of many specialists and their production houses. As Connor describes, Bong Joon-ho on the other hand seems transmedial not so much in the ways he works with content, as in how he crosses nations, corporations and other political, economic, and social configurations. And he does this, as it seems many of our directors do, through a gesture, a concept, or an image—*Snowpiercer's*

⁶ Dyer, *Only Entertainment* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 18.

train (as a metaphor for narrative drive and capitalism), his hands making the shape of that train, and the beyond-negotiation-demand for a gimbal.

We did not write this collection to extol the great director. Instead, it's because, as Warren Buckland suggests in his chapter, we as humans desire to engage with art forms as a means to both recognize ourselves and see past ourselves. I've have had a chance to talk with and meet several of the leading directors and practitioners of today, and they seem just a bit more interesting and noticeably more anxious and driven than most of us. As co-editors, we see ourselves, with varying degrees of agreement and difference, as possessing progressive politics. In more generous societies, we'd hope everyone would have the abilities and resources to produce work if they so desired, and to be seen.

Some of our commitment to this collection comes out of overlapping political work; for me, much of this is tied to audiovisual literacy, and some of it to neuroscience and new technologies. I'm co-opting Sandberg's line of "lean in" (which Joe Tompkins has written beautifully on in relation to *The Hunger Games* series).⁷ I see merit in unplugging. But there's also merit in engaging forcefully. We had long made a commitment to range and diversity, but in the interim, as we worked on our collection, #MeToo and #OscarsSoWhite unfolded. My interviews with above- and below-the-line practitioners seemed to capture the industry's new commitments to diversity and range. There's clearly an increasing engagement with showing women and people of colour before the camera (most strikingly so

⁷ Tompkins, "The Makings of a Contradictory Franchise: Revolutionary Melodrama and Cynicism in *The Hunger Games*," *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58, no.1 (2018): 70-90.

with advertising to millennials). And perhaps as a related corollary, there's new pressure to represent behind the camera too. I'm most moved by some well-established production houses like Partizan (Michel Gondry's company) and Anonymous Content and Reset (David Fincher's former and current company).

This is a big volume. We've attempted to reflect gender, race, age, nationality, LGBTQ+, and disability. Some of the politics of our "highest profile" directors are more conservative than ours (Lynch, Bay and von Trier have all expressed sentiments we can't endorse), but more are committed to social justice. We feel our collection intersects with recent thinking about the interwoven nature of individuals, community, and politics, and can be turned toward progressive ends.⁸

Our directors came out of fortuitous circumstances and biological predispositions (what might be called gifts and inheritances). Wes Anderson's mother was an archeologist and his father headed an advertising firm. Barry Jenkins and his colleagues attended Florida State University, where there was a remarkable level of energy, support, and magic. Sofia Coppola's father was Francis Ford Coppola, and she has imbibed cinema since infancy. Some of its serendipity (Bay got into trouble for blowing up his toy truck, an experience so overwhelmingly powerful he never let go of it), and some of it is biology. von Trier and David Bowie have been forthright about not being neuro-atypical, especially von Trier. But all of this is human and natural and understandable.

⁸ In a piece entitled "Beyoncé, New Technologies, Politics, and Our Unclaimed Futures" (accepted to JSAM, pending revisions), I draw from Marx, Rawls, Appiah, Kimberley Crenshaw to discuss social justice in relation to new technologies.

These artists' trajectories have been shaped by context and serendipity: it's partly a mystery (and probably some luck) how they developed, changed, persevered. Jenkins waited eight years between his *Medicine for Melancholy* (2008) and *Moonlight* (2016) films, and suddenly he's in the midst of *If Beale Street Could Talk* (2018) and the forthcoming TV series *The Underground Railroad*. It would have been hard to imagine, watching 80s and 90s music-video directors at the time, that Dave Meyers's videos would contribute so much to the genre's potential as an art form in such surprising ways.⁹

We attempt to capture how directors' work has evolved as they've worked across media, though this can be elusive. The most in-depth descriptions are in the chapters on Michael Bay, Dave Meyers, and Sophia Coppola: music videos still cast an influence on their work. Some influences can be gauged by imagining past this volume. One might speculate on the ways Wes Anderson's work will shift after his recent experiences curating a major museum exhibit (he handled thousands of art objects and whittled these down to a few—surely, given his past predilections, this would make a difference). He's just come out with wallpaper. And one wonders about the origin and development of David Fincher's meticulousness (which some claim is obsessive). Can we give music video some credit for this? Fincher has described music video as a director's sandbox, and because there isn't much dialogue, he must have spent a lot of time watching bodies within shots passing against the music, over and over again. Who wouldn't, with Fincher's inclinations, hunger for a perfect line? Traces of his early music-video work appear in his recent films, like Amy Dunne's celebratory leap

⁹ Meyers is incredibly inventive, fast, hardworking, and engaged with many forms (including hip hop), so perhaps this could have been foreseen.

into the air in *Gone Girl* (2014), having successfully escaped the police. Her euphoric movement matches some of the leaps in Paula Abdul's "Straight Up" (1988), Madonna's "Vogue" (1990) and Justin Timberlake and Jay-Z's "Suit in Tie" (2013). Her lacing her ballet shoes on the way to eviscerate her ex-boyfriend may draw inspiration from Abdul's "Coldhearted Snake" (1988).

The ways directors in this collection depend on their composers and other practitioners highlights a central political point, which is that we're bound to one another: no artist makes it alone, and the same is true for ourselves. As Theo Cateforis and Ewan Clark note, it's not completely clear if Anderson had a beloved, relatively whole soundworld prior to his collaborations with composer Mark Mothersbaugh, or if they co-created one together. When his next composer, Alexandre Desplat, began contributing, we don't know if he chose materials out of a respect for Mothersbaugh, to follow Anderson's taste, to maintain a house brand, or that these musical materials just seemed apt for these films' images. Still, one gets a sense how much Anderson, Mothersbaugh and Desplat became indebted to another. Perhaps similarly, Jenkins has found practitioners who beautifully augment his work, as cinematographers and sound designers, as has Nava with music producers and colour timers. Jess Cope and Steve Wilson seem intimately close. Floria Sigismondi has described her connection to Bowie as beyond the human. Schott's and Barbour's chapter on Sigur Rós shows the ways a song can carry such a clear message that no additional instructions need be included: we all want to be on the same wavelength, especially when thinking about our planet's future. What is it about these directors and their work, and how do they get us to better lives and a better world? Dyer says the musical in connection with popular, musically-

enlivened work creates feelings of utopia, but offers no roadmap to get there.¹⁰ Jenkins and Meyers may provide possible paths.

What is it about these directors and their work, and how do they get us to better lives and a better world? Dyer says the musical in connection with popular, musically-enlivened work creates feelings of utopia, but offers no roadmap to get there. Jenkins and Meyers may provide possible paths.¹¹

¹⁰ Dyer, *Only Entertainment*, 20-21. I would wish our contributors and subjects might share my impulses, which go something like this: We, at least in America, are incredibly wealthy. Our lives are contingent, shaped by what's been bequeathed to us, our gifts and inheritances. We might give some, yet still less than commonly-granted authority to free will, and, instead, through a sense of gratitude, and an embrace of the world, wish that we all might matter. We might strive for everyone to have good lives, and for the world's flourishing. Flourishing as a baseline for people might include freedom from precarity (healthcare, education, housing, employment, respect, community, and so on). With incredible resources (the world's best soil, rich cultural capital...), we have enough to support us all.

¹¹ Dyer, *Only Entertainment*, 20-21. I would wish our contributors and subjects might share my impulses, which go something like this: We, at least in America, are incredibly wealthy. Our lives are contingent, shaped by what's been bequeathed to us, our gifts and inheritances. We might give some, yet still less than commonly-granted authority to free will, and, instead, through a sense of gratitude, and an embrace of the world, wish that we all might matter. We might strive for everyone to have good lives, and for the world's flourishing. Flourishing as a baseline for people might include freedom from precarity (healthcare, education, housing,

But these directors produce messages that are new and in sync with our time. They first capture us, as Dyer and Carl Plantinga argue, with an unpackable conundrum.¹² Buckland sketches this most fully with his description of Anderson’s ironic sincerity. It’s also in Lynch’s and von Trier’s euphoric generosity, violence, and terror. And, perhaps, in Michael Bay’s benevolent, extravagant figures—mechanical objects whose source remains unfathomable. And Jay Versace’s desire to be king, even though he’s on Instagram. These transmedia artists all stretch out to the world (One can feel invigorated when those mechanical Transformers twist their way up to an erect posture). The directors discussed in this project a gratitude for existence, and for coexisting with other people. Kerins captures Bay’s exuberant drive, and Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen’s and Linda Bagley’s readings grasp a similar impulse in Trier’s dark *The House that Jack Built* (2018).

The rest of this work might be done by us, and/or with us requesting more collaboration with directors and practitioners. This can be harder to facilitate today, because we’re now in the era of the NDA (though I’ve found many industry personnel who remained incredibly generous). One mis-quote on Twitter, and that’s it. Artists and practitioners are, as Kevin Staacke of Pomp&Clout notes, “worried about the bigger, hungry fishes’ mouths behind

employment, respect, community, and so on). With incredible resources (the world’s best soil, rich cultural capital...), we have enough to support us all.

¹² Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979); Plantinga, *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion* (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1999).

them,” and many suppose we in the humanities can figure this out ourselves.¹³ Letting industry personnel know how important their contributions are can make a difference.

Our project (and it can be yours) is to develop a field of audiovisual studies that’s engaged with all media, and that’s political. This collection attempts to contribute here in several ways. It details directors’ and practitioners’ engagements with sound and image (which is a relational, interpersonal affair), and dependence on one another for success. In many ways, they labour for visions that speak to us.

These directors depart from their predecessors in the ways they work with images and soundtracks. The media swirl, audiovisuality, and the digital turn—and the ways these interrelate and overlap—help describe today’s aesthetics. The digital turn, for example, blurs the boundaries between sound and image, for both now share an ontological ground of being code. An adjustment in one medium can spur a modification in the other, and then back and forth again, nearly effortlessly. This content can then spin out into multiple forms. Sound and image relations can convey much of the work’s latent meaning.¹⁴

Media scholars have largely focused on the image, and, while there exist film-soundtrack studies and sound studies, not enough scholarship considers the ways sound and image work together. There are three reasons for this. 1) Little theory elucidates scholars’ close readings;

¹³ Interview with producer, winter 2019.

¹⁴ I’ve claimed that this relation can emulate human ones.

2) an analyst should feel comfortable working across disciplines (music and visual arts).¹⁵

Some boldness is required to attend to the soundtrack, the image, the editing, the lighting, the gesture as they unfold in both time and within the instant. 3) Academic programs don't encourage enough crossing between disciplines, nor dallying with the popular. Some of this collection's chapters closely consider audiovisual aesthetics (Holly Rogers, Lori Burns, Vernallis), and its many case studies place the soundtrack and the image side by side. These pieces' brevity and intentional juxtapositions enable new relations to emerge.

We need audiovisual studies because we live in an audiovisually-intensified culture. We also need more work on brief media. It's how we consume these days, with YouTube, adverts, and interrupted viewing practices. Brief media has its own aesthetic and formal shape. We have several pieces on such forms; it's our belief that if you can read a music video or short film-segment, you can also read Instagram teasers, blockbuster-film trailers, political ads and news segments (which are highly aestheticised).

This volume feels like a start. There's a moment here in our collection when Joi McMillon describes how sound can ferry a viewer across a rupture in time and space (in my interview with her, we discussed a sequence in *If Beale Street Could Talk*—a flashback in the midst of Tish's family breaking the news of her pregnancy to her in-laws—that worked beautifully in the theater, but not, because of poorer sound quality, with my iPad and headphones).

¹⁵ For theory that works towards this audiovisual fusion, see the work of Claudia Gorbman, Richard Dyer, Nicholas Cook, Michel Chion, Carol Vernallis and Holly Rogers.

Speaking to this disjunction, Katherine Breeden (a computer scientist at Harvey Mudd and collaborator for a study on media and eye-tracking) commented that, for neurological reasons, higher-res and more detailed sound makes the image seem richer. I've noticed that in certain news broadcasts (like Fox News) there were many devices limiting or downplaying the voices of political opponents (the newscaster's shoulder coming further forward than the guest's, in an apparent effort to edge them out; grimaces, interjections, and scrolling graphics set a rhythm and help redirect attention—even the lapel pins often seem to carry semiotic meaning). I've noticed, too, that documentary footage was often recast with a green tint. And then it struck me—if these devices are already in use to undermine or discredit TV guests, what sorts of techniques might be at play in the realm of sound and image? It's important to pay attention to this, to be aware of the many ways manipulations of audiovisual media can influence or rewrite our perceptions. All forms. All practitioners. All of us.

Holly Rogers: Modules and Oscillations

Above, Vernallis draws our attention to a new sensibility of media-making; one that not only complicates the emerging intensity of contemporary film but also paves the way for refreshed and extended forms of audiovisuality. In some ways, directors, with their close engagement with scripts, editing, cinematography and sound, have always been transmedial. But here we are interested in the fresh fluidities afforded by contemporary networked and participatory culture; in the ways in which directors navigate swiftly and fluidly across forms within our post-media condition. As Vernallis remarks above, the impact on visual, sonic, and audiovisual grammar has been both intense and liberating. Although all our chapters investigate the ways in which one person's voice develops through projects and across platforms while retaining a distinctive grain, most authors find an emergent mutability that

embraces assemblage approaches to construction, collaborative creativity and distributed authorship.

Assemblage, collaboration, distribution. The structure of our book mirrors this dispersal of authorship by approaching topics from a variety of angles. This works in a modular way.

Some sections begin with a specific idea. Our authors tackle the development of cross medial assemblage through the work of Sofia Coppola, Michael Bay and David Fincher, for example. In other sections, transmedial possibilities for stretched or disrupted audiovisuality, colourisation, framing and rhythm take centre stage, as we see in the aesthetically-driven music video analyses of work by David Bowie, Emil Nava, Sigur Rós and Jess Cope.

Modular case studies of Wes Anderson, Lynch, Barry Jenkins and Lars von Trier form interventions into these analyses. Although each chapter within these modules operates with its own internal coherence and dynamics, when read as part of a larger project, they begin to resonate differently. Broader themes emerge; different interpretations arise. Like the directors we discuss, these chapters work transmedially.

Critics have long pointed to a music-video style that has infiltrated film-making, but we're interested in a more contemporary and richer back-and-forth movement across forms and genres guided by directors accomplished in many technologies and aesthetics. This traversal across platforms, durations, budgets, styles and teams facilitates variety while also enabling individual voices to resonate loudly across projects. At our book's centre is a collection of essays focused on this paradoxical distillation of the communal voice. Jeff Smith's identification of a feminine sensibility that runs through Sofia Coppola's work opens the discussion. Her directorial voice, evolving through the affordances of digital manipulation, can be tracked through her commercials, music videos, feature films and recent holiday

special. Coppola's style can be experienced through her pastel colour schemes, soft lighting, and pensive, sometimes oblique, camera flow, as well as her overarching sonic structures that afford direct access to the subjective core of her characters. These audio and visual consistencies, Smith suggests, promote moments of transcendence and bliss. Mark Kerins finds different emergent stabilities in the work of Michael Bay. Focusing on his short form work, Kerins reveals a cinematic approach already at play in the director's early music video and commercial projects, a process of construction and an articulation of style that informed his later feature-film construction. The pair of essays that follow deal more closely with these processes of production, concentrating in on the technological fluidity that underpins large-scale transmedial assemblage. J. D. Connor refers to interviews with South-Korean Bong Joon-ho and the production history of his 2013 film *Snowpiercer* to show how a director's voice can emerge through major independent global production and digital processes that unite everything from screenwriting and design to sound, photography, editing and distribution. Graig Uhlin explores the ways in which workflow and below-the-line professionals can support the branded identity of the director through intensive forms of collaboration. David Fincher's production and post-production methods provide an example of technology and design transferability capable of forging coherence across numerous forms.

Coppola's, Bay's, Joon-ho's, and Fincher's convergent, transmedial textures open spaces for vibrant forms of audiovisuality. Within today's networked interdisciplinarity of multi-platform storytelling, Claudia Gorbman's so-termed *auteurs mélomanes* that Veranallis mentions above (form intense, long-lasting partnerships with composers, musicians and

sound designers.¹⁶ As Kerins shows in his work on Bay and Uhlin on Fincher, many directors began their careers in the music video industry. Skilled in cutting images to sonic rhythms and visualising musical form, they brought unique techniques with them as they moved into feature-film production. Our three-essay module on British director Emil Nava establishes this transference of skills through close examination of his saturated audiovisual textures and intricate, experiential use of colour. Vernallis sets the scene with her interview with Nava, alighting on aspects of technology and audiovisuality and seeking his thoughts on his unusual relationship to musical form, colour and image. Building from this, Brad Osborn focuses on Nava's and Calvin Harris's collaborations across fourteen videos. . Osborn combines techniques from visual and musicological scholarship to highlight an emergent style that fuses Harris's verse-chorus designs with Nava's blending of virtual and natural worlds. In his essay, Jonathan Leal moves closer still, placing the spotlight squarely on Nava's expressive and expansive use of colour. While Smith identifies a transmedial use of pastel shades in Coppola's work, here, Leal situates Nava's work within contemporary forms of colour processing and saturation, noting how the director, working in our age of screen proliferation, app development and ubiquitous social media presence, overcomes the normalisation of visual overload by defamiliarising certain audiovisual strategies.

Following the Nava module is a section focused on music video's centrifugal forces; of the peculiar forms of visual sonicity that arise when a director moves back and forth between music video and other forms. Vernallis, in the first of three investigations of music-based

¹⁶ Gorbman, "Auteur Music", in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 149.

transmedial projects, offers a reading of music video director Dave Meyers. Referring to work created over the last twenty-five years, Vernallis traces the ways in which his work has become more politically engaged and responsive to the song, changes that have been impacted by his photography and film work. Lisa Perrott, who coins the phrase “transmedia surrealism”, changes tact, homing in on the collaborative relationship between David Bowie and Floria Sigismondi to posit music video itself as a transmedial form. In her exploration of their generative and dialogic process of world-building across projects, she identifies several unfolding stylistic developments, including angular rhythms supported by stop-motion pixilation, contrasting camera movements and disorientating depths-of-field. Perrott’s work draws together ideas at play in several other chapters, including hauntology and temporality, which underpin the Lynch module, and a critical engagement with *Gesamtkunstwerk* (or total artwork), an idea that flows through our essays on von Trier. As her analysis progresses, Perrott is able to frame Bowie himself as himself a medium to be moulded and shaped across media.

In their close audiovisual analysis of the *Valtari Mystery Film Experiment* (2012), a group of videos—or what the authors call “soundtrack instigated films”—by different visual artists for the sixth studio album of Icelandic post-rock band Sigur Rós, Gareth Schott and Karen Barbour find transmedia style emerging vertically, as associations and progressions are forged from sound to image, song to video. Noting the melancholy and nostalgia that underpins the band’s sonic response to their homeland, the authors use the reciprocal fluidity between the structure of the post-rock songs and the human movement and gestures they evoke to develop a theory of distributed authorship for music performance and filmmaking.

Transmedia directors create work that demands new modes of analysis. While many of our authors deal with these demands, Lori Burns places methodology at the centre of her chapter. Through the construction of a digital storymap able to analyse, at a micro level, audiovisual gesture and rhythm, Burns proposes a new approach to music video that treads the boundary between multimodality and transmediality. Jess Cope's stop motion animation for Steven Wilson's "Routine" video (*Hand.Cannot.Erase.*, 2015) is used as a casestudy to show how a multi-dimensional artwork that includes video, artefacts, written texts, music and performances can offer a complex reading of human subjectivity and social experience.

Social experience and identity become the driving force for Burns' companion piece, which moves away from the fixed forms of music video and film to explore the fragmented transmediality that floods the participatory culture of social media. Here, Gabrielle Lochard investigates the confusion that arises when internet projects extend into and absorb other media forms and autobiographical events. Using Instagram celebrity Jay Versace to question the representation of queer black youth in online culture, Lochard cross-references Instagram content and the use of emojis to reveal non-normative viewing strategies. Versace's involvement with the Reebok campaign, which sees him repost photos and videos from the brand, is particularly interesting as it highlights the mediation of real-life on online platforms. Is this autobiography, puppetry or pure fiction?

Lying between these close investigations of transmedia directors and internet heroes are four large modules that focus on filmmakers who, although not beginning life as music video directors, are nevertheless radical and progressive *auteur mélomanes*. Wes Anderson, Barry Jenkins and David Lynch have all formed long-lasting partnerships with composers, allowing audiovisual rhythms and complexities to develop across projects, while von Trier, who, while

abstaining from soundtrack music in his Dogme '95 films, later featured fragmented, culturally dissonant pre-existent music within his work. While many of our book's directors bring music video aesthetics into long-play work, in these modules we see new forms of audiovisuality begin to permeate films, internet projects, music albums, music videos, and commercials; this musicalisation of form and style loosens conventional narrative textures. This process of musicalisation forms the basis of our four-essay David Lynch module, in which Greg Hainge argues that the director's use of granular synthesis (a process used in music production to stretch time and shift pitch) to contort temporal flow influences our experience of time by recalibrating our sense of duration. Borrowing ideas from quantum theory, and arguing that Lynch's signature style and thematic development is rooted in the specificity of his audiovisual medium, Hainge analyses moments where teleological time in Lynch's film and long-play television series appears to unravel. In my chapter, I treat this temporal fluidity more broadly. Referring to hauntological affordances similar to those that Perrott reveals in the Bowie-Sigismondi collaboration, I follow drones, room tones, acousmatic soundscapes and ruptured lip-syncs through Lynch's films, TV shows, internet projects and music videos. For me, these recurrent dissonant moments of sonic disruption operate like Mark Fischer's description of the "eerie absence", becoming audiovisual affect able to signify significant emotional or aesthetic upheaval between and across texts.¹⁷ John McGrath's chapter closes the module with a focus on a specific technique. For him, Lynch's unusual penchant for extreme sonic slowness, vari-speed and glitch in his work for film, television and commercials enables cinematic time to stretch out, making room for emotions to develop over long periods; these moments can be condensed and sped-up for short-form works.

¹⁷ Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016).

Completing this module, Elena Del Río develops the previous three chapters through an exploration of Lynch's aesthetics of expression. While I reveal a type of immateriality at play in Lynch's work, for Del Río, the notion of the formless can be seen as a paradoxical type of consistency, one based on Gilbert Simondon's philosophy of variability, mutability and the formless, that are determined by the exchange of information and differential energy between systems. For her, viewing Lynch's work evacuates fixed forms and identities and disrupts conventional concepts of individual subjectivity. Del Río calls for a new approach to transmedia based not on the recurrence of motifs, themes, and objects, but on morphogenesis/ontogenesis; "the process that traces the emergence and mutability of forms." Only in this way do Lynch's film simulate complex forms of reality that operate beneath formed substances.

Discussions of audiovisual temporality and speed also drive our Barry Jenkins module. Like Hainge and McGrath, Dale Chapman sees sonic slowness and slowing as processes able to disrupt traditional cinematic form. In an interview with Nicholas Britell about his time-stretched and pitch-shifted score for *Moonlight* (2016), Chapman draws our attention to the composer's appropriation of the 1990s "chopped and screwed" aesthetic, which sees artists remixing and chopping up hip hop by slowing its tempo, dropping beats and scratching vinyl. Applying the aesthetic to his orchestral textures, which descend and deepen in both pitch and emotion, Britell allows temporal distortion to take us into the emotional heart of the story. In his companion piece, Kwami Coleman investigates how blackness, masculinity and queerness can reconfigure transmedial assemblage by directing our attention to Jenkins's next collaboration with Britell, the film *If Beale Street Could Talk* (2018). Again, temporality is key. In many ways, Jenkins' careful use of recordings, listening and physical audio devices echoes Wes Anderson's love of analogue technology (as we'll see below) and Lynch's

recurrent tropes of a record stylus and scenes of listening. But here, Coleman notes how onscreen vinyl recordings of late-1950s and early-1960s jazz and rhythm-and-blues evoke an external, clock-time that causes friction against Britell's nondiegetic leitmotivic score, which suggests a more malleable, non-linear temporality more attuned to the interior, emotional states of the characters. Coleman reads these plural temporalities as embodying an experiential subjectivity unique to African American young adults in New York City in the early 1960s. Following these two close analyses is Vernallis gives us an insight into production practice with her interview with the editor for *Moonlight*, Joi McMillon, who became the first African-American female to win an Oscar for Best Editing.

The four chapters that make up the Wes Anderson module move outwards to assess how emotion, complexity and authenticity unravel and augment not only across audiovisual work, but also beyond it through fandom and cosplay. Warren Buckland kicks off with a consideration of the director's "new sincerity"; an aesthetic-affective approach to storyworld building that Buckland identifies as a "synthetic and collective mode of knowing". While Buckland keeps things broad, Theo Cateforis tightens the transmedial focus. For him, it is Anderson's quirky exploration of the confused and intertwined space between childhood innocence and the seriousness of adult experiences that gathers the directors' work into a coherent yet evolving style. Through an analysis of Anderson's collaborative work with composer Mark Mothersbaugh, Cateforis draws our attention to the emergent audiovisual sensibility that ripens through their four-film collaboration. Ewan Clark uses Cateforis's analysis as the starting point for his close reading of Anderson's later films, created in collaboration with composer Alexandre Desplat. Drawing on musicological processes, Clark shows how the composer, while borrowing Mothersbaugh's instrumentation to ensure a coherent transmedial soundworld, nevertheless hones it into transmedial musical timbres that

gather meaning from project to project. Drawing the section to a close, Ben Winters traces Anderson's numerous references to other medial forms, from opera, to novels, kabuki theatre and cinema itself. His focus lies on the persistent trope of analogue audio technology, which is frequently present as both sound and physical objects—record players, tapes, cassettes and telephones. Winters suggests that this technology signifies a sense of the authentic for both characters and audiences. Like Buckland, he moves beyond the frame, here using his ideas of authenticity and the analogue to explore Anderson's recent curation of a museum exhibition in Vienna.

In the book's final module, we focus on Lars von Trier, whose complex relationship to music and sound forms unique and challenging textures. First, Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen provides us with a broad and comprehensive look at the director's transmedial borrowings across his films, from style—the mirroring of cinematic traits from film noir, horror and melodrama—technology—taking inspiration from video, digital programming and animation—and other art forms—music, visual art, theatre and literature. “All this together has widened the spectrum for what a film can do”, explains Thomsen, as she uses comparative analysis to show how these borrowings are both undermined and extended. Drawing on recent theory of haptic affect, Thomsen shows how Trier's film's content and its materiality is pressed into the foreground to form a new politics of seeing.

In her chapter, Linda Badley tightens the focus. Taking the director's snippets and quotes from Wagner's work—and his Ring cycle in particular—as her starting point, she uses Wagner's conceptual *Gesamtkunstwerk* to trace the transmedial currents that course through his New Extreme Cinema films which, as Thomsen also shows, plunder traits of horror, apocalyptic disaster/sci-fi, and pornography. For Badley, von Trier's treatment of the

transmedial *Gesamtkunstwerk* differs from Bowie's audiovisual work, here described by Perrott. Von Trier references numerous artforms and philosophies, and grabs attention through musical soundbites, demonstrating a paradoxical coexistence of "Wagnerian" immersive fusion of the arts and an anti-Wagnerian, post-Brechtian form of distancing. The audience is asked to process allusion and quotation.

Finally, Donald Greig homes in on the director's persistent penchant for early music. Eighteenth-century instrumental music, with its contrapuntal textures and intricate melodies, draws attention to itself and, perhaps for this reason, is rarely found on film soundtracks for it can disrupt conventional methods of audiovisual consumption. Von Trier, suggests Greig, delights in the possibilities of this disruption. Early music fragments, from medieval requiems to Bach's instrumental work abound through his films, yet remain at a distance from the visual events, disengaged, critical and, significantly, culturally isolated from the time and aesthetic of the images. Through the clips' opacities, Brechtian distance is often subverted.

Lisa Perrott: Transmedia, Authorship and Assemblage

As Vernallis and Rogers have shown, the chapters in this volume are framed by a particular context in which the past, present and future of transmedia are not only formative, but have instilled a transformative impulse in the practice of many directors. There has recently been a flurry of scholarly energy devoted to examining transmedia storytelling, much of which has focused on how stories develop and extend across media, texts, and platforms. While paving the way for vigorous dialogue about what constitutes transmedia storytelling, scholars such as David Bordwell and Henry Jenkins acknowledge the difficulties of thinking "outside the

franchise model”.¹⁸ One pitfall of an economically overdetermined model is that the artistic motivations to work across media may be overshadowed by an emphasis upon transmedia storytelling in relation to franchise development, foundational canons and what Jenkins calls “mothership” projects.¹⁹ Looking beyond “mothership” projects as transmedial progenitors, Jenkins has emphasized the role played by fans in elaborating storyworlds across diverse media and platforms. His definition of a “transmedia story” is one that “unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole”.²⁰ Such a definition implies the centrality of narrative continuity and canonical world-building as essential ingredients for ensuring a coherent whole across media. The centrality of these ingredients inform the logic of several recent publications on transmedia, a context that provides a contextual springboard for this volume.

While our contributing authors have drawn usefully from this existing literature, as we have seen, the focal points of transmedia storytelling have also provided useful points of departure. Diverging from the emphasis on storytelling in the recent literature on transmedia, we invited scholars to undertake close examinations of director’s artistic and collaborative process across media, and to theorise these in relation to new approaches to media convergence and

¹⁸ Bordwell, “Observations in Film Art: Now Leaving Platform 1” (2009), at

<http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2009/08/19/now-leaving-from-platform-1/> (accessed 12 December 2018).

¹⁹ Jenkins, “The Reign of the ‘Mothership’”, 244.

²⁰ Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 95-96.

assemblage. As a result, the chapters in this volume reveal insights about the relations between transmedia and collaborative authorship.

While narrative continuity remains for some directors an important facet of transmedia, narrative discontinuity, audiovisual discontinuity and “loose continuity” also provide important strategies for transmedial artists with avant-garde leanings. Just as the traditional concept of an auteur is suggested by a director’s persistent continuity of style across media, singular notions of authorship are challenged by those authors who provide close examinations of dialogism, polyphony and collaborative experimentation. These authors chart the transmedial play generated within the collaborative matrix of director, artist and fan.

As such, the chapters in this volume offer alternatives and extensions to the existing literature on transmedia, authorship and assemblage. The directors and artists who are the objects of our study offer a compelling contribution to the field. While their medial crossings are in part shaped by contemporary agents such as neoliberal economics and media convergence, many are influenced by the long and rich history of transmedia. While the directors and authors in this volume speak from diverse identity positions and geographic locales, they also draw upon diverse histories of art, literature and culture, as testified by their engagement with antecedents to transmedia, such as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, “colour music”, surrealist strategies, absurdist humor, *détournement*, Baroque music, Brechtian staging, mythical archetype and psychodrama. While revealing new approaches toward technology, experimentation and assemblage, these approaches are examined in relation to the historical and cultural context in which transmedia artistry is currently practiced. This book contributes a unique view of what it means to be a transmedia director in tune with the present moment; within the context of its cultural past.

Bibliography

Bordwell, David. "Intensified Continuity: Visual Style in Contemporary American Film" *Film Quarterly* 55, no.3 (2002): 16-28.

Bordwell, David. "Observations in Film Art: Now Leaving Platform 1" (2009), at <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2009/08/19/now-leaving-from-platform-1/> (accessed 12 December 2018).

Dyer, Richard. *Only Entertainment*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005.

Dyer, Richard, and Paul MacDonald. *Stars*. London: BFI Publishing, 1979.

Gorbman, Claudia. "Auteur Music." In *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Leppert, 149-162. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Jenkins, Henry. "The Reign of the 'Mothership': Transmedia's Past, Present and Possible Futures." In *Wired TV: Laboring Over an Interactive Future*, ed. Denise Mann, 244-268. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014.

Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

Plantinga, Carl. *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*. John Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Smith, Jeff. *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Tompkins, Joe. "The Makings of a Contradictory Franchise: Revolutionary Melodrama and Cynicism in *The Hunger Games*," *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58, no.1 (2018): 70-90.

Vernallis, Carol. *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Vernallis, Carol. "Music Video, Songs, Sound: Experience, Technique and Emotion in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*," *Screen* 49, no.3 (2008): 277-297.