

**‘Yesterday Once More’: an investigation of the relationship between popular music, audience, and authorial intention in Dennis Potter’s *Pennies from Heaven*, *The Singing Detective*, and *Lipstick on Your Collar*.**

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Stephen Michael Brie.  
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## **Abstract**

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Critical interpretations of Dennis Potter’s television drama serials have tended to take a writer-centred perspective, focusing on establishing links between the dramatist’s life and work. In analysing the popular music content of these texts, critics have consistently postulated the existence of Brechtian distanciation effects on an implied viewer. Although, in order to contextualise Potter’s relationship with popular music, authorial intention is discussed, this study shifts the focus towards empirical interpretations of the musical sequences in *Pennies from Heaven*, *The Singing Detective* and *Lipstick on Your Collar*, and, in doing so, problematises the application of Brechtian theory to those texts. Utilising theoretical framings drawn from television studies, film studies, literary studies, communication studies, and musicology, the thesis offers interpretation and analysis of empirical material generated in response to both quantitative and qualitative exercises, and sets out to identify, and investigate, the narratological, musicological, and psychological factors which come into play when actual viewers encounter the narratively foregrounded, lip-synched musical sequences in Potter’s serials. The influence of respondent age and gender, of implied author discourse, and of genre expectation on empirical readings are also investigated. The thesis identifies, and attempts to account for, a predisposition on the part of Potter’s musically-infused period dramas to stimulate susceptible viewers to drift away from the performance, and into nostalgic memory excursions, or fabricated imaginings, experiences which often result in narrative amnesia, an inability to subsequently recall and/or recollect elements of narrative detail.

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**‘Yesterday Once More’: an investigation of the relationship between popular music, audience, and authorial intention in Dennis Potter’s *Pennies from Heaven*, *The Singing Detective* and *Lipstick on Your Collar*.**

## **Introduction**

*When I was young I'd listen to the radio,  
Waiting for my favourite songs,  
When they played I'd sing along,  
It made me smile.  
Those were such happy times,  
And not so long ago,  
How I wondered where they'd gone.  
But they're back again,  
Just like a long lost friend,  
All the songs I knew so well...*

The Carpenters, ‘Yesterday Once More.’

As The Carpenters’ lyric suggests, popular songs can weave an extremely powerful nostalgic spell, a fact closely related to their inherent ability to lodge themselves limpet-like in the memory. While prose and poetry are often difficult to memorise efficiently, the memory is far more competent in its ability to process, store, and recall details relating to popular songs. It seems that the combination of lyric, music, and performance-related punctuation and phrasing work together to allow a song’s profile to register in the memory. Once this information has been processed, even a fleeting encounter with a few bars of a song from our past can, like a Proustian madeleine,<sup>1</sup> induce pleasurable or

melancholic nostalgic memory experiences in which '*just like before, it's yesterday once more.*'

Television dramatist Dennis Potter sought to exploit this powerful property of popular music (albeit often in an ironic mode) in many of his texts, moving beyond the tradition of simply using music as underscore, as an episodic marker, or as a device to signal narrative tropes. His most explicit attempt to prominently integrate diegetic popular music within the narrative structure of television drama came in the form of his period 'trilogy'<sup>2</sup> *Pennies from Heaven*,<sup>3</sup> *The Singing Detective*,<sup>4</sup> and *Lipstick on Your Collar*.<sup>5</sup> In these texts Potter sought to utilise popular songs (from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s respectively), not simply as aesthetic embellishments, but, as in opera, as integral elements in the development of narrative exposition and dramatic meaning.<sup>6</sup> In undertaking such a task, he pioneered the dramatic conceit of having characters lip-synch to original, period recordings of popular songs, a device which quickly became his trademark.

Surprisingly, however, given the high levels of criticism generated in response to Potter's work,<sup>7</sup> the relationship between the popular music content of his texts and its communicative effects has, to date, been afforded relatively scant consideration by researchers and critics. This neglect reflects the fact that the musical elements of television dramas are often treated as poor relations of the visual image; although music is commonly highlighted as an important hailing device,<sup>8</sup> its contribution to the construction of televisual discourse is often neglected. The studies undertaken with television drama audiences by researchers such as Ang, Brunsdon, Hallam and Marshment, Heide, and Katz

and Liebes,<sup>9</sup> for example, concentrate mainly on the relationship between the visual image and dramatic content and have, thus, added little to our understanding of the ways in which diegetic music and musicalised narrative impacts upon the television viewing experience. Where the subject of the relationship between Potter's utilisation of popular music and interpretational processes has been broached, critics have avoided actual viewers in favour of a textually constructed hypothetical or implied viewer.<sup>10</sup> In 1993, after discussing the recently transmitted *Lipstick* with friends and acquaintances, the limitations of working exclusively within the confines of hypothetical viewership were highlighted when I became aware of what appeared to be a significant divergence between consistently positive academic critiques of Potter's utilisation of popular music (predominantly based upon critical interpretations and applications of Brechtian distanciation theory), and a popular response which exhibited a wide range of positionings and interpretations ranging from vehement dislike to indifference to enthusiasm to eulogy. In an attempt to gain an insight into the textual, intellectual, and emotional processes responsible for the creation of such an unusual degree of critical agreement, and for what appeared to be a contrastingly wide-ranging collection of empirical positionings, I decided to undertake a comparative study of critical and empirical interpretations of the musical content of *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick*. I was interested in the influence genre convention and expectation might have on empirical responses to the musical content of the texts, in investigating levels of, and reasons for, respondent acceptance or rejection of motivational plausibility in relation to the musical fantasy sequences, with the interpretational effects of Potter's musically constructed characterisation, and in the way that the representation of gender and sexuality are perceived to be represented in, and by,



the musical sequences. I was also keen to find out whether or not the musical sequences in the three texts would be interpreted by respondents in similar ways, or whether they might each produce different types of response because of inherent narrative differences.

The more I thought about what was happening musically within the texts, and, as the study progressed, the more I learnt about the ways in which respondents were processing the musical sequences, the more I came to realise that critics may have taken far too much for granted in terms of audience-text dynamics. As detailed in Chapter 3, the results of this research suggest that critical preferred readings<sup>11</sup> of the texts based on the notion of a hypothetical implied viewer, particularly those used to support claims that Potter should be seen as a Brechtian practitioner who deliberately used music as an ideologically motivated alienation device, may misrepresent both authorial intention and actual viewing experiences. Although the musical sequences in the focus texts did sometimes induce a form of distanciation by acting as catalysts for the development of nostalgic personal memory experiences, experiences which often resulted in what might be termed narrative amnesia (the temporary mental drift away from constructing the storylines of the texts), such responses do not fit comfortably into Brechtian paradigms, and it is extremely unlikely that they were intentionally sought by Potter.

Academic studies of ‘serious’,<sup>12</sup> authored television drama, including the work carried out to date on Potter’s texts, have tended to approach the subject from a writer-centred perspective.<sup>13</sup> Thus, critical response to the musical content of *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick* has been underpinned by the positioning of Potter as an auteur who created

formally complex, thematically serious dramatic works of art. This study investigates the extent to which members of the viewing public might align with, or react against, such formal complexity and thematic sobriety and with such notions of implied authorship. I did not, however, set out with the intention of offering a simplistic exposé of diversity or typicality in relation to the popular reception and interpretation of the musical content of the texts: given the complex nature of the relationship between the televisual text and the contemporary viewer, evidence of diversity would be neither surprising nor particularly interesting. The overriding aim was rather to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of music-related viewing and listening practices. I hoped to add new knowledge to this neglected area by investigating the ways in which narratively expositional, diegetic<sup>14</sup> lip-synched original recordings of popular songs might contribute to the construction of telesonic and televisual meaning in engagement with actual viewers, in contrast to a critically constructed hypothetical viewer.

Once the focus of the study had been identified, I set about a literature review of relevant academic research. I envisaged that the study would need to be informed and supported by theoretical framings drawn from a number of relevant academic disciplines including television studies, film studies, literary studies, communication studies, and musicology. My knowledge of Potter's work was rather episodic and so my first tasks were: to read relevant published academic and popular writings on Potter; to familiarise myself with Potter's published opinions on the subject of popular music; to view for the first time texts such as *Moonlight on the Highway* (ITV, 1969) and *Cream in my Coffee* (ITV, 1980) where Potter had initially experimented with the incorporation of narratively foregrounded

popular music; and to review in detail the three focus texts *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick*.

The next stage of my research involved familiarising myself with approaches to the collection, transcription, coding, and analysis of empirical data. Coming from a literary studies background I had little experience of such practices; I thus set about researching pre-existing television audience studies which had employed ethnographic methodologies.<sup>15</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, I initially utilised a questionnaire which I hoped might highlight potentially lucrative focus areas prior to setting up the first series of interviews. I also experimented with a group dynamic with *Lipstick* respondents. However, because the focus of the research was primarily concerned with the collection, coding, and analysis of memory-related data, the intensive individual interview rather than the focus group or the quantitative questionnaire was the preferred format for engagement with respondents. In all, a total of 235 individuals took part in this study, with 25 being interviewed on a one-to-one basis. The inherent need for a focus on one-to-one qualitative contact, together with the fact that the research was carried out by a single researcher on a part-time basis with no financial funding, meant that the recruitment of large numbers of respondents was never seriously contemplated. Realising from the outset that I would be working within the limitations of the practically possible, at no stage did I expect the findings of this thesis to carry any representational validity. Having said that, although the conclusions offered below were specifically made in relation to comments made by the individuals taking part in this study in response to their experiences of the three texts under discussion, they *may*, nevertheless, have a significance beyond the respondent

sample and beyond the focus texts. Hopefully this study will function as a 'pilot' project to inspire other researchers to investigate the relationship between popular music and audiences of various kinds.

I next turned my attention to musicology. Although I had interests ranging across the musical spectrum, my expertise specifically related to the history and sociology of popular music. My knowledge of musicological theory was rather limited, and I had no experience at all of methodological approaches to the collection and analysis of empirical interpretations of popular music. I therefore began to familiarise myself with the work of musicologists such as Frith, Middleton, and Tagg.<sup>16</sup> I also attended several Masters seminars given by Tagg at The Institute of Popular Music at The University of Liverpool. These sessions proved particularly useful when it came to formulating approaches to the collection, coding, and interpretation of music-related experiences. For example, it was at these sessions that I first became aware of the possibility of developing a methodology for the collection of empirical responses to musical extracts based upon the concept of verbal-visual associations. By asking people to write down words which relate to the images or ideas which come into their minds when they hear a piece of music, it is possible to gain some knowledge of their musical experiences, and to document the way in which both lyrical and instrumental music can transmit de-codable cultural references. This methodology is theorised in Chapter 2 and practically illustrated in Chapter 3.

Because I would be working with responses based on memory, I needed to familiarise myself with relevant cognitive theory pertaining to approaches to the processes involved in

recall and recollection. I also needed to think about potentially practical methods of coding and interpreting memory-related responses. Because I was unable to find any similar studies, I had to construct my own practical memory tasks and memory related coding procedures, and these are described in detail in Chapter 2.

In planning the structure of the thesis, after much procrastination I decided to present three chapters, the first of which offers contextualising discussions of Potter's place in the development of British television drama, of critical interpretations of the musical content of *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick*, and of Potter's authorial intentions and general attitude toward popular music. The main body of the study, however, is chiefly concerned with the gathering, transcribing, coding, and analysis of non-specialised textual criticism, ie, with the collation and analytical interpretation of popular interpretations. Chapter 2 focuses on the development and practice of the various methodologies utilised to facilitate the collection, transcription, coding, and analysis of the empirical material offered in response to the three focus texts, and Chapter 3 presents an analysis of those responses.

The idea that definitive meanings of the texts will be revealed through the interpretation of empirical experience is clearly as misguided as the notion that either textual analysis, or exposition and interpretation of authorial intention, can provide definitive readings. However, by combining approaches in this study, I hoped that some of the inherent limitations of each may be compensated for. While agreeing with Nightingale's claim that the audience-text relationship is 'a chimera which can only ever be apprehended

partially',<sup>17</sup> I offer no apologies for seeking to gain *some* understanding of *some* of the processes behind the generation, experience, and articulation of music-related televisual pleasures, and of the ways in which individuals engage with the musical content of Potter's texts.

## Chapter 1

### **Contextualising Potter's relationship with popular music.**

#### **Critical responses to Potter's musical serials.**

Although, as Jacobs has highlighted, there had been critical writing on television drama since the 1930s,<sup>18</sup> television did not fully develop as a subject for academic interest until the mid 1970s. Then, stimulated initially by articles by industry insiders Troy Kennedy-Martin and John McGrath which argued the case against naturalism,<sup>19</sup> it became the subject of considerable debates amongst academic critics such as McArthur, MacCabe, and Williams.<sup>20</sup> Looking back on some of those debates, many of which developed out of the inappropriate application of film studies critical aesthetics to television drama, most of the arguments seem ponderous and obfuscatory, centred as they are on politically motivated, pedantic, and often abstract definitions of 'realism.'<sup>21</sup> As television studies developed with the widespread availability of video, academic and popular interest in television drama also increased and critics such as Brandt, Nelson, and Tulloch sought to promote an aesthetic less influenced by the application of film theory and more relevant to the idiosyncracies of television drama.<sup>22</sup> Although individual writers such as Bennett, Bleasdale, Griffiths, Mercer, McGovern, and La Plante have attracted critical interest,<sup>23</sup> the main focus has centred on Dennis Potter. To date there have been four published biographies,<sup>24</sup> a book-length critical reassessment of his work,<sup>25</sup> a collection of

international essays,<sup>26</sup> and an extensive analytical interview.<sup>27</sup> Several books on television drama also include chapters which deal with Potter's texts.<sup>28</sup> In addition, a significant number of related journal and newspaper articles also exist.<sup>29</sup>

Ignoring Potter's insistent claim that 'What I do isn't autobiographical',<sup>30</sup> much of the critical writing on Potter has come from a biographical perspective, with critics consistently attempting to link the work to the life. Into this category comes Purser's 1981 overview, which places Potter's early work, from *The Glittering Coffin*<sup>31</sup> to *Blue Remembered Hills*,<sup>32</sup> in relation to his working-class origins and to his debilitating skin disease. The first book-length study, Stead's *Dennis Potter* (1993) also concentrates on linking biographical detail to the texts. Like Purser, Stead argues that Potter's work strongly reflects both his socio-economic background and his psychological profile. For Stead, consistency of location, character, and plot lead to the construction of what he terms a recognisable 'Potterland', a fictional space in which Potter plays out his life experiences and fantasies in a specifically English context.<sup>33</sup> Because of his obvious affinity with Potter, Stead's book suffers from a refusal to accept the fact that Potter's work was often inconsistent. Stead also glosses over Potter's predisposition towards repetition, or self-plagiarism, a weakness highlighted by Caughie who, while praising *Detective* as 'one of the significant works of post-war British modernism',<sup>34</sup> feels justified in criticising Potter's:

constant revisiting of his demons and recycling of his work [which] represents not so much a deepening of his vision as a failure of his imagination.<sup>35</sup>



In *Fight & Kick & Bite: The Life and Work of Dennis Potter*, Gilbert also takes a less than complimentary view of Potter's inconsistency. In the light of the negative responses he received from the Potter Estate after losing out to Humphrey Carpenter in the scramble to be designated the official Potter biographer, it is perhaps not surprising to find that Gilbert presents what might be termed an irreverent perspective on many aspects of the Potter oeuvre: thus, *Sufficient Carbohydrate* is described as 'repellent in a gratuitous, destructive way';<sup>36</sup> *Lipstick* as 'a six-part serial that runs well nigh six hours and has nothing to say';<sup>37</sup> and *Midnight Movie* as 'a piece poised between genre parody and self-parody.'<sup>38</sup> Gilbert identifies a falling-off in the quality of Potter's work after *Detective*, and suggests that the reason for this decline was the estrangement of long-term producer Kenith Trodd. Taking into account the ensemble nature of television drama production, which works to counterbalance simplistic concepts of authorship, Gilbert's claim is a strong one.<sup>39</sup>

Carpenter's authorised biography eventually appeared in 1998. Running to 590 pages of main text, it is, as might be expected from such an established biographer,<sup>40</sup> detailed and meticulously researched. To the surprise and dismay of the Potter Estate, however, Carpenter explores some of the more murky and salacious areas of Potter's life in yet another attempt to link life and work.<sup>41</sup> Although Carpenter does unearth a number of new sources, much of the text revisits previously covered ground and offers little in the way of fresh insights into the texts themselves. On the biographical level, the most interesting section of Carpenter's book is that covering Potter's attempt to complete *Karaoke* and *Cold Lazarus* in the final weeks of his life.

Rarely does such negative criticism permeate the pages of John R. Cook's biography *Dennis Potter: A Life on Screen* originally published in 1995 and updated in 1998.<sup>42</sup> Cook takes both a chronological and thematic approach to Potter's life and work, examining all the texts and relating them to Potter's journey from birth to maverick 'Golden Age' writer to canonical auteur to his extremely public death. The revised edition adds commentary on the posthumously screened *Karaoke* and *Cold Lazarus*, and offers a reply to criticisms of the original edition.<sup>43</sup> Cook is clearly a Potter devotee and supports the notion of Potter as a television auteur. In particular Cook tracks the themes of class betrayal,<sup>44</sup> the link between sex and death,<sup>45</sup> the search for a post-Fall lost Eden,<sup>46</sup> and the relationships between author and character, and between fiction and truth.<sup>47</sup> Cook meticulously teases out these strands, mapping out a web of interconnecting themes and texts. At the centre of Cook's web sits the novel *Hide and Seek*,<sup>48</sup> which, he argues, provides 'the crucial clues as to how and why Potter's writing for television began to shift - from despair to hope.'<sup>49</sup> Cook spends considerable effort offering psychoanalytical perspectives on the content of Potter's texts. Many of the points made in relation to Freudian concepts such as Oedipal relationships, castration complexes and voyeuristic pleasures can, however, only ever be maintained in relation to an implied psyche both in terms of character motivation and of viewer response. Because his interpretations draw so heavily on the principal of the implied reader it can be argued that Cook allows little space for alternative readings.

Creeber's critical reassessment, *Dennis Potter: Between Two Worlds*, is presented as the first detailed critique of Potter's drama to call into question the critical assumptions so

frequently made between the life and the work.<sup>50</sup> Although Creeber does adopt less of a chronological approach to Potter's work than many of his predecessors, in effect biography still plays a significant role in his analysis. From a cultural studies position which seeks to combine aspects of Romanticism and culturalism with marxist, feminist, and psychoanalytical theory, Creeber analyses Potter's work through the conceptual frameworks of authorship, class and nostalgia, religion, popular culture and gender. Like Stead and Cook, he presents Potter as a specifically English organic modernist in the tradition of Hoggart and Williams, and makes links between the dramatist's work and his position within the British class system, a position which Creeber describes as being caught between two worlds, the world of his working-class origins, and the middle-class world he inhabited for the majority of his life. It is this positioning which, according to Creeber, produced Potter's modernist sensibility. In making such assertions Creeber draws upon earlier commentaries such as Colley and Davies's 1980 paper '*Pennies from Heaven: Music, Image Text.*'<sup>51</sup> Colley and Davies place Potter within the Orwellian tradition. They argue that, in terms of class, both Orwell and Potter were fascinated by the social 'other', the middle-class Orwell by the working-class, and the working-class Potter by the petit-bourgeoisie. They also suggest that both writers shared the belief that industrialisation had brought negative forces which progressively undermined the cultural life of an organic society which, they believed, existed in the pre-industrial era. From their marxist perspective Colley and Davies seek to define Potter as a left-wing writer and seem disappointed to conclude that *Pennies* is essentially a psychological drama which exhibits a 'brazen capitulation' to the bourgeois happy ending.<sup>52</sup> The social criticisms which the angry young Potter had flirted with in *The Glittering Coffin* were thus seen to be sadly

lacking in the serial. This is hardly surprising as 18 years separate the two Potter texts, years which saw his political philosophies undergo significant modification; by the time *Lipstick* was transmitted in 1993, Potter was openly admitting that many of his beliefs were ‘what would commonly...be called right-wing.’<sup>53</sup>

Such discussions lead logically into what has developed into a heated debate amongst critics about whether Potter should be positioned as a modernist or as a postmodernist writer. In relation to this thesis, I am less interested in the argument *per se* as in the way in which such positionings might impact upon his utilisation of popular music, and in how it might, or might not, influence viewers’ interpretations of the musical sequences. Advocates for positioning Potter as a modernist include Creeber, Cook, and Caughie. Citing Frankfurt School influences, Creeber points to Potter’s savage attacks on mass culture and his desire to ‘return and re-visit an apparently simpler and more communal world’<sup>54</sup> as evidence of his modernist sensibilities; Cook argues that Potter’s emphasis on the primacy of art, and on an inner as opposed to an outer world constitutes a modernist perspective;<sup>55</sup> and Caughie, while admitting that the whole notion of a popular modernism within capitalist society might be seen as a contradiction in terms, nevertheless points to the way in which Potter profited from the sophisticated development of editing techniques and the fluidity of the filmed image which, suggests Caughie, offers:

ways of engaging the viewer in the instabilities and disorientations of dream states, fantasies and the surreal, and of making the unconscious material.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, although both Creeber and Caughie approach Potter's work from perspectives influenced by negative notions of mass production developed by the Frankfurt School, their focuses are different in that, while Creeber emphasises Potter's negative relationship with mass culture and the technology used to create it, Caughie foregrounds the way in which Potter pragmatically sought to exploit its potential for disorientating his viewers 'smack in the middle of the orientation process.'<sup>57</sup> One of the ways that Potter sought to achieve this disorientation, while at the same time offering a modernist representation of internality, was to create a form of psychological impressionism in which, according to Caughie:

the subjective and the objective compete for validity, in which memory and history, fantasy and reality, dream and everyday life...each claim their own materiality.<sup>58</sup>

As Caughie goes on to argue, modernism enters contemporary culture as a discourse 'trailing clouds of the elite, the experimental, the difficult.'<sup>59</sup> If words such as 'elite', 'experimental', and 'difficult' define modernism, then the use of those very words to describe Potter's texts by many of the respondents who took part in this study tends to endorse a modernist rather than a postmodernist positioning. Such a simplistic approach, both to modernism in general and to Potter's work in particular is, of course, conceptually unsound. If Potter is to be labelled a modernist, and, as I suggest below he demonstrably was in terms of aesthetic sensibility, then we must, following Caughie, add the seemingly oxymoronic prefix 'popular' to that description. Potter's dramas were not confined to some late-night graveyard slot on a minority channel; most were broadcast at prime time

on the BBC and ITV networks, many were repeated, and many, including the serials under discussion here, attracted significant viewing figures: *Pennies* attracted an audience of 12 million viewers for Episode 1,<sup>60</sup> and averaged eight million over the six episodes; *Detective* drew eight million viewers for Episode One and an average of six million across the six episodes, and *Lipstick*, averaged four-and-a-half million viewers across the six episodes.<sup>61</sup> Such drawing power is reflected in the fact that most respondents, even those who had used the words ‘elite’, ‘weird’, ‘strange’ and ‘intellectual’, tended to find some pleasures in viewing the serials (see Chapter 3). If modernism is to be equated with the concepts of art and high-culture, and *vice-versa*, and Potter (and most academic critics), clearly believed (and in the case of critics continue to believe) that he was creating art, then perhaps *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick*, in utilising popular culture and taking forms which are, arguably, far more consumer friendly than many earlier modernist works, might best be described as popular modernism. However, although such texts prove that it is possible to simultaneously attract viewers and stand out from the general flow of television, the results of this study suggest that the tactic of courting popularity through the use of popular music can have effects which may work against some of the fundamental principles underpinning modernism. In many cases respondents taking part in this study experienced a form of psychic drift-off, musically-induced mental disassociations from the narrative of the text, experiences which in turn often resulted in what I term narrative amnesia, an inability to recall and/or recollect details about those sections of the plot relating to the musical sequences. Such drift-off also negatively affected levels of respondent-character engagement. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 3, the use of diegetic, narratively foregrounded original recordings of popular songs in these

texts often unwittingly contrived to undermine the intellectual project of modernism as articulated by critics such as Caughie.

While critics such as Caughie, Cook, and Creeber have highlighted Potter's modernist tendencies, it is perhaps understandable that there is, amongst others, what might be termed a postmodernist lobby intent upon claiming the dramatist's works for their cause. Formally there are aspects of Potter's work which might attract the label. Corrigan, for example, constructs an argument for positioning *Detective* as a postmodern epic, as 'a kind of music-image cartoon with the exaggerated gestures and tautological clichés...that support and dissipate contemporary narrative,'<sup>62</sup> and he offers the serial as an example of the way in which the postmodern narrative has created 'a kind of arrested body-character [Marlow] narratively suspended or dissipated across an evacuation of time.'<sup>63</sup> For Corrigan, Marlow's body becomes:

the textual location of the central crisis within contemporary narrative, a human figure at once stripped of motivations and spread across the boredom of an immobile and interminable present,<sup>64</sup>

and he, thus, offers the character as a representation of postmodern man, a dislocated subject engaged in a futile search for a fundamentally unobtainable self.

Gras also situates Potter as a postmodernist writer, particularly in relation to the way he answers the 'questions of the moment',<sup>65</sup> questions such as those brought about by the

withering away of stable foundations as the Grand Narratives of history are gradually eroded. In *Detective*, argues Gras, Potter shows how we can no longer:

search for formal structures with universal values, but must, instead, engage in specific historical investigations that uncover how we constitute ourselves and are constituted into being the subject of our discursive practices,<sup>66</sup>

basing his argument on the way in which Marlow's physical and mental rehabilitation is brought about by the redemptive power of personal memory.

Hunningher also discusses elements of postmodernism in *Detective*, focusing on Potter's exploration of the relationship between the writer and his creation.<sup>67</sup> Hunningher's argument for positioning these texts as postmodern is based on the idea that they illustrate and support the poststructuralist idea that we are constructed as subjects by language. In *Detective*, as in many of his dramas, Potter lays bare the fictionality of characterisation, foregrounding the constructed nature of fictional characters by playing meta-fictional/meta-dramatic games with the Two Mysterious Men (Ron Cook and George Rossi), who begin to realise that they are little more than actants in a fictional text:

First Mysterious Man: We should not have run.

Second Mysterious Man: Did we have a choice ?

First Mysterious Man: What are we doing here ?

Second Mysterious Man: Perhaps we're. I mean, perhaps we -  
(Episode Five).

Such an exchange is reminiscent of that between Hamm and Clov in Beckett's absurdist drama *Endgame* which concludes with Hamm asking 'We're not beginning to...to...mean



something ?'<sup>68</sup> Potter continues the meta-fictional joke in *Detective* (and it is almost certainly meant to be taken as a joke), by having Binney (Patrick Malahide) and Nicola (Janet Suzman) speak the textual punctuation:

Binney: You did it question mark.

Nicola: I did it exclamation mark.

Binney: He signed question mark.

Nicola: He signed exclamation mark

Binney: Oh comma aren't you the clever one dash exclamation mark.  
(Episode Five)

Hunningher may be taking Potter's literary games too seriously. As discussed in detail below, in terms of sensibility, Potter was essentially a modernist, and one way of interpreting such playfulness is to acknowledge it as an attempt by Potter to present a pastiche of postmodern fiction rather than as a serious attempt to join the ranks of postmodern writers.

Like Gras and Hunningher, Bondebjerg identifies postmodern elements in *Detective*, specifically highlighting the way in which the serial recycles themes and visual motifs, employs a system of competing syuzhets, and deconstructs identity.<sup>69</sup> Drawing on Olson's work on meta-television,<sup>70</sup> and on Eco's writings on postmodern paradigms,<sup>71</sup> Bondebjerg finds Potter making 'constant efforts to visualise the flow of a postmodern consciousness saturated with popular culture and mass media.'<sup>72</sup> Having identified these postmodern elements, however, Bondebjerg, like Caughie, argues that *Detective* does not mesh unproblematically with postmodernist paradigms principally because the narrative is

centred on a search for meaning, a search which eventually proves successful, with all narrative enigmas and ambiguities ultimately resolved. Because Potter's communication has 'substance and meaning beneath the chaotic surface', Bondebjerg argues that Potter should not be labelled a postmodernist 'in the uncritical Baudrillard sense of the word.'<sup>73</sup> Nelson makes a similar claim, arguing that *Detective* is 'no paratactical bricolage with narrative strands or free-floating signifiers simply left unresolved to play against each other', and that it is Potter's 'concessionary acknowledgement of detective fiction's generic tendency towards closure and the audience's need for potential answers in TV drama' that 'militates ultimately against the conception of [*Detective*] as postmodern fiction.'<sup>74</sup>

There has been relatively less critical interest in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, possibly because their narrative structures are more conventional than that of *Detective*. In relation to *Pennies*, there tends to be more of a critical consensus about its categorisation, with Potter's exploration of psychological expressionism, and his valorisation and respect for a past textually signified as organic and superior influencing critics to position it as a modernist text.<sup>75</sup> Critical approaches to *Lipstick*, however, like those to *Detective*, tend to identify both modernist elements (specifically psychological expressionism),<sup>76</sup> and postmodernist traits (an underlying ironic playfulness, and a pastiche, retro pop-art 1950s *mise-en-scène*).<sup>77</sup>

From the point of view of this study, the positioning of Potter's work *per se* as modernist or postmodernist is less important than the way in which such positionings relate to his

utilisation of popular music. In terms of formal intentionality, the use of textually foregrounded diegetic popular music to represent psychic states, or to use Potter's own phrase, 'the workings of the head',<sup>78</sup> suggests a modernist mode of musical functionality. Rather than the characters singing the songs, in effect, the songs sing the characters. Conversely, however, because Potter playfully employs popular music to offer ironic comment on characters and events, and because he shared many of the negative opinions expounded by Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School towards popular music (see below), his appropriation was scornful rather than reverential. In knowingly and playfully employing what he referred to as 'ludicrous and banal' songs,<sup>79</sup> he arguably steps into postmodern territory. However, because the very notions of modernity and postmodernity depend on slippery, often abstract, signifiers, associational categories such as modern and postmodern, modernism and postmodernism, modernist and postmodernist, are also correspondingly unstable. The safest conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that Potter's work, as distinct from his philosophical sensibility, exhibits both modernist and postmodernist elements, and, thus, defies simplistic categorisation.

Considering the amount of critical writing on Potter's work, surprisingly little has been published to date about its communicative effects. Coward is one critic who has, at least theoretically, shifted the focus for study from the author to the audience as a site for the creation of meaning. In her analysis of *Detective*, for example, she claims that the popular reception of the drama highlights a developed ability on the part of the average television audience to read the codes of television.<sup>80</sup> Influenced by both Barthesian theory and the work done by Foucault on the nature of authorship, Coward stresses the relative

insignificance of authorial control in relation to the ensemble medium of television, and the corresponding importance of the viewer as the place where the meaning of the text ultimately (if anywhere) resides.<sup>81</sup> As Coward points out, Potter uses *Detective* to question the relevance of the author in the sense making process, asking a question previously posed by both Beckett and Foucault - 'What matter who's speaking ?'<sup>82</sup> Potter's position regarding the authorship debate did, however, often fluctuate between an allegiance to the idea of totally removing the author from the interpretative equation, as demonstrated in the following quotation:

One of the reasons I chose to write 'drama' rather than prose fiction is precisely to avoid the question which has so damaged, or intellectually denuded, the contemporary novel: 'Who is saying this ?'<sup>83</sup>

and a paradoxical condemnation of the potential of the television production process for limiting the power of the authorial voice:

The worst thing about television, perhaps, is the way that so many aspects of its administration, its technology, its expensiveness and its method of distribution conspire together...to diminish or threaten or drown out or even stop the mouth of that 'individual voice' which all even half-way creative writing must aspire to articulate.<sup>84</sup>

As happens when comparing many Potterisms, the contradiction is glaringly obvious, perhaps too obvious. One gets the impression that Potter is once again consciously leading the critic a merry dance, playing around with the concept of the creative process and its relationship to the individual, and perhaps also giving an indication of one of the reasons for his nostalgic preoccupation with a (so-called) 'Golden Age' when the writer, rather

than the director or the producer, was the centre of the creative process in television drama. The relationship between Potter and the 'Golden Age' of British television drama is more complicated than most critics suggest. Although a contemporary of canonical television dramatists and practitioners such as Jeremy Sandford, Jim Allen, Alan Mercer, Trevor Griffiths, Ken Loach and Tony Garnett, in terms of political and philosophical sensibility, literary influence, and aesthetic preference, Potter was arguably closer to the European *avant-garde* absurdist theatrical tradition as exemplified by dramatists such as Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Samuel Beckett. Potter's work has always centred on the individual psyche rather than on the collective and the social. His early television dramas such as *Alice* (BBC, 1965), and *Where the Buffalo Roam* (BBC, 1966), written and produced for *The Wednesday Play* series at the height of that strand's obsession with materialist television drama, have little in common with the overtly political, social realist tradition which informs the television dramas produced by the Allen-Loach-Garnett team. Conversely, his work does tend to exhibit a heightened sense of the poetic and a strong psychological, existentialist, absurdist sensibility which positions it alongside such theatrical dramas as *The Maids*, *The Balcony*, and *Endgame*. If Potter is to be likened to any British television dramatist it is arguably Harold Pinter in that both exhibit strong literary influences, both attempt, although in different ways, to represent internal states, and both concentrate on depicting middle-class obsessions. Unlike Pinter, however, Potter was prepared to compromise his modernist artistic integrity, incorporating potentially nostalgic original recordings of popular songs centrally within his narratives in an attempt to broaden his audience base beyond the 'chattering' classes traditionally seen as the target audience for serious television drama. In order to understand the reasons why Potter's

utilisation of popular music in television drama was deemed to be innovative, and why critics have tended to approach his work from a Brechtian perspective, it is necessary to discuss the ways in which music has traditionally functioned in television programmes.<sup>85</sup>

### **Popular music and the moving image.**

Although critical texts on dramatic genres, or individual programmes, often make some reference to soundtrack, most do so almost grudgingly. At the time of writing a comprehensive, book-length study of the use of music in television has yet to be published. Those texts which claim to cover the use of music in both film and television often confine their analysis of television to a single chapter or even to a few pages. Mundy's *Popular Music on Screen*, for example offers one chapter on 'popular music and the small screen', but makes no reference at all to the use of music in television drama.<sup>86</sup>

When music is employed within a filmic or televisual text, it is often relegated to the viewer's sensory background. Outside of the musical genre, most soundtracks utilise commissioned, original music as underscore, crucial to a film's overall structure but designed to operate in the perceptual background. Although we are often unconscious of the presence of a score, Gorbman argues that such music can, nevertheless, render the viewing subject less critical, and that it does this by drawing the spectator further into the diegetic illusion, lessening his/her defences against the fantasy structures to which narrative provides access. In doing so, she suggests, it also helps to channel the preferred meaning of the narrative events depicted.<sup>87</sup> Gorbman's observations are made specifically in relation to music used in the cinema and cannot be unproblematically transferred to

television viewing experiences. In contrast to cinema-goers, who actively transport themselves to a darkened theatre, and are often unaware for much of the time of other audience members as they watch a personally selected, usually uninterrupted narrative projected onto a large screen, the television viewer watches often unplanned or randomly selected, sometimes episodic sequences of programmes on a small screen in a domestic space, sometimes in daylight, and often in the company of other viewers with whom he/she may engage in attention-disrupting conversation.<sup>88</sup> In addition, television viewers, like many consumers of popular music, often simultaneously engage in parallel or ancillary activities such as cooking or reading which can dilute or inhibit psychological narrative immersion.<sup>89</sup> These fundamental differences mean that psychoanalytical approaches may be less relevant to television audience research.

Until the 1960s, most music used in both film and television was stylistically conservative symphonic underscore. Although experiments with jazz-influenced soundtracks had taken place in the cinema during the 1950s, for the most part in films dealing with seedy elements of society such as the Alex North scored *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Kazan, 1951)<sup>90</sup> and Leith Stevens' *The Wild One* (Benedek, 1953), it was not until the end of that decade that contemporary popular music began to be regularly employed in non-musical filmic and televisual texts.<sup>91</sup> From the late 1950s onward the cinema played an important part in the popularisation of rock 'n' roll music through films such as *Don't Knock the Rock* (Sears, 1957), *Go, Johnny, Go* (Landres, 1958), *Expresso Bongo* (Guest, 1959), *G. I. Blues* (Taurog, 1960), *Play It Cool* (Winner, GB, 1962), *Summer Holiday* (Yates, GB, 1963), *Viva Las Vegas* (Sidney, 1963), and through films featuring the Beatles such as *A*

*Hard Day's Night* (Lester, GB, 1964) and *Help* (Lester, GB, 1965). Lester's films in particular effectively revived the visualisation of music, a process which, since the end of the Busby Berkley era, had been largely superseded by the sonorisation of the visual image. British television also played its part in the popularisation of rock 'n' roll music during the late 1950s and early 1960s through programmes such as *Juke Box Jury* (BBC, 1959-67), and *Ready, Steady, Go!* (Associated-Rediffusion, 1963-6). A number of 1960s British television dramas such as *Up the Junction* (BBC 1, 1965), and *Cathy Come Home* (BBC 1, 1966), which featured young characters and dealt with issues which young viewers could relate to such as abortion and homelessness, began to experiment with incorporating atmospheric non-diegetic contemporary popular music prominently within their narratives. Although non-diegetic, this music was meant to add narrative commentary. A prime example of such an expositional employment is Ken Loach's retrospectively ironic use of Ben E. King's *Stand By Me* when Reg and Cathy's marriage is put under strain as they begin to slide into the poverty trap in *Cathy Come Home*.<sup>92</sup> Since the 1960s, popular music has played an ever increasing role in the cinema as directors such as Scorsese - *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976),<sup>93</sup> and Tarantino - *Reservoirs Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Jackie Brown* (1998) have followed the path taken by the pop music industry in exploiting the semiotic potential of the popular song-visual image dialectic. In so doing they have developed associations and connotations to songs way beyond the imaginings of the original composers. Tarantino's playful use of the Stealer's Wheel track *Stuck in the Middle With You* in *Reservoir Dogs*, and Lynch's manipulation of Bobby Vinton's classic rendition of the Lee Morris-composed *Blue Velvet*, and the Roy Orbison composed and performed *In Dreams* in *Blue*



*Velvet* (1986), for instance, have become classic examples of the process of sonic-visual counterpoint. For viewers of these films, these originally sugary songs now exhibit dark anempathetic connotations relating to psycho-sexual deviancy and physical violence.<sup>94</sup>

Whether a cinematic or televisual soundtrack or underscore consists of symphonic or popular music, many of the functions which music was originally asked to perform during the 'silent'-film period are still relevant today.<sup>95</sup> Such functions would include: the creation of emotional atmosphere or mood, both in terms of character psychology and audience response; the mediation of historical zeitgeist; the conjunctive function of linking scenes, sequences, characters, and incidents; smoothing the flow of narration across edits, both temporally and spatially; episodic marking; the highlighting, via the motif process, of narrative tropes; the representation, or emphasis of movement (kinetic function), of sound (sonic function), and of texture (tactile function); the provision of an ironic commentary on the visual image through the process of counterpoint; and, perhaps the most commonly used (and arguably abused) application of music in both cinema and television, the recitative function of filling in caesuras where verbal narration is absent from the soundtrack.<sup>96</sup> In addition to these shared functions, television also employs music as a hailing device, calling its sometimes preoccupied viewers to attention via established mnemonic musical title motifs; typical examples are the themes used to signal the start of soap operas such as *Coronation Street* (ITV, 1960-), and *EastEnders* (BBC, 1985-),<sup>97</sup> police series such as *Dixon of Dock Green* (BBC, 1955-76), *Z Cars* (BBC, 1962-78), and *The Bill* (ITV, 1984-), science fiction series such as *Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963-89) and

*Star Trek* (BBC, 1969-71), sports programmes such as *Grandstand* (BBC, 1958-) and *Match of the Day* (BBC, 1964-), and of course local and national news programmes.

Underscore can be employed to induce fear and menace: well known filmic examples include Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), where Bernard Herrmann's score for violins produces tactile, sonic and kinetic anaphones to create the onomatopoeic screeching which adds so much meaning to the now infamous shower scene; and Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), where the repetition of John Williams' bi-tonal motif allows the audience to anticipate the appearance of the killer shark.<sup>98</sup> In television, examples include the now clichéd leitmotif used to signal something strange is about to happen in *The Twilight Zone* (ITV, 1963-) and in children's shows such as *Thunderbirds* (ITV 1965-6),<sup>99</sup> and the short, but startling, minor-key splurges which often accompany a significant trope in popular detective dramas such as *Columbo* (Universal, 1972-9), and *Miss Marple* (BBC, 1984-92).

Of course symphonic underscore can also represent the romantic or joyous feelings of characters, and can often cue the development of similar types of emotions in the minds of the audience. Although our lives are increasingly underscored by music in both public and private spaces, people do not normally experience string accompaniments to their romantic interludes, yet both cinematic and televisual representations of love do appear to require non-diegetic musical embellishment in order to make them seem emotionally significant to the viewer. As Antheil has pointed out, love has a distinctive sound, 'You *see* love, and you *hear* it. Simultaneously.'<sup>100</sup> The traditional relationship between love and music on screen is essentially a phenomenon of generic conditioning, a romantic clinch

automatically inducing the expectation of representational music because we have experienced the combination so many times before. David Lean's appropriation of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2* in *Brief Encounter* (GB,1945) is a typical cinematic example of the musical evocation of romantic emotions. On the small screen, many television soap opera producers consistently use underscore to romantically embellish physical contact between characters, particularly in the cliff-hanger sequences which often conclude an episode.

As film producer Steve Wooley has pointed out, music is the cheapest, and arguably the most effective mediator of zeitgeist available to film and television producers:

Pop music is like a knife, you twist it and nostalgia comes pouring out...If you can't afford the sets, slap on a distinctive period tune and the audience will imagine the rest.<sup>101</sup>

For example, in contemporary films the 1930s and 1940s are commonly referenced by various forms of big-band music or jazz, as in Scorsese's *New York, New York* (1977); Coppola's *The Cotton Club* (1984), and Allen's *Radio Days* (1987); the 1950s by early rock 'n' roll, as in Whatham's *That'll Be The Day* (1974) and Walters' *Cry Baby* (1990); the 1960s by the first explosion of British pop, as in Caton-Jones' *Scandal* (1989), or by a liberal sprinkling of psychedelia as in Zemeckis' *Forest Gump* (1994) and Stone's *The Doors* (1991); and the 1970s by either glam rock, as in Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine* (1998), or by mainstream disco music as in Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997).<sup>102</sup>

Television has also exploited music's ability to provide local, historical, and social colour. In terms of the establishment of period, both factual and fictional programmes have relied heavily on musical embellishment. The BBC series *The Rock and Roll Years* (1985), for example, dispensed with voice-over narration in favour of contemporary pop songs which helped to establish the historical perspective by adding a musical commentary to the archive news footage being shown. Television drama producers<sup>103</sup> have also traditionally used music to establish period within fictional narratives: successful usages include: *Upstairs Downstairs* (ITV, 1971-5) where popular tunes and music hall songs helped to create an atmospheric Edwardian London; *No Bananas* (BBC, 1996), which employed evocative songs from the Second World War;<sup>104</sup> *Our Friends In The North* (BBC, 1997) which utilised popular music from several decades in a narrative which spanned the period 1964 to 1995, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (BBC, 1993) and *Big Women* (Channel 4, 1998) which appropriated 1970s glam rock, and, of course, dramas such as *Rock Follies* (ITV, 1976-7), *Tutti Frutti* (BBC, 1987) and *and the beat goes on* (Channel 4, 1996), whose fictional worlds are specifically centred on the popular music industry.

While the producers of the aforementioned television dramas have, arguably, employed popular music judiciously within their narratives, many recent examples have exhibited signs of excess. The narratives of *Heartbeat* (Yorkshire, 1992-) and *The Hello Girls* (BBC, 1996 and 1998) for example, are saturated in period music; for the most part the songs have little connection with the storyline, and are employed simply as period signifiers or as fillers for non-verbal sections of the narrative. The American series *Miami Vice* (Universal, 1985-90) can also be accused of abusing its relationship with popular

music, but for different reasons. The series was very much a child of its time, the image dominated 1980s; rather than signalling period, the producers consistently introduced music as a style signifier, narrative content being seen as secondary to both the look and the sound of the product.<sup>105</sup>

Perhaps the most unsuccessful attempt to mix popular music and television drama was the short-lived Steven Bochco produced American police series *Cop Rock* (transmitted on Channel 4 in 1991). Strongly influenced by Potter's work, the series incorporated song and dance into an otherwise realistic and often extremely violent narrative. After struggling to attract viewers, the series, now described as an embarrassment by Bochco, was prematurely pulled from the U.S. schedules.<sup>106</sup> Frith has argued that such inappropriate infusions of popular music into televisual dramatic texts tend to swamp surrounding images and produce shifts in levels of audience attention.<sup>107</sup> The results of this study support Frith's claim and highlight the way that unconventional genre bricolage can alienate viewers (see Chapter 3). Where *Cop Rock* was a critical and populist failure, *Ally McBeal* (Channel 4, 1997-) has appropriated Potteresque musical techniques and attracted critical and popular acclaim.<sup>108</sup> The reason for *Ally McBeal*'s popularity, and the general acceptance of the subjective, lip-synched musical sequences by both critics and viewers may be related to its being promoted and perceived as a light-hearted 'lifestyle' drama aimed at a relatively young target audience,<sup>109</sup> rather than as a serious legal drama. Although the series deals with the stresses of modern-day middle-class life, it does so only in a semi-serious way, incorporating a strong comedic element. The anti-realist, lip-synched musical sequences, therefore, may be deemed by both critics and viewers as being

in line with the series' generic positioning. The fact that the series also incorporates a significant number of supposedly non-lip-synched musical performances by members of the cast, and by actual performers such as Sting, Barry White and Al Green, may also aid the acceptance of the economically utilised, anti-realist, lip-synched sequences by preparing the ground for the suspension of disbelief. The rejection of *Cop Rock* on the other hand, with its bizarre mix of lip-synching to specially composed songs (rather than to existing period material as in Potter's texts), graphic violence, and a tendency toward a 'fly-on-the-wall' shooting-style, highlights the existence of distinct, and for viewers, sometimes non-transgressional generic boundaries. As discussed in Chapter 3, because Potter's musically-infused serials were often surrounded by a discourse which promoted them as serious dramas, his viewers may also have suffered from what might be termed generic inflexibility. Potter was insistent that the serials should not be promoted as musicals, but rather as serials with songs. His stated reasoning for this distinction was that, because the characters did not genuinely sing the songs themselves, the term musical was generically inaccurate.<sup>110</sup> Given Potter's critical and self-promoted positioning as a writer of serious, intellectually-challenging dramas, his pedantry may also reflect an unwillingness on his part to attract the stigma which is often attached to genre texts, and to the writers of those texts. Whatever the rationale, this reluctance to promote the serials as musical dramas seems to have inhibited some respondents from achieving suspension of disbelief in relation to the musical sequences.<sup>111</sup>

### **Potter and popular music: intention and practice.**

Viewers have come to expect, although, as illustrated below, not necessarily to accept, the utilisation of popular music in Potter's work. It might even be argued that in the latter part of his career his trade-mark lip-synch technique, rather like Pinter's silences, was overworked, and often appeared to come dangerously close to the self-parodic.<sup>112</sup> Potter's reliance on popular songs is, in the light of his vehemently stated dislike for them, rather ironic. His views on the nature and value of post-Second World War popular music follows in the tradition of modernist critics such as Adorno, Leavis and Hoggart.<sup>113</sup> In 1962, in his condition of England polemic *The Changing Forest*, for example, Potter attacked the new pop music which, he claimed, had brought moral degeneration to his beloved Forest of Dean: the juke-box, he lamented, had become 'lord and master.'<sup>114</sup> The new generation of popular entertainers were dismissed as 'neon-dressed pop singer[s], jerking over the echo-chambered microphone[s] as if in orgasm',<sup>115</sup> and he railed against contemporary song lyrics which, he claimed, were only concerned with 'sex, sex, sex.'<sup>116</sup> Like Adorno, who condescendingly labelled all non-classical music 'jazz',<sup>117</sup> Potter did not differentiate between popular music genres, and dismissed *all* post-1940s popular music as bland pop. His vilification of popular music as 'cheap' 'drivel' which reduces everything 'to the utmost simplification',<sup>118</sup> was based on his belief that, unlike modernist art, which he associated with individual creativity, authenticity, and artistic integrity, the popular song could be easily produced by often anonymous teams of hack writers for commercial gain, and that its main characteristic was standardisation: by such reasoning, the popular song should not be mistaken for art.<sup>119</sup> Such a division of serious and popular music into the manichean binaries of 'good' and 'bad' is extremely problematic, and can be criticised for applying what Tagg has termed '*haut-bourgeois* norms of aesthetic reference', to

popular music, and for paying scant regard to ‘the social, economic, or cultural situation of the popular majority.’<sup>120</sup> It also fails to appreciate the fact that authenticity is a quality which is not necessarily simply related to the way in which music is composed or performed, and that, as Frith argues, often the authenticity of a song is contained in the story it is heard to tell and in the narrative of musical interaction in which the listeners place themselves.<sup>121</sup> In the light of the musically-induced, nostalgic memory experiences described by respondents taking part in this study (see Chapter 3), this thesis argues that transcendental experience does not only occur in response to so-called serious music, and that *all* music is capable of contributing to the construction of a sense of identity by allowing listeners to position themselves within imaginative cultural narratives.

Echoing the analytical perspectives of critics such as Adorno, Potter consistently railed against the commercialisation of the music industry: in his final television interview for example, he argued that:

commercialisation...means...you’re putting a commercial value upon everything...we’re not citizens, we’re consumers.<sup>122</sup>

In contrast to the commercialised present, Potter consistently valorised his vision of an organic (possibly mythic, probably apocryphal) past<sup>123</sup> in which music was played and enjoyed as a socially-binding activity uncontaminated by commerce. In 1962, for example, when Britain was in the first throws of Beatlemania, Potter, at the age of 27, produced a nostalgic lamentation for the decline of his village brass band whose live, spontaneous, organic music had been superseded by what he saw as commercialised recorded pop:



The band used to be in constant demand, and the men who belonged to it...thought themselves possessors of a massive and enviable privilege...Then, there were regular concerts, local contests, marching for the chapel behind the tasselled admonitory banner...[now] it is as if you could feel the life changing under your feet like a mild but sustained tremor...<sup>124</sup>

As Colley and Davies have argued in relation to *Pennies*, Potter exhibits a classic Leavisite/Thompsonian pessimism about the way in which a voraciously commercial music industry sets out to colonise the emotional life of the petty-bourgeoisie with its cheap songs.<sup>125</sup> Potter's defence against the sweeping tide of commercialism was to seek solace in an idealised, pre rock 'n' roll past,<sup>126</sup> a past typified in his depiction of the cosy working-class rural community sing-alongs led by his real father in *Between Two Rivers* (BBC, 1960),<sup>127</sup> and by Mr Marlow in *Detective*.

In spite of his prejudices, however, Potter did understand the dramatic potential inherent in the popular tune and it is this understanding which influenced his systematic annexation of popular musical products. He acknowledged that there was 'something of the Psalms of David' about popular music,<sup>128</sup> and admitted that even he was not immune to the seductive properties of a well crooned tune: in 1968, for example, he wrote:

Whenever the cold winds blow too bleakly through my mind I like to listen to some elderly and rather scratchy recordings of Al Bowlly...the big crooning swoon on the wireless round about the time I was cutting my first milk teeth...for me...[his] throatily-velvety version of 'You May Not Be An Angel' has the lingering flavours of chewy rusks, cod-liver oil and National Dried Milk.<sup>129</sup>

In 1977, on his first appearance on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*, he described how the song *Roses of Picardy*, which had been sung to him by his mother when he was small, always produced in him feelings 'so deep that you cannot express them.'<sup>130</sup> Such sentiments rest uneasily alongside Potter's often repeated claim that he saw nostalgia as little more than 'a twee, Technicolour version of the so-called past'<sup>131</sup>, and that as far as he was concerned, nostalgia was not an important factor in his writing:

I don't know 'nostalgia'...Nostalgia is a second-order emotion...I'm not dealing in nostalgia.<sup>132</sup>

It is rather ironic that Potter should categorise nostalgia as a form of cultural philistinism as it is often one of the crucial factors motivating many of his characters, and, as illustrated in Chapter 3, it also appears to fundamentally influence the ways in which some viewers negotiate his musically-infused texts.

As discussed above, when Potter began to write for television in the mid 1960s, music was mainly used in television drama to enhance title sequences; to provide period atmosphere; as a filler in dialogue-free sections of the narrative such as driving sequences; and as a signifier that various narrative tropes were happening, or were about to happen.<sup>133</sup>

Potter's main contribution to the use of music in television drama was the promotion of a modernist mode of musical functionality. By introducing the concept of lip-synching to original recordings, he was able to externalise character psychology as part of a stream of consciousness. Although Potter had briefly flirted with the device in *Moonlight on the Highway* (ITV, 1969), it was only fully realised as an aesthetic motif in 1978 with

*Pennies*.<sup>134</sup> Like many critics, W. S. Gilbert credits Potter with revolutionising television drama with his innovative incorporation of popular music in *Pennies*, describing the moment in Episode 1 when Parker (Bob Hoskins) lip-synchs for the first time (to Elsie Carlisle's version of *The Clouds Will Soon Roll By*) as a turning point in the history of British television drama.<sup>135</sup> The novelty of the dramatic device lay in the use of the original recordings rather than in the miming technique itself which had been employed as a technical expediency in the cinema since the advent of the sound film, and in television (in light entertainment programmes for example), prior to Potter's work.<sup>136</sup>

Although, as stated above, Potter was emphatic in his claim that, because his characters did not genuinely sing the songs, his works should not be classified as musicals, he did draw heavily on conventions borrowed from both the film and the stage musical.<sup>137</sup> Both *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, for example, place the generic heterosexual couple at the centre of their narratives like so many stage and Hollywood-musicals.<sup>138</sup> In addition, both serials are built around the classic wrong couple scenario developed in film-musicals such as *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* (Kelly/Donen, 1949), *An American in Paris* (Minnelli, 1951), and *Silk Stockings* (Mamoulian, 1957). And of course, both serials pay homage to the conventional Hollywood happy ending, *Pennies*, with Parker's bizarre return from the dead (echoes here of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*), and *Lipstick* with a set-piece on-stage review (also featuring a resurrection), typical of the back-stage musical. Potter's use of the daydream sequence device in all three serials is informed by cinematic precedents not only in musicals such as *On the Town* (Kelly/Donen, 1949) and *Brigadoon* (Minnelli, 1954)), but also in non-musical films such as *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (McLeod, 1947), and

*Billy Liar* (Schlesinger, GB, 1963). Potter sought to revitalise television drama in the late 1970s by drawing upon a genre which had by then, in the cinema, and to a lesser extent in the theatre, seemingly fallen from favour with both producers and viewers.<sup>139</sup> With its insistence on multiple levels of reality, and on what Feuer calls ‘the continuity between dream images and waking life’,<sup>140</sup> the musical was, for a dramatist as opposed to naturalism as Potter, an obvious, and potentially lucrative genre to explore.<sup>141</sup>

In playing a central role, Potter hoped that the songs would express, sometimes uncomplicatedly, sometimes ironically, a morphology of feeling relating to areas of both primal and cognitively-sophisticated emotion which are often impossible to express through other channels. In doing so, he hoped that such anti-naturalistic narrative interjections would paradoxically create a rarefied form of realism, which might be termed expressionist realism, a form which, according to Marinov, would:

highlight the personal misery of the individuals trapped in the fictional world of their impossible dreams and unfulfilled desires’<sup>142</sup>

Although much less reverent in his approach to popular music, Potter’s intentions are arguably close to those of screenwriter and director Terrence Davies who offers what Caughie describes as ‘working-class memory seen through the lens of aesthetics...a *musée imaginaire*’,<sup>143</sup> by incorporating popular song both sentimentally and ironically in his complex cinema memory narratives *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (GB, 1988), and *The Long Day Closes* (GB, 1992). There are, however, fundamental differences between the two dramatists in terms of the way in which they utilised the songs in their texts. The main

difference relates to the process of mediation; whereas Davies's characters interpret the songs themselves, the songs in Potter's texts are genuine artefacts, original recordings by popular artists of the period, lip-synched by the characters. With Davies's texts, the music's nostalgic appeal for viewers is essentially related to the memory of the communality of the actual act of singing the songs; with Potter's texts, on the other hand, much of the nostalgic power of the songs is generated by the memory of the original period renditions.<sup>144</sup>

Academic television drama criticism has tended to appropriate from theatre studies theories about practice and performance. As noted above, the theories and practices of Bertolt Brecht feature particularly strongly in academic criticism of Potter's work in general, and of his utilisation of music in particular. Those critics who seek to position Potter as a modernist are particularly keen to make the Brechtian connection. Marinov, for example, in discussing Potter's relationship with the musical genre, suggests that the purpose of the musical sequences was to create a Brechtian *verfremdung* aesthetic by distancing the audience 'from any kind of empathy or association with the characters.'<sup>145</sup> While not going as far as Marinov in terms of unproblematically identifying a Brechtian aesthetic in Potter's work, Nelson, in discussing *Detective*, does suggest that its:

distanciation techniques make a play of ideas approximating to the rational critique Brecht hoped to encourage through the devices of *verfremdung*.<sup>146</sup>

As Millington and Nelson have argued, the term 'Brechtian' is often used to denote any device which 'makes strange the events by breaking the illusion that the spectator is

witnessing actuality.’<sup>147</sup> Such liberalisation of the term is particularly problematic when distanciation theory is applied to television drama. Often such applications make no adjustment for the fundamental differences between television and the theatre. Even when practiced within the far more conducive surroundings of the theatre Brecht discovered that an equation between authorial intention and audience response to popular music was far from certain. The story of his dismay at hearing theatre-goers humming the song *Mack the Knife* rather than discussing the socio-political implications of *The Threepenny Opera*, is indicative of the dangers of taking audience-text dynamics for granted where musical affect is concerned. There is considerable distance between Potter’s modernist desire to investigate and articulate the individual psyche and the metonymic characterisation sought by Brecht. Potter’s interior landscape dramas are in many ways the antithesis of Brecht’s Epic Theatre with its intention of universalising experience. The focus of Potter’s work was always the integrity and complexity of the (predominantly middle-class) individual, rather than the ideological subordination of the working class, and it appears much more likely that, as Cook has argued, Potter was attempting to ‘get under the skin of all viewers...to draw their attention to their own individual sovereignty’,<sup>148</sup> than to infuse his texts with agit-prop elements. In laying bare the psychological demons of their characters through popular music, Potter’s texts actively encourage (although, as I illustrate in Chapter 3, not always successfully), what Brecht most sought to prevent, the development of empathy or closeness (*einführung*). In addition, while the rationale behind Brecht’s use of alienation techniques was to defamiliarise and to encourage his audience to see things as if for the first time, Potter’s popular music sequences, with their

appropriated, nostalgia-inducing original recordings, encourage viewers to draw pleasure from the eminently familiar.

Apart from stressing his concern for what he saw as pollution by the popular, Potter himself never justified his methods in terms of ideology, and the problematics of working with such assumptions as a critical tool for understanding or evaluating the function and effects of the musical sequences in his texts have been underestimated. Even though he was familiar with the works of Brecht, Potter seldom made direct reference to the playwright or to his work.<sup>149</sup> At no time, for example, does Potter make any reference to Brecht or to Brechtian theory during his discussion of anti-naturalist techniques in his extended interview with Fuller.<sup>150</sup> Basically this is because, as Cook suggests:

While both Brecht and Potter shared a dislike of 'naturalism', the latter's stemmed not from any need to find new more effective forms of conveying a political message. In his view, all political drama ultimately did was 'to buck up and cheer up those who support your side' so that its message would 'not drop an ounce' with those who were unsympathetic to it.<sup>151</sup>

Rather than forcing ideology on the television audience, Potter claimed that he preferred 'to see plays in which the ideas are not exposed on the surface like basking sharks.'<sup>152</sup> Such a statement suggests that Brechtian distanciation, and its out-of-context appropriation by television playwrights, and by critics with a political agenda (such as those writing for *Screen* during the 1970s and 1980s), appeared rather unsubtle to Potter, who's understanding of the term distanciation did not always mesh with that of Brecht, or indeed with those critics who sought to apply what were essentially political-theatre based

ideas to the criticism of psychologically-centred television drama. In relation to the medium of television, it can also be argued that the critical appropriation of Brechtian alienation theory can be seen to be fundamentally flawed in that it works on the principle that television viewers often mistake the representation for the reality it purports to represent, thus preventing them from experiencing critical distanciation, or to use Laura Mulvey's filmic terminology, 'passionate detachment.'<sup>153</sup> By their very nature, all artistic representations depend upon some measure of distanciation in order to function as aesthetic objects, a fact recognised by the majority of the respondents taking part in this study. If total immersion in the diegetic worlds of traumatic dramas such as Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* or Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* occurred, then surely spectators would flee in horror, fearful for their own safety: and, in spite of their documentary-influenced aesthetics, docudramas such as *Cathy Come Home*, and even dramadocs such as *Hillsborough* (ITV, 1996) are almost certainly positioned as dramatic texts by most viewers. Brecht's stated desire to propel the spectator 'along a narrow single track where he can look neither right nor left, up or down'<sup>154</sup> sits extremely uncomfortably alongside post-structuralist reader response theory, and, as Murray Smith points out, even if we were to accept the premise of Brechtian distanciation theory, the question must be posed, 'how critical is the spectator who can only be constructed as critical by an estranging text?'<sup>155</sup> The popular music sequences in *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick* were not designed to create critical viewers who would be persuaded to stand back from the action and appreciate the ideological implications of the performance. Ironically, however, the results of this study suggest that for some respondents the songs acted as catalysts for the creation of personal, nostalgic memory excursions, excursions which could be termed



'distancing' in that they caused respondents to mentally drift-away from associated sections of the narrative. Rather than inducing any ideological revelation, however, musically-induced drift-off often resulted in narrative amnesia, an inability to recall and/or recollect details about narrative content.

Paradoxically for a writer with such modernist leanings, Potter, believing the theatre to be a minority pursuit for the middle classes,<sup>156</sup> chose to work within the mass medium of television; in doing so he must surely have realised that while creating a critically-aware audience through distancing music might have seemed appropriate in a 1930s or 1940s agit-prop theatrical setting during a period when the Hollywood- musical was still extremely popular, the likelihood of its being embraced by a contemporary television audience who, according to Gerald Cook, 'would rather watch the rush hour in Oxford Circus than a Hollywood musical',<sup>157</sup> could not be taken for granted. Although, as Hallam points out, Potter's work represents the apotheosis of writerly patronage by empathic programme executives,<sup>158</sup> his television work was never completely *avant-garde* because the medium would never allow its drama to be so; as Caughie has argued, 'The outrage of the *avant-garde* seems out of reach of television.'<sup>159</sup> The difference and innovation exhibited by texts such as *Pennies* and *Detective* is soon appropriated, becomes an expectation, and runs the danger of becoming a parody of itself. In contrast to some other areas of the arts such as painting and music, the shockwaves of the new in television drama are usually of significantly less magnitude, and often tend to fade into the accepted far more quickly, or alternatively to fail spectacularly.

Potter's stated intention with *Pennies* (originally subtitled 'Six Plays With Music'), was to bring the songs, of which the transmitted serial contains over 80:

right up front...right smack in the middle, not as an interlude, but to integrate them as part of the drama.<sup>160</sup>

Such an idea was not original. Indeed, in an article published the year before *Pennies* was transmitted, McGrath had called for television dramas which utilised music:

not for background emotive effect, but as a statement in itself that made its contribution to the meaning.<sup>161</sup>

Popular music set-piece performances had already been used in British television drama prior to *Pennies*; Howard Schuman's *Rock Follies* (ITV, 1976-7) for example, had incorporated elaborate musical set-pieces within its narrative.<sup>162</sup> Being a story about rock musicians this was relatively unproblematical. What Potter was attempting with *Pennies*, however, (and to an even greater extent with *Detective*), was to create a form of modernist, stream of consciousness television novel. As Kenneth Trodd has pointed out, the essence of Potter's methodology was 'to dislocate us firmly from the entrenched naturalism of television drama.'<sup>163</sup> In seeking to dramatise interior states via the conceit of having the emotions of his characters mediated through the voices of popular singers and the lyrics of Tin-Pan-Alley songwriters, Potter sought to challenge television's defining realist aesthetic by subverting the conventions upon which verisimilitude is founded. Thus, as Marinov has argued, the musical sequences oppose the realist convention of characters acting as real people in real time, space and circumstances, with the lip-synch device

counter-pointing deep meaning, making it 'virtually impossible to maintain the romantic realism of a traditional musical.'<sup>164</sup> While it is true that the musical numbers create a stylistic incongruity largely inconsistent with the canon of the musical genre (where they normally serve to complement the film's narrative), Marinov's claim, that the songs have the effect of jarring viewers out of their empathic responses (thus making them contemplate and judge the action), and Creeber's similar argument that Potter developed the musical sequences in *Pennies* in order to:

provide a distancing or alienation effect which, in Brechtian terms, forces the spectator to recognise the forces by which the dominant ideology manipulates Arthur's social reality,<sup>165</sup>

are surely compromised if the instances of narrative amnesia which the musical sequences often initiated in respondents taking part in this study are in any way typical. The consequences of this drift-off effect appear to have been anticipated even by Brecht who warned that:

Music must not, like a narcotic intoxicating opiate, prevent the listener from thinking, but much rather, it must demand [thought]...Music should not 'serve' but 'mediate'; it should not 'intensify' or 'assert' the text but 'interpret' it, and 'take the text's message for granted'; it should not 'illustrate' but 'comment upon' the text; it should not paint the 'psychological situation' but 'present behaviour.'<sup>166</sup>

As the results of this study suggest, in practice it is difficult to prevent this 'intoxicating opiate' from weaving its narcotic spell on viewers.

Having discussed relevant theoretical approaches to Potter's work, and documented his ideological and practical relationships with popular music, the next chapter will begin by considering potential methodological problems which might be relevant to research based on the interpretation of memory-related interpretations of musical experiences; it will then briefly outline general developments in television-related audience research and discuss the empirical work already undertaken in the field of television drama which has informed this study; finally the development and practice of the methodology utilised in this study will be detailed.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Developing a Methodology**

This chapter deals with the core problematic of how best to approach the gathering, collation, coding, and analysis of interpretative, memory-based responses to dramatic sequences which prominently utilise diegetic popular music. After researching existing television drama studies, I became aware of the fact that there did not appear to be any comparable empirical research focusing specifically on musical content. In order to formulate a viable methodology in response to the core problematic, I realised that a multi-disciplinary approach would be required; I thus began research in a number of areas including television audience studies, film studies, literary studies, memory-related cognitive studies, and musicology, in the hope that they might positively inform the construction of a workable methodology.

#### **Interpreting interpretations of musical experiences.**

This study attempts to gain some insight into the processes underpinning individual interpretations of the popular music content of Potter's texts, and the role memory plays in such processes. In undertaking such a project I realised that I was likely to encounter logistical challenges relating to the collection, transcription, coding and analysis of interpretations of recalled and/or recollected musical experience. In considering potential approaches, I identified three areas which might prove problematic: the first related to

the debate amongst musicologists regarding the way in which music creates meaning; the second related to the difficulties likely to be encountered by respondents attempting to use language to describe musical meanings and experiences; and the third, to the problems likely to be encountered by the researcher attempting to use language to transcribe, code, and analyse such meanings and experiences, a task complicated further by the complexity and inaccessibility of many memory processes.

Musicologists attempting to analyse the origins of musical meanings have traditionally been divided into two opposing camps - 'absolutists', those who tend to locate meanings intrinsically within the individual sonic text; and 'referentialists', those theorists who have tended to concentrate on inter-textual and extra-musical associations.<sup>167</sup> 'Referentialists' have increasingly shifted the focus of interest from the compositional process, and the text as an inherent carrier of meaning, to the ways in which music is processed and negotiated by the listener. This change has developed as a result of the adaptation and utilisation by musicologists of socio-semiotic models of analysis developed by poststructuralist critics of both the written and the visual text.<sup>168</sup>

In rejecting the 'hypodermic' sender-message-receiver communications model developed during the 1950s,<sup>169</sup> most poststructuralist critics dismiss the 'absolutist' idea that music exhibits inherent associations with basic human emotions.<sup>170</sup> Kristeva, for example, argues that music cannot transmit specific meanings or emotions from composer to receiver, and that it is, in effect, an empty sign, and, therefore, polysemic, the only limitations to interpretation being the framework of the cultural system in which the music is situated.<sup>171</sup>

Thus, according to Kristeva, there are potentially as many meanings of a piece of music as there are listeners to it. Philip Tagg, a musicologist whose research methodology is largely based on semiotic principles, supports the idea that musical meanings result from the interaction between a sonic text and the listener, and that such meanings are influenced by sociologically and ideologically constructed 'extra-musical fields of associations', and by generic influences which he terms 'para-musical fields of associations.'<sup>172</sup> When listeners (or in the case of television drama, viewer-listeners) with different socio-cultural profiles and differing levels of cultural (specifically musical) competence come into contact with a musical text, their responses to both lyrical and non-verbal elements will invariably be shaped by their profiles.<sup>173</sup> Tagg illustrates this point in his analysis of funeral music from different parts of the world, arguing that:

Music understood as sad or associated with death in one culture is not necessarily understood as sad or associated with death by members of another musical culture.<sup>174</sup>

The sounds of grief, therefore, like many other musical sounds, far from exhibiting universal properties, can be seen to be culturally constructed.

Tagg uses the terms 'codal incompetence' and 'codal interference' to explain why musical messages sent by the composer (transmitter) can fail to register with the listener (receiver).<sup>175</sup> Codal incompetence arises when the composer and listener do not share the same vocabulary of musical symbols. Thus, some of the more overtly ethnic songs performed for the Eurovision Song Contest may seem alien to those British viewers who

are unfamiliar with the musical forms on which they are based. In relation to the mainstream popular music used in Potter's texts, codal incompetence should not be a problem for the group of British middle-class respondents taking part in this study. Codal interference occurs when the composer and listener share the same store of musical symbols but totally different socio-cultural norms and expectations.<sup>176</sup> Codal interference is often related to aesthetic preference and can, thus, be influenced by class and/or age; a grandfather's disdain for his grandson's heavy-metal music would be an example of the way in which codal interference influences the listening experience. Potter's disdain for 'pop' music may be due to codal interference resulting from socially acquired negative aesthetic and ideological extra-musical fields of associations. The problem with the concepts of codal incompetence and codal interference is that they both imply that a definitive or correct meaning is encoded in the music; thus, variations on established musical meanings are often interpreted by critics and composers as 'mistakes' produced by a lack of understanding on the part of the listener, or as a breakdown in communication between listener and composer (or between music critic and listener). These points support Hall's claim that researchers are unlikely to encounter the consistent inter-subjectivity of response between sociologically heterogeneous respondents that effects theory had taken for granted.<sup>177</sup> Even respondents with similar socio-cultural profiles, though capable of producing similar basic responses to certain pieces of music,<sup>178</sup> may not produce detailed levels of inter-subjectivity due to variations in their individual psychological profiles. Thus, as highlighted in Chapter 3, critical interpretations of the ways in which popular music functions in Potter's work, based on a model which constructs a hypothetical or implied viewer and a preferred reading are likely to deviate, to



varying degrees, from those produced by the individuals who constitute Potter's audience. Researchers should, however, be wary of claiming that empirical interpretations of sonic and/or visual texts are somehow more authentic and, therefore, more valid than academic readings simply because they have been generated by actual viewers. In addition, because ethnographic research can often become an exercise in the analysis of story-telling, consistent questioning and problematising is essential, not only of the stories being told (the primary texts, and the versions of those texts constructed by respondents), but also of the positioning of both the storytellers (producers and respondents) and of themselves as recorders of these stories.<sup>179</sup>

If musicologists have failed to agree about the origins of musical meanings, most agree about the inadequate nature of conventional language as a vehicle for describing musical experiences. The only way that most listeners/viewer-listeners can attempt to convey their conceptual experiences of a piece of music is via conventional language. Often, however, language proves to be an inadequate tool. Most language systems are referential and employ signifiers (the spoken word or the written word) which are related to their referents only by conventional agreement (the word cat for example has no iconic or even indexical relationship with a feline mammal). Apart from the musical notation system, which does not allow for associational or emotional representation, and is in any case understood only by a minority of the population, we do not have any conventionalised means of translating musical signifieds constructed from notes and chords into a universally recognisable and understandable form; without the words, argues Feuer, 'music has trouble talking about itself.'<sup>180</sup> Without some form of logo-sonic taxonomy,

listeners/listener-viewers are thus unlikely to be able to give a consistently detailed picture of their musical experiences. Fortunately, some progress has been made in this field. By experimenting with a taxonomy of what he terms verbal-visual associations<sup>181</sup> Tagg has highlighted the usefulness of musical cross-referencing, or inter-textuality, in the interpretive process. In illustrating the dialogic origins of many musical meanings,<sup>182</sup> he argues that music can 'speak' about itself and about other pieces of music. In order to gauge the potential of both lyrical and instrumental music for creating period, generic, and emotional atmosphere, and for 'talking' about itself through respondent interpreters, I designed a verbal-visual associations exercise based on the focus texts. This exercise involved 50 respondents (none of whom had taken part in either the questionnaire exercise or the interview exercises discussed below) providing written responses to recordings of *Lipstick's* opening title-music (*Lipstick on Your Collar*), and closing credit-sequence music (*The Man with the Golden Arm*). I decided to focus on title and credit-sequence music in this exercise because, in addition to providing information about the semiotic power of music in general, I felt that the results may also provide an indication of the ways in which music influences the interpretation of title and credit sequences. I decided to focus on *Lipstick* because the serial utilised a song incorporating a lyric in its title-sequence and an instrumental piece of music in its credit-sequence, thus allowing the semiotic effect of both types of music to be evaluated. Such an evaluation would not have been possible with *Pennies* or *Detective*, as each episode of *Pennies* utilises different title and credit-sequence music, and *Detective* utilises only instrumental music in these sequences. Because, according to Tagg, as long as respondents are members of a common culture they are likely to make similar cross-class, cross-gender music-related verbal-visual

associations, I solicited respondents for this exercise more or less at random. However, I wanted to avoid the possibility that respondents might make associations based on visual images from the serial, rather than on purely sonic experiences relating to the music itself, and so I set out to ensure that none of the respondents chosen had ever seen *Lipstick*. In terms of respondent numbers, the exercise would be an inadequate indicator of any gender or age-related behaviour patterns, and so no concerted effort was made to achieve a gender balance, or to manipulate a specific age-range. In the event, 35 females took part in the exercise and 15 males. The age-range of respondents was 18-70. Basically I commandeered whoever I happened to meet over a period of a week, under the proviso that they had not seen *Lipstick*. Each respondent was played a 60-second extract from *Lipstick on Your Collar* and *The Man with the Golden Arm* and asked to provide a written response to the music. Influenced by Tagg's claim that most non-para-musical verbal-visual associations relate to people, place, and period, respondents were given those three categories as foci for their responses, and asked to write down any words, phrases, or images relating to each of these categories which came into their minds while they were listening to the music. All the responses were collated by category heading and then used to create associational 'maps' of the tunes.<sup>183</sup> The results, which are discussed in Chapter 3, question Feuer's claim that instrumental music cannot 'talk' about itself.

Complementary research undertaken by critics such as Frith, Lack, and Middleton on the development of a music-based meta-linguistic discourse, or what Lack calls a 'synonymy' of music,<sup>184</sup> is beginning to open up new possibilities for researchers attempting to understand musical experience. Nevertheless, for the reasons discussed above, I realised

that the majority of respondents could not be expected to talk about the popular music used in Potter's texts in a complex or technical manner, and I expected responses to be either extra-musical (related to the non-musical world), or para-musical (related to other musical forms or specific songs, ie, associational), or both. As illustrated in Chapter 3, individual responses varied considerably in terms of detail, from what might be termed the quotation respondent, who remembered a limited amount of lyric and/or melody information, to what might be termed the comprehensive respondent who memorised and articulated a significant amount of detail about the musical content and its relationship to the narrative. This tends to support research carried out on the content analysis of popular music lyrics which suggests that although some listeners do consciously absorb musical texts in some detail, many, particularly those who listen to music as a parallel activity, often pay scant attention to song lyrics and are sometimes only conscious of the melody and/or the beat.<sup>185</sup>

I envisaged that the combination of visual narrative and liberally infused, narratively expositional popular music in Potter's texts might create a parallel activity situation which splits attention between the two channels of sensory experience, and that this might sometimes result in various levels of aural and visual disorientation. In order to test out this proposition, and gauge the extent to which the stimulus of the visual image in isolation from the soundtrack might enhance or hinder respondent ability to recall/recollect detail associated with the musical sequences, I devised an exercise for *Pennies* respondents which involved matching mute video extracts from the serial to their associated songs,

initially without being prompted (unmotivated stage), and then, if unsuccessful, with the aid of randomly played extracts of the associated songs (motivated stage).

The fact that a song, or a piece of music, has only a transient existence can cause significant problems both for the respondent attempting to articulate a musical experience and for the researcher seeking to analyse such responses. The musical referent effectively ceases to exist as a conceptual entity after a performance (whether live or recorded) other than as a memory trace in the mind's ear, and even then it is highly unlikely to maintain its unity. Because a song can move through time and space away from its moments of origins,<sup>186</sup> fragmentation and/or distortion often hamper the recall/recollection processes. In addition, interpretive problems can also be expected when we attempt to freeze for descriptive or analytical purposes a musical text which is essentially organic; the evolution of musical meaning is a step-by-step process and cannot be recorded as a snap-shot along the temporal line.<sup>187</sup> Musical meanings should not be seen as static because songs continually accumulate and connect with new meanings and beliefs as they pass through time and space away from their moments of origin. The situation is further complicated by the fact that no two live musical performances are ever identical, each performance producing a different, but equally transient referent.<sup>188</sup> Thus, each version of a song will exhibit different characteristics, and can result in different listener interpretations and associations. It is, thus, essential to acknowledge not only the skeletal characteristics of a song, but also the specific nuances and connotations of the particular version under analysis,<sup>189</sup> thus the comments offered by respondents taking part in this study relate specifically to the versions of the songs utilised in the serials.

## Music and emotion

The relationship between popular music and the re-enactment of emotion as memory is both complex and paradoxical. Although music can, as Langer has argued, 'reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach',<sup>190</sup> it often does so via a profoundly inarticulate lexicon. Like the majority of mainstream popular music, most of the period music used in Potter's texts is relatively simplistic in terms of lyrical content and musical arrangement. In addition, the lyrical content of most of this music, in common with most popular music in general, can also be described as relationship orientated and so would appear to provide ideal material for the production of romantic, melancholic, and/or nostalgic responses. The problem for the researcher is deciding whether the response to a piece of music relates specifically to the music itself or to an experience generated *by* the music, if the latter is the case then the complexity of the music may not be such an issue. However, different genres of music may exhibit different levels of emotive potentiality; while seemingly inane pop songs such as Diana Ross's *Doobedoodn'doobe Doobedoodn'doobe Doobedoondn'doobe*,<sup>191</sup> with its nonsensical though eminently memorable lyric can induce nostalgic feelings of time, place and experience, the same claim is much harder to make for more formally complex, generically challenging music such as the jazz-funk fusion found on Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew*,<sup>192</sup> or the free-jazz experimentation of Ornette Coleman on *Free Jazz*.<sup>193</sup> Such intricate instrumental music, lacking a catchy lyric and infused with polysemic sliding signifiers may be too abstract to work effectively as a device for the promotion of romantic or nostalgic responses.

As Frith has argued, popular songs do not reflect emotions, but give people ‘the romantic terms in which to articulate and so experience their emotions.’<sup>194</sup> In other words they can help to construct a morphology of feeling. This process can be seen to be operating textually in relation to Potter’s characters, and in practice with respondents of this study. As discussed in Chapter 3, some respondents used the music in a similar way to the main protagonists; like Parker in *Pennies* and Hopper (Ewan McGregor) in *Lipstick*, they were empowered by the music to either enjoy and valorise identities they yearn for or believe themselves to possess but repress because of the demands of convention. By transferring a cultural legacy into a private affective space, both characters and respondents are able to play out personal fantasies without submitting to the judgemental reprimands normally dispensed by a consensus conscious society. Part of the characters’ role playing is, thus, related to wish fulfilment: in *Pennies*, Parker wishes to be free from the restrictions of his humdrum middle-class existence and his sexless marriage, he wishes for the fantasy world presented by the Hollywood-musical and the popular song, a world in which he can sing and dance and attain the always sexually available girl. In *Detective*, the music of the 1940s allows Marlow (Michael Gambon) to make sense of a life which has become fragmented and out of his control. He desperately wants to get back to his sing-along childhood, the childhood which his memory tells him existed prior to him witnessing his mother’s infidelity in the woods. In *Lipstick*, Hopper’s wish is to escape from the grey claustrophobia of public service in post-war Britain into a carnivalesque, Americanised rock ‘n’ roll dream peopled by spangled cheesecake pin-ups and Brylcreemed singers. In *Pennies*, both Joan (Gemma Craven), and Eileen wish to escape from their unsatisfactory

existences, the former back into middle-class respectability, and the latter into a position of relative autonomy free from domestic drudgery. Sylvia (*Lipstick*) wishes to exchange her mundane life and her violent relationship with her husband for the glamour and romance she sees on the silver screen in the cinema. While such wish scenarios undoubtedly produce pleasure, critics of popular culture see this musically-induced pleasure as a form of false consciousness. Adorno for example castigates such pleasures, claiming that those listening to what he terms sentimental music:

become aware of the overwhelming possibility of happiness, they dare to confess to themselves what the whole order of contemporary life ordinarily forbids them to admit, namely that they actually have no part in happiness. What is supposed to be wish-fulfilment is only the scant liberation that occurs with the realization that at last one need not deny oneself the happiness of knowing that one is unhappy and that one could be happy. The actual function of sentimental music lies in the temporary release given to the awareness that one has missed fulfilment,<sup>195</sup>

an idea which Dyer later reformulated as 'entertainment utopia.'<sup>196</sup> Adorno's argument also echoes Schopenhauer's claim that:

No attained object of willing can give a satisfaction that lasts and no longer declines; but it is always like the alms thrown to a beggar, which relieves him today so that his misery may be prolonged till tomorrow.<sup>197</sup>

In many ways *Pennies* underlines these ideas for the majority of its narrative. For the most part, Parker's imaginings can be seen as fleetingly temporary highs induced by the narcotic effect of the music. He spends most of his time 'looking for the blue...and the gold' which, he admits, really only exists 'Inside yourself! Inside your own head.'<sup>198</sup> But, of course, he



needs the songs to help create the fantasy utopian scenarios to which he becomes addicted:

Songs. They're like the pictures, and that. You can sort of learn - you know - learn how to live and that. They just drop into your head and help you look at things.<sup>199</sup>

Such is the intensity of his addiction, he is forced to return to his musical imaginings after he makes a metaphorical attempt to break away from them by smashing up the records in his store in Episode 4. For Parker, the line between reality and illusion becomes blurred, the illusion often feeling like the reality and *vice versa* as he struggles to differentiate between actuality and make-believe. The majority of the songs in *Pennies and Lipstick* allow a pleasurable, if ephemeral escape from (and by comparison a criticism of), the society in which the characters feel themselves trapped. Once the music fades and the narrative returns to actuality however, the characters are forced back into captivity.

Unlike the songs employed in both *Pennies and Lipstick*, those in *Detective* are often melancholic in sentiment, and Marlow's relationship with the music is somewhat different to that of Parker and Hopper in that, for him, the songs seemingly come unbidden, and are just as likely to be malignant as benign. While Parker and Hopper freely conjure up songs of innocence, Marlow is subjected to involuntary, often painful songs of experience. In *Detective*, the musical fantasy sequences are clearly presented as involuntary reactions to the hyperventilation Marlow experiences as a result of his skin disease, and to the hallucinogenic medication he is prescribed:

I'm starting to lose control of my body temperature. I keep going over the top... Sometimes - sometimes these - hallucinations - they're better than the real thing. People can sing in them or dance... (Episode 1).

In contrast to both *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, where the musical sequences are simply presented as imagined escapist fantasies, such a rational explanation creates plausibility of musical motivation. In addition, unlike *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, where the musical fantasy sequences begin instantaneously, in *Detective Potter* often leads us into a sequence either by having Marlow begin to sing a song prior to moving into a fantasy sequence, as in the *On the Sunny Side of the Street* sequence (Episode One), or by indicating the onset of an hallucination by having Marlow see a fantasy character in the non-fantasy world prior to the onset of a fantasy sequence, as happens in the build up to the *Dry Bones* sequence (Episode One), where he sees Sonia the prostitute (Kate McKenzie) from the spy-story strand in amongst the group of doctors. For the most part, respondents were far more likely to accept what they considered to be the motivationally plausible musical fantasy sequences in *Detective* than what they considered to be the unrealistic 'goings on' in both *Pennies* and *Lipstick*.

### **Working with memory.**

In addition to the potential problems associated with the trans-modal processes involved in the interpretation of interpretations of musical experience, I soon realised that the research procedure would be further complicated by difficulties associated with working with memory processes. The memory process is often extremely selective, it employs what

might be termed perceptual filtering, and more often than not it invokes a positively evaluated past. It can also, with the benefit of hindsight, or what Freud termed *nachträglichkeit* (translated as afterwardness), confer meanings on experiences that did not initially possess such meanings.<sup>200</sup> Often memories of the past are not memories of facts but memories of our imaginings of the past. The ructions which developed between the author Frank McCourt and the people of Limerick over what they claim to be a misrepresentation of popular history in *Angela's Ashes* highlight the way in which memory can be extremely idiosyncratic.<sup>201</sup> The unfiltered past is deep, dark, and amorphous; memory and nostalgia combine to give it definition and shape by creating a concrete narrative out of fragments which often simplify history into a rose-tinted time-line of events that lead somewhere better. As Bakhtin suggests:

In the world of memory, a phenomenon exists in its own peculiar context, with its own special rules, subject to conditions quite different from those we meet in the world we see with our own eyes.<sup>202</sup>

Amongst the most interesting of these peculiarities are the ways in which we 'see' and 'hear' in memory. If, to use a filmic metaphor, our everyday perception of the world is made up of point-of-view shots and point-of-hearing soundscapes, memory often utilises high wide-angle or aerial shots with associated non-naturalistic aural perception in its recreation of past events and experiences. Although this memory perspective represents what might be termed a privileged camera/hearing position, a form of third-person narration in which, like Marlow in *Detective*, we 'see' ourselves, the resulting shot is often frustratingly dreamlike in that it can combine areas of spatial and temporal soft focus

sound and vision with areas in which there is a sharp and strangely extensive depth of field or sound range. One of the reasons for this is perceptual filtering which tends to focus in on pleasant events and/or emotions while saving us from pain by editing out unpleasant events and/or emotions.<sup>203</sup>

Filmmakers conventionally tend to signify the transitions into and out of memory or dream by some form of hazy dissolve, and occasionally with an accompanying aural distortion.<sup>204</sup> Visibly, Potter's lighting transitions and motivational close-ups perform a similar function, signalling entry into and out of fantasy-time, the transition from spoken narrative to music performing the same function aurally.

There are usually differences in form between memories produced by children, which tend to be non-linear or non-sequential events 'seen' in an almost photographic or eidetic format, and adult memories which tend to be linear but often less sharply defined. As Rose points out:

A thirty-year-old man does not remember his ten-year-old self in the same way as a fifty-year-old remembers his thirty-year-old self although the time lapse is the same in each case... Only a few individuals seem to retain in adulthood the eidetic memory of their childhood.<sup>205</sup>

In addition, it must also be noted that advancing age usually induces cognitive slowing which can affect the memory process. Although it has been argued that cognitive slowing affects different memory tasks in different ways, older subjects, particularly those over 60

years of age, have been shown to exhibit a measurable slowing in free recall ability, and to experience deficits in temporal discrimination when attempting memory tasks.<sup>206</sup>

The actual process of producing memory is, as Freeman suggests, dynamic and dialogic:

Each and every time we return to the past an entirely new monster will have been created; what had already been rewritten will have been rewritten yet again, the latest version, this being another step away from the original...all we have are memories of memories of memories.<sup>207</sup>

In relation to this study, it must be acknowledged that the comments made by respondents in relation to memories induced by the songs in the serials may be layered constructions, far removed from the actual experiences. Like Derrida's notion of language as little more than a process of constant deferral, memory can only ever make distant reference to an experience. The longer we live, the more fictional our pasts become. The more time that lapses between hearing a song and recalling it, the greater the possibility of quotational and/or distorted recall. Having said that, as Proust consistently argued, the experience of reworking memory traces (*erfahrung*), can sometimes be even more powerful than the original experience,<sup>208</sup> a fact supported by the intensity and prevalence of the nostalgic reveries which many respondents reported experiencing in response to hearing the original recordings used in the three serials.

For the purpose of this study, the basic processes of memory can be initially classified under three broad headings: recollection, recall, and recognition. Recollection relates to the reconstruction of events or facts on the basis of partial clues; for example, the

memory-based hermeneutic mechanisms which are utilised by viewers of *Detective* in their reconstruction of the narrative would come into this category, as would the memory-based information offered by all respondents during the 'motivated' section of the interview process (see below). Recall relates to the active, unaided remembering of events or facts. The 'unmotivated' section of the interview process (see below) thus involves respondents in the act of recall. Recognition relates to the ability to correctly identify previously encountered stimuli as familiar. Both unmotivated and motivated responses utilise this concept. In order to access recall, respondents must first experience recognition. In addition to these three processes, we might also consider a number of other useful terms, including primary memory, secondary memory, episodic memory, and semantic memory.<sup>209</sup> Primary memory is short-term memory and relates to recollection, recall, and recognition of recent events and facts. The formulation of answers to questions put to respondents relating to their viewing of the texts thus involves the use of primary memory. The nostalgic memories induced by the music in the serials fall under the category of secondary memory, or long-term memory.<sup>210</sup> By episodic memory I mean the memory of events in one's own life history. Again, the personal memories induced by the music can be classified as episodic. Semantic memory relates to memory-based knowledge that is independent of one's own life history. If, for example, a 30 year-old respondent makes reference to the 1950s in discussing *Lipstick*, because they are too young to have personal memories of that period, such references cannot be episodic and, therefore, must be semantic.

Having spent time researching the problematics associated with working with memory, and with the collection and interpretation of musical experience, I then turned to existing television audience studies for methodological inspiration.

### **Drawing on existing television audience studies.**

Influenced by literary studies-based reader response approaches to textual interpretation,<sup>211</sup> and by Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding work which popularised the concepts of preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings,<sup>212</sup> television audience studies began to move away from both the 'effects'-based research carried out during the 1970s by the likes of Lefkowitz et al,<sup>213</sup> and Vidmar and Rokeach,<sup>214</sup> and from the rather generalised 'uses and gratifications' approach of critics such as Blumler and Katz,<sup>215</sup> which posited an almost infinite diversity of uses for television based on socio-economic and physio-emotional needs.<sup>216</sup> Interest in the television audience was also strongly influenced by David Morley's seminal research *The Nationwide Audience*,<sup>217</sup> a study of the responses of class-based focus groups to factual television.<sup>218</sup> Although the study later attracted extensive criticism for its methodological and ideological practices,<sup>219</sup> criticism which was for the most part later accepted by Morley himself,<sup>220</sup> the research was important in that it went beyond the limitations of both 'effects' and 'uses and gratifications' traditions and helped to position the viewing of television as 'a complex cultural practice full of dialogical negotiations and contradictions.'<sup>221</sup> Since Morley's study, numerous research projects have concentrated on audience responses to factual programmes,<sup>222</sup> on patterns of viewing, and on the mechanics of watching television.<sup>223</sup>

In terms of fiction, a high percentage of television drama audience research has been undertaken on soap opera by researchers such as Brown,<sup>224</sup> Brunsdon,<sup>225</sup> Buckingham,<sup>226</sup> Livingstone,<sup>227</sup> and Seiter,<sup>228</sup> and on soap-series such as *Dallas* (BBC, 1978-91),<sup>229</sup> - Alasuutari,<sup>230</sup> Ang,<sup>231</sup> and Katz and Liebes<sup>232</sup>; and *Dynasty* (BBC, 1982-9), - Shroder.<sup>233</sup> Because several texts already offer overviews of the range of existing television-drama related audience studies,<sup>234</sup> I intend to mention only those which have directly informed this study.

Ien Ang's work with viewers of *Dallas* has been particularly influential. Working with written responses to advertisements placed in women's magazines, Ang sought to make links between ideology and popular culture, and in doing so set out to challenge the Frankfurtian 'effects' doctrine that popular culture primarily manipulates the masses.<sup>235</sup> The results of this thesis support the validity of Ang's critique of the sender-message-receiver mass communications model as expounded by critics such as Adorno. As illustrated in Chapter 3, rather than exhibiting passive reception of implied textual meaning, many respondents actively manipulated and appropriated the popular music employed in Potter's texts for their own pleasures. As with Morley's study, critics attacked Ang's work on methodological grounds. In particular it was argued that the use of letters left no space for clarificatory or supplementary questioning, and that, because the sample was self-selecting (*Dallas* fans), it could not claim to represent a wider audience. In spite of this criticism, Ang's conclusions that there is often a 'constant to and fro movement between identification with and distancing from the fictional world',<sup>236</sup> and that television drama can offer 'a personal escape similar to that of a daydream', are



supported by the results of the analysis of respondent interpretations of Potter's dramas (in spite of the modernist tendencies of those texts). Many respondents did appear to oscillate between identification and distancing, and many used the musical content to engage in pleasurable, nostalgic memory excursions in which they were able, even if only ephemerally, to 'lose' themselves.

Also working with *Dallas*, but leaning more toward the analysis of cultural difference rather than gender difference, Katz and Liebes sought to investigate the process of negotiation between the text and the racial/ethnic cultures of its viewers.<sup>237</sup> Using 50 ethnically homogeneous focus groups from different countries (each group being made up of three people) as a microcosm of the worldwide audience of *Dallas*,<sup>238</sup> they conducted open-ended, hour-long interviews alongside a written questionnaire.<sup>239</sup> Their aim was to investigate whether the origins of responses were 'universal', 'traditional', 'personal', or 'generic.'<sup>240</sup> Their findings, in relation to respondents' perceived notions of realism, and in relation to their response to associated perceived levels of plausibility, generally support those presented by Ang in that they also found that respondents divided into two groups, those who used and talked about the drama 'referentially', ie, in relation to 'real life', and those who offered a more 'distanced', or 'critical' view relating to the dramatic construction of the story.<sup>241</sup> Katz and Liebes study indicated a 3:1 ratio in favour of the referential mode. Perhaps not surprisingly in the light of Potter's use of non-naturalist musical sequences, a reverse ratio emerges with respondents in this study, where, as highlighted in Chapter 3, critical readings outnumbered referential readings by approximately 3:1. In 'Patterns of Involvement in Television Fiction: A Comparative

Analysis',<sup>242</sup> Liebes and Katz subdivide their earlier taxonomy, separating the 'referential' into two types of keyings, ('real' and 'play'), three kinds of 'referents' ('I', 'we', and 'they') and two kinds of 'value orientations' (interpretive or 'value-free', and evaluational or 'normative').<sup>243</sup> They found that far more keyings were of the 'real' variety than of the 'play' variety (those relating to hypothetical issues). Of the referents, Liebes and Katz suggest that 'we' should be seen as more committed than 'I' because the 'we' invokes a role as public persona taking an official stance on behalf of the group, whereas 'I' is less committed.<sup>244</sup> They also suggest that 'play' and 'they' categories are indicative of generalisation and, therefore, relate to low involvement.

Having read these studies, I realised that those comments made by respondents in relation to Potter's texts which broadly related to conceptions of realism, plausibility, identification and distanciation could be broadly coded using the 'referential' and 'critical' categories developed by Ang, and by Katz and Liebes, and, as discussed below, I appropriated those categories when coding and analysing the written questionnaires and the individual and group interview exercises.

Authored television drama has attracted relatively less audience-related academic attention than popular drama and soap opera. Of those who have ventured into this area, because they set out with broadly similar aims to my own (to investigate the textual and cultural factors influencing individual responses to authored television drama), and because they offer examples of potentially relevant research methodologies, I was particularly interested in the studies undertaken by Hallam and Marshment on *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

(BBC 2, 1990),<sup>245</sup> by Heide on *thirtysomething* (Channel 4, 1989-92),<sup>246</sup> and by Thomas on *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987-00).<sup>247</sup> Of the three, Hallam and Marshment's has most in common with my own research in that they were particularly concerned with the relationship between memory and the dramatic television text. Although they did not focus on the musical content of the text, they were specifically interested in the ways in which individuals remembered narratorial and aesthetic aspects of the serial. They analysed verbal responses from small groups of women and the contents of a written questionnaire which drew 32 replies from the 100 solicited. The questionnaire was divided into sections on production, aesthetics, theme and content, and emotional response. The method of analysis was based on key-word and key-phrase groupings. They found that memories of the serial were predominantly visual ones and that for most respondents the 'look' of the work outweighed the narrative in terms of how it was remembered.<sup>248</sup> Like Ang, and Katz and Liebes, Hallam and Marshment identify a 'slide between relating to the text as a constructed fiction and as a representation of reality.'<sup>249</sup> They also found that verisimilitude was considered to be a praiseworthy factor by respondents, an evaluation repeated by respondents taking part in this study (see Chapter 3). Perhaps sensibly, they conclude that:

people's different positionings cannot be neatly compartmentalised but are composed of a complex of overlapping categorisations which can also change over time.<sup>250</sup>

As discussed below, I modelled my questionnaire on the format devised for their study and their key-word groupings influenced my key-word categorisations.

Although essentially only concerned with gender and class-related influences, Heide's study of *thirtysomething* viewers shares some of the aims of my own research, particularly her desire to investigate the gap between the critical interpretation of the series put forth by scholars and the experience of viewers.<sup>251</sup> In order to gain an understanding of the ways in which one 'demographically desirable group' generates meaning,<sup>252</sup> Heide conducted interviews with 20 female viewers in the New York area and distributed questionnaires to another 30, making a total of 50. Her respondents were primarily white and middle-class, and ranged in age from 25 to 45. She found her respondents through the same 'snowball' method of recruitment previously employed by researchers such as Rubin and Press,<sup>253</sup> a method which, as discussed below, I, in turn, utilised for this study. Heide conducted interviews in two-hour sessions at respondent's homes, at their workplaces or in coffee shops, partly in groups and partly in one-to-one situations. Her analysis suggests that the *thirtysomething* dramas end up serving as morality tales 'to caution women against deviating too strongly from traditional roles.'<sup>254</sup> She found that lower middle-class respondents tended not to identify so much with the female characters, most of whom are middle-class, as with the situations these characters found themselves in, and that they usually judged the characters more harshly than the upper middle-class respondents.<sup>255</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, respondents taking part in the present study also tended to identify more with situations rather than characters.

Thomas's work on *Inspector Morse* is also gender focused and combines textual analysis with qualitative audience research. In relation to the present study, it is interesting because

of its introductory claim that it will investigate the relationship between the programme and nostalgic conceptions of Englishness. In effect the essay is rather disappointing in that it tells us very little about the way in which nostalgia as a production commodity is utilised within the text, or of the ways in which such nostalgia might be consumed by viewers. It does, however, provide additional information about the mechanics of constructing and analysing written questionnaires. Thomas distributed questionnaires to audiences at a National Film Theatre screening of an episode of *Inspector Morse* in September 1991. Her sample was essentially self-selecting, ie, Morse fans from within the London area. Out of an audience of 'about 100', 30 completed questionnaires were submitted. Thomas made contact with these people and asked for volunteers to take part in interview sessions: 13 responded and nine interviews ranging from 10 to 40 minutes in length were conducted after screenings of four extracts from *Inspector Morse* (pre-selected by Thomas for their relevance to the issues of gender representation).<sup>256</sup> The sample was white and predominantly middle-class. 75% of the respondents were under 35 years of age. Thomas found that respondents made 'conventional associations of quality with high production values, realism, the intellectual challenge of the plots, and the character of Morse himself.'<sup>257</sup> Her conclusion includes a similar claim to the one made by Hallam and Marshment, that 'the image of a...mass audience perpetuated by statistical research, masks the subtlety of readings...which a programme such as this may generate',<sup>258</sup> a statement which is, in turn, supported by the findings of this thesis.

Having undertaken research in a number of potentially relevant areas, I began to think about designing a suitable methodology. The methodology detailed below was specifically

designed to facilitate the study of the consumption, and subsequent verbal articulation of music-related experiences of the three focus serials. Many of the decisions taken in the formulation of the methodology were influenced and informed by the theoretical and practical work carried out by the musicologists, psychologists, and television drama researchers discussed above.

### **Methodology**

The first methodological issue which needed to be considered related to the number of respondents which could practically be incorporated in the study. Because of the nature of the research, which was not aimed at establishing typicality or at providing conclusively representative data, but rather at focusing on the relationship between personal memory, emotion, and hermeneutic responses to the narratively expositional popular music employed in the three focus texts, my initial intention was to set up intensive one-to-one, and perhaps small group interview sessions, in other words to predominantly work qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

As Lewis points out, the fundamental question relating to the evaluation of any research methodology is 'what can it tell us ?'<sup>259</sup> The decision to focus predominantly on qualitative methods of data collection was made after asking such a question of potential quantitative methodologies. Collecting data using a questionnaire format, or via respondent's letters as Ang had done, may have been less time-consuming but did not appear to be a suitable option for a number of reasons. As Ang herself admitted, such approaches are problematic in that:

What people...write about their experiences, preferences, habits, etc., cannot be taken at face value...We must search for what is behind the explicitly written, for the presuppositions and accepted attitudes concealed within them.<sup>260</sup>

Quantitative approaches do not allow any opportunity for respondent reflection or for the researcher to ask supplementary or clarificatory questions. Regardless of potential issues respondents would like to discuss, or unexpectedly raised areas of interest the researcher would like to develop, the questionnaire method forces both to follow what Lewis terms 'the remorseless logic of the pre-designed questionnaire.'<sup>261</sup> Responses to questions posed by questionnaires may, thus, raise more questions than they answer. In contrast, 'live' interviews allow supplementary and clarificatory questions essential when working with problematic concepts such as musical experience and memory processes. Quantitative methodologies also preclude access to what Wittgenstein terms the 'logical scaffolding' of language, which includes inflection and intonation, body language, and the linguistic categories through which respondents articulate their worlds.<sup>262</sup> The recorded interview goes some way towards overcoming these limitations by allowing the researcher to note facial expressions and body movements which might contribute to meaning, and by producing a reviewable permanent record of the interview which captures voice inflection and is relatively closer to the moment of meaning production than a written questionnaire. The questionnaire can also be an inadequate method of ascertaining the intricacies of the semiotic interplay (both visual and aural) between viewer and television text which I particularly sought to explore. I needed to interview respondents in a 'live' situation in order to be able to revisit specific musical sequences via aural and, in the case of *Pennies*,

visual extracts. Most people are, in any case, far more comfortable with the idea of talking about television than they are with writing about it.

If the collection of data using questionnaires was likely to be problematic, so too was the coding and analysis of such material. After reading a number of research projects which had utilised the questionnaire method of data collection, I realised that the coding and analysis of such data was a potentially far more laborious and time-consuming procedure than might be experienced utilising a qualitative approach.<sup>263</sup> While quantitative research methods are useful when dealing with quantifiable areas such as programme ratings, once they stray into areas relating to attitudes and opinions, and in the case of the present study into personal memory and emotion, their limitations can override their usefulness.<sup>264</sup> In spite of these negative points, I was reluctant to totally dismiss the idea of utilising the questionnaire in some form as a research tool. I thought that it might be a useful means of appraising public attitudes to Potter and to his work prior to engaging in more focused qualitative research, and so I decided to preface the interviews with an investigatory 'pilot' questionnaire exercise.

### **The questionnaire exercise**

Because the intended function of the questionnaire exercise was to highlight potentially lucrative focus areas for subsequent in-depth interviews rather than to provide representational evidence, I felt that the selection of subjects did not need to take into account any specific sociological groupings. I decided to use students as respondents essentially on the grounds of accessibility. At that stage in my career I was teaching in a



number of different institutions and was thus able to recruit students efficiently. The questionnaires were distributed amongst A' Level students and undergraduates in five different educational institutions in and around Merseyside. Because I taught within the humanities, all of the students were following arts-based courses: approximately 25% were A' Level students and approximately 75% were undergraduates. I felt that 175 might be a manageable number in terms of the collection, collation, coding, and analysis of material. In the event, because of my inexperience, the process took a lot longer than I had expected. Of the 175 questionnaires distributed, 160 were returned. The gender distribution of respondents who submitted their questionnaires was 51 male and 109 female: this imbalance reflects the general gender imbalance in arts-based subjects in further and higher education. Although the total age-range of the students was 18-68, as might be expected with a student sample, the majority of respondents came from the 18-25 age group.

The questionnaire, which comprised 16 questions, was distributed in December 1995. (see Appendix 1 for sample response). The initial questions related to television drama in general, eg 'What are your favourite television dramas and why?', and 'Which television dramas would you class as quality dramas and why?' Although the scope for detailed comment was obviously limited, I hoped responses to such questions might broadly highlight public approaches toward contemporary television drama, specifically in relation to notions of quality. I hoped that a knowledge of such approaches might inform the formulation of subsequent interview questions. The remaining questions related directly to Potter and his work, such as 'Do you like Potter's dramas? Give reasons for your

answer', 'Would you describe Potter as a popular writer ? Give reasons for your answer', and 'What kind of things do you think Potter writes about ?' The last section of the questionnaire posed questions focusing specifically on *Lipstick*, such as 'Can you briefly summarise the story of *Lipstick on Your Collar* ?', 'What do you remember about the men/women in the serial ?', 'Do you think the serial was realistic ?', and 'Which songs do you remember being used in the serial ?' These questions were designed to allow the dissemination of conceptions of Potter as an implied author, and of memories and opinions of Potter's most recently transmitted drama, specifically in relation to gender issues, concepts of realism, and the popular music content.

Having collected the data, I was then faced with the daunting task of coding it. I hoped to utilise the questionnaire exercise to gain some much needed practice in the area of response coding prior to grappling with the more important and extensive material which would be produced in response to the interview exercises. In order to efficiently organise the material prior to analysis, I needed to have some method of differentiating and categorising the comments visibly on the page. The obvious form of differentiation was to utilise a colour-coding system. I thus highlighted comments by colour according to designated categories. After unsuccessfully (and in hindsight naively) attempting to adapt a number of pre-existing coding schemes for the categorisation of responses, I realised that I would need to formulate a coding strategy specific to my questionnaire. After considerable trial and effort, a workable system evolved. For example, in relation to the coding of reasons offered by respondents for liking Potter's work, I eventually found that most could be divided into six broad categories. The first category, Appreciation of

Innovation, related to respondent perceptions of Potter's work as being positively different to other television dramas; the second category, Appreciation of Production Values, related to respondent appreciation of what they perceived to be high production values (in relation to writing, acting, sets, costume and lighting); the third category, Appreciation of the Representation of Sexuality, included positive comments relating to the sexual content of the serials; the fourth category, Aesthetic Appreciation, included comments expressing an appreciation of the 'look' or style of the serials; the fifth category, Genre-Related Pleasures, included those comments which referred positively to the incorporation of musical genre conventions within the texts; the final category, Pleasure in the Real, included comments relating to perceived elements of textual realism.

In order to trace any noticeable gender-related differences, I further divided the opinions into those offered by male respondents and those offered by female respondents. Included in the Appreciation of Innovation category were words such as 'unusual', 'distinctive', 'different', and 'experimental.' In the Appreciation of Production Values category were words and phrases such as 'well written', 'high production values', 'enthraling storyline', 'well produced', 'interesting characters', and 'well acted.' In the Appreciation of the Representation of Sexuality category were words and phrases such as 'sexually explicit', 'an abundance of naked women', 'sex' and 'the yum-yum blonde.' In the Aesthetic Appreciation category were words and phrases such as 'abstract and artistic', 'his theatrical style', and 'visually exciting.' In the Genre-Related Pleasures category were words and phrases such as 'uses different genres', and 'like a musical.' In the Pleasure in the Real category were terms such as 'It was very realistic', and 'It reminded me of my own experiences.'

A similar methodological approach was employed in the coding of reasons for disliking Potter's work. These fell into four broad categories: those expressing frustration relating to the texts' Formal Complexity (the utilisation of modernist editing techniques in *Detective*, the elaborate employment of analepsis and prolepsis in *Detective*); those expressing an aversion to the Sexual Representation in the texts; those expressing annoyance or distaste in relation to the Musical Content of Potter's texts; and those relating to perceived Poor Entertainment Value. In the Formal Complexity category were phrases such as 'they border on the incomprehensible', 'too disorientating', 'the plots are too complicated', 'too fragmented', and 'difficult to follow.' In the Sexual Representation category were words and phrases such as 'too involved with sex all the time', 'sexist', 'misogynistic', and 'too sexually explicit.' In the Musical Content category were words and phrases such as 'I don't like the way they sing in the middle of scenes', 'the singing and dancing is just too surreal', 'the singing and dancing is bizarre', and 'the musical diversions irritated me.' In the Poor Entertainment Value category were phrases such as 'they're boring and make you uncomfortable', 'they're too deep to be entertaining', 'they disturb me', 'his plays are just depressing', and 'they make me depressed and physically ill.' The coding categories developed for the questionnaire exercise were modified and utilised for responses to Potter and his work made during the interview exercises.

The results of the questionnaire suggested that gender appeared to influence respondent reaction to Potter's work. Female respondents were far more likely to dislike Potter's work than their male counterparts. While just over 28% of female respondents claimed to

dislike Potter's work for reasons relating to the way his texts represent sex and sexuality, only one male respondent claimed to dislike the texts for reasons relating to their sexual content. Female respondents were far more critical than male respondents in relation to what they perceived to be poor entertainment value. Respondents of both sexes were equally critical about the formal complexity of Potter's texts. In taking such a position, questionnaire respondents tended to bracket all Potter texts together, and thus did not appear to differentiate between temporally complex, multiple narrative texts such as *Detective*, and texts such as *Pennies* and *Lipstick* which employ fairly conventional linear narratives devoid of analepsis or prolepsis. This may be due to the fact that some respondents may only have seen *Detective*. It may also be due to the fact that, like many of the respondents who took part in the interview exercises, some questionnaire respondents may have been working with an implied author paradigm constructed out of a journalistic and/or academic discourse which positions Potter as a 'difficult', 'intellectual' dramatist who only writes complex dramas. This seems to be borne out by the comments made by questionnaire respondents in relation to their perception of Potter's popularity. Comments such as 'he's cultish', 'he's popular among art students, but not among normal types', and 'he's too surreal for mainstream tastes', tend to suggest that Potter's work is more likely to be appreciated by viewers of BBC 2 and Channel 4, (where it was predominantly transmitted), than on the more populist BBC 1 or ITV.

The majority of questionnaire respondents believed that Potter's most consistently explored themes were sex and sexuality and 'writing about himself.' Although it is difficult to refute such claims, they may also be related to limited viewing of Potter's work. Those

respondents who had only seen *Blackeyes* (BBC2, 1989), for example, may be justified in equating Potter with voyeurism and the exploitation of the male gaze, and similarly, in spite of his consistent claims that *Detective* should not be seen as autobiographical, those respondents who were aware of Potter's medical condition might be forgiven for believing that the content of the serial was indeed autobiographical.

The section of the questionnaire dealing with *Lipstick* produced some particularly interesting results. Of the 41 respondents who claimed to have watched the serial 12 months earlier, 24 claimed to remember 'nothing at all' about the storyline, and 14 claimed they were unable to remember any images from the serial. Of those who were able to offer summaries of the storyline, none were able to name a character. Such results are, of course, based entirely on the recall process, and, as the subsequent interview exercises highlighted, motivated recollection levels would, almost certainly, have been higher. While a number of male respondents cited various sexual images in *Lipstick* as being the most memorable and pleasurable, 'the blonde, busty woman', 'sex against the wall', 'a picture of a blonde girl in the friend's pornographic magazine', 'a female with a snake that turned into a penis', and 'all the shagging', female respondents tended to remember places such as the War-Office and the cinema, and the musical set-pieces, but tended to metonymise them as 'dancing in the office', or 'singing office clerks' rather than specifying any particular song or sequence. This tendency to merge the musical sequences together was repeated in the interview exercises and may be related to the abundance of musical sequences and/or to the drift-off effect induced by the use of popular music (see Chapter 3). Of the 41 respondents who claimed to have watched *Lipstick*, 10 were unable to

remember anything at all about the female characters, while 11 were unable to remember anything at all about the male characters. Of those who were able to remember the female characters, almost all focused on Sylvia. While male respondents tended to describe Sylvia mainly in relation to her physical appearance and in what might be termed complimentary terms, 'she was yum-yum', 'a blonde with a nice chest', 'a gorgeous working-class woman', and 'attractive, sexy, provocative blonde', female respondents tended to offer moralistic judgements such as 'stereotype blonde bimbo', 'flirty and emotionally unstable', and 'tarty, red lipstick, common blonde hair.' In discussing the male characters, respondents of both sexes focused on the voyeuristic cinema organist Harold Atterbow (Roy Hudd). He was consistently described in negative terms such as 'a repulsive, dirty old man', by female respondents, and contrastingly as 'marvellous', and 'humorously exaggerated' by male respondents. As discussed in Chapter 3, such gendered perspectives in relation to male and female characters tended to be repeated across the three serials by interview respondents. In terms of concepts of realism, of the 41 respondents who claimed to have watched *Lipstick*, 9 believed it to be realistic and 22 found it to be unrealistic. Reasons for allocating the term realistic included: 'it caught the post-war atmosphere', 'the relationships were realistic', 'it had a realistic setting - the Suez Crisis', 'because the people were like normal people', and 'it had things to say about real life.' Reasons for deeming the serial unrealistic included: 'because you can't know what other people are thinking', 'there was too much bursting into song', 'because people don't get up and sing at work', 'the male characters seemed unreal', and 'the characters seemed too exaggerated.'

Although the questionnaire sample is too small to have any quantifiable meaning, the exercise did have some value in that it suggested the possibility that Potter's texts may appeal more to men than to women, and to the over 35s more than to younger viewers, and, therefore, that further investigation of the ways in which a respondent's gender and age might influence his/her interpretation of Potter's texts should be included in the individual interview section of the study. It also informed my approach to the formulation of interview questions relating to the relationship between viewers and the popular music content of Potter's texts. Responses tended to suggest that although the majority of respondents claimed to have enjoyed the musical content, many struggled to remember the songs. In terms of ability to remember the musical content of *Lipstick*, of the 41 respondents who claimed to have watched the serial, 10 were unable to name any of the songs featured, and 20 were only able to name one song. In total only nine of the 33 most prominently featured songs in the serial were remembered, with just the title song and *Love is Strange* being remembered by more than one respondent.<sup>265</sup> While acknowledging the limitations of the questionnaire exercise, the responses did appear to offer some support to the notion that engagement with Potter's musically infused period narratives can result in a mental transition into a musically motivated nostalgia mode which can, in turn, induce various levels of narrative amnesia. Through the interview exercises I hoped to gain further understanding of this phenomenon, both in relation to its potential prevalence, and in relation to possible reasons for its occurrence. I also hoped to gain additional insight into the ways in which gender, age, genre expectation, and notions of implied authorship might influence interview respondents' interpretations of the musical content of the texts. Having gained a broad idea of public attitudes toward Potter and his



work from the questionnaire exercise, the next stage of the process was to design a workable structure for the interview exercises.

### **The interview exercises**

In considering approaches to the second phase of research, the first decision that had to be made was whether to work exclusively with individual respondents, with small groups, or with a combination of the two; each method has its supporters.<sup>266</sup> Although group interviews are less time-consuming, and as Lewis suggests, allow the observation of 'the dialectics of conversations between people',<sup>267</sup> intuitively I favoured the individual interview for several reasons. Firstly, as previous studies suggest, respondents viewing texts on an individual basis may sometimes feel inhibited when subsequently called upon to discuss their opinions of them in a group situation with people they may not know, particularly if any of those people exhibit socially dominant behaviour.<sup>268</sup> Group dynamics may, for example, persuade respondents to expound comments and beliefs which they deem to be publicly acceptable rather than those which they may hold personally. A second problem with group interviews is the difficulty they pose for the researcher in identifying individual speakers at the transcription stage. The importance which this study places on individual memory and emotion also significantly influenced the choice of individual interviews over group interviews. The one-to-one interview method allows memory and emotional responses to be investigated in greater detail than would a group situation where some respondents may feel inhibited about discussing such personal issues. That is not to say that all respondents will necessarily 'open up' to a researcher on a one-to-one basis, but the chances are that such a situation may be more conducive to such

discussions. In addition, group members may 'contaminate' each other's initial personal memories of the texts. Having developed a preference for individual interviews, I nevertheless decided not to reject the idea of group interviews without first testing them out, and I used *Lipstick*, the first focus text, as a 'pilot'-study to test out the feasibility of both methods (see below).

As with most research projects, practical and economic factors played a part in dictating the size of the audience sample used; a project such as this, carried out by a single researcher on a part-time basis without funding, necessarily precludes the recruitment of large numbers of respondents. Very early in the research process I came to realise why so many researchers in this field hunt in pairs. Fortunately, as stated above, the nature of this research project did not necessarily demand the recruitment of extensive numbers of respondents. A study based on investigating individual memory-related responses to musically-infused dramatic texts may not necessarily exhibit significantly increased quantifiable benefits in relation to an increase in respondent numbers. After careful consideration, I decided that nine respondents for each of the three serials might be both productive and manageable, I thus set out to recruit 27 respondents, nine of whom would take part in the first phase of the interview exercise, the 'pilot'-study on *Lipstick*. There were two logical reasons for starting with *Lipstick* rather than working chronologically (ie, *Pennies*, *Detective*, *Lipstick*); firstly, it made sense because I had already included the serial in the questionnaire, and secondly, because I wanted to work with a relatively straightforward linear narrative before moving on to the formally challenging *Detective*. I hoped that the experiences gained in the construction, collation, coding, and analysis of

the *Lipstick* study would help to sharpen the field of focus for the *Pennies* and *Detective* studies.

Unlike researchers such as Ang and Thomas, I did not want to work specifically with fans. Although most of the respondents who took part in this study had seen some of Potter's work, none of them can be described as fans. I felt that such a closed community might limit the range of response. In addition, I was interested in the ways in which respondents engaged with the serials after a single viewing, particularly in which aspects of the narratives were retained in the memory and which were forgotten, and in the influence that the musical sequences might have on memory and *vice-versa*. I felt that this area of study might have been compromised by Potter devotees who, untypically, might have watched the serials on several occasions. I therefore tried to ensure that individual interview respondents who had seen *Lipstick* were given *Pennies* or *Detective*, that those who had seen *Pennies* were given *Detective* or *Lipstick*, and that those who had seen *Detective* were given *Pennies* or *Lipstick*.

Following researchers such as Heide (see above), I decided to use the 'snowball' method of recruitment. Basically this involves finding an initial volunteer who then solicits a friend or acquaintance, who subsequently does the same, and so on until the target number has been reached. Respondent recruitment proved to be far more difficult than I had expected. Many of those approached by my initial volunteer declined to take part due to lack of time. Some, after initially declaring an interest, declined once they were told they would be required to watch dramas written by Dennis Potter. Thus, while I had consciously sought

to preclude Potter fans from the study, those who particularly disliked his work tended to preclude themselves. Eventually, however, the target of 27 respondents was achieved, but subsequently decreased to 25 when, after viewing *Pennies*, two male respondents abdicated, one disappearing without trace, taking my tapes with him, and the other claiming to be so 'fed up' with the serial that he refused to take part in the interview process.

A class-based analysis would have served little purpose given the nature of the study, and so I decided to aim for a fairly homogeneous, mainly middle-class contingent of respondents. I therefore ensured that my initial volunteer was from this grouping and asked her to recruit from within her social circle. While class was not a methodological factor, in the light of the results of the questionnaire exercise, which suggested that the majority of Potter's viewers might be over the age of 35, I was keen to investigate the ways in which age and gender might influence responses to the texts, and so I sought to ensure that respondents spanned a reasonably broad age-range bearing in mind the subject matter (the dramas of Dennis Potter); in practice the 27 respondents ranged from 29 to 64.<sup>269</sup> I aimed to ensure approximate equality in terms of gender division. Although the initial recruitment was reasonably well balanced at 12 male and 15 female respondents, due to the defection of the two male respondents the balance was subsequently tipped further in the direction of the female gender at 10:15. Responses to the questionnaire had indicated that Potter's texts may appeal more to men than to women, and so with the gender imbalance of the interview exercise in mind I expected to find more criticism than appreciation, and in practice this proved to be the case (see Chapter 3).

Interview respondents were given video tapes of their designated serials and asked to view them in their own homes over a six week period, the actual time span of each serial as transmitted. Although, by its very nature, an academic study cannot hope to exactly replicate normal viewing conditions, I felt that individual home-viewing, without the intrusive presence of a researcher, was preferable to organised group screenings. Respondents were given the option of watching alone or with others present. Respondents were encouraged to try and view one episode a week as per the transmission schedule, but, for practical reasons, some had to modify the preferred viewing pattern due to unforeseen circumstances; one, for example, watched all six episodes of *Detective* over a seven day period, a decision which, interestingly, did not appear to influence his responses in any particular way.

In order to simulate a 'live' viewing experience as closely as possible, and to attempt to ensure standardised viewing conditions, respondents were encouraged to watch the serials as if they were being transmitted, rather than being on tape. They were asked to watch each episode in a single viewing, and to organise their viewing regime as they would for any regular transmission, leaving the tape running if they were interrupted by the doorbell or by the telephone, or if they made refreshments or visited the toilet. They were asked not to rewind the tape in order to catch up on anything they had missed. In practice, at the interview stage most respondents admitted that because they were conscious of being involved in a research project they had paid more attention than they would normally do to what they were watching. This heightened attention level makes the problems many

respondents encountered with recall and recollection even more interesting. If, as detailed below, significant narrative amnesia occurred when respondents' attention levels were unnaturally high, the chances are that under normal viewing conditions such gaps in the text may be more pronounced.

As I was dealing principally with memory-based responses, I was particularly concerned that there should be a relatively short, standard time-lapse between the completion of viewing and the conducting of interviews. The longer the interval between viewing and interview, the more reconstructive the memory process was likely to be. As Höijer has pointed out, on the one hand the thought that was thought during viewing may be richer in content than the thought later communicated at the interview stage, while conversely, subjects may later elaborate or embellish what had originally been fragmentary or incomplete ideas, or even fabricate thoughts which they had not experienced during initial viewing.<sup>270</sup> In addition, the limitations of language, particularly in relation to the articulation of music (where only associational or representational responses can be expected - see above), and to musically-induced emotions and feelings, which are often unconscious or subconscious reactions, pose considerable problems for the researcher, and the assumption that viewers are able to offer an account of their viewing activities in a language which will conform to researchers' expectations should, therefore, always be questioned. The interpretation of respondents' interpretations is thus a highly problematic process, a process which can be likened to a game of Chinese whispers where the fidelity of the message is consistently undermined as it passes along the chain. In addition to the problems of dealing with discourse provided by respondents, empirical audience research

is also hindered by that which remains unspoken, with the not said - the trouble with silence is that it is profoundly ambiguous. The analysis of the popular discourse which constitutes the basis of audience studies such as this is, thus, an inexact science and can be likened, in the words of Lewis, to 'wrestling with a jellyfish.'<sup>271</sup> Keeping these potential dangers in mind, all respondents were interviewed within 24 hours of completing their viewing, and many of my interpretational and analytical comments are necessarily prefixed by qualifying terms such as 'seem to be' and 'appear to be.'

In terms of the subject matter of the research and the nature of the interviews, respondents had only been told that they were taking part in an audience study based on the work of Dennis Potter. I was particularly keen that they should have no prior knowledge of the focus of the study - the popular music content of the texts, because, as Nightingale points out, not only can viewers with prior knowledge of the researcher's interests 'translate their viewing experiences into the sorts of stories they think the researcher will find interesting',<sup>272</sup> but, and this was my main worry, they are also likely to construct their viewing so as to concentrate on, or privilege those areas on which the research is focused. Keeping this focus from respondents until the interview had started almost certainly prevented this from happening.

Both one-to-one interviews and group sessions (see below) were, on average, 70 minutes in duration and were conducted informally either in respondents' homes or, if this was not possible, in my own home. All interviews were recorded on audio tape and subsequently transcribed.<sup>273</sup> I sought to negate as much as possible the development of an inhibiting

hierarchical relationship between researcher and respondent by utilising domestic space, by avoiding the use of overtly academic discourse, by stressing the fact that responses would not be categorised as right or wrong, and by assuring respondents that their opinions would be treated as their property, and that they could, therefore, veto the use of any comments in the thesis: in practice no respondent chose to exercise this right. Respondents were also assured that, in order to maintain confidentiality, identifying letters and numbers would accompany comments rather than respondents' names.<sup>274</sup>

The individual interviews were semi-structured in that a number of set questions were prepared, but most were sufficiently open-ended to allow respondents to elaborate on the subject under discussion. After the *Lipstick* one-to-one and group sessions (see below), where some respondents occasionally went off on rather oblique tangents during their interviews, I became increasingly mindful of the danger of allowing *Pennies* and *Detective* respondents to deviate too much from the focus of the question, principally because of the technical difficulties involved in coding and analysing such responses. I therefore tightened up the focus of my questions and allowed *Pennies* and *Detective* respondents less opportunity to deviate from the focus areas. Supplementary and/or clarificatory questions were, however, added where relevant. While acknowledging the fact that there is no such thing as a neutral question, I consciously sought to refrain from leading respondents toward what might be construed to be desirable, or confirmatory answers. I also tried to remain mindful throughout the interpretational stage of the study of the danger of utilising only confirming quotes and of conveniently disregarding those which appeared contradictory to proposed arguments.



The basic structure of the individual interviews was dictated by the focus of the study - the relationship between popular music, authorial intention, and audience, with questions specifically formulated to encourage respondents to offer memories and opinions of the popular music content of the serials, of genre influences, of gender representation, and of perceived aspects of implied authorship. Each interview began with a number of warm-up questions about the respondent, ie, age, occupation, and their television viewing habits. They were then asked some general television drama- related questions similar to those used in the questionnaire, and encouraged to talk about their likes and dislikes. Respondents were then asked about their previous knowledge of Potter and encouraged to offer their opinions of his work. The interview then moved on to discuss the designated text.

The music-related questions formulated for the *Lipstick* 'pilot'-study proved relatively efficient and were retained for the *Pennies* and *Detective* interviews. In order to provide an indication of the way in which respondents prioritised musical and non-musical elements of the narratives, they were asked to summarise the storyline of the serial they had watched. Respondents were also asked to discuss the texts in terms of generic placement, ie, how they positioned them in relation to realist conventions, and to the conventions of the musical genre. In the main section of the interview respondents were encouraged to talk about their understanding and interpretation of the popular music sequences. They were asked to offer possible reasons why Potter had used popular music in his work, to discuss its function, and to comment on their reactions to it. They were

then asked to talk about the musical sequences they remembered best. In order to gauge levels of awareness of production processes associated with the musical sequences, respondents were then asked questions relating to the technicalities of *mise-en-scène* signalling into and out of fantasy-time (lighting changes, camerawork, character motivation, and the use of the lip-synch device), and asked for their responses to characterisation and gender representation in the serial as a whole, and within the musical sequences in particular. They were also asked to give their opinions about the relevance of nostalgia and memory in relation to their experience of the text, and about the representation of the relevant historical period. Respondents were also asked what they remembered about the title sequence of the serial (or sequences in the case of *Pennies* which has different titles sequences for each episode). Of all the music utilised in the texts, I expected that the title music would produce the best recall/recollection figure because of its frequency of occurrence, and for the most part this proved to be the case, although some respondents struggled because they had fast-forwarded through the titles sequences in order to 'save time' (see below).

Unmotivated recall, and motivated recollection music-related memory tasks were initially devised for the *Lipstick* 'pilot'-study and were subsequently utilised for the *Pennies* and *Detective* interviews. The rationale behind the tasks was to involve respondents in the processes of recall and recollection and to differentiate between the two types of response. In the unmotivated section of the interview, respondents were asked to name, unaided, any songs which they recalled being used in the serial. If they recalled a song they were then asked whether they were familiar with the song prior to watching the serial.

Respondents were then asked: (a) to name the characters involved in the scene in which the song featured; (b) the approximate position of the sequence within the narrative order, ie, near the beginning, in the middle, or near the end of the story; (c) the narrative function, ie, what the characters were doing in the sequence, and what it had to do with the story; (d) whether the music was diegetic or non-diegetic, ie, what it's source was, and, if it was diegetic, which character was responsible for motivating it; and (e) to describe the setting in which the musical sequence took place. I hoped that such information might present an indication of respondent attention levels during the musical sequences, and of their ability to recall music-related narrative detail.

The next part of the interview was the motivated section which focused on the process of recollection. Respondents were played 30-second audio extracts from a selection of the most prominently featured songs from the serial, and asked to say whether they remembered them being used in the narrative. By most prominently featured I mean those popular music standards which were either conspicuously diegetic, or that underscored the narrative for a duration of time that might realistically allow a possibility of recognition. On reflection, I came to realise that the 27 extracts played to each respondent in the *Lipstick* 'pilot'-study probably overtaxed their concentration levels. In hindsight, I also realised that the larger the number of extracts, the more complicated and time consuming would be the mechanics of post-interview coding and analysis. While acknowledging the need to retain a meaningful sample of songs, I therefore reduced the number of audio extracts for both the *Detective* interviews (to 23), and the *Pennies* interviews (to 22). If

respondents remembered a song, they were asked the same supplementary questions as in the unmotivated section.

After reading through the results of the *Lipstick* exercise, and the study subsequently conducted on *Detective*, I decided to make a number of changes to this section of the interviews for *Pennies* respondents. A number of *Lipstick* and *Detective* respondents indicated that they felt that they might sometimes have been guessing about the inclusion of some of the songs played during the motivated sections of the interviews. Some claimed that because a lot of the songs 'sounded the same' they were often swayed by how appropriate a song sounded rather than by actual memory of the song in the narrative. In order to test out the level of association by similarity, I decided to add a number of 'red-herring' songs to the list of audio extracts. I chose three period recordings of songs from the 1930s which dovetailed neatly with the actual extracts - *I'll String Along With You*, *I'd Rather Be Me*, and *It Was A Lover And His Lass*. As discussed above, I also decided to introduce some mute video extracts to see how respondents might react to a visual clue rather than an aural clue. I was also interested in the ways in which the presentation of visual and aural extracts as separate stimuli might affect the memory process. An analysis of the responses made to these additions is presented in Chapter 3.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they had enjoyed the serials, and if they would choose to watch another Potter drama if it were transmitted on television. At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were informed that they were welcome to read the thesis on completion but prior to submission for examination. Of the 25 respondents

who took part in the study, two expressed the desire to view the completed manuscript, a request subsequently granted. I also informed respondents that they were welcome to view any part of the thesis which might subsequently be published. Seven respondents expressed a desire to see any published extracts, and when a chapter based on the *Lipstick* study was published in *The Passion of Dennis Potter: International Collected Essays*,<sup>275</sup> photocopies were provided for these respondents.

As discussed above, I did not want to dismiss group work without first testing its validity in relation to this particular study. Thus, after interviewing *Lipstick* respondents on an individual basis, I organised three discussion groups around respondent availability: Group 1 was made up of four respondents (L2, L3, L4, and L5); Group 2 of three respondents (L1, L8, and L9); and Group 3 of two respondents (L6 and L7). Although some group members knew other members, some had never met before. In an attempt to minimise the academic atmosphere of the exercise the group sessions, like most of the individual interviews, were conducted in an informal setting in the homes of respondents.

I realised that the memory process may be 'contaminated' somewhat by the group dynamic, but I hoped that these sessions might provide an opportunity to gain some understanding of textual negotiation and sense making in process, and so each session was centred around the screening of one episode of *Lipstick*: Group 1 were shown Episode Two, Group 2 Episode Four, and Group 3 Episode Six. The focus was thus shifted from recall and recollection to immediate response, with questions being posed specifically in

relation to elements of the narrative being experienced at the time rather than retrospectively.

Like the individual interviews, the group questions were semi-structured in that I had a number of pre-planned questions centred around specific themes relating to the musical content of the episodes being screened. In the session with Group 1, for example, a transcript of which is presented in Appendix 4, respondents were asked to comment on the visual and aural elements of the title sequence, the *The Story of My Life* sequence, the *Blueberry Hill* sequence, the *It's Almost Tomorrow* sequence, and the *Don't Be Cruel* sequence. Other questions followed the individual interview structure, focusing on: the function of the music in the serial in general, the lip-synch device, the relationship between the serial and Hollywood-musicals, the representation of historical period in the serial, the representation of male and female characters, and Potter's status as a television dramatist. If respondents alluded to a musical sequence from another episode, they were encouraged to discuss it.

Although the *Lipstick* group sessions did produce some useful material, there were a number of problems. In spite of my attempts to negate it, verbally aggressive individuals did tend to dominate proceedings and sometimes prevented less confident respondents from finishing their sentences, or even from speaking at all in relation to some questions; the result was often a rather unbalanced discussion. In Group 1 for example, one respondent was consistently cut-off in mid sentence by other group members, and, in consequence, she became increasingly less willing to offer opinions. I also experienced far

more difficulty in keeping the conversation focused on designated areas than in the one-to-one sessions. As expected the problem of identifying speakers from audio recordings at the transcription stage also proved difficult. This was a particular problem when four individuals, three female and one male, were involved as in Group 1. Although the male was easily identifiable, I needed the help of one of the female respondents at the transcription stage to match some of the comments to female group members. While video recordings would have negated this problem, the presence of a camera, however inconspicuously placed, may well have inhibited the willingness of respondents to present their experiences and opinions.

On completing the *Lipstick* study I came to realise that it was not logistically feasible to carry out both individual and group sessions with all the respondents taking part in this study, and so, because the main focus of the study was individual memory, I made the decision to conduct only individual interviews with respondents viewing *Pennies* and *Detective*. On the positive side, however, the *Lipstick* group sessions did provide additional interview technique experience, and many of the approaches to question formulation and presentation were successfully utilised throughout the *Detective* and *Pennies* one-to-one exercises. In addition, although the transcription, coding, and analysis of the group sessions was time consuming, they did provide productive practice in those aspects of empirical research.

### **Coding and interpreting the interview and group session material**

Because of my inexperience in dealing with empirical material, I expected organisation and coding to present a significant challenge, and this proved to be the case. Although the formulation of the interview questions had been informed by the experience gained from the questionnaire exercise, an exercise which highlighted the need to construct questions which would allow the grouping of responses into manageable categories by utilising clear focus areas, in practice the variety of response and the sheer volume of material produced (43 hours of recorded interviews) made coding a gruelling, and sometimes frustrating experience. After the interview and group session responses were transcribed from tape to word processor to paper, I soon realised that in spite of my attempts to maintain focus during the interviews some of the material was not relevant to the specific aims of the study. Decisions had to be made in relation to what to include and what to leave out.

As with the material collected in the questionnaire exercise, individual interview and group session respondent comments were first colour-coded into broad categories. These initial categories were formulated in relation to the aim of the study, which was to investigate the relationship between critical interpretation, authorial intention, and popular response to the popular music content of the texts. I realised that I would need to start off by allocating comments to relatively broad categories which could subsequently be subdivided using more specific criteria. Comments were, thus, initially grouped into five broad categories: music-related (including comments relating to musically-induced nostalgic memories); comments relating to levels of narrative comprehension; character-related (including gender issues); Potter-related comments (biographical and evaluative);



and comments relating to realist conventions. Comments which did not fit into these focus categories were not coded.

At this first stage of classification I found that many relevant comments could legitimately fit into several of the broad categories: comments about the relationship between genre and narrative, for example, could often legitimately fit into both the music and the narrative categories; when such a situation occurred, I initially included the comment in each category and made a subsequent decision as to the contextual relevance of the comment at the next stage of classification which, in order to further focalise areas for analytical purposes, sub-divided the five broad categories using designated key-words and key-terms.

Utilising descriptive terms previously employed by Tagg (see above), music-related comments were divided into those which exhibited para-musical fields of associations (generically associational), and those which exhibited extra-musical fields of associations (psychological, sociological, political, historical).<sup>276</sup> Other music-related comments were organised using specifically designed key-word or key-term categories relating to musically-induced memory and nostalgia experiences, and to muso-narratorial elements (pertaining to the relationship between music and narrative - including comments on the *mise-en-scène* and editing in the musical sequences).

The broad narrative-related category also needed to be sub-divided for analytical purposes. Drawing on the experience of coding the questionnaire exercise, this category

was initially divided using the terms appreciative and critical. These categories were, however, still too wide for efficient analysis and so appreciative comments were further divided using the specifically designed terms positively complex (those expressing pleasure in narrative complexity), and generically acceptable (those indicating an acceptance of the utilisation of the conventions of the musical genre). Comments in the critical category were divided using the terms negatively complex (those expressing dissatisfaction in relation to narrative complexity), generically unacceptable (those indicating dissatisfaction with the utilisation of the conventions of the musical genre), and enigmas (those relating to elements of the narrative perceived by respondents to be unresolved).

In order to break the broad character-related category into analytically-friendly units, it was divided using classifications coined by Hallam with Marshment.<sup>277</sup> Taking Murray Smith's 'structure of sympathy' as a starting point, they divided his concept of alignment (the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions, and to what they know and feel)<sup>278</sup> into the sub-categories: 'intellectual alignment', 'interest alignment', 'concern alignment', 'moral alignment', 'aesthetic alignment' and 'emotional alignment.'<sup>279</sup> Intellectual alignment refers to 'the process of information, reasoning and understanding which the spectator is positioned to receive from the text...usually mediated through the psychological construction of and/or the activities of the central character.'<sup>280</sup> Interest alignment arises 'from the positioning of particular characters at the centre of the narrative' which 'inevitably focuses the spectator's interest on their fate.'<sup>281</sup> Concern alignment relates to the response to the way a text positions the spectator to 'invest a certain hope and/or fear in relation to the fate of

the character(s).'<sup>282</sup> Moral alignment concerns 'the text's evaluation of the character, which the spectator is aligned to share.'<sup>283</sup> Aesthetic alignment invites the spectator to 'enjoy the character/s', and 'recognise the character as conforming to the culture's norms of beauty and/or attractiveness.'<sup>284</sup> Finally, emotional alignment is the process 'whereby spectators are positioned to share the emotional response(s) of character(s).'<sup>285</sup> I found such divisions useful because they allow the researcher to investigate responses to the ways in which texts suggest such positions to viewers as ones which offer specific types of viewing pleasures.

The interview questions sought to promote discussion of respondent's perceptions of Potter as an implied author. As stated above, this element of the interview discourse was initially grouped under the heading Potter-related comments before being subsequently divided using the terms biographical (unjudgementally commenting on biographical detail), and evaluative (those comments relating to biographical detail which included value judgements). The comments relating to conventions of realism were sub-divided using terms previously utilised by researchers such as Ang, and Katz and Liebes (see above), ie, 'referential' (comments comparing the text to the lived world), and 'distanced' (comments indicating an awareness of the text as an artistic construction, and, thus, contrasting the text with the lived world). During the sub-division stage of coding, a category was created for comments specifically relating to the depiction of sex and sexuality in the serials, and comments in this category were differentiated using the terms positive responses and negative responses. In order to investigate possible gender influences on interpretations,

responses in all the above categories were subsequently grouped together according to respondent gender.

The main focus of the interview exercise had been the engagement between respondents and the popular music sequences. I was particularly interested in investigating the ways in which respondents consumed the songs, and the extent to which the songs and their associated narrative positionings were retained in the memory after viewing. In order to make sense of responses made during the unmotivated recall and the motivated recollection sections of the interviews (including those made in relation to the mute video extracts shown to *Pennies* respondents), which were specifically designed to test out these areas, they needed to be coded and categorised. After studying the interview transcriptions, I realised that comments could effectively be divided into four specifically designed placement groupings, each relating to a different level of memory efficiency: accurate placements, partial placements, inaccurate placements, and no recollection. Accurate placements were those responses that correctly placed a song in terms of each of the following categories: (a) position within the narrative order, (b) narrative function, (c) characters involved in the scene, (d) source of music, and (e) the setting in which the scene takes place. Partial placements successfully identified at least one of the above. Inaccurate placements failed to correctly identify any of the above. No recollection meant no recollection of the music having been used in the serial. An analysis of the results of the memory tasks are discussed in Chapter 3.

Having discussed issues relating to authorial intentionality in Chapter 1, considered potential problems which might be encountered when working with music and memory, and detailed methodological procedures in Chapter 2, the next chapter will offer a theoretically informed analysis of the empirical material generated for this study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Analysis.**

Utilising theoretical approaches drawn from screen studies, cultural studies, and musicology, this chapter will present an analysis of the empirical material generated in response to the three focus texts during the questionnaire exercise, the individual interview exercises, the group exercises, and the verbal-visual associations exercises. In the light of this analysis, a number of propositions will be offered relating to the relationship between respondents and the popular music content of the serials. The chapter will examine the ways in which respondents rationalised (or in some cases failed to rationalise), the incorporation of diegetic, narratively-foregrounded popular music in the serials. Working in accord with the focus areas designated during the coding process, the chapter will initially discuss perceived concepts of functionality in relation to both characters and audience, prior to offering an interpretation of responses to the following elements of the audio-visual experience: (a) the manipulation of time in the musical sequences; (b) the signalling of transitions into, and out of, fantasy-time; (c) the utilisation of original period recordings and the (sometimes cross-gender) lip-synch device; and (d) the incorporation of genre bricolage. The chapter will then present a discussion of the ways in which the music-memory-nostalgia dynamic contributed to the inducement of seemingly involuntary nostalgic memory experiences (drift-off) in some respondents, experiences which often induced narrative amnesia. The discussion will then go on to illustrate the way in which

*Pennies* and *Lipstick* produced a stronger drift-off effect than *Detective*, and conclude that this difference may be the result of differing levels of plausibility in relation to musical motivation. The chapter will then examine the influence of gender on respondent interpretation, and will argue that a respondent's gender often significantly influenced their engagement with the texts, specifically by influencing respondent-character alignment dynamics, and by colouring perceptions of Potter's representations of sex and sexuality. In relation to respondent-character dynamics, it will also be argued that the gender of the motivating character significantly influenced respondent interpretation of the musical sequences.

### **Music, narration and comprehension.**

The logical starting point for my attempt to investigate the ways in which respondents engaged with the popular music sequences in the focus texts was simply to ask them what they thought Potter hoped to gain by using the songs. In discussing functionality, respondents highlighted a range of possibilities. Some suggested that one of the reasons why Potter may have used music in the serials might be that he was a popular music fan who enjoyed the songs:

He obviously liked the music. (L9: F, 32).

It's one of his loves. (P1: M. 41).

This type of comment tended to come from those respondents who knew little about Potter or his work prior to watching the serials. These respondents tended to construct an

advocatory implied author out of their readings of the texts which contrasted with Potter's actual sentiments. In circumventing Potter's often intentionally ironic appropriation of popular songs, such interpretations position Potter's musical methodology as celebratory or even evangelistic. Alternative approaches<sup>286</sup> such as these are influenced by a confrontation between conflicting aesthetic preferences, ie, codal interference between author and respondent in relation to the value of popular song (see Chapter 2). Without some degree of contextual knowledge of Potter's disparaging attitude toward popular music (see Chapter 1), readings such as these are perhaps understandable. Even if these respondents had had prior knowledge of Potter's dismissive attitude towards the artistic merit of popular music, however, there is no guarantee that they would have interpreted the sequences from Potter's perspective. As discussed in more detail below, aesthetic taste, often governed by age factors and levels of cultural competence, appeared to significantly influence acceptance or rejection of Potter's musically-infused narrative forms. For example, unlike those younger respondents who were brought up under the influence of MTV-style production aesthetics and conventions, and, thus, relatively familiar with, and seemingly happy to accept formal and generic playfulness such as that exhibited in Potter's texts (and presumably in other television dramas like *Twin Peaks* (BBC-2, 1990-1),<sup>287</sup> and *Moonlighting* (BBC 2, 1986-89)), some older respondents, whose interpretive schemata may have been mediated predominantly through relatively conservative forms of programming, did not readily accept the concept of genre bricolage in the serials.



Some respondents, particularly those more familiar with Potter's biographical profile, did acknowledge the ironic mode of musical functionality, highlighting an intentional counterpoint between sound and vision in many of the musical sequences:

The romantic songs...are constantly eating away at the image (P5, F: 44).

Cheesy war-time songs that were supposed to make you feel better when you couldn't (S6, F: 29).

I think he used them [the songs] to poke fun in the midst of all this boredom (L4, F: 58).

In contrast to the earlier biographically uninformed comments, distanced muso-narratorial comments such as these exhibit synchronised acknowledgement of authorial intention. These respondents, presumably working within similar paradigms of cultural competence to Potter, positioned his utilisation of the ironic mode of musical functionality as positively complex (see Chapter 2). Already it is clear that, within the field of respondent interpretation of musical functionality, there is no such thing as concordance, and that, although some respondents did exhibit some preferred viewer characteristics, the majority did not, a situation which suggests that the critical concept of a definitive text should be treated with extreme caution.

Unlike many contemporary television dramas which exhibit what Nelson terms 'flexi-narrative' characteristics, ie, segments, situations and/or characters designed to appeal to a number of diverse audiences (in terms of ethnicity, sexuality, class, gender, and age) as a means of attracting viewers,<sup>288</sup> the three texts under discussion appear to have a range of

thematic and representational content which, according to the empirical material collected for this study, appears to appeal primarily to middle-class, middle-aged, male viewers. Some respondents picked up on the serials' limited appeal in relation to the sociological plurality of contemporary television audiences, and of the divergent tastes likely to be found amongst them. With this heterogeneity in mind, a number of respondents commented on the way in which the musical sequences in the serials might offer a populist counterbalance to what they perceived to be potentially alienating complexities of narrative form, narrow thematic content, and/or the serials' often dark subtext:

It was like light relief for some people (L2, M: 64).

The music might appeal to people who found the content a bit difficult. (L4, F: 58).

The inference here is, perhaps, that the 'people' who might require 'light relief' because they might find the texts 'a bit difficult', are from less educationally privileged areas of society than the respondents offering these opinions, an interpretation which allows for the possibility that these middle-class respondents share Bourdieu's belief in the clear relationship between taste and education:

The closer one moves towards...areas, such as music or painting, and...towards certain genres or certain works, the more the differences in educational capital are associated with major differences both in knowledge and in preferences.<sup>289</sup>

Such differences in levels of cultural capital, suggests Bourdieu, tend to mean that:

the popular audience delights in plots that proceed logically and chronologically towards a happy end, and 'identifies' better with simply drawn situations and characters than with ambiguous and symbolic figures.<sup>290</sup>

As a group, however, the middle-class individuals who took part in this study were far from concordant in their aesthetic responses to the musical content of Potter's often 'difficult' texts, exhibiting a taste-range which suggests that Bourdieu's analysis may be too simplistic.

In terms of technical functionality, most respondents, particularly those who viewed *Detective*, commented on the way in which many of the songs provided additional narratorial exposition, functioning, for example, as episodic markers to signpost impending narrative tropes:

They signalled something was going to happen (S4: M, 46),

and how, in common with most cinematic and televisual texts, the serials utilise music to signal temporal and geographical transitions:

I think it fills the gaps between past and present. A way of getting you from point A to point B...(S1, F, 60).

One song can put over a point that you would need a lot of dialogue to do, and a lot of explanation (S7, M: 59).

Such comments indicate a developed awareness not only of universal conventions of storytelling, but also of time and space-manipulating editing processes specific to

cinematic and televisual storytelling. Most respondents efficiently articulated their understanding and engagement with the manipulation of time and space, both within the musical sequences, and between fantasy-time and non-fantasy-time. Possibly working with schemata drawn from the Hollywood-musical, most realised that the passage of fantasy-time within the sequences cannot be measured against the passage of what respondents frequently referred to as 'real time' (their experience of lived time). In making this point, they were aware that, like the majority of musical set-piece sequences in Hollywood-musicals, the 'real time' durations of the musical reveries of Parker, Marlow and Hopper are essentially unmeasurable.<sup>291</sup>

[Hopper's] mind steps out of time. (L2, M: 64).

It was a moment sustained for a dream, it didn't exist in time. (P6, F: 58).

Those [sequences] were like a commercial break. (P1, M: 41).

Such comments indicate an awareness of the variousness of temporal representation in the serials, and suggest that these respondents understood and accepted Potter's claim that:

Whenever we sing...we are outside 'normal' time, we are in the cauldron of the actual minute, and we have suspended or evaded the claims of any other moment except *this* one.<sup>292</sup>

In general, respondents felt that the musical sequences in both *Pennies* and *Lipstick* were less relevant to the development of the narrative than those in *Detective*. Some respondents, again possibly working with a generic paradigm based on the Hollywood-musical, where emotion-signifying set-pieces are usually economically distributed within

the narrative, or with classical narratorial models, sometimes became irritated by what they considered to be Potter's over-liberal insertion of musical set-pieces, particularly in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, where the interruptions are more frequent and less stylistically versatile than those in *Detective*. Feeling that they had grasped the narrative connotations within the songs relatively quickly, some *Pennies* and *Lipstick* respondents felt the need to criticise both the number of songs employed, and their duration:

For the first part of the song I'd be really listening and thinking 'This is what he's thinking.' But then I thought 'They can cut the song now because I know what he's thinking.' But they did the chorus when they didn't need to; you already had the message. It was a bit patronising, like you haven't got the message so we'll play it again (L1: F, 32).

I was thinking 'I know this is a fantasy, so let's get it finished and get back to the plot' (P1: M, 41).

I thought there were too many musical bits, and the plot was suffering because of it. I thought 'OK, get on with it now' (P4: M, 41).

The relatively high levels of respondent criticism in relation to the number and frequency of songs in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, as compared to that voiced against *Detective*, indicates an appreciation of the different ways in which the songs function narratorially in the serials. Whereas the musical set-pieces in *Pennies* and *Lipstick* were predominantly interpreted as stylistic embellishments, in relation to hermeneutic processes the musical sequences in *Detective* were understood to operate on a far more complex level, often as abstract, yet essential narration:

The music stressed something in the plot. You might not be able to put something in your own words, but there was a song that could do it for you (S1: F, 60).

In this case, the main influence is essentially generic, and relates to the detective genre's inherent capacity to temporarily defamiliarise, deflect and frustrate what Bordwell terms 'the logic underlying the interpretive activity.'<sup>293</sup> In this sense respondents are acknowledging Potter's intention that the songs should function as aids to unlocking the narrative's puzzles. In addition, because they are more obviously motivated (by Marlow's drug-induced hallucinatory condition), the songs attract less criticism in terms of being judged negatively against a realist aesthetic than do their counterparts in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*. Because of this, the majority of respondents were, paradoxically, far more comfortable with the complex musical flashbacks in *Detective* than with the relatively straightforward musical embellishments in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*. Most respondents felt that even though the musical sequences in *Detective* might violate realist conventions, they were a necessary part of the narrative, and served a utilitarian function, unlike those in *Pennies*, and particularly in *Lipstick*, which many respondents felt were 'distracting', 'gratuitous', 'patronising' to the viewer, or simply there to 'fill time.' Sometimes the reaction was strong enough to induce the respondent to actively 'edit' the text:

Every time a piece of music came on I fast-forwarded it. I hated it. I'd listen to the beginning to see if the song fitted into the scenario of the play, and when it did, or didn't, I fast-forwarded it...(P3: F, 47).

I switched off when they started singing; that would be when I'd go and make a cup of tea. (P7: F, 35).

Thus, rather than attracting these respondents via the popular appeal of the music, the frequency of the sequences caused them to literally drift away from the narrative by fast-forwarding the tape, or by leaving the room. Such responses would result in a number of unintended ellipses in the narrative, and go some way towards explaining the difficulties some respondents had in recalling the individual songs used, their narrative positions, the characters associated with the sequences, and the settings in which the sequences occurred. The need to avoid what might be termed musical verbosity has been practically acknowledged by the American producers of television dramas such as *Ally McBeal* (Channel 4, 1997-) and *Chicago Hope* (Channel 4, 1998), where the popular music sequences, while often performing a similar narrative function to those in Potter's serials, are limited in number and are rarely longer than 30 seconds in duration, and are, therefore, perceived to be less intrusive, and perhaps less patronising given the fact that so many respondents taking part in this study 'read' the denotational and connotational elements of the popular music narratives quickly and efficiently.

In discussing the narratorial function of the musical set-pieces in the serials, respondents consistently evoked the paradigm of the Hollywood-musical:

In a Hollywood-musical when they sing it's part of what's actually happening. This is like, they do something and he [Potter] elaborates on it by the singing and dancing. Time stands still for them to do it. (P7: F, 35).

In the musicals...the action stopped and they'd sing, but this was different because it's all incorporated...The music isn't as important as the musicals where the main thing is the music...This is just using songs to emphasise things. (L4: F, 58).

In the likes of the musicals, the song is actually telling the story, so you tend to follow it...A musical is where the songs tell the story. This, the songs just fit into the story. (L9: f, 32).

Although most respondents seemed to have little difficulty in articulating and accepting the generic conventions of the film-musical (the relaxation of familiar notions of plot construction, character motivation and cause-effect relationships, and the suspension of disbelief in relation to a musicalised story-world), some were extremely reluctant to accept the transference of such conventions into what they expected to be serious television drama. For many respondents, music worked to negate realism in the texts. Potter's generic bricolage of set-piece music and conventional drama sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick* produced such reactionary comments as:

Hollywood-musicals are not about serious subjects. When I go to a musical I know I'm going to a musical; I wasn't going to see a musical, I was going to see a drama...Prancing around the office and miming to things...I don't like people dancing around an office. (L3: F, 59).

You're in the middle of a drama scene one minute, and the next it's like this [mimes dance routine]. (P1: M, 41).

The singing irritated me in the middle of viewing something serious. (P2: F, 31).

I thought 'This is ridiculous!'...I thought it was just too strange. It was like a musical with knobs on. (P3: F, 47).

and

I'd rather sit and listen to music or watch a play, but not mix the two up... I like the music or a play but I'm not really stuck on them when they're mixed.(L6: F, 44).



Such responses are rooted in pre-conceived generic expectations on the part of respondents, and highlight a perceived incongruity between supposedly serious, authored drama, and the spectacle of singing and dancing. Expectations resulting from conceptions of Potter as implied author colour responses in the same way as generic expectations, and, in this sense, can be considered a form of generic expectation associated with serious drama. Both the questionnaire exercise and the interview exercises highlighted the fact that the vast majority of respondents had perceptions of Potter which were constructed not from first-hand knowledge of his work, but from media discourse. A number of respondents had seen, and been moved by Potter's final interview with Melvyn Bragg,<sup>294</sup> and many had read about him in the national press. One questionnaire respondent suggested that he must have been an important writer because his death was reported on *The Nine O'Clock News*. Even amongst older respondents, however, there was little evidence of much awareness of his early critically acclaimed television dramas such as *Stand Up Nigel Barton* (BBC, 1965), *A Beast with Two Backs* (BBC, 1968), and *Blue Remembered Hills*, and many questionnaire and interview respondents thought that *Detective* was his first television drama. If such responses (from a group containing a significant number of middle-aged and elderly respondents) are in any way representative, the so called 'Golden Age' of British television drama may have all but faded from popular consciousness. Interview respondents who had knowledge of Potter, but had not seen any of his work before taking part in this study, were consistent in their descriptions of him being promoted as a 'controversial' but 'important', 'intellectual' writer:

I'm aware of his infamy...and he's regarded by some as a genius...(S8: M, 40).

He was a highly respected TV writer. (S9: M, 44).

A number of respondents admitted to being surprised at the 'playing around' which occurs during the musical sequences in the serials, a response which is indicative of the tension which often developed between implied serious author discourse and the genre bricolage employed in the serials. The fact that respondents were taking part in an academic study may also have influenced them to expect to encounter what they might consider to be serious, intellectual dramatic texts, an expectation which many felt had been frustrated by the presence of the musical sequences. Together with genre expectations, and media-induced perceptions of implied authorship, such pre-conceived notions may have played a role in respondent conservatism in relation to the incorporation of song and dance sequences into otherwise plausible dramas. Thus a number of respondents who, presumably, would willingly suspend disbelief and accept the existence of bug-eyed aliens in a science-fiction drama, and unquestioningly accede to Tosca or Madame Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San) bearing their tortured souls in an operatic aria, refused to accept Potter's incorporation of set-piece musical sequences into television dramas which otherwise dealt with often dark, disturbing subject matter: cinematic aliens in the English village, no problem; rotund divas offering musical melodrama on the stage, fair enough; dancing in the War Office during the Suez Crisis in a supposedly serious television drama, surely not! Respondent reaction supports Altman's claim that genre study produces satisfactory (or unproblematical) results 'only when it has the right type of material to work with',<sup>295</sup>

which, he argues, is why most genre critics prefer to deal with texts that are 'clearly and ineluctably tied to the genre in question.'<sup>296</sup>

Irrespective of whether individual respondents accepted or rejected Potter's genre bricolage, across the three serials most cited the representation of internal states of characters' minds (what Gennette calls the creation of a meta-text)<sup>297</sup> to be one of the main functions of the musical interludes. Such a process involves the employment of a modernist mode of musical functionality. Although many respondents found the musical reveries implausible, across the three serials few experienced difficulty in comprehending which character had generated the sequences:

They're his [Parker's] fantasies, wish fulfilment. (P4, M: 41).

They are Marlow's hallucinations. (S5, F: 35).

...it was all in Hopper's mind... They came out of his mind. (L1, F: 32).

Motivation is potentially easier to locate in *Pennies* and *Detective* where a single character mentally creates the fantasy sequences, than it is in the sometimes multi-character-generated fantasy sequences in *Lipstick*. Having said that, such ambiguity of generating consciousness posed few problems for the majority of *Lipstick* respondents. To take an individual song as an example, all nine *Lipstick* respondents recognised Hopper as the motivating character behind *The Garden of Eden*<sup>298</sup> fantasy sequence in Episode One:

The dark-haired young man was fantasising. (L2, M: 64).

It was Hopper fantasising over the woman. Something he wanted but couldn't have. (L8, M: 35),

and most experienced little difficulty in understanding and articulating, with varying degrees of complexity, the concept of psychological representation through the musical sequences:

The fantasies are like celluloid...they are going through their heads...(L5, F: 39).

The songs emphasise loneliness, an existential world (P6, F: 58).

They question what is...reality, and the strategies used to escape it. (S1, F: 60).

Such comments indicate that these respondents are equipped with relatively refined levels of cultural capital facilitating an understanding and appreciation of the complexities of artistic psychological representation, one of the central principles of modernist aesthetics.<sup>299</sup>

In terms of acknowledging their awareness and understanding of *mise-en-scène* signalling of transitions into and out of fantasy-time, most respondents readily spotted the instructional, cyclical relationship between the shot which precedes a musical sequence and its twin-shot which heralds the return to actuality:

The figures were back in the same place at the end of the sequence, there was a coming back to the ordinary world. (P6, F: 58).

They just go back to what they were doing at the start...as if they weren't aware of it themselves. (L4, F: 58).

Such twin-shots begin and end most of the musical sequences. In *The Garden of Eden* sequence,<sup>300</sup> for example, a framing, pre-motivation, two-shot mid-shot of Francis (Giles Thomas) (foreground, camera left) and Church (Nicholas Farrell) (background, camera right) is revisited at the conclusion of Hopper's reverie to signal a return to post-fantasy actuality. The standard pattern across the three serials is for a motivational close-up to follow the pre-motivational framing shot. In *The Garden of Eden* sequence, after the transition to the close-up, Hopper motivates the first bars of the instrumental introduction to the song via an inclination of his head. Traditionally the close-up has been used in the cinema and in television drama to portray emotion and to signify psychological states; Potter's texts take advantage of viewers familiarity with this convention.

The majority of respondents across the three serials also recognised and understood that lighting changes in the *mise-en-scène* usually signalled the onset or closure of a musical reverie:

There was a lighting change, and the character transformed. (P2, F: 31).

The background went dark, or red, and then the music would start, and they would start singing. (L7, M: 43).

There's a change in the lighting and a close-up, and you get a slight change in expression. It becomes all Hollywood, all eyes and teeth, less realistic. (P4, M: 41).

Hopper looks at Francis and the two of them make eye-contact, and there's a light, a colourful spotlight goes on Hopper which always happens when

he's dreaming about a song...it's the coloured spotlight more than them looking at each other; when that happens the person's thinking the song. (L1, F: 32).

Such lighting signals are borrowed from the theatre and from the film-musical genre in which the love felt by the evolving couple is often indicated by a coloured flood of light which signals their emotional transportation from normality into a sphere of heightened romantic experience. They also offer a visual representation of the rose-tinted, romantically idealised worlds often created by the lyrics of popular songs. It is possible that the awareness of such conventions, and the affective sentimentality of the song lyrics, contributed to the inducement of a psychological state conducive to the onset of mental drift-off away from the presented narrative and into personal memory tableaux or wishful imaginings. Thus, not only did the 'magical' *mise-en-scène* changes and the romantic and/or nostalgic songs transport the characters into fantasy-time, they also had the potential to do the same for susceptible respondents

Respondents tended to interpret the relationship between the musical sequences and levels of narrative complexity differently according to their designated serial, with the sequences in *Detective* proving to be the most difficult to negotiate. Unlike the relatively linear narratives of *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, the narrative structure of *Detective* incorporates analeptic and proleptic transitions; together with the shifts between actuality, fantasy-time, and memory, they had the potential to produce temporal disorientation :

Sometimes I lost the plot when the music came on, you didn't know when it was supposed to be in time. One minute it was now, then it was the war, then it was the future ! (S7, M: 59).

Thus, not only did *Detective* respondents have to deal with transitions into and out of fantasy-time, they also had to cognate the multi-chronology of the various plot strands - the present-day hospital strand, the war-time spy strand, the childhood memory strand, and the imagined affair strand.

Although the musical sequences in *Detective* are more demanding on viewers because of the complexity of narrative chronology, the musical sequences in *Lipstick* are more demanding on the viewer in terms of the complexity of visual stimuli presented. The number of shots per sequence is usually greater in the *Lipstick* musical sequences than in either *Pennies* or *Detective*, and the duration of shot is on average far shorter. The use of accelerated montage is also far more commonly used in *Lipstick*. In addition, the cut is by far the dominant transition from shot to shot in the *Lipstick* sequences, whereas in *Pennies* and *Detective* dissolves are utilised extensively. The reason for these difference is essentially related to the rhythm and tempo of the music. Whereas the majority of the 1930s and 1940s songs employed in *Pennies* and *Detective* are temporally lingering romantic ballads, *Lipstick* utilises many up-tempo 1950s rock 'n' roll numbers. While a slow wistful ballad usually encourages a montage utilising a limited number of relatively long shots per sequence and a leisurely dreamy dissolve transition from shot to shot (as in *The Very Thought of You* sequence from *Detective* discussed below), rhythmically faster, drum and base dominated rock numbers generally demand rapid transitions on the beat,

which means more, shorter shots, and cuts rather than dissolves. Thus, in *The Garden of Eden* sequence, which lasts for one minute and 23 seconds, 36 cuts are employed from the first motivational close-up of Hopper to his outro close-up. Of the 36 shots in the sequence, 22 are one second or less in duration. The average length of shot in the sequence is somewhere between one and two seconds, which is approximately two seconds shorter than the average length of shot in the majority of musical sequences in *Pennies* and *Detective*. Although many of the shots are non-diachronic, several include zooms in or out, and two employ quite rapid right to left whip pans. While many of the cuts are motivated by the beat, some specifically follow off-beat lyric cues which tends to create a rather jerky montage. Thus, visually the sequence is extremely busy, both in terms of the dance routines performed by the characters and also in relation to the celerity of the montage. While some respondents, particularly those in the lower age-range, appeared to be relatively familiar with this kind of music-video influenced contemporary editing technique and, therefore, seemed comfortable with the visual demands of the sequence, some, mainly in the upper age-range, found the rapid editing to be distracting or annoying:

I couldn't stand the way the picture jumped around all the time. (L2, M: 64).<sup>301</sup>

The jumping and changing annoyed me...It was too 'way-out' for me. (L3, F: 59).

As illustrated by the respondent quotations offered above, the interview exercises tended to support the questionnaire exercise in relation to the notion that a respondent's age may be a crucial factor in influencing their responses to Potter's work. Age seemed to be



particularly influential in colouring respondent reactions to the way in which sequences such as *The Garden of Eden* are constructed. As Nelson has argued, 'the postmodern aesthetic preference is for the attenuated but ebullient',<sup>302</sup> and those younger respondents who were brought up with strands of programming which typically employ rapid montage sequences and/or hand-held camera techniques (whether specifically music-based like *Top of the Pops* [BBC, 1964-], dramas which incorporate musical sequences like *Ally McBeal*, *Chicago Hope*, and *A Many Splintered Thing* [BBC, 2000], or non-musical dramas like *ER* [Channel 4, 1994 -] which include extensive hand-held sequences), may be more willing to accept the editing techniques employed in such sequences as *The Garden of Eden* than would some of the older respondents who may find them disorientating.<sup>303</sup> The differing respondent reactions to the sequence, partly dependent as they appear to be on age factors, tend to suggest that Nelson's claim that:

In television drama it is the fast-cutting of narrative fragments from hot-spot to hot-spot which draws an audience rather than the tempered, exegetic build-up over time to a climax and resolution of more traditional forms,<sup>304</sup>

may be too much of a generalisation, and may require some qualification.

Although respondents did criticise the musical sequences in *Pennies* and *Detective* on the grounds of implausibility (*Pennies*) and, what they believed to be problematic genre deviation (*Detective*), interestingly there were no criticisms of the serials in relation to the editing or camerawork which, even in the musical sequences was, for the most part, far more conventional than that used in *Lipstick*.

When asked to comment on Potter's utilisation of the lip-synch device and the use of original recordings, as might be expected, all 25 respondents were aware that the actors were miming rather than singing themselves. A number of possibilities were suggested for the employment of the lip-synch device, ranging from the speculative:

If they didn't have good voices he'd be buggered (L7, M: 43).

to more technically informed explanations such as:

Miming makes it look as if it's not quite real, that they are playing a part, acting out roles... (L5, F, 39).

L5's comment illustrates an appreciation of Potter's anti-naturalist intentions, and of the way in which the songs are meant to function ironically. As we have seen, however, intention does not always mesh with interpretation, and Potter may have underestimated the fact that irony is the product of engagement between character, viewer and song, rather than being specifically inherent in the song itself, or in the song's position in the text. Respondent S6, for example, did not read the songs in *Detective* ironically, and positioned them as restrictive rather than liberating narratives:

If the characters had been allowed to sing themselves they might have sung them in a more ironic way (S6, F: 29).

While L5's comment suggests a relatively distanced reading of the text, S6's response suggests a referential engagement and a tendency to treat the characters not as representations, but as 'real' people. Most respondents offered comments which suggested an awareness of the fact that lip-synching to original recordings contravenes realist convention. As illustrated by the quotation offered below, many also acknowledged that lip-synching contradicts the paradigm by which characters in musicals, both filmic and theatrical, usually articulate the songs themselves:

It annoyed me that it wasn't them singing because in the musical it's always the same person (P7, F: 35).

Rather than working within the established paradigm, Potter sought to appropriate period performances which would bring meanings and connotations with them; the 'found object, the real thing' he suggested, 'did the work for me.'<sup>305</sup> Potter shares this belief in the integrity of artistic authenticity with Benjamin, who argued that the 'aura' of a work of art is indelibly linked to its originality (although Benjamin probably didn't have popular music in mind when he made the statement, and Potter avoided using the term 'art' to describe popular music).<sup>306</sup>

While most respondents read the characters' musical *alter-egos* as liberated versions of their normally repressed selves, some, like L5 quoted above, offered comments which suggest an inverted reading, positioning the lip-synching fantasy characters as the role players. Such readings are constructed out of an understanding of the way in which the lip-synch device forces the characters to mime, not only to the voice of another person,

but also, like karaoke, to pre-existing lyrics, thus enforcing second-hand articulation of emotions, a situation which can be seen to contradict Potter's promotion of the songs as authentic objects. It seems, however, that by the time he came to write *Karaoke*, he had become aware of a different kind of connotational irony, one related to the parodic appropriation of his trade-mark lip-synch device in television commercials.

### **Music, memory and nostalgia: the drift-off effect.**

Across the three serials, most respondents recognised the relationship between music and the creation of period atmosphere or zeitgeist:

He used it to set the mood of the time. (L6, F: 44).

It was for period reference (S2, M: 31).

The potent power of music, whether lyrical or instrumental, to create period, generic, and emotional atmosphere is particularly well highlighted by the results of the verbal-visual associations exercises carried out on the *Lipstick* title music (*Lipstick on Your Collar*), and credit music (*The Man with the Golden Arm*) (see Chapter 2). When asked to write down words, phrases and images which came into their minds while listening to these pieces of music, respondents, with only one or two exceptions, offered remarkably consistent responses across the three placement categories (people, place, and time). The Connie Francis-performed *Lipstick on Your Collar*, which first charted in this country in July 1959, produced people-related verbal-visual associations denoting cross-gender youth and affluence: 'young people', 'high-school kids', 'teenagers', 'pink jumpers and pig-

tails', 'boys with slicked-back greasy hair like in *Grease*', 'young and in love', 'rich teenagers', 'middle-class kids like in *Happy Days*', and 'shiny automobiles and the good life.' The song produced place-related verbal-visual associations which referenced stereotypical American locations and cultural practices: 'diners', 'drive-ins', 'summer-camps', 'high-schools', 'ice-cream parlours', and 'prom night.' In terms of time referencing, the song produced verbal-visual associations mainly relating to the 1950s: 'I can just imagine the 1950s', 'the late 1950s', 'the 1950s like the *Grease* movie', interspersed with an occasional reference to the 1960s, and in one instance, to the 1970s - 'the 1970s because it reminds me of *Grease*.' This last placement possibly relates to the time when *Grease* was first shown in the cinema (it was released in 1978). Such associational consistency in relation to people, place, and time is not surprising when one takes into account the lyrical content of the song, with its denotative references to 'the record hop', 'soda pop', and 'your bottom dollar', (the song was written and performed by Americans),<sup>307</sup> and its teen-relationship theme. The song is also formally typical of 1950s American pop, with its doo-wop close harmonies and its Scotty Moore-influenced middle-eight guitar break,<sup>308</sup> elements which are conducive to the production of generic para-musical associations. In terms of functioning as a signifier of an historical period (the 1950s), the song is clearly efficient. When the sonic semiotics of the song are combined with visual representations of period artefacts as in the *Lipstick* title sequence (a vintage jukebox and 1950s-style clothes), the efficiency level is increased, allowing the majority of *Lipstick* interview respondents to easily identify the period setting from the title sequence.

In contrast to meanings generated by songs like *Lipstick on Your Collar*, which have a denotative lyric, meanings evoked by instrumental music like *The Man with the Golden Arm* relate exclusively to the interaction of respondents with the relatively abstract musical qualities of harmony, melody, rhythm, tone, and tempo, and so one might assume that consistency of interpretation, particularly in terms of extra-musical associations, might not be as predictable as with songs with lyrics. In practice, this proved not to be the case and the results of the verbal-visual associations exercise clearly question Gorbman's claim that instrumental music cannot efficiently 'talk' about itself (see Chapter 2).

*The Man with the Golden Arm* is used as part of the credit-sequence in all six episodes of *Lipstick*. Written by Elmer Bernstein, and performed by the Billy May Orchestra, it was first released in Britain in February 1956. *The Man with the Golden Arm* was written for the soundtrack of the 1955 Otto Preminger-directed film of the same title, which featured Frank Sinatra as Frankie Machine, a jazz drummer struggling with heroin addiction. Although in terms of composition and release date the tune is chronologically acceptable, as illustrated below, generically it connotes characters, places, and a period associated with jazz and the urban American underworld, rather than a post-war generation of rock 'n' roll-influenced British teenagers, and it must, therefore, be considered a rather misleading sonic semiotic. The arrangement can be positioned as post-bebop, pre-cool, big-band jazz. Billy May's version, recorded with the help of pre-eminent jazz musicians such as trumpeter Shorty Rogers, saxophonist Bud Shank, and drummer Shelly Manne, exhibits a fondness for voicing the reed section, particularly the saxophones, in thirds,

which results in a style of mouthing which became known as 'slurping.' Bernstein describes the arrangement thus:

The repetitional bars figure gives us a sense of drive and grim monotony. At the top we have the hysterical scream of the bass, and within, the chromatic triplets whirling about and circumscribing themselves in a hopeless circle from which they finally emerge, but only for the last cry of despair at the end of the title...A lonely trumpet filters through the rather gentle strings and woodwind...The savage rhythm of the brass and drum themes [conflict] with the poignant sweetness of the woodwind and string melodies, sustaining a moody, apprehensive, excitement, only interrupted by flare-ups into violence.<sup>309</sup>

The effect of this arrangement, dominated as it is by minor-key notes (minor = sad, major = glad), is to produce a menacing, late-night, urban atmosphere, peopled by 'low-life' male and female characters, and respondents consistently described experiencing such associational mental images. In the people-related category, respondents offered verbal-visual associations such as: 'men in trilby hats', 'detectives', 'Humphrey Bogart', 'blues singers', 'crowds', 'gangsters', 'women with long dresses and lots of make-up', 'blonde, brassy women', 'women smoking cigarettes from silver cases', 'dubious characters', 'underworld types', 'seedy women', 'prostitutes', 'crooked cops', 'sleazy characters', and 'jazz bands.' This consensus was repeated with both place-related, and time-related associations. Respondents consistently offered place-related associations such as: 'New York', 'big city', 'alleyways', 'claustrophobic nightclubs', and 'Chicago.' Time-related associations included: '1940s', 'late-night, neon-lit', 'Philip Marlowe times', '1930s', 'dark shadows and streetlamps', 'prohibition times', and 'late 1930s.' The many references to detectives and the police may be related to the fact that the tune incorporates

a number of musical motifs, particularly the wailing siren motif described by Bernstein as 'chromatic triplets whirling about', which have become generic in police and detective drama series such as *Department S* (ITV, 1969-70) and *Kojak* (BBC, 1974-8).<sup>310</sup>

From these examples it can be seen that music can, with or without an accompanying lyric, communicate to members of an interpretive community to such an extent that most respondents were able to offer generically similar people, place and time-related verbal-visual associations. Having said that, an analysis of the interview transcripts suggests that with the widespread availability of video recording the semiotic implications of music utilised in television title and credit sequences may increasingly be going unappreciated by viewers. Most interview respondents exhibited low levels of recall and recollection when asked to describe the visual and musical content of title and credit sequences from the three serials, and, in spite of instructions to the contrary (see Chapter 2), many admitted that they had taken advantage of the fast-forward facility offered by video recording which allows sections of programmes which are perceived to be redundant to be bypassed.

Unlike *The Man with the Golden Arm*, much of the popular music used within the main narrative of *Lipstick* does work to support intended historical, geographical and sociological contexts and themes, a fact highlighted by a number of *Lipstick* respondents who commented on the way in which the early rock 'n' roll music used in the serial contributed to the representation of the charged atmosphere of 1956, the year in which Elvis released his first album for Sun Records and Bill Haley's *Rock Around the Clock* first thrilled the newly emerging British teen audience:



It [the music] was to show that it was a new culture and that these men were part of it. (L5, F: 39).<sup>311</sup>

Here we see a clear correlation between authorial intention and respondent interpretation, Potter's stated intention being that the music in the serial should reflect the socio-cultural changes taking place in mid 1950s British society:

There was proto-rock coming in, a sense that the stuffy, regimented, bowler-hatted, broolly-toting, hierarchical, still stupidly half-imperialistic, greatly inflated England at the time was being broken up by plastics, colours, music. The consumer revolution was happening. The word 'teenager' was being used for the first time...The songs in *Lipstick* are used to show that those things were happening.<sup>312</sup>

The music in *Lipstick* was interpreted by most respondents as a signifier of individual liberation from the monotony of quasi-military public service. Even the more politically symbolic numbers like *Blue Suede Shoes* (Episode Three), with its contextually jingoistic allusions to Eden, Nasser and the Suez Canal, are motivated and driven by Hopper's youthful desire to escape from the hierarchically stifling environment that is the War-Office. While other fictional 1950s and early 1960s 'angry young men' such as Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* (Richardson, GB, 1959),<sup>313</sup> Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Reisz, GB, 1960), and Colin Smith in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Richardson, GB, 1962) engage in active confrontations with society (albeit with little success), Hopper's frustrations, like those of Billy Fisher in *Billy Liar*, are diverted into carnivalesque musical scenarios in which, at least on an imaginative level, the Establishment can be ridiculed and sexuality explored. Like the above mentioned

films, however, *Lipstick* can be read as a conservative text which supports the notion that the system can only be successfully challenged in fantasy-time.

One might expect the liberally employed catchy songs in Potter's texts to have a mnemonic effect and facilitate relatively high respondent recall/recollection levels in terms of the relationship between the narrative and the song. In practice, more often than not this proved not to be the case. Although most respondents thought that there were 'a lot' of songs in the serials, most had only a vague idea of the number. The estimates for *Pennies* ranged from 10 to 50; in actuality there are more than 80 pieces of music used during the six episodes, 45 of which might be classified as prominently featured (see Chapter 2). Some respondents may have counted some of the songs more than once, as songs, such as *Pennies from Heaven* and *Roll Along Prairie Moon*, are used several times. *Detective* drew estimates ranging from 12 to 30; the text actually utilises over 75 pieces of music, of which 35 fall into the prominently featured category. Thus, in spite of criticism of the over-employment of songs by some respondents, and the widely-held belief that the serials contained 'a lot' of songs, the estimates of respondents tended to be on the low side. This is not particularly surprising and can be explained by the fact that many of the pieces of music used are short duration soundtrack fillers or episodic markers and are often rather obscure. Of far more interest is the response to the prominently featured songs. At both the unmotivated and motivated stages of the interviews, respondents consistently struggled to name and place, in relation to the narrative, prominently featured songs used in the serials. In the case of *Pennies*, for example, at the unmotivated stage of their interviews, four respondents were able to recollect *Pennies from Heaven*; three were

able to recollect *Roll Along Prairie Moon*, and one was able to recollect *You Rascal You*. One respondent was unable to recall any of the songs. Thus of the 45 prominently featured songs, only three were recalled at the unmotivated stage. A similar situation emerged in relation to both *Detective* and *Lipstick*. In the case of *Detective*, at the unmotivated stage of their interviews four respondents were able to recall *Dry Bones*; three respondents recalled *The Umbrella Man*; two were able to recall *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*; one recalled *Don't Fence Me In*; one *It's A Lovely Day Tomorrow*; one *Paper Doll*; and one *Cruising Down the River*. Thus of the 35 prominently featured songs, only seven were recalled at the unmotivated stage. With *Lipstick*, six respondents recalled *Lipstick on Your Collar* at the unmotivated stage; two were able to recall *The Great Pretender*; one *Earth Angel*; one *Lay Down Your Arms*; one *Don't Be Cruel*; and one *The Green Door*. Thus, of the 28 prominently featured songs, only six were recalled at the unmotivated stage.

In the motivated section of the interviews, recollection levels were, as one might expect, generally higher than the recall levels associated with the unmotivated stage. In response to the audio extracts, 19 of the 22 prominently featured songs from *Pennies* were recollected by at least one respondent, only *You've Got Me Crying Again* and *That Certain Thing* failed to be recognised as having been used in the serial. Although this appears to be a high recollection ratio, if we break it down into individual respondents we find that the same respondents tended to remember the majority of the songs and that the majority of respondents struggled in their attempts at recollection. In addition, of the 22 prominently featured songs played, six were recollected by less than three respondents. As one might predict, *Pennies from Heaven* was the only song to attain a maximum

recollection figure of seven out of seven. Of the other prominently featured songs, only *You Rascal You* and *Zing Went the Strings of My Heart* were recollected by six out of seven respondents.

The level of recollection was higher with *Detective*. In response to the audio extracts, of the 23 songs played, all were recollected by at least one respondent. The title-music *Peg O' My Heart*, *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, *Lili Marlene* and *Dry Bones* were recollected by all nine respondents at the motivated stage. These are, perhaps, the songs one would most expect respondents to remember: *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* and *Lili Marlene* are songs which have seeped into popular culture and are, therefore, relatively well known; *Dry Bones* is a standard novelty song and is utilised in the most memorable and Potteresque sequence in the serial, the Busby Berkeley-like hospital-ward extravaganza; and *Peg O' My Heart*, used both as title music and as a signifying motif, has abundant opportunity to register with viewers. As with *Pennies* however, there was a wide discrepancy between individual respondents, some of whom exhibited little difficulty in recollecting the songs as having been used within the serial, while others struggled to say whether the majority of songs had been part of the narrative.

With *Lipstick*, all 27 prominently featured songs played at the motivated stage drew at least one recollection. Overall, however, recollection levels were much lower than with *Detective*. On average each song drew only four recollections from the nine respondents, and songs such as *Lotta Lovin'*, *Makin' Love*, *The Fool*, *It'll Be Me*, and *Only You* drew only one recollection each.

As discussed in Chapter 2, in order to gain some idea of the degree to which respondents might be guessing about whether songs were or were not included in *Pennies*, I inserted three period 'red-herring' songs into the selection of audio extracts. While many respondents were unsure or mistaken about the actual songs inclusion or exclusion, some claiming that they were hampered by the fact that it was not easy to distinguish between the songs in the serial because 'they all sounded the same', they were consistently sure that the generically similar 'red-herring' songs had not been utilised in the text. Of the seven *Pennies* respondents, only one thought that the first of the 'red-herrings' *I'll String Along With You*, had been part of the original text, the remaining six were sure that it had not. The same statistic applies to *I'd Rather Be Me*, six respondents being sure that it was not included and only one believing that it had been. All seven respondents were sure that *It Was a Lover and His Lass* had not been included in the serial. It seems strange that although most *Pennies* respondents appear to have mentally lost, or edited from their memories many of the songs used in the serial, they were able to say, with remarkable certainty, that the three 'red-herrings' were not included. This suggests that at some level, perhaps subconsciously, some memory trace of the actual songs had probably been retained, though not necessarily of sufficient intensity to allow definite recall/recollection. It may be that the lack of such subconscious memory traces allowed the 'red-herrings' to be confidently dismissed. Such results support the idea that some respondents may have had their attention diverted in some way during the musical numbers, and it is this drift-off effect that seems to have caused respondents to experience problems with the recall/recollection processes.

As discussed in Chapter 2, in order to gauge the extent to which music-related recollection levels might be increased or decreased by the presence of visual images, *Pennies* respondents were asked to match mute video extracts from six musical sequences to their associated songs, initially unaided, and then if unsuccessful, with the aid of randomly played aural excerpts from the songs. The chosen sequences were potentially memorable, and arguably crucial moments in the narrative: *The Clouds Will Soon Roll By* being the opening bedroom scene in Episode 1 in which Parker lip-synchs for the first time; *You Rascal You* being the scene in Episode 1 in which Joan and her friends imagine killing and cremating Parker (see below); *Radio Times* being the scene in Episode 3 in which Eileen travels by train to London; *Anything Goes* being the scene in Episode 5 in which Joan dances with the Police Inspector after he tells her that the police think that Parker had murdered the blind girl; *Whistling in the Dark* being the court scene in Episode 6 in which Parker is condemned to death; and *You Couldn't Be Cuter* being the scene in Episode 2 in which Parker, Eileen, Eileen's father, and Eileen's brothers perform a folk dance routine in the forest.

In the light of the recall results produced in response to the aural excerpts, I was not really surprised that at the unmotivated stage the mute video exercise produced a very low recall level. What did surprise me was the fact that the motivated section of the exercise also produced a low recollection level. Although respondents consistently claimed to have memories of the songs being part of the narrative at the unmotivated stage, of the seven respondents only one was able to correctly match a song to a video extract - the *Whistling*

*in the Dark* court scene. The other five extracts failed to attract a single song match. Even the *You Rascal You* sequence which was consistently mentioned by (mainly female) respondents during the interviews failed to attract a song match. Thus, the recollection ratio for the unmotivated task was one from a possible 42. Even at the motivated stage, respondents only averaged two out of six correct matches, with *You Rascal You* proving to be the sequence best recollected, attracting five out of six correct matches. One of the reasons why the visual images in the musical sequences appear to have had such a weak relationship with their associated aural components may be that in texts such as those under investigation, in which music plays a prominent role rather than operating as underscore, the two forms of stimuli produce a parallel activity situation in which the musical element of the narrative dominates the visual element. Because of the potential which the popular music content of the serials appears to have for inducing drift-off, it seems that the visual narrative of these texts can be 'lost' during musically-induced nostalgic psychic reveries, hence the low recall and recollection levels for the mute video exercise. As we have seen, however, respondents also had problems in recalling/recollecting details about the musical content of the serials. Thus, although for some respondents (such as P4 who claimed to have 'heard the music' more than he'd 'seen the pictures'), the musical elements of the narrative may have dominated the visual elements during some of the sequences, the powerful mental distancing effect of the resulting drift-off often induced a subsequent inability to recall/recollect the musical content itself. The difficulties experienced by respondents in recalling/recollecting narrative detail during the various memory tasks contrast with the findings of Hallam and Marshment in their empirical work with viewers of *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* (see

Chapter 2). Although their methodology was somewhat different to mine, the fact that their respondents were able to recall many aspects of a text which made significantly less use of diegetic music than Potter's serials, may lend support to the argument that the liberally employed musical sequences in Potter's texts can somehow distract viewers from the visual narrative content.<sup>314</sup>

Not all of the songs used in the serials can be described as being well known, and so lack of familiarity with some songs may also have played a role in creating the low recall/recollection levels. Having said that, however, most of the songs played during the motivated stage of the interviews were well known standards. The interesting point here is that even when respondents claimed to have prior familiarity with a song, many still had no recollection of it having been part of the narrative. Songs such as *Only You*, for example, which appears in Episode Two of *Lipstick*, drew only one firm recollection, yet five of the nine respondents claimed to know the song well. Even more surprisingly, *Cheek to Cheek*, which appears in Episode 1 of *Pennies*, drew only two recollections, yet six of the nine respondents claimed prior familiarity with the song; and *We'll Meet Again*, from Episode Six of *Detective* drew only three recollections from nine respondents each of whom claimed to know the song well. While familiarity did not always facilitate recollection, sometimes lack of familiarity with a song failed to prevent its recollection. For example, all nine respondents claimed to have no prior knowledge of *Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall* which appears in Episode Six of *Detective*, yet eight of them had no problem in recollecting that it had been part of the narrative; similarly, of the seven respondents who viewed *Pennies*, only one claimed prior knowledge of *The Clouds Will*



*Soon Roll By* (Episode1), yet six were certain it had appeared in the serial. Such examples suggest that degrees of familiarity, or lack of familiarity, while often having an influence on recall/recollection levels, may only be part of the answer.

Another significant contributing factor to the low recall/recollection levels may be the inherently casual nature of television viewing in general. Irrespective of the type of programme being watched, intermittent attention, in relation to both visual and aural aspects of narrative content, has been shown in a number of empirical studies to be the dominant mode of television viewing.<sup>315</sup> Unlike the cinema experience, for many viewers watching television is often an ancillary activity which they engage in while simultaneously doing something else such as ironing, reading or cooking. Respondents were asked to view the serials under normal viewing conditions (see Chapter 2) and although some did admit to paying increased attention because of the fact that they were involved in an academic study, most did claim to have watched them under normal viewing conditions which often produced an ancillary viewing situation. In addition, because, as Ang has indicated, viewers find only certain elements relevant, a selection process is always taking place, and a televisual text is never read in its totality.<sup>316</sup> As argued above, in the case of Potter's musically-infused dramas, it appears that intermittent viewer attention can also be accounted for by the drift-off effect which is specifically related both to the nostalgic properties of the popular music used in the serials, and, and this is the area I intend to discuss next, to their visual periodisation.

The majority of respondents taking part in this study were able to place the historical periods in which the serials were set by reading the numerous visual and aural period signifiers, - the 1930s in the case of *Pennies*:

The 1930s, there was a bit of a clue with the politician; and the music (P1: M, 41)

It was the late 1920s, early 1930s. There was no reference to the General Strike, but there was a lot of reference to unemployment (P: 6),

the different periods of the multi-plot *Detective*:

The childhood was set during the war because that teacher had a thing up [map of Europe] (S6: F, 35).

Probably late 1940s because there were soldiers about but there wasn't much reference to the war. And the music of the period, and the clothes (S2:M, 31).

[The hospital scenes] Late 1970s, early 1980s...the detective story, late 1940s, the childhood stuff, early 1940s. There's no mention of the war but it's around. The style of music (S8: M, 40),

and the 1950s for *Lipstick*:

The 1950s, National Service and the Suez Crisis (L4, F: 58).

The 1950s...The music, the telephones, the cars, the cinema (L7, M: 43).

The songs thus operated as easily de-codable signifiers of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Temporal disorientation can, and did occur, however, in relation to individual songs. Possible reasons for misjudged temporal placements of a song might include the

appropriation of temporally ambiguous connotations by songs which have been utilised out of their original historical context in other areas of popular culture, ie, in television advertisements such as the 1998 Guinness advertisement which used Michael Holliday's 1958 version of the song *The Story of My Life*, and the 1997 McDonald's advertisement and the 1998 Centre Parcs advertisement which both used the Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters' song *Don't Fence Me In*, originally released in the 1940s. Both tracks had previously been utilised by Potter, the former in *Lipstick* (Episode Two), and the latter in *Detective* (Episode Two). Viewers watching video copies of the serials, or repeated broadcasts after 1998, who might not have been familiar with the songs prior to the advertisements may experience some temporal disorientation. The repeated re-release of songs can also lead to confused placements. Songs such as The Platters' *My Prayer* (*Lipstick*, Episode Two), for example, which has been re-issued on several occasions, can pose similar problems. *My Prayer* is also an example of a song which, when used anachronistically, can cause those who know the original release date to misjudge the year in which a drama is ostensibly set. As previously stated, although Potter uses the song in his depiction of the events of 1956, it was not released in this country until 1957.

Some respondents directly questioned the validity of individual songs' utilisation as period signifiers. A piece of music deemed to be historically inappropriate, was capable of producing a negative, distancing effect:

There's not a single song...that I would have associated with the Suez Campaign. Not like...*Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag*, or *Goodbye Picadilly, Hello Leicester Square* (L2: M, 64).

*Two-Way Family Favourites*...or Billy Cotton, that would be the thing that would depict Britain in the 1950s. She [Sylvia] would have been listening to *Housewife's Choice*, The Light Programme [rather than to popular music] (L5: F, 39).

In such cases, the songs neither connected nor underlined the narrative; indeed, for these respondents, thwarted, as they perceived themselves to be in their expectations of historical fidelity, they had the opposite effect, they broke the frame and fragmented it. Such distancing, however, cannot be termed Brechtian as it is detrimental to narrative comprehension, and was not intentionally planned by the producers of the serials.

The mediators of zeitgeist in the serials, particularly the musical signifieds, produce what might be termed character decades, stereotypical, often clichéd representations of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Some respondents were aware of the constructed nature of the pasts depicted and were able to make a number of related inter-textual references:

His detective story, set in trilby hat days, and macs...It reminds me very much of *Maigret* (S1: F, 60).

I don't know if it's true 1950s, or the 1950s as portrayed in films (S3: F, 58).

in the 1950s...the clothes and the music...the cars...teddy-boy type clothes...I've seen films about this time (L1: F, 32).

A kind of romantic idea of the past (P5: F, 44).

It [the 1950s depicted in *Lipstick*] was what my idea of the 1950s was like (L6: F, 44).

In many ways, such comments are in line with the postmodernist theories expounded by critics such as Baudrillard, Jameson, and Rosenstone. Jameson, for example, has highlighted the seemingly commonly held belief of film and television producers that the notion of pastness can be signified by conventionally recognisable stereotypes about the past,<sup>317</sup> a conceit which Rosenstone terms 'false historicity.'<sup>318</sup> The comments of the respondents quoted above suggest that the conceit may not always be invisible to the viewer. These respondents, while acknowledging the desired outcome of the conceit - the creation of an impression of an historical zeitgeist, also exhibit a well-developed awareness of its basic artifice as a simulacra of history, and, therefore, of the way it actually bares its own device. Their comments also indicate an awareness of the way in which the images commonly reference out not to experiences of the lived world, but to other visible fictions. In alluding to the degree to which retrospective styling is employed within the texts, respondents are also close to the Jamesonian notion of the nostalgia film or '*la mode retro*.'<sup>319</sup> Jameson argues that in postmodern popular culture the history of aesthetic styles displaces actual history.<sup>320</sup> Leaving aside the complex problematics of a definition of actual history, Jameson's point seems to be underlined by the respondent quotations offered above which recognise the fact that, in their fetishistic cannibalisation of period paraphernalia, period dramas can only offer the idea of a particular period, and that all we can experience is a simulation of it through its visual and aural artifactual remnants. Such recognition can, arguably, be termed postmodern in that it rejects the idea of period drama as an unmediated window onto the past. However, even those respondents who acknowledged the conceit behind the period reconstructions tended to see them as romantic, respectful attempts to recreate the past rather than as knowingly mocking

invectives, or Tarantinian-style postmodern parodies.<sup>321</sup> Thus, most respondents did not appear to share Jameson's concerns about what he terms 'pseudo-historical depth' in period texts,<sup>322</sup> or support his criticism of popular culture's necromantic relationship with the past:

in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the ironies of the styles in the imaginary museum.<sup>323</sup>

It is clear that for some respondents the historical period details depicted often proved to be more memorable than many of the characters. Such respondents tended to remember much more about period detail within the *mise-en-scène* than they did about the profiles and narrative functions of the characters. This ability to accurately recall period detail displayed within the narrative was often linked to personal memories of the era in question. L4: F, 58 , for example, was able to describe in detail the pattern of a stained glass panel in a door depicted in *Lipstick* because it matched one she had once had in her own home in the 1950s; the same respondent, after six hours viewing, could only recall three of the characters in the serial. Another respondent was able to accurately describe some drinking glasses fleetingly seen in one episode of *Lipstick* because they reminded her of the type she had used as a young child:

I was looking at the glass...and I thought 'Whoever did the props for this thing has been on the ball because I remember glasses like that from when I was a little girl (L6: F, 44),

yet simultaneously struggled to retell even the basic story-line. Thus, many respondents appear to have experienced significant pleasure from the process of nostalgic recognition of period artefacts. Such recognition can contribute to the onset of drift-off. When such recognition combines with the nostalgic properties of the popular songs used in the serials the drift-off effect is particularly powerful and can result in associational narrative amnesia. Bearing in mind the way in which Potter has so vehemently vilified nostalgia (see Chapter 1), it is ironic that many respondents, specifically those at the top-end of the age-range, interpreted his texts from such a blatantly nostalgic perspective.<sup>324</sup> Although the prime motive behind the attempted construction of detailed aural and visual period verisimilitude was the creation of a mimetic context for the fiction, the simulacra also works to turn the texts into nostalgic artefacts. Many respondents, like S1 quoted below, made specific reference to the concept of nostalgia when describing their reactions to the texts:

It [the music in *Detective*] was nostalgic....The radio had much more influence on our lives as children (S1: F, 60).

Such comments underline the way in which many respondents gained pleasure from entering into a musically-induced nostalgia mode. The producers of television drama are fully aware that nostalgia is a saleable product and many set out to exploit consumer demand: shows such as *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987- 2000) and *Miss Marple* (BBC1, 1984-92), for example, depict 'National Trust' worlds which, arguably, survive only in the collective memory of the television audience.<sup>325</sup> In contrast, however, it seems that critical

commentaries on Potter's musically-infused period serials may have underestimated their nostalgic properties, and consequently may have taken too much for granted in relation to audience-text dynamics. Hunninger's claim, for example, that the songs in *Detective* 'connect and underline different narrative strands',<sup>326</sup> and Corrigan's belief that the narrative of *Detective* allows viewers to 'think clues through the songs',<sup>327</sup> are essentially preferred readings founded on assumed interaction between text and an ideal, attentive viewer. In practice, the intentional fallacy is highlighted as many respondents described how, when watching the serials, they would find themselves 'drifting off' into musically-induced fabricated tableaux, or into memory narratives underpinned by personal history. As Colley and Davies have argued in relation to *Pennies*,<sup>328</sup> many of the songs in the serials metonymise happier, more carefree worlds than the ones in which viewers are immediately situated.<sup>329</sup> The driving force behind many nostalgic emotions is an often unconscious desire to return to a time when circumstances may have been less complicated, when responsibilities were few, when loved ones were still alive and well, and when our romantic sensibilities were untainted by a cynicism born of experience. Such yearnings, particularly in the wake of postmodern theories of the decentred subject, can be seen as a form of homesickness or *heimweh* which positions the past as an object of desire.<sup>330</sup> When such a situation develops, the respondent may temporarily reject the present for a musically-signified, nostalgia-based, idealised version of the past, a possibility highlighted by the respondent comments presented below:

I just thought back to the 1950s...going to dances and things like that (L3: F, 59).



I forgot myself and it just took me back to my old dancehall days. I suppose I was distracted from the storyline (L4: F, 58).

I've just drifted off into thinking about the song, rather than thinking about what's going on on the telly. I've just drifted off thinking what it was like to be a teenager in the 1950s. When there's music in a play...I get carried away with the music instead of concentrating. Perhaps I remembered them [the songs] from being little, and perhaps drifted off thinking 'Was I living at home? Was my mother alive?' that type of thing, and that's where I've lost it a bit because I've gone off in my mind (L6: F, 44).

I sort of drifted into the song for my own personal reasons. I think I stopped taking in what was going on as they were singing...(L9: F, 32).

When the music came on I tended to drift until it came back to reality (P1: M, 41).

I'd be looking at the telly, but not watching the telly, thinking my own thoughts (S4: M, 46).

Most of the time [the songs] pushed me out of the narrative (S9: M, 44).

I was probably drifting away with the music...It made me think of other bits of work where it might have been used, like a film or something (L8: M, 35).

Such expressions as 'forgot myself', 'drifting away', and 'carried away' tend to suggest that the process is Proustian in that it occurs spontaneously and involuntarily, the respondent's memory being motivated or cued not by the taste of a madeleine, but by the nostalgic properties of popular music. Again this highlights the inappropriateness of using a Brechtian model for the analysis of such a process: Brecht sought to critically engage his audience, not to make them metaphorically walk out of the performance.

The way in which Potter's musically-infused texts encouraged drift-off can be highlighted by looking closely at a musical sequence from *Detective*. The transmitted text utilises 35 identifiable pieces of music, and over 40 underscore samples.<sup>331</sup> As period signifiers, the songs represent a predictable representation of the types of music popular in Britain during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Songs such as *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, *Cruising Down The River*, and *We'll Meet Again* are particularly efficient vehicles for signifying an often nostalgically-distorted concept of period Englishness. The big-band sound, at its peak in the early 1940s, is well represented, as are popular crooners of the period such as Al Bowlly, Bing Crosby and Sam Browne. Apart from the anarchic novelty song *Dry Bones*, the only real stylistic deviation comes in the form of the proto-doo-wop, urban American harmonies of The Inkspots' *Do I Worry?*

Unlike most Hollywood-musical set-pieces, where time appears to stand still as characters transcend their interpersonal conflicts through song and dance, the musical sequences in *Detective* exist within their own fictional space, in a character-motivated, hallucinogenically-defamiliarised now. In contrast to both *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, where liberational music is deliberately evoked and orchestrated by the protagonists, Potter casts Marlow as a victim of intrusive, often emotionally debilitating melodies. Whereas in *Pennies*, argues Potter:

Arthur Parker, believing in the songs in his simple-minded kind of way, had licence, as it were, to inject those songs everywhere and in any way, and make them seem real...

in *Detective*:

Marlow...was resisting them, didn't believe in them...they were hard little stones being thrown [at him].<sup>332</sup>

One of these 'hard little stones', the ballad *The Very Thought of You*, performed by Al Bowlly and the Ray Noble Orchestra, in a sequence which occurs approximately half-way through the final episode, provides a typical example of the way in which the text musically and visually represents 1940s Britain. The sequence begins with the still-hospitalised adult Marlow telling Nurse Mills (Joanne Whalley) of how as a child he often heard music from the gramophone creeping up the stairs. As the curtain is drawn around the bed the tinkling piano introduction to *The Very Thought of You* begins. A memory-signifying slow dissolve transports us into a representation of 1940s London. After an establishing right to left pan along a row of terraced houses, we are offered a close-up of a period gramophone playing a 78 recording of the Al Bowlly number, the needle, according to the published text, 'biting and hissing along the etched groove';<sup>333</sup> the music is thus confirmed as being diegetic within the memory narrative. In the centre of the tiny, dimly-lit room is Marlow's grandfather, a generic figure dressed in a black formal suit, drinking a glass of stout. Next we see young Philip lying on his bed upstairs reading a *Hotspur* comic. As Bowlly's voice effortlessly glides across the brass-led orchestration (*The very thought of you*), the camera zooms slowly into a close-up of Philip listening to the haunting melody (*And I forget to do*). The next shot returns us to Philip's grandfather (*The little ordinary things that everyone ought to do*) in the parlour. Now, in high wide-angle, we see a coffin (containing the body of Philip's mother) along the window wall (*I'm*

*living in a kind of daydream / I'm happy as a king*). Next we see Philip come into the room and give his grandfather a fright (*And foolish though it may seem to me, that's everything. / The mere idea of you / The longing love for you / You'll never know how slow the moments go / Till I'm near to you / I see your face in every flower*). At this point the narrative shifts both temporally and geographically, and from the interior of a steam train we see a scarecrow 'standing still and silent in a field'<sup>334</sup> (*Your eyes in stars above*). The camera then slowly pulls back to reveal Philip in profile looking out of the window. Musically we now move into the middle-eight instrumental section of the song, during which we are offered a long-shot of Philip's father waiting for the train before cutting to a mid-shot; we are then offered a rear full-length shot, a close-up of the approaching train belching smoke, and a point-of-view shot from the open train window. As Bowly's vocal resumes (*It's just the thought of you / The very thought of you / My love*) we see a shot of Philip leaning out of the train window shrouded in smoke, followed by a close-up of his father.

The sequence is drenched in period signifiers. The 1940s *mise-en-scène* is conventionally underchromatised, even the flowers on the coffin and the trees around the railway station are starved of colour. The collective memories of Potter and his production team offer an impressionistic, sepiaised representation of 1940ness. This sepia vision can be seen as a kind of half-way stage between the conceit of signalling the past in black and white, a device often employed in both television and film, and the utopian, heavily chromatised pasts often presented in the Hollywood-musical. In common with the pasts depicted in both *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, *The Very Thought of You* sequence takes its visual points of

reference from popular memory and from other media representations of the period. Some respondents, as in the example below relating to *Lipstick*, overtly acknowledged the relationship between the representation of historical periods and memory:

I didn't understand why the street looked like a lot in Universal Studios...the tops of the houses, like pictures...it looked like, nostalgic, like sepia...all browns...everybody wore brown...That puts it more in our memory rather than actuality. In our street, everybody's door was painted differently and there were different things about each house that made it stand out, whereas in this street everything seemed to be the same colour, uniform...It was probably done on purpose. I think the whole thing is all nostalgia...Potter writing it...obviously would have a memory of this time and that would be how he would see things, in those colours (L1: F, 32).

Such a comment suggests a critical distance between respondent and text in terms of recognition of its fictionality, and of how part of its fictionality, or artifice, is signalled by its similarity to other examples of media conceits (Universal Studios). At the same time, the comment also suggests a simultaneous acceptance of the conventions of the aesthetics of fiction. The response also highlights the way in which even the most critically aware respondents consistently attributed the produced texts entirely to Potter, barely acknowledging the notion of television being an ensemble medium.<sup>335</sup>

Some *Detective* viewers, particularly those too young to have memories of the periods depicted, may accept the representations as faithful because the stylised period visuals provide a cross-reference to other filmic or televisual versions of the periods such as *Family at War* (Granada, 1970-72) or *Sam* (Granada, 1973-75). In the case of *Lipstick*, respondents born after the period often accepted its pop-art depiction of the 1950s as accurate because it mirrored the representations presented in films such as *American*

*Graffiti* (Lucas, 1973) (Jameson's key text), and *Grease* (Kleiser, 1978), and in television programmes such as *Happy Days* (Paramount/ ITV, 1975-). Even viewers old enough to have memories of the periods may, under the influence of the period music, be prone to a tendency toward nostalgic essentialism, and may thus accept the representation as accurate.

Both visually and aurally, *The Very Thought of You* sequence foregrounds period technology.<sup>336</sup> The camera lingers over the naive gramophone ensuring its signification, celebrating its crudity. The original mono recording is retained, its crackling white-noise conventionally suggesting period fidelity. Respondents made specific reference to the way in which original period recordings bare their own device, not simply by the sonic presence of the performer's voice, but also by foregrounding period-identifying technical naivety, an effect which helps signal the transition into and out of fantasy-time:

There's a different tone in the recording, you'd have the same quality of sound and that changes with the older recordings, so then you know it's not real. (P4, M: 41).

The unrealistic consistency in volume across space (parlour to bedroom) tends to reinforce the impressionistic, often inaccurate nature of memory. The text, in this sequence, thus sacrifices spacio-sonic fidelity in favour of memory process replication. Such prioritising also suggests that, in terms of the musical sequences, the normal vision-sound hierarchy of truth (seeing is believing) is reversed. Arguably the artificiality of the

period *mise-en-scène* in such sequences is at least partially offset by the fidelity of the period recording.

Written in 1934, *The Very Thought of You* may connote, for those with childhood memories of the original version, a mythical, inter-war golden-age.<sup>337</sup> The innocence of this golden-age popular music is literally embodied in what Barthes might term the grain in the voice of Al Bowlly.<sup>338</sup> The crooner's elegant, whispering delivery, and his romance-based, sanitised repertoire, present a sharp contrast to what Potter saw as sexually-explicit post-war popular music. As Potter argues through his cipher Robin Wentworth in *Moonlight on the Highway*, Bowlly:

makes sex sound lovely. Not a bit like sex at all...all his songs are about love, never about making love, never about copulation.<sup>339</sup>

This innate lyrical and vocal innocence may act as a powerful nostalgia prompt, inducing memories of, or longings for, a vanished, possibly mythical past in those viewers of a certain age suffering from what might be termed the ache of postmodernism.

As is typical of many songs of the period, Noble's ballad is essentially metaphysical in its approach to love and romance.<sup>340</sup> It is the idea rather than the physicality of love which is celebrated. The longing for an absent, idealised other-half is typical of what Horton has classified as the wishing and dreaming sub-genre of the popular ballad.<sup>341</sup> In this particular case, however, the song is meant to signify the continuum of pain resulting from the loss of a parent, the absent idealised female subject of Marlow's memory narrative being his

mother, rather than a conventional lover.<sup>342</sup> Thus, the song can affect different respondents in different ways, or the same respondent in more than one way, triggering romance-related responses, yearnings for a lost parent, or nostalgic thoughts of halcyon, care-free days:

It reminds me of the era of my childhood, where there was a popular song for everything...It was on all the time (S1, F: 58).

The song also proved capable of inducing melancholic or unpleasant memories of the period, as in the case of the respondent who described it as a:

Terrible, boring song from my childhood...I grew up in the war. Those terrible...songs to me are like terrible claustrophobia. I wanted to escape...The wartime years and the years afterwards were the most tedious, dreary years. Contrary to what everyone says...contrary to what the play tries to suggest, they were terribly grey years, and a lot of the music brings that back to me. (S7, M: 59).

Although aware at the unmotivated stage of the interview that the song had been used in the serial, the respondent had no recollection of its position in the narrative, of its narrative function, of the characters involved in the scene, of whether it was diegetic or non-diegetic, or of which setting it was associated with.<sup>343</sup> In this case, rather than inducing pleasurable, nostalgic memories, the song seems to have produced negative emotions which were intense enough to inhibit concentration on the narrative. Thus, the musical sequences in the texts appear to have the power to lead respondents into pleasurable, melancholic, or even painful psychic reveries not unlike those experienced by Potter's characters.



*The Very Thought of You* is an example of a piece of music which, when coupled with overtly stylised visual period signifiers, as it is in *Detective*, can induce effects on viewers which may not have been anticipated by the serial's producers. Trumpeter Nat Gonella's silkily-tactile melancholic minor-key notes, may, for example, encourage what Adorno might condescendingly term the 'emotional listener' to experience involuntary sentimental emotions and memories as a result of hearing the song. Thus, rather than concentrating on the narratively expositional visual and aural information within the sequence, some respondents appeared to appropriate such information for their own bitter/sweet nostalgic pleasure. Whether we term *Detective* a detective story with music, or a musical detective story, the drift-off effect, with its associative tendency to induce narrative amnesia, can be seen to be highly problematic for a genre so dependent upon the maintenance of audience attention. If Potter's clues, so carefully infused into the musical sequences, are often partially erased or even sometimes totally edited out in viewers' minds in favour of alternative memory-related or fictionalised psychic reveries, the generic desire to produce a narrative which, after initial frustration, leads its viewers toward a comprehensive and conclusive resolution, may be undermined.

### **Music and realist conventions**

The way in which the musical sequences contravened established conventions of dramatic realism both in terms of form (the transitions into fantasy-time) and content (singing instead of talking), attracted significant criticism from respondents, and was cited as one of the main reasons for lack of engagement with both storyline and characters. For many

viewers, realism has been, and seemingly remains, the defining aesthetic of television drama. Such an adherence to mimetic representation, seen by Bourdieu to be indicative of what he terms 'barbarous taste',<sup>344</sup> is to a significant extent culturally conditioned and is essentially founded upon the preconception that texts should make sense. As Caughie has argued, the television drama of the 1950s and 1960s, founded as it was upon a combination of formal realism and cultural seriousness, presented a realist aesthetic as the standard by which later productions would be compared.<sup>345</sup> When this expectation is frustrated in Potter's texts, either formalistically by temporal or spatial obfuscation, or in terms of content by characters lip-synching, sometimes in a cross-gender mode, to original recordings, or by genre bricolage, some respondents tended to compare what they were watching unfavourably with what they considered to be conventionally realist models of television drama such as *Boys from the Blackstuff* (BBC2, 1982) and *EastEnders* (BBC 1 1985-):<sup>346</sup>

In Bleasdale it's moving. You care about what happened to the people in it.  
In this you don't (L5, F: 39).

The equation realist = good, modernist, or non-naturalistic = bad, seemed pretty much ingrained in the minds of many respondents. In a time when, according to critics such as Baudrillard,<sup>347</sup> the status of the real has never been less certain, it is interesting to note that a number of respondents pledged allegiance to conventional notions of realism, clinging to what Hallam with Marshment describe as 'ways of showing and telling that cast the representation of the material world in mimetic rather than symbolic terms.'<sup>348</sup>

Respondents were remarkably consistent in their definitions of what constituted character and narratorial realism. Their frames of reference and areas of expectation can be seen to match those posited by critics such as Abercrombie who argues that the realist text should employ a narrative which has 'rationally ordered connections between events and characters' with a 'caused, logical flow of events, often structured into a beginning, a middle and a closed conclusion.'<sup>349</sup> Fundamentally, respondents worked on principles of believability or plausibility in relation to characters and storylines. For the majority of respondents this area of the 'signifying continuum'<sup>350</sup> was crucial to their acceptance of a text as realistic, the expectation that the characters and events in a realist drama should behave according to the laws of everyday existence, that is, they should display verisimilitude, being clearly ingrained. It is mainly Potter's subversion of these conventions by the infusion of disorientating musical sequences in which characters do not act true-to-life that persuaded most respondents to describe the serials as unbelievable:

When they started dancing around and singing I thought 'This is ridiculous.'  
There are things that you can accept, but I thought it was just too strange.  
(P3, F: 47)

Such scepticism reflects Lack's argument that:

[The] concept of a musicalised everyday, where characters spontaneously burst into song as if it were the most natural thing in the world, is one of the most surreal conceits ever played by the film industry upon its audience.<sup>351</sup>

If we look at *Lipstick*, for example, respondents' adherence to paradigms of realism appears to have played a significant role in influencing a reluctance to suspend disbelief in relation to the musical fantasies which developed in the War-Office. While respondents struggled to recall specific details about the serial's music, and the characters and plots relating to the musical sequences, they were extremely consistent in their ability to remember the physical geography of the War-Office set in which the musical sequences take place, and consistently described it as being 'realistic.' That this would be the best remembered set is not surprising as, in terms of the occupation of narrative time, it is the most prolifically utilised set in the serial. The fact that it is so consistently described as 'realistic' is, perhaps, rather surprising as 12 of the musical fantasy-time sequences described by many respondents as 'unrealistic' originate or take place there, and, as discussed below, a number of areas of the set are conspicuously not true-to-life.

Most respondents were able to recall the organisation of the desks and the positioning of the characters with remarkable clarity:

Their desks were in a kind of square...a clock and windows (L2, M: 64).

It was square. He was here, he was here, he was there, he was at the end (L6, F: 44).

Oak-panelled. Six desks, and near a window the guy who was doing a bit of racing and stuff [Hedges] used to fall asleep; the one next to him, on his right, was the boss [Bernwood] (L7, M: 43).

The strong sense of verisimilitude which some respondents gleaned from the War-Office set, together with generic expectations associated with authored drama, and what many

respondents considered to be implausible motivation, seems to have hindered the suspension of disbelief in relation to the musical reveries:

People miming and dancing around in that office, that just wouldn't happen in reality (L3, F: 59).

For such respondents the text appears to create what Bordwell has termed 'insufficient realist motivation.'<sup>352</sup> As Hallam with Marshment suggest, television dramas usually go out of their way to emphasise how both characters and their situations are 'just like us' through their construction of the television world as 'a parallel everyday reality.'<sup>353</sup> Potter's experimentation with a modernist mode of musical functionality as a means of representing internal states can be seen as an attempt to create character complexity and, therefore, enhance levels of psychological believability; as we have seen, however, ironically, for many respondents, such an attempt is undermined by the very presence of the lip-synched period songs and associated dance sequences. In contrast to the negative responses to *Lipstick*, and to a lesser extent *Pennies*, most respondents were prepared to accept the fantasy-time musical sequences in realist settings in *Detective* because Marlow's medical condition and the hallucinogenic medication used to treat it made the relationship between cause and effect relatively more plausible.

*Lipstick* Production Designer Gary Williamson has made no attempt to make the view through the windows in the War Office appear anything other than artificial. The vista is obviously a painted façade of brilliant blue sky. Along with other devices such as the

unrealistic naming of characters (see below), such artificiality is offered as a strong hint to the viewer that the serial should not necessarily be categorised as conventional realist drama. Surprisingly, however, although a number of respondents mentioned the windows when describing the office, none of them made any reference to the obviously artificial façade when discussing the non-musical sections of the narrative. It seems that in the non-musical sequences, although respondents tended to recall the geographical positioning of props and characters within the War-Office with remarkable accuracy, they were much less vigilant in terms of spotting anti-naturalist constructions.<sup>354</sup>

In addition to encouraging mental drift-off and associated narrative amnesia on the part of some respondents, the onset of musical fantasy-time sometimes induced distancing which allowed a critical mode of viewing, (again, because of the absence of pedagogical intention, however, it would be inaccurate to label this distancing Brechtian). For example, one respondent when discussing the *I See the Moon* musical sequence set in the War-Office (*Lipstick*, Episode Four) spoke of the way in which the television production process had been exposed during the sequence:

It got bigger as the songs were going on because the camera was coming...from above; it was obvious that there was nothing above it...The War-Office became a massive room which fitted loads of people and camels in it (L1, F: 32).

Such a response contrasts with the experience of those respondents who drifted-off and were lost in the music. For this respondent, the unconventional exposé of studio technique prevented such an effect, but equally forced her out of the narrative, suspension of

disbelief being impeded not so much by the music itself, as by the unexpected referencing of the production device. It is, perhaps, not surprising that this sequence should attract critical readings as it is arguably the most playful and carnivalesque in the serial, with belly dancers of both sexes and pantomime camels joining the cast in throwing camel shit and kicking balloons around the office. At one point in the sequence one of the central conventions of realist television, the maintenance of camera invisibility is contravened; the presence of the camera is directly acknowledged when a piece of camel shit sticks to the lens. This self-referential gesture is not included in Potter's original script and the decision to include it in the transmitted text was presumably made by Director Renny Rye. When the fantasy sequence is over, and normality is restored, one of the balloons from the romp is seen in shot, the only time in the serial that the status of the musical sequences as mental fabrications is questioned. Interestingly, this anomaly did not attract any comment from respondents when the sequence was discussed.

### **Music and characterisation**

As Murray Smith has suggested, our entry into narrative structure is crucially mediated by character.<sup>355</sup> This fact applies to all forms of fictional narrative including the musical sequences in Potter's texts. In investigating the respondent-character dynamic within the musical sequences, I utilised a taxonomy suggested by Hallam with Marshment, which is based on the sub-classification of the term alignment. According to Smith, alignment describes the process by which:

spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions, and to what they know and feel.<sup>356</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 2, Hallam with Marshment identify six sub-categories of alignment: 'intellectual alignment', 'interest alignment', 'concern alignment', 'moral alignment', 'aesthetic alignment', and 'emotional alignment'.<sup>357</sup>

Because Potter's texts work to externalise and foreground characters' psychological states, one might assume that his texts would induce high levels of respondent-character alignment; in practice this was not always the case. Although loss of ego and adoption of the perspective of the 'other' are concepts which are commonly used to account for the emotional engagement and overall suturing into the narrative of cinema audiences, the inherently different idiosyncratic conditions in which television viewing normally takes place can sometimes dilute the intensity of viewer-character alignment, particularly in single dramas and short-run serials where viewer-character relationships have less time to develop than in long-running series and soap operas. Perhaps the most influential reasons for the often surprisingly low levels of reported respondent-character alignment, however, are the narrative estrangement caused by the narcotic drift-off effect of the popular music, and the fact that many respondents felt that the musical sequences contravened realist conventions. This perceived formalistic deviation led to a loss of plausibility which, in turn, led some respondents to exhibit correspondingly low levels of alignment with characters.



Viewers engaging with fictional texts bring to their readings culturally embedded knowledges, or personal schemata against which they measure the behaviour of characters and events.<sup>358</sup> Although, as Nelson points out:

The constructed worlds of television drama cannot be measured directly against those material worlds inhabited by members of the audience,<sup>359</sup>

across the three serials, a number of respondents, when discussing characterisation, disregarded what might be termed Kantian problematics and sought to locate their point of reference in some knowable, shared reality. This often resulted in a referential mode of viewing which tended to produce alignment with plot and characterisation if they corresponded to personal experience; when the text matched the experience, as it did for many respondents in the non-musical sections of the narrative, there were relatively high levels of respondent-character alignment in most of the sub-categories and an associative tendency to read characters as real people with pre-text existences and the freedom to make life-choices :

The mother [Mrs Marlow] was trapped. She must have known what she was going to end up with in the first place. (S5, F: 35).

If she [Nicola] couldn't have seen what he was like before she married him, she shouldn't have married him [Marlow] (S8, M: 40).

She [Sylvia] shouldn't have gone for the Welsh fella [Francis], she should have gone for somebody a bit more down to earth. (L7, M: 43).

Such readings suggest a relatively high level of alignment, particularly in the interest, concern, and emotional sub-categories. Such responses, linked as they are to the

acceptance of narrative plausibility, were rarely offered in response to the musical sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick* which tended to dilute many of the alignment sub-categories. Because of the relative plausibility of musical motivation in *Detective*, respondent-character alignment levels were in general relatively higher than in the other two serials.

Some respondents, mainly those who viewed *Detective*, utilised an actuality template in relation to what Smith terms the 'person schema',<sup>360</sup> but used it to contextualise the characters as textually constructed analogues of human agents rather than as real people:

One sees people exactly [like] that in real-life, they are believable in the play. (S3: F, 58).

[*Detective*] was realistic in that the views held by the characters could be authentic. (S2: M, 31).<sup>361</sup>

Although such comments indicate some distancing, they also suggest a degree of respondent-character alignment. If the characters are considered authentic in relation to actuality, as in the above quotations, then the respondent is likely to be interested, concerned, and emotionally aligned with them and with their fates.

Some respondents on the other hand, mainly those who viewed *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, did not find the characters or their situations credible, and consequently offered far more distanced readings which acknowledged the texts as dramatic constructions. Most of these comments were made in relation to the musical sequences. In responding to questions

about the relationship between characterisation and conventions of realism in the musical sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, for example, a number of respondents criticised the characterisation in the sequences on the grounds of perceived lack of plausibility:

I can't say I paid much attention to the characters in the fantasy scenes...I was waiting for the next drama scene (P1, M: 41).

It was...completely artificial (P5, F: 44).

This isn't realistic...this is like comic-book (L1: F, 32).

The civil servants...were being parodied like caricatures...cardboard characters. I get the impression he's talking about types rather than people...stereotyped blondes and callous youths (L2, M: 64).

The worst case blonde bimbo, the worst case wimp, the worst case fantasiser. (L8, M: 35).

Thus, the experience of spectatorship does not always match the Metzian model whereby 'the credulous spectator (who believes in the reality of the fiction) takes over from the incredulous spectator (who knows the action is a representation).'<sup>362</sup> In cases such as those presented above, character and plot alignment were considerably reduced by the perceived lack of verisimilitude in the musical sequences. Respondents' search for believability in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, a search based on their conceptions of what constitutes serious drama (ie, high levels of verisimilitude), was often frustrated by the genre bricolage within the texts; such frustration may have reduced levels of intellectual alignment during the musical sequences which, in turn, specifically inhibited interest, concern, and emotional alignment. This low level of alignment may have contributed to

the onset of drift-off by encouraging respondents' minds to wander from the narrative into musically-induced nostalgic reveries.

Respondent-character alignment is also inhibited by the frustration of conventional characterisation by Potter's consistent use of comedic, obviously fabricated names. His work is peopled by characters whose names have inter-textual literary associations such as Philip Marlow (*Detective*), and Emma Porlock (*Cold Lazarus*), characters with rhyming names such as Jack Black (*Follow the Yellow Brick Road* - BBC2, 1972), alliterative names such as Sandra Sollars and Linda Langer (*Karaoke*), comic names such as 'Pig' Malion and N. Balmer (*Karaoke*), and absurdist names such as First Mysterious Man (*Detective*). Potter has also been playful in his naming of the characters in *Lipstick*: the Mick Hopper character takes his Christian name from the male member of the kitsch 1950s singing duo Mickie and Sylvia, responsible for the song *Love is Strange* in Episode Six, and his surname from the combination of the 1950s euphemism for dance - hop (hip-hop, at the hop), and the name of Potter's favourite artist Edward Hopper;<sup>363</sup> Sylvia also takes her name from the singing duo but it also seems to have been influenced by Joyce's poem *To Sylvia Beach* which begins with the question 'Who is Sylvia.?', a question rhetorically posed by the lecherous cinema organist Harold Atterbow on more than one occasion;<sup>364</sup> and Francis Francis is a name which, one might assume, conspicuously draws attention to itself as a construction. In practice, the drift-off effect of the period music, together with relatively low levels of respondent-character alignment, tended to override the mnemonic novelty value of such names. After an average viewing period of six hours, a number of respondents, particularly those who viewed *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, struggled

to acknowledge the names, or even to acknowledge the existence of characters other than the main protagonists (Parker, Marlow, Hopper, Sylvia). Those respondents who were able to recall/recollect secondary characters were often able to place them only in relation to the main protagonists, ie, Parker's girlfriend (Eileen), Parker's wife (Joan), Hopper's girlfriend (Lisa). Some of those who could not recall a character's name were able to offer the name of the actor who played the character, ie, 'the one played by Gemma Craven' (Joan in *Pennies*) and 'the one played by Roy Hudd (Harold Atterbow in *Lipstick*). Such low recall/recollection levels suggest low respondent-character alignment levels and stronger 'star' or actor recognition levels. Recall/recollection levels were relatively higher for *Detective*, with most respondents being able to name the principle characters: Marlow, Nicola, Binney/Finney/Raymond, Nurse Mills, Mr Marlow (Jim Carter), and Mrs Marlow (Alison Steadman). The conclusion here is that respondent-character alignment levels were generally higher than for the other two serials, which tends to confirm the fact that drift-off levels were lower and plausibility levels higher for *Detective*, a combination reflecting the differing modes of musical motivation in the serials and also the nature of the generic game of detection which respondents expected to play given the title of the serial.

Of the main protagonists in the serials, Marlow was deemed by most respondents to be the most plausible character; again this can be equated to the way in which his musical reveries are signalled as medicinally motivated. As a character, however, he was not always the recipient of high levels of respondent alignment. A number of *Detective* respondents described the way in which Marlow's skin condition produced a state of heightened, or comprehensive realism<sup>365</sup> which caused them varying levels of emotional

distress, and such was the graphic nature of the visual representation of the psoriatic arthropathy one *Lipstick* respondent who had watched a single episode of *Detective* when it was originally transmitted in 1986 reported having lasting memories of Marlow's physical condition almost ten years later:

It didn't make me want to carry on watching...because the man in the bed with the eczema [sic] was horrible...I didn't want to see him again. (L1, F: 32).

Thus, although character plausibility was cited as a desired element of realist television drama, it seems that in the case of Marlow, the heightened level of realism resulting from the graphic depiction of his skin disease tended to negate alignment for a number of respondents (mainly female), with the aesthetic sub-category being the most inhibited. However, as Hallam with Marshment point out, emotional engagement in realist fiction is not primarily premised upon a character, but on their situation.<sup>366</sup> Their structuralist proposition is supported by the reactions of respondents to characterisation in all three serials as inter-character relationships and the situations in which characters found themselves usually made more impression than did specific details about characters as individuals. In many cases, negative reactions to Marlow's skin condition were overridden by interest, concern, and emotional alignment relating to adverse situational scenarios, both musical and non-musical, such as the impersonal way in which Marlow was treated by the doctors in the *Dry Bones* sequence (Episode One), and by the evangelicals in the *Ac-cent-tuate The Positive* sequence (Episode Four):

I felt the same reaction as he did to people like the doctors and the church group (S3, F: 58),

and to personal relationships such as the bond between young Philip and his father:

The son and father relationship was so sad and torn. You could see how distraught he was, and so you tended to relate to his situation (S7, M: 59),

and the strained relationship between Philip's mother and her in-laws

You could sympathise with that situation (S7, M: 59).

A similar pattern emerged in relation to *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, although most of the comments related to non-musical sequences. While many respondents struggled to recall/recollect character's names and physical characteristics, or details about the music and musical sequences, many exhibited evidence of alignment with relationship-related problems or with situational issues:

I thought, here's a guy [Parker] who's on his way down but he's clinging to the dream, which we all do. It's always going to get better, but you knew it wasn't...he was out there trying to earn a living; and he was getting knocked back at home. The fact that he went astray was no surprise (P1, M: 41).

The anguish that she [Joan] had...you could relate to her as a woman. One of my friends in particular, it's her life. To have sex because that's what your husband wants, as a duty (P2, F: 31).

The aunty [in *Lipstick*] was a sad figure, having to live her life with that dreadful man (L4, F: 58).

I felt the frustration of Lisa going out with that man [Hopper] (L4, F: 58).

Sometimes respondents struggled to make sense of what they considered to be narrative enigmas or ambiguities in relation to characters, events, and situations, particularly in relation to *Detective*. Whereas the imaginings of Parker and Hopper are pure fabrications based on wish fulfilment, Marlow's hallucinations are part fabrication and part memory. One of the hermeneutic tasks which both Marlow and viewer must undertake is the separation of memory traces from fabrication; whereas Marlow eventually successfully achieves this separation, a number of respondents did not. For example, some were unclear about the fictional/non-fictional status of the section of the narrative dealing with the affair which Marlow imagines is taking place between his wife Nicola and Finney:

When the wife was plotting with the film producer I wasn't sure whether that was actually happening or not. (S2, M: 31).

I'm not sure that was actually in the book or whether he was creating it. I know there was a book written by him, but whether that was going on in that actual book he wrote, I don't know...I still don't know whether there was a bit where he was supposed to have signed the screenrights over, and I don't remember him doing it at all. These were bits where he would appear in scenes which I thought were only going on in his head, but he was actually shown as being in them as well...I don't think a writer should expect a logic to be so obtuse on the audience...It leaves more questions than answers...She seemed to come to get him to sign his screenplay to her. But if that went on...who's telling the story? Somebody looking at the hospital and telling the story who's not involved in anything, like a camera somewhere on the wall...The hospital bits weren't seen through his eyes...they were seen by someone who was just a neutral observer...And it never came out how he found out about his mother's death...with these bits of the story you're still not sure whether they were real or in his imagination. (S4, M: 46).



At times it was difficult to follow. You kept drifting in and out of reflections, drifting in and out of dream sequences, and real time. Occasionally you'd think 'What are we in here? Is this the dream, or the real world?'...I was convinced that she was [having an affair] until the end, and then I thought there was doubt thrown on it by the story itself, and I honestly wasn't sure. I was left puzzled in the end. (S9, M: 44).

Six of the nine *Detective* respondents were puzzled by this part of the narrative, exhibiting a strong desire for unambiguous resolution. Such an adherence to narrative closure is indicative of the way in which respondents consistently, and arguably inappropriately, employed conventionalised realist paradigms when attempting to engage with Potter's anti-realist texts. When the texts were found wanting in relation to these paradigms, drift-off, low levels of respondent-character alignment and experiences of narrative amnesia often resulted.

### **Representations of sex and gender in the musical sequences**

Potter has been consistently criticised, in both the popular press, and to a lesser extent in academic circles, for his supposedly misogynistic portrayal of female characters.<sup>367</sup> Steyn, for example, in an article that questions the reputation of a writer whose main trademarks, he suggests, are 'old songs and nudity', argues that the women in Potter's dramas functionally degenerate 'from secondary roles to cypher to wank object.'<sup>368</sup> Other critics have pointed to sadomasochistic elements in Potter's work,<sup>369</sup> to his linking of sex and death,<sup>370</sup> and to the overtly voyeuristic viewing experience they claim his texts construct.<sup>371</sup> Examples of sequences which became *causes célèbres* include the 'heaving bottom' sequence in Episode Three of *Detective*, the marital rape which precedes the *The*

*Green Door* sequence in Episode One of *Lipstick*, and just about all of the *Blackeyes* serial. In practice, respondent reaction to the depiction of sex and sexuality in *Pennies*, *Detective*, and *Lipstick* did not always mirror this criticism. Not surprisingly, it appears that a respondent's gender and age may have influenced the ways in which they perceived certain aspects of Potter's representations of gender and his depiction of sex and sexuality. It was noticeable, for example, that the younger respondents, both male and female, were more likely to have strong opinions on the ways in which the texts dealt with issues relating to the representation of gender. In the under 40 age-range, a number of both male and female respondents acknowledged what they saw as negative representations in relation to both male and female characters. However, respondent gender seems to have been the most influential factor in determining the reaction to the depiction of sex and sexuality in the serials; while most females took what might be termed a hostile position in relation to the depiction of sex and sexuality, as might be expected, male respondents were usually far less critical. There was a clear difference between the way most male respondents and most female respondents reacted to the depiction of sex and sexuality. Irrespective of age, most male respondents did not see the sex scenes as particularly voyeuristic or gratuitous, but, rather, saw them as integral and, therefore, artistically justifiable:

They were in context...The sex scenes are not that long, They're graphic, but they're not hitting you in the face (P1, M: 41).

I don't think it was voyeuristic (P4, M: 41).

There was nothing really offensive...There were a few sex scenes, but they weren't put in to titillate, they were there to explain events in the story. You saw bits of women, but...it wasn't dwelt on in any way (S4, M: 46).

I think they were justified. I don't think they were put in for salacious insertion, they played their part (S7, M: 59).

It doesn't offend me (L8, M: 35).

Many female respondents on the other hand tended to take the opposite viewpoint:

There was...gratuitous sex. That bit where the farmer made them perform...you could have made the point without actually showing...(P6, F: 58).

I didn't think there was any need for the sort of sex that was in it. It was blatantly obvious what was happening. It's not just suggested, it was actually there (S5, F: 35),

with the depiction of the fantasy-angel character (Carrie Leigh) in *Lipstick* being singled out for particular criticism:

He [Hopper] sees this woman who's got a snake around her, and she's got no clothes on, which I didn't see the need for, she could have worn something (L1, F: 32).

The girl prancing about in his mind, that used to annoy me (L9, F: 32).

Some female respondents took what might be termed a Mulveyesque stance on the way in which the fantasy-angel character simultaneously functioned as an object for male voyeurism, and as an often annoying distraction for most (heterosexual) female viewers:

A woman must look at this so differently to a man. It was just hilarious to me...I think the woman must make a difference to the way men watch it. Men would just want to watch it for her, whereas women...would look at her in a different way...With men it would just be sex (L4, F: 58).

She's a distraction. The important bits are what the men get up to (L5, F: 39).

In contrast, male respondents tended to defend the visual presentation of the fantasy-angel character without any real intellectualisation of the attraction:

I'm sure most young men have fantasies about naked blonde women, I suppose in that respect it would be realistic (L8, M: 35).

The presence of sexually provocative female images such as this may, thus, be one of the reasons why some respondents, both male and female, experienced drift-off during the musical sequences involving the fantasy-angel (the *Earth Angel* and *The Garden of Eden* sequences in Episode One), with male respondents experiencing fantasy reveries of their own in response to the stimulating visual images, and female respondents experiencing distancing in reaction to what they perceived to be negatively distracting visual images.

It was the nature of specific sex scenes, particularly those in *Pennies*, rather than the presence of sex scenes *per se* which many female respondents objected to.

The first time Bob Hoskins and whatever her name is had sex in the house and he told her all the spiel, that surprised me in the way he just went up her skirt (P2, F: 31).

I felt uncomfortable because of the way sex was portrayed in it...He [Parker] was always pleading for it and that was so pathetic...He just wanted to have sex with her and use her. You wouldn't want children to think that was acceptable (P3, F: 47).

The sexual things that are going on are bordering on the animalistic (P5, F: 44).

I didn't think there was any need for the sort of sex that was in it (S5, F: 35).

Perhaps surprisingly, the scene which attracted the most criticism from female respondents, both numerically, and in terms of intensity of feeling generated, was not the 'heaving bottom' scene from *Detective*, or the marital rape scene from *Lipstick*, but, rather, the scene in Episode 3 of *Pennies* in which Joan gives in to Parker's demands and paints her nipples with lipstick:

I found that part of it...I did find the lipstick on the nipples...sad (P2, F: 31).

Things like when she puts the lipstick on her nipples...I thought 'How low can she stoop', and that sickened me (P3, F: 47).

The scene, which was hardly mentioned by male respondents, is perhaps indicative of the way in which Potter's texts sometimes seem obsessed by the darker side of sexuality and often exhibit sadomasochistic tendencies which some female respondents found fundamentally distasteful or degrading. The scarcity of romance in the non-musical sections of the narratives was criticised by a number of female respondents who, like those quoted above, felt that the sex in the serials was too primitive and often abstracted from any sense of love or commitment:

The long romantic kiss was a sharp contrast to the reality of sex as she [Sylvia] would have known it. And which do you think she preferred ? I think it would be the long romantic kiss. She just wants the romance, the nice gentleness, not the harsh sex (L4, F: 58).

In addition to possibly reflecting L4's personal preferences, such a comment also hints at the way in which the texts, in foregrounding sex at the expense of romance, consistently undermine established Hollywood-musical generic convention, a fact which may go some way towards explaining why some female respondents often struggled to achieve engagement either with the plot or with the male characters. Another reason may be the way in which the texts, in contrast to classical Hollywood- musicals, appear to negate the likelihood of successful relationships between the genders, a fact highlighted by both male and female respondents:

It [*Pennies*] presented a very bleak view of human relationships...that there's more likely to be conflict than union (P5, F: 44).

There seems no possibility of friendship between male and female (L2, M: 64).

While *Pennies* and *Detective* may have seemed relatively explicit at the time they were made, (1978 and 1986 respectively), horizons of expectation change and it might be expected that the shock value of Potter's work would have diminished by 1995 when respondents were interviewed for this study. This was not always the case, and respondents of both sexes tended to think that there was more sex depicted in the serials than there actually was. This imagined excess may be related to Potter's media profile

which often presented him as television's 'Mr Filth.' In many respects this profiling, which was often self-promoted, is based on exaggeration. While acknowledging the seemingly indefensible representation of women in *Blackeyes*, many of Potter's texts have attracted excessive criticism and often undeserved notoriety in relation to their actual sexual content, and it is probably fair to say that far more explicitly sexual images have gone uncriticised over the years in such female-authored television dramas as Andrea Newman's *Bouquet of Barbed Wire* (ITV, 1976) and *Imogen's Face* (ITV, 1998), and Fay Weldon's *Big Women* (Channel 4, 1998). A similar situation exists in relation to the use of 'bad' language in Potter's texts; there are probably more profanities expounded in single episodes of series such as *and the beat goes on* (Channel 4, 1998) (I counted 17 examples of the word fuck in one episode), and *Sex and the City* (Channel 4, 2000-), than in Potter's entire oeuvre.

Although there appeared to be a distinct gender-linked response pattern to the depiction of sex within the serials, there was no similar cathexis in relation to gender representation; while some respondents, mainly younger females, were keen to criticise the representation of female characters:

[The women] were very stylised...they weren't very deep (S6, F: 29).

He was trying to do everyone like that famous thing, madonna and harlot, except that there were no madonnas (S6, F: 29).

He tended to have a downer on women. They were there for men's pleasure (L9, F: 32).

The women...you didn't really know what their concerns or fears or aspirations were...they were a bit of colour for the series...Who is he to talk about women's lives ? (L5, F: 39),

across the three serials there were respondents of both genders who read Potter's female characters as inherently stronger than their male counterparts:

The women characters were quite well drawn. The schoolteacher [Eileen] grew and became a stronger character (P4, M: 41).

The men appeared as the weaker characters. (P7, F: 35).

The women probably came across as stronger than the men (S5, F: 35).

The male characters were prominent but weak (L5, F: 39).

They were all strong, controlling women (L7M: 43),

and many respondents, both female and male, argued that neither gender was particularly well represented:

He portrayed men badly as well, he wasn't biased, the men were equally as awful (P3, F: 47).

None [of the characters] were particularly pleasant (S2, M: 31).

It didn't show either [gender] up in a good light (S6, F: 29).

While there was, thus, no obvious respondent consensus with regard to gender representation, there was evidence of cross-gender, cross age-range agreement that all three serials were presented from a distinctly male perspective:



I think its coming more from a man's point-of-view, a man's personal vision (P5, F: 44).

[Women's] bodies are shown more than the men's bodies. You see women's breasts in it, but you don't see any bits of men in it (S4, M: 46).

It was just from a man's point-of-view (L5, F: 39).

Without a doubt that was totally from the male point-of-view. Everything was centred around the males, even though the women controlled them you never really got their point-of-view. It was always the male fantasy, never the female...the boob scene with Sylvia, you saw all those shots. That was for males. You never saw a fella's arse for instance. (L7, M: 43).

Apart from reflecting the fact that all three texts were written and directed by men, such comments are informed by the fact that the main protagonists in the serials are male (Parker, Marlow and Hopper) and that they provide the motivating psyches behind the majority of the musical fantasy sequences, sequences which, thus, exhibit a form of male-centred first-person narration. In these sequences, it can be argued, the female characters are metaphorically, and sometimes literally, made to dance to what might be classified as a gendered tune. Of the three serials, *Pennies* is the only one in which some musical sequences are unambiguously motivated by female characters - *Blue Moon*, *You Rascal You* (see below), *The Clouds Will Soon Roll By*, *Anything Goes*, and *The Moon Got in My Eyes*, all motivated by Joan (in Episodes 1, 1, 2, 5, and 6 respectively), and *You've Got Me Crying Again*, *Love is Good for Anything That Ails You*, *Radio Times*, *I Only Have Eyes for You*, *Better Think Twice*, *And So Do I*, and *You Sweet So and So*, all motivated by Eileen (in Episodes 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4 and 5 respectively).<sup>372</sup> All of the musical sequences in *Detective* are motivated by Marlow. The only musical fantasy sequence which unambiguously involves a female consciousness in *Lipstick* is the *My Prayer*

sequence (Episode Two) in which Sylvia shares the song with both Hopper and Francis but constructs her own accompanying fantasy (see below); in all the other musical fantasy sequences she appears to be constructed and directed by male characters, sometimes by Hopper and sometimes by Francis

Looking closely at the structure of a couple of examples of these female-motivated fantasy sequences, and at the way in which respondents interpreted the gender representations within them, a comparison can be made with the sequences motivated by male characters. The two musical sequences chosen for close analysis are the *You Rascal You* set-piece from *Pennies* and the *My Prayer* sequence from *Lipstick*. The *You Rascal You* sequence seemed particularly interesting because although it was the fantasy sequence from *Pennies* which was most recalled by female respondents during the audio extract section of their interviews, and also during the motivated section of the mute video exercise, it was barely remembered by male respondents. The *My Prayer* sequence from *Lipstick* was chosen because it is the only textually signalled example of a female character-induced fantasy in the serial.

*My Prayer*, written by Boulanger and Kennedy, was originally recorded by Jeff Chandler in 1955; the version by *The Platters* used in the 1956-set serial was recorded in 1956, but not released in Britain until 1957.<sup>373</sup> In the published scripts, Potter described the song as a 'fifties mix of syncopation and sanctimony...self-pitying, masturbatory...'<sup>374</sup> which indicates an ironic, or satirical appropriation. Performed in close harmony by both male

and female voices, the lyric can be classified within the wishing and dreaming category of the romantic ballad:

*When the twilight is gone,  
And no songbirds are singing,  
When the twilight is gone,  
You come into my heart,  
And here in my heart you stay while I pray.*

*My prayer is to linger with you  
At the end of the day,  
In a dream that's divine.  
My prayer is a rapture in blue  
With the world far away  
And your lips close to mine.*

*Tonight, while our hearts are aglow,  
Oh tell me the words  
That I'm longing to know.*

*My prayer and the answer you give,  
May they still be the same  
For as long as we live,  
That you'll always be there  
At the end of my prayer.*

Like most of Potter's musical sequences, the *My Prayer* set-piece is cut to the music; most of the edits happen on a beat, and most of the visual transitions have a direct relationship with the lyrics of the song. The sequence is preceded by a prologue in which Sylvia, working as a cinema usherette, remembers the earlier advances of the lecherous organist Harold Atterbow, and constructs a fantasy pastoral scenario in which Francis appears as a shepherd. After a transition to the War-Office, a bored Hopper mentally motivates the

opening bars of *My Prayer*. Francis appears to appropriate the song, the romantic lyric seemingly motivating him to conjure up an image of Sylvia, the object of his affections. Sylvia, still in the cinema, appears to use the words of the song to recreate her earlier rural idyll fantasy, this time writ large and projected onto the cinema screen. The rationale behind the prologue now becomes apparent because it confirms the fact that the motivating consciousness creating the idyllic pastoral scenario is Sylvia's; without the prologue it would be possible, as a number of respondents nevertheless did, to misinterpret the scene and attribute the fantasy to the lovesick Francis.

In the published script, Potter describes the fantasy Sylvia as 'half-shepherdess half tart...a demure young woman...in a flowered pinafore', under which, because the actual Sylvia's mind 'is not quite able to hold such an unlikely transformation', she wears stockings and suspenders.<sup>375</sup> In the transmitted version, the demure element is even less obvious and she is dressed in a low-cut, red-checked milk-maid bodice with a long, 1950s-style, flowing skirt and red stiletto shoes. Nevertheless, her costume still combines connotations of innocent pastoralism with a sexually charged 1950s dance culture, or perhaps more accurately retro 1950s dance culture; in other words, it simultaneously signifies both a 1950s rock 'n' roll lifestyle and a timeless Hollywood-musical folkishness. Her bright red lipstick and her blonde, Diana Dors/Veronica Lake-style hairdo are distinctly movie-star in appearance. The rural *mise-en-scène* is conspicuously signalled as artificial, with a painted sky and background and an obviously one-dimensional wooden songbird tweeting sweetly in the foreground. After emerging from a fairytale Hansel-and-Gretel-like gingerbread cottage, fantasy Sylvia breaks off a phallus-shaped piece of gingerbread from the cottage

façade and simulates felatio. After sharing a glass of champagne with shepherd Francis, she gazes provocatively at him before leading him into the cottage where we see the couple kiss in close-up. Next comes a transition to the War-Office where Hopper imagines Hedges (Clive Francis), Trekker (Shane Rimmer), Church, Bernwood (Peter Jeffrey) and Berry (Douglass Hensall), bathed in red and blue light, lip-synching the 'Ah-aa-aah!' harmony. We then see a close-up of the actual Sylvia in the cinema prior to cutting to a high-angle shot of fantasy Sylvia and shepherd Francis kissing outside the cottage. As the music stops the couple exchange dialogue:

Shepherd Francis: 'I've sold the sheep my darling.'

Fantasy Sylvia: 'How much my love ?'

Shepherd Francis: '£999,000 sweetheart.'

Fantasy Sylvia: 'Oh.'

Shepherd Francis: 'What's the matter ?'

Fantasy Sylvia: 'What a pity it wasn't a million.'

At this point shepherd Francis bows his head, the sun sets, the couple become silhouettes, the sounds of the countryside fade out and are replaced by the jarring opening bars of *Lipstick's* credit-sequence music, *The Man With The Golden Arm*, and a cut transports us away from the couple to the credit visuals comprising pixilated images from the serial.

During the group interview session, respondents interpreted the sequence in a number of different ways. The male respondent (L2), having somehow missed or misinterpreted the

clues offered by the prologue which signalled Sylvia as the motivating consciousness behind the fantasy, attributed motivation to Francis. The sequence was, thus, interpreted as being analogous to Hopper's fantasy-angel fantasies, ie, that the fantasy Sylvia was a constructed answer to Francis's prayer, a manifestation of his frustrated sexual desire, and that she was, therefore, in spite of the closing dialogue and symbolism which suggest otherwise, the manipulated character in the sequence.

One female respondent, while correctly attributing motivation to Sylvia, offered a distanced interpretation which positioned the sequence as an attempt by Potter, as a male author, to ridicule predatory, unsatisfiable females:

That thing about the million pounds at the end, she's never going to be satisfied, ha ha ha [ironic laughter] (L3, F: 59).

L3's comment suggests that any intended authorial irony had been noted and knowingly discarded. Another female group member, also correctly reading the motivation as Sylvia's, saw the sequence as a form of female empowerment narrative in which fantasy Sylvia was able to manipulate the submissive shepherd Francis:

She was strong really, she got what she wanted (L5, F: 39).

In cases such as this, the joke at the end about the thousand pounds shortfall was seen to be at the expense of the hapless male rather than the insatiable female. In the interpretations presented above, the major influences governing the interpretative positions

taken by respondents toward gender issues appear to have been the gender of the respondent, and their perception of the gender of the motivating character.

When discussing the musical sequences, respondents of both sexes consistently claimed that the most memorable visual image was Sylvia's face, and particularly her blonde hair.

Almost all the comments about her were prefaced by a reference to her blonde hair:

The blonde-haired girl, a bit fit, ha , ha...Like a Barbie doll (L7, M: 43).

A vivacious blonde (L8, M: 35).

Blonde hair, at least in relation to females, has acquired specific semiotic connotations (often from cinematic representations, and from 'girlie' calendars and posters), relating to sexual promiscuousness and low levels of intellect. For a number of male respondents such a combination proved to be particularly attractive, even when acknowledged as artificially constructed:

I was very interested when the attractive young lady came on...The blonde...was really entirely cosmetic...she was a tart, cheap, shoddy, but with a certain glitter to her (L2, M: 64).

Such comments are indicative of the way in which the female characters, to a greater extent than the male characters, were often initially judged by male respondents according to their compatibility with, or deviation from, accepted conventionalised standards of physical attractiveness; if the character was compatible, then aesthetic alignment was likely.

Although female respondents mentioned Sylvia's physical representation in the sequence, in general they were more interested in her emotional characteristics and in her position within society, and they tended to divide into opposing camps, those who saw both the actual Sylvia and the fantasy Sylvia as negative representations:

I think other women would bring the blonde down a peg or two (L5, F: 39).

and those who were more magnanimous and, thus, offered some degree of defensive support:

the blonde...she was in the world of the romantic films and so the real life was such a disappointment for her... The kind of woman men go for, blonde, sexy...She had to become strong to defend herself. I think she was a victim. The good things about her aren't portrayed, just physical...she's attracting all the wrong things and she'll suffer because of it (L4, F: 58).

Thus, while for many male respondents alignment with the Sylvia character was more often than not focused as aesthetic alignment based on pleasures gained from the visual image, comments made by female respondents suggest a wider range of alignment and non-alignment experiences, with interest alignment, concern alignment, and emotional alignment normally proving more common than aesthetic alignment. As we can see from the comment of L5 above, however, a number of female respondents found the Sylvia character annoying and morally reprehensible, and, therefore, did not experience moral alignment, a positioning which consequently affected other alignment sub-categories in a negative way.



The *You Rascal You* sequence from Episode 1 of *Pennies* seems to have made a significant impression on a number of female respondents. The sequence, which is set in the lounge of the Parker's suburban semi-detached house, follows a scene in which Parker has sex in his car with a prostitute (Rosemary Martin) after Joan had previously made it clear that she regarded sex as an unpleasant task which she endured only under duress. Joan, and her very middle-class friends Irene (Jenny Logan) and Betty (Tessa Dunne), are having morning coffee and chatting. The subject of Parker's trustworthiness is raised and Irene and Betty exchange a knowing look. The conversation turns to the subject of marriage in general, and Joan suggests that it isn't all its cracked up to be:

There's a lot of silly stuff and nonsense taught to young girls about marriage nowadays. In the magazines and things.<sup>376</sup>

She then brings up the subject of door-to-door salesmen, and mentions Conrad (Nigel Havers), the vacuum pad salesman who had called earlier in the episode. The three friends then exchange views on the pros and cons of sex:

Irene: Want a change do you, Bet ?

Betty: (Snort) Get off. The less of *that* the better.

Irene: Oh, I don't know, it's quite nice on a Sunday morning.  
(They simper.)

Joan: I think I'd rather have a cup of tea, though.<sup>377</sup>

After a silence, the three women look at each other, eye to eye, as though to a pre-arranged signal, and the introduction to the Blue Lyres' (male vocal)<sup>378</sup> version of *You Rascal You* begins. The camera zooms in on Joan to signal the motivating consciousness, and she lip-synchs the lyric:

*I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
Well I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
I've brought you into my home,  
You wouldn't leave my wife alone,  
I'll be glad when you're dead you rascal you.*

*Oh I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
I'll be tickled to death when you leave this earth, you dog,  
When you're laying six-feet deep,  
No more fried chicken will you eat,  
No you won't, you rascal you.*

*I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
Oh you asked my wife for a feel,  
And something else you tried to steal,  
Oh you ain't no good at all, you rascal you.*

*I'll be glad that day, you rascal you.  
When you're laying in you're grave,  
No more blonde women will you crave,  
No you won't, you rascal you.*

*I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you.  
Oh I'll be standing on the corner, high,  
When they bring you're body by,  
Oh you dog, you rascal you*

*You Rascal You* is a traditional blues number, and has been performed by some of the leading names in black music including Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, and Cab Calloway. Like many blues numbers, the lyric is subversively connotative, with veiled allusions to sex and drugs; the reference to 'fried chicken' in the second verse, for example, was a black euphemism for the practice of cunnilingus, and the word 'high' in the final verse refers to drug-induced euphoria.<sup>379</sup> There is, however, no evidence that Potter knew of these sexual and narcotic connotations, and he almost certainly chose the song purely for its comic effect, as a vehicle for the externalisation of Joan's resentment of Parker's sexual demands and of her unconscious desire to be rid of her own philandering rascal. The song thus takes on new subversive connotations in relation to its contextual usage.

As the fantasia develops Joan imagines a powerless Parker being stabbed melodramatically by herself and her friends who then celebrate the imagined murder by waving their bloodied hands in the air in an evangelical fashion in time to the comedic lyric and jaunty instrumentation. In her fantasy, Joan then nails down the lid of Parker's coffin, climbs on top of it and expresses her joy at his demise by dancing uninhibitedly. The three women then combine to set light to the coffin, thus cremating the hapless Parker. After the fantasy cremation, the music fades and we return to the *tableau vivant* of the framing static three-shot of the once more demure women, cups of coffee still in hand.

The male-vocal version of *You Rascal You* used in the sequence can be seen as a form of parody or pastiche, which attempts to comment ironically on traditional gender relationships, a usage specifically highlighted by respondent P6:

I thought it questioned the gender stereotyping roles...Questions of power and sexuality were opened up (P6, F: 58).

The sequence, described by one male respondent as 'the girlie scene' (P1), attracted little comment from male respondents but was particularly enjoyed by female respondents who seemed pleased that a female character had been allowed to express her boredom and frustration in the same way as the male characters:

She [Joan] was lonely and didn't have a lot to do with her life. These things are diversions for her (P3, F: 47).

There was a sense that she [Joan] had her own dreams (P6, F: 58).

In contrast to the often negative or uncommitted comments on the female viewing experiences offered in relation to many of the musical sequences in *Detective* and *Lipstick*, all female *Pennies* respondents claimed to relate to this sequence. In speaking of the sense of pleasure gained from sharing in the symbolic murder and cremation of Parker, they appear to have developed a strong sense of alignment with Joan and her predicament:

This is where they are going to cut him up. I thought this was the only scene in which these women were empowered...It's symbolic (P2, F: 31).

Wanting to murder their husbands...I'm sure people have been there, ha, ha, ha (P5, F: 44).

With Eileen also being allowed to instigate fantasy sequences in the serial, *Pennies*, does seem to offer a greater possibility of alignment for the female viewer than either *Detective* or *Lipstick*.

Having discussed the focus areas of narration, comprehension, the music-memory-nostalgia dynamic, genre expectation, characterisation, and the representation of gender and sexuality in Potter's musical serials, it is clear that the majority of respondents did not exhibit preferred viewer characteristics. As might have been expected, readings, interpretations, and experiences of the musical content of the texts varied enormously. Such diversity of response does not preclude the possibility of developing propositional conclusions in a number of focus areas, and it is to this task that I now turn.

## Conclusion

In undertaking this research I hoped to fill some of the gaps in our understanding of music-related contemporary viewing and listening practices, and of the ways in which narratively-foregrounded original recordings of period popular songs contribute to the construction of televisual narrative discourse and dramatic meaning. While the conclusions offered below go some way towards filling some of those gaps, they also raise a series of important new questions about the popular music-television audience dynamic, questions which will, hopefully, stimulate further research in the field. In relation to Potter's work, the study is the first to offer an in-depth examination of the musical content of *Pennies*, *Detective* and *Lipstick*. It is also ground-breaking in its dialogic, 'bottom up' approach. For the first time, empirical interpretations of the serials, rather than hypothetical or implied viewership, form the basis for the critical commentary offered.

The methodology utilised in this study was a mixture of established practices and terminologies appropriated from previous television drama audience studies, modified research techniques and taxonomies developed by musicologists, and specifically designed empirical exercises and interpretative strategies. The organic way in which the empirical material was assembled proved productive. The nature of the research aims (as detailed above) called for a methodology predominantly based on qualitative research practices. Although I was originally sceptical about its practical value, the decision to

begin with a written questionnaire exercise ensured that a number of focus areas were highlighted prior to undertaking the *Lipstick* 'pilot'-study. Lessons relating to questioning technique learnt from the 'pilot'-study, where some respondents wandered from the focus of the interview, tightened up the *Detective* interviews, which, in turn, positively informed the *Pennies* interview process by indicating the efficacy of introducing the 'red-herring' exercise and the mute video exercise.

The 'red-herring' exercise was particularly informative, raising some particularly interesting questions about the retention of music-related narrative information. The fact that respondents struggled to recall/recollect the actual songs used in the serial, yet were able to correctly state that the generically matched 'red-herring' songs had not been part of the *Pennies* narrative, suggests that even when respondents claimed to have no memory of the actual songs, they had, almost certainly, retained some memory trace of them, possibly at an unconscious level, which allowed them to be compared to the 'red-herring' songs. With the benefit of hindsight, this knowledge caused me to question the fidelity of my memory task placement categories, which, although they did provide basic recall and recollection information, were not, I now realise, sophisticated enough to accurately measure levels of retention or lack of retention of music-related narrative detail. If undertaking a similar study in the future, more technically informed memory exercises would need to be developed in consultation with experts in the field of cognitive studies. I would also extend the memory task section of the interviews, use fewer extracts, and spend longer on each one. I would also have liked to have offered detailed empirically-informed analyses of more individual musical sequences,

particularly from *Pennies* which, in terms of analysis, is possibly underrepresented in relation to *Detective* and *Lipstick*. This disproportionate representation can to some extent be related to the fact that, due to unforeseen circumstances, there were fewer *Pennies* respondents to work with. I would also be keen to further develop the verbal-visual associations exercise which proved particularly informative, the results clearly indicating the way that music, both lyrical and instrumental, exhibits communicable extra-musical and para-musical connotations.

The interpretive methodology utilised in this study was specifically designed to facilitate the investigation of the consumption and subsequent verbal articulation of music-related television viewing and listening experience. In many respects it proved successful, particularly in the way it supported the relatively efficient collection and processing of the empirical material. The decision to classify the interview material initially by colour coding into broad groupings, then according to key-word and key-phrase categories, and finally according to the gender of the respondent, although extremely time-consuming, proved invaluable in that it facilitated the segregation of discrete focus areas for analysis and made the organisation of those areas manageable. In terms of categorising the respondent-character dynamic, I found Hallam with Marshment's taxonomy based on alignment sub-classification to be a useful theoretical tool.

The interview material, once collated and analysed, provided new knowledge in relation to some of the processes associated with the generation, experience, and articulation of music-related televisual pleasures, and the narrative schemas used by individuals in their



engagement with the texts. Some aspects of the viewing/listening experience, however, particularly those involving memory processes, are ultimately beyond the reach of any research method. In particular, the problematic relationship between musical experience, the memory of that experience, and the verbal articulation of the memory of that experience created problems when it came to interpreting respondents' memory-related comments. Many problems relating to the trans-modal process of articulation from music to memory to words have not, and I now realise, almost certainly could not, have been overcome in this study. As argued in Chapter 2, a detailed correlation between the verbal articulation of the memory of a music-related experience and the experience itself can never be taken for granted, and so the conclusions offered below necessarily relate to the verbal articulation of memories of music-related experiences rather than to the experiences themselves.

The interview transcripts show that most individual interview respondents possessed more than enough cultural capital to engage with Potter's texts on a detailed and articulate level. For example, the majority of respondents exhibited an informed awareness of the rationale behind the modernist mode of musical functionality utilised in the texts, of the intentionally ironic implications of many of the songs, and of the technicalities of *mise-en-scène* signaling associated with their usage. This level of articulation is, perhaps, not surprising given the predominantly middle-class respondent sample with its associationally high levels of cultural capital. What is perhaps surprising is the way in which many of these middle-class respondents consistently measured the texts against realist paradigms and sought comfort in realist conventions. In doing so they

challenge Bourdieu's rigid class-based categorisation of taste. All my middle-class respondents, irrespective of which text they viewed, articulated a realist disposition in relation to their expectations of plot, characterisation, believability, and the desire for a conclusive resolution. If the narrative was found wanting when measured against realist conventions, as it consistently was during the musical sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, respondents tended to move away from the given text and create individual psychic texts of their own. This adherence to realist conventions corresponds to the 'barbaric' taste which Bourdieu associates specifically with the working-class. The results of this study suggest that such allegiance to the conventions of 'formulaic' realism is not exclusive to one socio-economic grouping, but is, rather, widespread and deeply set.

Although respondents consistently attributed the production process entirely to Potter (see Chapter 3), Kenneth Trodd's role in developing the rationale behind the musical sequences, and his input in relation to the selection of individual songs was undoubtedly considerable, as were the realisation talents of directors Piers Haggard, Jon Amiel, and Renny Rye, and any discussion of intentionality must acknowledge their contributions. Although, as detailed in Chapter 1, Potter's intentions in relation to the way he expected his work to engage the viewer were often ambiguous and sometimes contradictory, both he and Trodd did seem to want to use the medium of television as a laboratory for dramatic experimentation, thus promoting a new approach to the dramatic representation of human experience, an approach which might take the form of an expressionist, or 'critical' realism which would dramatise not only the materialist aspects of life, but also the imaginative and fantastical kanted realities which normally remain unexposed outside

of the stream of consciousness novel. This is one of the functions they hoped popular music would perform, the presentation of what might be termed mental *verite*. The original, lip-synched period songs were meant to illustrate the inner life of characters, making visible that which cannot easily be articulated with conventional forms of dramatic communication. Both Potter and Trodd hoped that such an anti-naturalist approach would break the frame, disturb the consciousness, and encourage viewers to contemplate human existence, both in relation to the characters and to themselves, across a broader spectrum of experience than is normally offered in conventionally realist television dramas. In relation to these objectives, the results of this study provide examples of what might be interpreted as both success and failure. For some respondents the frame was broken by the musical sequences in some of the texts, and such disorientation, as intended, resulted in heightened levels of subjectivity which often produced psychic experiences not normally associated with television drama viewing. Ironically, however, it was *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, the serials which received the most adverse criticism from respondents in relation to form and levels of plausibility, rather than the more generally accepted (and academically applauded) but formally more complex, *Detective*, which seem to have been the sites for a closer mesh between authorial intention and viewer interpretation.

Many of the songs, particularly those utilised in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, stimulated extra-diegetic transcendental pleasures, often being decontextualised and enjoyed as discrete pieces of nostalgic entertainment. Such pleasures were sometimes associated with psychic drift-off away from the narrative and into fabricated fantasies, or into memory

narratives underpinned by personal history involving secondary, episodic, and semantic memory experiences. As stated above, only the verbal reports of these experiences are available for interpretation, and it is, therefore, impossible to define the actual nature of them. The complex inter-relationship between musically-induced pleasures and psychic cognition is, thus, one area where further research might prove productive, particularly in relation to the investigation of what might be happening cognitively in relation to disturbances of consciousness during moments of drift-off.

Often the result of drift-off was the onset of varying degrees of narrative amnesia, the inability to recall and/or recollect narrative detail. One factor which strongly contributed to drift-off was the refusal on the part of some respondents to unproblematically accept what they believed to be a violation of the conventions of realist drama. Most respondents equated the notion of serious drama with an adherence to realist conventions. When such conventions were perceived to be contravened, as many respondents felt they were in the musical fantasy sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, where characters in the set-pieces actively perform *to* an acknowledged viewing audience (something they do not do in *Detective* where the characters clearly perform the songs for each other), the resulting incredulity increased the potential for drift-off. In relation to *Detective*, however, most respondents felt that the musical sequences did not violate realist conventions as they had in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, the crucial difference being the fact that Marlow's fantasies were clearly signaled as being motivated by the hallucinogenic drugs he was administered in hospital. His reveries were, thus, perceived by most respondents to be plausible and utilitarian in that they contributed to narrative development.

Conversely, the musical fantasy sequences in *Pennies* and *Lipstick* were often deemed to be implausible and gratuitous, and these serials, particularly *Lipstick*, were often read as pop videos loosely linked by a weak storyline. These differing perceptions were associated with higher levels of drift-off and narrative amnesia in *Pennies* and *Lipstick* respondents than were evident in those who viewed *Detective*. In addition to the estrangement caused by the perceived lack of motivational plausibility in *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, some respondents were also distanced from the texts by what they considered to be an excessively liberal utilisation of musical sequences, by the lengthy duration of those sequences, and by the complexity of the montage employed within those sequences. Although there are more musical sequences in *Pennies*, such criticisms were particularly voiced in relation to *Lipstick* where the transitions are cut to the rapid beat of rock 'n' roll music rather than mixed to the rhythm of slow ballads as is often the case in *Pennies* and *Detective*. The perceived plausibility of motivation and utilitarian functionality meant that such criticisms were far less common in relation to *Detective*. Although in today's market, the success of a television drama is predominantly measured in viewing figures, there are other relevant criteria. It can be argued, for example, that Potter and his producers achieved success in their modernist attempts to bring the subjectivity of viewers into play by breaking the frame and disturbing consciousness with the implausible musical sequences in the often criticised *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, but were less successful with the universally acclaimed *Detective*, where the interruptus was accepted as plausible, and thus did not result in similar levels of fracture. In *Pennies* and *Lipstick*, the musical sequences, in highlighting the reality of fantasy, act as catalysts for the unfolding of psychic memory and/or imaginative 'usable stories'. In *Detective*, where the

status of the musical motivation is grounded in reality, the 'usable stories' are more closely related to the mechanics of plot and characterisation.

In the wake of the events in New York on September 11 2001, the concepts of fantasy and of nostalgia, linked as they often are to perceptions of states of innocence and freedom, are likely to play an ever increasing role in our lives. As the world is perceived to be becoming less and less innocent and more and more dangerous, the consumption of escapist forms of fiction is likely to increase proportionately. Such a development already appears to be underway. At the time of writing (November 2001), *The Sunday Times'* Top Ten Paperback Best Sellers List contains four *Harry Potter* stories, three books associated with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and a fantasy by Terry Pratchett, and film versions of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *The Fellowship of the Ring* are about to appear in cinemas. Thus fantasy and nostalgia, always traditionally popular generic areas, are becoming even more important. It seems likely that television drama will also develop to reflect this increasing interest in fantasy narratives. While drama series such as *The X Files* (BBC2/BBC1 1994-) cater specifically for the science-fiction market, as this study indicates, Potter's musical period serials allow viewers to experience arguably more universally appealing engagements with fantasy and nostalgia. In addition to the fantasy reveries and nostalgic pleasures associated with the period songs, many respondents taking part in this study gained significant pleasure from the recognition of nostalgic period artefacts within the *mise-en-scènes*; such recognition often significantly increased the likelihood of fantastical drift-off. Rather than seeing such

experiences as lapses of concentration, however, they should, like the reveries induced by the music, be seen as important, therapeutic aspects of the dramatic viewing experience.

If such levels of drift-off and narrative amnesia occurred when respondents' attention levels were unnaturally high due to the influence of the knowledge that they were taking part in an academic study, the chances are that under normal viewing conditions they may be even more pronounced, and, in consequence, the success level of the expressionist realist texts in relation to creating formal fracture and disturbance of consciousness may also be increased. Having said that, the disorientation caused by the musical sequences was sometimes sufficiently intense as to induce some respondents to fast-forward through them. Those respondents who did so obviously failed to fully engage with the texts, and their memory-related testimonies were, therefore, accordingly treated with some caution.

The results of this study also underline the need for more research into the ways in which age and gender may impact upon viewers' interpretations of popular music, and on television dramas which foreground popular music within their narratives. In relation to the three focus texts, it was noticeable that a respondent's age often influenced the ways in which they responded to formal and thematic properties. For example, younger respondents tended to be far more comfortable in engaging with complexities of form in *Detective* and *Lipstick* than did older respondents, particularly in relation to temporal and spatial manipulation of the narrative, accelerated montage techniques, and genre bricolage. Conversely, older respondents tended to relate more to the thematic and

historical content of the serials and to perceived levels of period verisimilitude than did many of the younger respondents who felt that the texts did not engage with contemporary or youthful themes, or offer interpretations of the past which exhibited contemporary validity. Such responses can, to some extent, be accounted for by the fact that *Pennies* and *Detective* were being viewed a long time after they were originally transmitted (17 years in the case of *Pennies*, and nine years in the case of *Detective*). Although, in terms of form, *Pennies* received less criticism from my respondents than did *Lipstick*, in 1979 when it was initially transmitted, many *Pennies* viewers would almost certainly have found the serial quite strange in comparison with conventional 1970s period dramas such as *Family at War* and *Upstairs Downstairs*. *Lipstick*, on the other hand, was being viewed by respondents just two years after original transmission and, therefore, it is perhaps reasonable to assume a greater correlation between respondent interpretations and those of viewers who made up its original audience.

Because of the distance between original transmission and viewing, a number of younger respondents tended to talk about both *Pennies* and *Detective* as period pieces, not only because they contained references to the 1930s and the 1940s, but also because, to them, the quality of image fidelity in *Pennies* appeared technically 'old fashioned' in comparison with the sharp digital video quality of contemporary television programmes, and because, to them, *Detective*'s 1980s present, with its specific references to the Thatcher Government, Bernard Levin and other, for the most part forgotten public figures, seemed dated even in 1995. In the period since the original transmissions of *Pennies* and *Detective*, British television has undergone significant change with the



coming of satellite and cable broadcasting, digital transmissions, the spread of MTV-style production processes (MTV Europe first broadcast in 1987), and interactive television. It is, then, perhaps not surprising that, in terms of form, if not thematic content, the retro pop-art, music-video-influenced 'flexiad' sequences in *Lipstick* were, for the most part, readily accepted by those younger respondents whose formative teenage television viewing history may have specifically coincided with the technological developments detailed above. Neither, perhaps, should we be surprised to discover that, in contrast, some respondents in the upper age-range, almost certainly brought up on what might be termed a more formalistically conservative television diet, found them disorientating. Having said that, in terms of its contemporary impact, some members of *Detective's* original audience may not have found its formal playfulness or its meta-fictional self-referentiality totally new because the (arguably) equally frame-breaking *Moonlighting* made its British debut on BBC2 in 1986 prior to the first episode of *Detective* being transmitted. In fact, even earlier, in 1982, Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff*, one of the most popular 'realist' drama serials ever shown on BBC television had included a surrealist dream sequence (in 'Yosser's Story') and a carnivalesque finale peopled with absurdist characters (in 'George's Last Ride'). In terms of those respondents who did find Potter's formal playfulness uncomfortable and/or disagreeable in 1995, one can only assume that such viewers did not contribute to the substantial viewing figures for subsequent popular, yet formally and/or stylistically challenging, television dramas such as *Twin Peaks*.

The results of this study clearly suggest that the application of Brechtian theory to the focus texts by critics such as Creeber and Marinov, related as it is to the concept of the implied or ideal (theatre) viewer and to specific historical, sociological and political contexts, is practically inappropriate. There were no political intentions behind Potter's utilisation of popular music; the modernist mode of musical functionality was developed predominantly as a means of externalising the psychological demons of his characters, while simultaneously encouraging his viewers to broaden their understanding of the complexities of human experience. In doing so, Potter's texts actively encourage, albeit not very successfully, what Brecht most sought to prevent, the development of *emfuhlung*. While the rationale behind Brecht's use of alienation techniques was to encourage his audience to see things as if for the first time, the original recordings and visual periodisation in Potter's texts encourage viewers to draw pleasure from the eminently familiar. Although the musical sequences did often result in respondent estrangement, the effect was often to push respondents out of the narrative and encourage them to engage in pleasurable extra-diegetic psychic reveries which resulted in varying degrees of narrative amnesia, hardly the critical response Brecht sought. Thus, critical interpretations of the ways in which popular music functions in Potter's work based on models which construct an implied (ideal) viewer and a preferred reading, are likely to deviate, to varying degrees, from those produced by the individuals who constitute Potter's audience.

Although Potter's experimentation with a modernist mode of musical functionality can be seen as an attempt to create character complexity and, therefore, enhance levels of

psychological believability, ironically, for many *Pennies* and *Lipstick* respondents, such an attempt was consistently undermined by the disruptive, frame-breaking presence of the lip-synched period songs and associated dance sequences which, because they were considered to be a violation of realist conventions, contributed to the low levels of respondent-character alignment exhibited in the interviews. Because musical motivation was perceived to be plausible in *Detective*, respondent-character alignment levels were generally higher than in the other two serials. Across the three serials, inter-character relationships and the situations in which characters found themselves usually made more impression than did specific details about characters as individuals, which suggests that characters were predominantly read structurally, or metonymically, rather than referentially. Although respondents of both genders interpreted the female characters as inherently stronger than their male counterparts, and yet paradoxically agreed that all three serials were presented from a distinctly male perspective which resulted in a form of male first-person narration, it became evident that a respondent's gender significantly influenced their engagement with the texts, particularly in relation to the ways in which they perceived certain aspects of the representation of sex and sexuality. Across the three serials, male respondents tended to gain more pleasure from the texts than their female counterparts. The main focus of male alignment was aesthetic, and was predominantly based on voyeuristic experience. This was particularly noticeable with male *Lipstick* respondents who clearly gained aesthetic pleasure from images of Sylvia and the fantasy-angel. Most male respondents justified the sexual content of the serials as being an integral part of the narratives. Female respondents tended to exhibit a wider range of alignment experiences (predominantly interest alignment, concern alignment, and

emotional alignment), although not at a particularly intensive level. Unlike their male counterparts, many female respondents offered moral judgements in response to the sexual relationships depicted in the serials. Also in contrast to male respondents, many female respondents considered some of the sexual images fundamentally distasteful or degrading, and felt that they were often an unnecessary distraction. It was the nature of the sex scenes rather than the depiction of sexual activity *per se* which attracted most negative comments from female respondents, with many feeling that the sex in the serials was too primitive and often abstracted from any sense of love or commitment. Thus, the sexual imagery in the serials, particularly in *Lipstick*, seems to have contributed to drift-off by inducing some male respondents to construct their own fantasies, while simultaneously causing some female respondents to lose interest in the narrative. If Potter deliberately sought to liberate the consciousness of his viewers, then perhaps we may be justified in considering such low levels of respondent-character alignment as a positive development, rather than as evidence of the texts' failure to engage their viewers.

Respondents' perceptions of the gender of the motivating character often influenced their interpretations of the musical sequences. With both Joan and Eileen being allowed fantasy sequences, *Pennies* offered a greater possibility of alignment for the female viewer than either *Detective*, in which all the sequences are motivated by Marlow, or *Lipstick* in which the majority of the sequences are unproblematically motivated by Hopper. Analysis of the empirical exercises suggests that, unlike contemporary soap operas and dramas such as *This Life* (BBC, 1996-7) and  *Holding On* (BBC, 1997), the texts which make up Potter's musical trilogy do not exhibit, in terms of characterisation,

contemporariness, or thematic content, the 'flexi-narrative' characteristics necessary to engage a wide spectrum of viewers. Although no demographic breakdown is available, it would be extremely interesting to know the age and gender composition of the actual audience for the three focus texts. In relation to the comments made by respondents taking part in this study, it seems that Potter's often politically incorrect texts appeal predominantly to a middle-aged to elderly male audience, and that many young people, and many females, struggle to relate to them.

Another factor which influenced response to the musical fantasy sequences was the influence of media constructions of Potter as an implied author. As detailed above, almost all respondents attributed the texts entirely to Potter. Both the questionnaire exercise and the individual interview exercise pointed to the fact that respondent perceptions of him and his work were mainly constructed not from first-hand knowledge, but from media discourse. Few respondents had any detailed knowledge of Potter's work prior to *Detective*, and yet most had clearly fixed ideas of him as an 'intellectual', 'important' writer of 'serious' drama. Such perceptions caused many respondents to express surprise that such fantastical 'goings on' (singing and dancing) should occur in what they expected to be 'serious' authored dramas. Two *Lipstick* respondents, for example, (L1 and L8) were extremely surprised to be confronted with something which they compared to the situation comedy *Hi-De-Hi* (BBC 1, 1981-8) when they had expected a 'serious drama.' This perceived conflict produced a tension between implied author discourse, the appropriation of conventions from the Hollywood musical, and the associated frustration of realist paradigms. Had the serials been written by a team of

writers and/or been promoted as musical dramas in the way that *Rock Follies* and *Tutti Frutti* were, or as comedy dramas like *Ally McBeal*, then the fantasies and genre bricolage may have been readily accepted.

Although in terms of personal sensibility Potter was undoubtedly a modernist, respondents offered comments which highlighted both modernist characteristics (reverence for the past, modernist montage techniques), and postmodern elements (genre bricolage, repetition, device-baring character names) within his texts. Writing predominantly for the populist medium of television meant that Potter would never be allowed to develop as an *avant-garde* practitioner in the way that Beckett was allowed to do in the theatre, or as Godard was allowed to do in the cinema. Although he was often formally indulged by television drama programmers (an indulgence which television writers are unlikely to enjoy in the future), in terms of thematic content the majority of Potter's texts remained relatively narrow and, arguably, relatively conservative. Having said that, he did revolutionise, and then popularise expressionist realism as a dramatic device via the modernist mode of musical functionality, allowing music to move out from beneath the penumbra of underscore and narrative gap filling. Today a situation comedy drama series such as *The Royle Family* (BBC2/BBC1 1998-) can attract large multi-age, cross-gender, cross-class audiences by offering what is essentially a plotless narrative peopled by hyper-stereotyped characters inhabiting a minimalist studio set. Such drama is, arguably, the antitheses of what Potter was trying to do with his period musical serials. However, although the tastes of television audiences and the criteria by which television controllers gauge dramatic works may have changed over the past couple of decades, it is

likely that *Detective* will continue to be used as a template by which the quality of future television drama serials are measured, and as a paradigm for highlighting the possibilities offered to the dramatist by the small screen. Potter's other work, however, may not survive outside of academic circles and cult viewership. Controllers may be less and less inclined to compromise their viewing figures by scheduling repeats of Potter's single plays, and the results of this study suggest that, even amongst the middle-aged and the middle classes, supposedly Potter's main audience, knowledge of his early work, and indeed knowledge of most 'Golden Age' television drama has all but disappeared. Ironically for a writer positioned as 'intellectual' and 'difficult' by media and academic discourse, Potter's legacy is likely to be felt less in serious drama than it is in the world of television advertising and in popular drama formats. Series and serials such as *Ally McBeal*, *Chicago Hope*, and *A Many Splintered Thing*, for example, have successfully built on Potter's pioneering work with narratively expositional diegetic popular music, turning what was once an innovative dramatic device into part of the collective consciousness, and part of lived culture. A comparative study of the communicative effects of such contemporary manifestations of Potteresque techniques, particularly in relation to the dynamics of consciousness associated with drift-off, may further enhance our understandings of the complex relationship between popular music and memory.

## Notes

1 In Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Moncrieff and T. Kilmartin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), (originally published between 1913 and 1927), the taste of a madeleine cake acted as a catalyst for extensive, often nostalgic memory experiences.

2 In using the term 'trilogy' I am not implying that the serials were specifically intended to run as a continuing sequence; the term is used simply to indicate the fact that there are three serials, that they are set in three successive decades, and that they each foreground popular music within their narratives.

3 *Pennies from Heaven* was first broadcast in six weekly episodes on BBC 1 between 7 March and 11 April 1978. Hereafter I shall refer to the serial as *Pennies*.

4 *The Singing Detective* was first broadcast in six weekly episodes on BBC 1 between 16 November and 21 December 1986. Hereafter I shall refer to the serial as *Detective*.

5 *Lipstick on Your Collar* was broadcast in six weekly episodes on Channel 4 between 21 February and 28 March 1993. Hereafter I shall refer to the serial as *Lipstick*.

6 In the cinema, Director George Lucas had pioneered the narrational use of popular songs (from the 1950s and early 1960s) in his 1973 film *American Graffiti*. Lucas's approach to the appropriation of the songs was essentially reverential and, therefore, different from Potter's often parodic and/or ironic usage.

7 *Detective* is, for example, probably the most written about television drama in the history of the medium; see Chapter 1 for an analysis of critical commentary.

8 See, for example, J. Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge, originally published 1982, revised 1992) p. 128.

9 See, for example: I. Ang, *Watching Dallas* (New York: Methuen, 1985); 'Wanted Audiences' in E. Seiter, H. Borchers, G. Kreutzner, and M.W. Warth (eds.) *Remote Control* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.p. 96-115; 'Melodramatic Identifications: Television Fiction and Women's Fantasy' in M.E. Brown *Television and Women's Culture: The Politics of the Popular* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1990) p.p. 75-88; *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (London: Routledge, 1991); *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (London: Routledge, 1996); C. Brunson, 'Writing about Soap Opera' in L. Masterman (ed.) *Television Mythologies: Stars, Shows and Signs* (London: Comedia, 1984) p.p. 82-7; 'Women Watching Television' *Mediakulture*, 4, 1986, p.p. 100-6; 'Text and Audience' in Seiter et al (1989: 116-29); 'Television Aesthetics and Audiences' in P. Mellencamp (ed.) *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (London: British Film Institute, 1990); *Screen Tastes: Soap Opera to Satellite Dishes* (London: Routledge, 1997); J. Hallam and M. Marshment, 'Framing Experience: case studies in the reception of *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*', *Screen* vol. 36, no. 1 Spring 1995, p.p. 1-15; M. J. Heide, *Television Culture and Women's Lives: thirtysomething and the Contradictions of Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995); E. Katz and T. Liebes 'Decoding *Dallas*: Notes from a Cross-Cultural Study' in H. Newcomb, *Television: The Critical View* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) p.p. 419-32; 'Mutual Aid in the Decoding of *Dallas*' in P. Drummond and R. Paterson (eds.) *Television in Transition* (London: British Film Institute, 1985) p.p. 187-98;

10 See, for example, J.R. Cook, *Dennis Potter: A Life on Screen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), Revised edition 1998; and S. G. Marinov, 'Pennies from Heaven, *The Singing Detective* and *Lipstick on Your Collar*: Redefining the Genre of Musical Film' in V.W. Gras and J.R. Cook (eds.) *The Passion of Dennis Potter: International Collected Essays* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000) p.p. 195-204.

11 The term preferred reading, which refers to critical arguments about how meaning/s are inscribed in the text by the author, has been used in literary criticism for some considerable time. In relation to television criticism, the term appears to have first been utilised by Stuart Hall in the 1970s; see, for example, 'Encoding and decoding in television discourse', stencilled paper number 7 (University of Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1973), reprinted in S. Hall et al (eds.) *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1981). In the case of television and film, the term is usually used to describe the meaning/s inscribed in the text by the entire production process. The poststructuralist shift in emphasis from author to reader has seen the validity of the term come under attack from a succession of critics; for a discussion of the relevance of the term in relation to television criticism, see Lewis's critique in 'The encoding-decoding model: criticisms and redevelopments for research on decoding', *Media, Culture & Society*, vol.5, pt.2 1983, p.p. 179-92.

12 Academic writing tends to associate seriousness with authored drama. The term 'serious' is, however, problematic and relatively subjective. For an in-depth discussion of usages of the term in relation to



television drama see J. Caughie, *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p.p. 1-25. Having highlighted the problematic nature of the term I will, henceforth, only enclose it in inverted commas if it is part of respondent discourse.

13 As a general example, see S. Day-Lewis, *Talk of Drama: Views of the Television Dramatists Now and Then* (Luton: Luton University Press, 1998); for authorial approaches to Potter, see, for example: Cook (1995); G. Creeber, *Dennis Potter-Between Two Worlds: A Critical Reassessment* (London: Macmillan, 1998); T. Corrigan, 'Music from Heaven, Bodies from Hell: *The Singing Detective*' in *A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Mass Culture After Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1991) p.p. 179-93; and J. Hunningher 'The Singing Detective - Who Done It?' in G. W. Brandt (ed.) *British Television Drama in the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p.p. 234-57.

14 I position the songs as diegetic because, even though not all of the characters are aware of them, they come from the consciousness of individual characters and are, therefore, technically from within the world of the story.

15 For a detailed discussion of such studies see J. Lewis, *The Ideological Octopus* (London: Routledge, 1991).

16 See, for example: S. Frith, *Sound Effects* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); 'Mood Music: An Inquiry Into Narrative Film Music', *Screen*, vol. 25 pt. 3, 1984; *Music For Pleasure* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988); and *Performing Rites: on the value of popular music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); R. Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990); and 'popular music analysis and musicology: bridging the gap', *Popular Music*, vol. 2 no. 2 May 1993, p.p. 177-89; P. Tagg, *Kojak - 50 Seconds of Television Music: Towards the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Gothenburg, 1980); 'Musicology and the semiotics of popular music', *Semiotica*, 66 - 1/3, 1987, p.p. 279-98; 'An Anthropology of Stereotypes in TV Music', *Svensk Tidskrift för Musikforskning*, STM 1989, p.p. 19-42; *Fernando the Flute: Analysis of Musical Meaning in an ABBA Mega-Hit* (Liverpool: The Institute of Popular Music: University of Liverpool, 1991); 'Toward a Sign Typology of Music', *secundo convegno di analisi musicale*, R. Delmonte and M. Baroni (eds.) (Trento: Università Degli Studi di Trento, 1992) p.p. 369-78; "'Universal' music and the case of death", *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 35, pt. 2, 1993a, p.p. 54-85. 'Introductory notes to music semiotics', unpublished seminar notes, Institute of Popular Music: University of Liverpool, 1993b); and 'The Göteborg connection: lessons in the history and politics of popular music education and research', *Popular Music*, vol. 17, no. 2 1998, p.p. 219-42.

17 V. Nightingale, *Studying Audiences: The Shock of the Real* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 148.

18 See, J. Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

19 See T. Kennedy-Martin, 'Nats go Home: First Statement of a New Drama for Television', *Encore*, vol. 11, no. 2 March/April 1964, p.p. 21-33 ; and J. McGrath, 'TV Drama: The Case Against Naturalism', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 46, No. 2, 1977, p.p. 100-05.

20 See, for example: C. McArthur, 'Days of Hope' in T. Bennet, S. Boyd-Bowman, C. Mercer and J. Woollacott (eds.) *Popular Television and Film* (London: British Film Institute, 1981); C. MacCabe, 'Days of Hope: A Response to Colin McArthur' in Bennett et al (1981); and R. Williams *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974), and 'Realism and Non-Naturalism 1' (Edinburgh International Television Festival Official Programme, 1977).

21 The term 'realism' is highly problematic, suggesting as it does that there is a single, objective, representable reality. The plural form, realisms, which allows for multiple, subjective interpretations, is, arguably, a more acceptable term. Having acknowledged the problematic nature of the term, I will, henceforth, refrain from utilising inverted commas whenever it is incorporated within the text of the thesis, unless it is part of a respondent quotation. For detailed discussions of the concept of realism in relation to television texts see for example: Caughie (2000); J. Corner 'Presumption as theory: "realism" in television studies', *Screen*, vol. 33, no. 1 Spring 1992, p.p. 97-102; R. Nelson, *TV drama in Transition: forms, values and cultural change* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

22 See, for example, G.W.Brandt (ed.), *British Television Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) ; Nelson (1997); J. Tulloch, *Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1990); and Williams (1974). For later developments see, for example, J. Bignell, S. Lacey, and M. Macmurrough-Kavanagh (eds.) *British Television Drama: Past, Present and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

- 23 See, for example: the chapter on Bennett in Duncan Wu's *Six Contemporary Dramatists* (London: Macmillan, 1995); the chapters on Bleasdale, McGovern and La Plante in Day-Lewis (1998); on La Plante in J. Hallam, 'Power Plays: Gender, Genre and Lynda La Plante' in Bignall et al (2000); Bob Millington and Robin Nelson's *Boys from the Blackstuff: The Making of TV Drama* (London: Comedia, 1986); and on Mercer in D. Taylor, *Days of Vision: Working with David Mercer: Television Drama then and now* (London: Methuen, 1990).
- 24 See: P. Stead, *Dennis Potter* (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1993); Cook (1995); W. S. Gilbert, *Fight & Kick & Bite: The Life and Work of Dennis Potter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995); and H. Carpenter, *Dennis Potter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).
- 25 Creeber (1998).
- 26 Gras and Cook (2000).
- 27 G. Fuller (ed.), *Potter on Potter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993).
- 28 See: P. Ansorge, *From Liverpool to Los Angeles: On Writing for Theatre, Film and Television* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997); I. Bondebjerg, 'Intertextuality and Metafiction: Genre and Narration in the Television Fiction of Dennis Potter' in M. Skovmand, and K. C. Shroder (eds.) *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media* (London: Routledge, 1992) p.p. 163-80; Corrigan (1991); Day-Lewis (1998); A. Hilfer, 'Run Over by One's Own Story': Genre and Ethos in Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective*' in Bignell et al (2000); Hunningher (1993); P. Purser 'Dennis Potter' in Brandt (1981: 168-93), the first chapter-length discussion of Potter's oeuvre; and Wu (1996).
- 29 Journal and newspaper articles relating to Potter and his work are included in the bibliography.
- 30 Fuller (1993: 10).
- 31 *The Glittering Coffin* (London: Gollancz, 1960); Purser mistakenly dates the text as 1962.
- 32 *Blue Remembered Hills* was first transmitted on BBC-1 on 30/01/79 in the 'Play for Today' strand.
- 33 Stead (1993: 7).
- 34 Caughie (2000: 20).
- 35 Caughie (2000: 172).
- 36 Gilbert (1995: 255). *Sufficient Carbohydrate* premiered at the Little Hampstead Theatre on 07/12/83.
- 37 Gilbert (1995: 285).
- 38 Gilbert (1995: 289). *Midnight Movie* was first transmitted on BBC-2 on 26th December 1994.
- 39 Kenneth Trodd's role as Producer of many of Potter's dramas was particularly important. Although he knew how the songs should operate, Potter did not have intimate knowledge of the music of the periods he wished to illustrate, or a detailed blueprint about how his ideas might be realised on the screen. While directors Piers Haggard (*Pennies*), Jon Amiel (*Detective*), and Renny Rye (*Lipstick*) gave valuable advice on the latter, Trodd played the most significant role in the choice of songs for many of Potter's dramas. One of the most experienced producers still operating in the field of television drama, Trodd is an authority on big-band music, and is the author of a biography of bandleader Lew Stone (*Lew Stone: A Career in Music* (Joyce Stone, 1971)). Trodd advised Potter about the musical content of his dramas from the early experiments with *Where the Buffalo Roam* (BBC, 1966) and *Moonlight on the Highway* (ITV, 1969), through *Pennies* and *Detective*. After falling out prior to *Lipstick* going into production, Trodd and Potter were reconciled for the production of *Karaoke* and *Cold Lazarus* (BBC and Channel 4, 1996). For a detailed discussion of this often tempestuous relationship see Cook (1995). Potter's willingness to acknowledge Trodd's contribution varied from interview to interview, often being dependent upon the current state of their relationship. In conversation with Fuller (1993: 91), for example, Potter chose to ignore Trodd's contribution, claiming that he chose the tunes 'all through *Pennies* and *The Singing Detective*' himself. On all known evidence this is not true, and certainly contradicts Director Pierce Haggard's claim that Trodd made a 'gigantic contribution' as a source for the numbers in *Pennies* (Gilbert, 1995: 236).
- 40 Carpenter had previously written a series of major biographies including those of Auden, Tolkien, Pound, Britten, and Runcie.
- 41 Carpenter's previous biography, of Robert Runcie, was also highly controversial and iconoclastic.
- 42 The book is based on Cook's Ph.D thesis 'Follow the Yellow Brick Road: A Study of the Work of Dennis Potter', University of Glasgow, 1994.
- 43 Cook is particularly keen to offer a rebuttal to criticisms of his biography made by Creeber (1998: 4), especially the claim that he unproblematically treats each new text as 'a continuation and development' of its predecessor.
- 44 See, for example, Cook (1995: 15).

- 45 See, for example, Cook (1995: 52).
- 46 See, for example, Cook (1995: 107 and 285).
- 47 See, for example, Cook (1995: pp. 120-6).
- 48 D. Potter, *Hide and Seek* (London: Andre Deutsch/Quartet Books, 1973). The novel was reprinted in 1990 by Faber and Faber.
- 49 Cook (1995: 118).
- 50 Creeber (1998: 6)
- 51 I. Colley and G. Davies, 'Pennies from Heaven: Music, Image, Text', *Screen Education*, no. 35, Summer 1980, p.p. 63-78.
- 52 Colley and Davies (1980: 65-74).
- 53 Fuller (1993: 21).
- 54 Creeber (1998: 33).
- 55 Cook (1995: 147).
- 56 Caughie (2000: 161).
- 57 D. Potter, 'Realism and non-naturalism', in Programme of the Edinburgh International Television Festival 1977, p. 37.
- 58 Caughie (2000: 167).
- 59 Caughie (2000: 153)
- 60 In this thesis I replicate the published texts' use of numbers for episodes of *Pennies*, ie, Episode 1, and words for episodes of *Detective* and *Lipstick*, ie, Episode One.
- 61 See *Broadcast* April-June 1978 for *Pennies* audience figures, December 1986-February 1987 for *Detective* audience figures, and March-April 1993 for *Lipstick* audience figures.
- 62 Corrigan (1991: 185).
- 63 Corrigan (1991: 179).
- 64 Corrigan (1991: 183).
- 65 'Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective*: An Exemplum of Dialogical Ethics' in Gras and Cook (2000: 96).
- 66 Gras (2000: 90)
- 67 Hunningher (1993: 234-57). Strangely Hunningher makes no reference in his paper to the novel *Hide and Seek* in which Potter explores the author-character relationship even more extensively than he does in *Detective*.
- 68 S. Beckett, *Endgame*, in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986) p. 108.
- 69 Bondebjerg (1992: 173).
- 70 See S. R. Olson, 'Meta-television: Popular Postmodernism', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, vol. 4, pt. 3 1987, p.p. 284-301.
- 71 See, for example, U. Eco, 'Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 3 1972.
- 72 Bondebjerg (1992: 167).
- 73 Bondebjerg (1992: 167).
- 74 Nelson (1997: 206-7).
- 75 See, for example, Colley and Davies (1980); Cook (1995); Creeber (1998); and Stead (1993). For Potter's published thoughts on the concept of the organic society see, for example, *The Changing Forest: Life in the Forest of Dean Today* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1962), reprinted by Minerva in 1996.
- 76 See, for example, Cook (1995); Creeber (1998); and R. Wallach, 'Socialist Allegory in Dennis Potter's *Lipstick on Your Collar*' in Gras and Cook (2000) p.p. 41-52.
- 77 See, for example, Marinov (2000).
- 78 Quoted in Fuller (1993: 85).
- 79 Quoted in Fuller (1993: 86).
- 80 R. Coward, 'Dennis Potter and the Question of the Television Author', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 4 Winter 1987, p.p. 79-87. Coward never really defines what she means by the 'average television audience.'
- 81 Coward (1987: 86).
- 82 M. Foucault 'What is an Author?', *Screen*, vol. 20 Spring 1979, p.p. 13-33. Foucault was revisiting the question previously posed by Samuel Beckett in '*Texts For Nothing*' in *No's Knife* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1967).

- 83 'Some Sort of Preface' in *Waiting for the Boat, On Television* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984) p. 12.
- 84 Potter (1996: 22).
- 85 I do not intend to offer a lengthy discussion of the relationship between music and the cinema, the subject has been covered extensively elsewhere, see, for example: R. Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) ; D. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); E. Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London: Routledge, 1984); M. Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); C. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); R. Lack, *Twenty Four frames Under: A Buried History of Film Music* (London: Quartet Books, 1997); and J. Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen: From the Hollywood musical to music video* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
- 86 Mundy (1999).
- 87 Gorbman (1987:55-9).
- 88 Williams (1974) describes the experience of watching television as being one of 'flow', pointing to the apparent randomness and juxtapositioning of televisual material, a concept updated by Ellis (1992: 115-7), who suggests the term 'segmentation' is a more appropriate description of the contemporary pattern of television programming.
- 89 For comprehensive discussions of the relationship between television and everyday life, see, for example: Seiter et al (1989); R. Silverstone, *Television and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Ang (1996). Frith (1981) and K. Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996) p. 28, discuss the concept of music as a parallel activity.
- 90 Unless identified by the prefix GB, or Fr, all referenced films are of US origin. All dates refer to the year of release in Britain.
- 91 The now widely accepted connection between jazz and seediness is almost entirely Hollywood-constructed; in Britain, for example, the majority of jazz aficionados have traditionally been middle-class 'intelligentsia.' Jazz seems to have gone out of fashion in Hollywood, and is now rarely employed other than in jazz biopics such as *Round Midnight* (Tavernier, 1986), and *Bird* (Eastwood, 1988), the biopic of the heroin addicted saxophonist Charlie Parker, where it is used to represent alienation and mental and physical breakdown. As detailed in Chapter 3, the results of the verbal-visual associations exercise carried out for this study suggest that its connotations with 'seediness' are still strong in the minds of many respondents.
- 92 Reg later abandons Cathy and their children and moves to Liverpool.
- 93 Lack (1997:225), describes Scorsese's films as having a 'sensurround' quality, as music is 'perpetually overheard.' Such music, he argues, acts as a kind of 'Greek Chorus' to the visual motifs (1997: 326).
- 94 Chion (1994) has argued that, paradoxically, such anempathetic music actually aligns the viewer empathetically with the characters because of its apparent indifference to their discomfort; Lack (1997: 133) makes a similar point. There is of course a negative side to this embrace of popular music by the cinema: an increasing number of narratively weak films have been produced which are little more than vehicles for the promotion of soundtrack albums; examples include *Flashdance* (Lyne, 1983) and *Footloose* (Ross, 1984). Feuer (1993: 123) terms such films 'teen' musicals.
- 95 Although in common use, the term 'silent' is, of course, problematic as the majority of early films were produced with the intention of having some form of musical accompaniment.
- 96 See, for example: Gorbman (1987); and Tagg (1987) and (1993b).
- 97 The way in which some viewers can become attached to title music was highlighted when the producers of *EastEnders* decided to update the title theme; viewers complained about the updated theme and the original version was reinstated.
- 98 For detailed explanation of sonic, kinetic and tactile anaphones, see Tagg (1992: 369-78). Basically, the term anaphone refers to the use of existing models in the formation of musical sounds. Sonic anaphones work on the principle of the onomatopoeic stylisation of non-musical sound, such as the song of a bird, or the babbling of a brook; kinetic anaphones relate to the temporal relationship of the human body to time and space, and represent movements such as marches or gallops; tactile anaphones represent textures, for example rich and lush textures may be represented by slow-tempo string underscores.
- 99 The device is acknowledged at a very early age; for example, my four-year-old daughter, when watching repeated transmissions of *Thunderbirds*, always exclaims 'Something bad is going to happen now, isn't it daddy' when this musical motif is heard.

- 100 Quoted in T. Thomas, *Music for the Movies* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1973) p. 171.
- 101 Quoted in J. Romney and A. Wooton (eds.), *Celluloid Jukebox: Popular Music and the Movies Since the 50s* (London: British Film Institute, 1995) p. 9.
- 102 As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, those viewers with a deeper knowledge of musical history, or those with a personal referent related to the piece of music, can often cite the exact year in which the film/programme is set, and spot anachronistic usages of songs.
- 103 My usage of the term producers incorporates all production personal involved in the ensemble production process from pre-production through the filming process through post-production.
- 104 Although it belongs under the category of 'sit-com', *Goodnight Sweetheart* (BBC, 1993) is another example of the successful use of popular music to create a 1940s atmosphere.
- 105 Nelson (1997: 184) makes a similar point about the use of music in *Heartbeat* and *Miami Vice*. For a comprehensive analysis of *Miami Vice* as a postmodern text, see D. Buxton, *From The Avengers to Miami Vice: Form and Ideology in Television Series* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
- 106 See A. Graham, 'Top of the Cops', *Radio Times* 29 November 1997, p. 6; and R. J. Thompson, *Television's Second Golden Age* (New York: Continuum, 1996) p.p. 178-9.
- 107 See Frith (1984: 78-87).
- 108 The first series won a string of awards including a Golden Globe Award (Best Television Series - Musical or Comedy) and a Viewers for Quality Television Award (Best Comedy Series).
- 109 This target audience is exploited by the marketing section of the music industry who advertise popular music albums in the commercial breaks.
- 110 See Fuller (1993: 85).
- 111 See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of this point.
- 112 Potter's lip-sync technique was overtly parodied in the Allied Dunbar television commercials produced during the 1990s. A number of these commercials were produced based around the Irving Berlin song *Let's face the music and dance*. The song originally appeared in the 1936 film *Follow the Fleet* (Sandrich).
- 113 Leavis believed that popular culture was sub-standard and had little intrinsic value. The rationale behind his argument was that popular music undermines the authenticity of organic culture; see F. R. Leavis *Culture and Environment* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993). Hoggart's critique of 'Americanised' or 'Woolworth' 1950s popular culture can be found in *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957). Both Cook (1995) and Gilbert (1995) discuss Hoggart's influence on Potter.
- 114 Potter (1962: 18).
- 115 Potter (1962: 78).
- 116 Potter (1962: 18). Such condemnation can also be found in *Moonlight on the Highway* in which the character David Peters (Ian Holme) lambasts the pop singers of the 1960s who, 'whine and howl through their long hair like a lot of bloody apes.'
- 117 See, for example, 'On Jazz', trans. J. Owen Daniel, *Discourse*, vol. 12, no.1, p.p. 45-69.
- 118 Fuller (1993:84-96).
- 119 Adorno made a similar claim in 'Perennial Fashion - Jazz', *Prisms*, 1982, p.p. 119-32, suggesting that 'Anyone who allows the growing respectability of mass culture to seduce him into equating popular song with modern art because of a few false notes squeaked on a clarinet...has already capitulated to barbarism.'
- 120 Tagg (1998: 228).
- 121 Frith (1996:275).
- 122 *Seeing The Blossom: Two Interviews and a Lecture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994) p.p. 14-15.
- 123 In *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967) p. 252, Raymond Williams claims that 'If there is one thing about "the organic community", it is that it has always gone.'
- 124 Potter (1962: 106-8).
- 125 Colley and Davies (1980).
- 126 Potter shared Hoggart's belief that the 1950s brought a cultural 'Fall.'
- 127 In *Between Two Rivers* Potter's father leads the villagers in a rendition of *Painting the Clouds with Sunshine*. Potter would later use this song to close Episode 5 of *Pennies*.
- 128 Potter (1994: 19). Potter took the religious metaphor even further in an interview with Ray Connolly, describing the songs in *Pennies* as 'diminished versions of the oldest myths of all in the Garden of Eden', see R. Connolly, 'When the Penny Dropped', *London Evening Standard*, 21 March 1978, p. 8. The link is

graphically illustrated when, in Episode 2 of *Pennies Eileen* (Cheryl Campbell) seques from *Psalm 35* into *You've Got Me Crying Again* while conducting hymns during a school assembly.

129 D. Potter, 'It May Be That Twiggy Has The Right Idea After All', *The Sun*, 18 March 1968b. The wistful references to primitive technology suggest that, for the middle-aged Potter, connotations of scratchiness were as influential as the particular tune in inducing nostalgic memories of his childhood.

130 *Desert Island Discs*, BBC Radio 4, 17 December 1977. Potter appeared on the programme again on 21 February 1988.

131 Quoted in Fuller (1993: 22).

132 Potter (1994: 67).

133 An example of the latter usage would be the 'chilling' sustained minor-key note which usually underlined a frightening discovery in the science-fiction series *Quatermass* (BBC, 1955 and 1958-9).

134 In *Moonlight on the Highway* the character David Peters briefly lip-synchs to a gramophone recording of Al Bowlly's *Lover Come Back To Me*. The difference, of course, is that the music has a physical origin within the scene rather than being the product of a character's imagination as in *Pennies*.

135 Gilbert (1995: 235); see also Cook (1995), and Stead (1993). *Pennies* is also often cited as a direct influence on the demise of the single play and the subsequent fashion for the serial format; see, for example, Day-Lewis (1998: 5 and 22).

136 While the term miming (with its comedic connotations), is usually used to describe actors or singers simulating singing to recordings of their own voices, as in *The Black and White Minstrel Show* (BBC, 1958-79), when reference is made to Potter's texts, the rather more grandiose term 'lip-synchronisation' is more likely to be used to describe the practice of miming to original recordings.

137 See Fuller (1993: 85).

138 Altman (1987: 35) argues that, in the Hollywood-musical, 'the couple is the plot.'

139 Although there had been attempts to revive the musical earlier in the decade with films such as *Cabaret* (Fosse, 1972), *A Star is Born* (Pierson, 1976), and *New York, New York* (Scorsese, 1977), the genre was deemed by many critics to be anachronistic, and only really recovered some of its former popularity with the advent of 'teen' musicals such as *Grease* (Kleiser, 1978); *Saturday Night Fever* (Badham, 1977), and *Fame* (Parker, 1980), which placed the teenager at the centre of their narratives.

140 Feuer (1993: Preface).

141 Potter's views on television drama aesthetics and form mirrored those of Troy Kennedy Martin (1964: 33) who had also attacked realist techniques and television drama's 'necrophiliac involvement with naturalism.' Potter's passionate advocacy of the non-naturalistic form may, as Creeber (1998: 46) has argued, have originally grown out of the problems and limitations he encountered when attempting to work within a realist documentary format in *Between Two Rivers*, his portrait of life in the Forest of Dean.

142 Marinov (2000: 201).

143 J. Caughie, 'Half Way To Paradise', *Sight and Sound*, vol.2, pt.1 May 1992, p. 11.

144 In relation to *Pennies*, as Gilbert (1995: 241) points out, the integrity of the original recordings is no longer preserved in the MGM movie version. Instead 'they are built up with interpolations and new arrangements so that they furnish the basis for extended production numbers.' For Potter 'the very brilliance of the musical numbers destroyed the reason for them being there.' He believed that the film failed because the songs 'didn't come out of the characters, they didn't come out of the head.', quoted in Fuller (1993: 111).

145 Marinov (2000: 195-204).

146 Nelson (1997: 202).

147 Millington and Nelson (1986: 16).

148 Cook (1995: 293).

149 Potter read a number of Brecht's plays during his time as an undergraduate at Oxford, and he was a member of the Oxford University Labour Club which sponsored a performance of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. See Creeber (1998:53).

150 Fuller (1993).

151 Cook (1995: 293).

152 D. Potter, *New Statesman*, 8 February 1975.

153 L. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3 1975, p. 18.

154 B. Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre* (trans. and ed. J. Willett) (London: Methuen, 1964) p. 44.

155 M. Smith, 'The Logic and Legacy of Brechtianism' in D. Bordwell and N. Carroll (eds.) *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1996) p. 138.

- 156 See Cook (1995: 334).
- 157 Quoted in Caughie (2000: 99).
- 158 Hallam (2000: 141). The esteem in which Potter was held by those who run television drama is reflected in the unique double transmission of his posthumous *Karaoke* and *Cold Lazarus* on BBC 1 and Channel 4 in 1996.
- 159 Caughie (2000: 130). Caughie's quotation needs qualifying. Although television drama does tend to avoid elements of the *avant-garde*, a number of documentaries have embraced the aesthetics of modernist montage, an example being the documentary biography of Beatles Manager Brian Epstein broadcast on BBC 2 on the evenings of 25/26 December 1998 which utilised what might be termed MTV-style editing techniques and unconventional camera work.
- 160 Quoted in Fuller (1993: 85).
- 161 McGrath (1977: 103).
- 162 Ansorge (1997: 66) cites *Rock Follies* as a formative influence on Potter's work.
- 163 K. Trodd, introduction to published scripts of Potter's *Pennies from Heaven* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996a: xi).
- 164 Marinov (2000: 198). Marinov's use of the term realism to describe a traditional musical is rather odd.
- 165 Creeber (1998: 141).
- 166 Quoted in Lack (1997: 77).
- 167 For original usage of these terms see L. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) p. 1.
- 168 For a representative example of influential literary approaches see: R. Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller (London: Jonathon Cape, 1975); N. Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London and Henley: Routledge, 1978); and H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. T. Bahti (Brighton: Harvester, 1982). Musicologists who have developed this area include: Frith (1981); P.J. Martin in *Sounds & Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Middleton (1990); J. Shepherd and P. Wicke in *Music and Cultural Theory* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997); Tagg (1980, 1987, (1989), (1991), (1992), (1993a), (1993b) and (1998); and S. Whiteley in *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1997) p.p. 259-76.
- 169 The image of a hypodermic needle to represent a one-way path from sender to receiver appears to have been first suggested by B.R. Berelson in *Voting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1954).
- 170 See, for example, D. Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), which is a typical example of the absolutist perspective.
- 171 See J. Kristeva *Language the Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics*, trans. A. M. Menke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) p. 309. For a more detailed discussion of poststructuralist attitudes to musical meanings see Shepherd and Wicke (1997: 14-23).
- 172 See Tagg (1987:291).
- 173 Middleton (1990:233-4) criticises Tagg for his policy of carefully selecting songs for analysis which exhibit high levels of connotative potential, and for not applying his musical analytic technique to a pop recording with relatively bland, unimportant or 'musicalised' lyrics.
- 174 Tagg (1993: 76).
- 175 Tagg (1993b:10-12).
- 176 Tagg (1993b: 11).
- 177 See Hall (1973).
- 178 See, for example, Tagg (1989) on gender stereotyping (1989).
- 179 Cohen makes a similar point in her paper 'Ethnography and popular music studies', *Popular Music* vol. 12 pt. 2 1993, p.p. 123-138.
- 180 J. Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (London: British Film Institute, Second Edition, 1993).
- 181 Tagg (1989: 22-5).
- 182 See Tagg (1991).
- 183 A sample response is presented in Appendix 5.
- 184 See Frith (1981); Lack (1997); and Middleton (1990).
- 185 See, for example: D. Reisman, 'Listening to Popular Music', *American Quarterly*, 2, 1950, p.p. 360-1; N. Denzin 'Problems in Analysing Elements of Mass Culture: notes on the Popular Song and Other

Artistic Productions', *American Journal of Sociology*, 75, 1969; and J.P. Robinson and P. Hirsh, 'It's The Sound That Does It', *Psychology Today*, 3, October 1969, p.p. 42-45.

186 See Negus (1996: 193).

187 Stravinsky described the sense of time passing in music as belonging to two different perceptual modes - the real or 'ontological' time in which we hear each note and the 'psychological' time in which we experience the musical piece more 'elastically' and 'subjectively', see Lack (1997: 278).

188 Consider, for example, the way in which artists such as Bob Dylan and Van Morrison consistently reinterpret their material during live performances.

189 Consider, for example, the vastly different significations and connotations produced by the versions of *My Way* recorded by Frank Sinatra in 1969, and by Sid Vicious of The Sex Pistols in 1978.

190 Quoted in Budd, M. *Music and the Emotions: The Philosophical Theories* (London: Routledge, 1985) p. 110.

191 The song spent nine weeks in the British charts in 1972.

192 Released in August 1969

193 Released in December 1960.

194 Frith (1988: 123).

195 T. Adorno, 'On Popular Music' in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, vol. 9 1941, p.p. 17-48. For a detailed discussion of the Frankfurt School's attitude to the concept of false consciousness in rock music, see A. Blake, *The Land Without Music: Music, Culture and Society in Twentieth-century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

196 See R. Dyer, 'Entertainment and utopia', *Movie*, 24, Spring 1977.

197 Quoted in Budd (1985: 85).

198 *Pennies*, Episode 2.

199 *Pennies* Episode 6.

200 See N. King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) p. 11.

201 F. McCourt, *Angela's Ashes* (London: Harper Collins, 1996).

202 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, M. Holquist (ed.), C. Emerson and M. Holquist (trans.) (Austin: University of Texas, 1981) p. 18.

203 For a detailed explanation of these processes see S. Rose, *The Making of Memory* (London: Bantam Press, 1993)

204 Once the transition has taken place, however, most filmmakers tend to dispense with these devices and return to a sharp, eidetic *mise-en-scène* and soundscape. There are, of course, many exceptions to this; one of the most obvious is Robbins' *Dead Man Walking* (1995), in which the memory sequences are shot entirely in a soft-focus, washed-out, black and white.

205 Rose (1993: 104-6).

206 For a detailed discussion of the relationship between age and memory, see T. J. Perfect and E. A. Maylor (eds.), *Models of Cognitive Ageing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

207 M. Freeman *Rewriting the Self* (London: Routledge, 1993) 90. Resnais plays with these ideas visually in *Last Year at Marienbad* (Fr., 1961).

208 See, for example, Chapter 3 of Edmund White's *Proust* (London: Phoenix, 2000).

209 The terms episodic memory and semantic memory were first developed by Canadian psychologist Endel Tulving in the 1970s, See E. Tulving, *Elements of Episodic Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

210 See Rose (1993: 109).

211 See, for example: Barthes (1975); J. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); S. Fish, 'Interpreting the Variorum', in D. Lodge (ed.), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (Harlow: Longman, 1988) p.p. 311-29; Iser (1978); and Jauss (1982).

212 Hall (1973).

213 M. M. Lefkowitz et al 'Television violence and child aggression: A follow-up study, in *Television and Social Behaviour* vol. III, 1972.

214 N. Vidmar and M. Rokeach, 'Archie Bunker's bigotry: A study in selective perception and exposure', in *Journal of Communication*, 1974, 1 (24), p.p. 36-47.

215 See, for example, J. G. Blumler and E. Katz (eds.) *The Uses of Mass Communications* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1974).



- 216 For a detailed discussion of the move toward 'ethnographic' audience studies in television research see C. Geraghty, 'Audiences and "Ethnography": Questions of Practice' in C. Geraghty and D. Lusted (eds.) *The Television Studies Book* (London: Arnold, 1998) p.p. 141-57.
- 217 D. Morley, *The Nationwide Audience* (London: British Film Institute, 1980).
- 218 Morley's conclusion (1980: 137) was that 'social position in no way directly correlates with decodings.' Other researchers have focused on class and/or gender-related issues, see for example Andrea Press's *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).
- 219 Nightingale (1996: 66) argues that Morley's study 'sacrificed its potential as an exploration of the variability in interpretation to a demographic vision of class determination and sociological classification.' See also, M. Allor, 'Relocating the Site of the Audience', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* no. 5 1988; and Lewis (1991).
- 220 See D. Morley, 'The Nationwide Audience: A Critical Postscript', *Screen Education* no. 39, 1981.
- 221 Ang (1989: 96-115).
- 222 See, for example: R. Brunt and M. Jordin, 'The Politics of Bias: How Television Audiences View Current Affairs' in J. Hawthorn, *Propaganda, Persuasion and Polemic* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987); P. Dahlgren, 'The Modes of Reception: Towards a Hermeneutics of TV News' in Drummond and Paterson (1985); J. Lewis, 'Decoding Television News', in Drummond and Paterson (1985); K. Richardson and J. Corner, 'Reading Reception: Transparency and Mediation in Viewers' Accounts of a TV Programme', *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 8, pt. 4, 1986, p.p. 485-508; and S. J. Sigman and D. L. Fry, 'Differential Ideology and Language Use: Readers Reconstructions and Descriptions of News Events', *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1985.
- 223 See, for example: N. Abercrombie and B. Longhurst, *Audiences* (London: Sage Publications, 1998); I. Ang (1996); P. Collet and R. Lamb, *Watching People Watching Television*. Report presented to the Independent Broadcasting Authority, London, 1986, a study which observed viewing habits with the aid of a camera installed inside television sets; Geraghty (1998: 141-57); Lewis (1991); D. Morley, *Family Television, Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (London: Comedia, 1986); Nightingale (1996); and J. Root, *Open the Box* (London: Comedia, 1986).
- 224 See, for example: M. E. Brown 'Knowledge and Power: An Ethnography of Soap Opera Viewers' in R. Leah, V. Berg, and A. Lawrence (eds.) *Television Criticism: Approaches and Applications* (New York: Longman, 1991) p.p. 178-98, and *Soap Opera and Women's Talk* (London: Sage, 1994).
- 225 See, for example, Brunson (1986) and (1991).
- 226 See for example, *Public Secrets: EastEnders and Its Audience* (London: British Film Institute, 1987).
- 227 See, for example: 'Viewers' Interpretations of Soap Opera: The Role of Gender, Power and Morality' in Drummond and Paterson (1988: 83-107); and 'Interpreting a Television Narrative: How Different Viewers See a Story', *Journal of Communication*, vol. 40, pt. 1, Winter 1990, p.p. 72-85.
- 228 See, for example, 'Making distinctions in TV audience research: case study of a troubling interview', *Cultural Studies*, 4, 1, 1990, p.p. 61-84.
- 229 Only the British transmission dates will be given for American dramas.
- 230 See, for example, 'I'm ashamed to admit it but I have watched Dallas': the moral hierarchy of television programmes', *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 14, 1992, p.p. 561-82.
- 231 See, for example, Ang (1985), (1991) and (1997).
- 232 See, for example: Katz and Liebes (1984) and (1985); and Liebes and Katz, 'Patterns of Involvement in Television Fiction: A Comparative Analysis' in *European Journal of Communication* vol. 1, 1986, p.p. 151-71.
- 233 See 'The Pleasure of *Dynasty*: The Weekly Reconstruction of Self-Confidence' in Drummond and Paterson (1985) p.p. 61-81.
- 234 See, for example: Lewis (1991), Nightingale (1996) and Geraghty (1998).
- 235 Ang (1985: 17).
- 236 Ang (1985: 50).
- 237 Katz and Liebes (1984: 419).
- 238 Katz and Liebes (1984: 421).
- 239 As had been the case with Ang's work, critics objected to various aspects of their methodology; in 'Convergence of Antagonistic Traditions ? The Case of Audience Research', *European Journal of Communication* 2 (1), 1987, p.p. 7-31, Schroder, for example, questioned whether valid generalisations

about the American reading of *Dallas* could be made on the basis of 10 interviews with respondents from the Los Angeles area.

240 Katz and Liebes (1984: 422-3).

241 Katz and Liebes (1984: 428).

242 Liebes and Katz (1986).

243 Liebes and Katz (1986: 155).

244 Liebes and Katz (1986: 163).

245 Hallam and M. Marshment (1995).

246 Heide (1995).

247 L. Thomas, 'In Love with Inspector Morse' in C. Brunson, J. D'Acci, and L. Spigel (eds.) *Feminist Television Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

248 Hallam and Marshment (1995:10).

249 Hallam and Marshment (1995: 10).

250 Hallam and Marshment (1995: 4).

251 Heide (1995: 7).

252 Heide (1995: 10).

253 See L. B. Rubin, *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); and A. Press, 'Deconstructing the Female Audience: Class Differences in Women's Identification with Television Narrative and Characters', Ph.D. thesis University of California, Berkeley, 1987.

254 Heide (1995: 25).

255 Heide (1995: 9).

256 Thomas (1997: 194).

257 Thomas (1997: 198).

258 Thomas (1997: 203).

259 Lewis (1991: 75).

260 Ang (1985:11).

261 Lewis (1991: 78).

262 L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 1961) p. 40.

263 For a comprehensive discussion of such projects see Lewis (1991).

264 As Lewis (1991:77) argues, these problems are also, in some cases, pertinent to the qualitative method, and researchers should be wary of assuming that they can solve them simply by interviewing fewer people in more detail.

265 Additional data pertaining to the analysis of the questionnaire exercise is presented in Appendix 2.

266 Examples of research using the group interview include Morley (1980), and Liebes and Katz (1986); examples of the individual interview method include Buckingham (1987), and Jensen (1986). Researchers such as Heide (1995) have utilised both methods in single studies.

267 Lewis (1991: 89).

268 For a detailed discussion of the pros and cons of individual and group interview methods see B. Höijer, 'Studying Viewers' Reception of Television Programmes: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations', *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 5 1990, p.p. 29-56.

269 All six people in the 20-25 age-range approached by my recruiting respondent declined to take part in the study.

270 B. Höijer, 'Television-Evoked Thoughts and Their Relation to Comprehension' in *Communication Research*, vol. 16, no. 2, April 1989, p.p. 179-203.

271 Lewis (1991: 115).

272 Nightingale (1996: Preface).

273 See Appendix 3 for sample *Lipstick* individual interview transcription. Floppy discs containing transcripts of all the interviews conducted with *Lipstick*, *Pennies* and *Detective* respondents are included with this thesis.

274 Those respondents who viewed *Pennies* are represented in the thesis by the prefix P plus an identifying number (P1 to P7); those who viewed *Detective* by the prefix S plus an identifying number (S1 to S9); and those who viewed *Lipstick* by the prefix L plus an identifying number (L1 to L9). Where respondent's comments are quoted, their gender and age details are also given, ie (P1, M: 41).

275 S. Brie "'Yesterday Once More": Thoughts on the Relationship Between Popular Music, Audience and Authorial Intention in Dennis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven*, *The Singing Detective*, and *Lipstick on Your Collar*' in Gras and Cook (2000: 205-218).

- 276 Tagg (1987: 291).
- 277 See Hallam with Marshment (2000: 122-42).
- 278 See Smith (1995: 84-5).
- 279 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 134-7).
- 280 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 134-5).
- 281 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 135).
- 282 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 135).
- 283 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 135).
- 284 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 136).
- 285 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 136).
- 286 I use the term alternative here rather than oppositional because such readings are not rejections of an acknowledged position, but are based on what might be termed uninformed assumptions.
- 287 Nelson (1997) offers a discussion of the formal properties of *Twin Peaks*.
- 288 Nelson (1997: 30-50).
- 289 P. Bourdieu, 'The aristocracy of culture', *Media, Culture And Society*, 1980, vol. 2, no. 3, p.p. 225-54. Bourdieu acknowledges three 'zones' of taste which, he argues, roughly correspond to educational levels and social classes : (1) 'Legitimate taste', the taste for 'legitimate works'; this zone, he claims, 'increases with educational level and is highest in those fractions of the dominant class that are richest in educational capital'; (2) 'Middle-brow taste', which brings together the 'minor works of the major artists', and is 'more common in the lower-middle classes'; and (3) 'popular taste', related to 'music devalued by popularisation', and most frequently found 'among the working classes.'
- 290 Bourdieu (1980: 237).
- 291 The exceptions are the musical sequences in 'back-stage' film musicals such as *42nd Street* (Bacon, 1933): such sequences replicate 'real time' and are thus temporally quantifiable.
- 292 Dennis Potter , 'The Other Side of the Dark', BBC Radio 4, 23 February 1978.
- 293 D. Bordwell, *Making Meaning* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989) p. 42.
- 294 Published in Potter (1994).
- 295 R. Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999) p. 17.
- 296 Altman (1999: 17)
- 297 G. Gennette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay on Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).
- 298 Along with *Lipstick on Your Collar* (1959), *Little Bitty Pretty One* (1957), *My Prayer* (1957), *The Story Of My Life* (1958), *Raining In My Heart* (1959), *Making Love* (1959), *Young Love* (1957) and *It'll Be Me* (1957), *The Garden of Eden* is used anachronistically, having been released in January 1957, several months after the onset of the Suez Crisis. While such inaccuracies may be deemed problematic when associated with dramadoc or docudrama formats, they are, arguably, less so in relation to such obviously fictionalised dramas as *Lipstick*. Written by Denise Norwood, *The Garden of Eden* actually charted four times, by four different artists in 1957; apart from the Frankie Vaughan version used in the serial, which reached the number one spot, versions also charted by Dick James, Gary Millar, and by Joe Valino.
- 299 Most of the novels of Virginia Woolf, for example, are based around the presentation of inner-states.
- 300 See Appendix 6 for a shot by shot breakdown of the sequence.
- 301 L2's comment highlights the way in which video allows the viewer a certain degree of editorial power over the text. Many respondents admitted to fast-forwarding through sequences which they found to be 'boring' or 'repetitive.' Such editing must, in part, account for the difficulties some respondent's experienced in recalling/recollecting specific details about the songs, and their narrative positionings and functions. The musical sequences in *Detective* carry far more narratorial information than do those in either *Pennies* or *Lipstick*, information which is often of crucial importance to the development of both the fabula and the syuzhet, and so 'lapses of concentration' during *Detective* may be more hermeneutically debilitating than would be the case with the other two serials.
- 302 Nelson (1997: 159).
- 303 As with most of the propositions made in this thesis, the statement is not meant to be a generalisation, and is formulated only in relation to the respondents who took part in this study. Many older viewers do watch programmes like *ER* on a regular basis and would, therefore, be familiar with rapid editing techniques.
- 304 Nelson (1997: 159).
- 305 Quoted in Fuller (1993:85-6).

- 306 See W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Theatre*, trans. J. Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977).
- 307 *Lipstick on Your Collar* was composed by Americans Edna Lewis (lyrics) and George Goehring (music), and performed by American Connie Francis.
- 308 Scotty Moore was Elvis Presley's long-time guitarist.
- 309 E. Bernstein, 'The Man with the Golden Arm' in *Film Music*, vol. XV, no.4, Spring 1956, p.p. 2-13.
- 310 See Tagg (1979).
- 311 By 'these men', this respondent presumably means the younger generation represented by Hopper. Gender issues are discussed elsewhere in the thesis, but it is interesting to note here that it is the male characters who this respondent sees as representing changes in British society in the late 1950s.
- 312 Fuller (1993: 101).
- 313 Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* was first performed in the theatre in 1956.
- 314 Hallam and Marshment (1995).
- 315 See, for example: Alasuutari (1992: 561-82), and Ang (1991).
- 316 Ang (1985: 42).
- 317 F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in E. A. Kaplan (ed.) *Postmodernism and Its Discontents* (London: Verso, 1988).
- 318 R. A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995) p. 60.
- 319 Jameson (1988: 23).
- 320 F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' in T. Docherty (ed.) *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) 76. Nelson discusses the retro-fashion of *Heartbeat* (YTV, 1992-) in 'From *Twin Peaks*, USA, to lesser peaks, UK: building the postmodern TV audience', *Media Culture & Society*, vol. 18 1996, p.p. 677-82.
- 321 As in the 'Jack Rabbit Slim's' scene in *Pulp Fiction* (1994) in which Tarantino offers a parody of popular culture icons from the 1940s and 1950s.
- 322 Jameson (1991: 76).
- 323 Jameson (1988: 169).
- 324 In contrast to some of the pleasurable nostalgic experiences recounted by older respondents, 29 year-old S6 claimed to have been 'depressed' by the nostalgic elements of *Detective*.
- 325 See S. Barker, "'Period' detective drama and the limits of contemporary nostalgia: Inspector Morse and the strange case of a lost England' in *Critical Survey*, vol. 6, no. 2 1994, p. 235.
- 326 Hunningher (1993: 248).
- 327 Corrigan (1991: 186).
- 328 Colley and Davies (1980: 74).
- 329 It would be interesting to analyse the responses to a drama which, rather than utilising warm, sentimental, and optimistic pop, incorporated traditional blues songs which signify a doom-laden *mise-en-scène* infused with world-weary pessimism.
- 330 The word nostalgia was coined in 1688 as a medical diagnosis of the extreme homesickness suffered by Swiss mercenary soldiers fighting abroad.
- 331 The title music *Peg O' My Heart* and the generic underscore samples were chosen by Director Jon Amiel, see Hunningher (1993: 248-9).
- 332 Quoted in Fuller (1993: 87).
- 333 Potter (1986: 220).
- 334 Potter (1986: 221).
- 335 This is the reverse of the situation with film, where most viewers attribute the text to the director and have little idea of the identity of the screenwriter. This phenomenon was highlighted during the warm-up section of the interviews, when most of the respondents were able to name several film directors (Spielberg, Scorsese, Hitchcock) and two or three television dramatists (mostly Bleasdale, La Plante and Potter), yet failed to name any television directors/producers or film screenwriters.
- 336 Corrigan (1991) makes reference to the importance of the technology of performance in relation to other songs in the serial.
- 337 Some younger viewers may only be familiar with the Doris Day version from the 1950 film *Young Man With a Horn* (Curtiz), and may, therefore, make different associations which may exclude the inter-war period. Others of course may have no knowledge of the song at all. Potter used an instrumental version of *The Very Thought of You* in *Pennies*.

- 338 Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, Trans. Heath, S. (London: Fontana Press, 1977) p.p. 179-190.
- 339 Potter chose Bowly's versions of *You Couldn't Be Cuter* and *Eddie Was a Lady* as part of his top-ten on *Desert Island Discs* BBC Radio 4, 17th December, 1977.
- 340 In *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994) p. 90, R. Samuel argues that the metaphysical preoccupations of pre-war song lyrics are similar to those expounded in some areas of Elizabethan love poetry. Frith (1988: 106-115), however, argues that such song lyrics are time specific, and represent the 'sentimental ideology of capitalist society.'
- 341 D. Horton, 'The Dialogue of Courtship in Popular Songs', *American Journal of Society*, 1957, pt. 2, p.p. 569-78.
- 342 The Oedipal connotations of Marlow's relationship with his parents have been extensively dealt with elsewhere, see, for example, Cook (1995).
- 343 Of the nine respondents who viewed *Detective*, six were aware of *The Very Thought of You* being used in the serial, one was certain that it wasn't, and two were not sure. Of the nine, five were familiar with the song, four were not. Only one respondent was able to correctly place the song in terms of its chronological position in the narrative. The same respondent was the only one to correctly describe the song's narrative function. Only two out of nine respondents were able to say which characters were involved in the scene. Only two were able to say whether the song was 'sung' or used as 'background.' Three respondents were able to say which setting was associated with the scene.
- 344 Bourdieu (1980: 246).
- 345 Caughie (2000: 70).
- 346 Interestingly, respondents did not acknowledge Bleasdale's use of anti-naturalist surrealist and carnivalesque sequences in the final episode of *Boys from the Blackstuff*. Some respondents emphatically and unproblematically categorised *EastEnders* as realist drama; others questioned the idea of using soaps as a template for realism. Respondent P6 (F: 58) for example, argued that '...the reality they have is constantly grim and depressing, which isn't quite real.', and L1 (F: 32) criticised the contrived nature of the distillation of life in soaps, pointing to the way in which '...everything happens in the one street.' Geraghty defines soap opera as a distillation of aesthetics associated with light-entertainment, melodrama and realism, see 'The aesthetic experience of soap opera' in J. Corner and S. Harvey (eds.) *Television Times* (London: Arnold, 1996) p.p. 88-97.
- 347 See for example *Simulations*, trans. P. Foss, P. Patton, and P. Beitchman (New York: Semiotext, 1983).
- 348 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 4).
- 349 N. Abercrombie, *Television and Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996) p. 27.
- 350 A term used by Hallam with Marshment to describe the visual sense making elements of a filmic text; they divide this process into the following sections : *mise-en-scène*; organisation of the characters and objects within the frame; editing, and technology (2000: 102),
- 351 Lack (1997: 242).
- 352 Bordwell (1989: 29-32).
- 353 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 100).
- 354 I use the term constructions relatively, taking into account that all properties and settings in the serial are constructions.
- 355 Smith (1995: 18).
- 356 Smith (1995: 83).
- 357 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 134-6).
- 358 See Hallam with Marshment (2000: 125).
- 359 Nelson (1997: 73).
- 360 Smith (1995: 31).
- 361 Hallam and Marshment (1995:10) make a similar observation in relation to their study of viewer's responses to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.
- 362 See Hallam with Marshment (2000: 122).
- 363 It appears that Hopper's paintings may have influenced some of the set designs on *Lipstick*: the cinema scenes for example strongly resemble the image depicted in Hopper's painting *New York Movie, 1939*.
- 364 See *James Joyce: Poems and Exiles* (London: Penguin, 1992) p.p. 86-7.
- 365 See Nelson (1997: 120).
- 366 Hallam with Marshment (2000: 137).

- 367 For an overview see Creeber (1998: 149-89).
- 368 J. Steyn 'The Great Pretender', in *The Modern Review*, June/July 1994, p. 18.
- 369 Corrigan (1991:181).
- 370 Cook (1995: 262).
- 371 Gilbert (1995: 211).
- 372 Although Joan is involved in the *The Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* sequence in Episode 1, motivation is, arguably, ambiguous as the music could come from the mind of either Joan or Conrad (Nigel Havers).
- 373 Numerous versions of the song have been recorded by artists such as Solomon Burke (1973), Glen Campbell (1979), Tony Christie (1968) and Kathy Kirby (1976).
- 374 Potter (1993: 64).
- 375 Potter (1993: 65).
- 376 Potter (1996a: 33).
- 377 Potter (1996a: 34).
- 378 The lead vocal is taken by Joe Crossman.
- 379 It is common to find censored versions of the song which are aimed at specifically white audiences.
- 380 Copyright passed to MGM. in 1981 when the studio made the film version of Potter's drama.
- 381 All durations are timed to the nearest second.

## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire response sample.

Age: **20**

Sex: **Male**

Occupation: **Student.**

Do you watch television drama regularly ?

**Yes.**

What are your favourite television dramas and why?

**Crime. One-off plays. The excitement, suspense, mystery.**

Which television dramas would you class as quality dramas and why?

***The Forsyte Saga; I Claudius; Brideshead Revisited; The Jewel in the Crown.* They are all realistic and the acting is good.**

Can you name any television dramas written by Dennis Potter ?

***The Singing Detective; Blackeyes; Lipstick on Your Collar; Pennies from Heaven; Blue Remembered Hills; Brimstone and Treacle; Son of Man.***

Which of those did you watch ?

**The first three.**

Do you like Potter's dramas ? Give reasons for your answer..

**Yes. He manipulates the medium of television and is experimental and willing to face controversy. His style is the equivalent of theatre.**

Would you describe Potter as a popular writer ? Give reasons for your answer.

**Not so much. He is heavily criticised due to the fact that he is original, unorthodox and experimental.**

What kind of things does Potter write about ?

**His own experiences and opinions such as his feelings on exploitation and sex.**

Did you watch *Lipstick on Your Collar* ? If you answer yes then please continue, if no stop here.

**Yes.**

Can you briefly summarise the story of *Lipstick on Your Collar* ?

**Set during the Suez Crisis, 1956. Most of the action takes place in the War-Office and often surrounds two young recruits and their fantasies.**

Can you describe any images that you particularly remember from the serial ?

**The high-ranking officers breaking into song in the office.**



What do you remember about the men in the serial ?

**They all had two sides. The officers knew they had to do their duty but often disliked it. The two young recruits had fantastical and realistic sides.**

What do you remember about the women in the serial ?

**Usually quite strong but often controlled by men; the Welsh soldier's aunt, and in particular Sylvia who is a very strong-willed person but is dominated by her husband and the voyeuristic cinema organist.**

Do you think the serial was realistic ? Give reasons for your answer.

**It had a realistic setting (the events of the Suez Crisis) but had surrealistic images.**

Which of the songs do you remember ?

**The theme song; *I See the Moon*; *Blue Suede Shoes*; *Love is Strange*; *Lay Down Your Arms*; *The Man With The Golden Arm*.**

Did you enjoy the serial ? Give reasons for your answer.

**Yes. It was well written, good construction, with twists, disturbing moments and surreal, often funny moments.**

## Appendix 2

### Additional questionnaire data.

Of the 160 respondents, 92 claimed to be regular viewers of television drama. Taking into account the gender imbalance, female respondents accounted for 75% of regular viewers. *Cracker* (ITV, 1993-) proved to be respondents' favourite television drama with 41 nominations: Potter's work received just one. *Cracker* also received the most nominations in the quality drama category with 39. *Detective* and *Lipstick* each received two nominations and *Blackeyes* one, which means that only 3% of respondents classified Potter's work as quality drama. As discussed in chapter 3, the results of the interview exercise detailed below suggest that one of the main reasons for this refusal to categorise Potter's work as quality drama is the tendency on the part of many viewers to equate the term quality with conventions of realism, conventions which Potter's texts often contravene. Interestingly, all five nominations for Potter's work came from male respondents, a pattern of preference which, as indicated below, tended to be reproduced not only throughout the questionnaire exercise, but also by those respondents who took part in the interview section of the study.

71% cent of questionnaire respondents were able to name at least one Potter drama, which means that 29% were unable to name one of Potter's works. In terms of gender,

82% of male, and 65% of female respondents were able to name at least one Potter drama. The age-range, 18-25 had the highest percentage of respondents able to name a Potter text with a figure of 69%, and the highest percentage of respondents who claimed never to have watched a Potter drama (65%). This concentration is hardly surprising given the fact that the respondents were all drawn from the student body and were, therefore, predominantly from this age group.

Amongst questionnaire respondents, *Detective* was the best known Potter text with 50% of respondents claiming to have at least heard of the serial, and 40% claiming to have watched it. In terms of gender, 59% of male respondents and 16% of female respondents claimed to have watched *Detective*. The age-range 36-45 contained the highest percentage of respondents who had watched *Detective* (64%). 45% of respondents had some knowledge of *Lipstick*, with 37% claiming to have watched it (this figure is made up of 37% of male respondents and 20% of female respondents). The age-range with the highest percentage of *Lipstick* watchers was the 26-35 group with a figure of 44%. 28% of respondents had some knowledge of *Pennies*, although only 8% claimed to have watched it. The relatively low knowledge of *Pennies* can be explained by the fact that it was first transmitted in 1978 when many of the respondents would have been very young; the figure may also be influenced by the fact that, for copyright reasons, *Pennies* has not been available on video.<sup>i</sup> 44% of respondents claimed to have watched at least one Potter drama. 35% of male respondents and 66% of female respondents claimed never to have watched any of Potter's work. 26% of respondents claimed to like Potter's work, 31% claimed to dislike it, 12% claimed a neutral opinion, and 31% offered no opinion at all.

Of those respondents who claimed to like Potter's work, 61% were male and 39% were female. Only 17% of respondents in the numerically dominant 18-25 age-range claimed to like Potter's work. Of those respondents who claimed to dislike Potter's work, 38% were male and 62% were female. 94% of respondents who claimed to dislike Potter's work came from the age-range 18-35. Gender appeared to be a strong influence in determining reasons for liking Potter's work. Female respondents tended to offer more production value-related reasons, while male respondents tended to cite textual innovation, and sexual content as reasons for liking Potter's work.

### Appendix 3

#### *Lipstick on Your Collar* individual interview sample transcript.

**L1 (Female: Age 32, Teacher).**

S.B. How much television do you watch in a typical week ?

**L1 About five hours a night, that's about 35 hours a week.**

S.B. Do you normally watch drama on television ?

**L1 Yes.**

S.B. What are your favourite television dramas ?

**L1 All the BBC productions of Jane Austen, I like them. And all the American dramas like *thirtysomething* and *Murder One*.**

S.B. Why do you like those dramas ?

**L1 I like the costume dramas, and they're always about an age when I would have liked to have lived. And I like the lifestyles in *thirtysomething* because that's how I'd like to live.**

S.B. What do you think makes a quality drama ?

**L1 Not *Murder One*. It has to be realistic, and it needs to be some sort of culture. I'd say that *Pride and Prejudice* and the other Austen things were quality drama.**

S.B. What do you mean by 'culture' ?

**L1 They have to be cultural, like literature. It can't just be, I don't think, I wouldn't class quality drama as just things like Lynda La Plante wrote, that's not quality drama even though she might be a good playwright. But if it was something like Virginia Woolf, and they put it on the telly as a play, that would be quality drama. Like the film *Carrington* was quality drama. If somebody wrote that now that would be quality drama. I would say *Mister Wroe's Virgins* was quality drama. It was quality literature, you could see that it was well written. It was well written because I read the book as well. *Murder One* isn't well written. Some dramas I might say are quality because of the direction, like when they make more of it from the direction. Like *thirtysomething* isn't quality drama but they do it well.**

S.B. Can you name any television drama directors ?

**L1 No.**

S.B. What about film directors ?

**L1 Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese. I could name quite a few film directors.**

S.B. Can you name any television drama producers ?

**L1 No.**

S.B. Can you name any television drama writers ?

**L1 Besides Potter ? Lynda La Plante. The bloke from *Brookside*, what's his name ?**

S.B. Do you know who wrote *Boys from the Blackstuff*?

**L1 No.**

S.B. *Prime Suspect* ?

**L1 No.**

S.B. *Casualty* ?

**L1 No.**

S.B. How much did you know about Dennis Potter before you watched *Lipstick on Your Collar* ?

L1 He's just died. He did an interview before he died. He had some disease, erm, skin. He had cancer when he died. He died from cancer, but he had this skin disease, and Melvyn Bragg interviewed him. It was a good interview. I liked that interview, and I thought I might try watching something else. Then I saw, by accident, one of *The Singing Detective* programmes. I hated it. I absolutely hated it. And then after he died I saw when he was talking in Edinburgh for the BBC Television Awards [sic], and he made all these outrageous statements about the BBC and about television. He was very conservative and he wanted it all to stay the way it used to be. He said that he wanted these other plays, no, he didn't say it there, he said it to Melvyn Bragg, he wanted these two plays to be run in conjunction on BBC and Channel 4 after he died. He hadn't finished one or other of them. They're coming on soon.

S.B. What kind of dramas would you say Potter writes ?

L1 Sexy. It's all sex. It's all nostalgia, and all the music in it. The best things are music from the period from whenever the play is. And lots of sexual innuendos, and lots of outrageous things like, I think he tries to be outrageous on purpose. They're all from a bygone era, like *Pennies from Heaven* and *The Singing Detective*, nothing



from now. One of the new ones, I don't know the names, *Karaoke* and the second one, it's in the future. I can't imagine he could write anything for in the future.

S.B. Can you name any of his other dramas ?

L1 Something beginning with a B. I can't remember.

S.B. Which of his dramas did you watch ?

L1 I've seen bits from the film of *Pennies from Heaven*, not the telly series, the film. And I've seen some of *The Singing Detective*, several clips from several programmes, not the whole series. And every clip has been either the man with the eczema [sic] being manipulated by a nurse, or somebody else, erm, the detective going to bed with some woman from the nightclub. I hated them. It didn't make me want to carry on watching them because the man in the bed with the eczema was horrible, a horrible person to everybody, so he didn't endear himself to me. I didn't want to see him again. He was just a horrible character. It didn't make me think this poor bloke is dying here. It's more than eczema, what's it called ? Psoriasis, that's it. Everyone he spoke to, I mean he wouldn't be very happy I suppose if he had psoriasis, but he was horrible. The actor was horrible. You know, nothing made you feel sorry for him. The whole thing, like the ward was horrible, an old hospital. Nothing made me want to carry on watching it.

S.B. How would you summarise the story of *Lipstick on Your Collar* ?

L1 I would say that there was a central character who is a Welsh boy that goes to London, even though it doesn't start with him and he probably isn't the central character. It's based around the War-Office and the Suez Crisis, and the Welsh boy goes and works in the War-Office. It just revolves around his life. Him in a house with his aunty and uncle. And the people that live upstairs are linked to the War-Office because the bloke upstairs works in the War-Office as well. It's not a triangle, but it's all sort of like a web from the War-Office to that house. It doesn't go anywhere else except the pictures, and you don't see anything in the pictures except this woman from upstairs, and this organist, this mad organist who isn't in the War-Office or upstairs, and he's like the singing detective, horrible ! That's Roy Hudd. So it's really, the life to me all revolves around the life of this Welsh bloke. He interacts with everybody else within the story. There's only a couple of them who are involved with all the other characters in it, and it follows the Suez Crisis, and how he falls in love with this woman who lives upstairs who's having sex with everybody according to the aunty. She's carrying on with lots of men and with the mad organist. Her husband's killed by the mad organist, and this poor Welsh boy thinks he's going to get her. And then right at the end was the best thing about the whole series, I thought, we didn't expect them to swap partners, because there's another bod in the War-Office who also interacts with most of the characters, and he fancies a Canadian girl who's into literature. He's not into literature at all, he's into music. And Sylvia, who lives upstairs, isn't into literature and is into music; and

**the two of them swop. I didn't expect that to happen. The rest of it you know what's going to happen all the way through. There's another thing where the mad organist runs over Sylvia's husband and kills him when he's trying to run over Sylvia, but that's slightly unpredictable, but it's over in a second.**

S.B. Did the serial have any strong themes ?

**L1 The only theme was sex and the war. It's all about what is the meaning of life I suppose. Like, all the people in the War-Office all had nervous breakdowns, and it was like 'Oh my God we're going in but we're all going to die', and all this business. 'Why have we fought all of these years ?' 'What is the meaning of our jobs and our lives ?' And the other is love, because that's all they're looking for, love. But I don't think any theme comes out strongly.**

S.B. What do you remember about the title sequence which begins each episode ?

**L1 There's this Canadian girl, whose the niece of the man in the War-Office, Lisa, and Sylvia, and another woman who I didn't recognise, the golden goddess woman [fantasy-angel]. There's three of them in late 1950s outfits, you know, swingy skirts and that. There's the Houses of Parliament like a graphic behind them. And the Welsh bloke. They're standing on the bridge. It might be the bridge, it might not, and they dance to *Lipstick on Your Collar*. And the women go across and kiss him.**

He's like all shocked and shy. There might be a clock or something which gets shattered at the end.

S.B. Which songs do you remember from the serial ?

L1 *Lipstick on Your Collar*. The others I don't know. There was a series of songs I thought the same people sang, like The Platters, but I didn't think it was The Platters. They all just sounded the same.

S.B. Why do you think Potter uses music in the serial ?

L1 Because his writing isn't good enough to portray what he wants to portray, so he uses the songs. All the songs were appropriate to the things. Hopper would be in the War-Office dreaming, and he'd have a song come into his mind because he was trying to escape from the War-Office. So a song would come into his mind, and that song would follow the story-line. And at another point when they were talking about the Suez Crisis, Wallace, no not Wallace, the General bloke [sic], the boss, is traumatised about the war and everything, and camels and Egyptian people come on and there's a song. I don't know the song. And they're all dressed up. It was ludicrous. If somebody had turned on at that point they'd have thought 'What is this ?!' I think they let him get away with a lot because he didn't have to write anything did he ? You know, he created all of that atmosphere for whatever Hopper was feeling at that point without any dialogue. He was just daydreaming about a

woman, and then he'd just see a woman and the whole atmosphere was created by the song.

S.B. So where did the songs come from ?

L1 Well, at first it was all in Hopper's mind. Nobody else was thinking the songs. They came out of his mind. Although the others were all singing them to us, it was all in his imagination. But when Francis Francis came along, I think the first song he wasn't in, but then later on he started hearing the songs as well which was totally out of character for him because he wouldn't have done that. Suddenly songs were coming from his thoughts and he would look across at Hopper and he was in on this. The first time I noticed it Francis is daydreaming about Sylvia, and Hopper is just daydreaming about sex, and getting out, and the songs, the golden goddess woman [fantasy-angel], and she's parading around and all the others start dancing and Hopper looks at Francis and the two of them make eye-contact, and there's a light, a coloured spotlight goes on Hopper which always happens when he's dreaming about a song. So really, it's the coloured spotlight more than them looking at each other; when that happens that person's thinking the song. Like Hopper was going to make cups of tea, and he's standing at the other end of the room, and then his boss would shout across and say 'What on earth are you doing ?' And in that split-second you'd have three minutes of the song, but he's been standing there dangling the spoons in the cup, so he's obviously been doing things, he hasn't stopped. We see condoms go

**in the tea-cups because that's what he's been thinking about. So he's probably just carried on. But we haven't seen what's carried on. He's carried on a dream.**

S.B. Can you say if you think the songs I'm going to play were in the serial, and, if you think they were, can you say which characters were in the scene, which character or characters sang the song, where the scene took place, where in the story the scene came, in other words, the beginning, middle or end, and what the scene was about. I'll give you plenty of time to think. Also, tell me if you knew the song before you heard it in the programme.

Extracts played:

*Lipstick on Your Collar*

**L1 The titles. I have heard it before.**

*Don't Be Cruel*

**L1 I think it was Francis thinking about Sylvia, but I'm not sure. It might be when Hopper is in his bedroom and he imagines he sees Lisa outside. I know the song.**

*The Great Pretender*

**L1 Hopper waiting to be a rock 'n' roll star. No. It's in the War-Office. I can see them all singing the 'doobee doobies', and I think it's Hopper. I know the song.**

*Earth Angel*

**L1 That's when the golden goddess [the fantasy-angel] appears and Hopper's daydreaming about women. He sees this woman who's got a snake around her, and she's got no clothes on, which I didn't see the need for, she could have worn something. She appears at the window opposite to his desk. I don't know the song.**

*Little Bitty Pretty One*

**L1 The men in the War-Office singing it to Francis, very camp. I don't know why. I know the song.**

*The Green Door*

**L1 I'm not sure if it's when Francis is looking up the stairs and they're behind, Sylvia and Berry. I think I've heard the song before.**

*Only You*

**L1 No idea. I don't know the song.**

*The Story of My Life*

**L1 I think when Hopper is dancing with Sylvia towards the end. The two of them meet and he falls for her suddenly as he walks past her, which was stupid because having seen her once before he didn't fall for her then, so why would he fall for her at the end ? He would have fallen for her at the beginning, which is when I expected it, when he saw her at the Palais, and he didn't, and I thought that was daft. Or, it**

could have been when the Major [sic] brought Lisa into the office and Hopper started singing. I've heard that song somewhere before.

*Blueberry Hill*

L1 Something to do with Hopper. It could be when he's in the cafe-bar playing, but not really playing, only playing in his imagination. Singing like Elvis. Or, when Hopper walked past Sylvia in the street. That's a well-known song.

*It's Almost Tomorrow*

L1 I think this comes up a few times. I don't think somebody sang this. I think Sylvia turned it on the radio in the bedroom. I've never heard of it before.

*Your Cheatin' Heart*

L1 I don't think anybody sang it. It was just on when Sylvia went to bed with Roy Hudd. It might have been repeated every time he called at the house. It's a famous song.

*The Garden of Eden*

L1 When the goddess [fantasy-angel] is there. She's what Hopper sees as his perfect woman in his imagination. She's what every bloke would like, she's all blonde and gorgeous. She's always got this golden spotlight on her. You never see her, erm, it's always a warm shot, like rosier than it could possibly be. She's just perfect, long blonde hair and slim figure. She's in the camel one as well. When he's trying to



court Lisa, who's dark-haired and totally unlike the goddess woman. When he sees Lisa I thought he wouldn't go for somebody like Lisa, but I didn't link the goddess with Sylvia until he started falling for Sylvia, then I linked the two and I thought 'Yes, she is the type, film-star looks.' The goddess only appears in the songs, all the others are in the play. She wears nothing except a golden fig-leaf which she pulls off, but you don't see anything, thank goodness. And she has a serpent wrapped around her; very Garden of Eden type thing.

*My Prayer*

**L1 I think it's Francis, but I couldn't tell you where. It might have been background music in the cinema, when Sylvia is daydreaming watching the film. I know the song.**

*Blue Suede Shoes*

**L1 Hopper in the cafe-bar. It's Elvis.**

*Raining in My Heart*

**L1 No. Never heard of it.**

*Unchained Melody*

**L1 No. I know the song though.**

*I See the Moon*

**L1 I think Hopper is in the bedroom and he's looking out at the moon. I don't know the song.**

*Be Bop A Lula*

**L1 Something to do with Hopper. A well-known song.**

*I'm In Love Again*

**L1 After Lisa runs out of the cafe-bar and Hopper imagines he's the singer on the stage. Never heard of the song before.**

*Young Love*

**L1 When Francis and Lisa realise they've fallen in love, when he falls into the grave. Donny Osmond sang that.**

*The Fool*

**L1 No. Nothing.**

*It'll Be Me*

**L1 No. Nothing.**

*Love Is Strange*

**L1 Sylvia and Hopper singing to each other by the placards. The ideal road, really colourful, cartoon-like scene. I think I've heard it before.**

*Sh-Boom (Life Could Be A Dream)*

**L1 This was when Hopper was dancing with Sylvia in the Street and he imagined the road with all the placards with the house of the 60s, marriage and suburbia. I know the song.**

*Lotta Lovin'*

**L1 No.**

*Lay Down Your arms*

**L1 At the end of the whole series. They were all in it. It looked like it was in Sylvia's imagination because it started off with Hopper and Francis, she was watching, ushering, watching the screen, and Hopper and Francis came out of the eyes of something that was on the screen, and singing *Lay Down Your Arms*. She was imagining it at first but then she got on the stage with them to dance, and they were all mouthing it, and then everybody else came on from the sides, from the War-Office, and the aunty and uncle, and I thought it was very contrived because why did they all arrive in the cinema when none of them had ever been before ? There was only Francis who had ever been to the cinema ! Then I didn't think it was in her imagination. It was in her imagination at the start, but then at the end it just stopped, it didn't go back, where before, in everybody else's imagination it went**

back to the shot that it had started the song with; so if Hopper was imagining things while sat at his desk it would come back to his desk and the story-line would carry on, whereas in this they were all on the stage like in a review.

*Makin' Love*

**L1 Possibly when Francis collapsed in the Palais; she [Sylvia] kisses him. Don't know the song.**

S.B. What effect did the music have on you ?

**L1 For the first part of the song I'd be really listening and thinking this is what he's thinking. But then I thought they can cut the song now because I know what he's thinking. But they did the chorus when they didn't need to; you already had the message. It was a bit patronising, as if you haven't got the message so we'll play it again. I was switched off by the end of each song.**

S.B. What do you remember about the music which closed each episode ?

**L1 I liked the music, it reminded me of jazz and sleazy clubs. I didn't know why he changed the music from *Lipstick on Your Collar* to this, it was very different. I didn't think it went with *Lipstick on Your Collar*, whether it was supposed to be a kind of time-warp thing, I don't know. This was from a bit later on. The picture looked like *Department S*, 1960s detective thing.**

S.B. Do you think the serial was realistic ?

**L1 No. It was all in their imagination. The things that were realistic ? Whatever was in their imagination might have been more realistic than what was actually going on. I didn't think the series was realistic, and the bits that I thought were realistic were the bits where they were dreaming, because they were like turning points for some parts of it, like if they recognised that they loved this person, or they recognised they didn't, or Hopper realises the General [sic] was having a nervous breakdown. The rest of it was slow, they were the exciting bits. I didn't understand why the street looked like a lot in Universal Studios. You always saw, before you go to the street, the tops of the houses, like pictures, and then the roofs were flat, it looked like, nostalgic, like sepia-type things, all browns and everybody wore brown, apart from Sylvia. That puts it more in our memory rather than actuality. In our street everybody's door was painted differently, and there were different things about each house that made it stand out, whereas in this street everything seemed to be the same colour, uniform. It looked like sticky-backed plastic. It was probably done on purpose. I think the whole thing is all nostalgia and looking back on childhood memories. For Potter writing it, he obviously would have a memory of this time, and that would be how he would see things, in those colours.**

S.B. What do you remember about the War-Office ?

**L1 Lots of wood, very brown. It got bigger as the songs were going on because the camera was coming up from above; it was obvious that there was nothing above it. It was television, not real life. like the camel song, the War-Office became a massive room which fitted lots of people and camels in it.**

S.B. What do you remember about the cafe-bar ?

**L1 That was one of the more realistic things. I can remember things like that, like ice-cream parlours, that sort of place, like *Happy Days*. I've seen thousands of American movies, diner type things.**

S.B. What do you remember about the house where Francis lodged ?

**L1 The only bit of colour in the whole house was the sky-light thing on the door, the light was coming through in the middle of the night ! Downstairs seemed to be a lot bigger.**

S.B. What did you think of the way the male characters were presented in the musical sequences?

**L1 Wallace was very camp, he was funny. I remember thinking it was funny that we thought we knew the people in the War-Office, but they were like cardboard cut-outs, and then suddenly when the Major [sic] has a nervous breakdown they all**

develop their personalities, that was weird. The General [sic], he was just pathetic, he falls to pieces when one thing happens. He was like a 'ye olde-England' type. Hopper and Francis were very good as actors. And whats-his-name, 'Gis a job', Yosser, Bernard Hughes, was amusing. The men in the War-Office I didn't think had any characters at all, except Wallace. The only ones I could identify with as characters were Hopper, Francis, Wallace, and the uncle. I hated Roy Hudd because he was just a snivelling creep. He was like these judges, you can imagine them salivating all over you. He slobbered all over Sylvia. Berry was just obnoxious, but then they built his character up a bit, and really, when he died, I was a bit sorry. If he'd died after he shoved Francis' head under the toilet I'd just have said 'Oh he's dead', but when he did die he wasn't as hard as he made out.

S.B. What about the female characters ?

L1 Sylvia was your movie star, Diana Dors type. They went on about Diana Dors in the office, and then the next shot was Sylvia, all the make-up and that, very glam. Lisa was your wholesome Canadian girl, wide-eyed, totally the opposite of Sylvia. Sylvia loved the music and Lisa loved the theatre. The aunty was good. The goddess woman [fantasy-angel], the unobtainable thing.

S.B. When was the serial set, and how do you know ?

**L1 I don't know when the Suez Crisis was. I know it was after the war, in the 1950s. The clothes and the music. The set and the cars. The clothes were like swingy skirts and teddy-boy type clothes. Buddy Holly type suits. And the music, some of the music placed it then. I've seen films about this time.**

S.B. Did the serial tell you anything about the Suez Crisis ?

**L1 Nothing, it didn't tell you what happened afterwards, if they went in. All I learnt from it was that the Americans weren't on our side, or were pretending to be. And the French weren't on our side, and we should have gone in at Alexandria but didn't, according to the series. In the last programme they said we threw leaflets down.**

S.B. Which scenes, or images, do you remember most ?

**L1 Francis with the skylight shining behind him, looking up the stairs. The War-Office.**

S.B. Did you enjoy the serial ?

**L1 The first couple were, erm, it got better as it went on. I had to make myself stick at it. I didn't look forward to the next one. They were only an hour each but it felt like two hours. I wasn't enthralled. The music made it better. I thought they should**



**have had short clips of the music, not long ones. There was too much War-Office, it was the same thing all the time. They should have done more in the house because the aunty and uncle were so good. It was a struggle to watch. I liked parts of it. The second half was more entertaining. It was long and drawn-out. They could have done it in three or four hours.**

S.B. Would you watch another Potter drama ?

**L1 Perhaps.**

## **Appendix 4**

### ***Lipstick on Your Collar* group session sample transcript.**

#### **Group 1**

**Date: 18/06/96**

**Respondents involved L2 (M: 64) L3 (F: 59) L4 (F: 58) L5 (F: 39)**

**Episode 2 viewed**

**S.B. What do you think of the title sequence ?**

**L5 They stripped him. I didn't remember that the first time. The three girls stripped Francis. He was on a record, you know, the stylus of a record player, I didn't notice that the first time either.**

**L2 I didn't notice that at all. I'm too busy looking to see who it is.**

**L4 I noticed the director this time, which I never did before.**

**L5 There were lips on his cheek.**

**L4 When she kisses him the lips start speaking.**

S.B. What do you make of *The Story of My Life* sequence ?

**L5 There's no real story. It's so mundane and yet the song itself is quite idealistic, like a contrast.**

**L4 It's the fantasy isn't it.**

S.B. Where does the music come from ?

**L2 It's when he first meets the girl, or whatever is going on inside his head at the time.**

**L4 Yes, when the Welshman first meets her.**

**L2 It's inside his head.**

**L4 It's his fantasy.**

**L5 It's kind of happening, erm, the fantasies are like celluloid, Diana Dors and that. They're going through their heads and yet their lives are completely mundane and ordinary.**

**L4 That's why they escape into their fantasies.**

**L5 Exactly, they're making them bearable.**

S.B. What happens when the music stops ?

**L3 Somebody started to speak.**

**L4 It stops when he goes 'bubum.'**

S.B. What about *Blueberry Hill* ? What initiates the music here ?

**L3 The mountain of stuff they are given.**

**L3 The fella who talks about the mountain of shit.**

S.B. Why do all the people in the office become involved in the song ?

**L3 I think it's the one person's fantasy, imagining they were in it. It's inconceivable that they could all be in the same fantasy at the same time.**

**L4 I think I agree with Frank (L2). I can't think of what else it could be.**

**L3 Maybe they're all thinking it.**

**L4 I think they think the whole thing is a load of shit. They're terribly bored, they're time watching all the time. But I don't know, I think what you say could be, erm, that everybody else is in his fantasy.**

**L3 It couldn't work any other way.**

**L4 Yes, that's the only way it could work.**

**L3 You would have to have everyone, they're all bored but not everyone is thinking, none of the others heard what was said.**

**L4 No ! That wouldn't work. Whereas the one person's fantasy involving everybody, that would work.**

**S.B. How do you know that this is a fantasy sequence ?**

**L4 The girl. The naked girl.**

**L2 The man on the toilet.**

**L5 The colours on the faces change. It's kind of an unnatural colour, yellow.**

**L4 The first time they started to sing the lighting on his face made him look devilish.**

**L5 Yes, horrible !**

S.B. What happened when the music stopped ?

**L2 It just stopped.**

S.B. We've reached the first commercial break, what are your views on the first 20 minutes of this episode ?

**L4 The Establishment, he's [Potter] really ridiculing it. Pulling it to pieces in an hilarious way as far as I'm concerned. I think it's really very funny.**

**L5 It's about two lads, their friendship developing. That seems to be the only thing that isn't a fantasy.**

**L2 Different personalities. People with different ideas.**

**L4 It's so strong, the way those people live. There is no companionship. It's just awful, and in different ways. I mean, he's a bigot down stairs [Uncle Fred], a religious bigot, a fanatic giving her [Aunt Vickie] a hell of a life.**

**L5 But she's kind of used to him and very cynical, isn't she.**

**L4 Well, she's become that way even if she wasn't. And the two upstairs [Berry and Sylvia] just hate each other.**

**L2 There seems no possibility of friendship between male and female.**

**L4 No, not for any of them. They're trapped in their own little private hell. They're doomed.**

**L5 But the older woman [Aunt Vickie] has got no fantasy at all, whereas the younger one's [Sylvia] full of Diana Dors.**

**L4 The Diana Dors is wonderful because it was a reflection of her [Sylvia] wasn't it.**

S.B. What do you think about the way Sylvia is presented ?

**L4 As a victim. I think she's a victim.**

**L2 I think she's portrayed as someone who really likes a good time and has got herself into a bit of a spot because she's with the wrong bloke and is just wanting to get out of it.**

**L4 Would she ever have met the right bloke with her fantasies ? She's not living in the real world.**

**L2 I've seen the whole thing, she will meet the right fella ha ha ha.**

**L3 I think she's portrayed as a brainless blonde. You do a double think about it. My initial reaction was she's portrayed as a typical male fantasy, then you realise that...**

**L5 If it was written in the 50s it would be objectionable, but because it was written in the 80s [sic], with feminism and that...**

**L4 But he's [Potter] really captured the brainless blonde hasn't he. There must be many like that.**

**L5 She's not that brainless though ! She knows exactly what to do, how to dress, and how to portray herself, so she's extremely clever.**

**L3 Exactly !**

**L4 But does she realise in dressing like she is that she is, in a way, a victim ? Because she's attracting all the wrong things. And she'll suffer because of that.**



**L2 She gets what she wants.**

**L3 But if she wants, you know, some sort of deep relationship...**

**L4 She won't get it because of the way she portrays herself. And look what she's married to ! She hates him, but he was attracted and so will others be attracted in the same way, and that will just bring more agony for her.**

**L5 But she clearly enjoys the physical side.**

**L4 But she doesn't ! I think I would say the opposite. Like when she says 'I'm tired.'**

**L3 She sees sex as a way to get things.**

**L4 Yes.**

**L3 I think he [Potter] presents her as one-dimensional.**

**L2 They're not real characters are they !**

**S.B. Can characters in a tv drama be anything other than stereotypes ?**

**L2 But he's [Potter] had plenty of time, because this is on for six hours ! If it was only a half-hour thing...When you see the lot I think it does develop a bit, but it does start off with very very sharp stereotypes.**

**L5 You identify with the Welshman don't you, because he's kind of unsure of himself and his role, the others are stuck in their roles.**

**L3 He's pathetic !**

**L4 he's a buffoon, the only nice guy.**

**L5 You'd be ashamed to have him as a friend.**

**L4 Yes, he's embarrassingly awful.**

**L2 Yes, but again, that's typical of many British films of the 50s, you know the Ian Carmichael type, the bumbling ass, except that he's [Francis] more idealistic. I still think he was something of a cardboard cut-out character.**

**S. B. Was there anything in the first section that anybody objected to ?**

**L5 I'm a little bit aware of Andrew [her young son] upstairs. If he came down while it was on...but they're things he's heard before, but I'd still be a bit...**

**L4 I agree. I might not like to watch that with my mother or father.**

**L5 It's the kind of thing families watched while sitting, erm, the different generations would squirm and be embarrassed if you watched it with your mother or your children, you'd feel you couldn't discuss it because...**

**L3 My mother would have switched it off.**

**L4 So would mine.**

**L5 That's a load of rubbish !**

**S.B. Do you think this is acceptable after the Nine O'Clock News ?**

**L4 Yes.**

**L5 Yes. Amongst us it is totally acceptable, but among different generations it's really squirm-making. You wouldn't know how to communicate about it between your family.**

**L2 I was going to turn off after the first episode. If I had I'd have thought it was just a load of nonsense. That chap [Hedges] who persistently goes through the first episode saying 'bumholes', I just thought that was infantile. I imagined he [Potter] was like that.**

**L3 I would imagine my kids would love it. They're still very anal.**

**L2 The level of comment, yes.**

**L5 The fact that it would probably embarrass.**

**L3 I think he stretches the point too much. When we first see the toilet rolls it's funny, but then it went on and on and that's where I found it embarrassing.**

**S.B. Is Potter a great dramatist ?**

**I would say no. He's got a couple of gimmicks, like the music.**

**L2 He says all the things about the Establishment that people on the far left would say.**

**S.B. Do you identify with or relate to any of the characters ?**

**L2 The aunt, she's the most interesting character**

**L5 But nobody would want to identify with her like a character in *Coronation Street* because the ordinary folk watching her would feel uncomfortable about her.**

**L4 She's more real for me than any of the characters in *Coronation Street*.**

**L5 Yes, but you wouldn't wish to identify with her even though she's real.**

**L2 She's forced into being that way.**

**L4 Yes, she can't get out of it. She's been made as she is.**

**L2 By him and the circumstances.**

S.B. Do you think that Potter is trying to show the sort of problems women face in society ?

**L5 I don't think he could.**

**L4 I think he is with their lives.**

**L5 Who is he to talk about women's lives ?**

**L4 From his own observations.**

**L5 How is he to know about their emotional lives ?**

**L3 I think he's trying to, whether he's successful or not, that's another thing.**

**L4 And the men are not happy either. The two husbands, they lead miserable lives.**

S.B. What do you think about the scene with Sylvia and the mirror ?

**L2 It was as though they were making her out to be a different sort of person.**

**Maybe human appeal as opposed to sex appeal.**

**L4 She takes the way life is and says 'I deserve more than this.'**

**L3 The value she puts on how she looks is extremely high. We only see one little facet of her, not her hopes or desires or abilities or values, or any of the good things about her, it's just the physical.**

**L4 It's how one would look at oneself, critically in a mirror, in a very private moment. You felt almost as if you were intruding. But she was thinking how lovely, very conceited.**

S.B. Do you think it was a man's view ?

**L4 No.**

**L2 It's a selling point for a woman, what's going to earn her the millions.**

**L4 Or bring despair ! She's only concerned with her physical beauty. She's looking at Diana Dors and envying her because she thinks she's physically beautiful. She's not concerned with anything else in her life, she's only concerned with her appearance.**

**L2 She was lovely until she opened her mouth. She looks so beautiful and then she comes out with something like that.**

S.B. What do you think about the music in the sequence ?

**L4 Is it *It's Almost Tomorrow* ?**

**L2 Yes.**

S.B. Why do you think Potter uses that song ?

**L4 Hopes for how it might turn out in the future.**

**L3 But that song's not about good hopes for the future, but extremely bad hopes for the future.**

**L4 Is it ?**

**L2 It's *Almost Tomorrow*, because that's it, she's told him to push off. It's sung by a man to a woman, and she's fed up with him, she's going to go out with somebody else, and this is their last night together, so tomorrow's not a good thing.**

S.B. What do you think about the way Atterbow the organist is presented ?

**L3 There was fairy-tale type music.**

**L5 That music reminded me of the horrible wicked man in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. You know, leading her astray, because she doesn't need much leading astray, ha ha.**

**L4 That music was so familiar. Was it *Persian Market* [sic] ? Yes. Well, she was for sale in a way. He was such a lecher. She knows that though. She trades on her appearance. He's vile, repulsive.**

**L5 Dickensian.**



**L4 He looked greasy.**

**L3 You wouldn't buy a second-hand car off him, ha ha.**

S.B. Was he a believable character ?

**L5 Oh yes.**

**L3 He was like the judges you imagine slobbering.**

S.B. What did you think of the musical scenes in the War-Office ?

**L4 They were obsessed with the same thing. It says how much people do live in their own fantasy world.**

S.B. What about this *Don't Be Cruel* sequence ?

**L2 He's looking for mercy isn't he. Sings '*Don't be cruel to a heart that's true.*' He [Francis] becomes the victim.**

S.B. How did the sequence start ?

**L4 He [Hopper] was looking at the clock, a quarter past the hour, that's when it started.**

S.B. How did it finish ?

**L2 It ends when he [Church] says I'm going to put you on a charge.**

**L4 I think in this case they're all cruel, because they all know he's late [Francis], they all go at him.**

**L2 Yes, but someone must be perceiving them, not only being cruel, but being cruel in a certain way in terms of the song. There must be an observer of this, a liver of this particular fantasy.**

S.B. What happens to time during the fantasy scenes ?

**L4 It's suspended isn't it.**

**L2 Yes. His [Hopper's] memory, his mind steps out of time. What seems to him a fantasy, a long time, is not in reality.**

**L4 It goes very quickly in reality.**

S.B. What did you think about the *My Prayer* scene at the end of the episode ? Who's fantasy was it and how do you know ?

**L5 Hers [Sylvia's].**

S.B. Why were they miming it in the War-Office ?

**L2 Well, he's [Francis] fantasising about her [Sylvia], and she fantasises that, which I suppose is meant to portray her immaturity. That's her idea of how a country scene would look, a bit like *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* [from *The Wizard of Oz*].**

**L3 It's a sharp contrast, that thing about the million pounds at the end, she's never going to be satisfied.**

**L2 But that's a very interesting point, to see how, who's fantasy is that in ? It wouldn't be in hers, because she probably didn't realise how mercenary she is, and it certainly, at this stage, wouldn't have been in his. So that's Potter, that's the author trying to show that she's not as attractive as she appears.**

**L5 She hasn't got any friends has she. Girls like that have mates, but she hasn't.**

**L4 She's too beautiful, too much competition.**

**L5 I think other women would bring her down a peg or two. Tell her to get more realistic.**

**L4 Unless they were similar types.**

S.B. What did you think about the part where she ate part of the cottage ?

**L4 It was odd.**

**L2 Yes, it was funny. One of the things that struck me about that scene was that it was a very prolonged kiss, as though she'd got as far into real-life sexual relationships as they did on the screen in those days. The height of passion was a very prolonged kiss; of course she'd know all about it from real-life, but in her dream world it wasn't easy to translate that into a proper human relationship. I thought it was intriguing.**

**L4 But the long romantic kiss was a sharp contrast to the reality of the sex as she would have known it. And which did she prefer ? I think it would be the long romantic kiss.**

**L5 He [Francis] idolises her, whereas her husband [Berry] just sees her as part of everyday life.**

**L4 She just wants romance, the nice gentleness, not the harsh sex.**

S.B. Are there any role-models in the serial ?

**L5 The other young one [Hopper].**

**L2 Yes. He's down to earth and realistic.**

**L4 He's the last person to be translating Russian. That doesn't ring true.**

**L2 That's a good point, I'd never really thought about that before. He's not very well educated. At the lowest level you don't do Russian at all. He's the one who's going to get on. He gets the best girl. He gets the blonde in the end. So he's always going to come off best.**

**L4 Or worse !**

**L5 He's the modern Britain isn't he.**

S.B. What do you think the serial is saying about modern Britain ?

**L2 All that was changing. Britain has got to find a new role in the world. It's coming through in small things like espresso coffee and different types of music.**

**L4 I can't say it's optimistic. It's all changing.**

**L5 The old die-hard Britishers at the crossroads. Where is the country going ? No one is confident about it. That Douglass Hogg, he belongs in that War-Office, bumbling old British...**

**L2 Why is bumbling and old necessarily British ? Just because they are patriotic they must be bumbling old fools ?**

**L5 But they're not patriotic in the sense that you can identify with.**

**L2 That's Potter portraying them as ridiculous, because that's the way he thinks about it.**

**L4 This is on so many levels. It's out to entertain as well as instruct. A big part of the entertainment is the music.**

**S.B. Do you think there is any similarity between this and Hollywood-musicals ?**

**L2 No. What this reminds me of is where there is a nostalgia for the music of a certain period, and they make a feeble attempt to construct a story out of it. I'm thinking of that Gerry and the Pacemakers thing [sic. A stage play about Liverpool in**

the 1960s called *Last Tram To Limestone*]. All you do really is shoot out as many of the musical hits of that time as you can in a short time, and people who were young then, or like that period, will say this is great. You don't find any Hollywood-musical like that.

L4 No, it's completely different. I was thinking of *High Society*, lovely, lovely songs. The whole action stops the song...

L5 You lose yourself in it.

L4 Time is suspended while he's getting his point over with the songs.

L5 The Judy Garland type thing where it's, you know it's unreal, but you look up to the stars.

L3 You wouldn't want to identify with Aunt Vickie ! She's too close to the truth. Somebody like Grace Kelly, or *South Pacific*, when the music starts you are them.

L5 But her [Sylvia's] idol was Diana Dors, not Marilyn Monroe or Grace Kelly, which, you'd have thought she'd have an American...

L4 She looks more like Diana Dors than the others. It was the hair, exactly the same.

**L2 But also they're not asking you to enjoy the music, but to point up things.**

**L4 The music isn't as important as the musicals which is, erm, the main thing is the music. This is just using songs to emphasise things.**

S.B. Do you think the music works ?

**L4 It does for me.**

**L2 Well, I like those tunes, but I don't think it works in terms of doing what it should for the, for making the point, because I can remember the music, and I can remember the film [sic], but I couldn't match them up together.**

**L4 There were so many. I couldn't remember either.**

S.B. Was the serial easy to follow ?

**L3 The strain was to have to watch it, ha ha.**

**L2 I felt the first episode was terrible. But then when it brought other characters in and it moved, if it had been set in that one room [the War-Office] all the time it would have been boring.**



**L4 They changed continually from the usherette, the cinema, the War-Office...**

**L2 In the first one I only saw the War-Office !**

**L4 I thought it was full of contrasts. And even the War-Office, you weren't there long before they broke into song.**

**L3 I had to make myself watch it.**

S.B. Do you think men would watch it in a different way to women ?

**L4 Well, I think the woman [Sylvia] must make a difference to the way men watch it.**

**L2 Yes.**

**L4 She's so beautiful and so sexual. Men would just want to watch it to see her, whereas women would like to see, they'd look at her in a different way. With men it would just be sex.**

**L3 There was no comparable male character was there.**

**L4 The young Elvis look-a-like, he was good to watch. I liked watching him. But the others were most unattractive**

**L3 Once a man got over the 'I find her attractive' he might look outside and just watch the important things.**

**L5 That's at the back of my mind, that she's a distraction. The important bits are what the men get up to.**

S.B. What value did it have other than as entertainment ?

**L3 It didn't change my life. whatever was in it didn't change my point-of-view. It wasn't profound.**

**L2 I thought it was fairly obvious.**

**L3 They should have just had four episodes.**

**L2 Six hours is self-indulgent.**

**L4 It gives you more time to tell the story and to develop the characters, although they didn't really develop !**

**L3 Cardboard characters, just superficial.**

**L4 I think a lot of people live a great deal in their heads.**

**L2 It's the style I think that got me. This idea that you can match up popular music to point up emotions. It's done in other things that he's done.**

**L3 They take the songs from a whole decade in, I mean *Forest Gump*, they used the music from the eras, and it was evocative and atmospheric, it didn't detract from the film, for me this just suspended everything.**

**L4 But it added a lot to the entertainment value.**

**L2 I don't think it was evocative. It's mostly American music, The producers in America [sic] wouldn't give a damn about any of the preoccupations including the Suez campaign. They kept well out of it. And all these other personal feelings would not be the same in their environment. I don't think hearing that music particularly brings back the 50s, except that they've got together a lot of the songs that you knew from the time. But I wouldn't associate it with what was happening in England. I might associate it with what was happening to me, but I don't think it illustrated England.**

**L4 I agree with that.**

**L2 The songs I remember, I can't remember when I heard them but they were all personal, they wouldn't mean anything to anybody else.**

**L5 *Two-Way Family Favourites*, if you wanted to depict, or Kenneth Hall [sic], or that other one, Billy Cotton, that would be the thing that would depict Britain in the 1950s.**

**L2 Yes, that's right.**

**L4 Yes, ITMA, things like that.**

**L5 She'd [Sylvia] have been listening to *Housewife's Choice*, the Light Programme.**

**L4 It was more the films, the cinema, that's where the music came from.**

**L2 The organist coming up, I can remember the cinema of those days and that wasn't relevant to what was happening in England.**

**L4 Those films of the 1940s were the fantasies for me.**

**L2 Diana Dors was home-grown. She showed what a young girl could aspire to.**

S.B. What do you think Potter thought of the music of the 1950s ?

**L2 I think he used it a bit tongue in cheek.**

**L4 He used it so much, but I don't know if he liked it. You would think he did.**

S.B. Do you think Potter is an interesting writer ?

**L2 No. Too much of it is schoolboy.**

**L4 He makes you feel uncomfortable.**

S.B. Who would be a more interesting television writer for you ?

**L5 Bleasdale, it's moving, you care about what happens to the people in it. In this you don't.**

**L2 I get the impression he's talking about types rather than people.**

**L3 Rolling things all into one person...**

**L2 These are stereotype blondes and callow youths.**

**L4 It's the visible crudity...**

**L2 It is crude. He's over sexual, whereas Bleasdale was worried about social problems. I would guess that it was to do with him [Potter] and his own illness, his own condition. I don't think he could have had a particularly happy life. There's all sorts of repressed instincts.**

**L4 *Guardian* readers would like him, that's why it annoys me. It could be just like the Emperor's new clothes, just because that kind of people say it should appeal doesn't mean it does.**

**L2 I think he tried to widen his appeal with his controversial stuff, the lavatory humour, the sex. I think every play he did was a kind of event, a media thing before it came out.**

## Appendix 5

### ***Lipstick on Your Collar* title-music and credit-music verbal-visual associations response sample**

Age: 49

Sex: Male

Music: *Lipstick on Your Collar*.

People: American Teenagers, circa 17 to 18 years old. Both sexes, enjoying life at the high-school dance. Images of clean-cut, short-haired males and females in white dresses, white socks and sneakers.

Place: Middle-America, whatever that means. A typical small, conservative American town with the flag flying outside the town-hall. Neatly manicured lawns, wooden, white homes and fences. Smallville USA from *Superman* comics.

Time: The 1950s, say 1956. Rock 'n' roll starting to emerge, but still a time of hope, of everything American being right. Anti-communism, shiny automobiles, mom, pop and 2.4 kids.

Music: *The Man with the Golden Arm*.

**People: Mature, say 35-40. Well-off swingers. Men with double-breasted suits and trilby hats. Women with long dresses and lots of make-up and pulled back hair.**

**Place: America. Any big city. A night-club, could be a drinking club. Its late. Everyone's smoking cigarettes from silver cigarette cases.**

**Time: Late 1930s, just before the outbreak of World War Two. Everyone still enjoying themselves, isolationist America.**



## Appendix 6

### *The Garden of Eden* shot breakdown.

The sequence is prefixed by dialogue between the newly arrived Francis Francis (Giles Thomas) and Major Church (Nicholas Farrell). Francis makes an allusion to Pushkin's Anna, quoting the lines: 'You stood before me/ Like a momentary vision' Francis describes Anna as 'an enchantingly lovely young lady' which prompts Church to suggest that Francis must be 'obsessed with pretty young ladies.' This dialogue motivates Hopper (Ewan McGregor) to imagine the female fantasy-angel character (Carrie Leigh) who had appeared in the earlier *Earth Angel* sequence to be hovering outside the office window. Winged, and naked except for red stiletto shoes and a fig-leaf, she smiles provocatively at the mesmerised Hopper. The sequence progresses to a two-shot mid-shot of Francis (foreground, camera left) and Church (background, camera right). A cut takes us back to a close-up of Hopper (shot 1, duration 4 seconds), who mentally cues the introduction of the acoustic guitar introduction to Frankie Vaughan's 1957 hit *The Garden of Eden*, and the enormous room instantly becomes a set for a musical number. An inclination of Hopper's head motivates Vaughan's opening vocals (*When you walk in the Garden*), and a cut to the previous two-shot of Francis and Church (shot 2, duration 3 seconds). Church is now lip-synching the lyrics and making mock lewd gestures, wiggling pretend breasts and lascivious hips at hapless Francis. Fully clothed in a pin-striped suit, as he is throughout the sequence, Church lip-synchs the next line (*In the Garden of Eden*) as he removes a fig-leaf from his genital area and offers it to Francis. We then cut back to a close-up of an embarrassed Francis (shot 3, duration 1 second). The lyrics continue (*With*

*a beautiful woman*) and we cut back to a close-up of Hopper (shot 4, duration 1 second), rapidly followed by a cut to Major Hedges (Clive Francis) (shot 5, duration 1 second), simulating sex with his desk while lip-synching the lyric. A rapid cut to a close-up of Hopper (shot 6, duration 1 second), is followed by a cut, on the first word of the next line (*And you know how you care*), to a wide-angle shot of Lt. Col. Bernwood (Peter Jeffrey) (shot 7, duration 3 seconds), lip-synching behind his desk. On the word *care* the camera whip-pans from right to left to offer a full-length shot of Church gesturing to Francis and provocatively crossing his legs. The lyric continues (*And the voice in the Garden*) and we cut on the word *Garden* to a close-up of Francis (shot 8, duration 1 second). As the next line begins (*In the Garden of Eden*) we cut back to a two-shot as Church leans uncomfortably close to a worried Francis (shot 9, duration 2 seconds). On *Eden* we cut to see Francis in close-up (shot 10, duration 1 second). The next transition comes via a cut on the first word of the next line (*Tells you she is forbidden*) to a three-quarter length shot of Hedges wiggling his hips (shot 11, duration 3 seconds). On *forbidden* the camera repeats its earlier whip-pan right to left movement to offer a full-length shot of Major Carter (Nicholas Jones) on top of his desk, simulating being penetrated from the rear as he lip-synchs the next line (*Can you Leave her there ?*). On *there* we cut to a big-close-up of a transfixed Hopper (shot 12, duration 1 second), who moves his eyes right to left to motivate a cut which coincides with the first word of the next line of the lyric (*When you're yearning for loving*). The cut is a particularly significant one in terms of *mise-en-scène* signification. The cut takes us from the close-up of Hopper to a three-quarter length shot of Hedges lip-synching (shot 13, duration 4 seconds).’ The scene becomes green and steamy as the office is bathed in red light, and adorned by classical architectural pillars

decorated in exotic jungle foliage. On the word *loving* the camera zooms out to show Hedges twirling around and lip-synching (*And she touches your hand*). He kisses Church's hand as we see Col. Trekker (Shane Rimmer) dressed as a tree in the background. On the word *hand*, which coincides with the kiss, we cut to a mid-shot of Francis (shot 14, duration 1 second). As the next line of the lyric begins (*And your heart starts a pounding*) we revert to the three-shot of the dancing Church, Hedges and Trekker (shot 15, duration 3 seconds). The next line (*And you're feeling so grand*) motivates a cut to a wide-angle shot which shows Carter (camera left), Church and Hedges linking arms (centre frame), and Corporal Berry (Douglass Henshall) (camera right), dancing and lip-synching (shot 16, duration 1 second). On *grand* we cut to a big-close-up of Hopper (shot 17, duration 1 second), followed by a rapid cut to a companion big-close-up of Francis (shot 18, duration 1 second) on the first word of the next line (*Can you leave her to heaven*). On *heaven* we cut back to the wide-angle which has now become a five-shot with the inclusion of Col. Trekker (shot 19, duration 1 second). On the first word of the next line (*And obey the command*) we cut to a two-shot of Church (foreground, camera right) and Bernwood (background, camera left) lip-synching (shot 20, duration 3 seconds). The next line (*Can you walk from the Garden*) motivates a cut to a close-up of Francis (shot 21, duration 1 second) followed by a return to the five-shot, the characters waving their hands as in a mock-religious vaudeville spoof (shot 22, duration 3 seconds). On the word *understand* in the next line (*Does your heart understand ?*) we cut to a wide-angle shot of Francis (shot 23, duration 1 second). We return to the five-shot on (*When you walk in the Garden*) (shot 24, duration 1 second), followed by a big-close-up of Hopper (shot 25, duration 2 seconds). As the next line starts (*In the Garden of Eden*)

we cut to a mid-shot of Hedges picking an apple from a tree (shot 26, duration 2 seconds). On the word *Garden*, he changes, via a dissolve into the fantasy-female character, who is now meant to operate as a blasphemous modern representation of Eve. She temptingly looks into the camera holding the apple, which glows goldenly. On the word *Eden* we cut to a close-up of a lustful Hopper licking his lips (shot 27, duration 1 second). The next line begins (*With a beautiful woman*) and on *beautiful* we return to the angel/Eve character in mid-shot, moving toward the camera, offering the apple (shot 28, duration 1 second). The next line (*And you know how you care*) induces a cut to a mid-shot of the spellbound Francis (shot 29, duration 1 second). On *care* we cut to the wide-angle with angel/Eve in the foreground moving ever closer to the camera while Church, Carter, Trekker and Berry lip-synch (*And the voice in the Garden*) (shot 30, duration 4 seconds). The next line (*In the Garden of Eden*) motivates a cut to a close-up of Francis who swallows nervously (shot 31, duration 2 seconds). We cut on the first word of the next line (*Tells you she is forbidden*) to a close-up of the angel/Eve character staring provocatively into the camera, tempting Francis (and the viewer) with the apple (shot 32, duration 1 second). After *forbidden* there is a cut to her point-of-view of Francis looking at the apple (shot 33, duration 1 second). The next line (*Can you leave her there*) motivates the reverse shot, that is Francis' point-of-view of the angel/Eve character who now has what appears to be a large green snake which she strokes while she lip-synchs the lyric (shot 34, duration 4 seconds). As the camera pulls back we see that the head of the snake is a large penis with a flaying forked-tongue. The next transition is a cut to a close-up of Francis licking his lips (shot 35, duration 1 second). As the percussionist produces the pre-fade tab on his cymbal and snare drum we cut to a close-up of Hopper

smiling with delight (shot 36, duration 1 second). The end of the reverie is motivated by Church asking Francis 'Have you located a lodging ? A place to dream.' As Hopper is shocked out of his imaginings, the lights return to normal and there is a cut to the two-shot of Church and Francis which started the sequence.

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