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“Lust For Life:” Cinematography and
the Soundtrack in Danny Boyle’s
Trainspotting

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Introduction

The art of cinema uses both audio and visual elements in order to make fascinating stories. Contemporary filmmaking breaks free from classic filmmaking, where the soundtrack of a film served a secondary, background role of musical accompaniment complementing and aiding the visual world of a film. Today, the experience of the viewer is influenced by both visual and audio elements that are transformed into dynamic storytelling tools. The combined relation between cinematography and musical soundtrack produces a vibrant mosaic of storytelling. Cinematography refers to the art and technology of motion picture photography, which involves various aspects from the general composition of a scene, through the lighting of the set, the choice of cameras, lenses, filters, to the choice of camera angles and movements, as well as the integration of any special effects. Film soundtracks complement cinematography and are vital to the plot of a film, since they enhance the development of the storyline and help in creating the film’s atmosphere. Directors use a range of numerous musical components like various instruments and orchestras. The music achieves an intricate balance with the film by seamlessly integrating into the film’s framework while also standing out in order to improve the viewer’s experience, thus enhancing the audience’s emotional connection. Through the combination of the integrated musical elements and the enhanced emotional impact, film soundtracks play a crucial role in both setting the mood and connecting the audience to the storyline (Xu 351). In what follows, I shall examine Danny Boyle’s iconic 1996 film, *Trainspotting*, as an excellent example for the showcasing of this advancement, demonstrating how the creative use of music results in a unique cinematic experience, overcoming traditional narrative limits. The music and cinematography in *Trainspotting* not only enhances the visual storytelling, but it is an active element in the narrative, which provides vitality for the characters and supports thematic depth. This study aims to look into the complex system of connections, showing how cinematography and the soundtrack serve as narrative catalysts in *Trainspotting*, resulting in a unique and intriguing medium for storytelling.

In the following, I shall examine how *Trainspotting* uses its soundtrack as more than just a background element. The soundtrack is often overlooked by the viewers because of its subtle nature (Xu 352). By examining the key cinematographic scenes of *Trainspotting*, this study aims to show how the film effectively uses the soundtrack as a tool for storytelling, to explore themes of addiction, identity and societal criticism. The film presents itself as a complex piece, where techniques in mise-en-scène, lighting, music and editing combine to form a diverse and rich canvas for analysis. The combination of these aspects, along with the film's exploration of cultural and societal issues specific to the 1990s, marks *Trainspotting* as a groundbreaking piece in modern filmmaking.

Adapting Irvine Welsh's iconic novel, *Trainspotting* (1993), the film offers a raw and unapologetic depiction of heroin addiction in Edinburgh, portraying the dominant spirit of disillusionment of the youth in the Scotland of the 1990s. The film stands out by its engaging cinematography and a remarkable musical soundtrack, which together create a powerful and emotional cinematic experience. I shall examine the complex relationship between cinematography and musical composition in Boyle's *Trainspotting*, focusing on how the soundtrack and the lyrics connect with the visual elements of the film. I argue that the choice of songs often ironically drives and shades the development of the narrative, while they also present the growth (and fall) of the characters.

Trainspotting represents the most significant milestone of the British cinema of the 1990s. The film shows the lives of a group of young men addicted to heroin, living in the financially poor region of Edinburgh during the late 1980s, early 1990s. The narrative centres around Mark Renton, played by Ewan McGregor, as he attempts to achieve sobriety and free himself from his addiction, as well as the influence of his friends and the drug subculture. The film opens with Renton and his friends committing petty crimes and substance abuse, depicting the ecstatic and painful sides of their way of life. In the opening scene, Renton delivers a monologue on his views on life and heroin, setting the film's focus on the subject of the (loss of) meaning of life, disillusionment, and addiction. He makes multiple attempts to stop his heroin use, experiencing different levels of success and later relapses, showing the complex nature of addiction. The main characters in the story are Renton and his friends: Spud, an amusing although unfortunate drug user; Sick Boy, an ambitious young man fixated on James Bond; Begbie, an aggressive man who loves violence; and Tommy, who starts off drug-free but gradually succumbs to heroin. The film shows their experiences, which are often miserable, chaotic, often filled with dark humour.

An important element of *Trainspotting* is the portrayal of the heroin scene in Edinburgh and how it affects the characters' way of life. The film openly portrays the harmful effects of heroin, including scenes of overdose as well as its effect on relationships and well-being. Renton's journey is marked by several memorable moments, in particular the surreal "worst toilet in Scotland" sequence and the heartbreaking death of an infant due to neglect, which serves as a striking warning on the highly destructive effect of addiction. The film hits its highest point as Renton makes the decision to walk away from his previous life, giving up his friends in order to set off on a fresh beginning. Despite its controversial nature, this act represents his ultimate attempt to break free from the cycle of addiction.

According to Duncan Petrie, the film's appeal lies in its accessibility as both a commercial and an aesthetic object. It tackles complicated issues of culture, identity, and representation with understanding and humour. In particular, the film's depiction of Edinburgh heroin users, presented in a colourful and imaginative cinematic manner, overcame the grim subject matter. The film's excellent use of style above content was considered a symbol of the mid-1990s cultural moment, along with the rise of Tony Blair's New Labour and a feel-good social optimism (Petrie 42). The film also experimented with historical images from England and Scotland, shattering clichés and romanticised views of Scottish identity. Renton's anti-nationalist monologue in the film criticises the romanticization of the Scottish setting and offers a deeper take on national identity (Petrie 49).

According to Murray Smith, the film takes a different perspective of drug addiction than films before *Trainspotting*. While other films apply the drug use experience merely as a narrative element, presenting it as a one-dimensional and aesthetic thing, *Trainspotting* depicts the horrible aftermaths of heroin use (Smith). The film's usage of colour in the mise-en-scène is particularly remarkable, as it uses certain shades to symbolize different emotional states and themes, adding to the storyline and heightening the viewer's emotional connection to it. Mise-en-scène, a phrase initially used in theatre and then adopted in film, refers to the whole set of visual elements present within a frame. This includes the elements of the production, such as the stage design, objects used on stage, performers, attire, and lighting (Bordwell and Thompson 112). These aspects collectively build the scene's atmosphere, suggesting the characters' mental states and setting the mood. It consists of the setup and movement of elements within the frame, as directed by the director and production designer. The concept plays an essential part in conveying the film's artistic vision and establishing a unique understanding of time and place (Barsam and Monahan 165).

Smith examines the concept of transvaluation in *Trainspotting*, using Nietzsche's philosophical concepts to figure out how the film overturns traditional societal norms. Nietzsche's theory, which emphasizes how all values can be changed, criticizes standard moral values as being opposite to the power and vitality of life itself. He denies the idea of an objective moral standard and rather calls for a transvaluation of values that esteems power, creativity and life. This philosophical critique is shown in *Trainspotting*, which has a complicated moral setting, where the characters have to find their way in a world without standard moral foundations. Renton, the main character of the film, is an excellent illustration of this Nietzschean philosophy, Smith argues. He goes through a transition between traditional morality and a countercultural set of values which fall in line with Nietzsche's call for individual autonomy and power. Renton's character demonstrates this journey, shifting from traditional societal norms to a rebellious countercultural value system. This illustrates how the film interacts with Nietzsche's critique of conventional morality and discusses freedom, existential choice, and the creation of a personal identity where societal norms are not present (Smith 52). Renton's monologue from the opening sequence of the film is particularly illustrative of Nietzsche's idea (I shall come back to the discussion of this monologue shortly).

John Neil Munro's study of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* looks into the cultural impact of the novel. According to him, the film functions as a cultural reflection, perfectly capturing the socioeconomic changes and disappointment experienced during the 1980s and 1990s in Britain (Munro 58). The complex connection between Welsh's novel and its cinematic adaptation can be seen in the film's narrative structure and editing. Munro points out that the successful transformation from written text to film involved not only the adaptation of the plot, but also the creative use of cinematic techniques to express the true nature of Welsh's work. Munro emphasizes the film's opening sequence, which quickly sets the atmosphere for a cinematic journey into the main characters' lives (Munro 153). This particular scene, considered characteristic of the film's dynamic and raw narrative approach, shows director Danny Boyle's skilful use of different cinematic techniques like voice-overs, low-angle views, and freeze-frames to successfully convey the intense reality of the characters' encounters.

The constant exchange between music and film narratives is an important tool to study how films actively connect with and mirror modern society. Hilary Lapedis explores the link between music and film, using *Trainspotting* as an important example of how the mixing of

these two art forms can offer a unique narrative and aesthetic experience. Lapedis states that *Trainspotting* extends beyond using modern music as a simple background, instead weaving music seamlessly into the story. The film takes inspiration from music videos, adopting its structure and visual power to successfully captivate and connect with its audience (Lapedis 369). This approach allows the film to convey complex ideas of disappointment, the need to escape, and the perception of oneself in a medium that is deeply relevant to the viewer's own experiences with music and popular culture. In addition, Lapedis' study shows that the use of popular music in *Trainspotting* serves as a narrative device, connecting the film's thematic concerns with the wider cultural and social conversation (Lapedis 370). This not only improves the amount of audience engagement with the film but also portrays *Trainspotting* as an artistic creation which reflects the mindset of its time.

Karina Totah's "Trainspotting's Playlist: A Compilation of Subcultural Struggles" in *Bright Lights Film Journal* looks further into how the music in *Trainspotting* is more than just a background element. It studies how the film's music contributes to recognising the themes of revolt, addiction, and the harsh existence of 1990s Britain. According to the article, the music of *Trainspotting* depicts the protagonists' ties to a subculture that opposes mainstream cultural conventions. The characters are outsiders who have become disillusioned with the normal ways that have been set for them. The soundtrack, that includes punk, rock, and techno music, highlights their rebellion and sense of belonging to something beyond the mainstream. The contrast between the joyful music and the harsh realities of addiction illustrates the ups and downs in their life.

In *The Cinessential*, Zachary Davies also argue that the music in *Trainspotting* is more than just filling the silence; it's an important aspect of the film that adds depth to the story and improves the viewer's experience. The soundtrack includes punk, rock, electronic, and pop songs, representing the protagonists' varied and often chaotic lifestyle. This wide selection highlights the film's subversive and rebellious attitude. Specific tracks are selected to highlight particular scenarios, such as Lou Reed's "Perfect Day" during the overdose sequence, which provides a mournful and wry depth to the visuals while highlighting the harsh reality of heroin addiction.

While there may be different opinions, it is certain that a film's music not only matches the events on the screen, but also influences the viewer's understanding of the events, because of the simultaneous experience of watching the visuals while listening to the music. According

to Jessica Green, film music serves the basic function of coordinating with the visual imagery to trigger the audience's emotional response to the characters and the general ideas highlighted in the film. Through interaction with other various forms of communication, music overcomes the traditional role of merely being a background element, but instead actively influences and produces significance within the picture (Green 84).

One of the many challenges of adapting a book into a film is the ability to capture the source text's raw energy. However, the way Danny Boyle visualizes Welsh's writing reflects both the energy and life of the novel. Jonas Thoreson states that Boyle manages to convey the same atmosphere by making use of creative editing ideas (23). For example, the lengthy description in the novel of Renton desperately searching for the lost opium suppositories in the disgusting toilet is presented in a surrealistic way. Diving into the toilet and finding himself in a serene underwater setting, the suppositories are portrayed as glowing pearls at the bottom of the water. The shift from the realistic portrayal of finding the suppositories to the surrealistic underwater dive highlights Boyle's creative process (Thoreson 23). The other challenge the film adaptation faces is drawing the parallels between the use of heroin and other harmful habits. In the novel, the societal critique is presented by drawing parallels between the use of heroin and being in the army, which falls out of the focus of the film. Instead, legal substance abuse like consuming alcohol or smoking is presented, giving the parallel a more humorous side, but because of this, lacking the depth of the novel's societal critique (Thoreson 26).

The depiction of drug usage in cinema is not a newfound topic, thus most of the technical elements have been used before. According to Peter Byrne, "the use of colour, special effects, flashback and flash-forward, varying film speed, and fast editing allow films the opportunity to recreate the hallucinogenic experience" (Byrne 174), which became an important feature in many films with similar topics, like for example in David Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch* (1991). However, while *Naked Lunch* manages to blur the line between hallucination and reality, the experiences of Renton in *Trainspotting* are depicted in a different way (Byrne 174). The famous toilet scene received a lot of backlash from reviewers, some saying that it had crossed the line, but at the same time other reviews argued that it captured Renton's state of mind very effectively. The film showcases both Renton's pleasure and helplessness ultimately "as a clear manifestation of Renton's exhilaration in degradation" (Byrne 174). Renton's sense of unreality is underlined by his overdose which is accompanied by Lou Reed's "Perfect Day,"

further showing Renton's inner turbulence, fundamentally presenting the film's exploration of the effects that addiction has.

“Lust for Life”

The cultural movement that challenged mainstream conventions and redefined the landscape of popular music of the 1970s and 1980s was the newly emerged punk rock music scene. This genre evolved in response to the commercialization of rock music, offering a raw, aggressive and sometimes hostile sound that resonated with the frustrated youth on a worldwide level. One of the most important icons of this scene is Iggy Pop, often deemed as the “Godfather of Punk,” who embodied the movement's essence by provocative performances and a rebellious spirit. He represented the untamed energy and rebellious attitude of punk music, this way influencing many musicians and shaping the genre's evolution. His bold demeanour, provocative lyrics and powerful stage performances changed punk rock, but also helped to start a cultural revolution that is still felt in music today.

“Lust For Life” is one of the most famous songs ever recorded by Iggy Pop, alongside with “The Passenger.” It is featured on his 1977 album with the same title. The song was born during a crucial stage in Iggy Pop's career. He relocated to Berlin in order to leave behind his heroin-addict lifestyle and revive his inspiration for art. That is where he worked together with David Bowie, with whom he co-produced “Lust For Life” during his stay there. The musical inspiration for this piece originates from the opening segment of the American Forces Network News, which the two had the chance to listen to during their stay in Berlin. In a 2013 interview for *Q Magazine*, Iggy Pop reminisced about the starting idea:

“Once a week the Armed Forces Network would play Starsky & Hutch and that was our little ritual. AFN would broadcast an ID when they came on the air, a representation of a radio tower, and it made a signal sound, 'beep-beep-beep, beep-beep-ba-beep.' And we went, 'Aha we'll take that!' David grabbed his ukulele, worked out the chords, and away we went.”

Following its debut in 1977, the song received significant success in countries like The Netherlands and Yugoslavia, gaining the impressive No. 3 spot on the Top 40 charts of both countries. The drumbeat has since been adopted by songs such as Jet's “Are You Gonna Be

My Girl” and other similar works. The song got newfound fame in the 1990s following its feature in *Trainspotting*.

The film starts off with a couple of young men running away from law-enforcements as the iconic drumbeat from “Lust For Life” kicks off. As the chase continues on, the film’s iconic-ironic monologue starts on about choosing life, mundane social constructs, like a job or family, and different modern-day utilities, which all stand as symbols of a normal, usual, simple life:

“Choose Life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a fucking big television, choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players and electrical tin openers. Choose good health, low cholesterol, and dental insurance. Choose fixed interest mortgage repayments. Choose a starter home. Choose your friends. Choose leisurewear and matching luggage. Choose a three-piece suit on hire purchase in a range of fucking fabrics. Choose DIY and wondering who the fuck you are on Sunday morning. Choose sitting on that couch watching mind-numbing, spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fucking junk food into your mouth. Choose rotting away at the end of it all, pissing your last in a miserable home, nothing more than an embarrassment to the selfish, fucked up brats you spawned to replace yourselves. Choose your future. Choose life [...].”

Renton’s iconic monologue that kickstarts the film was inspired by a seminal passage of Welsh’s novel:

“Society invents a spurious convoluted logic tae absorb and change people whae’s behaviour is outside its mainstream. Suppose that ah ken aw the pros and cons, know that ah’m gaunnae huv a short life, am ay sound mind etcetera, etcetera, but still want tae use smack? They won’t let ye dae it. They won’t let ye dae it, because it’s seen as a sign ay thir am failure. The fact that ye jist simply choose tae reject whit they huv tae offer. Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; choose sitting oan a couch watching mind–numbing and spirit–crushing game shows, stuffing fuckin junk food intae yir mooth. Choose rotting away, pishing and shiteing yersel in a home, a total fuckin embarrassment tae the selfish, fucked–up brats ye’ve produced. Choose life. Well, ah choose no tae choose life. If the cunts cannae handle that, it’s thair fuckin problem. As Harry Lauder sais, ah jist intend tae keep right on to the end of the road.” (Welsh 76)

Unlike in the novel, Renton's monologue appears in the opening sequence of the film, this setting the mood of it right away and the heavy Scottish dialect of the novel shows this is going to be a voice against the grain. The opening monologue uses an ironic voice about choosing the commodities of life which are accepted by society, and at the end of the monologue Renton clearly states that he refuses to choose what is accepted (and expected) by society, presuming that heroin exempts him from providing an answer as to why he chooses not to "choose life" ("Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?").

The monologue contradicts what is shown on the screen, as the young men running away from the police must have done something against the law to be chased, thus not following the norms. As the scene progresses, we see the main character, Renton, smoking a cigarette in a beaten-up room, while the monologue progresses: "[choose] good health, low cholesterol, and dental insurance. [...] fixed interest mortgage repayments. [...] a starter home." This, once again, stands in opposition to what the visuals showcase. Instead of seeing a healthy Renton in a healthy setting, we see him in a filthy, run-down environment, smoking weed. The camera cuts to another location, where Renton and his friends are playing a football match, while the monologue continues on. The drum beat is still audible, while Renton talks about choosing things such as "leisure wear and matching luggage," and "sitting on that couch watching mind-numbing, spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fucking junk food into your mouth," clearly criticizing the norm that is accepted by society. As the sequence goes on, the camera shows Renton and his friends when Renton gets hit by a football on the head exactly when the monologue reaches the iconic part of "Choose your future. Choose life", where it transitions to him falling on his back as Iggy Pop sings the renowned opening lines "Here comes Johnny Yen again / With the liquor and drugs and the flesh machine."

In a 1995 interview, Ray Manzarek, the guitar player of *The Doors*, revealed that the first lines of "Lust For Life" were inspired by "Gypsy Johnny," who was their heroin dealer back in California. This detail is significant, since in continuation, Renton asks the rhetorical question why anyone would want to choose these normal and boring things. In this scene, he is once again in that run-down apartment, laying down and exhaling cigarette smoke in the dimly lit environment. The monologue then continues on, with the music still going on, about him choosing something radically different, but not having any reasons on why he does that. The very last bit of the scene wraps up perfectly the whole atmosphere of the film. As the monologue is finished with "Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?", the song reaches the end of the first verse with "About something called love." In this case, "love" is used as a

synonym for heroin which conquers the life of Renton, and everyone involved with him. Having the illegal substance, he feels he needs to provide no explanation as to why he rejects the norm and chooses instead the pleasure and ecstasy that heroin seemingly offers.

Boyle's use of vibrant colours and fast editing in the opening sequences immediately engages the audience in the film's dynamic and chaotic world. The renowned "Choose Life" monologue, accompanied by Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life," illustrates the seamless connection between visual narrative and musical score, creating the atmosphere for the film's look at youth culture and substance abuse. The opening sequence highlights the greater story by balancing the fast-paced life choices with the harsh realities of Edinburgh, at the same time offering a raw and unedited glimpse into the lives of the main characters. Boyle's viewpoint compares the lively and chaotic energy of young people with the gloomy undertone of addiction, resulting in a captivating visual and audio dialogue that draws in viewers on several levels. The use of "Lust for Life" not only increases the scene's fast-paced energy but also provides a level of irony to the story, giving a critique of the materialistic values of the 1990s. The fusion of sound and vision in *Trainspotting* offers a prime example of how the film uses cinematic tools to enhance the narrative, allowing viewers to learn about the complexity of its characters and the world they live in.

The story progresses on with Renton taking the decision to leave this decayed lifestyle behind, with the help of the method that one of his friends, Sick Boy, developed. The scene cuts to Renton's apartment, where he is seen carrying grocery bags that contain the essentials to "relinquishing junk" (*Trainspotting* 0:06:20), while "Habanera" from Georges Bizet's famous opera, *Carmen*, accompanies the young man's first steps towards "conversion." This extra-diegetic element adds a lot of significance to this scene. In the opera, this is the moment where the title character makes her first appearance, a passionate and intoxicating femme fatale whom the male characters cannot resist. While Renton is trying to escape the bewitching nature of the substance, he cannot help and falls victim once again to the temptress that is heroin. All the effort that he made, like buying all kinds of canned soup, medication, vitamins, and locking himself up in his room, are to no prevail. In the end, he is seduced by the very thing he was trying to get rid of. In the end, he breaks out from his room and gets some opium suppositories from a dealer (played by Irvine Welsh, the author of the novel) whom he does not really interact with, but this was a time of need.

As the effect of his last heroin shot starts to clear out, Renton has no choice but to run to the toilet of the nearest pub, since the constipation caused by the heroin starts to disappear rapidly. While making his way towards the restroom, he is fantasizing about “brilliant gold taps, virginal white marble, a seat carved from ebony, a cistern full of Chanel No. 5 and a flunky handing me pieces of raw silk toilet roll” (*Trainspotting* 0:08:40). The restroom in question is a filthy toilet, filled with excrement everywhere together with other bodily fluids (faeces, vomit, urine) and rubbish. He relieves himself, but soon realizes that the suppositories must not have dissolved yet, and he is quick on his knees, madly searching for the suppositories inside the filthy toilet bowl as Bizet’s “Habanera” aria from the opera *Carmen* resumes, showcasing that he is ready to do anything (literally, dive anywhere) in order to obtain the subject of his obsession.

For this scene, Boyle takes on a different perspective. We see Renton as he is slowly diving into the toilet bowl and disappearing. This surreal scene further develops as the camera is cut to an underwater setting, where Renton is swimming in beautiful, clear blue water, while Brian Eno’s “Deep Blue Day” is playing. The contrast between the filthy toilet and the peaceful underwater setting conveys the extremity of the whole situation. The fact that Renton is ready to dive into the filth of filth in order to save the precious suppositories shows how heroin had fully taken control over his life and he is no longer master of his actions. The suppositories are presented as the most precious of jewels, hidden at the bottom of the deep ocean. The ambient music paired with the soothing blue of the underwater world gives the viewers a surrealistic experience. In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, Boyle commented that one’s first instinct when faced with something truly unpleasant is to transform it into something beautiful (Vilkomerson). In this sense, Renton’s hallucination could mean that he escapes the bleak reality of the world by emerging into the deep waters to look for his sanctuary.

Renton’s descent into the filthy toilet is portrayed as a voyage into an ideal, hallucinatory, paradise-like underwater universe. This unusual descent is also a symbolic journey, representing his desire to escape and the tempting attraction of heroin as a short refuge from his sad existence. The surrealist portrayal of the scene serves a double objective: it visually attracts the viewer while also digging into the protagonist’s subconscious. The contrast between the filth of the toilet and the serene underwater sequence highlights the distinction between the everyday of addiction and the false comfort found in drugs. In addition, the dramatic music that accompanies the scene emphasizes this contrast, so strengthening the

idea of the deceiving attraction of addiction and the gradual descent into filth. The combination of this setting along with the soothing music makes a powerful metaphor for the gradual incline into depravation caused by addiction.

“Lead Us Not Into Temptation”

The film’s musical soundtrack is filled with various genres, such as punk rock, in the representation of Iggy Pop; Georges Bizet’s “Habanera” from *Carmen* provides classical elements and Brian Eno’s soothing “Deep Blue Day” represents ambience music. The sound of the 1980s is also heavily present in the form of *Heaven 17*, a British synth-pop band from 1980. The band got its name from the fictional band “The Heaven Seventeen” mentioned in Anthony Burgess’s masterpiece, *A Clockwork Orange* (a novel that is also paid tribute to in *Trainspotting*). “Temptation,” the track featured in the film, got a gritty and synthetic, almost futuristic sound, which is paired with the highly sensual lyrics: “So let’s head for home now / Everything I have is yours.” In an interview for *The Guardian*, singer and songwriter Glenn Gregory said that the inspiration for the song came from the Lord’s Prayer (Watkins). “And lead us not into temptation” from Matthew 6:9–13 was, ironically, the inspiration for the song. In this sense, the song isn’t about the very act of sex, but rather the temptation of it, when this feeling is reciprocated by the person of one’s desire.

The scene cuts to the dark setting of a nightclub, where young people are enjoying the present, while the music “Temptation” accompanies the scene. At first, the camera shows Begbie and Sick Boy, both of them tempted by desire. The scene cuts to Spud and Tommy, who are having a discussion. Spud is telling his friend, that even though he’s been with his girlfriend for 6 weeks, she denies having sex with him, and Tommy tells him that he is also not on the best terms with his girlfriend at the moment. This is the scene the setting of which is inspired by the excellent 1971 adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. The young men are sitting on a sofa and above them the name of the nightclub can be seen, “Voloko Umphetico,” which is a tribute to “Moloko Velocet” from *A Clockwork Orange*, the text even being written in the same font as in the 1971 film. Then, the camera cuts to Renton, as he is standing on the sideline, observing his surroundings. The voiceover during the scene talks about how those who manage to give in to life’s pleasures and temptations are segregated from those who are merely on the sidelines, deeming them as failures. As Renton is walking onto the dancefloor, the lyrics heard is “Lead us not into

temptation,” which clashes with the voiceover, where Renton is talking about how heroin decreased his libido, but now that the substance’s effect is leaving his body, “grim desperation took hold in his sex-crazed mind,” but unfortunately whoever he approached rejected him, leaving him to wander around the dancefloor aimlessly, looking for someone who would reciprocate his primal instincts.

The chords of “Temptation” are interrupted by *Sleeper*’s cover of “Atomic” by *Blondie*. This is the moment where Renton first lays his eyes on Diane, who is standing alone in the bar. As she starts moving through the crowd, Renton is following her with his eyes. “Tonight, make it right” is heard as the voiceover says “And with that, Mark Renton had fallen in love,” marking the start of Renton’s newfound subject of infatuation. He is quick on his feet, running after the girl who is leaving the nightclub. “Atomic” is faintly heard outside as he is trying to catch up with Diane. He is trying to compliment the girl, but she seems unimpressed at first, only giving him vague answers. Renton is taken aback by her witty personality, especially when she says:

“Do you find that this approach usually works, or, let me guess, you’ve never tried it before. In fact, you don’t normally approach girls, am I right? The truth is that you’re a quiet, sensitive type but if I’m prepared to take a chance, I might just get to know the inner you: witty, adventurous, passionate, loving, loyal, a little bit crazy, a little bit bad, but, hey, don’t us girls just love that?” (*Trainspotting* 00:24:10)

Trainspotting also discusses the dynamics of gender roles, through the perspective of the main character. In Guillermo Iglesias Díaz’s reading, Renton is “a character with a special sensibility about personal relationships and sexual tendencies” (Díaz 40) and the interaction between him and Diane serves as an example. Instead of Renton making the first move, Diane is the one who controls the situation, asserting dominance. This is further developed when Renton figures out that she is a minor and Diane threatens to take legal action if he attempts to leave her. Renton and Diane’s relationship challenges traditional gender roles, and ultimately showcases Renton’s vulnerability against Diane’s assertiveness.

The young man does not know whether the girl reciprocates his feelings or not, as she has only given him ambiguous answers, but he is quick on his feet, running to the taxi to go home with Diane, as the guitar riffs of “Atomic” are playing, louder this time. We not only see Diane and Renton, but Spud and Tommy as well, as all three of them are finally get their feelings and desires reciprocated. First, we see Renton and Diane in the girl’s room, as he is

watching her undress, with a clear lustful expression on his face, while “Tonight, make it magnificent” is heard, just as he is about to finally make love to her. Then, the camera cuts to Spud, who is laying on his girlfriend’s bed, passed out from all the alcohol he had consumed throughout the night. She tries to wake the sleeping man up, while “Tonight, make me tonight” plays again, signifying that she was ready to take their relationship to the next step, but to no prevail, as he cannot be awakened. Lastly, in a third narrative parallel, Tommy and Lizzie is shown as they are passionately kissing on the sofa, about to fulfil their sexual desires, when the girl suggests that they watch a videotape with one of their own sexual intercourses recorded, while *Sleeper*’s version of the song fits right in with the atmosphere of the film, giving the viewer a taste of the 1990s British rock scene.

Iggy Pop once again strengthens his stand in the soundtrack of *Trainspotting*, this time with his cult song, “Nightclubbing.” This song, featuring David Bowie, at first might seem like a simple song about the very idea of going to clubs and enjoying the atmosphere, but after taking a closer look at the lyrics, the emotions of disconnection are also present in the song. The hypnotic rhythm of the song paired with the lyrics that describe nightlife as both appealing and rough serve as a sign that shows how nightclubbing might give one temporary relief, but in the long run leaves one hollow on the inside. In the film, this song is playing as Renton and his friends decide “to get back on drugs as soon as possible” (*Trainspotting* 00:34:15).

The hypnotic beats of the song serve as a non-diegetic element, as the audience is shown how Renton is falling back into the dark life of addicts. He steals money from his parents while they are having dinner together, showing the contrast between the life they lead versus the life the young man chose to lead. These scenes are interrupted by a close-up of a spoon in which Renton is “cooking up” the heroin, seconds later we see Renton, in a delirious state, as Tommy, clearly heartbroken, tells him that Lizzie had broken up with him. Distressed, Tommy tries to convince Renton to let him experience the effects of the substance, but Renton refuses at first in order to further preserve the innocence of the heartbroken man, however at the mention of the funds for heroin, there is no more refusal. Their “conversation” is paired with the lyrics of “Nightclubbing” faintly heard in the background: “Nightclubbing we’re nightclubbing / We’re what’s happening” (*Trainspotting* 00:35:55). The dishevelled environment, where the young men succumb to the forbidden pleasure, with its filthy and inhumane setting combined with the hypnotic beats of the Iggy Pop piece sets the mood for the scene. In continuation, we hear Renton’s voiceover, talking about how important the

National Health Service is, when it comes to providing material for the substance. As he is enumerating all the things they had done in order to obtain the said materials, like stealing prescriptions, or even trading with pensioners or alcoholics, the screen shows crimes they committed, such as stealing a television from a retirement home for raising money for their needs. “Nightclubbing” reinforces how heroin is taking over the life of young men, trying to avoid reality and hiding in the makeshift bliss and paradise that this “magical” powder creates. The camera shows, once again, a completely dirty and unkept space, where Renton and his friends are laying in the filth, still in a delirious state from the last dose of liquid paradise, while the baby, Allison and Sick Boy’s daughter, Dawn, is crawling around them on the floor, full of the rubbish that might clearly be dangerous for it. The sequence further illustrates how addiction can make one completely alienated from reality and how it makes one fully succumb to it.

The upside-down shot of Renton laying down is disturbed by a blood-curling scream of a woman, as the riffs of “Nightclubbing” slowly fade out. Next, a shot of the hallway is shown on the screen, but the deep blue colour of the setting suggests that whatever happened can only mean no good. They awaken as the woman enters the room, frantically screaming and running to the nursery where nothing good awaits her. In the most tragic scene of the film, the baby lays in the crib, probably dead for days before her state was discovered by the mother. Everyone stares at the corpse in shock, Sick Boy being the most startled one. Renton does not know how to react; he lacks the empathy and shows no visible reaction. His answer for Sick Boy, who demands his friend to say something, is “I’m cooking’ up,” a verbal reaction that clearly shows how a heroin addict cannot avoid going deeper and deeper into hell. Even in a difficult and heartbreaking situation like this, Renton’s first reaction is to once again alienate himself from the real world and escape to the temporary shortcut that heroin offers.

“Just a Perfect Day”

One of the prominent music scenes of the 1990s was the newly emerged sound of grunge, all the way from the United States of America. Even though it was also popular in Europe, the British music scene gave ground to the birth of a counterculture, which can be characterized by the various regional accents and, most importantly, was inspired by the sound of the 1960s and 1980s British pop music, like *The Beatles*, *The Kinks* or *The Smiths*. This movement later

became known as Britpop, and unlike grunge, it possessed a lighter sound, and the lyrics were filled with British references. During the reign of Britpop, one of the most important and influential bands of the time was *Blur*. Their debut album *Leisure* features one of their most significant tracks, “Sing”. Originally, the song was entitled “Sing To Me” and according to lead singer and songwriter Damon Albarn the theme of the song deals with the loss of childhood innocence and questioning the meaning of life. The rough guitar riffs, drums and piano, mixed with childlike lyrics result in a chilling yet thrilling sound.

Sick Boy, portrayed by Johnny Lee Miller, is sobbing above the dead infant’s crib while Renton’s voice-over tells that “It wasn't just the baby that died that day. Something inside Sick Boy was lost and never returned,” as the first sounds of “Sing” start playing. Finally, the heroin addicts are faced with the bitter reality and consequences of their awful lifestyle. The opening sequence of the film comes back, but in this case the upbeat light-heartedness is replaced with a more aloof and sombre tone. Iggy Pop’s vibrating “Lust For Life” is replaced by the melancholic melody of “Sing.” Now, the focus from carelessness and blissful happiness of the junkie life is shifted to the dark side of this way of living. With the death of the child, they also lost their own innocence. The voiceover during the scene talks about how he needs to get up and keep going no matter what because it will never be enough, as it was meant to be an answer for the lyrics “So what’s the worth / In all of this.” Renton and Spud are caught by the authorities and stand in front of the law, further signifying their loss of innocence, because they must stand trial for the damage they had caused. Unlike Spud, Renton gets a chance to recover, in response he vows that “With God's help, I'll conquer this affliction.” He is let free on one condition, to never cause any more trouble. With the rehabilitation program, recovering heroin addicts get prescribed drugs to combat their addiction, but with Renton one feels he won’t be able to keep his vow.

The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s paved the way to many underground and alternative rock artists. With transgressive lyrics and experimental guitar play, Lou Reed was one of the most prominent members of the genre. In the beginning, he did not get much recognition, playing in the band Velvet Underground. His success came with his departure from the band and starting his solo career, releasing his solo debut album *Transformer* with the help of David Bowie. This album is considered as an important milestone in the history of glam rock, with songs such as “Walk on the Wild Side” and “Perfect Day.” “Perfect Day” tells the story of a couple, enjoying time spent together in the park, and going to the zoo. However, there have been various other interpretations of the song. Some argue that the song actually talks about

Lou Reed's heroin addiction. These claims were rejected by the singer himself, still the arguments might hold some truth. "Perfect Day" stands as a metaphor for drug use and the euphoric bliss that heroin can momentarily induce. The lyrics talk about how "[...] you made me forget myself," which may suggest that the "you" here refers to heroin, given Lou Reed's history as an addict. Boyle's use of Lou Reed's "Perfect Day" in the scene following baby Dawn's death adds a markedly painful, ironic and heart-breaking weight to the film.

Even the court's decision could not stop Renton from giving in to his most precious obsession. Fresh out of the courtroom, still wearing the same clothes he was standing in front of the judge, Renton talks about how the daily 3 doses of methadone to battle the heroin addiction is not enough for him and he desperately needs to go to Mother Superior, their dealer, to get "one fucking hit to get us over this long, hard day." He is standing on the top of a wall, jumping right off it, but the next thing we see is him landing in the run-down apartment of Mother Superior. He is seen once again ordering his usual, "favourite dish" from the "menu," both him and Mother Superior playing they are in a restaurant. This light banter goes on while Mother Superior hands Renton the syringe containing his "usual order." The screen shows a close-up of the young man injecting the contents of the syringe into a vein in his arm as his breath hitches. The copper-coloured liquid gets discoloured by the red blood leaking into the syringe and the next shot invites the viewer into the inside of the syringe, while the drug is pushed into the vein. As the momentary bliss hits Renton, the first chords of Lou Reed's "Perfect Day" start playing. Renton then lies back on the floor, followed by yet another cinematographically iconic scene from the movie: in yet another surrealist shot, he starts sinking into the filthy carpet, disappearing into the ground. From Renton's point of view, the camera shows the surrounding environment through a tunnel-vision, and he is seen having a seizure, losing his consciousness as Lou Reed's calm voice fills the silence: "Just a perfect day, drink Sangria in the park / And then later, when it gets dark, we go home." Renton overdosed himself, his body struggling to cooperate with the hard drug. Mother Superior realises that the young man's reaction to the drug is more serious than usual, so he drags him out of the apartment, calling a cab for him. The sirens of the ambulance are heard as the dealer drags Renton out of the building. As the ambulance races off on the street, Renton is laid flat on the road, with Mother Superior sitting on the road and waiting for a cab. The lyrics "Oh, it's such a perfect day / I'm glad I spent it with you" under this scene add a painful-ironic atmosphere to the scene. While the artist is singing about having spent a perfect day together with a loved one, Renton is lying on the ground alone, completely

knocked out, about to die, waiting for salvation after his rendezvous with heroin. Mother Superior drags the unconscious young man into the black vehicle (that reminds one of a hearse), tossing him inside as Reed sings “Just a perfect day, problems all left alone.” Renton is left alone; the dealer does not want to meddle in, because it might cause massive problems for him. However, he does leave money in the pocket of Renton’s shirt, payment for the cab driver, after all not leaving Renton completely alone. The black vehicle pulls up to the hospital, where the cab driver leaves the unconscious Renton in front of the building, taking the money left for him: “Oh, it’s such a perfect day / I’m glad I spent it with you / Oh, such a perfect day / You just keep me hanging on.” From Renton’s point of view, from the underfloor box of a “coffin,” he is taken to the Emergency Room by two men. A doctor and a nurse try to wake him up so that his body does not succumb to permanent unconsciousness. As the doctor is trying to revive him, we hear “You’re going to reap just what you sow,” while the camera cuts to Renton’s point of view once again, but here the sides of the coffin are the arms of the nurse, who’s looming over him trying to unbutton his shirt. The lyrics are inspired by a Bible verse, more specifically Galatians 6:7: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” The verse talks about the consequences of our actions, and Renton is finally facing the aftermath of his devious lifestyle. In the next shot, the doctor is preparing a syringe, but in this scenario the syringe is not used for injecting a dangerous substance into his veins, quite the opposite. This shows how the object Renton used for injecting the drug can also be used for saving lives. The doctor is trying to save the young man from himself. As the doctor injects the medicine into Renton’s vein, the camera cuts to him rising from the coffin, technically resurrected. He is given a second chance. The parents come and collect the troubled soul from the Emergency Room, the whole family in the back of a cab. All three of them have a troubled expression on their face: the parents worried for their son, and the young man exhausted from all the things that happened to him. In the next scene, the father carries him—the helpless child—in his lap into his childhood room. Renton is placed on his bed, while his parents undress and tuck him in the bed. They lock the door to his room, because they know what he is capable of if not given what soothes his hunger.

Now, Renton is lying uneasy in his bed, since the effects of the last shot are wearing off and his body is craving more. Tossing and turning around, he is unable to rest, while *Underworld*’s “Dark and Wild” techno beats are creating the perfect atmosphere for the scene. The pulsating rhythm of the song enhances the viewer’s experience, witnessing the

nausea and pain Renton is experiencing. Terri Wilkinson's article in *Muse* describes the cold-turkey sequence from *Trainspotting* as an unsettling depiction of addiction. In this moment, Renton is suffering from severe withdrawal symptoms. He is shown sweating excessively and shouting while imagining a baby crawling across the ceiling, with many people speaking to or about him. The noises of dining and shackles bashing against doors contribute to the chaotic and unsettling mood. This sequence points out the raw and terrible effects of withdrawal, helping viewers understand Renton's pain. *Trainspotting* illustrates both the joy and agony of heroin abuse, frequently from the addict's perspective, thus providing an honest glimpse into the addict's reality. Renton's attempt to become clean, for example, is contrasted with his agitated need for a final dose, demonstrating the illusion of control that addicts experience. The film's dark comedy and evocative images, such as Renton's withdrawal hallucinations, provide a captivating insight into the addict's experience, emphasising the way that addiction distorts reality.

As Renton is trying to get some rest, in a frantic vision, Diane appears in front of him in her school uniform, singing "Oh, you've got green eyes, oh, you've got grey eyes / Oh, you've got blue eyes / And I've never seen anyone quite like you before," as if she was singing him a lullaby. This lyric is from "Temptation," however completely different from Heaven 17's "Temptation." Unlike Heaven 17's song which played during the club scene and depicts the fulfilment of bodily desires, *New Order's* "Temptation" is about the feeling one experiences when they cannot stop thinking about someone, in Renton's case this being heroin. In this scene, the lyrics "And I've never seen anyone quite like you before" has a double meaning: it could signify his relationship with both Diane and heroin, since both had a significant impact on him. This sequence is cut short by Renton's parents entering his room, bringing him food which he refuses to eat. Instead, the young man tries to convince his parents to take him to the clinic, but they refuse, stating that the state-organized program did no good to him. Then, he goes on, trying to persuade them, like a child begging his parents for a new toy, to let him get one last shot to ease his pain. As a result of the drug withdrawal, hallucinations plague him: he sees Begbie in the bed next to him, then baby Dawn crawling on the ceiling towards him. The feverish dreams have taken over his mind; he is trying to resist but to no prevail. On the television, he sees his parents attending a quiz show, while Sick Boy is sitting right in front of him, with a biscuit and a cup of tea in his hands, dressed in a gentleman's suit. A scream cuts in, as baby Dawn is crawling closer and closer to Renton, while he is trying to hide away in the bedsheets, in a weak attempt to escape. Then, the camera spins and Spud is

seen, dressed in the attire of convicts with a chain on his ankles, sitting on the top of the door, staring at Renton. The quiz show resumes, now the topic of the show being HIV. All of a sudden, Tommy appears from the shadows in Renton's room, staring at him with dead eyes and starts to talk about how heroin is better than anything one can ever experience, foreshadowing his fate. The show's host asks the parents "Is he guilty or is he not guilty" right when the baby finally reaches Renton's bed, who is screaming at the top of his lungs, uncontrollably shaking in his bed, while the baby slowly turns its head in 180 degrees—another iconic, shocking scene from *Trainspotting*. The scene shows how Renton's guilt about the loss of the baby has always lingered in his mind, and his consciousness does not give him peace. Everything that has happened around him because of heroin haunts him and now that he is rejected the only sanctuary from this madness, he fails to escape and needs to face reality. The hypnotic synth beats accompanying the whole withdrawal-hallucination sequence give the viewer a glimpse into the mess that is going on inside Renton's head. His parents try to calm their son, who is in a manic state, telling him that checking himself out for HIV needs to be done, thus referring to the fact that back then HIV was a big issue among heroin addicts in Edinburgh.

The scene cuts to Renton sitting at a booth, completely disassociated, while older people are enjoying their time, playing bingo. The voiceover talks about how after years of heroin use, in the middle of an HIV epidemic, he manages to stay clean "several years of addiction right in the middle of an epidemic, surrounded by the living dead, but not me -- I'm negative." However, not everyone is as fortunate as he is. In the next scene, the camera shows an apartment building's hallway, where "AIDS JUNKY SCUM" and an arrow is graffitied on the wall with red paint. Seconds later, Renton is calling Tommy's name, as he is banging on his door. The front of Tommy's apartment is smeared with faeces and "PLAGUE" is graffitied with red paint on his door. Finally, Tommy lets Renton into his apartment, but the place underwent tremendous change: all the furniture is gone, piles and piles of rubbish and filth everywhere. The once healthy and innocent Tommy became a low-life heroin addict himself living day-to-day, infected with a disease which was frowned upon. There is only one thing left from his innocent days: a torn Iggy Pop poster hanging loosely on the wall, the only remnant of the past. Renton is playing with the half-deflated ball he finds in the apartment while trying to make small talk with Tommy, however, he is silent. At last, Tommy asks his guest about whether he has taken an AIDS test and if so, what results he got. Tommy is bitter to hear that he is the only one affected by the disease. Even though Renton is heroin-free now,

he helps Tommy out by giving him money, trying to clear his conscious, as he was the one who started his friend's downfall.

London, the capital of the UK, is represented as a culturally diverse city, full of people from different backgrounds. The screen shows a collage of footages from London, with various people, while the upbeat techno beats of "Think About the Way" by *Ice MC* further emphasizes the vastness of the city. Unlike the homogenous Scotland, where a stray American tourist is the talk of the town, here everyone is welcome. Renton starts a new life here, leaving behind his history and embracing the opportunities London can give. He starts working as a real estate agent in the capital, something he grew to enjoy quite a lot. Renton does not keep in touch with his friends back home but gets updates from Diane via letters she writes him. Even though he tries to leave the past behind him, there is no escape for him. First, Begbie shows up, as he is running away from the police because of an armed robbery and settles in with Renton in London. During Begbie's stay, Renton does nothing but tolerate his friend, tending to all his needs. The music that accompanies this sequence is "Mile End" by *Pulp*. The upbeat sounds of the song give the scenes a comical atmosphere. Renton's apartment slowly transforms into a filthy living space, just like what the song is about: "And now we're living in the sky / I'd never thought I'd live so high / Just like Heaven if it didn't look like hell." However, it's not only Begbie who asks Renton for a favour. Renton is shown lying in bed with Begbie and Sick Boy, sleeping next to the two men's feet, in an unpleasant position. His patience is starting to run low however, as Sick Boy and Begbie push his boundaries. Sick Boy pulling stunts like selling Renton's TV and asking him to sell his passport to make business start to get on his nerves. *Elastica's* "2:1" provides the musical sound for this scene, the cool guitar riffs giving a satirical atmosphere, as if the film was some sort of comedy. However, this attitude quickly changes as the camera cuts to a train running on the tracks. The boys need to go back home to Edinburgh to attend the funeral of their friend, Tommy. Even though he started using heroin the last, he is the first one to die.

As Tommy's coffin slowly starts to sink down, a heartbroken sound breaks the silence, as Spud starts singing "Two Little Soldier Boys," a sentimental song about two little boys playing soldiers. Both Tommy and Spud are innocent in their own ways: Spud's naivety and harmless nature is on par with Tommy's innocence. The latter became corrupted because of a heartbreak, no ulterior motive was behind his actions, yet he is the one who dies the youngest.

Sick Boy, Spud, Renton and Begbie once again are together, but the good memories are quickly demolished by Sick Boy, who is proposing a deal to his friends. He has some heroin to sell but needs someone to test it for him. Since he does not trust Spud, it is going to be Renton's duty. After months of being clean, Renton gives in. On the way back to London, he gives himself another, last, shot. However, he makes a clear distinction "But let's be clear about this: there's final hits and final hits. What kind was this to be?" After having experienced both kinds, he wonders whether this will fill him with immense pleasure, or he will end up at the hospital like last time. The synth sounds of "A Final Hit" by *Letfield* give the scene a suspenseful aura. Upon arriving to London, with a tribute to the iconic *Beatles* album cover, "Abbey Road," the four of them are seen walking across the road, each carrying a bag.

The drug deal is successfully delivered, earning the group of friends sixteen thousand pounds. Renton's voiceover talks about the feeling of true friendship he felt in that moment, surrounded by his friends, but knew that this feeling will not last long. As they are sitting in a pub, celebrating the deal, Begbie and Sick Boy leave the money on the table but neither of them trusts the others. While the others are away, Renton and Spud stay at the table, guarding the money. Renton suggests taking everything, but this thought has not even crossed Spud's mind. This makes Renton realize that Spud would not betray him, unlike Sick Boy, who says that he would have already stolen the money if he were in Renton's place.

All four of the friends are sleeping in a hotel room; Sick Boy and Spud on the floor, while Renton and Begbie share the bed. Renton is visibly nervous, chewing on his nails, while Begbie is asleep, holding onto the bag full of money as if his life depended on it. The scene is accompanied by the famous track "Born Slippy" by *Underworld*. Renton slowly gets up, trying not to awaken the others, as he gets ready. While he is walking out of the room with the bag in his hands, Spud wakes up and shakes his head, meaning to stop Renton from what he is doing, but instead he nods to him and steps out of the room.

The closing sequence of the film serves as a resolution of the narrative. With Renton crossing a bridge with the money he had stolen from his friends, he stares right into the camera admitting to betraying his friends. According to Thoreson, "what Renton's parting words convey is a form of cynical reason that enables him to pursue the lie he previously opposed" (Thoreson 29), meaning that Renton rationalizes his behaviour with excuses like they will grow apart, but ultimately admitting that his actions made him a bad person, however he is on

the path to change and become a better person. The closing sequence of the film reiterates the monologue from the opening sequence. Here however, in contrast to the rebellious spirit of the opening argument, the rejection of what society thinks is normal seems to be replaced with the embracement of this “normal,” mundane life. Renton seems to be ready to finally change and leave everything bad behind and start over again, and this time he is going to “choose life:”

“So why did I do it? I could offer a million answers, all false. The truth is that I'm a bad person, but that's going to change, I'm going to change. This is the last of this sort of thing. I'm cleaning up and I'm moving on, going straight and choosing life. I'm looking forward to it already. I'm going to be just like you: the job, the family, the fucking big television, the washing machine, the car, the compact disc and electrical tin opener, good health, low cholesterol, dental insurance, mortgage, starter home, leisurewear, luggage, three-piece suite, D.I.Y, game shows, junk food, children, walks in the park, nine to five, good at golf, washing the car, choice of sweaters, family Christmas, indexed pension, tax exemption, clearing the gutters, getting by, looking ahead, to the day you die.” (*Trainspotting* 01:29:40)

However, Boyle's film certainly does not offer a happy ending, quite the opposite. The ironic tone of the closing monologue does not suggest that Renton has become a better and happier man. The normal life that is presented as the alternative to the life on drugs is in fact just another dead end. Both lifestyles will make one end up in a dead end and there is no good way, *Trainspotting* suggests: choosing to lead the miserable life of drug addicts ruining yourself and everyone else around you or choosing to opt for the mediocre life that consumer society offers is no good way, either. In this sense, the viewer is left with the idea that the youth of the Edinburgh of the 1990s is left on its own with no good prospects, with the possibility of no reasonable, in-between solution for a fulfilled and balanced life. This paper was meant to provide an analysis of how music plays a foreground role in *Trainspotting*, working hand in hand with its excellent cinematography. The carefully selected and arranged musical pieces with their rich lyrics complement the remarkable cinematography of the film, offering a unique, delicate and outstanding cinematic experience. Thus, Danny Boyle's masterly fusion of music and image in *Trainspotting* stands the test of time offering a fresh, fascinating cinematic experience to the present-day viewer too, almost 30 years after its original release. The combination of its select, learned visual world, its unique characters, and

excellent script and soundtrack secure *Trainspotting* a place among the masterpieces of film history.

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