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FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND  
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**Violence and the Negotiation of Musical Meaning in  
Rock, Pop, and Rap Cover Songs**

**Alyssa Woods**

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Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in  
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## Abstract

My thesis uses a synthesis of literary, cultural, and music theoretic frameworks to explore the social and musical meanings of mainstream popular cover songs. My chosen repertoire encompasses songs from the genres of rock, pop, and rap. All of these songs explore the central thematic issue of violence. By providing close readings of these songs, I explore the way in which each song negotiates the narrative of violence from within the codes and conventions of its particular genre or style.

All of the songs in this study demonstrate musical borrowing, either as a cover song, or through the technique of sampling. Since there is currently no single theoretical framework that sufficiently interprets this borrowing, I use a combination of frameworks, including: authenticity, intertextuality, subject-position, Signifyin(g), and representation. A synthesis of these models aids my interpretation of the selected cover songs and helps my examination of the appropriation in each case as well as the artist's socio-musical positioning. I demonstrate how these different concepts interact in song interpretation, each one revealing different subjective aspects of the songs.

In Chapter 1 I examine two versions of the song “97 Bonnie and Clyde”, a song that explores an extreme case of domestic violence. The original, written and performed by rap artist Eminem, and a cover interpretation by female singer-songwriter Tori Amos. I examine how, using the same lyrics, each artist conveys their own social position and message through their vocal and musical presentation. In Chapter 2 I explore how Eminem appropriates music from a female pop artist, Dido. Eminem samples a portion of the song and structures his song “Stan” around the borrowed musical material. In doing so he alters the meaning of her lyrics and music, casting it in the context of his dark

narrative. In Chapter 3 I explore a similar case of musical borrowing. Eminem appropriates the chorus of rock band Aerosmith's well known song "Dream on". Using Stuart Hall's theories of representation I argue that Eminem borrows music and video techniques from the rock genre in order to make an identity claim. In Chapter 4 I examine three different version of the song "Happiness is a Warm Gun": the Beatles' original which uses the gun as a sexual metaphor, and covers by U2 and Tori Amos which both express social commentary on gun violence and gun control.

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## Introduction

### I. A Musical Snapshot

*Da-da made a nice bed for mommy at the bottom of the lake  
 Here, you wanna help da-da tie a rope around this rock? (yeah!)  
 We'll tie it to her footsie then we'll roll her off the dock  
 Ready now, here we go, on the count of free...  
 One... two... free... WHEEEEEEE! (splash)*

The lyrical excerpt shown above depicts a man disposing of his wife's body after having brutally murdered her in a domestic dispute. He is addressing his kidnapped infant daughter who he has brought along for the ride. This excerpt derives from the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" (1999), a gruesome tale that describes how the narrator murdered his wife and then justifies his actions while he disposes of her body in the river. The lyrics presented above are taken from the third verse, at the moment when he throws the body off the dock.

Two very different musical performances of these lyrics exist: the original recording by the author, rap artist Eminem, and a cover by singer-songwriter Tori Amos. These two contrasting versions offer very different narrative, social, and musical perspectives. Eminem's rap setting offers the lyrics in a recited style, with deliberate rhythmic content in the voice, presented in relation to a heavy, repetitive bass beat. Brief utterances made by the child are added to the texture, contributing to the disturbing effect of the narrative. Eminem, as artist, convincingly assumes the voice of the violent male narrator.

Amos's version, by contrast, adopts the narrative perspective of the victim, the murdered mother. Even though the text is only altered slightly, the voice of this woman

emerges through the presentation of the murderer's lyrics. Amos does not maintain the musical elements of the rap genre, but rather is accompanied by strings and piano. The texture and sonority created by her arrangement gives the song a dark and ominous feeling. She adopts a spoken word style for her delivery of the verses, only singing the chorus.

This song example invites us to question how we are meant to interpret the socio-musical meaning of these two very different versions. Even though the lyrics remain almost identical, the different musical interpretations cast different perspectives over the lyrical narrative. The delivery and setting of the lyrics allow for different meanings to emerge, meanings that engage gender, power, and violence from the very immediate perspectives of murderer and victim.

I begin with this musical snapshot in order to introduce and illustrate my theoretical and analytical goals in this study. Although Chapter 1 provides a more thorough analysis of this song, this introduction refers to salient features of the song in outlining my theoretical framework.

## **II. Objectives: Analytical and Theoretical Framework**

The goal of this study is to explore social and musical meanings in songs that encompass gender and violence. By analyzing mainstream popular songs, I will demonstrate the ways in which various genres of popular music address the issue of violence in the lyrics, music, and videos.

I have chosen songs from three of the main genres of mainstream North American popular music: rock, pop, and rap. This material does not reflect all of the genres of popular music since a comprehensive examination is beyond the scope of this study.

The rap song "Stan" (2000) by controversial rap artist Eminem, samples a portion of female pop singer Dido's song "Thank You" (1999), adding a layer of meaning that explores the violent themes of obsession and misogyny. Tori Amos recently released an album, entitled *Strange Little Girls* (2001), featuring songs originally written and performed by men, reinterpreted by Amos from a woman's perspective. The song "'97 Bonnie & Clyde" from this album is a cover interpretation of Eminem's original, recorded in 1999, on *The Slim Shady LP*. Both versions of the song deal with the issue of violence against women. As with "Stan," a comparative analysis of both versions of the song yields interesting interpretive results. Similar to the format of "Stan", Eminem's "Sing for the Moment" from the 2002 album *The Eminem Show*, samples a portion of Aerosmith's "Dream On" (1973) in order to construct the chorus and formal structure of the song. Eminem re-works Aerosmith's music and uses it to represent his own identity and masculinity. Tori Amos's "Happiness is a Warm Gun" (2001), also from *Strange Little Girls*, is a cover interpretation of The Beatles' original, recorded in 1968 on *The White Album*. Popular rock band U2 also recorded a version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" on the *Last Night On Earth* single (1997). The Beatles' original deals with sexuality, and the two cover versions reinterpret the lyrics to comment on gun violence and gun control.

My repertoire surveys a variety of popular music styles with the common theme of violence. In addition to their theme of violence, these stylistically different songs share other commonalities. The songs all have an expanded formal design, convey a powerful

message, and they explore a narrative of specific or situational violence. In the lyrics, this narrative is negotiated from the inside, from the perspective of a very personalized, “subjectified” subject or narrator. Musically, each song negotiates the narrative of violence from within the codes and conventions of its particular genre or style. These lyrical and musical negotiations are the focus of this study: for a given song and its versions, what is the subjective position of the song and how are codes and conventions treated? These questions of subjectivity and musical expression often raise the question of an artist's "authenticity", which is the first theoretical category explored below. Discussion of authenticity leads naturally to the terms **appropriation**, **representation**, **essentialism**, **Signifyin(g)**, and **intertextuality**. This introduction theoretically explores each of these terms. The following analytic chapters apply each of these terms as integrated into the analysis. For ease of understanding, the introduction explores the theoretical concepts of each term independently of each other. These are current terms in literary theory, cultural studies, and musicology and theory, which are often used in discussions of musical meaning. An investigation of these subjects could constitute a thesis on their own, but a thorough investigation of these terms is beyond the scope of this study. I will discuss them here so that the terms will be available for my discussion of the musical analysis.

### **III. Theoretical Categories for Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning in Popular Music**

In the context of questioning compositional derivation and authorial voice in popular music, the term **authenticity** has emerged prominently in critical and analytical

writings on popular music. The concept of authenticity embraces a variety of different interpretive perspectives, including authorial intentions, style and genre manipulation, musical originality, as well as many other aspects of composition, performance, and recording.

In Allan Moore's 2002 article on authenticity in popular music, he defines three primary categories of authenticity: first person authenticity, or authenticity of expression; second person authenticity, or authenticity of experience; and third person authenticity, or authenticity of execution. First person authenticity conveys the performers integrity and genuineness to the audience. Second person authenticity brings the listener into the process and occurs when "a performance succeeds in conveying the impression to a listener that the listener's experience of life is being validated, that the music is 'telling it like it is' for them" (220). Third person authenticity is evaluated when a performer "succeeds in conveying the idea of another, embedded within a tradition of performance" (Moore 2002, 218). Central to Moore's article is the caution that authenticity is ascribed to the music rather than inscribed within it. According to Moore, "Authenticity is a matter of interpretation which is made and fought for from within a cultural and, thus, historicized position" (210). He feels that in further consideration of authenticity in popular music, the emphasis should shift from consideration of the author's intent to the listener's interpretation.

Questioning the authenticity of "cover" versions of songs also invites to raise the question of **appropriation**. In Lori Burns's recent work on cover interpretations of blues and torch songs, she makes some relevant remarks on the reception of cover songs: "A cover will necessarily be received as a *commentary* on or *interpretation* of the original

song. One can even understand the cover as an *appropriation*, since the recording artist will always bring his or her own individual and social musical position to bear on the meaning of the song" (2002a, 1). Even if the recording artist does not intend to appropriate the material for their own purposes, the singer/band will always operate within the cultural codes and conventions of their own musical genre and time period, as well as within their own personal life circumstances. Often, artists covering a song intend to appropriate the material to convey a particular message or meaning. Richard Middleton describes a spectrum of borrowing that ranges from the tribute cover to a parody (2000, 83). The spectrum of covers moves from "exact copies on one end, through tributes, reinterpretations and distinct stylistic shifts, to ideological attacks at the other end..." (83). Middleton emphasizes the fact that, regardless of the type of cover, there is always a dependence on an *originating moment*, an existing version, a starting point to which the cover will relate. Middleton calls this song origin a "transiently privileged moment of departure within networks of repetition, Signifyin(g) and remixing" (83).

Middleton also explores some negative connotations of the appropriation of material that occurs with some cover songs. For example, Natalie Imbruglia's "Torn" (1997) is almost an exact copy of the original, placing it on Middleton's spectrum of covers "so close in every detail to an earlier version by Norwegian singer Trine Rein as to occasion journalistic outrage" (Middleton 2000, 82). In this case, the cover is denied credibility because nothing new is added (82, fn 25). Since the cover was not billed as such in North America, where it was a huge hit, it has a negative connotation. Imbruglia enjoyed popular and financial success with the song without publicly crediting the original of which it was an almost exact copy.

Middleton also gives the example of The Verve's "Bittersweet Symphony" (1997), which is at the other extreme on his spectrum of borrowing. In contrast to Imbruglia's song, which is almost an exact copy, "Bittersweet Symphony", while based on an old instrumental version of "The Last Time" by The Rolling Stones, is "changed and added enough to make the song a legally new entity (albeit still the object of a court case for plagiarism)" (Middleton 2000, 82). In this case, although the material is considerably altered, the appropriation is still negative because it is uncredited.

Middleton discusses several different versions of the song "My Way", which was recorded by Frank Sinatra in 1969. Sinatra's version was a cover of an earlier French song, which was given new English lyrics and which has been imitated and parodied many times. Elvis Presley covered the song in 1977, in what Middleton describes as a tribute. Middleton also describes Sid Vicious's 1979 version with the Sex Pistols as a tribute, but this time a negative one. Adapting the timbral qualities to the genre of punk music, it is possible to see the Sex Pistols' version of "My Way" as an ideologically motivated cover because "there is a conscious effort to make a statement which is in opposition to, and indeed 'mutilates', an existing aesthetic" (Middleton 2000, 83).

Regardless its positive or negative connotations, appropriation is present in all cover versions and should be acknowledged in consideration of the authenticity of the performance. Middleton poses the following question of cover interpretations: "whom do we hear in this situation, the new performer or earlier ones, or both?" (2000, 82). The answer to this question depends on the particular song, the subjective perspectives of the performers, as well as the subjective perspectives of the listeners. My analyses will further explore the issue of appropriation.

The concept of **representation** is an important area of research in many fields, including cultural studies and feminist studies. This study relies, in part, on some theories of representation, particularly those of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, in my interpretation of the musical meaning of the songs in this study.

One definition of representation is "to present, to image, to depict" which implies that something already exists and is being represented (Hall 1997). This conception of representation suggests that meaning is already established as a fixed element. Hall attempts to subvert this idea by proposing that events in the world never have one fixed meaning "so representation never captured the process because there was no fixed meaning to *re-present*" (1997). He believes that representation is the way in which meaning *is given* to the things depicted. Hall believes that "the meaning of an event does not exist until it has been represented" (1997). Therefore, representation is a *process* that gives meaning to something. Representation is part of the event or object itself.

Hall brings culture into the equation by positing that the notion of culture becomes important when one tries to determine *how* meanings enter into the object or event. Hall defines culture as "the way we make sense of, give meaning to the world" (1997). Hall believes that if you privilege the notion of representation as giving meaning, you give culture a central role. Therefore, culture is a system of representation.

For Hall, communication and language complete the circle of representation: "Language externalizes the meanings that we are making of the world (1997). He goes on to claim that "nothing meaningful exists outside of discourse." Since this is a controversial statement, Hall is careful to clarify that he does not mean that the whole world is nothing but language; rather that without language and other forms of

communication, there is no *representation*, and therefore, without language there is no *meaning*. Although language can refer to any type of communication, Hall uses the medium of video/images to illustrate his theoretical stance. I propose that the process of creating meaning through representation also exists in music and that Hall's theoretical approach can be applied to the medium of music. I will explore this idea further in Chapter 3, "Authenticity and Constructions of Masculinity: Violent Themes in Eminem's 'Sing For the Moment' (Reworking of Aerosmith's 'Dream On')" and Chapter 4, "Popular Song as a Political Platform: U2 and Tori Amos's Covers of The Beatles's 'Happiness is a Warm Gun'".

Particularly valuable to this study is Hall's notion of an *identity claim*. According to Hall, an identity claim occurs when a claim of *who the person is* or *what they belong to* is made in the process of representation. As an example of an identity claim, Hall shows an image of the British Olympic team captain, Linford Christie after he had just won the 100-meter sprint at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Christie has the Union Jack wrapped around his shoulders. By carrying the Union Jack, Christie is claiming something about being British. His identity claim reflects three things: he is a winning athlete, he is British, and he is black.

Hall explains that identity claims are also present in advertising. Advertising works by making a claim on identity. Hall believes that viewers only get something out of an image if they position themselves in relation to what the image is telling them. For example, in relation to visual advertising: "Ads only work when we identify with what is represented in the images" (1997). Images all have a range of potential meanings, but the

meaning the spectator receives relies on their engagement with the image. This notion of representation implicates the viewer in the production of meaning.

Representation has also been an important area of investigation in feminist scholarship.<sup>1</sup> "Feminists argue that representation continually creates, endorses, or alters ideas of gender identity" (Humm 1995, 238). Analogous to Hall's views on representation, many feminist scholars also agree that representation or signification includes *processes* by which meanings are produced (Humm 1995, 238). For example, Griselda Pollock believes that we cannot separate reality and signifying processes.<sup>2</sup> Other feminist scholars, such as Laura Mulvey, posit views on representation that are contrary to Hall's research. "Mulvey argues that representation is constructed on the absence or *lack* of female subjectivity because woman is the silent object of a male gaze" (Humm 1995, 239).<sup>3</sup> This is opposite to Hall's theory that representation is created through process.

Hall's concept of representation as a process of giving meaning can raise the question of **essentialism**. In feminist theory, the term essentialism is often used in opposition of constructionism. Essentialist thought holds that differences between men and women are essences, they are inherently biological and universal. Constructionism holds that many of the differences between men and women are not innate but rather socially constructed. Hall's conception of representation involves giving meaning to

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Kappeler (1986), Mulvey (1975), and Kaplan (1983) just to name a few.

<sup>2</sup> Humm (1995, 239) cites Pollack. Further discussion of this topic can be found in Pollack (1987)

<sup>3</sup> Further discussion of this can be found in Mulvey (1975)

something, contradicting the idea of essentialism, where meaning is inherent in something. Following Hall's theory, essentialist thinking can result in stereotypes.

Regardless of whether an essentialist or constructionist stance is adopted, discussion of gender usually relies on the use of the terms "masculine" and "feminine". Toril Moi suggests that we "distinguish between 'feminism' as a political position, 'femaleness' as a matter of biology and 'femininity' as a set of culturally defined characteristics" (Moi 1997, 246). The discipline of feminist studies has now grown to encompass studies on masculinity. Moi's definitions of the above terms could be transferred to studies on masculinity. I will further address issues of gender and masculinity in Chapter 3 "Authenticity and Constructions of Masculinity: Violent Themes in Eminem's 'Sing For the Moment' (Reworking of Aerosmith's 'Dream On')"

The concept of **Signifyin(g)** correlates with Hall's affirmative definition of representation. Lori Burns has applied the concept of Signifyin(g) to the analysis of popular music (2002a). Paraphrasing Henry Louis Gates, Burns explains that Signifyin(g) can be achieved through rhetorical literary procedures, such as irony, parody, and metaphor, that feature repetition and revision. According to Gates, the essence of Signifyin(g) lies in the rhetorical devices themselves, the play of language, and the manipulation of meaning.<sup>4</sup> To illustrate this concept, Burns references Gates's discussion of the African-American Signifying Monkey (a black mythological figure):

"referred to as the trickster, a master of technique, and the  
fascination with his expression is not that he signifies

---

<sup>4</sup> Here, Gates builds on the literary studies of other scholars including Roger Abrahms, H. Rap Brown, Thomas Kochnan, and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan.

something, but that he 'signifies in some way' (Gates 1998, 54). Emphasizing this point, Gates asserts that herein lies a difference between European usage in which signification denotes meaning, and black vernacular usage in which signification denotes ways of meaning. Simply put, in Signifyin(g), process is privileged over literal content" (Burns 2002a, 2).

Following this line of thinking, Burns points out that privileging process over content leads to privileging the signifier over the signified. Burns states: "if the way is more important than the content, then the subjective voice is important as the medium for the rhetorical process" (2002a, 2). Burns quotes H. Rap Brown who defines Signifyin(g) as "'a way of expressing your own feelings,' thus placing the subject and the subject's position at the center of the ritual" (3). The process of Signifyin(g) brings the subject into the center, the point that ties in with Hall's definition of representation. If representation is a process, this necessarily involves the audience. In this sense, one could observe the process of Signifyin(g) as an act of representation. This position allows for the performer to participate in the act of representation, Signifyin(g) on a particular text.

It is very empowering to identify that the artist as individual is offering subjective interpretation, but what does that mean for the listener? How do we receive such meanings? How do we evaluate and interpret the manipulations of convention? This raises the question of the listener again, as we observed in Moore's second person

authenticity, and Hall's identity claim. Popular music scholar Eric Clarke has another way of dealing with this question.

Clarke applies the concept of **subject-position** from film studies to music. The notion of subject-position suggests that a given text, such as a film, or in this case a piece of music, elicits a particular response from the reader. Although it is understood that every spectator brings a different background to a viewing or listening experience, and, therefore, interprets the text differently, the creator can frame the piece to impose limits on that interpretation (Clarke, 1999). Clarke applies the concept of subject-position to the analysis of Frank Zappa's "Magdalena" (1972). Through his musical analysis, Clarke demonstrates how the song's subject-position "is a complex and distancing mixture of ridicule, melodrama, smutty fun, and real or simulated arousal" (1999, 371). The song's shifting and ambiguous subject-position is projected through frequent changes in musical style, the use of caricature and excess, and contrast and contradiction between the 'tone' of the lyrics and the music.

The differing analytical approaches in this study derive from the emphasized musical elements of each piece. For example, in Tori Amos's version of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde," her unusual vocal delivery commands the listener's attention because it is so unconventional. Therefore, an analysis of her vocal strategy may bring out aspects of the piece that we are obliged to hear. To analyze the passage of music described above, Clarke would consider elements of form, phrasing, rhythm, voice, texture, and production techniques to provide insight on the social message contained in the music.

A literary-theoretical term that proves to be the most flexible in the consideration of *meaning* in popular music is **intertextuality**. It allows for the coexistence of all the

terms that I have explored above, allowing for the shifting of perspective within a single text. The concept of intertextuality is particularly relevant to popular music analysis and criticism because of the extensive borrowing of materials that exists in most genres of popular music and is an important approach to the interpretation of meaning. The term intertextuality was coined by literary theorist Julia Kristeva in the 1960s and has been applied to music scholarship by authors such as Richard Middleton (2000), Serge Lacasse (2000), and Mark Spicer (2002). Middleton's definition of intertextuality explains that "all texts make sense only through their relationships, explicit or implicit, with other texts" (2000, 61). Middleton discusses the relation of popular music to conceptions of the musical work and outlines various popular music practices that fall within the definition of intertextuality (2000, 61). These practices include the collaborative process involved in most popular music production (such as lyricists, songwriters, arrangers, producers, video directors, etc.), aural reception, oral transmission, and extensive borrowing (reliance on formulae, groove and riffs, etc.).

One of the theoretical approaches that Middleton discusses in this article is the comparison of versions. Recordings are the primary form of disseminating popular music and Middleton believes that this has "contributed to the 'fixing' of pieces in apparently definitive versions" (2000, 77). Recordings can turn performances into icons. According to Middleton, a comparison of different recordings of the same piece:

documents a work's history but also lays before us a slice of that intertextual world of practice which gave it birth, enabling the listener to follow the Signifyin(g) dialogue

between variants. Similarly, although recordings do in one sense freeze process into product, in another they do exactly what their name suggests - record a moment, a memory of a moment... (2000, 78).

Middleton's point is that although recordings do 'fix', they also focus the listener's attention on the critical activity of comparing versions and the importance of covers. He believes that "remix culture", involving the use of recordings as raw material (sampling, scratching, etc.), naturally follows from "the practice of making multiples mixes aimed at different contexts", and "the record becomes an instrument of performance." (2000, 78).

Middleton also discusses the theoretical approach of stylistic fusion in remixes. He describes Grandmaster Flash's 1981 piece "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel" in which Grandmaster Flash draws on material from six other existing records. Middleton describes the result of this stylistic fusion as "an entertaining intertextual exercise in which the Signifyin(g) relations traditionally connecting performances are transferred into the operations of 'tape memory'" (2000, 80). It is important to recognize that although all six pieces intermingle in this recording, Grandmaster Flash still emerges as the author of this piece.

With the appropriation of material that occurs with a cover version, Middleton asks who we hear in the cover version (2000, 82). Do we hear the new performer or the earlier one(s), or both? As mentioned above in my discussion of appropriation, Middleton emphasizes the fact that there is always a privileged, originating moment to which all other versions refer. The concept of intertextuality allows for the voices of the original

artist as well as that of the artist covering the song to emerge in an interpretation. Intertextuality allows for all of the concepts discussed above to interact and emerge in an interpretation. It is for these reasons that the term intertextuality will emerge prominently in my analyses of various cover songs in this study.

#### **IV. Music Analysis**

The analysis and interpretation of the chosen music for this study borrows from the methods and approaches of popular music literature, feminist theory, and cultural studies discussed above. Since this study works with various styles and genres, I will need to use appropriate analytic techniques for each. This type of approach has a precedent in Burns's book, *Disruptive Divas* (2001). In the course of interpreting songs of various styles and genres, Burns uses different analytic approaches for each song, while maintaining a common interest in the role of the voice. Following Burns's approach, I will use appropriate analytic tools for each song, privileging the interpretation of the musical meaning. Some of the analytical tools I will use include text-music relations, harmonic and motivic analysis, formal organization, vocal strategies, as well as instrumental and production techniques.

This study consists of four analytic chapters in which I will implement a case-study approach to the repertoire discussed above. In Chapter 1, "Voice and Body in Musical Intertextuality: Tori Amos's Interpretation of Eminem's "97 Bonnie and Clyde", I explore how both Eminem and Tori Amos negotiate the theme of violence in their respective versions of "97 Bonnie and Clyde". The terms intertextuality, authenticity, and appropriation will be used to explore musical meaning in both the original and the cover

interpretation. I will demonstrate how Amos manipulates Eminem's formal structure to offer a woman's perspective on the horrific narrative depicted in the song.

In Chapter 2, "Borrowing and Appropriation in Rap: Eminem's ('Stan') Interpretation of Dido's 'Thank You'", I discuss the ways in which Eminem distorts the meaning of Dido's original material by placing it in a different context, both musically and in the narrative. I will examine how Eminem conveys social commentary through the music, lyrics, and video. The implications of Eminem's borrowing of Dido's material will be explored by applying the interpretive frameworks of appropriation, authenticity, and intertextuality.

In Chapter 3, "Authenticity and Constructions of Masculinity: Violent Themes in Eminem's 'Sing For The Moment' (Reworking of Aerosmith's 'Dream On')," I examine issues of authenticity, appropriation, intertextuality, and masculinity in Eminem's "Sing for the Moment" (2002). Similar to "Stan", Eminem borrows the musical backdrop and chorus of Aerosmith's classic rock song "Dream On" (1973) to structure his song. Based on Stuart Hall's theories of representation, I explore the ways in which Eminem makes an identity claim in his song and video by combining cultural signifiers of masculinity.

In Chapter 4, "Popular Song as a Political Platform: U2 and Tori Amos's Covers of The Beatles' 'Happiness is a Warm Gun'", I explore three different versions of the song "Happiness is a Warm Gun": The Beatles's original (1968), a cover version by U2 (1997), and a cover interpretation by Tori Amos (2001). Both cover versions convey social messages about gun violence and gun control. An exploration of all three versions shows how the artists use different musical strategies to make an identity claim and negotiate

meaning. The concluding remarks for this chapter will also serve as a conclusion for the thesis.

*Musical Examples.* The musical examples are provided in Appendix 1. They are labeled with the chapter number followed by the example number within that chapter. For example, the first example in Chapter 1 will be labeled 1-1, the second 1-2, etc., and the first example in Chapter 2 will be labeled 2-1. All of the song lyrics will be provided in Appendix 2 in the order in which they appear in the thesis.

*Bibliography.* The bibliography is a guide for anyone interested in popular music studies. I have compiled as complete a bibliography as possible in the areas of popular music analysis and popular music studies. The list of sources I have included on gender studies, cultural studies, and popular music journalism are less comprehensive and are mainly comprised of the sources I consulted during the course of this investigation.

## Chapter 1

### **Voice and Body in Musical Intertextuality: Tori Amos's Interpretation of Eminem's "'97 Bonnie and Clyde"**

*The ghost of this woman showed me, as she lay dying in the songworld.  
She's hearing him say his version to 'their' daughter. She cannot protect her daughter,  
who'll be made an accomplice in a very... rhythmic way.*

*-Tori Amos, cited in L. O'Brien 2002, 207*

The song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde", originally written and performed by rap artist Eminem (1999), is a narrative that explores an extreme case of domestic violence. Female singer-songwriter Tori Amos recorded a cover interpretation of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" (2001) to present a woman's perspective of the song. Using the same lyrics, both artists create very different musical presentations, each negotiating the theme of violence differently. Each artist conveys their own social position and message through their vocal and musical presentation. The terms intertextuality, authenticity, and appropriation, discussed in the introduction, will be used to explore musical meaning in these two versions of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde". This chapter explores and develops the interpretive issues that arise in the application of these three terms through the analysis of both versions of the song. A comparison of Eminem's original and Amos's cover version will illustrate how these two artists manipulate textual and musical elements in order to communicate a social message.

### '97 Bonnie and Clyde

Rap artist Eminem gained an immense amount of popularity with the release of his 1999 album *The Slim Shady LP*. Since then he has released two more solo albums, an album with the group D12, and starred in the movie *8 Mile*, drawing criticism because of his controversial lyrics, statements, and actions. Eminem's solo albums are named after his different personas: *The Slim Shady LP* (1999) after his alter-ego, *The Marshall Mathers LP* (2000) after his birth name, and *The Eminem Show* (2002) after his stage name. The voice of Slim Shady emerges as a character through which Eminem is able to express social commentary in a first-person narrative that does not necessarily reflect his own personal views or actions. He uses Slim Shady to shock people by presenting them with views that most artists would not or could not express. This alter-ego allows Eminem to be detached from the strong social issues that he expresses in his music: "Slim Shady is just the evil thoughts that come into my head, the things I shouldn't be thinking about...people should be able to determine when I'm serious and when I'm messing around" (Eminem in Williams 2002, 11). Eminem has a wide fan base, but receives a lot of negative attention due to the offensive nature of his lyrics, which many people feel encourage hate crimes against women and homosexuals. Fitting with the controversial nature of his work, the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" describes how the narrator has murdered his wife and justifies his actions as he disposes of her body in the river.

Tori Amos is well known for expressing social and feminist issues in her music. Responding to the increasing level of violence in our culture, she recently released an album of cover songs entitled *Strange Little Girls* (2001). Although originally written and

performed by men, Amos reinterprets each of the songs on this album from a woman's point of view, adopting many different perspectives over the course of the album. One of the most controversial songs on the album is her rendition of Eminem's "'97 Bonnie and Clyde." Amos assumes the voice of the murdered woman in order to problematize the issue of violence against women.

Of the three terms explored in this chapter, intertextuality is privileged because, unlike authenticity or appropriation, intertextuality allows for interpretation of multiple voices in both Eminem's presentation and Amos's presentation. My intertextual approach will focus on a variety of production techniques and vocal strategies (such as whispering, declamation, and rhythmic patterning) that illuminate authorial intent and social positioning. A comparison of the two versions will show how Amos manipulates both textual and musical elements to portray the voice of the victim as well as the voice of the perpetrator, and the voice of social commentator.

### **Eminem's Original**

Eminem wrote "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" during the summer of 1997, before his first record deal. He was having marital problems and his wife was preventing him from seeing their daughter, Hailie (Eminem 2000a, 31). Eminem claims that his original reason for writing the song was to upset his wife. Eminem discusses the concept behind the song: "Originally DJ Head made the beat. It didn't sound like the Bill Withers version anymore. Head had the bass line going down like 'tunt-tu-tunt tunt tad dunt, tunt-tu-tunt tunt tad dunt'. So it just clicked in my head instantly. A song about just me and my

daughter"<sup>1</sup> (Eminem 2000a, 31). Eminem's song is loosely based on the Bill Withers and Grover Washington Jr. song "Just the Two of Us" (1980)<sup>2</sup> (the lyrics to "Just the Two of Us" are provided in Appendix 2). Eminem takes this seemingly innocent love song and turns it into a narrative about violence.

The origins of the title "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" are found within the context of early 20th century Americana. The song's title refers to Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow who were infamous criminals during the Great Depression. The pair met in 1930 and were linked to their first crime in 1932. For two years they worked their way across the American southwest, holding up gas stations, restaurants, and banks. In that time they killed twelve people, most of whom were law enforcement agents. In 1934, Bonnie and Clyde were ambushed and killed by police in Louisiana.<sup>3</sup> Given the social context of the title of his song, Eminem suggests the relevance of this famous pair in the story that he tells. Eminem's narrative of a father and baby daughter aligns itself with the well-known story of Bonnie and Clyde. By choosing this title, Eminem implicates his daughter in the crime. Eric Clarke's concept of subject-position is relevant here. If the listener is familiar with the story of Bonnie and Clyde, the song title colors their interpretation of the song. Independent of the song title, it may have been possible to view the narrator's daughter as simply being present as an observer rather than as an active participant. By naming the song after a male/female crime team, Eminem implies that his daughter is somehow

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<sup>1</sup> Another rap artist, Will Smith, also used the chorus of "Just the Two of Us" to record a song about his relationship with his son (1997).

<sup>2</sup> Grover Washington Jr. 1980. *Winelight*. Elektra/Asylum.

<sup>3</sup> A more thorough description of these events can be found in Milner (1996) and Steele and Scoma (2000).

involved in this crime, if not physically, then perhaps as the catalyst in the narrator's mind. The daughter's participation is further explored in my discussion of the lyrics.

*Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.* After an examination of the lyrics and musical characteristics of Eminem's original, I will explore the perceptions of authenticity that can emerge in a reading of this song. Using Allan Moore's framework (2002), discussed in the introduction, I will explore Eminem's authenticity of expression, the authenticity of the song within the rap genre, and the listener's role in the interpretation. I will also discuss how intertextuality allows multiple perspectives and voices to emerge in this song.

*Lyrics.* As mentioned above, the lyrics of "97 Bonnie and Clyde" are presented in the style of a narrative, telling the story of a man who has just slit his ex-wife's throat, kidnapped his infant daughter, and who is on his way to dispose of the body. The story is told through the protagonist's conversation with his daughter as they drive to the beach and dispose of the body in the water. Much of the lyric content involves the narrator's justification for his own actions: his ex-wife's remarriage and attempt to start a new life and family without him. Also, the narrator implies that his wife prevented him from seeing his daughter. These serve as his motivation and justification for the murder.

The first thirty-six seconds of the song, a remarkable length of time in the context of popular song, consists solely of a variety of sound effects that set the stage for the grisly narrative of "97 Bonnie and Clyde." The listener hears the sound of something heavy being dragged, which one can later infer is the body. Then the listener hears the

sound of a car being unlocked and something loaded in the trunk. This is accompanied by the sound of passing traffic. This section ends with the sound of a car door being unlocked, opened, and then closed, followed by the immediate start of the rhythm and vocals. Although the listener may not yet realize what the sound effects are meant to represent, this later becomes clear during the presentation of the lyrics.

Another element that contributes to the vivid quality of this story is the presence of his infant daughter who he addresses throughout the song. As the narrator attempts to justify the murder to his daughter, he delivers some of the lyrics in child speech. For example, the word "daddy" is changed to "da-da," and "three" is pronounced "free." The enacted conversation is realistic, since the daughter can also be heard taking part in the conversation through occasional interjections. We hear baby sounds and words such as "yeah," "no," and "mama," creating a real presence of the child as part of the story. In addition to contributing to the disturbing qualities of the narrative, her presence also implicates her in the crime: in the protagonist's mind, she is the "Bonnie" to his "Clyde."

After the sound effects of the introduction, Eminem repeats the phrase "Just the two of us" eight times. This overlaps with six lines of text in which the narrator expresses his love for his daughter (the lyrics are provided in Appendix 2). As well as expressing his love for her, he also expresses his desired possession of her ("I would never give you up for nothing"). The mother, however, has restricted his access to their daughter, thus denying his desired possession and setting up his rationalization for the murder. His love for his daughter and his desire to be with her is his justification for the murder. The first time the listener hears this justification is in the following line: "Nobody in this world is ever gonna keep you from me."

There are many instances throughout the song where the protagonist attempts to minimize the severity of the crime in his conversation with his daughter. The narrator attempts to trivialize the violence by presenting it in terms that would be relevant to a young child. Although we know that the harsh details of the crime are being softened for the benefit of the daughter, they also speak to the listener. The trivialization of the violence through his explanations to his daughter might be said to underscore the potential impact of domestic violence. A few lyric quotations from the first verse will illustrate this nicely. In verse 1, line 3 ("Oh where's mama? She's takin a little nap in the trunk") the narrator explains the mother's absence by telling his daughter that she is sleeping in the trunk. In line 8 ("Don't play with dada's toy knife, honey, let go of it") the murder weapon is dismissed as a toy knife. In lines 12 through 14 the protagonist refers to a mortal wound as a "little boo-boo" and blood as ketchup. This "simplification" of the crime scene description continues throughout the song, constantly heightening the emotional impact of the violence.

The chorus also affirms the justification for the father's actions. As in the introduction, the chorus consists of the phrase "Just the two of us" repeated eight times. This short phrase emphasizes his desire to be with his daughter, and it is this desire with which he justifies his actions.

In the second verse, the narrator indicates his realization that his actions will have consequences. This is clearly shown in lines 1 to 3 ("There's a place called heaven and a place called hell, a place called prison and a place called jail. And dada's probably on his way to all of em except one"). Ironically, although he has been justifying the murder through his desire to spend time with his daughter, these lines reveal that he knows he

will go to jail. His violent actions may have taken care of the immediate problem but the narrator may not have thought of the more serious consequences before the murder. The lines immediately following this ("Cause mama's got a new husband and a stepson, and you don't want a brother do ya?") once again attempt to justify his actions to his daughter.<sup>4</sup>

The daughter's implication in the crime is solidified by several statements in the second and third verses. The last line of the second verse ("Ninety-seven Bonnie and Clyde, me and my daughter") clarifies the song title for any listener who may not have yet caught the reference. This phrase clarifies that his daughter is Bonnie, and officially implicates her in the crime. The narrator also implicates his daughter in lines 7 and 8 of the third verse ("Here you wanna tie a rope around this rock? We'll tie it to her footsie then we'll roll her off the dock"). The daughter responds with "Yeah." At this point in the song, the daughter is not just implicated but is an unknowing participant in the crime.

The song closes with a coda section, returning to the lyrical style of the introduction. The protagonist expresses his love for his daughter and assures her that he will always be there for her. This is a contradiction because he has already stated earlier in the song that he will probably go to prison for committing this murder. He therefore knows that he will not always be there for her. He has likely just robbed her of both parents and any chance at a normal life. Despite this, the coda carries with it a sense of compassion, suggesting that the protagonist does feel remorse. Eminem accomplishes this by articulating change in the protagonist's tone of voice.

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<sup>4</sup> In the last line of verse 3 ("But first, just help dad with two more things out the trunk"), Eminem alludes to the possibility that the narrator has also murdered the new husband and stepson. This is further reinforced by the album cover of *The Slim Shady LP*, which depicts the narrator standing on the dock with his daughter, looking out over the water, and somebody's legs sticking out of the trunk of his car.

I will now examine the formal structure, rhythm, and phrasing in order to reflect on the musical meaning of this song. The lyric interpretation is important to keep in mind as we examine Eminem's rigidly constructed formal structure. Eminem appears to place a horrific act of violence into a normative context with his construction of the formal structure of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde."

**Form.** Eminem exploits symmetrical forms in his structure for "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" (see Example 1-1). The introduction can be divided into two parts, the first section consisting of sound effects and the second part consisting of text. The coda of the song mirrors this content, with a section of text followed by a section of music. The introduction and coda form the symmetrical outer shell of the formal structure. Within this, there are three verses, each one paired with a statement of the chorus. The song's symmetry establishes a regular structure that is further amplified by the internal phrasing, which will be discussed below.

**Rhythm and Phrasing.** Eminem creates regular four-bar phrases with his use of rhythm. He uses one rhythmic pattern of one measure in length to structure the entire song (see Example 1-2). Each phrase is comprised of four repetitions of this rhythmic pattern. This rhythmic pattern is introduced at the beginning of the first verse and is repeated throughout the song. The continuity of rhythm provided by this repetitive pattern presents a sense of stability and unity in the song. At various points, the rhythmic pattern is followed by the sound of a record being scratched, a common technique in the production of rap music.

Each verse has 16 lines of text, each line of text supported by one repetition of the rhythmic pattern. The first verse can be divided into four 4-bar phrases, each containing four lines of text. Each phrase is concluded with record scratching.

The chorus can be divided similarly into eight lines of text that are supported by eight statements of the rhythmic pattern. The regular 4-bar phrasing from the verse is also present in the chorus, which can be divided into two large phrases. Each phrase is then divided into two sub-phrases, and each sub-phrase is followed by scratching.

The moments when the record scratching occurs in the second and third verses do not correspond to those of the original statement of verse and chorus. However, since the regularity of the phrasing was well established in the first statement, the sense of 4-bar phrasing remains intact for the remainder of the song.

As with most rap music, this song has a very regular, rhythmic flow. Because the beat is constant throughout the song, any interruption of the rhythm is considered to be significant. In "'97 Bonnie and Clyde", the regular sense of phrasing is only interrupted at one moment in the song. The rhythmic pattern that is present throughout the song is absent for one line of text -- line 10 in verse 3 ("One...two...free... Wheeeee!"). This is the moment in the narrative when the narrator throws the body into the water. This music includes the sound effect of a splash at the end of the phrase as the body supposedly hits the water. Such an interruption of the regular rhythmic flow heightens the tension at this moment, the climax of the song.

One section of the song that does not feature the regular rhythmic backdrop is the introduction. Its sparse rhythmic texture is a persistent heavy bass that accents the vocal line. The line "Just the two of us" is punctuated by three low pulsing beats on the words

"just," "two" and "us." At the beginning of the first verse, this beat is blended into the regular rhythmic pattern of the song. The three accentuated beats recur in the chorus punctuating the same three words. Because the beats are not as close to the surface of the music as they are at the beginning, they are not as audible.

Eminem narrates this song from the perspective of his alter-ego Slim Shady. Eminem's use of a different voice raises the question of his authenticity of expression. Using Allan Moore's theoretical framework (2002), as discussed in the introduction, we can ask if this is a case of first person, second person, or third person authenticity. As mentioned earlier, Moore concludes that these different types of authenticity overlap, as we see demonstrated in this example. First person authenticity relates to the performer's integrity of performance — is it genuine? Since Eminem performs in the voice of Slim Shady, his integrity could be questioned. However, recalling Eminem's quote from page twenty, the voice of Slim Shady is meant to be a release of Eminem's subconscious thoughts. In this sense, Eminem is claiming that his performance is genuine because the voice of the violent perpetrator originates somewhere in his psyche.

We can also bring Moore's idea of second person authenticity into the discussion. How does the listener respond to this gruesome story? Eminem's rigid formal structure and detached vocal delivery of a very horrific act of violence seems to isolate the listener. This is partly accomplished by Eminem's role as social commentator in "'97 Bonnie and Clyde".

With Moore's classification of third person authenticity, we consider the success of the artist within a particular tradition of performance. In this case, Eminem is working

within the constraints of a particular tradition — that of inner-city Detroit rap. This tradition of rap music carries with it a social context of race, poverty, violence, and hardship. The listener's perception of the performance as authentic would be measured against that particular tradition. Eminem's performance outwardly seems to fit somewhat with the violent aspect of this tradition, but does not carry with it the other connotations of race and poverty. Nevertheless, Eminem has been extremely successful among his colleagues and the public, despite the fact that he is a white rapper working within a predominantly African-American genre of music.

I propose that we consider Eminem's version in terms of intertextuality. The concept of intertextuality will allow us to consider the persona of Slim Shady, who caused us to pause in the attribution of first person authenticity. The rubric of intertextuality offers us the chance to appreciate Eminem as social commentator, as listeners considering the category of second-person authenticity. Finally, it allows us to consider the ways in which Eminem works within the rap genre as a white artist entering that musical context our concern for third-person authenticity.

Intertextuality also offers the possibility of multiple perspectives and voices. Eminem's version represents multiple voices in the story, that of child, mother, perpetrator of violence, and Eminem as social commentator. These multiple voices suggest all of the possible perspectives in this story — all stakeholders are represented. Although issues of authenticity are relevant, the concept of intertextuality allows for the multiplicity of voices in this narrative.

From an analytical point of view, Eminem uses this normative structure as a site for his violent story. The multiple voices are enacted over a rigid, dominant structure.

Eminem's care over this structure, his deliberate crafting of his music, is demonstrated in the following quotation: "When are people gonna see how crafted the music is and how much time I spend on making the music?" (Eminem in Williams 2002, 46). This symmetrical formal structure combined with the associative context of rap music (violence, gangster rap) creates an ominous backdrop for the violent scene of this story. I would argue that Eminem delivers the lyrics over this conservative structure in order to bring the listener's attention to the issue of domestic violence. Eminem is not encouraging this type of behavior, simply acknowledging its existence. He is portraying the anger that is felt by many violent males in order to emphasize the horror of it.

### **Tori Amos's Version of '97 Bonnie and Clyde: Appropriation, Authenticity or Intertextuality?**

Tori Amos performs each song on the album *Strange Little Girls* from the perspective of a different female character. She uses various marketing strategies to represent these female characters. To reinforce the identity of each of the characters "singing" the songs, she provided promotional album liner photos of herself dressed as the different characters. In addition, novelist Neil Gaiman wrote twelve stories that serve as mini biographies for the characters<sup>5</sup> (Appendix 3 provides Gaiman's story for "'97 Bonnie and Clyde"). Similar to the Slim Shady character, the different personas that Amos adopts for each song on the album allow her to provide a variety of perspectives on social issues. These distinct personalities allow her to remain somewhat more detached than if she were to perform them from her own perspective. "Amos's goal with *Strange*

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<sup>5</sup> The Neil Gaiman stories were provided in the Strange Little Girls tour program. These stories and the accompanying photos can be found at: Neil Gaiman, *Tori Amos: Strange Little Girls*, 2001. Available from the World Wide Web <[www.strange-little-girls.com/stories.html](http://www.strange-little-girls.com/stories.html)>.

*Little Girls* was to explore the world of men, how men see women, how men see themselves, and how a perspective can shift. She also wanted to focus on violence and identity. Amos said of the idea, 'I've always found it fascinating how men say things, and how women hear them'" (Davis 2001, 1). It is interesting how Amos's comment aligns with Moore's notions of first person and second person authenticity. The performance may be a genuine position on issues from the male performer's perspective but may not validate a second person female listener. Offering a woman's perspective seems to be one of Amos's motivations in creating this concept album.

Amos's album serves as a social commentary on issues of gender, sexuality, and violence in Western culture. Amos states: "Music is always a reflection of what's going on in the hearts and minds of the culture... If you're singing songs that are about cutting women up, usually these guys are tapping into an unconscious male rage that is real, that's existing — they're just able to harness it. So to shut them up isn't the answer. They're a gauge; they're showing you what's really happening in the psyche of a lot of people" (Van Horn 2001, 2).

Amos's rendition of Eminem's "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" is a commentary on the issue of domestic violence. "While she is neither supporting nor condemning Eminem, she feels that many of his defenders minimize the effects of lyrics. That, she says, in large part fueled her desire to make this album" (Amos in Hochman 2001, 2). Amos states:

"I would hear a lot of people say, 'They're only words, what is everybody going on about?' That's where I said I could pick up the gauntlet. I believe in freedom of speech, but

you cannot separate yourself from your creation. We go back to the power of words, and words are like guns... Your fingerprints cannot be erased from your words; you only leave the scene of the crime covered in ink. A person has to take responsibility for their words. We as writers cannot separate ourselves from what we create... Whether you choose the graciousness of Tom Waits or the brutality of 'Bonnie and Clyde' they're equally powerful, and that's what drove me" (Atlantic Records 2001).

Amos's perspective in this song is very different from Eminem's. Both artists chose to align themselves with different characters. Amos states: "I did not align with the character he represents. There was one person who definitely wasn't dancing to this thing and that's the woman in the trunk" (Nelson, 2001). She feels that the woman's perspective was missing from this song, saying, "But when you kill your wife, you don't get to control whom she becomes friends with when she's dead. She had to have a voice" (Jeckell 2001, 1).

*Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.* The concept of intertextuality is useful here for several reasons. First, like Eminem's version, Amos's version also represents multiple voices: that of the victim, the child, the perpetrator of violence, and Amos as social commentator. An intertextual approach allows for the multiplicity of voices to exist. Second, the idea of intertextuality is relevant here, as Amos's version is most clearly

understood in relation to Eminem's original version. Eminem's voice as social commentator is inherently present in opposition to Amos's role as social commentator. Amos's manipulations of text, texture, and form are key features in understanding the meaning of her version.

Questions of authenticity can also be posed about Amos's version. Just as Eminem assumes the voice of Slim Shady to offer the perspective of the violent male, Amos assumes the voice of the dead mother to offer the perspective of the victim.<sup>6</sup> Which of Moore's conceptions of authenticity are relevant here? Is Amos's performance genuine? She uses the voice of the victim, rather than her own to convey social meaning, but her own voice does emerge as social commentator. Is the listener's experience validated? These are questions that should be considered as we proceed to an examination of the lyrics and music.

*Lyrics.* The shift in narrative perspective in Amos's version significantly alters the meaning of the lyrics. As we hear Tori Amos narrating the story, we are aware of both the mother and the father as he is telling the daughter what has happened. Amos states: "You're hearing her listen to him tell their daughter lies" (Amos 2001a). It is possible to take one of two interpretive stances concerning the narration: the mother is dead and is somehow "listening" from beyond the grave, or the mother's throat is slit and she is listening as she slowly dies in the trunk. With either possibility, the effect on the narrative remains the same: the dead or dying mother is somehow listening to her ex-husband's justification of her own murder.

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<sup>6</sup> Amos recorded the song from inside a box that did not allow her to move and was created for the purpose of allowing her to relate psychologically to the dead mother. (Jeckell, 2001,2)

In her reinterpretation of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde," Amos remains true to Eminem's original version. She makes very few changes to the lyrics, and the changes made are extremely subtle (The lyrics are provided in Appendix 2). I will now briefly outline these changes to consider how they affect her interpretation.

The first change occurs in the third line of the introduction. In Eminem's original line ("And I'm always gonna be here for you no matter what happens") he refers to the possibility of going to prison for committing the murder. Amos changes the word "happens" to "happened." The effect of this is subtle, but shows a clear distinction between their interpretive stances. Eminem's "happens" likely refers to the possibility of going to prison for committing murder. Amos's "happened" refers to the fact that she has been murdered. I believe this brings forward the mother's voice. The mother is assuring her daughter that she'll always be there for her, even if not in a physical sense. This is an example of the relevance of intertextuality in an analysis of this song. There are several voices heard, at this moment, both those of the mother and the father. In this instance, the mother is overhearing the father, but her voice emerges in the alteration of the lyrics. This phrase establishes her voice in the song almost immediately, making the listener aware of her presence.

Other changes support this interpretation of the mother's voice in the narrative. The second change that Amos makes to the lyrics is the exclusion of the repeated phrase "Just the two of us" which occurs simultaneously to the recited text in Eminem's version. The third change occurs in the chorus. Amos excludes the interjection "And when we ride", which Eminem recites between the repeated "Just the two of us." This phrase would imply a future that is possible for the killer but not the victim. Another change that

Amos makes is the repetition of the phrase ("Me and my daughter"), which ends the second verse of both sections. Eminem only recited this line once, but Amos repeats it three times. The second and third times that she repeats this phrase, her voice is much softer, altering the quality to sound as though she is longing for something. I believe that the mother hears the father say this to their daughter once, and then repeats it herself, lamenting the loss of her life with her daughter. This lyric change will be important to keep in mind when considering the musical aspects of this section below.

Amos's vocal quality is an important part of the communication of the mother's feelings in the song. To portray the victim's voice, Amos recites the text of the verses in a cold, quiet, and detached tone of voice. However, by using various vocal strategies such as text emphasis and voice inflections she manages to create a great deal of emotion. For example, Amos places a strong emphasis on the word "mama" throughout the song by raising her intonation on either the first or second syllable. This emphasis on the word "mama" draws attention to the victim in the song. She also emphasizes the word "screamin" in verse 3, line 4 ("Mama's too sweepy to hear you screamin in her ear") by reciting it in a very low tone with no inflection and very hard diction on the "sc." This emphasis makes the listener aware of the daughter's distress. Another example of Amos's vocal strategy can be seen in the middle of the second verse where she changes her tone to a whisper to say: "But for now we'll just say mama was real real bad, she was being mean to dad and made him real real mad." Her delivery of this line contains an element of fear, again drawing attention to the victim.

In the third verse, Amos places a great deal of emphasis on the phrases that involve the mother being thrown into the water by stretching out the delivery of the lines.

An example of this can be seen in the second line ("Before we pway we're gonna take mama for a wittle walk along the pier") as well as the eighth line ("We'll tie it to her footsie then we'll roll her off the dock"). This emphasis helps to bring the violence to the forefront. In line 10, when the mother is thrown into the lake, Amos gasps. This vocal technique is very effective in making the story seem more realistic. From this point on in the song, Amos's voice gradually fades away until the last phrase ("Just the two of us") is nothing but a whisper. This dynamic change simulates the mother sinking to the bottom of the lake, out of earshot of the conversation between father and daughter.

At times, it is very difficult to tell whose voice is being heard, that of the victim, or that of the father. There are moments in the song where it seems likely that it is the male voice that we are hearing. At these moments, the tone of voice is definitely altered — the pitch is lowered and the delivery of the line is more aggressive. An example of this can be heard in verse 1, line 8 ("Don't play with dada's toy knife, honey, let go of it"). Another example can be heard in verse 2, line 10 ("Sit back in your chair honey, quit tryin to climb out"). At the end of the first verse, in line 15, Amos changes her tone of voice to recite the phrase: "Mama's messy isn't she?" She says it in an almost vindictive tone of voice. I would argue that this is the voice of her ex-husband, drawing attention to his aggressive and violent nature.

*Texture.* The musical texture of Amos's version is quite different from that of Eminem's. Her version is arranged for strings and piano, creating a contrasting atmosphere from Eminem's light, percussive rap style. The texture and sonority created by her arrangement gives the song a dark and ominous feeling. She does retain the rap element by adopting a

spoken word style instead of singing the text. Her vocal style changes to singing at the chorus, but the introduction and verses are recited. She does not "rap" but rather recites the lyrics.

*Form.* The form of Amos's version is slightly abbreviated from Eminem's original (see Example 1-1). Amos's introduction is much shorter due to the absence of the first thirty-six seconds of sound effects. Amos also omits the final statement of the chorus, significantly abbreviating the form. As discussed in my analysis of the original song, Eminem's coda consists of two sections, the first consisting of text, and the second music. Amos's coda includes only music. Despite the shortened form, Amos' version of the song is still longer. The total length of her version is five minutes and forty-four seconds and Eminem's version is five minutes and nine seconds long. The difference in length can be attributed to the speed of the lyric delivery — Amos's tempo of lyric delivery is much slower than Eminem's.

*Rhythm.* Amos's rhythmic presentation differs considerably from that of the original song. The one similarity is that, like Eminem, Amos uses a distinct rhythmic pattern for the introduction and chorus. Amos's introductory rhythm can be found in Example 1-3. This rhythm stops at the beginning of the first verse and reappears in an altered form in the chorus. It is interesting that Eminem's introductory rhythm was incorporated into the verses and Amos's introductory rhythm is not.

Amos's background repeated rhythmic pattern for the verses also differs from Eminem's. As discussed earlier, Eminem's version contains a continuous rhythm,

structuring the phrases and providing a sense of regularity and unity within the song. In the verses of Amos's version, the rhythm is provided by a string line consisting of running sixteenth notes. These sixteenth notes are then taken over by the percussion in the chorus. In the third verse, a military drum is added to the texture, contributing to the intensity of the music, as it heads toward the lyrical climax of the song, where the body is dumped in the water.

*Phrasing.* The phrasing in Amos's version is largely determined by the repeated pattern played by the strings. The bass line (see Example 1-4) is divided into three phrases based on the following template. Each line consists of the descending pattern D, B-flat, G. Each repetition of this phrase ends with a different pitch: the first phrase rises to A-flat, the second continues the descent to E-flat, and the third rises to C-sharp. Each bass note is followed by an ascending gesture of three sixteenth notes. This three-phrase pattern then repeats three times in each verse.

Amos disrupts the regularity established by Eminem's phrasing by changing the patterns of four into patterns of three. She further disrupts the regularity of the phrasing with her delivery of the text. Eminem's text delivery is very carefully constructed to fit with the regular 4-bar phrases set up by the rhythmic loop. Amos manipulates her delivery of the text to offset the lines of text with the beginning and ends of phrases. The beginning of the second verse is the first time in the song that the text phrasing matches the string phrasing. This synchronicity begins to create a sense of regularity in the structuring of the song. This regularity is then disrupted half way through the verse because of Amos's text manipulation. She places a great amount of emphasis on the

words "real, real, mad" in verse 2, line 8, stretching out the time that it takes to deliver this line. This disrupts the phrasing, once again offsetting the voice and string lines. The phrases remain out of sync for the remainder of the verse.

The third verse begins similarly to the second, with the voice and string phrases coinciding. The place at which the phrasing is once again disrupted is textually significant. The phrasing is disrupted at the textual climax of the song. The line "one, two, three" where the body is thrown in the water, is delivered over a longer span of time, therefore disrupting the phrasing. This musical effect heightens the tension at the climax of the song. Like the second verse, the vocal and string phrases remain asynchronous for the remainder of the verse.

The last phrase of the second verse has a disproportionate lyric line in contrast to the rest of the piece. The repeated line "Me and my daughter" receives more than one phrase of the string line. There is a long pause before the third repetition of this phrase. The combination of the pause and Amos's delivery of the lyrics disrupt the formal structure at this moment. This disruption draws attention to the lyrics, which seem to indicate the mother's sadness at no longer being able to spend time with her daughter.

Another interesting feature of the phrasing is the articulation of the piano motives. Brief piano gestures are played at the beginning and end of certain phrases, occurring in exactly the same place in each verse. The piano gestures imitate the motive being played by the strings. The first piano motive is played at the second repetition of the three-phrase string motive. It is again played at the beginning and end of each phrase for the remainder of the verse. The only exception to this occurs at the end of the last phrase before the chorus.

*Melody and Harmony.* Amos's version of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" is centered around a D modality. The introduction is strongly centered around an A modality but this is recognized as the dominant of the over-riding D modality by the string motive and bass line in the verses (see Example 1-5 for a transcription of the introductory string melody). This string melody becomes the central thematic material of the song as it is altered to become the supporting material in the chorus. The pitches from this introduction appear in the strings in the chorus with the melody almost intact, with the difference residing mainly in the rhythm (see Example 1-6). The predominance of this particular string motive is demonstrated by its influence on the vocal line of the chorus. The vocal line is a re-arrangement of these same pitches, with the exclusion of one pitch, F (see Example 1-6).

*Chorus.* Similar to the verses, the chorus is divided into three phrases. And as in the verses, this disrupts the regularity of the 4-bar phrases established in Eminem's version. Eminem's phrase "Just the two of us" is repeated eight times but Amos sings this line only three times, again disrupting the sense of regularity. In Amos's version, the interjection "Just you and I" occurs only once, between the second and third phrase. This is another technique that Amos uses to disrupt Eminem's symmetry.

Amos's desire to give a voice to the victim is most clearly expressed in the chorus. It is significant that the chorus is the only part of the song that is sung. It is also significant that the persistent, repeated string motive of the verse is replaced by a more melodic theme. Other than the introduction, it is the only part of the song where this

particular string melody can be found. These elements create a more melodic feeling in the chorus than in the verse. The mother is lamenting the loss of her life, and her daughter. Keeping in mind the multiplicity of voices, I would argue that the text "Just the two of us" is suggestive of both mother and daughter and father and daughter. All of these elements contribute to a reading of the chorus as the mother's lament and sorrow over the loss of her life with her daughter.

### **Interpretive Summary**

As mentioned in the introduction, Richard Middleton describes a spectrum of borrowing that ranges from the tribute cover to a parody (2000, 83). Where does Amos's version fit on this spectrum? It certainly is not a tribute, but I believe that we can also safely say that it is not a parody. I questioned earlier in this paper whether or not Amos's version was authentic or an appropriation. In answer, I believe that it is a critical re-interpretation of the original version, drawing on both the social and musical practices of both her medium and Eminem's medium.

All three of Moore's conceptions of authenticity intermingle in Amos's version. The question of first person authenticity is raised when she assumes the voice of the victim. The question of second person authenticity is raised because of the multiplicity of voices — who is being validated? As with Eminem's version, Amos suggests all of the possible interpretations: that of mother/victim, that of child, that of perpetrator of violence, and that of social commentator. The question of third person authenticity is raised by Amos's choice of medium. She is a female rock artist/singer-songwriter who is

covering a rap song. Her combination of these various traditions may raise questions of authenticity.

Unlike authenticity, intertextuality allows for a shifting position. The concept of intertextuality is relevant to both text and music in Amos's interpretation of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde." In my analysis of the lyrics, I have drawn out only a few of the many examples of the multiplicity of voices. Amos's manipulation of the musical structure is accomplished by considering the rigid form of the original version. Her interpretation, which is based on giving voice to the victim, relies on the original version — both for textual and for musical manipulation.

Both versions of "97 Bonnie and Clyde" contain a social message. Eminem's offensive style of rap music usually conveys a particular type of social message. He often uses shock value to get the message across. By expressing strong, often very harsh views on violence he presents the listener with the same social situations that are often glamorized by the media.

Tori Amos uses various musical strategies to offer a different perspective of this song. Her disruption of the phrasing, her vocal strategies, and her use of texture and rhythm all contribute to a reading of this song as a feminist response to the violence against women depicted in Eminem's original version.

## Chapter 2

### **Borrowing and Appropriation in Rap: Eminem's ("Stan") Interpretation of Dido's "Thank You"**

*I love the fact that you could now read the whole  
of my song as this weird, obsessive fantasy.  
-Dido Armstrong, cited in Binelli 2000*

Eminem's song "Stan" (2000) explores a case of extreme obsession and violence. Eminem borrows extensively from popular artist Dido Armstrong's 1999 song "Thank You" to structure his song. One of the central issues that I examine with "Stan" is the way in which Eminem uses Dido's lyrics and music, and the impact that this has on the meaning of her material. An exploration of the meaning of the lyrics and music of Dido's song "Thank You" as well as an examination of Eminem's reworking of her material, through an analysis of lyrics, texture, form and phrasing, yields interesting interpretive results. The theoretical concepts of authenticity, appropriation, and intertextuality will help explore the consequences of Eminem's musical borrowing.

### Dido's "Thank You"

British artist Dido Armstrong's debut album, *No Angel* (1999), enjoyed great popular success. Dido is a classically trained violinist and pianist whose popular songs belong to the genre of female singer-songwriter. She began her popular music career as a vocalist of the electronica band Faithless with the release of their 1995 album, *Reverence*. Her exposure to both electronica and classical music are apparent on *No Angel*, which she produced with her brother Rolo's assistance. Her ability to combine a variety of musical styles within her work is particularly apparent in the song "Thank You." Dido said of this song, "'Thank You' is my favourite song from my album...I wrote it as this sort of really simple, nice song" (Binelli 2000).

*Lyrics.* Dido's lyrics, provided in Appendix 2, tell the story of a relationship between the singer and either a friend or lover. The first verse contrasts mundane aspects of everyday life with this happy relationship. The first three lines depict the monotony of everyday life in contrast to the idyllic relationship put forth within the context of the song. The melancholy atmosphere established in the first three lines contrasts with the more positive lyrics of the fourth line, "it's not so bad." In this first verse, the subject conveys that there is a person who brightens up her life. The verse is structured so that the first three lines express negative thoughts, and the fourth line positive thoughts. The second verse expresses a similar sentiment and is structured in the same way, beginning with three negative lines followed by one positive line.

In contrast to the first two verses, the chorus is extremely positive. The depth of the subject's feelings is such that she attributes the "best day of my life" to being with her partner. The lyrics convey the joy and gratitude the subject feels for her partner.

The pattern of the third verse changes significantly from the pattern established in the first two verses. The first line is the only negative comment in this verse. The following three lines express the positive feelings the relationship engenders. The textual pattern of the previous verses is reversed so that one negative line is followed by three positive lines. The overall mood of the text has therefore progressed from negative to positive through the course of the song.

*Music.* The music parallels the progression of mood from negative to positive. "Thank You" has a lengthy musical introduction, beginning with solo bongo drums, and building with the addition of guitar, bass guitar, and piano. The piano has a prominent repeated motive that emphasizes the interval of a minor second. This minor second interval, combined with the G-sharp minor mode, helps to create a melancholy atmosphere that supports the sentiment of the first two verses of text. The texture continues to build with the addition of the drum kit. Once the musical atmosphere is established in the introduction, it remains intact for the duration of the first two verses.

The onset of the chorus brings a drastic change in atmosphere that coincides with the more positive sentiment expressed in the text. The mode changes from minor to major and the texture continues to build with the addition of back-up vocals. More prominence is given to the bongos, creating a much lighter atmosphere than the drum kit used in the verses. The major

mode, rich texture, and light style of music create an uplifted feeling that represents the harmonious relationship experienced by the subject and her partner.

The musical texture of the bridge is quite similar to the chorus. The back-up vocals and bongos are brought forward to the surface of the texture. A tambourine and recorder<sup>1</sup> are also added to the mix, creating a somewhat unconventional sound for a pop/rock song.

The modality of the third verse plays an important role in the overall structure of "Thank You." In keeping with the shift toward a positive mood in the lyrics, this verse remains in the major mode of the chorus instead of returning to the minor modality used in the first two verses. The continuation of the major mode in the third verse directly reflects the text patterning of the verses, which moves from negative to positive, coinciding with the minor mode to major mode shift. The chorus repeats a final time, ending the song in a positive manner.

Dido has been involved in many projects aside from recording her solo album and touring. The song "Thank You" appeared on the *Sliding Doors* motion picture soundtrack (1998), and her hit song "Here With Me" (1999) was used as the theme for the television series *Roswell*. Her involvement with rap artist, Eminem, has also drawn a great deal of critical attention. In 2000, Eminem sampled the first verse of "Thank You" and used it as the chorus for his song, "Stan". Due to the controversy over Eminem's lyrics, as well as the disturbing nature of "Stan", which will be discussed below, many of Dido's fans criticised her involvement with this project. A MuchMusic interviewer questioned her association with Eminem, stating that, "People feel

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<sup>1</sup> Dido plays the recorder on this track. This was the first instrument that she learned to play as a child, at age five, and she studied it throughout the younger years of her childhood. This is the only time that this instrument is used on the album.

that he's encouraged hate crimes toward women" (Armstrong 2000). Dido's response was that she had no problem with the lyrics, stating that, "I think the lyrics to 'Stan' are an incredible economy of words. They shouldn't try to ban music that's telling stories" (Armstrong 2000). In an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine, she also said, "Luckily, I love 'Stan'. I do think it's brilliant" (Binelli 2000).

### **Eminem's "Stan"**

***Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.*** The song "Stan" tells the story of an obsessed fan who takes Eminem's music too seriously and commits a murder-suicide. Unlike the case of musical borrowing, discussed in Chapter 1, that consisted of a cover version of a particular song, the borrowing discussed in this chapter involves a common technique in rap music: sampling. As mentioned above, the chorus of "Stan" is a sampling of the first verse of Dido's, "Thank You". In Eminem's appropriation of Dido's music, the lyrics are reinterpreted to convey a dark, obsessive meaning that did not exist in their original context. The terms authenticity, intertextuality, and subject-position will be useful in examining the reinterpretation of Dido's music and lyrics in the context of "Stan", as well as the implication of Eminem's appropriation. These terms will be important in my analysis of "Stan", focusing on expressive elements and the negotiation of violent and obsessive themes present in the song.

***Lyrics.*** "Stan" begins with two repetitions of the chorus. Since the chorus has not yet been placed within the narrative of "Stan", the listener is free to interpret the lyrics of the chorus on their own

merit. The meaning of the chorus within the context of this song only becomes apparent to the listener after the delivery of the first verse.

The narrative of the verses is delivered in the form of letters being written by the protagonist, Stan, to Eminem (The lyrics of "Stan" are provided in Appendix 2). Many of the lyrics refer to songs from Eminem's previous album, *The Slim Shady LP*,<sup>2</sup> and are used to create associative meanings. An example of this can be seen in verse 1, lines 7 and 8. The name Bonnie is a reference to the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" from the *Slim Shady LP* (1999). As discussed in the previous chapter, the Bonnie in "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" is the narrator's daughter who accompanies him to dispose of her mother's body after he has brutally murdered her. This reference to Bonnie in the lyrics of "Stan" reinforces the theme of Stan's obsession with Eminem/Slim Shady. Stan's desire to name his daughter after a character in an Eminem song shows the extent of his fandom.

At the next repetition of the chorus, the issue of Stan's obsessive fantasy is brought to the foreground. Following the first verse, the dark meaning of the chorus within the context of this song becomes clear. It becomes apparent that line 4 of Dido's chorus ("But your picture on my wall...") refers to Stan's fantasy relationship with Eminem. Living vicariously through Eminem allows Stan to feel fulfilled in his own life. Eminem's appropriation of Dido's lyrics, which originally referred to a healthy relationship, now reflects an unhealthy, obsessive relationship between a celebrity and a fan.

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<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, Slim Shady is Eminem's alter-ego, a character through which Eminem is able to express his evil inner thoughts.

The second verse solidifies the depth of Stan's obsession, fuelled by his dissatisfaction with his own life. His angst is demonstrated by the increasingly aggressive tone in the delivery of the lyrics. Stan's instability is apparent in lines 17 and 18, "Sometimes I even cut myself to see how much it bleeds. It's like adrenaline, the pain is such a sudden rush for me." This predisposition toward self-destructive behaviour helps the listener understand the type of bond that Stan fantasizes exists between himself and Eminem/Slim Shady. The depravity of Stan's behaviour characterizes his unbalanced nature and obsession with Eminem/Slim Shady's persona. The extent of Stan's fantasy is made clear in the last line of verse 2 ("We should be together too"), which has several disturbing implications. The following interpretations of this line are possible: 1) Stan may simply want to meet Eminem, 2) Stan could be expressing homosexual desire, or 3) Stan may be so mentally disturbed that he no longer sees his personality as being distinct from that of Eminem/Slim Shady. Regardless of which interpretive stance the listener takes, this line reinforces the idea that Stan's obsession has been mounting. By the time the chorus is repeated once again, the listener is now fully aware of Stan's obsession and can appreciate how the lyrics of the chorus reflect that obsession.

In the third verse, violence is explored as the central thematic issue. Stan's tone of delivery has escalated to anger as he records a taped letter to Eminem while driving. In lines 8 through 13, Stan compares the situation that he feels Eminem/Slim Shady has placed him in to the situation described in the Phil Collins in the song, "In the Air of the Night." Stan's anger stems partially from the fact that he feels Eminem/Slim Shady is standing idly by, watching him suffer rather than intervening on a personal level. In his attempt to inflict guilt on Eminem, Stan says, "I hope you know I ripped all of your pictures off the wall." This is significant in reference

to the last line of the chorus ("But your picture on my wall, it reminds me that it's not so bad, it's not so bad"). It demonstrates that Stan has given up hope that Eminem will ever grant him the attention that he thinks he deserves. Eminem's pictures and persona are no longer sources of comfort but rather become objects of rage. During the course of the verse, Stan's anger intensifies and the listener becomes aware of the violence that Stan has inflicted on his girlfriend with lines 19 to 22. With the statement, "see I ain't like you," Stan tries to establish a distinct personality from Eminem. In the first two verses, Stan desperately attempted to establish a connection with his idol but since he has now given up hope and no longer looks to Eminem for support, he tries to distance himself from him. His anger escalates to the ultimate act of violence as he drives his car off a bridge, killing both himself and his girlfriend.

When the chorus is sung this final time, the lyrics reinforce Stan's motivation for the violence. The obsession, alluded to in the chorus, contributes to Stan's breakdown and eventual murder-suicide. Eminem's violent appropriation of Dido's music is particularly evident here, as the lyrics have been manipulated to represent this obsessive relationship that ends in tragedy.

The fourth verse provides Eminem's intended social message with this song. As Eminem responds to Stan's letters, he explains that many of his lyrics should not be taken literally. An example of this can be seen in lines 7 and 8. Eminem responds incredulously to Stan's violent and literal interpretation of his lyrics. Commercial concerns aside, Eminem's point with this song is that his presentation should not be construed as advocating these actions or views, but rather as a forum for discussion. He comments on Stan's relationship with his girlfriend in lines 13 and 14, stating that Stan should treat her better. This statement seems out of character with the many misogynistic lyrics of Eminem songs. In fact, it contradicts the idea that his music provokes

violence against women and supports his various public statements that he does not intend for his music to be taken literally, but rather as a social commentary. Eminem would not tell Stan to treat his girlfriend better if he intended his music to provoke violent actions against women.

In the narrative developed in the song "Stan", the protagonist is clearly a disturbed individual who perfectly fits the stereotype of the obsessive fan. Although his violence is not directly aimed at Eminem, Stan's behaviour can be linked with that of Mark David Chapman who shot John Lennon, and with John Hinkley Jr. who attempted to assassinate Ronald Reagan in order to impress Jodie Foster (Jenson 1992, 11). Joli Jenson labels this model of the pathological fan as that of "the obsessed loner, who (under the influence of the media) has entered into an intense fantasy relationship with a celebrity figure" (Jenson 1992, 11). Although Stan has relationships with his girlfriend and his younger brother, he does not seem to have a social network or any other substantial relationships. The focus of his attention is placed almost exclusively on Eminem/Slim Shady. Jenson describes pathological fandom as being "excessive, bordering on deranged behaviour" (1992, 9). In Stan's case, this behaviour is taken to the extreme in the act of the murder-suicide.

*Music.* In sampling the first verse of "Thank You," Eminem kept most of the original musical background. His changes involve bringing the bass line and drum kit to the forefront of the texture, removing the bongos and piano, and adding various sound effects. These changes, particularly those of the heavy bass and the sounds of rain and thunder, effect a darker atmosphere than the original. Eminem places great importance on the sampled portion of "Thank You", as demonstrated by his reliance on the musical underpinning of Dido's music as the

backdrop of the entire piece. The use of the same musical underpinning throughout the piece provides continuity between verse and chorus.

*Sound Effects.* The use of sound effects plays an important role in "Stan" and contributes to the narrative of the song. The sound of rain is present throughout most of the song and is punctuated by an occasional clap of thunder. These storm sounds add to the dark atmosphere that characterizes this song. The sound of someone quickly scribbling with a pencil on paper is used to emulate the sound of the letters being written. Since the narrative is presented from the perspective of these letters, the writing sounds make it seem more realistic. One of the most effective sound effects used in "Stan" is the sound of screaming which is heard in the third verse when Stan says, "That's my girlfriend screaming in the trunk." At the end of the third verse, when the car goes over the bridge, the sound effects of tires squealing, and a car crashing, and a car splashing into the water fill in the narrative. These sound effects confirm that Stan did indeed drive his car into the water.

*Form and Phrasing.* The formal structure of "Stan" is very carefully constructed of the borrowed material from "Thank You." The sampled portion has regular phrasing that consists of four phrases with open-closed structure (See Example 2-1). The bass line is always closed, but the construction of the vocal line creates a sense of anticipation by leaving the second and third phrases open. Dido creates an antecedent-consequent feel with the two sets of 2-line phrases, first closed-open, then open-closed. The bass line repeats four times with the first three repetitions

being identical and the fourth repetition with the B being held to create anticipation before resolving to the tonic G-sharp.

This sense of regular phrasing continues throughout the entire song, "Stan." The 4-phrase unit is repeated intact and the bass line is used as a loop that repeats, uninterrupted, throughout the piece. Eminem carefully constructs and delivers the lines of text to coincide with the 4-bar phrase unit. Each phrase of music contains two lines of verse lyric, each unit, therefore, containing eight lines of text. The unit is repeated twice in the first verse and three times in each of the remaining three verses. The regularity of the music seems odd in contrast to the shocking nature of the lyrics.

The only variation in this structural regularity occurs at the end of the third verse, where the phrase pattern is expanded. The expansion consists of the bass line playing an additional two times without accompanying lyrics. This phrase expansion draws the listener's attention to this moment in the song. The last lines that we hear from Stan are, "Well, gotta go, I'm almost at the bridge now. Oh sh\*t, I forgot, how'm I supposed to send this sh\*t out?" The phrase expansion follows these lines and is accompanied by several sound effects: the tires squealing and the car splashing into the water. These sound effects take the place of the narrator's voice, depicting the events that occur at this moment in the song. By implying the violence rather than directly describing it, Eminem accentuates the horror of this moment in the story by allowing the listener to draw their own conclusions based on Stan's final words and the sounds that follow. Since this is the only time in the song that music is not accompanied by lyrics, it gives the listener a moment to reflect on the violent event depicted in the narrative. The deviations in phrasing and lyrics highlight this climactic moment.

As with most rap music, this song has a very regular rhythmic flow provided by the bass line and percussion. Since the beat is constant throughout the song, any interruption of the rhythm is significant. In "Stan," the beat is only interrupted a few times, always at moments where the lyrics reinforce Stan's obsession. An example of this can be seen in verse 2, line 16, where the drums temporarily drop out of the texture during the delivery of the line "I even got a tattoo of your name across the chest." At times, the guitar also drops out of the texture, also drawing attention to the lyrics being recited. The most obvious example of this occurs at the beginning of the third verse, where the first eight lines of this verse are accompanied solely by bass and drums. The sound of rain falling is brought closer to the surface of the music to emulate Stan driving down the highway. The sudden absence of the guitar in this section draws attention to Stan's intensified lyric delivery as we head toward the climax of this song.

An analysis of "Stan" invites us to explore how the listener may hear Dido's voice in the context of this new narrative. As discussed in the introduction, Richard Middleton poses the question: "whom do we hear in this situation, the new performer or earlier ones, or both?" (2000, 82). He points out that a cover version will always refer to an originating moment. This is particularly evident with "Stan" since it not simply a cover of Dido's original, but rather incorporates Dido's version into his song by sampling. Similar to the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde", which was discussed in the previous chapter, intertextuality offers the possibility for multiple voices and perspectives to emerge within the song. In this case, Dido's voice from the context of the original song "Thank You" emerges, as well as Stan's voice, and Eminem's voice

as social commentator. My discussion of the video for "Stan" will raise new issues in the interpretation of voice in this song.

*Video.* The video for "Stan" casts yet another light on the meaning of the sampled portion of "Thank You." Dido appears in the "Stan" video, playing the role of Stan's girlfriend. Her appearance in the video introduces another perspective, that of the Stan's girlfriend. An intertextual approach allows the intermingling of the different voices in the song: Stan, Stan's girlfriend, Dido, and Eminem. When Dido appears singing the chorus, the lyrics can be interpreted as representing Stan's girlfriend's situation. At other moments when Dido sings the chorus, the video flashes to images that depict Stan's obsession, so that, like the audio version, the listener can understand the lyrics to represent Stan's situation.

The video incorporates three different types of images: 1) Stan writing the letters, 2) Eminem reading and responding to the letters, and 3) the events described in the letters. The video begins with a non-musical introduction that contributes to the narrative of the song by depicting Stan's emotional instability. Stan is shown bleaching his hair in order to resemble Eminem. His girlfriend is pounding on the bathroom door, desperately trying to get in. When he finally lets her in, he yells at her, appearing as though he is on the verge of committing a violent act. The introduction of the video establishes Stan's obsessive and angry behaviour that otherwise only becomes apparent later in the song.

The use of voice in the video implies a duality in the chorus that was not apparent in the song alone. Three voices now emerge in the presentation of the chorus; Dido, Stan, and Stan's girlfriend. Dido Armstrong's voice emerges as an intertextual reference to the originating

moment within the song "Thank You". When Dido, playing the role of Stan's girlfriend, is shown singing the chorus, the lyrics can be interpreted as representing her situation. At other moments in the chorus, the video flashes to images depicting Stan's obsession, hence, like the audio version, the listener can understand the lyrics to represent Stan's situation.

The first repetition of the chorus depicts Dido singing. In this context, the chorus can be interpreted as a reflection of Stan's girlfriend's relationship with him. When the chorus repeats a second time, the image of Dido singing is replaced by one of Stan in his basement where the walls are covered with photographs of Eminem. At this moment, the role of the voice is questionable: are we still hearing the voice of Stan's girlfriend, or are we hearing what is going on in Stan's mind? At the line, "but your picture on my wall," the video focuses on one of the many pictures of Eminem that line the basement walls. This clarifies that the chorus also reflects Stan's obsession with Eminem. The presentation of two contrasting images, that of the girlfriend singing, and that of the basement shrine to Eminem, makes the viewer aware that the lyrics of the chorus refer to two relationships, that of Stan and his girlfriend, and that of Stan's imagined relationship with Eminem.

Eric Clarke's concept of subject-position can be applied to my interpretation of this segment of the "Stan" video. The images of Stan's basement shrine shown simultaneously with the line "But your picture on my wall, it reminds me that it's not so bad, it's not so bad" elicit a particular response from most viewers. The presentation of these images makes it difficult to ignore the obsessive connotation that Eminem has imposed on Dido's lyrics.

A variety of images reinforce Stan's obsession. An example in the first verse occurs when Stan waves to an image of Eminem on television. Stan does not seem to understand where reality

ends and fantasy takes over. In verse 2, line 16 ("I even got a tattoo of your name across the chest") Stan is shown having the name "Slim Shady" tattooed on his chest. In verse 2, line 17 ("Sometimes I even cut myself to see how much it bleeds") an image is shown of blood smeared on papers that are on Stan's desk.

Several of the video's images comment on violence against women. When Stan mentions his girlfriend's pregnancy in verse 1, line 7, the video moves to a shot of his girlfriend. The viewer becomes aware that someone else is involved in and affected by Stan's obsession. A similar framing technique is used at the next repetition of the chorus. The camera focuses on the girlfriend singing, making the listener very aware of her presence. The focus on the girlfriend at key moments in the text brings attention to the violence that will ensue.

The video shows images during the second verse to draw attention to Stan's obsession. Near the end of the second verse, the camera frames an image of Stan sitting in the basement looking at a picture of himself and his girlfriend. He takes a photograph of Eminem and tapes it over top of his girlfriend's photo so that the picture is now one of Eminem and Stan. This scene leads up to the line, "We should be together too." This combination of music and image clearly depicts the extent of Stan's obsession. During this repetition of the chorus the girlfriend gets out of bed in the middle of the night and walks down to the basement. At the line, "your picture on my wall," she finds the picture of Stan and Eminem and is horrified by it. She then turns around to find that Stan has followed her downstairs. He looks extremely angry and grabs her. There is no immediate violence, but as the third verse begins, the consequences of Stan's anger become apparent.

The central issue of violence is expressed during the third verse by filming techniques that reinforce Stan's violence, his motivation for the crime, and his eventual breakdown. As Stan drives down a rainy highway, the video parallels the timeline of Stan recording the letter to Eminem, flashing back to an event described in the letter for only a brief moment. The camera pans to a small photograph of Eminem hanging from the rear-view mirror several times, reminding the viewer of Stan's motivations for committing the forthcoming violent act. At lines 14 through 16, when the lyrics describe him tearing the pictures off the wall, the video flashes to accelerated footage of Stan destroying his basement shrine. This filming technique makes Stan appear to have completely lost control. At line 19, the video shows the girlfriend tied up in the trunk, highlighting the issue of violence against women. At the end of the verse, the camera pans to an image of the car going over the bridge and into the water. At this moment, the video flashes again to the girlfriend in the trunk. These images effectively enhance the human impact of this violent act.

The next repetition of the chorus provides the viewer with the opportunity to focus on the issues of violence and obsession. The prominent image is that of the car sinking in the water, allowing the viewer to reflect on the violent act that just occurred. During the last line of the chorus, the video flashes to the photograph of Eminem that was hanging from the rear-view mirror, now floating in the water. By focusing on the photograph, the viewer is reminded that it was the obsessive nature of Stan's fantasy relationship with a celebrity that drove him to commit this horrible act.

The video images in the fourth verse contribute to Eminem's social message by providing views of the violence as presented by the media. The various television news clips of the crime

scene contribute to the song's commentary on the role of media in popular culture. In the second line, the video shows divers going down to the car. This image effectively reinforces the senseless reality of this couple's death.

Eminem comments on how easily young children can be influenced when Stan describes his six-year-old brother, Matthew, to Slim Shady in the second verse: "He wants to be just like you man, he likes you more than I do." In the fourth verse, during lines 18 and 19, the video refers back to Matthew's burgeoning obsession despite the tragic consequences of Stan's obsession, by showing Matthew standing at Stan's grave and pulling down his hood to reveal bleached blond hair. These images allude to the fact that Eminem does not direct his music towards children. Unfortunately, while there may be warnings about the graphic content of Eminem's music, many children find access to this type of explicit material.

### **Interpretive Summary**

How are we to evaluate Eminem's borrowing of material? Is it an appropriation? As I discussed in the introduction, a cover interpretation can always be considered as an appropriation, either positive or negative, because "the recording artist will always bring his or her own individual and social musical position to bear on the meaning of the song" (Burns 2002a, 1). This is definitely the case with Eminem's version. Not only is he working within an entirely different genre, which operates within its own codes and conventions, he also alters the meaning of Dido's original lyrics by placing them within a different narrative and musical context. Whether or not to view this appropriation as having positive or negative connotations depends entirely on the listener.

Many Dido fans would probably view the appropriation as negative. The alteration of Dido's positive lyrics within the context of Eminem's dark, obsessive, violent song could also be construed as a negative appropriation. Nevertheless, since Dido herself has expressed her approval of "Stan" and her respect for Eminem as an artist, the appropriation cannot be altogether negative. Dido even went so far as to appear in the video, retaining her claim as the composer/singer of this material. She received full credit for her participation in "Stan", both commercially and in terms of recognition within popular culture, furthering her career as a popular musician.

Many of Dido's fans and critics were upset with her participation in "Stan" and thought that she was "selling out." They perceived her participation with Eminem for "Stan" as contradictory to her authenticity within the singer/songwriter genre (Allan Moore's third person authenticity, 2002). Her venture outside of her typical medium was seen by some as a commercialist move in order to increase the sales of her album as well as her popularity.

Dido's participation in the production of the video, as well as her reinforcement of Eminem and the song, helps lend credibility to "Stan". Dido's participation in "Stan" reinforces the song's originality. It is not simply constructed from a sample, the author of that sample has participated in the performance, making it more of a collaboration than a typical appropriation. This collaboration even extended to Dido and Eminem performing the song live.

Dido's active participation in the production of the "Stan" video, as well as her support of Eminem and the song, increases the credibility of "Stan". Eminem's sampling in "Stan" was not typical since the original artist was involved in the production. As the original author, Dido's

collaboration also reinforces the song's originality. Her approval of Eminem and his sampling of her music in "Stan" has even extended to Dido and Eminem performing the song live.

In evaluating Eminem's authenticity of expression (first person authenticity), we must consider the multiple voices that emerge in "Stan". Although the voices of Dido, and the character of Stan's girlfriend that she plays in the video, are present, Eminem uses Dido's voice to convey his own message. The same can be said of the character of Stan, who Eminem uses to express his social positioning.

The terms authenticity and appropriation do not fully account for the result of Eminem's borrowing of Dido's material. The more flexible term, intertextuality, can better account for the musical borrowings in "Stan". Intertextuality allows multiple voices to come through: that of the character Stan, that of Eminem as social commentator, that of Dido as Stan's girlfriend, and that of Dido's own voice.

"Stan" is an interesting commentary on Western culture. This song shows the consequences of what can happen when a fan takes something in the entertainment industry too seriously. In a *Rolling Stone* interview, Eminem said, "Even a song like 'Stan' is a message to critics - like, look, this is what happens if somebody takes my lyrics seriously. 'Stan' is about a sick f\*\*king kid who took everything I said literally"(Decurtis 2000). This comment, combined with the message conveyed in "Stan", indicates that Eminem does not intend for all of his music to be taken literally. Later in the same interview, he reinforces his position by stating: "The kids listening to my music get the joke. They can tell when I'm serious and when I'm not" (Decurtis 2000). The message of "Stan" is not to go out and kill your girlfriend or wife; it is exactly the opposite. By showing how disturbed Stan is, and the consequences of his obsession, the song is

intended to discourage obsessive and violent behaviour. Eminem appropriates Dido's music, but then uses it as a vehicle to raise awareness of how society places too much importance on the media and often relies on entertainment as a source for behavioural role models. The disturbing manner in which this material is presented is an extremely effective way of expressing the intended message.

### Chapter 3

#### **Authenticity and Constructions of Masculinity: Violent Themes in Eminem's "Sing For The Moment" (Reworking of Aerosmith's "Dream On")**

*"Spoken word is the most beautiful thing of all this rap. It's a lot more honest than it ever was before. Em does it so good, and he wanted to borrow 'Dream On' — the first thing he wanted to do was fix it."  
-Steven Tyler of Aerosmith, cited in Access Hollywood 2002*

Aerosmith's "Dream On" (1973) is a classic rock ballad that deals with themes of life experience, working toward personal goals, and living for the moment. Eminem's popular rap song "Sing For The Moment" (2002) borrows extensively from "Dream On", combining elements of two different musical genres, rap and rock. Eminem's narrative in "Sing For The Moment" is very personalized, primarily drawing on aspects of Eminem's childhood and public persona. Eminem takes the chorus of Aerosmith's well-known song, which had no violent connotations in its original context, and places it within his narrative that highlights abusive family disputes, assault, and gang-related gun use. Stuart Hall's theories on representation (1997) are useful in interpreting Eminem's negotiation of musical meaning in this song. I will also draw on Gareth Palmer's work on "masculinity" in rock music (1997) to explore Eminem's reliance on rock traditions to construct "masculinity". This chapter will also refer to Allan Moore's framework (2002) to explore the authenticity of "Sing For The Moment."

## "Dream On"

Robert Walser mentions Aerosmith as part of the "second generation of heavy metal" in his study on gender in heavy metal music, in which he provides a brief overview of the history of the genre (1993, 10). This second generation was active during the 1970s and included bands such as Kiss, AC/DC, and Judas Priest. Although Walser classifies Aerosmith as a heavy metal band, others would classify them as a hard rock band. More recently, as their sound has become less aggressive, many would drop the 'hard' from the classification and simply place them within the rock genre. Aerosmith formed in 1970, when singer/drummer Steven Tyler met guitarist Joe Perry while working at an ice cream parlor in Sunapee, New Hampshire (Ryzhov and Erlewine 2000, 1). Bassist Tom Hamilton joined up with the two, and eventually they recruited a second guitarist, Ray Tabano, who was replaced shortly after by Brad Whitford. After recruiting drummer Joey Kramer, Tyler quit playing drums and became the full-time lead singer. At the end of 1970, the band moved to Boston in hopes of landing a recording contract.

Steven Tyler wrote "Dream On" four years before the formation of Aerosmith. Tyler was "fiddling around" on a Steinway upright piano. He recounts, "One day I realized I had been playing too much in the key of C, so I went to F. When you're a kid, F is the greatest. That's where it started. It was just this little thing I was playing, and I never dreamed it would end up as a real song or anything" (Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 172). Tyler introduced the song to the band because they had six songs for their first album and needed four more. Some of the band members, particularly guitarist Joe Perry, disliked the song. These band members wanted Aerosmith to be known as a rock band and "Dream On" was a ballad. Joe Perry recounts how he felt about the song:

“It was kinda funny, but I didn’t like "Dream On" and hated my playing on it. It was a simple song and I could've done better if I'd hung around the studio a little longer. But I let it go by....Then I'd hear the song on the radio and cringe. As big as the song was, I hated it. We were a hard rock band and now we owed our reputation to a slow song. But that's the way things were then....In 1973, you had to get your songs on the radio and the only way a band like us got on the radio was by having a ballad” (Perry in Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 198).

At one point, when he was working on the bass line with Tom Hamilton, Tyler claims that he became very emotional, "I started to cry with relief because I was so sure of this song, so sure that it could really work for us and take us places we wanted to go" (Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 172-173). Tyler was correct. "Dream On" was one of the songs that launched Aerosmith's career.

*Lyrics.* Appendix 2 provides the lyrics to "Dream On." The lyrics to this song are quite subjective in interpretation because listeners can derive many possible meanings. Unlike other songs discussed in this study, such as Tori Amos's version of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde", Eric Clarke's notion of subject-position/obliged meaning would not necessarily be relevant with "Dream On." Upon initially hearing the song, I interpreted the lyrics to

be about life experience, growing older, maturing, celebrating the past rather than regretting it, leaving behind your regrets and living for the moment. Steven Tyler's perspective on this song differs somewhat, "People ask me all the time what 'Dream On' is all about. It's simple. It's about dreaming until your dreams come true. It's about the hunger and desire and ambition to be somebody that Aerosmith felt in those days. You can hear it in the grooves because it's *there*. It was 'Make it, don't break it' for real" (Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 173). Since most people cannot relate to Tyler's life experiences as a rock musician, struggling to make it to the top to finally achieve fame and fortune, they may not interpret this song the same way that Tyler conceived it. I find that Tyler's perspective is particularly apparent in the bridge lyrics, "Dream on... dream until your dreams come true."

**Texture.** The musical texture of "Dream On" is fairly standard within the hard rock genre of the 1970s. The instrumentation consists of vocals, lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, drums, and a mellotron,<sup>1</sup> an instrument that Tyler called an "early icon of 'progressive rock'" (Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 176). Tyler used the mellotron to record the string and flute sounds that are heard in the background of "Dream On." This song shares many similarities in style and texture with other legendary rock ballads of that era such as Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" (1971).

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<sup>1</sup> According to Tyler, their electric piano was stolen in New York, "so when it came time to record 'Dream On,' we called E. U. Wurlitzer's and got a mellotron.... The mellotron was a tape-driven English keyboard that looked like a Hammond organ and was actually an early sampling device, *not* a synthesizer..." (Aerosmith and Davis 1997, 176).

*Form and Phrasing.* The formal structure of "Dream On" does not follow a standard verse/chorus format. Again, looking at songs like "Stairway to Heaven", this was not unusual for that time. Example 3-1 outlines the formal structure as follows: introduction, verse, pre-chorus,<sup>2</sup> verse, chorus, guitar solo, chorus, bridge, chorus, outro.

The song is in common time, following a structure of fairly regular 4-measure and 8-measure phrases (Example 3-1 provides the measure numbers and phrasing). The introduction is twelve measures long: two 4-measure phrases with a 4-measure extension, or three 4-measure phrases, depending on your interpretation. Verse 1 is also twelve measures long, interpretable as either three 4-measure phrases or two 4-measure phrases with an extension. The pre-chorus is four measures of singing followed by a 4-measure instrumental link. Verse 2 is eight measures long followed by a 6-measure chorus: a 4-measure phrase with a 2-measure extension. The only irregular phrase is the guitar solo (measures 47-53) that is played between the two repetitions of the chorus. This solo is only seven measures long. The next repetition of the chorus is six measures long, followed by a 12-measure bridge. The chorus then repeats two more times over the span of ten measures: two 4-measure phrases with a 2-measure extension. The piece finally ends with a 4-measure outro.

*Harmony.* "Dream On" is in the key of f minor. One of the interesting features of the harmony is the similarity between the pre-chorus and chorus. They both begin with the following chord progression: Fm, E-flat, D-flat, E-flat, Fm, E-flat. The pre-chorus then resolves to a root position tonic chord, Fm, with the vocal line also ending on F. The

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<sup>2</sup> I am labeling this a pre-chorus because it follows a similar chord progression and is similar stylistically to the chorus.

chorus, however, continues with a Dm chord, followed by D-flat7, and then rather than resolving, hovers around the dominant, alternating B-flat minor and C chords, finally ending on the dominant, with a C in the voice.

The song ends in a similar manner, potentially leaving the listener with an unsettled feeling. In measure 82, at the end of the last repetition of the chorus, the voice ends on G while the instruments hover between B-flat minor and C chords, changing on every eighth note for six measures, eventually fading out.

The lyrical and musical analysis discussed above is important to consider as prefatory material to an examination of Eminem's "Sing for the Moment", which borrows extensively from "Dream On". It will be interesting to consider the meaning of Tyler's lyrical and musical material within this new context.

### **"Sing for the Moment"**

The song "Sing for the Moment" was released on *The Eminem Show* (2002), Eminem's third solo album. Eminem's albums have become increasingly more personal, *The Eminem Show* reflecting his situation in life at the time of recording. The songs deal with many of his personal issues: his daughter, his trouble with the law, his mother, and the impact of his music on society. The album differs from his past albums because Eminem sings on several tracks, rather than just rapping. "Sing for the Moment" was the fourth single released, almost a year after the album's initial release. This lengthy release period demonstrates the success of the album.

The influential group Run-D.M.C. set a precedent by integrating rock and rap in the 1980s. They are often considered to be the first *mainstream* rap group. In 1986, Aerosmith collaborated with Run-D.M.C. to record a new version of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way" (1975).<sup>3</sup> Aerosmith even appeared in the video, both bands performing live on stage. Another 1980s rap group that incorporated rock and rap were The Beastie Boys with songs such as "No Sleep 'Till Brooklyn" (1986).

Eminem samples the introduction and chorus of "Dream On" and uses a variation of their bass line to structure his piece. As we proceed to an examination of the music and lyrics of "Sing For The Moment", it will be important to keep the meaning and structure of Aerosmith's original in mind.

*Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.* Several of the theoretical terms used in previous chapters will be relevant to my discussion of "Sing For The Moment": appropriation, authenticity, and intertextuality. I will also introduce the term identity claim, discussed in the introduction. In his theories on representation as process, Stuart Hall (1997) defines an identity claim as occurring when a claim of *who the person is* or *what they belong to* is made in the process of representation. In this case, Eminem makes an identity claim by combining several signifiers of "masculinity" in his music and video. I will return to this idea after I have discussed the lyrics and musical features of this song.

*Lyrics.* Recalling Steven Tyler's earlier quote about his conception of "Dream On", I would argue that Aerosmith's song would speak to Eminem in the same way that Tyler

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<sup>3</sup> Walser mentions this fact in reference to the influence that heavy metal had on other forms of popular music. He provides another example of this influence with Tone Loc's 1989 hit rap song "Wild Thing", which was built around sampled drum and guitar licks from Van Halen's first album (Walser 1993, 15).

conceived it. Eminem lived through similar experiences, struggling to achieve success. I believe that Eminem sampled this song because it spoke to him in terms of authorial first person authenticity.

Tyler's interpretation of the song fits with the likely interpretation of Eminem's lyrics, which are provided in Appendix 2. Eminem generally does one of two things with his lyrics: he tries to shock the listener, such as with the song "97 Bonnie and Clyde", or tries to give insight on his ideas, such as with the song "Stan." In "Sing For The Moment", Eminem tries the latter approach, including a variety of his ideas, such as describing his upbringing, explaining his lyrics, and his current situation.

In "Dream On", verse 1 features the subject examining his present and his past. In the first verse of "Sing For The Moment", Eminem substitutes Tyler's six lines of lyrics with his own sixteen lines on the theme of a disappointing childhood. Although the verse is not spoken in the first person ("*He's* a problem child" and "*His* thoughts", etc.), Eminem still brings elements of his own childhood into the narrative. Lines 8 and 9 ("When he talks about his f\*\*kin' dad walkin out. Cuz he hates him so bad that he, blocks him out") applies to his childhood. His father left when he was very young, so Eminem never knew him and resents him for leaving.<sup>4</sup> Lines 12 and 13 describe Eminem's indoctrination in black culture ("Talkin' black, brainwashed from rock and rap. He sags his pants, do-rags and a stocking cap"). Lines 14 and 15 refer to Eminem's problems with his stepfather ("His step-father hit him, so he socked him back. And broke his nose, his house is a broken home"). This verse accomplishes two things: it expresses Eminem's own experience, an example of Moore's first person authenticity, and describes the

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<sup>4</sup> Eminem frequently refers to his resentment of his father's abandonment in his music.

situation of many of his fans, validating their experience, an example of Moore's second person authenticity.

The tone changes in verse 2, as Eminem switches to first person narration. In this verse, Eminem attempts to explain his music, lyrics, and persona. He talks about his progression from poverty to fame (lines 8 to 12), and about his problems with the press and the law (lines 13-16). He provides apologia, not an apology, but an explanation, a clarification of his music, by explaining the influence he has through his music (lines 22-27). He makes specific reference to his personal life with the last line of this verse ("You're full of s\*\*t too Guerrero, that was a fist that hit you"). Guerrero is a bouncer that Eminem caught kissing his now ex-wife Kim at a time when they were still married. Eminem was subsequently charged with assault for allegedly pistol-whipping Guerrero.

Verse 3 continues in the same tone. The first 8 lines discuss the role of violence in music and continue to explain and justify Eminem's lyrics. Lines 1 and 2 ("They say music can alter moods and talk to you. Well can it load a gun up for you and cock it too?") respond to the criticism that Eminem's lyrics are violent and hateful. He responds with lines 3 and 4 ("Well if it can, then the next time you assault a dude, just tell the judge it was my fault and I'll get sued"), which are quite sarcastic and point out the absurdity of holding celebrities responsible for other people's actions. His apologia continues with lines 5 through 8. Eminem explains that many rap artists carry guns for their own protection rather than as a status symbol or because it's "cool" and that they do not intend for teens to emulate them in this manner.

In lines 13 to 20 of the third verse, Eminem raps about how idolizing a music performer can provide escape, making some people's lives more bearable. The music

provides distraction and catharsis, giving ontological security to many troubled teenagers the same way that religion acts for others. This is the same concept as Karl Marx's "opiate of the masses" (Marx 1888) or as Adorno's "interpretive horizon" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1987). The culture industry provides security to many people, working the same way as advertising, where the quest to fulfill a desire validates that person's experience. The same thing occurs with the music industry. In the case of rap music, if a fan can own the CD or the same accoutrements as their favorite rap artist, such attainment can validate their life experience. This concept works together with Moore's conception of second person authenticity. The fan listens to the music because it validates their experience and then takes it a step further by idolizing that performer, further validating their experience.

Towards the end of verse 3, in lines 21 and 22, Eminem describes how he feels about his fans' adoration, ("That's why we seize the moment try to freeze it and own it, squeeze it and hold it, cuz we consider these minutes golden"). This is one of the primary points of the song. Eminem has spent years struggling to achieve success, and recalling Tyler's quote about "Dream On", this explains the significance of Eminem's sampling of the song. The chorus, "Sing for the moment..." is about having achieved this goal and enjoying while it lasts. Eminem makes this particularly clear as he ends his last verse with "just let our spirits live on, through our lyrics that you hear in our songs and we can" which leads directly into "Sing with me".

Eminem adds a personal touch to the sampled chorus by shouting various interjections during each repetition of the chorus. Unlike his use of Dido's music in

"Stan" (discussed in Chapter 2), where he left her sampled verse intact, Eminem shouts "C'mon," "Sing," and "Sing it," rallying his fans to join with him.

*Form and Phrasing.* The overall form of "Sing For The Moment" is standard: introduction, verse 1, chorus, verse 2, chorus, verse 3, chorus, outro (Example 3-2 provides a table outlining this basic formal structure). Similar to "Stan", "Sing For The Moment" is structured around borrowed musical material. The introduction and chorus are taken directly from "Dream On", with some small alterations. The verses are structured around a repeated bass line that is an altered version of the bass line from the chorus of "Dream On". I will describe each of these sections in detail below.

Eminem's song begins with an 8-measure instrumental introduction. Eminem uses a slightly altered version of Aerosmith's introduction. Eminem's introduction is slightly abbreviated, only eight measures instead of Aerosmith's twelve measures. The bass line in Eminem's version is much louder and closer to the surface of the texture. This introductory bass line is also altered from the original. Aerosmith's bass line in the introduction was quite simple, beginning on F and descending stepwise through E-flat, to D-flat, to C, then returning to F (see Example 3-3). The bass line of the introduction of Eminem's version is a simplified version of the guitar riff from measures 11-12 of "Dream On" (see Example 3-4). As in Aerosmith's version, the bass guitar only kicks in during the repetition of the first phrase, in measure 5.

Like the songs "97 Bonnie and Clyde" and "Stan", Eminem exploits symmetrical structures in "Sing For The Moment." He delivers his narrative over a constant beat, conveying musical emotion through his lyric delivery. The verses are structured around a

repeated altered version of the bass line from the chorus of "Dream On". This bass line begins on the tonic, F, and descends in half notes to E-flat, D-flat, then ascends through E-flat, back to F (see Example 3-6). Eminem borrows this riff from the first two measures of Aerosmith's chorus (Aerosmith's chorus bass line is provided in Example 3-5). Eminem takes the second half of his bass line from the guitar in the second half of Aerosmith's chorus. The bass line ascends step-wise from F, to G, A-flat, B-flat, C, then returns to the tonic, F and repeats the loop. The bass movement occurs at the rhythmic value of half notes, except the B-flat and C that end the riff, which are a dotted quarter and eighth notes. This bass riff forms a 4-measure sequence that is looped throughout the song, providing the phrasing and structure for the verses. Example 3-6 provides a transcription of this bass line.

Eminem recites one line of verse lyrics over the duration of two measures of music. Therefore, each repetition of the 4-measure bass line has two lines of text delivered over it. In the first verse, the sixteen lines of text (see the lyrics in Appendix 2) represent eight repetitions of the bass line and thirty-two measures of music. The second verse is the longest of the three with twenty-eight lines of text delivered over fourteen repetitions of the bass line and fifty-six measures of music. The third verse is slightly shorter than the second, with twenty-four lines of text, twelve repetitions of the bass line, and forty-eight measures of music.

The guitar plays brief ascending motivic gestures at the beginning of every second repetition of the bass riff. The guitar plays a gesture at the start of line 1, then again in line 5, line 9, etc., dividing the verses into 8-measure units. This occurs consistently throughout all three verses. Example 3-7 provides a transcription of this motive.

The verses are very long in contrast to the chorus, which is only six measures in length. Like Aerosmith's original, the chorus is a 4-measure unit of singing with a 2-measure instrumental extension. The breakdown of the measure count is as follows: introduction=8; verse 1=32, chorus=6, verse 2=56, chorus=6, verse 3=48, final two repetitions of the chorus=12, and then guitar outro=16 (Example 3-2 provides this information in a table). The division of measures is very strongly weighted towards the delivery of the rapped verses. This is quite unlike Aerosmith's version, in which the measure count is more evenly distributed: introduction=12, verse 1=12, pre-chorus=8, etc. (Example 3-1 provides this information in a table).

A constant drum beat aids the regularity of the formal structure. The beat alternates between strong and weak eighth note beats. This beat is constant throughout the verses, only changing in the measure preceding each repetition of the chorus.

The chorus of "Sing for the Moment" is a sample of the chorus of "Dream On". Eminem retains the six measures of the original chorus, only changing the bass line (see examples 3-5 and 3-6). The only other change made to the chorus is Eminem's shouts of "C'mon" and "Sing it" as discussed above.

After two more verses and several repetitions of the chorus, Eminem's outro consists of a lengthy guitar solo played by Aerosmith guitarist Joe Perry. This solo was not simply sampled from "Dream On" but is a separate solo, based on the harmonic structure of the song. This solo is extremely virtuosic and lasts approximately sixteen measures. I will explore the use of this guitar solo later in this chapter.

*Texture.* The texture of "Sing for the Moment" combines elements from both rap and rock music in an unusual way. The rap elements include the traditionally synthesized sounds, a pronounced bass line, and a heavy beat. The predominant rock element is the electric guitar solo, which is generally associated with rock, heavy metal, alternative, grunge, etc. The introduction of the song contains keyboard, guitar, drums, a prominent bass line, as well as synthesized string sounds. The texture of the verses is slightly less dense than the introduction because the vocals, bass, and drums are the most pronounced part of the texture, the guitar and keyboard playing a secondary role. The chorus has the densest musical texture involving guitar, keyboard, drums, bass-line, string sounds, Steven Tyler on vocals, and vocal interjections made by Eminem.

Half way through the third verse, at line 13, Eminem increases the intensity of the texture with the addition of synthesized string sounds, a saxophone, and high piano gestures. These additional sounds at the end of the last verse add intensity as the song moves toward closure. The intensity does not diminish with the next repetition of the chorus, and then, although the texture is less full during the outro, the virtuosic guitar solo keeps the level of intensity high until it eventually fades out as the song ends.

*Masculinity and the Electric Guitar.* The electric guitar has long been associated with "masculinity". Many popular music scholars have discussed the association of the guitar and "masculinity", including Steve Waksman in his 1999 book, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience*. Waksman describes the band Led Zeppelin as "the quintessential purveyors of 'cock rock,'" which he describes as "that brand of guitar-driven music that most clearly articulates a male-oriented regime of

power and pleasure" (1999, 239). Aerosmith is also often classified within the sub-genre of 'cock rock'. The following quotation by Waksman describes the association between "masculinity" and the electric guitar: "In his role as lead guitarist [of Led Zeppelin], [Jimmy] Page sheds light upon the ways in which the electric guitar might be said to signify the 'cock' of cock rock....Or the 'rock' for that matter..." (239).

From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the electric guitar, and the rock genre as a whole, could be viewed as a representing "masculinity". Although this association can still be made, much of the music of the past decade has shifted away from the use of the guitar solo.<sup>5</sup> It is impossible to determine what specific cultural factors have influenced such a change, but one possibility is rooted in gender. In the early 1990s, female rock bands and female artists began to use the electric guitar for their own purposes, examples being the Seattle grunge band Hole, and girl groups such as Le Tigre.

It is also possible that the waning of the guitar solo can be attributed to a cultural shift: the surge of popularity of African-American music and the shift away from predominantly Caucasian forms of music. The popularity of rap, hip-hop and R&B currently equals or exceeds that of rock and heavy metal. One could also say that rap music has replaced the guitar solo in representing "masculinity." Male artists dominate the genre of rap music. Subsequently, the rap genre consists of extravagant male posturing in the lyrics, vocal presentation, images, and music videos.

Eminem's "Sing For The Moment" stands out for its unusual combination of rap and the electric guitar solo. "Sing For The Moment" combines two signifiers of "masculinity": the rap genre and the electric guitar solo. It is through this medium, as

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<sup>5</sup> The legacy of the guitar solo still lives in country music, typically considered a Caucasian genre of popular music.

well as the personal lyrics, that Eminem makes his identity claim. His identity claim is further reinforced through the video, discussed below, which also contains themes of "masculinity".

*Video.* Most of Eminem's music videos depict the narrative described in the song. The video for "Sing for the Moment," however, is a montage of footage: Eminem in concert, Eminem with his fans, and people protesting his music. This video is based on the style of early rock and metal videos, in which the video mostly consists of live footage of the band performing.

I would like to compare Gareth Palmer's examination of Bruce Springsteen's videos to an examination of Eminem's "Sing For The Moment" video. Palmer differentiates between typical rock videos, which are more "commercial" (1997, 112) and Springsteen's videos, which mostly depict the musicians performing live. He aligns "commercial" rock videos with pop videos, which use "rootless images". While I believe that many rock videos are more commercial, many rock videos, particularly early rock videos, are similar to Springsteen's videos, consisting almost entirely of footage of the band performing. Palmer describes live video footage as being more authentic.<sup>6</sup> He describes Springsteen's videos as "personal expressions/messages with meaning". He believes that "Rock aspires to be an authentic representation of lived experience" (112). By validating the rock fan's life experience (second person authenticity) and by

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<sup>6</sup> With this use of the term authentic, Palmer is employing one of the word's conventional uses, which is to describe rock music as being authentic if the artist/band adheres to the conventions of the genre as well as a type of authenticity of expression. This use of the word authenticity also encompasses authenticity of experience because it is the rock fan that is labeling the performance as authentic or inauthentic.

conveying the performer's personal expression (first person authenticity), rock music gains authenticity.

Eminem's video for "Sing for the Moment" resembles that of earlier rock/metal videos in two ways. First, he achieves authenticity of expression (first person authenticity) in his performance. The video images all revolve around him: Eminem performing on stage, Eminem with his fans, Eminem's problems with protestors. Second, he adopts the early rock video style (the artist performing live on stage and interacting with cheering fans), as well as borrowing the music from that era. As discussed earlier, Eminem structures his song around a 1970s classic rock ballad.

When examining the video, the constructed cultural cues of "masculinity" become clear. Eminem asserts his masculinity in three ways: by drawing on the masculinity of the rock genre through his sampling, by employing the masculinity of the guitar solo, and by working within the masculinity of his own rap genre. Eminem expresses his identity through the combination of these constructed cues of "masculinity" and through his use of personalized images.

Rap music fits into a societally constructed conception of gender. Since society views aggression as a masculine trait, rap music can also be considered as masculine due to its aggressive nature. Although conceptions of gender are changing in popular culture, many cultural cues still attribute stereotypes of "masculinity" and "femininity". Rap music is strongly associated with "masculinity" for several other associative reasons. First, rap music has always been male dominated. There are many popular female rap artists such as Queen Latifah and Missy Elliott, but these women are still greatly outnumbered by men. Second, rap features images of male posturing: men as powerful, in

control of money, cars, and other people. Women are typically portrayed as subjects of male control, through acts of violence, and through their positioning as dependent on men.<sup>7</sup> Finally, in the domain of the music itself, rap has violent, aggressive connotations which are attributed as stereotypical "masculine" characteristics.

### **Interpretive Summary**

In "Sing For The Moment" Eminem effectively combines two genres of music: rap and rock. Both of these genres typically signify "masculinity". Eminem draws on these signifiers of "masculinity", making an identity claim. His identity claim depicts him as a white, male, rap artist. His appropriation of rock music, as well as rock video strategies, reinforce his masculinity, as well as reinforce his roots as Caucasian male who was raised in poverty in Detroit ("Rock City").

Eminem's use of Aerosmith's music raises questions of authenticity and appropriation. Eminem appropriates elements of the rock genre in order to convey his own message. His appropriation from another genre causes us to consider his third person authenticity. How can we evaluate his performance from within his tradition of rap music? Should we also consider his authenticity from within the rock genre? Is his performance authentic within either of these traditions of performance? As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, this type of collaboration between rock and rap is not unprecedented. The boundaries between genres of popular music are becoming more flexible, and a consideration of authenticity must account for these changes.

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<sup>7</sup> In Sut Jhally's video, *Dreamworlds*, he explores images of women being objectified and controlled by men in music videos.

In an exploration of first person authenticity we must ask if Eminem conveys authenticity of expression. I would argue that he convincingly conveys an authentic performance. Even though the chorus of his song is sampled from "Dream On", Eminem shouts interjections during the chorus, rallying his fans to join with him in a celebration of his success. He relates personal experiences in his lyrics by describing events from his childhood, as well as his current problems with the law and journalists. As discussed earlier, I believe that Eminem sampled this song because it spoke to him in terms of authorial first person authenticity. He related to the lyrics of "Dream On" in the same way that Steven Tyler intended.

With Eminem's musical borrowing in "Sing For The Moment", Aerosmith's, and particularly Steven Tyler's, voices emerge in this intertextual practice. Eminem's borrowing from rock allows for rock music practices and their meanings and connotations to emerge in Eminem's song and video. The codes and conventions of both the genres of rock and rap emerge and intermingle in Eminem's presentation. Intertextuality's shifting position allows for the meaning and context of Aerosmith's "Dream On" to emerge and co-exist with Eminem's identity claim in "Sing For The Moment".

## Chapter 4

### Popular Song as a Political Platform: U2 and Tori Amos's Covers of The Beatles' "Happiness is a Warm Gun"

*It's so surprising to people who come from Europe and anyone who's come from Ireland that in the U.S. guns are so available... it has always mystified us.*  
-Dave "The Edge" Evans, cited in J. Eliscu, 2001

In this chapter I will draw on several of the theoretical concepts discussed in previous chapters to examine three versions of "Happiness is a Warm Gun": the Beatles's original and two cover interpretations. The Beatles's original version uses the gun as a sexual metaphor whereas U2 and Tori Amos, who each cover the song, use it to express social commentary on violence and gun control. Stuart Hall's theories of representation will be useful in the exploration of meaning in the cover versions. The concept of intertextuality also allows for the emergence of multiple voices and meanings in the analysis of this song. I will also discuss Moore's concepts of authenticity in relation to the musicians' social positioning.

This chapter has the organizational challenge of analyzing three versions of one song. My analysis will first address each song individually, saving comparisons between the three versions for the end of the chapter. These comparisons will reflect on the theoretical issues raised throughout the chapter. The final comparative section will serve as a conclusion for both the chapter as well as the thesis.

### "Happiness is a Warm Gun"

The song "Happiness is a Warm Gun" was originally recorded by the Beatles in 1968. Like most Beatles songs, it has since been covered by many other artists, including Alanis Morissette<sup>1</sup>, the Breeders<sup>2</sup>, U2, and Tori Amos. After a brief exploration of the original version of the song, this chapter will also examine two very different cover versions, one by U2 (1997), and one by Tori Amos (2001). My analysis will show how these contemporary artists have appropriated this song to comment on issues of gun control and gun violence.

#### **The Beatles' s Original**

"Happiness is a Warm Gun" appears on the album *The Beatles*, otherwise known as *The White Album*, which was released on November 22, 1968. Although the song is credited to both John Lennon and Paul McCartney, the idea for the song and most of the lyrics originated with Lennon: "The idea for this song came to John [Lennon] after he discovered a gun magazine belonging to George Martin that had been left lying around the studio. On the cover was the line 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun In Your Hand'" (Turner 1994, 157). This phrase was likely derived from a popular 1960s platitude: "Happiness is a warm puppy" introduced in Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" comic strip. "The culture reacted with countless takeoffs, including 'Happiness is a warm gun'" (Everett 1999,

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<sup>1</sup> To my knowledge, Morissette has never recorded this song, but has performed it live at concerts.

<sup>2</sup> This version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" was recorded on The Breeders. 1990. *Pod*. Electra/Asylum.

182). Lennon felt that it was too good a phrase to let go and he began to toy with it. "I thought, what a fantastic thing to say!" John later remarked, 'A warm gun means you've just shot something'" (Turner 1994, 157). Lennon wrote, "Happiness is a Warm Gun" shortly after making this comment (Thomas 1998, 266).

At the time of the song's composition, Lennon had recently started living with Yoko Ono, a Japanese artist. They had met at an exhibition of her art in 1966. Lennon said that he felt "very sexually oriented" during this period "so before long the idea for a song about a warm gun had taken on sexual connotations..." (Turner 1994, 157). "Happiness is a Warm Gun" is a highly erotic song that can be elusive in meaning. Many of the lyrics, particularly those in the first section of the song, can be quite difficult to interpret.

*Lyrics.* Without previous knowledge of the circumstances surrounding this composition, some of the lyrics may seem obscure, but the overall implication of sex, drugs, and violence are still present. The lyrics of the song are divided into four distinct sections (see Appendix 2). Many of the lyrics in the first section were written during a night of acid tripping that Lennon had with his friends: Derek Taylor, Neil Aspinall and Peter Asher (Turner 1994, 157). Taylor recounts how "John said he had written half the song and wanted us to toss out phrases while Neil wrote them down" (Turner 1994, 157). Taylor's account of this evening helps explain the intent behind the lyrics of the first section.

The first section begins with a brief introduction ("She's not a girl who misses much"). It is likely that Lennon is describing Yoko Ono with this phrase. As Taylor

recalls, "First of all, he wanted to know how to describe a girl who was really smart and I remembered a phrase of my father's which was 'she's not a girl who misses much'" (Turner 1994, 157). This brief introduction goes directly into the first section ("She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand, like a lizard on a window pane"). Although the meaning of this passage is quite vague, the "the touch of the velvet hand" and the "lizard" have sexual connotations. According to Taylor, "the touch of the velvet hand" came out of a story that he told:

"about a chap my wife Joan and I met in the Carrick Bay Hotel on the Isle of Man. It was late one night drinking in the bar and this local fellow who liked meeting holiday makers and rapping to them suddenly said to us, 'I like wearing moleskin gloves you know. It gives me a bit of an unusual sensation when I'm out with my girlfriend.' He then said, I don't want to go into details.' So we didn't" (Turner 1994, 157).

Taylor is not clear about who came up with the "lizard on a window pane" but he interprets it as "a symbol of very quick movement. Often, when we were living in LA, you'd look up and see tiny little lizards nipping up the window" (157).

The next phrase ("The man in the crowd with the multi-coloured mirrors on his hobnail boots") is also quite elusive. According to Taylor, this phrase came from

something he saw in a newspaper "about a Manchester City soccer fan who had been arrested by the police for having mirrors on the toe caps of his shoes so that he could look up girls' skirts. We thought this was an incredibly complicated and torturous way of getting a cheap thrill and so that became 'multi-colored mirrors' and 'hobnail boots' to fit to the rhythm. A bit of poetic license" (Turner 1994, 157). The sexual connotations of this phrase become clearer after the next phrase: "Lying with his eyes while his hands are busy working overtime." Taylor recalls that this phrase came from something else that he had read "where a man wearing a cloak had fake plastic hands, which he would rest on the counter of a shop while underneath the cloak he was busy lifting things and stuffing them in a bag around his waist" (157). Although this phrase may have derived from a story about shoplifting, in the context of the previous sexual connotations in the song, it suggests something more erotic than shoplifting.

The next phrase of the song: "A soap impression of his wife which he ate and donated to the National Trust" could be construed as a veiled oral erotic reference. According to Taylor, the inspiration for this line came from a conversation about:

"the horrors of walking in public spaces on Merseyside, where you were always coming across the evidence of people having crapped behind bushes and in old air raid shelters....So to donate what you've eaten to the National Trust (a British organization with responsibilities for upkeeping countryside of great beauty) was what would

now be known as 'defecation on common land owned by the National Trust'" (Turner 1994, 157).

The next section of the song is much more comprehensible than the preceding section. In the vein of the previous innuendoes, "I need a fix 'cause I'm going down" could be interpreted as another oral erotic reference. Taken more literally, it could also refer to a need for drugs after coming down from the last trip. It "has a junkie's dread to it, the burnt-out zone between coming down and the next rush" (Riley 1988, 269).

The next section of lyrics ("Mother Superior jump the gun") is best understood in relation to two things: 1) the fact that Lennon was known to call Yoko Ono "Mother", and 2) the first line of the song ("She's not a girl who misses much"). Taylor states: "If it was a song about anybody, it was a song about Yoko. She was the girl he held in his arms, the girl who was so smart that she didn't miss a trick, and the one he always called Mother - in this case, Mother Superior" (Turner 1994, 157). To "jump the gun" normally means to rush into something, but given the sexual innuendos present in the first section of this song, it is easy to infer that the gun represents the male anatomy. "Sex in inextricably bound up with the violent phallus of the gun, which plays off the junkie's 'shooting up' and the dirty flasher 'shooting his wad' before it lurches into the final episode" (Riley 1988, 269).

The final section opens with the song's title phrase "Happiness is a warm gun", which has multiple meanings in the context of this song. It has the violent meaning of having just fired a gun, but it also has a sexual meaning of representing male anatomy.

The three back-up singers add doo-wop vocals ("bang, bang, shoot, shoot") to the texture (Everett 1999, 182). After the title phrase is repeated a second time, Lennon delivers the next few lines in a half-spoken manner. "Lennon was inspired by his relationship with Ono...to add a few gun-related sexual double-entendres" (Everett 1999, 182). The lines "When I hold you in my arms, and I feel my finger on your trigger," clearly have both a violent and a sexual meaning. Lennon then returns to several repetitions of "Happiness is a warm gun" as the song's conclusion.

The multiple meanings of sex and violence present in "Happiness is a Warm Gun" are further enhanced by the seemingly disparate musical styles that Lennon and McCartney strung together for the various sections of this song. Taylor's comment about the song's lyrics is also true of the music: "When John put it all together, it created a series of layers of images. It was like a whole mess of colour" (Turner 1994, 157). I will now examine the song's musical features. Throughout my discussion of the formal structure, instrumental texture, and vocal strategies, I will refer to Walter Everett's analysis (1999) of the song, which is a careful account of the musical content and structure.

*Formal Structure.* "Happiness is a Warm Gun" combines several distinct stylistic sections, almost as if three separate songs were put together. In fact, the spoken passage in the final section of the song ("When I hold you in my arms...") was the rejected spoken verse from the Beatles's "I'm So Tired" demo (Everett 1999, 182). Everett describes the song as "a mishmash of styles in a highly sectionalized through-composed

form" (1999, 182). Examples 4-1 and 4-2 provide tables illustrating the song sections. The division of Example 4-1 parallels the division of the lyrics. Example 4-2 divides the song according to the three distinct musical styles. In both examples, the section labels *a*, *b*, etc. do not represent the large-scale formal structure, but rather label the lyric sections. I use these section labels in my analysis of this original Beatles's version as well as for the two cover versions by U2 and Tori Amos. These examples are best examined in relation to the lyrics provided in Appendix 2 since only the first line of each section is given. I will discuss each of these sections briefly and then examine the musical attributes more closely in the section entitled "Texture".

Section one is comprised of the brief one-line introduction, *a*, and the lengthy first "verse" of the song, *b*. Section two begins with two presentations of the *c* ("I need a fix") material, one played on guitar and the second sung. Although I separated sections *c* and *d* in the lyric analysis, musically, they share similar stylistic attributes such that I have grouped them together in section two. The third and final section of the song consists of the *e* ("Happiness is a warm gun") material followed by the *f*, spoken material, followed by a reprise of the *e* material.

**Texture.** The song begins immediately with the first sung line, *a*, which is delivered in a very lyrical way over a similarly lyrical guitar riff. The guitar riff is a finger-picked, arpeggiated passage with a clear tone. The second line of text is sung in a contrasting vocal style: more rhythmic, less lyrical, and much louder. The change in vocal style is accompanied by a similar instrumental change. The drums and bass then enter and

although the original guitar riff is still present, another guitar riff is added to the texture. This guitar is distorted and is used in a way that is similar to drum shots. At the line "Lying with his hands..." the back-up vocals enter, creating an even fuller texture.

The acoustic, lyrical guitar riff present in the first section is replaced at the start of the next section, *c*. The guitar solo at *c* is played on a distorted electric guitar with a very raw sound. After the guitar has played the melody through once, the voices enter repeating the same melody. Several band members sing this melody in unison. The vocal quality in this section is almost devoid of expression, likely intended to mimic a drug-induced state.

After a brief a pause, the tempo increases and the singer presents the line "Mother Superior jump the gun." In this section, cymbals are added to the texture. The intensity builds by both an increase in volume and the singers' intensity during the fifth and sixth repetitions of the line "Mother Superior jump the gun."

One of the more interesting features of section 3 is the "greasy 'bang bang shoot shoot' doo-wop backing vocals over the idiomatic 1950s progression...I-VI-IV-V" (Everett 1999, 182). This adds a sarcastic element to this already sarcastic song. Lines 3-5 of this section ("When I hold you in my arms...") are half-spoken, like *Sprechstimme*, while the back-up singers chime in with "Oooo yeah" (Everett's transcription of this is provided in Example 4-7). This is followed by an extended, elaborate vocal presentation of the *e* material. The combination of the traditional harmonic structure, doo-wop vocals, sexually loaded lyrics, and sarcastic spoken passage provide the perfect satirical close to this song.

*Harmony.* Everett describes how the song is tightly unified by motivic relationships (1999, 182-183). In particular, he draws attention to the opening E-G motive (see Example 4-5), which is reharmonized at various points in the song. Everett shows how, in the first section of the song, "this third is filled in for a descent,  $g^1-f\#^1-e^1$ , over two chords in E minor" (182). A second harmonization occurs at the beginning of the guitar solo of section 2. Everett describes how "the same E-G third is supported by a major-minor seventh chord on A, in a new A-pentatonic-minor context that sets up the [025] (A-C-G) chord relations..." (183). The third harmonization of the E-G motive occurs in the song's finale, section *e* ("Happiness is a warm gun"). This finale begins with the same interval in a new high register (see Example 4-6), which, according to Everett, "opens up with great 'happiness' at the arrival of C major" (183). Everett's interest in Schenkerian analysis becomes evident as he describes the implication of this last harmonization of the motive: "C major finally clarifies E as the primary tone prolonged through the entire piece, as this 3 descends to 2 and to 1 in the final bar, descending most clearly in Harrison's telecaster" (183).

It is useful to note Everett's description of the harmony. The song, although somewhat unconventional with its non-verse/chorus format, does follow some traditional voice-leading conventions, for example the Schenkerian 3-line.

Given Lennon's pro-peace attitudes, one could easily assume that a song entitled "Happiness is a Warm Gun" would carry a social message about violence. However,

according to friends, Lennon had no such anti-gun message in mind in the genesis of the song. In fact, Lennon's conception of the song was inspired by his paramour and is overtly sexual.

### **U2's Version**

The rock band U2 is an Irish band that is extremely popular in both Europe and North America. The band has consistently produced hit albums since the early 1980s. The band members came together while they were still in high school at the Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Dublin in 1978 (Henke 1994, 10). Paul Hewson, now known as Bono Vox (Henke 1994, 10), eventually became the lead singer. Dave "the Edge" Evans and his brother Dick are both guitarists, and Adam Clayton is the bassist. Although their debut album, *Boy*, was released in 1981, their popularity and success as a rock band was really established with the release of their third album, *War* (1983), which deals with the sectarian strife in Northern Ireland (Considine 1994, 6).

The band U2, particularly lead-singer Bono, is now well known for their support of various human rights issues. Their reputation as activists began early in their career, with the release of the *War* album. The album "doesn't shy away from weighty issues; its songs grapple with such topics as the strife in Northern Ireland, Polish solidarity and nuclear terror" (Henke 1994, 9). The first song on the album *War*, and still one of U2's most popular songs is "Sunday Bloody Sunday" which "apparently addresses Bloody Sunday, a 1972 incident in which British paratroopers killed thirteen civilians in an illegal civil-rights demonstration in Londonberry" (Considine 1994, 6). Appendix 2

provides the lyrics for "Sunday Bloody Sunday." Dave Evans, who initially came up with the idea for "Sunday Bloody Sunday," points out that this is "not a song in which U2 takes sides with either faction in Northern Ireland, it's about the futility of war: 'There's many lost,' sings Bono, 'But tell me who has won?'" (Henke 1994, 14).

During U2's 2001 *Elevation* tour<sup>3</sup> of North America, the band used a powerful video montage to comment on gun control in the United States. During their performance of the song "Bullet the Blue Sky" (1990),<sup>4</sup> they screened a video created by Catherine Owens. The video includes images of victims of gun violence and children carrying firearms (Eliscu 2001). The video also includes footage of screen legend Charlton Heston, president of the National Rifle Association, defending his views on gun control. It shows Heston saying, "There are no good guns. There are no bad guns. Any gun in the hands of a bad man is a bad thing. Any gun in the hands of a good person is no threat to anybody, except bad people" ("U2 Tackle Firearms" 2001). This clip is followed by footage of a small child playing with a gun and other violent scenes ("U2 Tackle Firearms" 2001). U2 guitarist Dave Evans discussed the video montage in the following quotation: "The song needed something that would contemporize it... We're treading a very fine line between being artist and wanting to lecture Americans about issues that are important. It's basically turning the mirror on the audience" (Eliscu 2001).

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<sup>3</sup> This was a fifty-date North American tour from March to June of 2001. It was U2's first major tour in years ("U2 Tackle Firearms" 2001). A video recording of their Boston performance is available (U2 2001b).

<sup>4</sup> "Bullet the Blue Sky" was originally recorded on the album *The Joshua Tree* (1990). The lyrics are provided in Appendix 2.

"U2 originally released "Happiness is a Warm Gun (The Gun Mix)" as a b-side on *Last Night On Earth Part 1*, the "Last Night On Earth" single (1997). They released a second version, "Happiness is a Warm Gun (The Danny Saber Mix)", on *Last Night On Earth Part 2* (1997), which was the third single from the album *Pop*. This single featured a remix of "Last Night on Earth," the "Happiness" remix, as well as two other non-album tracks. They re-released "Happiness is a Warm Gun (The Gun Mix)" on the 2002 compilation *The Best of 1990-2000*, a two-CD set. The first disc, "The Best Of" contains the band's hit-songs from the past decade. "Happiness is a Warm Gun" appears on the second disc, "The B-Sides".

*Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.* Although I have been unable to find any direct quotations from the band concerning their interpretation of "Happiness is a Warm Gun," the other songs discussed ("Sunday Bloody Sunday" and "Bullet the Blue Sky") demonstrate the band's interest in issues of violence and gun control. "Happiness is a Warm Gun" is part of a system of images and meanings.<sup>5</sup> Interpreting this song from within this system of images and meanings that U2 has created, I believe that their version of the song is intended as commentary on gun violence and gun control in North America.

Stuart Hall's theories of representation can be useful in the analysis of this song. As discussed in the previous chapter, according to Hall, nothing meaningful exists outside of discourse. In this case, Hall's theory can be applied such that representation

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<sup>5</sup> Sut Jhally discusses how one song or video becomes part of a system of images and meanings in the video *Dreamworlds II* (1995).

occurs in the domain of the music itself. Hall defines an identity claim as occurring when a claim on *who someone is* or *what they belong to* is made in the process of representation. In this case, U2 conveys their social positioning on gun violence and the message of their version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" by making an identity claim. Through the process of representation, which occurs in the musical presentation, U2 alters the meaning of the original lyrics to convey a message about gun violence and gun control.

**Lyrics.** U2 kept most of the original lyrics intact for their version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun." Their re-working of the song consisted of changing the order of some of the lyrics and with the music itself. It is with the band's musical presentation that they make their identity claim. My reading of this song as commentary on gun control is based on an examination of U2's musical strategies as well as with an awareness of the band's social positioning.

The only lyrics that U2 omitted were the lyrics from the *f* section, Lennon's spoken passage. In the Beatles's original version, Lennon recited this passage with heightened emotion, playing on the double meaning of the warm gun. This passage reinforced the sexual double-entendre of the gun in its original context. U2's omission of this passage reflects their alteration of the song's meaning, from overtly sexual to a social message about gun control.

It is also interesting that the Beatles's *b* material (which constitutes what would normally be considered the first verse of a song) is spoken not sung. By the time this

texture that will be present throughout the rest of the song. After the instrumental introduction, Bono enters with the Beatles introduction ("She's not a girl who misses much"). U2 kept the original "do do do do do do, oh yeah" which sounds very out of place against the electronic instrumental texture. Rather than proceeding to the *b* material, Bono first sings section *d* ("Mother Superior") followed by section *e* ("Happiness is a warm gun"). The texture has been gradually building up until this point. The electronic sounds become higher pitched during the *d* section and the drums speed up intensely during the last repetition of "Mother Superior jump the gun" creating some anticipation. The drums continue with their fast, constant beat during the *e* section and the guitar sound effects are slightly more active here.

The texture reaches its fullest point when the much anticipated *b* section finally arrives. There are more electronic sounds and a very full musical texture. Rather than singing the lyrics here, Bono recites them in a very neutral manner. There is very little emotion in his voice, it sounds almost monotone. The frenzied music does not seem to fit with the lack of expression in Bono's voice.

The material that comes after this remains true to the order in which it appeared in the original, *c*, *d*, then *e*. Bono returns to singing in the *c* section and the musical texture returns to a slightly calmer state, similar to the texture in the first repetition of the *d* material. When hearing the *c* and *d* sections back to back, they seem to flow together the same way that these sections did in the original.

When the second repetition of *e* is played, the listener's expectations may be dissatisfied. After have already sung "happiness" earlier in the song, here Bono recites the

lyrics. Although the words are spoken with slightly more expression than the *b* section was, it still seems almost expressionless. The reader will recall my earlier discussion of the spoken *f* section of the Beatles' version. The singer's immense vocal expression in this passage added irony to the lyrics being recited. The vocalist recited the passage with such energy that it is even possible to notate the approximate pitches used (see the reproduction of Everett's 1999 transcription of this passage in Example 4-5). The rapid, pulsing drum beat is the most prominent part of the music at this moment because the guitars have momentarily dropped out of the texture. After four repetitions of that line, Bono begins to sing "Happiness..." and the musical texture returns to normal. After four sung repetitions of this phrase, the line is spoken two more times, leading directly into an instrumental bridge. The bridge contains very high-pitched guitar sound effects.

In the next repetition of *c* the instruments become much more rhythmic. The guitars respond with a rhythmic riff to each line that Bono sings. It is almost like a call and response format. The rhythmic instrumental riffs and call and response format distinguish this presentation of "I need a fix" from the first delivery of these lyrics.

The song ends with one more repetition of the *e* section in which the electronic sounds become very prominent. Bono repeats "Happiness is a warm gun" over and over until he eventually fades out. There is a brief musical outro and the piece ends with several high-pitched electronic sounds.

Rather than being clearly divided into sections like the original, this version has a much more continuous musical flow. It can still be divided into sections based on the way in which the lyrics are delivered, but there is a fairly consistent musical texture and flow

to this version. The Beatles's sectional changes created a sense of irony or tongue-in-cheek commentary. The consistency of form in U2's version seems more serious in its presentation. The unity and flow provided by the consistency of style and formal structure lends it more integrity than the original, therefore contributing to U2's more serious social message.

The consistency of style and structure, the highly electronic musical texture, and the re-organization of lyrics are all a part of U2's identity claim in this song. As part of a system of images and meanings, their version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" can be interpreted as commentary on gun violence and gun control in North America. Recalling guitarist Dave Evans's quote from this chapter's introduction, it is not surprising that the band would record a version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" as commentary on gun control: "It's so surprising to people who come from Europe and anyone who's come from Ireland that in the U.S. guns are so available...it has always mystified us" (Eliscu 2001).

### **Tori Amos's Version**

Amos released a version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" on the *Strange Little Girls* album of cover songs (2001). The song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" also appears on this album.<sup>7</sup> On the album, she paired "Happiness is a Warm Gun" with "I Don't Like Mondays," to comment on gun culture in North America. The original version of "I Don't Like Mondays"<sup>8</sup> was "arch pop journalism about a real-life tragedy: a teenage girl turned

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 1, "Voice and Body in Musical Intertextuality: Tori Amos's Interpretation of Eminem's '97 Bonne and Clyde'", for more details about Amos's *Strange Little Girls* album.

sniper" (Fricke 2001).<sup>9</sup> Amos's pairing of "I Don't Like Mondays" with her interpretation of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" "turned into cold assaults on America's gun culture..." (Irwin 2001). Amos said of the song, "[Lennon] saw an ad for a gun ... and he was murdered by a gun years later. It started to strike me that this was going to be a canvas, a backdrop for the fact that no changes have been made [in gun control] that are effective" (Amos 2001b).

In preparing her version of the song, Tori researched John Lennon's death and discovered that Mark David Chapman had called an escort service shortly before he shot Lennon. Tori states: "And we don't know if they had sex or if they just talked, but he told her to 'be silent'. So this is sung through the eyes of that call girl"<sup>10</sup> (Amos 2001c).

Amos's intent to use "Happiness is a Warm Gun" as a canvas for gun control became apparent in an extended radio interview with Chris Douridas on Spinner's *Ground Zero*. While discussing the shooting that inspired the original version of "I Don't Like Mondays" Amos said:

"I was watching a lot of the commentary at the time after  
the shooting, and the thing that struck me was: different

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<sup>8</sup> "I Don't Like Mondays" was written by Bob Geldof and originally recorded by the Boomtown Rats (1979). Appendix 2 includes these lyrics.

<sup>9</sup> The teenage girl was Brenda Ann Spencer, age sixteen. On the morning of January 29th, 1979, Spencer opened fire on children arriving at the Cleveland Elementary School in San Diego from her house across the street. She wounded eight students and killed the school principal, Burton Wragg, and custodian Mike Suchar. The song title derived from a comment Spencer made to reporters when asked why she had done this, "I don't like Mondays. This livens up the day." (Barbara Mikkelson, 21 March 2003, "'I Don't Like Mondays", Urban Legends Reference Pages, accessed 9 June 2003, available: <http://www.snopes.com/music/songs/mondays.asp>, 2).

<sup>10</sup> Appendix 3 includes Neil Gaiman's biography of the character of the call girl.

people from the gun lobby or the NRA would say things to the effect of, or I'd read it on the net...that these are bad seeds that do these kinds of things. And it was almost like they were absolving themselves because we all know that the issue is accessibility. And with all my nieces and nephews, the Chip Is Going To Slip!<sup>11</sup> It did with me. Its gonna, so the last thing you want is that they can pick up a 38 calibre gun. That's the last thing that you want.... meaning they lose it. We all have had moments when we get angry....and you know they throw watermelons because...that's what's around. And so...when those guys in power or women, did not want to say 'hey, that's its easier to get a gun than a drivers license in some states.' That's really not good, so we have to look at this. So 'Happiness' became a canvas...for the second amendment, written by a man who was killed by a gun. Who, when he saw the ad...just couldn't believe it...why is it warm? Because he just fired it...So I felt...this needs to be put on this record" (Amos 2001a).

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<sup>11</sup> This is an interesting reference to the lyrics of "I Don't Like Mondays". The first line of the song is "The silicon chip inside her head, got switched to overload."

This is just one of the many instances where Amos clearly states her intentions to use her cover of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" to comment on gun violence in America.

Amos relates her version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" to Mark David Chapman's encounter with a prostitute shortly before he shot Lennon. Amos states: "The service that he asked her to do [was] to be silent. So silent all these years, which is a reference to my life, I was able to hold that frequency, through the silence, through the silencer" (Van Horn 2001, 3). Her use of the word 'silence' in her life refers to the song "Silent All These Years" from her solo debut album, *Little Earthquakes* (1992). In this album Amos explores themes of alienation and her disenchantment with her place in society. For example, the song "Me and a Gun" refers to her sexual assault at gunpoint. This quote draws the connection between the voice of the call girl in the song "Happiness is a Warm Gun" and Amos's relationship to that character. Amos states that these women, these characters were her way into the song. They helped her to understand and convey the woman's perspective on each of the *Strange Little Girls* songs. Amos related to the call girl to find her way into the song "through the silence, through the silencer."

***Subjectivity and Expression of Meaning.*** By connecting the song to her personal life Amos lends authenticity to her version of the song. Considering Allan Moore's first person authenticity (authenticity of expression), Amos's expression is authentic because she expresses her own experience. Although Amos cannot directly relate to life of a call girl, the character whose voice she uses in the song, she can relate to the call girl's silence. Since Amos is covering this song and because she comes from a different

generation and gender than the original artist, one could question her first person authenticity. However, since Amos finds a way to relate the call girl's perspective in the song, one could say that she does convey first person authenticity.

The concepts of subject-position, representation, identity claim, and Signifyin(g) will all be raised in relation to Amos's stance in "Happiness is a Warm Gun". I will discuss the way in which Amos imposes a particular subject-position on the listener by using the technique of sampling. I will also discuss the way in which Amos signifies on the Beatles's original text. Through the process of representation, Amos makes an identity claim. By drawing out the voice of the call girl, Amos locates a perspective that U2 did not. This demonstrates how different perspectives can allow for different identity claims.

The term intertextuality is also relevant to my interpretation of this song for several reasons. First, Amos's stance with this song responds to the song's originating moment. Amos's intent with all of the songs on the *Strange Little Girls* album was to provide a women's perspective on songs originally written and recorded by men. Therefore, her song is a direct response to the original. Second, the concept of intertextuality allows for several voices to emerge in her song: that of Amos as social commentator, that of the call girl, that of the Beatles as she responds to their original, as well as those of the samples, discussed below.

*Lyrics.* Amos begins this song with an extremely long introduction in the context of popular song. The introduction lasts two minutes and eight seconds, a length that would constitute half of most popular songs. In this case, the introduction fits with Amos's

version of "Happiness", which is approximately ten minutes long. Her introduction consists of sampled spoken passages about gun violence that play over an elaborate musical background. The track opens with an immediate sample of a reading from a newspaper article written about John Lennon's assassination: "John Lennon was shot here at the entrance to the Dakota building. Lennon was shot four times with a 38 calibre gun in what seems to be a totally senseless killing."

After a slight pause, Amos's father, Dr. Edison Amos, a minister, enters with a lengthy quote on the Second Amendment (see Appendix 2 for a transcription of the song lyrics), a U.S. Constitutional amendment that argues for the right to bear arms. This quote introduces Amos's perspective in this song. By following the quote about John Lennon's assassination with a brief discussion about the Second Amendment, Amos introduces her message on gun violence.

After a change in musical texture and a brief instrumental solo, a sample of George W. Bush plays ("I believe that people who are gonna commit crimes shouldn't have guns"). Six seconds later, an excerpt of George Bush Sr. plays. He attempts to relate to the American people by stating that his "reaction [to gun violence] is the same as every other father's, every other grandfather." He talks about kids making bombs and concludes with "I don't know any answers." Amos's vocal entry overlaps with the last line of this sample, singing the phrase "Happiness is a warm gun". Amos's entry at this point seems a deliberate ironic contrast to the Bush statement. Her first line of singing refers to having just fired a gun, the statement coming immediately after two minutes of excerpts on gun violence and gun control. In many interviews (recalling, for example, the lengthy quote

on pages 101-102) Amos has clearly stated that she uses this song as a canvas for gun control.

Amos had the following to say about the sampled passages in the introduction:

“Yeah, you've got father and daughter and father and son. So you have...Dr. Edison Amos, my dad, talking about the second amendment and then you have George Bush Sr. and George Bush Jr....So...I thought that if I'm going to do father and son it was fair to do father and daughter and...this song has a little thread going to the one before it on the record; which is 'I Don't Like Mondays.' And I said... fair point” (Amos 2001a).

Again, Amos creates a link from "I Don't Like Mondays" to "Happiness is a Warm Gun". The "father and son" refers to the Bushes, and father and daughter are Amos and her father in "Happiness". In this sense, Amos personalizes the song. The inclusion of her father<sup>12</sup> combined with the comment about father and daughter lends first person authenticity to her version of this song. Amos's comment about father and daughter also refers to the teenage shooter, Brenda Ann Spencer, and her father in "I Don't Like Mondays".<sup>13</sup> The gun that Spencer used was a rifle her father had given her for her

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Edison Amos is a Methodist minister from Maryland (O'Brien, 205-206).

birthday. One of the lines in "I Don't Like Mondays" is "And Daddy doesn't understand it, he always said she was good as gold," (see Appendix 2).

Amos makes it quite clear from the start of her version that gun control is one of the primary issues of this song. The listener is immediately presented with several images: John Lennon's death, the Second Amendment, crimes committed with guns, victims of violence, and children making bombs. Eric Clarke's adaptation of the term subject-position is relevant here. Recalling my discussion from the introduction, Clarke argues that subject-position imposes limits on a listener's interpretation even though every listener brings a different background to their listening experience and interprets meanings slightly differently. I would argue that in this song, Amos's extended sampling of discussion on gun violence and gun control imposes a particular subject-position on the listener. Amos makes it difficult for the listener to ignore these issues as they listen to the rest of the song. In this sense, Amos's attempt to use this song as a canvas for gun control is effective.

There are two major text omissions in Amos's version. She omits all but the first line ("She's well acquainted with the touch") from the Beatles's *b* section. This omission is quite remarkable considering that it received the greatest emphasis in the narrative of the Beatles's song. In Amos's version, most of the other sections (*c*, *d*, and *e*) are simply several repetitions of one phrase. Amos also omits the Beatles's section *f*, the spoken section ("When I hold you in my arms..."). With these omissions, the only lines of text

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<sup>13</sup> In this interview, Amos's comment about father and daughter leads directly into a lengthy discussion about the song "I Don't Like Monday's and the fact that it was meant to be paired with "Happiness is a warm Gun" (Amos/Douridas).

that Amos delivers in seven minutes of singing are: 1) "Happiness is a warm gun mama", 2) "Mother Superior jump the gun", 3) "I need a fix 'cause I'm going down", 4) "She's not a girl who misses much", and 5) "She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand". In Amos's version, there are few lyrics, she simply repeats the same phrases, manipulating them by re-ordering them, combining fragments of different phrases, and by her elaborate vocal delivery. Since she uses so few lyrics, Amos establishes the narrative and social positioning of her version through her vocal strategies and the lengthy spoken introduction.

The fact that she sings only a small portion of the lyrics also emphasizes the instrumental music. The ratio of instrumental music to singing in this song is surprisingly weighted toward the instrumental music in the context of popular song. This is unusual for Amos. I am hard pressed to think of any other of Tori Amos's songs that have this little singing.

As with U2's version, Stuart Hall's theories of representation are useful in interpreting Amos's musical meaning. Amos communicates meaning through vocal and musical strategies. This analysis shows that Amos gives meaning to this song through the process of representation. Amos makes an identity claim on this song both as social commentator on gun control, and by assuming the voice of the call girl, therefore presenting a woman's perspective. As discussed earlier, intertextuality is relevant to Amos's version of this song because multiple voices are present: Amos as social commentator on gun control, the call-girl who presents a woman's perspective, as well as

the voices of the Bushes and Amos's father which echo through the song in the listener's memory.

*Texture.* The texture of this piece is best described as a rich, continuous web of sound created by guitar, bass, drums, and most importantly, Amos's voice and keyboard playing. The various instruments may come in and out at various points, but there is a consistency to the richness of the sound created by the mix. I will not discuss the texture in-depth here because the textural changes in the piece often relate directly to the division of the structure of the piece. I will combine my discussion of specific textural elements with the following discussion of the formal structure.

*Formal Structure.* Amos's version is through composed. Although some stylistic sections are clearly divided, other times, the sections blur together. I have provided a table (see Example 4-4) based on the letter names I assigned to the Beatles's version. This table will help guide the reader through my analysis. Amos's version does not divide into clear structural sections, but I have attempted to section it off based on the major musical shifts. Since Amos continually changes the sequential order of the lyrics and music, these divisions are not definitive, merely my subjective interpretation.

Section A is the two minute introduction comprised of the spoken passages on gun control played over two instrumental solos: guitar then keyboard. The introduction begins with the spoken clip at the front of the texture and a virtuosic electric guitar solo, also very close to the front of the texture. A keyboard riff and drums accompany the

guitar solo and spoken passages. Approximately half way through the introduction, after the spoken passage by Dr. Edison Amos, the keyboard takes over the primary melody from the guitar. The guitar drops out of the texture entirely for a few seconds and re-enters at the start of the quote by George Bush Sr., creating a polyphonic texture with the keyboard.

During the course of the introduction, the musical background gradually comes to the front of the texture, building until it eventually overpowers the spoken samples. This occurs just before Amos enters with her first line ("Happiness is a warm gun"), signalling the start of section B. Musically, this section is a continuation of the introduction. The most prominent difference in the texture is the absence of the harsh, electric guitar. In this sense, this section is slightly less intense than the introduction. This section is very brief and leads directly into section C, which begins with an instrumental link played by the keyboard. This is followed by a vocal presentation of the Beatles's *d* material ("Mother Superior jump the gun").

In section D, we finally hear the much anticipated first line of the Beatles's original ("She's not a girl who misses much"). Surprisingly, this is immediately followed by another spoken passage by Dr. Edison Amos ("Get these ten bill of rights..."). Another repetition of the line ("She's not a girl...") and another spoken line are followed by another instrumental link, this one played by the guitar. This is followed by the second line of the Beatles's song ("She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand"). Listeners familiar with the Beatles's lyrics will be surprised to hear a guitar solo following this line instead of the anticipated original lyrics. The guitar launches into a

keyboard solo followed by a very expanded version of the *c* material ("I need a fix"). By this point in the song (four and a half minutes) Amos has already presented all of her lyrical material. From this point forwards Amos repeats and elaborates on the lines she has already presented. With Amos's repetition and vocal elaboration on these lyric phrases, she is Signifyin(g) on the Beatles's original lyrics. Rather than allowing the meaning of the lyrics alone to stand, the meaning emerges through her vocal presentation. Amos appropriates the Beatles's lyrics material and then Signifies on them to convey her own meaning and social message.

The E section is characterized by a distinct rhythmic shift. The beat changes from being very fluid and flexible to a constant, heavy beat. Amos's version does not have clear musical and lyric divisions. These amorphous sections have little to do with the lyric presentation. This is clearly demonstrated in the E section, which has different musical parameters from the sections preceding and following it, but contains lyrics from *c*, *a*, and *d*. In this section, the musical underpinning keeps a constant groove created by the drums and bass guitar while Amos sings various vocal lines (*c*, *a*, and *d*). It is the musical underpinning that makes this a distinct section.

Similar to the section before it, the F section contains lyrics from several sections of the original: *c*, *d*, and *e*. This section arrives with dramatic changes in the tempo and the texture. The tempo is much slower than anything that has preceded it. Both the keyboard and electric guitar drop out of the texture at this point. The drums, which were a constant drum-kit beat, are now used less frequently, and after a while, they eventually settle on a continuous high-hat beat. The overall effect is a very mellow sound. The song

seems to be winding down (as the listener might expect after seven minutes and thirty-eight seconds). After approximately thirty seconds, the guitar re-enters, but, fitting with the texture at this moment, it is much more subdued than it has been previously.

*Phrasing.* The phrasing in the introduction is determined by the melodic and rhythmic structure of the keyboard melody. The keyboard plays a brief ascending gesture in groups of three. These groups of three gestures form one unit that then repeats. These regular rhythmic groupings immediately establish a regular sense of phrasing in the song. This regularity, however, does not last for long. During the second half of the introduction, the keyboard motive is replaced by a lengthier, more elaborate keyboard solo. Although this solo maintains the regular phrasing, the phrasing is less audible because of the elaborateness of the riff. The musical organization, texture, instrumental riffs are constantly changing throughout the piece. It becomes difficult to keep track of any regular sense of phrasing because of the constantly changing instrumental riffs. In one section, it may be a particular keyboard riff structuring that section, such as the introduction, in another it may be a guitar riff, or there may be an extended instrumental solo. These riffs and solos skew any preceding or following sense of regular phrasing.

*Vocal Strategies.* It is interesting that although Amos omits the lyrics with the strongest sexual connotations (the *b* material from the Beatles's version), she somehow manages to present, arguably, an even more sexualised version of the song. This is achieved by her vocal delivery. This is an example of how Hall's theories on representation are useful in

examining the meaning in popular songs. In the musical excerpt discussed below, the meaning is created in the process of representation, within the music itself.

One example of this can be seen in Section D-c (from 4 ½ minutes to 6 ½ minutes). For two minutes, the only lyrics that Amos sings are "Keep me down, I need a fix 'cause I" followed by almost twenty repetitions of "I need" with the word "mama" occasionally interjected. The lyrics are not Amos's primary means of conveying meaning in this section. She conveys the meaning through the music and her elaborate vocal presentation. The section begins with a keyboard solo, with Amos's vocals gradually entering. Amos conveys an element of desire by singing with a raw, pleading tone. For example, Amos begins with a high-pitched "I", then repeats the word "I" in a lower register, with a less refined, more needy vocal sound. She sometimes fades away at the end of statements, such as during the line "I need a fix", where she sounds almost as if in a dream-like or drug-induced state. Another example of her vocal technique can be seen in one of the melismas she sings on the word "a". She gradually begins to repeat "I need" faster, the repetitions occurring closer together, the tone in her voice becoming less refined and more primal. Her voice gradually increases in volume, gradually climaxing just before the phrase "Happiness is a warm gun". The intensity gradually builds throughout this two-minute passage. This is accomplished by her increase in vocal intensity as well as the addition of the guitar near the end of the passage. The majority of this passage is accompanied by a soft keyboard riff, drums and bass. When the guitar enters, backing the keyboard, the volume and intensity grows, accompanying Amos's more intense vocalizations.

I would argue that, in this passage, the voice of the call girl emerges. The desires of this call girl emerge through the musical representation. The phrase "I need" is first sexualised, then becomes pleading. Pleading for what, we do not know; that is left to our imagination.

In her version of "Happiness is a Warm Gun", Tori Amos allows meanings to emerge that were not present in the original version. Amos allows a woman's voice to emerge, altering the meaning of the highly sexual lyrics. She also uses the song as a canvas for control, a message that did not emerge in the song's original context. Her use of sampling, musical texture, formal structure, and vocal delivery all contribute to Amos's stance in this song.

### **Interpretive Summary**

I will now compare the three versions of "Happiness is a Warm Gun" to reflect on the different meanings negotiated by the Beatles, U2, and Tori Amos. I think that one of the most striking differences between the Beatles's original and the two cover interpretations is the difference in style and structure. The Beatles's version is clearly comprised of several different musical styles that structure the song. The style and structure of U2's version is consistent throughout the song. Amos's version has a consistent musical style, but unlike the two other versions, her version has less clearly defined sections. Amos distorts the tightness of the Beatles's original by blurring together the different stylistic sections. She accomplishes this by combining the lyrics from different sections, altering their meaning.

Although the stringing together of different stylistic sections in the Beatles's original is somewhat unconventional, the harmony functions in a conventional manner. The Beatles's song expands on a single re-occurring motive, E-G, which resolves in a Schenkerian 3-line over the course of the song. Neither U2's nor Amos's versions function in this way.

The difference in song length between the three versions is quite remarkable. The Beatles's song is quite short, only two minutes and forty seconds. U2's version is about the length of a standard pop-rock song, four minutes and forty-eight seconds. This version is extended by the repetition of several sections of text and music. Amos's version is nine minutes and fifty-three seconds, twice as long as U2's version and more than three times the length of the original. With the exception of the spoken passages in the introduction, Amos's version contains less actual lyrics than the other two versions because she omits most of the Beatles's first section of text. Although the length of Amos's version is partly accounted for by the two-minute introduction, the duration is also largely attributed to many instrumental passages and to extended vocalized passages.

It is interesting to consider how the same lyrics can be re-interpreted by several artists to convey different meanings. The music itself is an important medium for conveying meaning. In its original context, the Beatles's "Happiness is a Warm Gun" was a satirical, sexual metaphor. Almost thirty years later, U2, a politically charged band re-interpreted the song to convey a message about gun violence and gun control. Since very few changes were made to the lyrics, the message was conveyed through the music itself. U2 altered the song's original meaning by significantly changing the song's musical

texture, by reorganizing the lyrics, as well as by creating a more consistent style and formal structure. Amos also adopts an anti-gun stance in her version, but picks up on something that U2 did not. She reacts to the highly sexual lyrics, originally presented from a male perspective, and re-presents them from a woman's perspective, that of the call girl.

Both U2's and Tori Amos's cover interpretations could raise questions of appropriation and authenticity. U2 and Amos both appropriated the Beatles's song to convey their own social message. How does this appropriation affect the way in which the listener perceives their authenticity? In considering Moore's first person authenticity (authenticity of expression) we must acknowledge the fact that neither artist created the original material. However, the fact that both U2 and Amos's versions differ significantly in style, texture, structure, and social message from the original could be said to lend authenticity to their versions. Although both U2 and Amos are covering an existing song, they attempted to convey their own message through their individual musical presentations.

Intertextuality is relevant in the interpretation of both cover versions of the song. In U2's version, any listener who has heard the original will be surprised with the artificial, electronic musical setting in comparison with the original which was played on more "traditional" rock instruments. With Amos's version, although most of the lyrics are omitted, her first line of singing ("Happiness is a warm gun") is clearly the same melody as the original. Most people who have heard the Beatles's original will recall the lyrics and style of that song as they listen to this expanded, re-interpretation of the song. The

original version is also present as Amos responds to the male-oriented sexual innuendos with her own sexual vocal gestures. These gestures emerge through the persona of the prostitute.

In an interpretation of cover songs, the concept of intertextuality allows for a shifting position within a given text. It also allows for the co-existence of all of the theoretical concepts I have employed in my interpretation. Questions of appropriation, authenticity, negotiations of gender and musical meaning, and the process of representation interact in our perceptions of the songs. Posing questions of authenticity, examining the process of representation, as well as the other theoretical issues I have raised, cannot function alone in song interpretation. Just as all interpretations of a song will refer to an originating moment, and all versions will relate to one another, all of these theoretical constructs work together in culture.

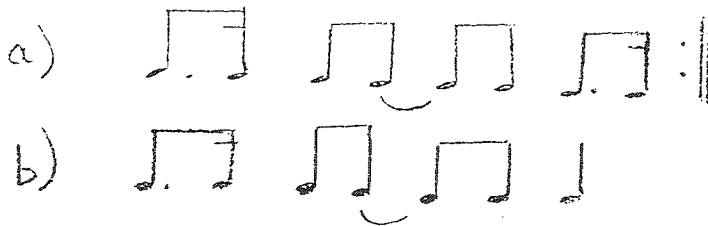
## Appendix 1

### Musical Examples

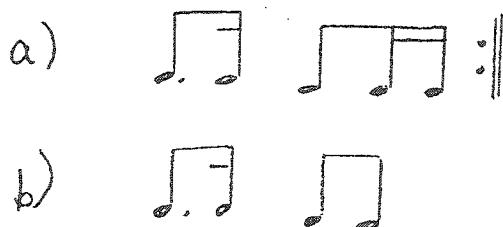
**Example 1-1: Formal Structure of "'97 Bonnie and Clyde"**

<b>Eminem</b>	<b>Tori Amos</b>
Introduction 1) Sound effects 2) Text	Introduction
Verse 1	Verse 1
Chorus	Chorus
Verse 2	Verse 2
Chorus	Chorus
Verse 3	Verse 3
Chorus	
Coda 1) Text 2) Music	Chorus/Coda

**Example 1-2: Rhythm "'97 Bonnie and Clyde," Eminem**



**Example 1-3: Rhythm "'97 Bonnie and Clyde," Tori Amos**



Example 1-4  
Tori Amos "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" Bass Line

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

5 Phrase 3

Detailed description: The image shows three phrases of a bass line for the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" by Tori Amos. The first staff contains two phrases. Phrase 1 consists of eight eighth notes: G2, A2, Bb2, C3, D3, Eb3, F3, G3. Phrase 2 consists of eight eighth notes: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, D4, Eb4, F4, G4. The second staff contains Phrase 3, which consists of eight eighth notes: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, D4, Eb4, F4, G4. The notation includes a bass clef, a common time signature (C), and an octave sign (8) below the first note of each phrase. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Example 1-5  
Tori Amos "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" Introduction

Detailed description: The image shows the introduction of the song "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" by Tori Amos. It consists of two staves of music in treble clef, common time. The first staff contains the first four measures of the introduction, and the second staff contains the next four measures. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and a sharp sign (F#) in the fifth measure of the second staff. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Example 1-6  
Tori Amos "'97 Bonnie and Clyde" Chorus

Musical score for Example 1-6, showing the chorus of "Bonnie and Clyde" by Tori Amos. The score includes four staves: Voice, Violin, S (Soprano), and Vln. I (Violin I). The music is in common time (C) and features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with various articulations and phrasing. The lyrics are: "the two of us Just the two of us".

Example 2-1  
"Stan" Bass Line

Musical score for Example 2-1, showing the bass line for "Stan". The score consists of two staves in bass clef, common time (C). The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with various articulations and phrasing, including slurs and ties. The first staff starts with a measure number '8' and the second staff starts with a measure number '5'.

**Example 3- 1: Formal Structure for "Dream On," Aerosmith**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>mm1-12</b>
Phrase 1	mm1-4
Phrase 2	4-12 (mm 9-12 extension)
<b>Verse 1</b>	<b>mm13-24</b>
Phrase 1	mm 13-16
Phrase 2	mm 17-20
Phrase 3	mm 21-24
<b>Pre-Chorus</b>	<b>mm 25-32</b>
Instrumental link	mm 29-32
<b>Verse 2</b>	<b>mm 33-40</b>
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>mm33-40</b>
Phrase 1	mm 41-44 (2 mm antecedent, 2 mm consequent)
Extension	mm 45-46
<b>Guitar Solo</b>	<b>mm 47-53</b>
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>mm 54-59</b>
<b>Bridge</b>	<b>mm 60-73</b>
Phrase 1	mm 60-64
Phrase 2	mm 65-67
Phrase 3	mm 68-73 (mm 72-73 extension)
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>mm 74-83</b>
Chorus 1	mm 74-77
Chorus 2	mm 78-83 (mm 82-83 extension)
<b>Outro</b>	<b>mm 84-87</b>

**Example 3- 2: Formal Structure of "Sing for the Moment," Eminem**

Introduction	mm 1-8
Verse 1	mm 9-40
Chorus	mm 41-46
Verse 2	47-102
Chorus	103-108
Verse 3	109-156
Chorus	103-108
Chorus (repeat)	
Outro	169-184

Example 3-3  
"Dream On" Bass Line  
Introduction



Example 3-4  
"Sing For The Moment" Introduction Bass Line



Example 3-5  
"Dream On" Chorus Bass Line



5



Example 3-6  
"Sing For the Moment" Bass Line  
Verse and Chorus



Example 3-7  
"Sing For The Moment" Guitar Motive



**Example 4- 1: Formal Structure, The Beatles "Happiness is a Warm Gun"**

a) She's not a girl who misses much
b) She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand
c) I need a fix
d) Mother superior jump the gun
e) Happiness is a warm gun
f) When I hold you in my arms (spoken)
e) Happiness is a warm gun

**Example 4- 2: Formal Structure, The Beatles "Happiness is a Warm Gun"**

<b>A. Section 1</b>
a) She's not a girl who misses much
b) She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand
<b>B. Section 2</b>
c) I need a fix
d) Mother Superior jump the gun
<b>C. Section 3</b>
e) Happiness is a warm gun
f) When I hold you in my arms (spoken)
e) Happiness is a warm gun

**Example 4- 3: Comparison of Formal Structure (Text)****"Happiness is a Warm Gun"**

<b>The Beatles</b>	<b>U2</b>	<b>Tori Amos</b>
		Intro
		e
		d
<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
	d	
	e	
<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b (1 line)</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>
<b>d</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>e, c, a, d</b>
<b>e</b>	<b>e (spoken)</b>	<b>c</b>
<b>f</b>	<b>e (sung)</b>	<b>d</b>
<b>e</b>	<b>e (spoken)</b>	<b>e(a few words)</b>
	c	
	e (with part of a)	

**Example 4- 4: Formal Structure, Tori Amos**  
**"Happiness is a Warm Gun"**

<b>A. Introduction</b>	
	Guitar solo
	Sample of reporter
	Sample of Dr. Edison Amos
<b>B.</b>	
	e
<b>C.</b>	
	Instrumental link (keyboard)
	d
<b>D.</b>	
	a
	Sample of Dr. Edison Amos
	b
	instrumental link (keyboard solo)
	c
	e
<b>E.</b>	
	c
	a
	d
<b>F.</b>	
	c
	d
	e

Example 4-5  
The Beatles's "Happiness is a Warm Gun"  
Opening E-G Motive

Very Slow

Am7 Am6 Em Am

She's not a girl who miss-es much, Do do do do do do— do—

*mf*

Example 4-6  
The Beatles's "Happiness is a Warm Gun"  
Section C, E-G Motive

I need a fix 'cause I'm

**Example 4-7**  
**Walter Everett's Transcription of Section F**

When I hold you in my arms\_ and I feel\_ my\_ fin-ger on your\_ trig-ger

I know\_ no - bo - dy can do me no harm\_ be-cause\_

(Everett 1999, 183)

## Appendix 2 - Song Lyrics

### "'97 Bonnie and Clyde," Eminem (1999)

#### Intro

Just the two of us.. (8X)

Baby your da-da loves you  
 And I'ma always be here for you no matter what happens  
 You're all I got in this world  
 I would never give you up for nothin  
 Nobody in this world is ever gonna keep you from me  
 I love you

#### Verse 1

- 1) C'mon Hey-Hey, we goin to the beach
- 2) Grab a couple of toys and let da-da strap you in the car seat
- 3) Oh where's mama? She's takin a little nap in the trunk
- 4) Oh that smell (whew!) da-da musta runned over a skunk
- 5) Now I know what you're thinkin - it's kind of late to go swimmin
- 6) But you know your mama, she's one of those type of women
- 7) that do crazy things, and if she don't get her way, she'll throw a fit
- 8) Don't play with da-da's toy knife, honey, let go of it (no!)
- 9) And don't look so upset, why you actin bashful?
- 10) Don't you wanna help da-da build a sand castle? (yeah!)
- 11) And mama said she wants to show how far she can float
- 12) And don't worry about that little boo-boo on her throat
- 13) It's just a little scratch - it don't hurt, her was eatin
- 14) dinner while you were sweepin and spilled ketchup on her shirt
- 15) Mama's messy isn't she? We'll let her wash off in the water
- 16) and me and you can pway by ourselves, can't we?

#### Chorus

Just the two of us.. (2X)  
     And when we ride!  
 Just the two of us.. (2X)  
     Just you and I!  
 Just the two of us.. (2X)  
     And when we ride!  
 Just the two of us.. (2X)

Just me and you baby  
 is all we need in this world  
 Just me and you  
 Your da-da will always be there for you  
 Your da-da's always gonna love you  
 Remember that  
 If you ever need me I will always be here for you  
 If you ever need anything, just ask  
 Da-da will be right there  
 Your da-da loves you  
 I love you baby

**"Just The Two Of Us," Bill Withers and Grover Washington Jr.**

I see the crystal raindrops fall  
 And the beauty of it all  
 When the sun comes shining through  
 To make those rainbows in my mind  
 When I think of you some time  
 And I want to spend some time with you

Just the two of us  
 We can make it if we try  
 Just the two of us  
 Just the two of us  
 Building castles in the sky  
 Just the two of us  
 You and I

We look for love, no time for tears  
 Wasted waters is all that is  
 And it don't make no flowers grow  
 Good things might come to those who wait  
 Not to those who wait too late  
 We got to go for all we know

Just the two of us  
 We can make it if we try  
 Just the two of us  
 Just the two of us

Building castles in the sky  
 Just the two of us  
 You and I

I hear the crystal raindrops fall  
 On the window down the hall  
 And it becomes the morning dew  
 Darling, when the morning comes  
 And I see the morning sun  
 I want to be the one with you

Just the two of us  
 We can make it if we try  
 Just the two of us  
 Just the two of us  
 Building big castles way on high  
 Just the two of us  
 You and I

Just the two of us  
 Let's get together, baby  
 Just the two of us We can make it  
 Just the two of us  
 We can make it  
 Just the two of us  
 Just the two of us we can make it

**"'97 Bonnie and Clyde," Tori Amos (2001)**

**Intro**

Baby your da-da loves you  
 And I'm always gonna be here for you  
 No matter what happened  
 You're all I got in this world  
 I'd never give you up for nothin'  
 Nobody in this world is ever gonna keep you from me  
 I love you

**Verse 1**

- 1) C'mon Hey-Hey, we goin to the beach
- 2) Grab a couple of toys and let da-da strap you in the car seat
- 3) Where's mama? She's takin a little nap in the trunk
- 4) Oh that smell -- da-da musta runned over a skunk

- 5) Now I know what you're thinkin – it's kind of late to go swimmin
- 6) But you know your mama, she's one of those type of women
- 7) That do crazy things, and if she don't get her way, she'll throw a fit
- 8) Don't play with da-da's toy knife, honey, let go of it
- 9) And don't look so upset, why you actin bashful?
- 10) Don't you wanna help da-da build a sand castle?
- 11) And mama said she wants to show you how far she can float
- 12) Don't worry about that little boo-boo on her throat
- 13) It's just a little scratch - it don't hurt
- 14) her was eatin dinner while you were sweepin and spilled ketchup on her shirt
- 15) Mama's messy isn't she? We'll let her wash off in the water
- 16) Me and you can pway by ourselves, can't we?

### Chorus

Just the two of us  
 Just the two of us  
 (Just you and I)  
 Just the two of us

### Verse 2

- 1) See honey – there's a place called heaven and a place called hell
- 2) There's a place called prison and a place called jail
- 3) And da-da's probably on his way to all of em except one
- 4) Cause mama's got a new husband and a stepson
- 5) And you don't want a brother do ya?
- 6) Maybe when you're old enough to understand a little better I'll explain it to ya
- 7) But for now we'll just say mama was real real bad
- 8) She was bein mean to dad and made him real real mad
- 9) But I still feel sad that I put her on time-out
- 10) Sit back in your chair honey, quit tryin to climb out
- 11) I told you it's okay Hey Hey wanna ba-ba take a night-night? Nan-a-boo, goo-goo ga-ga?
- 12) Her make goo-goo ca-ca? Da-da change your dia-dee
- 13) Clean the baby up so her can take a nighty-nighty
- 14) Your dad'll wake her up as soon as we get to the water
- 15) Ninety-seven Bonnie and Clyde, me and my daughter
- 16) Me and my daughter, Me and my daughter

### Chorus

### Verse 3

- 1) Wake up sweepy head we're here
- 2) Before we pway we're gonna take mama for a wittle walk along the pier
- 3) Baby, don't cry honey, don't get the wrong idea
- 4) Mama's too sweepy to hear you screamin in her ear

- 5) That's why you can't get her to wake, but don't worry
- 6) Da-da made a nice bed for mommy at the bottom of the lake
- 7) Here, you wanna help da-da tie a rope around this rock?
- 8) We'll tie it to her footsie then we'll roll her off the dock
- 9) Ready now, here we go, on the count of free
- 10) One.. two.. free.. oh-weeeeeeee
- 11) There goes mama, splashin in the water
- 12) No more fightin with dad, no more restraining order
- 13) No more step-da-da, no more brother
- 14) Blow her kisses bye bye, tell mommy you love her
- 15) Now we'll go play in the sand, build a castle and junk
- 16) But first, just help dad with two more things out the trunk

Just -- the two - of us

### **"Thank You," Dido (1999)**

#### **Verse 1**

My tea's gone cold, I'm wondering why I got out of bed at all.  
 The morning rain clouds up my window and I can't see at all.  
 And even if I could it would all be gray, but your picture on my wall,  
 It reminds me that it's not so bad, it's not so bad.

#### **Verse 2**

I drank too much last night, got bills to pay, my head just feels in pain.  
 I missed the bus and there'll be hell today, I'm late for work again.  
 And even if I'm there, they'll all imply that I might not last the day.  
 And then you call me and it's not so bad, it's not so bad and

#### **Chorus**

I want to thank you for giving me the best day of my life.  
 Oh just to be with you is having the best day of my life.

#### **Bridge**

#### **Verse 3**

Push the door, I'm home at last, and I'm soaking through and through.  
 Then you handed me a towel, and all I see is you.  
 And even if my house falls down now, I wouldn't have a clue.  
 Because you're near me and

#### **Chorus**

**Chorus**

I want to thank you for giving me the best day of my life.  
 Oh just to be with you is having the best day of my life.

**"Stan," Eminem Featuring Dido (2000)****Chorus**

My tea's gone cold, I'm Wondering why I got out of bed at all  
 The morning rain clouds up my window and I can't see at all  
 And even if I could it'd all be gray, but your picture on my wall  
 It reminds me, that it's not so bad, it's not so bad

**Chorus****Verse 1**

- 1) Dear Slim, I wrote but you still ain't callin
- 2) I left my cell, my pager, and my home phone at the bottom
- 3) I sent two letters back in autumn, you must not-a got'em
- 4) There probably was a problem at the post office or somethin
- 5) Sometimes I scribble addresses too sloppy when I jot'em
- 6) But anyways; f\*\*k it, what's been up? Man how's your daughter
- 7) My girlfriend's pregnant too, I'm bout to be a father
- 8) If I have a daughter, guess what I'ma call her? I'ma name her Bonnie
- 9) I read about your Uncle Ronnie too I'm sorry
- 10) I had a friend kill himself over some b\*\*ch who didn't want him
- 11) I know you probably hear this everyday, but I'm your biggest fan
- 12) I even got the underground s\*\*t you did with Skam
- 13) I got a room full of your posters and your pictures man
- 14) I like the s\*\*t you did with Rawkus too, that s\*\*t was phat
- 15) Anyways, I hope you get this man, hit me back,
- 16) Just to chat, truly yours, your biggest fan, this is Stan

**Chorus****Verse 2**

- 1) Dear Slim, you still ain't called or wrote, I hope you have a chance
- 2) I ain't mad-I just think it's f\*\*cked up you don't answer fans
- 3) If you didn't wanna talk to me outside your concert
- 4) You didn't have to, but you coulda signed an autograph for Matthew
- 5) That's my little brother man, he's only six years old
- 6) We waited in the blistering cold for you, four hours and you just said No.

23) Well, gotta go, I'm almost at the bridge now

24) Oh s\*\*t, I forgot, how'm I supposed to send this s\*\*t out?

### Chorus

#### Verse 4

- 1) Dear Stan, I meant to write you sooner but I just been busy
- 2) You said your girlfriend's pregnant now, how far along is she?
- 3) Look, I'm really flattered that you would call your daughter that
- 4) And here's an autograph for your brother, I wrote it on a Starter cap
- 5) I'm sorry I didn't see you at the show, I musta missed you
- 6) Don't think I did that s\*\*t intentionally just to diss you
- 7) But what's this s\*\*t you about you like to cut your wrists too?
- 8) I say that s\*\*t just clownin dogg, c'mon - how f\*\*cked up is you?
- 9) Your got some issues Stan, I think you need some counseling
- 10) To help your ass from bouncing off the walls when you get down some
- 11) And what's this s\*\*t about us meant to be together?
- 12) That type of s\*\*t'll make me not want us to meet each other
- 13) I really think you and your girlfriend need each other
- 14) Or maybe you just need to treat her better
- 15) I hope you get to read this letter, I just hope it reaches you in time
- 16) Before you hurt yourself, I think that you'll doin just fine
- 17) If you relax a little, I'm glad I inspire you but Stan
- 18) Why are you so mad? Try to understand, that I do want you as a fan
- 19) I just don't want you to do some crazy s\*\*t
- 20) I seen this one s\*\*t on the news a couple weeks ago that made me sick
- 21) Some dude was drunk and drove his car over a bridge
- 22) And had his girlfriend in the trunk, and she was pregnant with his kid
- 23) And in the car they found a tape, but they didn't say who it was to
- 24) Come to think about, his name was..it was you. Damn!

### "Dream On" Aerosmith (1973)

#### Verse 1

Every time that I look in the mirror,  
 All these lines on my face gettin' clearer.  
 The past is gone;  
 It went by like dust to dawn.  
 Isn't that the way  
 Everybody's got their dues in life to pay?

**Pre-Chorus**

I know nobody knows  
 Where it comes and where it goes.  
 I know it's everybody's sin;  
 You got to lose to know how to win.

**Verse 2**

Half my life is in books' written pages,  
 Live and learned from fools and from sages.  
 You know it's true,  
 All the things come back to you.

**Chorus**

Sing with me, sing for the years,  
 Sing for the laughter 'n' sing for the tears.  
 Sing with me if it's just for today,  
 Maybe tomorrow the good Lord will take you away.

**Guitar Solo****Chorus****Bridge**

Dream on, dream on, dream on,  
 Dream yourself a dream come true.  
 Dream on, dream on, Dream on and  
 Dream until your dream come true.  
 Dream on, dream on, dream on,  
 Dream on, dream on, dream on, dream on, ah.....

**Chorus (x2)****Outro****"Sing For the Moment," Eminem (2002)****Verse 1**

- 1) These ideas are nightmares for white parents,
- 2) Whose worst fear is a child with dyed hair and who likes earrings.
- 3) Like whatever they say has no bearing,
- 4) It's so scary in a house that allows no swearing.

- 5) To see him walking around with his headphones blaring,
- 6) Alone in his own zone, cold and he don't care.
- 7) He's a problem child, and what bothers him all comes out,
- 8) When he talks about, his f\*\*\*in' dad walkin' out.
- 9) Cuz he just hates him so bad that he, blocks him out.
- 10) If he ever saw him again he'd probably knock him out.
- 11) His thoughts are whacked, he's mad so he's talkin' back,
- 12) Talkin' black, brainwashed from rock and rap.
- 13) He sags his pants, do-rags and a stocking cap,
- 14) His step-father hit him, so he socked him back.
- 15) And broke his nose, his house is a broken home.
- 16) There's no control, he just let's his emotions go.

### Chorus

(C'mon!) Sing with me (Sing!) Sing for the year (Sing it)  
 Sing for the laughter, sing for the tear (C'mon!)  
 Sing it with me, Just for today,  
 Maybe tomorrow, the good Lord will take you away...

### Verse 2

- 1) Entertainment is changin', intertwinin' with gangsters,
- 2) In the land of the killers, a sinner's mind is a sanctum.
- 3) Unholy, only have one homie,
- 4) Only this gun, lonely cuz don't anyone know me.
- 5) Yet everybody just feels like they can relate,
- 6) I guess words are a motha f\*\*\*a they can be great.
- 7) Or they can degrate, or even worse they can teach hate.
- 8) It's like these kids hang on every single statement we make, like they worship us.
- 9) Plus all the stores ship us platinum,
- 10) Now how the f\*\*k did this metamorphosis happen?
- 11) From standin on corners and porches just rappin';
- 12) To havin' a fortune, no more kissin' ass.
- 13) But then these critics crucify you, journalists try to burn you,
- 14) Fans turn on you, attorneys all want a turn at you.
- 15) To get they hands on every dime you have,
- 16) They want you to lose your mind every time you mad.
- 17) So they can try to make you out to look like a loose cannon.
- 18) Any dispute won't hesitate to produce handguns.
- 19) That's why these prosecutors wanna convict me,
- 20) Strictly just to get me off of these streets quickly.
- 21) But all they kids be listenin' to me religiously,
- 22) So I'm signin' CD's while police fingerprint me.

- 23) They're for the judge's daughter but his grudge is against me.
- 24) If I'm such a f\*\*\*in' menace, this shit doesn't make sense B.
- 25) It's all political, if my music is literal,
- 26) And I'm a criminal how the f\*\*k can I raise a little girl?
- 27) I couldn't. I wouldn't be fit to.
- 28) You're full of sh\*t too, Guerrera, that was a fist that hit you!

### Chorus

### Verse 3

- 1) They say music can alter moods and talk to you,
- 2) Well can it load a gun up for you, and cock it too?
- 3) Well if it can, then the next time you assault a dude,
- 4) Just tell the judge it was my fault, and I'll get sued.
- 5) See what these kids do is hear about us totin' pistols
- 6) And they want to get one cuz they think the sh\*t's cool.
- 7) Not knowin' we really just protectin' ourselves,
- 8) We entertainers, of course the sh\*t's affectin' our sales, you ignoramus.
- 9) But music is reflection of self, we just explain it,
- 10) And then we get our checks in the mail. It's f\*\*ked up ain't it?
- 11) How we can come from practically nothing
- 12) To being able to have any f\*\*\*in' thing that we wanted.
- 13) That's why we sing for these kids, who don't have a thing
- 14) Except for a dream, and a f\*\*\*in' rap magazine.
- 15) Who post pin-up pictures on they walls all day long,
- 16) Idolize they favourite rappers and know all they songs.
- 17) Or for anyone who's ever been through sh\*t in they lives,
- 18) Till they sit and they cry at night wishin' they'd die.
- 19) Till they throw on a rap record and they sit, and they vibe.
- 20) We're nothin' to you but we're the f\*\*\*in' shit in they eyes.
- 21) That's why we seize the moment try to freeze it and own it,
- 22) Squeeze it and hold it, cuz we consider these minutes golden.
- 23) And maybe they'll admit it when we're gone. Just let our spirits live on,
- 24) Through our lyrics that you hear in our songs and we can...

Chorus - repeat 2X

**"Happiness is a Warm Gun," The Beatles (1968)**

She's not a girl who misses much  
Do do do do do do do do, oh yeah

She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand  
Like a lizard on a window pane.  
The man in the crowd with the multi-coloured mirrors  
On his hobnail boots  
Lying with his eyes while his hands are busy  
Working overtime  
A soap impression of his wife which he ate  
And donated to the National Trust.

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down  
Down to the bits that I left uptown  
I need a fix cause I'm going down

Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun.  
Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun.

Happiness is a warm gun (Happiness, bang, bang, shoot, shoot)  
Happiness is a warm gun, mama (Happiness, bang, bang, shoot, shoot)  
When I hold you in my arms (Oo-oo oh yeah)  
And I feel my finger on your trigger (Oo-oo oh yeah)  
I know nobody can do me no harm (Oo-oo oh yeah)  
Because happiness is a warm gun, mama (Happiness, bang, bang, shoot, shoot)  
Happiness is a warm gun, yes it is (Happiness, bang, bang, shoot, shoot)  
Happiness is a warm, yes it is, gun (Happiness, bang, bang, shoot, shoot)  
Well, don't you know that happiness is a warm gun, mama? (Happiness is a warm gun, yeah)

**"Sunday Bloody Sunday," U2 (1983)**

I can't believe the news today  
Oh, I can't close my eyes  
And make it go away  
How long...  
How long must we sing this song?  
How long? How long...  
'Cause tonight...we can be as one  
Tonight...

Broken bottles under children's feet  
Bodies strewn across the dead end street  
But I won't heed the battle call  
It puts my back up  
Puts my back up against the wall

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

And the battle's just begun  
There's many lost, but tell me who has won  
The trench is dug within our hearts  
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters  
Torn apart

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

How long...  
How long must we sing this song?  
How long? How long...  
'Cause tonight...we can be as one  
Tonight...tonight...

Sunday, Bloody Sunday  
Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Wipe the tears from your eyes  
Wipe your tears away  
Oh, wipe your tears away  
Oh, wipe your tears away  
(Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

Oh, wipe your blood shot eyes  
 (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)  
 Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

And it's true we are immune  
 When fact is fiction and TV reality  
 And today the millions cry  
 We eat and drink while tomorrow they die

(Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

The real battle just begun  
 To claim the victory Jesus won  
 On...

Sunday Bloody Sunday  
 Sunday Bloody Sunday...

**"Bullet The Blue Sky," U2 (1990)**

In the howling wind comes a stinging rain  
 See it driving nails  
 Into the souls on the tree of pain  
 From the firefly, a red orange glow  
 See the face of fear  
 Running scared in the valley below

Bullet the blue sky  
 Bullet the blue sky  
 Bullet the blue  
 Bullet the blue

In the locust wind comes a rattle and hum  
 Jacob wrestled the angel  
 And the angel was overcome  
 You plant a demon seed  
 You raise a flower of fire  
 See them burning crosses  
 See the flames higher and higher

Bullet the blue sky  
 Bullet the blue sky  
 Bullet the blue  
 Bullet the blue

This guy comes up to me  
 His face red like a rose on a thorn bush  
 Like all the colors of a royal flush  
 And he's peeling off those dollar bills  
 Slapping them down  
 One hundred, two hundred  
 And I can see those fighter planes  
 And I can see those fighter planes  
 Across the mud huts where the children sleep  
 Through the alleys of a quiet city street  
 You take the staircase to the first floor  
 Turn the key and slowly unlock the door  
 As a man breathes into a saxophone  
 And through the walls you hear the city groan  
 Outside is America  
 Outside is America

Across the field you see the sky ripped open  
 See the rain through a gaping wound  
 Pounding on the women and children  
 Who run  
 Into the arms  
 Of America

**"Happiness is a Warm Gun," U2 (1997)**

She's not a girl who misses much (Do do do do do do, oh yeah)  
 She's not a girl who misses much (Do do do do do do, oh yeah)

Mother Superior jump the gun  
 Mother Superior jump the gun  
 Mother Superior jump the gun  
 Mother Superior jump the gun

Happiness is a warm gun  
 Happiness is a warm gun

Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun

She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand  
Like a lizard on a window pane  
The man in the crowd  
With the multicoloured mirrors on his hobnail boots  
Lying with his eyes wide open  
And the hands busy working overtime  
A soap impression of his wife which he ate  
And donated to the National Trust, Hey

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down  
Down to the bits that I left uptown  
I need a fix 'cause I'm going down

Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun

Happiness is a, a warm gun  
Happiness is a, a warm gun  
Happiness is a, a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun

Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun

Happiness is a, a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun

I need a fix  
I need a fix, I  
I need a fix  
I need a fix cause I'm going down

Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun  
(Repeat until end)

**"I Don't Like Mondays," The Boomtown Rats (1979)**

The silicon chip inside her head  
Gets switched to overload.  
And nobody's gonna go to school today,  
She's going to make them stay at home.  
And daddy doesn't understand it,  
He always said she was as good as gold.  
And he can see no reason  
'Cause there are no reasons  
What reason do you need to be shown?

Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
I want to shoot  
The whole day down.

The telex machine is kept so clean  
As it types to a waiting world.  
And mother feels so shocked,  
Father's world is rocked,  
And their thoughts turn to  
Their own little girl.  
Sweet 16 ain't so peachy keen,  
No, it ain't so neat to admit defeat.  
They can see no reasons  
'Cause there are no reasons  
What reason do you need to be shown?

Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
Tell me why?  
I don't like Mondays.  
I want to shoot  
The whole day down.

All the playing's stopped in the playground now

She wants to play with her toys a while.  
 And school's out early and soon we'll be learning  
 And the lesson today is how to die.  
 And then the bullhorn crackles,  
 And the captain crackles,  
 With the problems and the how's and why's.  
 And he can see no reasons  
 'Cause there are no reasons  
 What reason do you need to die?

Tell me why?  
 I don't like Mondays.  
 Tell me why?  
 I don't like Mondays.  
 Tell me why?  
 I don't like Mondays.  
 I want to shoot  
 The whole day down.

**"Happiness Is A Warm Gun," Tori Amos (2001)**

*Spoken by a reporter (Daniel Bocking):*

John Lennon was shot here at the entrance to the Dakota building  
 Lennon was shot four times with a 38-calibre gun in what seems to be a totally senseless killing.

*Spoken by Dr. Edison Amos:*

The second amendment gives the right of the people to keep and bear arms.  
 This is a dispute which is going on in America now.  
 We should work diligently to keep this second amendment in place for any individual with  
 responsibility.  
 Let me repeat again, responsibility and boundaries of those who are privileged to be a part of all  
 of these 27 amendments of the Constitution of the United States of America, plus the Declaration  
 of Independence.

*Spoken by George W. Bush:*

I believe that uhhh... people who are gonna commit crimes shouldn't have guns.

*Spoken by George Bush Sr.:*

I guess my reaction is the same as every other father's, every other grandfather.  
 My heart goes out to the people, to the victims, because I don't understand how kids can be out  
 there.... making bombs... and uhh..and uhh, families being totally unaware of it,

with this culture going on.  
I'm just as troubled by it as anybody else and I don't know any answers.

*Amos sings:*

Happiness is a warm gun  
Happiness is a warm gun, mama  
Happiness is a warm gun, mama

*Instrumental link*

Mother superior jump the gun  
Mother superior jump the gun  
Mother superior jump the gun  
Mother superior jump the gun  
Mother superior jump the gun  
I said, mother superior jump the gun  
I said, I'm gonna  
Mother superior jump the gun  
Mother superior jump the gun  
and I said-a  
Mother superior jump the gun  
I said, I'm gonna

She's not a girl who misses much

*Spoken:*

Get these 10 bill of rights...each one gives the people a special right.

*Amos sings:*

She's not a girl who misses much.

*Spoken:*

This 2nd one is a right to bear arms.

*Amos sings:*

She's well acquainted with the touch  
She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand.

*Instrumental link*

*Instrumental Bridge*

---

Mother Superior jump the gun  
Mother Superior jump the gun

Mama....  
Mama....

Happiness is..  
Happiness...

Mama.....  
Mama...  
A-mama....

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### Appendix 3

#### Neil Gaiman's *Strange Little Girls Stories*

##### "Bonnie's Mother"

A Short Story  
By Neil Gaiman

You know how it is when you love someone?

And the hard part, the bad part, the Jerry Springer show part is that you never stop loving someone. There's always a piece of them in your heart.

Now that she is dead, she tries to remember only the love. She imagines every blow a kiss, the make-up that inexpertly covers the bruises, the cigarette burn on her thigh – all these things, she decides, were gestures of love.

She wonders what her daughter will do.

She wonders what her daughter will be.

She is holding a cake, in her death. It is the cake she was always going to bake for her little one. Maybe they would have mixed it together.

They would have sat and eaten it and smiled, all three of them, and the apartment would have slowly filled with laughter and with love.

(Gaiman 2001)

"Happiness"

A Short Story

By Neil Gaiman

She feels at home on the range; ear-protectors in position, man-shaped paper target up and waiting for her.

She imagines, a little, she remembers, a little and she sights and squeezes and as her time on the range begins she feels rather than sees the head and the heart obliterate.

The smell of cordite always makes her think of the fourth of July.

You use the gifts God gave you. That was what her mother had said, which makes their falling out even harder, somehow.

Nobody will ever hurt her. She'll just smile her faint vague wonderful smile and walk away.

It's not about the money. It's never about the money.

(Gaiman 2001)

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