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On Listening to 'The Scarlet Tide' (by T Bone Burnett and Elvis Costello) from Cold Mountain (2003; dir. Anthony Minghella): A Movie Song and its Afterlife

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On Listening to 'The Scarlet Tide' (by T Bone Burnett and Elvis Costello) from *Cold Mountain* (2003; dir. Anthony Minghella): A Movie Song and its Afterlife

**Abstract** This article examines how the emerging concept of affective space can be applied to movie soundtracks with particular reference to 'The Scarlet Tide' written by T Bone Burnett and Elvis Costello for the film *Cold Mountain* (2003) and the implications this has for the place of religion in film culture. It explores how affective space works with: (i) the experience of individual listeners; and (ii) the wider social context. Both affective expressions can shape how this track is received and integrated into a process of meaning-making. The paper concludes with an assessment of some implications that this discussion has for understanding the social nature of music, religion and spirituality.

**Keywords** religion, affective space, distributed self, meaning-making, social imaginary, spirituality
Introduction

Movie soundtracks are part of everyday life. We hear them when we watch a film, buy them to play in our homes or whilst driving, come across them when we are out drinking or eating, and in numerous other contexts. They become part of the personal soundtracks in relation to which we negotiate our identities, using memories, conscious and unconscious recollections and actively chosen resource material. They contribute to the ‘canons’ of material which become authoritative for us, whether or not those canons are more broadly owned and recognized (Marsh and Roberts, *Personal* 113-18). But in relation to media consumption and the use of artistic material and popular culture, how are we to understand this process more clearly? How is the practical use of such music influencing individuals and forming or informing communities, virtual or actual? And what, if anything, does it have to do with religion?

This article explores some of these issues by looking at the T Bone Burnett and Elvis Costello song ‘The Scarlet Tide’ performed by Alison Krauss as part of the soundtrack to *Cold Mountain* (2003; dir. Anthony Minghella). My aim is to explore the wider affective space of this song, which is provided by its location in a cross-cultural nexus that includes film, music, religion, history, literature, culture and more. To this end I begin with an overview of the movie itself before considering some of the different understandings of the emerging concept of affective space.

Overview of the Film

*Cold Mountain* is a film about war, love, music and faith. It’s set against the background of the American Civil War and depicts how violence and conflict brutalize people’s lives. One central character, known simply as Inman (played by
Jude Law), is a young man who leaves the small community of Cold Mountain, joins the Confederate army and – through his eyes – we see how war causes people on both sides to behave inhumanely to the opposition and (sometimes) to their own side. Two other key characters are Ada Monroe (played by Nicole Kidman) and Ruby Thewes (Renée Zellweger). They remain in Cold Mountain and it’s through their eyes we see how the conflict affects those who stay behind – as they cope with their worries about the safety of the ones who’re fighting and the various ways in which the distant conflict still casts a shadow over their local community.

Inman and Ada Monroe come from contrasting backgrounds but have fallen in love. Ada’s moved to rural Cold Mountain from urban Charleston where she’s been schooled in many sophisticated ways of little practical use in her new life. She can play classical music on the piano, she can play the hostess at soiree, she can play the role of dedicated companion to her widowed father, who is the minister at the church; but – when war comes and her father dies – she cannot run their small farm. By contrast, Inman is always practical: we see him fixing the roof on the church, ploughing fields, handling firearms and more. But the narrative impetus of the story is about how these two very different people share a brief kiss as Inman heads off to war and their journey back together through much adversity. But theirs is not the only love explored in this film. Ada’s adoring love for her father is contrasted with Ruby’s more caustic concern for her Pa – about whom she has no illusions. At one point she says of him, ‘He’s so full of manure that man, we could lay him down in the dirt and grow another one just like him.’ Although the relationships between Ruby and her father, and Ada and hers are very different, it is clear that they are based on mutual love. Love is depicted as the antidote to war whether that’s shared by peers or down the generations.
Cold Mountain is also a story about music. Most of the characters are linked to music in some way. As already mentioned, Ada Monroe plays the piano and one of the early, tender moments between her and Inman is when he offers her the sheet music that once belonged to his father. And at the start of the film Ruby’s father plays a limited repertoire on the fiddle but during his journey home to Cold Mountain he has learnt many more pieces and trying to restore himself in his daughter’s favour he pleads, ‘The music’s changed me!’ Responsibility for the soundtrack to Cold Mountain rested with T Bone Burnett, who earlier in his career played in Bob Dylan’s band but, more recently, has carved out a niche in providing traditional American music to accompany films, including O Brother, Where Art Thou? and the True Detective series on TV.

Shapenote singing, characteristic of New England and the American South, features on his soundtrack to Cold Mountain, providing another striking counterpoint to the theme of war. We hear the shapenote choir singing when Inman fights without any regard for his own life to save a young boy caught up in the fury of a Yankee advance and the shapenote singing of the church is interrupted by the news that war has been declared. But, as well as providing some of the colour to the story, music generally also serves to reinforce the theme that there is more to human existence and experience than can be described by words. During a downpour Inman points out the limitations of language, asking Ada, ‘What’s the word for the colour of this sky, or for the way that a hawk flies or for that feeling when you wake up and your ribs are bruised because you’ve been thinking so hard about someone?’ Music in all its forms is depicted as taking people into the realm beyond language.

Finally in this brief summary, Cold Mountain is also a story about faith. There are implicit and explicit expressions of faith throughout the movie. Some overt examples
include the portrayal of two very different ministers (the Reverend Monroe and the Reverend Veasey); the gathering of the Cold Mountain community in church; Maddy – the shaman-esque woman who heals Inman’s war wounds; Ada’s protestation that ‘God is weary of being called down on both sides of an argument’; and many more. Whilst the more implicit spiritual aspects are features in the movie like the landscape (‘The view heals,’ says Inman at one point); the theme of judgment (‘When this war is over, there will be a reckoning’); the sense of bereavement (‘What we have lost will never be returned to us. The land will not heal – too much blood. All we can do is learn from the past and make peace with it.’) But there is also a strong sense of destiny, a sense that, despite all war and conflict, all the pain and suffering, life does make sense – it is not meaningless. As Maddy says at one point, ‘I think there's a plan. There's a design for each and every one of us.’ It is significant that the story finishes on Easter Day with a strong sense of new life, a strong sense that all the preceding killing and death are not the end.

From this overview we get a sense of the complex social imaginary or dense cultural nexus that Cold Mountain inhabits. We can see to that both music and religion play a significant part in bringing the narrative to the screen. How are we to understand their filmic roles within the context of 21st century culture? One of the songs from the soundtrack that has a major impact in the film by bringing it to a conclusion and has had an impact beyond the life of the movie is ‘Scarlet Tide’ sung by Alison Krauss. I shall use this as a way of exploring some aspects of affective space within the context of film soundtracks and music in people’s everyday lives. In order to do that we need an overview of how this concept is understood.

Overview of Affective Space
In his discussion of music in everyday life, music psychologist John A. Sloboda, raises questions about the different meanings of ‘everyday’, using music in film as an example of the word’s ambiguity. He asks:

Is it ‘everyday’ when you hear it at home on the TV, and ‘non-everyday’ when you go and see the same film in a cinema? This may be a matter of degree: if you organize to watch a film at home ‘seriously’, you will turn off your phone, lower the lights, not stop halfway through to do something else – in other words, you will turn the everyday into the 'special' and will make your home into a temporary movie theatre, thus transforming the everyday into the special (497).

In Sloboda’s analysis the question of what is ‘everyday’ and what is ‘special’ is a matter of context. For him the issue of context is fundamental. He begins by observing the ‘cultural specificity’ of everyday music (494) and concludes by noting how the goals of individuals provide the framework for understanding the ‘behavioural and psychophysiological’ effects on listeners (511).

Here, I focus on some of the contexts identified by Sloboda for our discussion of ‘The Scarlet Tide’ and Cold Mountain, specifically: (i) the individual listener’s frame for affective space; and (ii) the broader social, interpretative frame which also shapes our affective worlds. Underlying this discussion is a perception of personhood as ‘distributed self” as found in the work of David Sims (86-104) and Marsh and Roberts (“Soundtracks” 419). Sims argues that:

My self, my identity, is not simply within my skull, or even within my body. It is in my organization, my place of work, my family, my friends. At different stages of our lives our identities are differently distributed, and this can be a matter of amusement to others. For example, many new grandparents seem
incapable of disguising how much of their identity is bound up in the
grandchildren, to the amusement and subsequent boredom of their friends. Our
identities may be distributed in our houses, our cars, our partners, our children,
our communities, our sports clubs, our hobbies, or our political and religious
affiliations (93).

People’s cultural interests and choices are thus an equally important element of their
identity, and these will include the movies they watch and the music they listen to.
The context of the ‘self’ that is integrating a soundtrack into one’s life cannot be
ignored, and as well as a distributed understanding of the individual listener, this
paper draws upon a similarly distributed understanding of a listener’s social context.
In exploring these themes, the concept of ‘affective space’ is especially helpful. It has
been developed and deployed in different ways by a number of scholars recently
(Callaway, Marsh and Roberts Personal, O’Neill, Partridge), and I shall explore this
developing discussion before going on to examine more specifically some of the ways
in which ‘The Scarlet Tide’ has interacted in the affective space of both (i) individual
listeners and (ii) a social context.

The concept of affective space uses the widespread observation that the emotional
dimension of the reception and use of media and (high or popular) cultural
consumption – watching TV or sport, listening to opera, attending concerts – provides
a highly charged personal arena within which ‘personal work’, including cognitive
reflection, can occur. This personal work within our affective space has been defined
as ‘any practice or activity that entails significant emotional engagement, through
which a person can be shown to be doing more than just enjoying the moment’
(Marsh and Roberts, Personal 16). Provoked and inspired by intense emotional
engagement, a viewer/listener/reader participates in a process of self-formation,
through a process which is partly non-rational and partly rational. A person’s self is being shaped by such continuing cultural engagement, sometimes incidental, often chosen (for example, ‘I am a fan of this football team’, ‘I love this artist’s music’, ‘Oh, I know this song, it reminds me of the time…’.) When scripted into a personal narrative, a self is constructed. Such personal (autobiographical) story-telling is decisive for identity formation. I am contending, then, that the distributed self emerges from a process of storytelling taking place within an arena of affective space.

As Partridge argues, through the construction of affective space music ‘contributes to the development of identity’ and specifically ‘our sense of self and who we are in relation to others and to what we collectively experience as “the sacred”’ (Partridge 38). Consequently, popular music is both an important tributary to the deep cultural reservoir (or ‘occultural reservoir’ (124) in Partridge’s phrase, thus referencing the sacred) and is one of the ‘sites where value is constructed’ (27).

By contrast, Kevin Lewis O’Neill bases his threefold version of affective space on a critique of global or regional space. He finds globalized accounts of religious space fail to take account of the lived sensations of people in those geographical territories. Therefore, ‘affect as a religiously managed and politically manipulated sensation makes legible a series of spaces that are not necessarily territorial but that are nonetheless deeply political. These include, for example, the felt distance that exists between us and them, between high and low, and between the sinner and the saved’ (O’Neill 1095). O’Neill notes cinema as a further example of ‘manipulation’ though does not develop his thinking in this area (1103). In essence, O’Neill argues that his notion of affective space incorporates three areas of human experience: (a) the physical nervous system; (b) the human group; and (c) the social imaginary. He has a
firmly embodied understanding of affective space and he believes that these affective processes both bind people together and push them apart (1110).

I agree both with the high value that O’Neill places on embodiment and the social dimension which he implies. This is in line, too, with the embodied understanding of music outlined by Maeve Louise Heaney, who observes: ‘music is also felt as well as made and heard: it induces and invokes the participation of the whole person, body and soul, not just the processes of intellectual reason’ (Heaney 61). O’Neill’s outline of affective space is largely a sketch at this stage. He does not develop in any detail what he means by the ‘social imaginary’, though others have noted the potential of linking the two concepts in a fruitful way (Marsh and Roberts “Listening Part 2”).

Finally in this discussion of affective space, we should note that Kutter Callaway also picks up this concept specifically in his study of film music. He argues for: ‘a more robust understanding of the “affective spaces” that film music opens up and, by extension, the contemporary impulse to identify these spaces as spiritually meaningful’ (Callaway 94) and contends that:

Increasingly, contemporary persons are turning toward the affective spaces opened up by a number of aesthetic experiences as locations for meaning-making activity … We might even go so far as to say that affective experiences serve as one of the defining aspects of our contemporary cultural imagination. That is, modern individuals construct their identities and make sense of their world in and through their emotions (115).

Callaway is surely correct to identify the meaning-making that is currently taking place within the affective space of individual and cultural imagination. This has a specificity which is embodied (Heaney) and geographic (O’Neill), as well as aspects that link directly and indirectly to religion and spirituality (Marsh and Roberts,
Against this background I want now to explore in more detail how that process of emotional sense-making happens within the distributed contexts of both: (i) individual listeners; and (ii) the wider social framework by looking specifically at the rendition of ‘The Scarlet Tide’ for the movie Cold Mountain. We need to keep in mind that however ‘serious’ we are about listening and viewing (to use Sloboda’s term), those processes of attending and meaning-making take place within a wider frame of cultural production which seeks to shape reception. Having examined the background to the film itself and to the concept of affective space, we will examine each of these two occultural reservoirs in turn.

Viewing and Listening in Context

(i) Individual Listeners’ Affective Space

As we shall see, much current research into the concept of affective space and popular music suggests that words matter less than might often be hoped or thought – especially from the perspective of Western Protestant-influenced culture that stresses the importance of the word as a vehicle for conveying significant meaning or content. So even though the lyrics of this song link with the film and bring it to a conclusion, it may not be at all for the lyrics that listeners connect with it. If the haunting nature of the song links with the film too, it is nevertheless primarily the music as sound which enables it to create a reflective, affective space for the listener.

What does this mean, though, as far as reception and use of film music beyond the viewing experience? Here we move into the multiple processes of meaning-making that are undertaken in respect to film (Callaway), popular music (Partridge) and the broader social imaginary (Taylor). ‘Textual indeterminacy’ means that space is opened up for multiple interpretations. But this does not necessarily mean
interpretations without limit. Classic literature is classic because it generates rich, multiple meanings, but a text retains some hold on the range of possible interpretations. In the same way, music evokes a range of responses and enables widespread enrichment of listeners willing to open themselves up before a piece of music (in this case a song) to see what emotions it evokes in them, and what affective and cognitive work they do as a result.

We are able to see more of this process now than in the past through the traces left in various forms of social media. A good example can be found at the Elvis Costello Fan Forum’s discussion of his rendition of ‘Scarlet Tide’ on tour in 2005 – two years after the start of the Iraq War. During that tour Costello added the lyrics: "I thought I heard a black bell toll up in the highest dome/Admit you're wrong/And bring the boys back home." Then came a further revision: "You know you lied/Just bring the boys back home." 2

In a lengthy statement released after he had to cancel a show for health reasons and reposted on the website by a fan, Costello is quoted as stating that during this tour: ‘The final song of each concert was “The Scarlet Tide” and I was greatly encouraged by the cheers that these new lines received and was touched by the personal thanks that I received from individuals at the stage door regarding the change and the sentiment contained within them.’ Costello goes on to acknowledge that not everybody was happy with his reworking of the song: ‘Naturally, not every one was in agreement. There were a few competing boos in Columbus and a woman reportedly stormed out in Dayton, vowing to never to return to one of my shows’. He accepts that it legitimate for people to disagree with him, and to point out that he is not a US citizen but there were much deeper issues at stake: ‘I believe it is irrelevant whether I am an outsider, presuming to comment on American foreign policy or if I
make my home in New York City. If such policies contribute to the instability of the world then they must be questioned just as surely as the berserk perversions of theology that are used to excuse mass murder.’

The point that is significant for this discussion is not Costello’s political beliefs but the diversity of responses both at the shows and on the website to the changes he made to song. Clearly there were those who felt for a variety of reasons that even the song’s writer should not alter the ‘canonical’ version, whilst others justify his right to do this.

We can already see that the afterlife of a song is complex and that complexity can be enhanced when it becomes part of a movie soundtrack. Film music works in some cases, of course, by forging a link back to a film viewed. But it may not, for example when heard on the radio or at a concert. This is especially so when, as is increasingly the case, films raid the history of music, especially popular music, in order to re-locate popular songs in new narratives, film narratives. A song can have had a life already. It is then placed within a filmic context and attracts a meaning by being located there, which might enhance its reception more generally, or might limit its range of interpretation. In the case of ‘The Scarlet Tide’ – written for the film – it could be argued that its primary meaning is to be found in its use in the film, but need we talk of ‘primary meaning’ at all? We can speak of first performance, or main recorded version. Yet it can be argued that there is no definitive performance of any song, since they are all part of the occultural reservoir.

At this point, I come to the way in which such music becomes religiously significant for the individual. For whatever its purpose or origins, when a piece of music creates an affective space in which listeners reflect on themselves, their own distributed self, their place in the world of affective space, and the meaning or purpose, or – if they so
choose – purposelessness of their existence, then they are using the music in a religion-like way in the sense that it is the stimulus for meditation and spiritual reflection. This does not make the music religious, of course. But it reminds us that there are many different ways – and necessarily so in more spiritually diffuse or (some would say) secularized times – where cultural practices not immediately religious serve religious ends. ‘The Scarlet Tide’, and so much other film music like it, becomes a vehicle for religious or religion-like reflection in the affective space which it can create for the listener.³

Now it could, of course, be claimed that I am suggesting a very weak sense of ‘religion’ here. In fact, ‘religion’ may not be at all appropriate for what I am suggesting occurs in the listening experience. Kutter Callaway has, indeed, suggested that what occurs in affective space/s might be ‘spiritually meaningful’ (Callaway 132). We may, then, be engaging with the ‘spiritual but not religious’ (Mercadante) or ‘everyday religion’ (Ammerman) in noting that ‘The Scarlet Tide’ might be a prompt for meditative or reflective activity. There need be no inevitable reference to religion at all, no link made with a religious tradition or community. Terms such as religious and spiritual remain contentious. In much popular Western culture, religion is identified with forms of religious organization whilst spirituality is an expression of individual exploration of faith. As Wuthnow observes about this perception:

‘Spirituality is somehow more authentic, more personally compelling, an expression of their search for the sacred, while religion connotes a social arrangement that seems arbitrary, limiting, or at best convenient’ (Wuthnow 306). I would agree with Wuthow’s contention that the line between spiritual and religious practices is a very fine one, which can be difficult to draw (314).
Therefore it is hugely significant that such meaning-making and spiritual activity is going on. When secularized Western life is more individualistic, and when communal religious practice is being re-shaped substantially, both through such individualism and the impact of technology on everyday practice, it is a valid question how religious traditions do connect with such individualized, ‘spiritually meaningful’ music consumption. I shall come back to this in our conclusion but, as we have seen, the process of reception is not context-less so we shall now explore some of the social context which shapes the affective space for listening to ‘The Scarlet Tide’. In particular, how the perceptions of its creators (film-makers, song writers and novelist) might impact upon the reception of song within the movie.

(ii) Social Affective Space

In an interview for National Public Radio in 2006, T Bone Burnett was asked about a song on his album *The True False Identity* (2006) called ‘Hollywood: Mecca of the movies’. In response he observes:

Everyone’s relationship with Hollywood is complex. It’s an interesting town. It’s full of all of the stuff that arts and the theatre have been full of – all gods are worshipped. Hollywood is full of ‘pseudologica fantastica’, i.e. full of people who have a compulsive need to live in a fantasy reality (Hanson).

Movies are fantasies yet purport to be narratives about reality or stories of people living in worlds we recognize. The complex question of who are the ‘selves’ represented in these films and who is the ‘self” watching the movie was raised in our introduction. In Western culture we tend to think in a unitary way, so in movies we speak about *the* film, *the* director, *the* soundtrack. Yet as film credits make clear, *the* director is part of a large team. Any movie will be part of the film-selling market. It
will reference the canon of films, and soundtracks may include music from different genres and even with a single composer, one person’s work is created within the context of other pieces. The same is true about our sense of ‘self’ – we are not one self but many selves. Those distributed selves operate within a social frame in which film, music and literature play an important role in shaping personal identity. The processes of negotiating personal and collective identity, concepts of meaning and the wider social imaginary are undertaken by those creating movies and songs as well as those who are receiving them.

We can see this at work in the soundtrack to *Cold Mountain* and with ‘The Scarlet Tide’. There is a series of scenes near the beginning of film where Ada Monroe (Nicole Kidman), daughter of the new church minister, is shown travelling to her father’s house with her piano, playing it on the back of a wagon whilst Inman (Jude Law) is ploughing the field next to the road. That scene merges into an evening soirée at the new home where Ada is once more playing her instrument. In his commentary on these scenes, director Anthony Minghella speaks of how music pre-occupies him in the writing process for a movie: ‘I can’t write until I know the music in a movie ... how the movie’s going to sound’ (*Cold Mountain 2 Disc special edition*, disc 1 ‘Director Feature’).

For Minghella, music is a vital aspect of the film, reflecting his own internal debate about whether music can change anybody or anything. The fact that beauty exists in music prompts the question: has it changed the world in any way? The scene where Ada travels along the road, playing her piano on the wagon whilst Inman is ploughing is described as ‘a courtship without words’. In the movie commentary this leads into a discussion between the film’s director and its editor, Walter Murch, about how the music becomes a character in *Cold Mountain*. Murch remarks: ‘In terms of the
audience … music is almost as big, if not bigger, than some of the main characters in the film’. It is difficult to tell exactly how much impact the ‘character’ of music has upon viewers and listeners, although it is interesting to note Jim Beviglia’s comments on americansongwriter.com suggesting that the impact can be considerable: ‘Krauss’ haunting rendition of the song played over the movie’s end credits and inadvertently showed it up by summing up in three minutes all of the emotions and sentiments the filmmakers had labored two-and-a-half hours to express’ (Beviglia 2013).

Music is not a major character only in the film. It is also a major character in the original novel by Charles Frazier. Interviewed about the book and the importance of a musical soundtrack to his novel, Frazier is asked to respond to that moment in the story when Stobrod Thewes realizes music is more than making ‘notes for money’ and where Thewes thinks: ‘The grouping of the sounds, their forms in the air as they rang out and faded, said something comforting to him about the rule of creation. What the music said was there is a right way for things to be ordered so that life might not always be just tangle and drift but have shape, and an aim’). Frazier reflects: ‘I just always felt that [Stobrod’s] life had been so wasted, so lacking any kind of pattern or form or discipline of any kind, that the thing that had attracted him…became a thing that, once he took it seriously, had the potential to save him’ (Ketchin).

Themes of redemption and the role of music in that process recur throughout the interview. Frazier describes himself as a listener and collector of music, and has clearly researched the musical references he has included in the novel. As noted, the seriousness of music in the book is carried through into the film. At one point Frazier discusses how in the novel Inman is humming the hymn ‘Fear of the Great Redeemer’ when he shoots another character. The author, reflecting on many of the songs from that place and time, says: ‘A lot of them are sort of frightening-sounding things. If
you look at music as a fairly deep expression of a culture and its values, then what do you make of a culture that put a pretty high value on music so mournful and scary?’ (Ketchin). It is significant that the film ends with the track ‘The Scarlet Tide’, described by the songwriters as an ‘anti-fear song’ (Bessman).

Nevertheless, from these observations from the wider social frame we begin to gain a sense of how music plays a key role in bringing together the distributed character of a film. The film’s occultural reservoir (again using Partridge’s image) is created in part by the distributed selves of writers, actors and production crew. In an earlier interview for National Public Radio in 2003, T Bone Burnett commented on his writing traditional-sounding music for the movie: ‘That was the job. We were trying to write into the Civil War, so I spent a great deal of time with that music in old hymnals. You know, all of the stuff comes out of old hymnals. In fact all of the music we listen to today, everything we call rock and roll comes right out of this stuff’ (Edwards). This reservoir of meaning-making undertaken by those creating the movie implicitly and explicitly impacts upon those who are undertaking their own meaning-making in the viewing of the film and the reception of its soundtrack.

Conclusion

With this study I have taken a concept of distributed self which undertakes processes of meaning-making within an affective space and explored this through the reception and creation of the track ‘The Scarlet Tide’ from Cold Mountain. In particular, I have examined two settings for affective space – those of (i) individual listeners and (ii) the social context. To conclude, I shall explore some implications this has for the study of religion and theology.
I begin by returning to John A. Sloboda’s analysis of music in everyday life, where he outlines ten propositions for understanding everyday musical emotions (495-510). Such emotions in music are: 1) of low intensity rather than high intensity; 2) rather unmemorable on average; 3) short lived and multiple, rather than integrated or sustained; 4) include a significant proportion of negative emotions such as irritation, disapproval, and dislike; 5) more self-referring (e.g. cheerful, anxious) than other-referring (e.g. proud of, approving of); 6) reflective of and influenced by the personal emotional meaning of the non-musical context; 7) prioritize basic rather than complex emotions; 8) everyday emotions to music are elicited by retrospective self-report; 9) listener focused rather than focused on the musical work; 10) arise from transient aspects of goal achievement with which the music becomes associated, rather than from stable evaluative attitudes to the music. Sloboda asks whether film music should be regarded as ‘everyday’ music and notes the ambiguity of this musical form (497). I shall focus on two propositions (5 and 6), which take us to the heart of the matter. Proposition 5) states that everyday emotions in music are more self-referring than other-referring. Leaning on a 2004 survey by Juslin and Laukka, setting out the relative frequency of felt emotion as estimated by listeners, in which happy, relaxed and calm were the most frequently cited, Sloboda argues that ‘special’ contexts for music focus maximum attention on the music itself and minimize other concerns, whilst everyday uses of music tend to be characterized by a much stronger role for the context or the accompanying activity. However, proposition 6) raises the matter of how non-musical information interacts with the emotional impact of the music. My discussion of ‘The Scarlet Tide’ problematizes these perceptions somewhat, picking up on some particular aspects of film music’s reception. Film music that may appear to be secondary, though, as we see from Minghella and Murch, is intended to
be ‘special’. It is a film character in itself with which viewers are invited (expected) to engage. And though film music may be picked up incidentally (there is no guarantee that viewers ‘get’ what Minghella and Murch may have intended), there is even a broader context for an individual viewer: to a wide body of music, to a range of musical associations and memories. This may indeed be self-referential, but it is also self-referential within a life-journey and a broader context of meaningful material (at the very least other songs). In addition it will include the full range of affective space—and significantly for religion and spirituality— the occultural reservoir.

Callaway contends that ‘movies serve as the lingua franca of (post)modern society, providing a common vocabulary for the construction of meaning and the communication of contemporary mores and values’ (Callaway 10). This should be heard alongside Heaney’s observation that music is a particularly intense form of meaning-making activity: ‘Meaning is an event. It is always an interaction between reality and human apprehension of the same, in a given moment of time and history, and as such is dynamic and in evolution…music is a particularly dynamic symbolic form, provoking interaction with reality and between those making and listening to it, in a variety of ways’ (Heaney 84-5). It is not surprising then that the role of music within movies, despite the everyday context in which it occurs, has an important sense-making significance. What is surprising is that this has not been more widely discussed with the notable exception of Callaway 2013.

It could, though, still be argued that we are far from religion, and perhaps should not even suggest that one is, or is even like, the other (McCloud). In which case do we remain solely in the realm of cultural studies and the discussion of the arts and popular culture? This is true up to a point. We are immersed in an arena where sense-making happens not only for those who would describe themselves as religious. Such
interpretative analysis and discussion does not necessarily fall under the heading of religion but our discussion of ‘The Scarlet Tide’ accentuates the point that whatever and wherever ‘spiritually meaningful’ encounters occur in relation to forms of art and popular culture, they are of interest to scholars of religion and to practitioners. Otherwise religious groups are in danger of being too closeted within their own isolated worlds. Similarly, reflection on what people do with such spiritually meaningful encounters can usefully eavesdrop on what religious readings might offer the interpretative task. Well beyond discussion of ‘the meaning of words’, the music in *Cold Mountain* invites viewers and hearers to pause, enjoy, reflect.

One final comment is needed. If music of all kinds, and film music included, is generating such meditative reflection at all, then the question arises as to where and how such reflection happens and is processed. In his book *Why Music Matters?* David Hesmondhalgh argues that music’s most significant effects on the world ‘relate to the sustenance of public sociability, which keeps alive feelings of solidarity and community’ (Hesmondhalgh 10). I have argued that within a context of affective space, people engage with processes of meaning-making and identity creation, and I have sought to tease out some of the dynamics of that with reference to ‘The Scarlet Tide’. Crucially this is not something that merely takes place in individual home theatres (Sloboda) but across the vast range of cultural expression and social imaginary. It will include interacting with other listeners and (increasingly) creators of music through virtual communities, blogs and fan-sites, together with formal and informal educational groups. Religion and spirituality too remain social activities which create solidarity and community. So even if some contend that listening to music and religious practice are not alike, there will inevitably be some overlap in the Venn diagram of public sociability.
In summary, I have argued that the processing of the music on movie soundtracks takes place within a context of affective space, which involves attention to the affective worlds of both individual listeners' frame and the wider social framework. Within these depths of affective space there are many potential links to the occultural reservoir of religion and spirituality which continue to contribute to meaning-making in Western culture.

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2 http://www.elviscostellofans.com/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=4383 (accessed 1 September 2015). Costello has continued to extemporize with this part of the song, for example in a 2009 concert he can be seen reworking the lyrics to reflection on the financial crisis of 2008. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsD9kX0uog0 (accessed 8 September 2015).

3 For further discussion of ‘religion-like’ in this context see Marsh and Roberts ‘Listening as Religious Practice (Part One), 2015