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Assignment 1
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In this essay, I will compare a pair of film segments, with attention to the styles and functions of the music. The two segments I choose to compare are:

- the train station shootout in *The Untouchables*,
- the concluding portion of the Paris Flashback and Ilsa's return to Rick, in *Casablanca*.

First, I discuss the segment of the train station shootout in *The Untouchables*. This segment features the two remaining untouchables, Eliot Ness and George Stone / Giuseppe Petri, as they wait for and eventually capture Al Capone's accountant, needed as an indispensable witness in order to trial Al Capone for tax evasion. Much is at stake in this scene: with Ness' colleagues, Jim Malone and Oscar Wallace, already murdered, it is entirely unclear whether Ness will succeed in his campaign against Al Capone – and at what price.

This segment is filmed from Ness' point of view. As he is waiting for Al Capone's men, Ness' attention shifts between a woman and her baby in a carriage, and suspects coming into the station. The woman struggles to move the carriage up the stairs. Ness hesitates to help her, sensing that danger is imminent.

The segment starts with no music. When the baby comes into the scene, we hear a children's tune, a lullaby, first played on a keyboard and then progressively joined by orchestra. The lullaby seems out-of-place, just like the baby carriage seems out-of-place in this soon-to-be violent segment. The lullaby is a new theme, heard for the first and only time in this segment. As the tension rises, the lullaby progressively fades out while high sustained strings take over. This "tension theme" was heard for the first time during a false alarm in the unsuccessful first stake-out, when Ness sees a man standing on the street, which turns out to be just a reporter. When the shootout resolves and the baby is saved by the other agent, the lullaby briefly comes back, giving a – somewhat comical – relief to the scene.

Just like the camera, the music narrates Ness' point of view. When Ness' attention is on the baby, we hear the lullaby. As Ness' concern shifts from the baby to the imminent danger, the music shifts from the lullaby to the tension theme. In fact, the music reflects Ness' subjective sense of danger more than the actual danger. This is clear in the scene where the tension theme appears for the first time: the music creates an increasing tension as Ness approaches the man on the street and abruptly stops when Ness realizes that he's only a reporter. The diegetic sounds (baby cries, mother's murmurs, foot steps, shot guns) are highly selected also according to Ness' focus.

In addition to emphasizing Ness' attention and highlighting the tension, the music gives a peculiar slowness to actions in the shootout. As an audience, we almost feel that the actions happen in slow motion. When the music stops after the lullaby comes back and concludes, and the dialogue restarts, normal pace returns.

To conclude, the music in the train shootout segment of *The Untouchables*, like the camera, focuses the narrative on Ness' point of view, highlights the shooting action, and, with the lullaby, betrays the incongruity of the baby carriage in such a segment.

Now, I will discuss the segment in *Casablanca* with the concluding portion of the Paris Flashback and Ilsa's return to Rick. In terms of the overall narrative, the Paris Flashback is important because it explains Rick and Ilsa's past as lovers, which induces the present tension.

The flashback develops variations on the love song "As Time Goes By" and bits of other themes that appear throughout the movie (the beginning of "La Marseillaise", German tunes). Developing the love song "As Time Goes By" during the flashback is appropriate, because, the song is played by Sam while Rick is remembering his past with Ilsa in Paris. In the flashback, at the café *La Bella Aurore*, Sam plays the song to the lovers, which explains why

the song is so powerful in stirring remembrance of their love past to them. We then hear a little variation on the song before an ominous sound announces the German's voice on the loudspeaker. The variations on the love song then continue as the two lovers plan their future. The music is in the background of their dialogue. It sometimes spurs to the foreground, and then recedes. When the glass spills, we hear the Doom theme, and in the station, fragments of the Marseillaise and the love song, and the Doom theme again when the train departs. When Ilsa returns to Rick, in the present, the music continues: fragments of the Doom theme, variations on "As Times Goes By", the Laszlo theme, and la Marseillaise. At the end of the scene, when Ilsa leaves, and Rick laments with his face down in his arms, we hear a particularly sad variation on "As Time Goes By".

The variations on "As Time Goes By" begin after we hear the song for the first time in the café when Ilsa asks Sam to play it. It is judicious that the variations develop as develop our understanding of the relationship between Rick and Ilsa. As such, the music has the power of an explanation, and is essential to the narrative.

In conclusion, the train shootout segment in *The Untouchables* and the Paris flashback in *Casablanca* both show how music can enhance the narrative of a film. In *The Untouchables*, the lullaby gives a surrealistic feel to the scene, emphasizing the Ness' internal conflict between his family values and his violent job. In *Casablanca*, the love song "As Time Goes By" with its mixture of diegetic and non-diegetic occurrences, reminds, both the protagonists and the audience, of the love between Rick and Ilsa.