enfranchisement" within the music-marketing industry (Straw 1988, 6) was instrumental to creating the singles-based, high-turnover culture out of which MTV emerged in the early 1980s.

Meanwhile, although Luhrmann accepted the MTV parallels with only lukewarm enthusiasm (York 2006, 60), he nonetheless contributed to them by aiming his movie explicitly at the "youth culture," by giving music a central role in capturing this demographic, and by employing a cinematographic style that features the ultra-quick-cut, "post-classical" camerawork typical of the music video, in which "the rhythm of the images [is] carefully reunited with physical rhythm [of the music]" so that "the video, like the song, has its basis in rhythm" (Berland 1993, 38-39). These factors, together with a music track played at intrusive volume levels at many points in the film (albeit briefly, for the most part), gave movie critics every reason to assign *Romeo + Juliet* a strong MTV sensibility. Academics, similarly, were justified in seeing in Luhrmann's film the same "collagist" ethos, full of freneticism and intertextual pastiche, that characterizes a number of seminal early music videos and makes the form, in some scholars' opinion, the apogee of postmodernist media genres (see, for instance, Straw 1988; Kaplan 1987; Fiske 1986).

The trouble with these references is that they are as vague as they are pervasive. While they may represent accurately the film's marketing strategy, and to a certain extent its visual style, they give a misleading picture of Luhrmann's use of music in his approach to adapting Shakespeare for the screen. Since music is indeed as central to *Romeo + Juliet* as is generally held, this is a significant point of inaccuracy. Andrew Goodwin observes, with commendable mildness, that "[o]ne absence in postmodern theorizing about music television lies in the neglect of music" (1993, 46); this crucial absence extends to assessments of *Romeo + Juliet*. None of the texts that reference "music television" or music videos examines the music itself in more than a cursory fashion. Even Julie Sanders's article is more a textual analysis than a musical one, in the sense that it either associates the songs' lyrics with the film images (for instance, the lyrics to "Angel" with the scene of Juliet wearing angel wings) or examines the effects of their literary intertextual references (for instance, Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, used in the film at the end of the tomb scene). Given that writers almost universally fail to theorize about the music-video genre or specify what aspect of "MTV style" they have in mind, the comments do not really even refer in any meaningful way to music videos, but rather seem to be shorthand for the film's commercial quality. Conventional wisdom about *Romeo + Juliet* therefore extends from a premise that is both unexamined and untested, making it possible that the highest-grossing Shakespeare film in cinematic history has been fundamentally mischaracterized.

A closer look at the use of music in *Romeo + Juliet* suggests that this is indeed the case. While it is true that Luhrmann and his team deliberately put much of the film's music in harness with the

visuals to create what he calls "modern-day . . . equivalencies that could decode the language of Shakespeare" (Luhrmann 1996), music so employed does not result in anything like a music video. In fact, it results in quite the opposite: a filmic construct whose music track subserves the narrative to a remarkable degree and "manipulatively hyperexplicates" (Brown 1994, 2) the narrative in a way perhaps not attempted since Hollywood composer Max Steiner wrote his notorious "mickey-mousing" underscores for *Mildred Pierce* and *Don Juan* in the 1940s. In subordinating the aural track to translational purposes, Lurhmann violates both the central premise of the music video and the basis of music-television culture itself: the sanctity of the song. As Will Straw points out, the music-video era came about when the recording industry, trying to solve the problems of slow turnover and low innovation rates caused by the 1970s album-oriented approach to marketing, put new primacy on "the individual song as the basic unit within the marketing of . . . music" (1988, 7). Whatever disruptions music videos may have caused in the listener's traditional ways of processing music, they respected the genre's raison d'être, preserving the central element of "the song as a singular structure . . . the structure never contested in the video" (Berland 1993). By contrast, the process of creating the *Romeo + Juliet* sound track was, in the words of score mix engineer Geoff Foster, "a matter of breaking down elements from the multi-tracks," to the extent that "[composer/mixer] Nellee [Hooper] had conversations with certain managers saying the record company will not release your multi-tracks, which means that all we've got is your stereo mix, and we can't use it in that form, so it will be butchered" (2007). Luhrmann's use of music also violates the converse rule of music videos: that "[their] visual-semantic complexity rarely . . . allows the song to challenge the video's seduction of the viewer" (Berland 1993, 39). As I argue below, the *Romeo + Juliet* sound track, with its deliberate intrusiveness, systematically interrupts precisely that seductive process.

In fact, the decision to use music to perform a literally (and literarily) hermeneutic function confounds almost every traditional approach to film-music theory and practice, and resonates through the filmic whole. Having a movie provide, essentially, a facing-page translation for its own dialogue track is both radical and conservative — the latter in the sense that it heralds a return to techniques used in the "silent" era, such as the use of captions and, more relevantly, a music track that "consist[s] of pieces with different tempi and moods strung together, like tracks of a compilation album" (Chion 2009, 407). I argue that Luhrmann's seemingly simple decision to employ a significant portion of the music as a linguistic "translator" sets the stated intent of increasing accessibility at odds with the actual effect by repeatedly disrupting the viewers' absorption into the diegetic world, forcing them to engage in an effortful intellectual process of reconciliation and impeding the film's thematic and narrative coherence.

In my examination of the way the music's translational mandate acts on the film's structure, viewership experience, and ontological whole, I follow K. J. Donnelly's call for a "dual logic" in film-music analysis that employs both semiotic and musicological tools for observing the ways in which the music works in the overall film (2001, 3). I look at not only what Claudia Gorbman terms "cinematic codings" that express the interplay of musical and other filmic elements, but also "cultural codings" (otherwise known as topoi, or "style topics") that aid the viewer's interpretation on a number of levels (1987, 3). Given that the sound track contains both classical underscore and popular songs, it seems fitting to apply both the conventional theory of style-topic function in narrative films and Ronald Rodman's more recent ideas about what might be called "generic style topics" — a recognition, as Rodman points out, that "unlike themes in the classic film score, traits of . . . characters [in films with popular-song sound tracks] are not represented by singular leitmotifs. Instead, it is the *style* of the popular songs that signify as leitmotifs in the film" (2006, 126, emphasis in original). To a considerable degree, however, the peculiar workings of the music track in *Romeo + Juliet* stymie both traditional and new soundtrack theories.

The comprehensive implications of Lurhmann's musical employment can best be understood by first considering the typical aims and the global effects of music within a film's fictional construct. One of the primary goals of most film music, as Gorbman writes in her still-definitive *Unheard Melodies*, is to "render the individual an untroublesome viewing subject; less critical, less awake" (1987, 5), as well as to "act as a suturing device" that "lessens spatial and temporal discontinuities with its own melodic and harmonic continuity" (6). The viewer, she notes, "tends to be conscious of the discourse (elements, including music, that enunciate the story) only insofar as it 'transgresses' or 'interrupts' story (that which is enunciated)" (31). Other major functions of film music include establishing and sustaining mood, moving the viewer emotionally by means of pitch-relation affectiveness (that is, the harmonic and melodic progressions of the music), and aiding narrative interpretation by the use of culturally recognized motifs or styles of music (the abovementioned "style topics"). In sum, a movie's music track is typically characterized by invisibility, inaudibility, emotional signifying, continuity, unity, and narrative cuing (Gorbman 1987, 73).

Film-music theorists increasingly recognize, as well, that sound tracks using popular songs function somewhat differently — partly because in order to fulfill their function, they must be made intermittently overt, and partly because the subliminal absorptive effect of the classical underscore, which Anahid Kassabian calls "assimilating identification," is usually replaced with more individualized "affiliating identifications." In other words, many of the emotional and mnemonic associations made between viewers and the movie through the music will "depend on