

Coplandia, or the Ideological American Sound

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Abstract

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This thesis defines and explores Coplandia, a body of commercial music derivative of Aaron Copland's populist compositions. Coplandia occurs in film, television, advertisements, and at public events, inspiring feelings of American patriotism. It is musically rooted in Copland's ballets, chamber music, and film scores of the 1930s and '40s, adapted through simplification for the commercial realm. This thesis examines the connections between Coplandia and Aaron Copland, considering the political implications of Copland's own life and the circumstances surrounding the use of music derivative of Copland's compositions.

Introduction

Some of the music most readily associated with Aaron Copland is that which was not composed by Copland at all, but sounds “Coplandesque.” It appears in movies and commercials, accompanying a broad definition of heroism. For the last several decades, commercial music imitating Copland’s populist period has been used in political and nonpolitical arenas to set imagery of “America.” Coplandia refers to music that sounds like a portion of Aaron Copland’s repertoire, associated with Populism in the Depression-era United States. Looking at Copland’s repertoire for the concert hall and ballet stage, elements of the musical topic took root in *El Salón México* (1936)¹, and came into maturity in *Billy the Kid* (1938). Other major works of this category that feed into Coplandia include *Lincoln Portrait*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, *Rodeo* (all from 1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944). All of these pieces were composed before the end of the second World War, under a largely nationalistic zeitgeist.

Collectively, Copland’s concert works and their imitations have come sonically to underscore a certain American ideal. They support imagery of the honest, blue collar American. According to critic Alex Ross, “Coplandesque imitations” are used “to convey the

¹ *El Salón México* is an explicitly Mexican style piece, written during Copland’s stay in Mexico City. Still, several of Copland’s stylistic choices in composing the piece relate to the style he later developed when in search of an “American” sound. *El Salón México* also reflects Copland’s desire to write music that could matter on a national level, a mentality he carried over to his work once back in the US. Once he returned from Mexico City, he wrote in a letter to Carlos Chávez “[w]hen I was in Mexico I was a little envious of the opportunity you had to serve your country in a musical way. Here in the U.S.A. we composers have no possibility of directing the musical affairs of the nation—on the contrary, since my return, I have the impression that more and more we are working in a vacuum.” The sentiment would soon change, as Copland became able to contribute to the direction of musical affairs in the US in the 1940s and beyond. Quoted in Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), 224.

innate goodness of small-town life—elderly couples sitting on porches, newsboys on bicycles, farmers leaning on fences, and so on.”² Such imitations in American media abound, in everything from Ronald Reagan’s 1984 re-election campaign, to theme music for *The West Wing* or *Veep*, to the score for the 2012 movie *Lincoln* or the 2014 movie *The Monuments Men*. These examples are just a few of many, and share a common bond of being linked by sounding Coplandesque. They are all used in instances intended to inspire patriotism and feelings of positivity toward an American national identity, yet they come from various points along the political spectrum.

Coplandia, as I see it, is a body of commercial music derivative of Aaron Copland’s populist ballets, chamber works, and film scores. By “commercial,” I mean music generally written not for the concert hall or formal stage, but for the screen, be that television or film. This body of music is often incidental: underscoring advertisements, war movies, and fictional athletic victories. For the listener entrenched in the media culture of the United States, Coplandia has a way of eliciting feelings of American patriotism, and more generally a sense of contentment and superiority. While nothing in the music inherently suggests any of these qualities, it has been encoded with the sentiments in recent decades.

Copland’s own music is not Coplandia; Coplandia is an imitation and approximation of Coplandesque musical signatures and techniques. Since Coplandia is music based on—but not limited to—the sound world Copland created and popularized, but not actually written by Copland himself, analysis of Coplandia does not necessarily fit within analysis of Copland’s own music. Coplandia’s tangential relationship to Copland’s music should place it

² Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Picador, 2007), 302.

in an academic body related to film music studies. Much of Copland's music that inspired and codified Coplandia came from the composer's film scores like *Of Mice and Men* (in addition to ballets and chamber music), and contemporary Coplandia is typically found in movies and television. Because of its situation between hermeneutic musicology and film studies—as well as its absence from scholarship in both fields—Coplandia is difficult to ground in a subfield. It is a concept often discussed in casual settings, but has been noticeably absent from musicological scholarship.

To date, Coplandia has not been discussed as a formal term; rather, it appears in casual usage. Neil Lerner's 2001 study in *Musical Quarterly* is the first and only attempt, so far, to define Coplandia's musical characteristics.³ Lerner does not use the word "Coplandia;" instead, he considers a "pastoral trope," relating it to the pastoral topic as defined by Leonard Ratner, and drawing upon Michael Beckerman's now famous work on Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha" in Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, "From the New World."⁴ Lerner's inquiry into Copland's "pastoral" writing in film scores provides a foundation for my study of the problems inherent in Copland's signification of America in his ballet and concert music.

³ Lerner, 477–515.

⁴ See Leonard Ratner, *Classical Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 21, and Michael Beckerman, "Dvořák's 'New World' Largo and *The Song of Hiawatha*," *19th-Century Music* (Vol. 16, No. 1, Summer 1992), 35–48.

Of Mice and Men

Coplandia as commercial simulacra did not occur without cause or precedent. Much of the associations in the public eye and ear between Copland's music and ideologies of America originated in Copland's film scores. Though Copland was not primarily a film composer, his work in Hollywood made enough of an impact in American media culture to foster an association between his populist modernism and imagery of the everyday person. In *Hearing Film*, Anahid Kassabian discusses the process by which music and idea become associated with one another. "Composed scores, most often associated with the classical Hollywood scoring traditions, conditions...assimilating identifications. Such paths are structured to draw perceivers into socially and historically unfamiliar positions, as do larger scale processes of assimilation."⁵ The simultaneity of composed music and filmic imagery creates an assimilation of meaning. Kassabian argues the assimilation is unconscious on the part of the viewer, and is rather reinforced by repetition of similar identifications. Copland's own music became generic through its association with familiar types of imagery.

In the Hollywood film industry, the Coplandia style has become identified with heroism associated with traditional Americanism, on several levels. It accompanies dramatic conclusions and temporary successes. A great number of instances of Coplandia in Hollywood involve war movies, inscribing and reinscribing the sound with a homosocial environment focused on the tenets of traditional masculinity. Because of the codification and identification of Coplandia with patriotism, movies with war-related topics can use

⁵ Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2.

Coplandia to elicit feelings of patriotic empathy at moments of fictitious heroism. Movies that use Coplandia tend to have all or mostly-male casts, echoing a social conflation of traditional patriotism with masculinity. With Coplandia, the connection occurs through music based on music composed by gay men, complicating patriotism's reliance on heteronormative masculinity.

One of the more prominent and pertinent examples of Copland's own music associating with filmic imagery is in the 1939 film *Of Mice and Men*. Directed by Lewis Milestone and based on John Steinbeck's novella of the same name, *Of Mice and Men* follows characters George and Lennie as they attempt to overcome the Dust Bowl and Lennie's mental disabilities to make a life living off the land in California. Entrenched in populist imagery of the period, along with an ex post facto collaboration between Steinbeck and Copland, *Of Mice and Men* as a film captured the zeitgeist of the common man's experience with the Dust Bowl and its aftermath. Copland's role as composer began to identify his compositional signatures with imagery of Americanism.

Noteworthy about Copland's score for *Of Mice and Men* is its musical simplicity. Bick points out that for Copland, *Of Mice and Men* represents a point along the way of Copland's stylistic move from difficult modernisms to more consonant, accessible styles.⁶ The concept of simplicity in Copland's music has a history of exploration as it relates to his politics. Copland's leftist leanings put him in a class of artists responding to the Great Depression and interwar period in the United States. This so-called Cultural Front was diverse, though united in its perpetuation of modernism in the name of populism. Closely related to the Cultural Front is the Popular Front, defined by Elizabeth Bergman Crist as "an initiative of

⁶ Ibid., 432.

the Moscow-based Communist International (Comintern) that allowed for the creation of national coalitions to unite liberals, progressives, and Communists in the fight against facism.”⁷ Copland never joined any Communist organizations, yet his ideological allegiance with leftist causes and purposes emanated throughout much of his career. The goals of these organizations involved the proliferation of cultural products in ways that supported the missions of leftist causes and proletarian culture without sacrificing artistic agency or intended quality in simplification.

Copland’s role as composer for *Of Mice and Men* was crucial in creating a wider, more diverse audience for musical modernism, and also for identifying the type of modernism Copland was already crafting with his alleged subjects. A mission of the Popular Front was to bring highbrow artistic trends to the masses. *Of Mice and Men* allowed Copland to engage with mass culture through his music. By associating himself with Steinbeck, the mainstream film industry, and a working-class story, Copland’s music became inextricably linked with the populist movement of which he had previously been on the fringes. According to Sally Bick, “the score for *Of Mice and Men* remains pivotal, in part because it introduced audiences to a modernist American idiom that would challenge the norms of Hollywood while eventually inspiring it.”⁸ The score reinforced the message of the film, and served its own purposes in popularizing musical modernism and Copland’s style.

⁷ Elizabeth Bergman Crist, *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland during the Depression and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 19. This volume in its entirety does well to inquire into and theorize Copland’s personal politics and their effect on his music and celebrity. In particular, the Introduction (pp. 2–13) and Chapter 1, “Communism and the Cultural Front” (pp. 15–42) provide a helpful foundation for Copland’s political life.

⁸ Sally Bick, “*Of Mice and Men*: Copland, Hollywood, and American Musical Modernism,” in *American Music*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Winter 2005), 426.

According to both Copland and his biographers, the simplicity of Copland's music of the 1930s and 1940s was a political statement in itself. As Crist discusses, Copland's simplicity without sacrifice of musical quality and substance was a conscious move toward accessibility, and the furthering of the populist cause. Some of Copland's performances were sponsored by the federal government's Works Progress Administration as part of the New Deal, creating incentive for art of the highest quality with a widespread appeal. Copland's simplification of style falls into what Michael Long terms the "vernacular imagination," or a commonly held understanding, "reflect[ing] a creative or re-creative process typically related to a slate of priorities (aesthetic, ethical, sensual) that intersects with a prioritized sense of the past."⁹ Long's due acknowledgement of the unmanageably large and nebulous nature of American media culture in the twentieth century extends into any study of Copland's output and legacy. American culture is too diverse to effectively generalize; the makeup and habits of the American people are diverse and do not nicely fit together into defining categories, but there are some unifying threads. For Copland and others on the Cultural Front, a conscious effort was made to appeal to the "common man," whoever that may be, through artistic expression.

By engaging in cinema, a medium notably more commercial than concert music or ballet, Copland positioned himself in a realm that would allow his music to reach a wide audience. Even though *Of Mice and Men* was not terribly commercially successful, the pairing of Copland's music with Steinbeck's novel and Milestone's directorial vision created an accessible work in a popular medium that would ultimately work to identify Copland's

⁹ Michael Long, *Beautiful Monsters: Imagining the Classic in Musical Media* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 5.

music with imagery of proletarian America. This particular identification in mass culture may have started with *Of Mice and Men* in 1939, but it does not require perpetual viewings of this film in order to confirm and reaffirm the connection. Reading film through Roland Barthes' theory of intertextuality, Melanie Lowe points out that "associations come not from 'real' experiences but from (the real experience of) filmic and televisual representation of such events."¹⁰ These experiences provide the initial connections between music and image, the same identifications Kassabian discusses.

With Copland's music, the identification between music and image also created an ideological connection. Copland's populist music does not only connect with dust bowl imagery, but with a larger concept of American values. *Of Mice and Men* put the struggle of the common man during the Depression onscreen, for a large audience. By altering styles of musical modernism to be palatable to mass-cultural audiences, Copland distributed artistic sophistication tied to a strong, populist work.

¹⁰ Melanie Lowe, "Claiming Amadeus: Classical Feedback in American Media," in *American Music*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2002), 106.



Figure 2 "Marlboro Man" Horn Call

The first of these motives imitates Copland's style in *El Salón México*. *El Salón México* depicts a dancehall in Mexico City of the same name, where Copland spent time while traveling. The Cuban *danzón* was popular at the time, and Copland may have internalized its characteristic *clave* as Mexican music. In Copland's attempt for *El Salón México* to capture the sound world of Mexico, he ended up conflating national styles and creating a starting point for them to continue to be conflated in American popular culture. It is this style that becomes part of the Coplandia canon, as evidenced by its use in the Marlboro Man commercials. In addition to Copland's use of Cuban styles for a piece that would seem to be incorporating Mexican styles, musical and cultural blending across the US-Mexico border allows for some similarity between styles of Mexican music and music from the Southwestern United States. In *El Salón México*, Copland captured a sound that blends Cuban, Mexican, and American folk styles, bounded in a classical medium. Such blending occurred in a geographical region commodified in exaggeration by acts like Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Beth E. Levy explores the Wild West as part of an imagined America, identifying it as a circus-like extravaganza.¹²

The first two-measure motive in the Marlboro Man commercials links aurally to Copland's identification of Latin American styles in the United States-based American style,

¹² Beth E. Levy, *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 10–13.

while the second motive nods more closely to a white American sound. In many commercials in the series, the lyrical melodic line is played by a horn or trumpet, echoing Copland's heavy use of these brass instruments. They are simply modified horn calls, but their way of outlining and destabilizing tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies is akin to Copland's pandiatonicism in works like *Appalachian Spring*. In the Marlboro Man ads, the horn call uses a subdominant harmony where a dominant would be expected at the end of the antecedent motive, and a dominant harmony where a tonic would be expected at the end of the consequent. For the style of diatonicism in this music, the sequencing of pitch creates a sound world in which Western harmonies are recognizable, but they do not follow the sequencing rules of European common practice. The phrasing comes closer to a blues pattern, which is more comfortable with unresolved dominant harmonies.

Another early example of Coplandia in advertising exists in the explicitly political arena. Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" videos for his 1984 presidential re-election campaign use a generic version of Coplandia as the backdrop to images and monologue celebrating traditional (Conservative) American values. Reagan's "Morning in America" videos do not have a direct musical link to Copland's repertoire; rather, they test the boundaries of Coplandia. The musical background is similar to the neo-Romantic film music style of the mid-to-late twentieth century. The way the instrumental melody gets passed from clarinet to oboe then throughout the woodwind and brass families brings it closer to Copland's style, even if it is a weak musical connection. In *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, music critic Alex Ross considered the music in "Morning in America"

one of a “kitschy version” “of the open-prairie sound.”¹³ Ross’s observation of kitsch is often a factor that aurally distinguishes Coplandia from Copland’s own music; commercial imitative versions may go overboard drawing together American patriotic signifiers, as “Morning in America” seems to have done.

In addition to musical considerations, the politics of Coplandia are related to the politics of Copland. However, the extent of that relationship is constantly shifting. For Copland, writing tonal concert music was a conscious choice, going against the trends of serialism or otherwise dissonant styles. By the time Coplandia was popularized by composers other than Copland himself, beginning slowly in the 1980s, compositional styles in the United States had changed enough so that tonality was more expected. When Coplandia makes its way into ubiquity onscreen, it is uncomplicated by academic debates about the politics of serialism. Still, it is a direct outgrowth of Copland’s concert and film music, and tied to Copland’s reputation, even if it is not necessarily observed that way.

Coplandia has roots in mid-twentieth century gay culture, but its contemporary use tends to accompany traditional conservative, heteronormative Americanism. Effectively, Coplandia, in its simplification of Copland’s writing style, erases complicated parts of Copland’s music, performing a sort of queer erasure. When Coplandia stands in for generic patriotic-sounding music, it appropriates a style codified by a marginalized group of composers whose music allowed them to break through their marginalization. Even though

¹³ Ibid. In an email, Ross reaffirmed that in *The Rest is Noise*, he “named Reagan’s Morning in America as a source of the trend, but I’m sure one could find earlier examples.” Email message to the author, May 9, 2013. The Marlboro Man ads predate the “Morning in America” ads, as do Richard Nixon’s 1968 campaign advertisements also suggested by Ross as noteworthy. Nixon’s ads tend to use isolated elements of Coplandesque music such as stylized percussion or harmonies, and do not synthesize enough elements to be Coplandia, though they come close.

music by Copland, Thomson, Rorem, and the like was not codified as a specifically gay aesthetic, the style of American classical composition from this group was incredibly popular in the mainstream, allowing a group of gay composers to shape a style that became American in the mainstream. Coplandia's basis on Copland's music allows music by composers who lived in opposition to normative American standards to dominate the sound world of American patriotism.

Because Coplandia is genealogically connected to Copland (meaning Coplandia would not exist without Copland's works upon which to base the style), contexts for Copland's composition illuminate implications of Coplandia. Important to the discussion of Copland is that of his contemporaries, particularly the circle of gay, New York-based tonalists identified by Nadine Hubbs as defining America's sound from the 1930s through the postwar period.¹⁴ Copland is generally accepted as the leader of this group—despite his trepidation with the concept of any sort of leadership role—which includes Virgil Thomson, Ned Rorem, Leonard Bernstein, Giancarlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, as well as other less-popular composers. Though the concept of an American sound seems monolithic and limiting, the composers of this circle, to various degrees, were instrumental in creating a flavor of classical music that has since been reified as the American style of music. Open fifths, timbral preferences for reedy woodwinds and heroic brass, styles of angular melodies, and percussion use have come to sound American the way that over-dotted rhythms sound French, and modality sounds English.

¹⁴ Nadine Hubbs, *The Queer Composition of America's Sound: Gay Modernists, American Music, and National Identity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 2004.

The reasons for this group of composers writing tonal music are unclear; there is nothing inherent in tonality that lends itself to a particular set of individuals or identities. However, these composers transgressed Austro-Germanic compositional standards of their time that were otherwise playing out in academic composition departments in the United States, and wrote music that they found appealing. Since their music was more approachable to audiences in the United States than other new music of the time, it got performed frequently, and gained an audience. This was assisted by the network of conductors of major orchestras in the Northeast who programmed the music of their friends and colleagues, particularly Leonard Bernstein, who was instrumental in programming Copland's works. The prevalence of tonal music in the concert hall gave composers greater exposure in a larger culture that would have otherwise rejected them on the basis of their homosexuality, had it been part of a more open understanding.

With so much music intended to inspire feelings of patriotism in disparate populations of American ideological and non-ideological groups, one might speculate about the musical depiction of America, the American Dream, or Americans' attitude toward the West as it is mythologized in a nearly collective imagination. Beth Levy argues that Copland's envisioning of the American West stems from an internal confusion of Occident and Orient, due to his Russian-Jewish heritage, and his Brooklyn boyhood upbringing.¹⁵ A second-generation American living in the city, Copland's view of the American West was, for much of his life, based on fiction and imagination. Despite Copland's born-and-bred American citizenship, critics of his time aligned him with the global East, since both his

¹⁵ Beth E. Levy, "From Occident to Orient: Aaron Copland and the Sagas of the Prairie", in *Aaron Copland and His World*, Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick, eds. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 336-7.

parents emigrated from Russia to the United States. As a first-generation American, Copland's pastoral music infused elements of his near-distant ancestral homeland, particularly those of its Jewishness.

Though Levy introduces theoretical terms most famously and extensively explored by Edward Said¹⁶, she does not press the concept of Occident versus Orient, or "here" versus "there." The discussion is cursory, not digging into a deeper analysis of the implications of Copland's engagement with Orientalism.¹⁷ The shifting conceptualization of both Occident and Orient are evident in Copland's music, as well as the derivative Coplandia, a musical topic that refers to an Orient within an Occident different from those for which the terms were coined. As Said argues, the locations of the Occident and the Orient change depending on one's vantage point. For an American, the Orient is the Far East, whereas for a European, the Orient is the Middle East, particularly the Arabian Peninsula. Central to Said's argument of Orientalism as a means of conscious or unconscious oppression are its roots in colonialism. Copland could not be aligned with the global East and the Orient, since such an alliance is not feasible. In his own life, Copland exuded pride in his American citizenship, seeing himself as one possibility of the "all-American" person. While Copland sympathized with communist economic principles, he was never a member of the Communist Party, nor did he sympathize with Soviet leadership. At the time that he was writing his populist works, the Saidian Orient was entrenched in the onset of the Second World War.

¹⁶ See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹⁷ For a much more extensive discussion of musicology's relationship with Orientalism and postcolonial theory, see Matthew Head, "Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory," *Music Analysis*, Vol. 22, Issue 1–2 (March 2003), 211–230.

In addition to the geographic and ideological problems of the Orient and global politics in the 1930s and '40s, there is a problem of connotative terminology. "Oriental" is a pejorative term, and intentionally Oriental music tends to diminish the Oriental subject, while bearing resemblance to its creator's homeland.¹⁸ Beethoven's inclusion of the Turkish March in the finale of his Symphony No. 9 offers an example of intentionally Oriental music in a western setting that misrepresents Turkish music, sounding instead like a Western European take on exoticism. The former, diminishing the Oriental subject, is the more common treatment of Orientalism in music, particularly in the time of Copland's Populism. Since Copland was so secure in his American identity, his Occident fit with the culturally dominant Occident of Western Europe and the United States, and his Orient was the world outside those boundaries. Rather than a quasi-fixed conceptualization of Occident and Orient as geographical locations, Copland's music exploits an Orientalism accounting for time and imagination.

The music of Coplandia creates an Orient of the American West in the time of Cowboys and Indians. Of course, this "time" did not exist the way it is imagined, though it certainly exists in Hollywood movies. Though Levy does not pick apart the Occident and Orient at play in Copland's music, it is evident that the Orient is the mythologized American West of the Hollywood movie. By extension, the Occident is everyday life, and the musical Occident is the musical Modernism of the early twentieth century. Copland's populist music uses these two forces, Modernism and Populism, to aurally construct Occident and Orient, respectively.

¹⁸ See, for example, Ralph P. Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*," in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (November 1991), 261–302.

While some have seen Copland's populist music as a way of reconciling ideas of the experienced America versus the imagined West, Howard Pollack offers an alternative reading of the music as an escapist exercise in imagining away the cultural oppression of his own homosexuality. Pollack finds it "hardly irrelevant that so many of Copland's dramatic and texted works...depict an outsider's struggle for self-realization through a dialectical exploration of isolation and engagement."¹⁹ In pre-gay liberation terms, musicality was code for homosexuality. As Philip Brett points out, questions like "Is he 'musical,' do you think?" were coded ways of asking if someone was gay.²⁰ Music was the place Copland could depict what could not be done in the real world, allowing an opportunity to imagine an alternate life for himself.

Copland's populist music is Orientalist in its longing for exoticism. The imagination of the Oriental subject as something desirably exotic is in line with Copland's imagination of the American West as a point of escapism from his nonconforming homosexual existence. Missing from Copland's Orientalism is the pejorative, bullying aspect that is prevalent in Said's theorization of Orientalism. Copland's composition of this escapist music may have been a way for him to escape his own Otherness, yet the music has been appropriated to erase feelings of Otherness. When Copland's populist music becomes appropriated as Coplandia, it is for use in situations longing for a Utopian vision of "America," one in which all who seek American-ness are granted their membership.

¹⁹ Howard Pollack, "The Dean of Gay American Composers," *American Music* (Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 2000), 43.

²⁰ Philip Brett, "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet," in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, 2nd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 11. Nadine Hubbs expands upon musicality and homosexuality in *The Queer Composition of America's Sound*, 64-102.

In living the life of a marginalized individual on many accounts while composing music of the idealized American Dream, Copland created space for multiple entry points and interpretations of his music. The picture he painted with his own music was a distorted version of the true America, one full of fictionalized cowboy glory. It came from Copland's imagination of the Wild West, mitigated by a softness bringing the image closer to real life. But the life Copland lived was that of an urbanite, Communist-sympathizing, homosexual, Russian-descended Jew. The real Copland did not experience the world with the traits of an all-American hero. His presumably lowered social status on the basis of his identity rendered him an underdog, capturing America through fictionally-composed music. Still, Copland, being a white man, benefitted from passing privilege; he lived a life in various minority groups, but could pass, or appear to fit in with the majority, when it was convenient. With these two sides of Copland's persona—the cowboy and the boy who dreams of cowboys—on opposite sides of the work/creator paradigm, the music is left open to appropriation by those with motivations relating to either one.

Further complicating the question of Copland's own identity is his work as a cultural diplomat, hired by the United States government during the Cold War. As Emily Abrams Ansari argues, Copland's diplomatic work is largely ignored in considerations of political implications of his work. However, this diplomacy proves relevant in relationship to his music throughout his career.²¹ Much of Copland's political radicalism occurred prior to his diplomatic work, though there was some overlap. The timing of the stages in Copland's beliefs and his diplomatic work is practically irrelevant. His communist sympathies did not

²¹ See Emily Abrams Ansari, "Aaron Copland and the Politics of Cultural Diplomacy," in *Journal of the Society for American Music*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2011), 335–364.

preclude his government-funded activism, despite the government's enormous fear of Communism. Copland did eventually get questioned by Senator Joseph McCarthy in relation to his communist sympathies, but "McCarthy's anticommunist attack would only briefly interrupt Copland's internationalist efforts."²² Either the Red Scare was not as scary as Americans are often led to believe, or Copland's Leftist politics were not seen as threatening enough to preclude international diplomacy. Government actions against suspected Communists were certainly aggressive, yet Copland managed to be mostly overlooked, to his benefit. The idea that such an openly Left composer would be both allowed and funded to promote cultural diplomacy during McCarthyism and the greater Cold War proves that Copland's multiple identities could coexist in the public eye, even if they seemed contradictory.

As history has told, Coplandian music has been appropriated by numerous political groups, many of whom fervently disagree with one another, and none of whom have a more authentic claim over the music or the dream to which it refers. The musical setting of the American West—the Coplandia topic—is curious for its geographical implications and their play into the American ideas of Manifest Destiny. Though the concept is a creature of the nineteenth century, its implications of the mysterious West and its need to be conquered still resonate in cultural imagination, if not in real experiences. By the time of Coplandia's appropriation as a universal signifier of "America," the West was conquered. It still exists as an object of a new colonialism and Orientalism as depicted in Hollywood, though it does not exist in the real world as the Wild West. Instead, Coplandia, or the music which refers to that imagined Wild West, serves as a reminder of the landscape existing in

²² Ibid., 337.

the media. Its use as early as the 1960s reminds those growing up watching Westerns and similar media of the musical landscape they saw as depicting a certain kind of America. Rather than referring to a temporality of real existence, Coplandia signifies something only existing in Hollywood or music created by outsiders meant to sound American. It imagines the West as an unsophisticated Wild world.

The Music of Coplandia

Coplandia itself can come in many forms, and have different sounds. In all cases, Coplandia is tonal; it does not follow the same rules of tonality and counterpoint codified in the late eighteenth century, but it revolves around a tonal center. It is diatonic, although it can frequently modulate to nearby key areas through reassignment of harmonic function. In many ways, Coplandia is Neoclassical, imitating many precedents characteristic of the Classical period, but used in new and sometimes ironic ways.

The musical characteristics of Coplandia are related to those identified by Neil Lerner in his survey of Copland's pastoral film music.²³ According to Lerner,

Copland's pastoral writing includes...(held pedal tones, sometimes at the fifth, and rustic melodies) and even highlights timbres reminiscent of the "oaten reed" of the classical literary shepherd. Copland's pastoral mode tends to put the most interesting melodic material into the winds or brass, deemphasizing the strings in the modernist tradition of Stravinsky.²⁴

²³ See Neil Lerner, "Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces: Surveying the Pastoral Trope in Hollywood," in *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 85, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 477–515.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 482.

Lerner argues that many of Copland's own compositions are interesting because they seem simple at the surface, but a closer analysis reveals a great deal of sophistication. Coplandia, on the other hand, strips away elements of Copland's compositional style, leaving a more bare approximation of the music, imitating just the overarching form of tonality and instrumentation Copland used. Engaging with the rhetorical, political implications of Copland's music, Alex Ross argues "the radicalism implicit in these pieces never comes all the way to the surface." Because of Copland's subtlety in musically conveying his politics, the music is left open for varying points of interpretation.²⁵ Since Copland's music does not carry explicit semantic content, it is ambiguous enough that it can be understood to mean practically anything. Between Lerner and Ross, it is clear that Copland's music is rife with opportunities for appropriation.

In practice, there are several ways of engaging with the Coplandia sound that fall into distinct yet overlapping categories. There is the music by art music composers like John Adams or John Williams who use some musical idioms popularized by Copland in his populist period in their own compositions, effectively creating a personalized version of the Coplandia style. This piggy-backed style bares only a slight relationship to Copland, copying some of the more prominent musical techniques codified as part of the "American" sound. A second category is comprised of film and commercial music that paraphrases sections of Copland's music, while composers "write around" those sections with their own material. An example from Rick Perry's 2012 Presidential campaign will be explored later in this thesis. A third category has a weaker connection to Copland, involving a sort of bricolage approach in taking characteristics of Copland's music, putting them together to make

²⁵ Ross, 302.

something new. This category does not include music that paraphrases Copland, but it sounds Coplandesque. It is related to the first category, but appears in advertisements. The Marlboro Man advertisements fall into this category, along with advertisements for various consumer products like bleach, and countless examples of non-diagetic music in film and television. Music can be located in more than one of these categories; the three categories are not mutually exclusive, but they classify different ways of hearing and writing the Coplandia sound.

With the study of any musical topic comes conflict in the form of temporality. Musical topics are signifiers; they contain traits that refer to another style of music. These topics are almost always backward-looking and nostalgic; they refer to music of an older time. The extent of the temporal significance of a given topic varies greatly, as topics refer to different objects from different times and places. From a practical standpoint, a topic must be atemporal since its features originate in music that has already been composed. Ramond Monelle devotes significant time and energy in attempt to reconcile the temporality of both music and the idea of topics in his 2000 extensive study on musical semiotics.²⁶ In pitting philosophers of culture and music against one another, Monelle argues for the temporal references in topics and topic theory. That is, “[i]t is the time in which events can be placed, the tabula rasa on which the temporal forms of life are written.”²⁷ Music exists in time, but topics have temporality, meaning that they refer to a section of significance in the linear understanding of time.

²⁶ Ramond Monelle, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). I am most concerned with Chapter 4, “The Temporal Image” (81–114).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

If topics possess musical signifiers of older music, the use of topics in music signifies a reference to older time. This theory works well for topics that refer to music in the dominant culture in a temporal space. A waltz topic, for example, is used to evoke associations with the waltz as it was danced by many in its heyday. But the temporal significance of topics becomes complicated when a topic refers to an imagined music. The Coplandia topic at hand does not use musical elements that emerged “naturally;” instead, its elements derive from European interpretations of “America” à la Dvořák, and Hollywood interpretations of the American West set to music by Virgil Thomson and others. In these imaginations of the American West, the music does not refer to any “authentic” America, and instead is imagined by outsider creators. The lack of real-life musical objects in the temporal and geographical arcs takes an element of specificity away from the Coplandia topic. It does not have a real-world analog; therefore, it leaves itself open to external parties placing meaning upon it.

In a way, Coplandia is a form of musical simulacra, something produced to represent the otherwise unrepresentable. Jean Baudrillard refers to information in mass media as intellectual simulacra. “Rather than creating communication, [information] *exhausts itself in the act of staging communication.*”²⁸ The information becomes saturated and exhausted by its medium, creating a landscape too dense for specific meaning. Coplandia is similar in its non-specificity and its ubiquity. It saturates the commercial sound world, leaving only a feeling rather than any explicit meaning. Its basis on Copland’s music offers a partial source

²⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 80. Emphasis his.

for the sonic repetition, since the commercial genre is only loosely based on Copland's music, and not a specifically comprehensive stylistic copy.

***Appalachian Spring* and John Williams**

One of the last of Copland's own major works contributing to the Coplandia topic, *Appalachian Spring*, premiered in October of 1944, at the Library of Congress, for which it was commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The result was a highly integrated collaboration between composer Aaron Copland, and choreographer Martha Graham. Musical scores for *Appalachian Spring* bear the subtitle "Ballet for Martha," Copland's working title for the piece. Its premiere was well-timed with the wrapping up of the war in Europe, and the work was well-received by the American public. According to dance historian Lynn Garafola, as "a paean to hearth, home, and the American heartland, to American values and rural community, *Appalachian Spring* was an idyll of domesticity, and it caught the mood of the country brilliantly."²⁹

Appalachian Spring simultaneously realizes and challenges the American Dream, depending which system of codes one follows, and whether one experiences the work as a ballet or as concert music. Because of its internal contradictions, the work supports the ambiguous nature of Coplandia. In its original form, it is a short ballet for only thirteen instruments. *Appalachian Spring* praises grandeur in simplicity. Its sparse instrumentation renders quietness and simplicity, though this same small group becomes large, occasionally overtaking, bombastic sound. Toward the end of the piece, it becomes clear that the entire

²⁹ Lynn Garafola, "Making an American Dance: *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*," in *Aaron Copland and His World*, Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick, eds. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 135.

work is centered around a borrowed folk song from the Northeastern Shakers, “Simple Gifts.”³⁰ While surrounding music may be stylistically different from the folk song, the melody is fragmented and augmented to such a degree that the source becomes almost unrecognizable, providing material for the rest of the work. Since so much musical material in the piece is derived from the “Simple Gifts” melody, a musical takeaway of the piece demonstrates that lots can be done with little material.

The most pertinent features of what becomes Coplandia found in *Appalachian Spring* are the use of harmony and timbre. Copland’s extensive use of open fifths is likely the single most important element of the Coplandia topic, and the fifth is pervasive throughout *Appalachian Spring*. Its use is counter-intuitive; the open fifth usually signifies the open strings on a violin, viola, or cello, yet the interval is nearly always sounded by a wind instrument. By combining a musical technique linked with strings and the timbre of winds, Copland blends the two instrument families in a way that simultaneously signifies both and neither family. It marries the winds and strings by taking an interval characteristic of strings and applying it to winds that produce sounds more closely associated with earthiness and exoticism. This technique is exploited throughout *Appalachian Spring* and in most instances of the Coplandia topic.

The opening section of the piece, “Very slowly,” paints a harmonic picture of complexity in simplicity. With just six notes, outlining the tonic and dominant triads of the tonic key A major, the instruments saturate the tonal space. These two triads are harmonically opposed in the vocabulary of standard tonality, but their softness and

³⁰ Copland referred to the song as “A Gift to be Simple,” though it is currently best known as “Simple Gifts.”

deliberate consecutive placement change the rules of tonality for the course of the piece. In Copland's sound world, tonic and dominant can coexist without tension or need for hierarchy. Such harmonic stability does not last for the remainder of the piece, but the balanced relationship between tonic and dominant sets the stage for a saturated tonality in which the tonal material can be borrowed from the rules of diatonic counterpoint and harmony, or descend from Modernist systems of alternative tonalities or atonality.

After the opening section, the strings lead into a loud and fast exploration of melodic space, and are soon followed by the rest of the ensemble joining in. This section explores more Neoclassical techniques, such as mixed meter and polytonality. Following, a subdued section combines dynamic and textural aspects of the opening with harmonic material from the loud interruption. Additional moods and styles are explored until a return of the opening affect clears the tonal palette.

The obvious and extensive use of "Simple Gifts," or "A Gift to be Simple," as source for a theme and variations agrees with Lerner's assessment of Copland's (and Virgil Thomson)'s "exploitation of folk tunes, borrowed or synthesized; the use of canon...as rhetorical device...an instrumental palette favoring winds over strings; and a fondness for the perfect fourth, both melodically and harmonically."³¹ "Simple Gifts," a melody beginning with a perfect fourth, is introduced by a clarinet. It is worked through a canon, played by winds. The strings are present accompanimentally, but do not play melodic lines until the third statement, in which the violas play an augmentation of the melody, launching a move toward inclusion of strings.

³¹ Lerner, "Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces," 486.

“Simple Gifts” in a canonic theme and variations form is interesting in its own right, though the compositional techniques employed address an antiquated time. The temporality of both the theme and variations form and the canon in a classical music setting refers to a Classicized style of musical composition. They were most heavily used in the eighteenth century for smaller forms. The theme and variations is more closely associated with Mozart and Beethoven than with any other enormously popular composers, used generally in piano works. “Simple Gifts” is perhaps more characteristic of a canon than of a theme and variations form, though its development through repetition is reminiscent of the theme and variations. The canon, on the other hand, is fugue-like, though it is without some of the more restrictive aspects of the fugue form. When the canon was used in the eighteenth century, it was already anachronistic. The eighteenth century canon was evocative of the Renaissance canon, and its use signaled antiquity.

When Copland puts “Simple Gifts” through the canon and variation forms, he imitates Beethoven’s use of “An die Freude” in the ninth symphony. The differences between the two settings abound, yet the same general premise is consistent: both take a simple song toward the end of a piece that prepared their emergence in earlier sections, and make the simple song the grand focus of the rest of the work. Like in Beethoven’s ninth symphony, where “An die Freude” is prepared in the orchestra before its emergence, “Simple Gifts” comes almost organically from the preceding music. Of course, music cannot actually emerge organically; rather, the composer consciously prepared the melody earlier in the piece. But to a naïve listener, in both cases, the melody naturally emerges from the greater piece.

The use of “Simple Gifts” in a piece called *Appalachian Spring* further supports the notion of an Oriental folk being depicted in the ballet. The ballet’s title refers to a spring (a small river) somewhere in the Appalachian Mountains in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. But “Simple Gifts” is a Shaker folk song, and the Shakers do not come from the Appalachian region. The geographical separation of the folk song from the ballet’s title region creates another Orient in the American folk. This, combined with the musical features signifying the American West, influences a sense of a non-geographical Orient. All the different types of Orientalism in the work can either be taken at face value as pejorative oversimplification and essentialism of multiple groups. In the Othering of so many groups for so many different reasons, nearly everyone is an Oriental Other. It seems that in *Appalachian Spring*, the view one takes is dependent upon how the work is experienced as well as one’s personal biases.

Despite all the simple-sounding musical aspects of the excerptable Coplandia, Copland’s music from which the topic emerged does not exclusively use this simple tonal language. Instead, Copland remained fond of more complicated musical styles associated with a more highbrow taste, and used elements from more difficult modernisms in the same pieces most closely associated with Coplandia. *Appalachian Spring*, the piece at hand, is undoubtedly focused on “Simple Gifts.” But in sections of the greater ballet score, the music is nothing like the pure and simple sound world of that excerpted folk melody. With sections of mixed meter, harsh dissonances, and accented syncopations, *Appalachian Spring* itself complicates the Coplandia ideal of simplicity. Because of this complication, the next logical step is to realize that Coplandia was not created by Copland at all; instead, it is

a product of the culture industry, used for reasons close to those that Copland composed the music: to escape drudgery and signify America.

When the excerpted musical elements from Copland's music are manipulated to create the Coplandia topic, it leaves out everything that makes the music interesting and contradictory. For the Coplandia topic is pretty; it is metrically consistent, harmonically stable, and employs pleasant sounding timbres. Pieces like *Appalachian Spring* are interesting in their combination of the pleasant, approachable music with the more distancing Modernist techniques Copland was using before he began composing populist music. In those pieces, the Americana ideal is complicated by troublesome sections. Those sections, such as the one following the loud string section feature in *Appalachian Spring*, create a sense of anxiety in the otherwise complacent or joyous music. When Coplandia becomes divorced from its source music, it loses the anxiety present in those pieces. In that divorce, it gains a uniformly positive emotional sound world. Since nothing troubles the music, it is idealistic, just like the American Dream it often accompanies.

Though elements of the music from *Appalachian Spring* are what becomes exported and appropriated in popular media, understanding the relationship between the choreography and music is a helpful tool in understanding the work and its relationship to idealized and imagined America. Graham, coming from a Modernist dance tradition even more avant-garde than Copland, choreographed *Appalachian Spring* as a neotraditionalist work. She premiered the lead role in the ballet, and "call[ed] her the Bride, although no marriage ceremony takes place."³² Merce Cunningham, another important pioneer of Modernist choreography, danced the role of the Revivalist. With these figures—including

³² Garafola, 135.

Copland—so enmeshed into what Garafola calls an “idyll of domesticity,” ironies abound. Dressed in pioneer costumes, the dancers perform choreography challenging the ideas of American perfection in reproducible simplicity.

Simply the juxtaposition of traditional costumes worn while dancing to primarily soft and inviting music with Graham’s choreography is enough to complicate the work. The costumes worn in the premiere are large and modest; they seem like they would belong to a hidden folk in the ambiguous American East. The choreography combines elements of Modernism with Traditionalism in a way that confuses the eye, without going so far in its Modernism as choreography in ballets set by Stravinsky and the like. It hovers between approachable and difficult, complementing the musical features. The visual aspect of *Appalachian Spring* adds a dimension to the piece that affirms its cultural subjects of exploration.

When John Williams’s piece “Air and Simple Gifts” was performed at President Obama’s inauguration in 2009, it was decidedly derivative. The piece opens with a violin solo hearkening back to the opening of *Appalachian Spring*, and the remaining instruments soon enter to play filmic Romanticism. Like in *Appalachian Spring*, “Simple Gifts” is introduced by the clarinet. The melody is treated like it was by Copland in *Appalachian Spring*, but with contemporary harmonic and rhythmic updates to create a more pop/rock-like style. Though Williams’s setting does not address large portions of *Appalachian Spring*, his paraphrase of Copland’s opening and subsequent treatment of the “Simple Gifts” melody connects the piece securely with *Appalachian Spring*.

Washington Post critic Anne Midgette’s scathing review of the piece makes clear that Williams practically plagiarized *Appalachian Spring*, while visibly eliciting positive,

America-loving imagery. Midgette sees Williams' setting of "Simple Gifts" as unoriginal, and also as a move on the part of the Obama team coming off as trying too hard. Since, as Midgette recapitulates, Obama's campaign relied on a model similar to that of Abraham Lincoln, Obama and his staff should have followed Lincoln's suit and not used what she considers such politically-charged music at the inauguration.³³ In pointing this out, Midgette acknowledges that "Simple Gifts" has become a marker of American patriotism through its use in Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, so much so that its use at the inauguration is over the top. Taking a rosier view, Alex Ross at *The Rest is Noise* blog appreciated "the look of delight on the face of the president—a title he officially acquired while the music was playing, at the stroke of noon." Ross also brings up the racial diversity of the performers chosen for the occasion: "an Israeli-born violinist, a Chinese-American cellist, a Venezuelan-born pianist, and an African-American clarinetist."³⁴ The racial and ethnic makeup of these performers brings a level of diversity to the Coplandia sound that is otherwise missing; though it can accompany a wide variety of political associations, Coplandia generally accompanies whiteness. Williams's adaptation of it for the 2009 inauguration, and the racially diverse group of performers, allows Coplandia to have a wider reach than it otherwise would.

³³ Anne Midgette, "Music Review: John Williams's 'Air and Simple Gifts' at the Obama Inauguration, *Washington Post*, January 21, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/20/AR2009012003560.html>.

³⁴ Alex Ross, "Inaugural music," *The Rest is Noise* (blog), January 21, 2009, <http://www.therestisnoise.com/2009/01/inaugural-music.html>.

***Billy the Kid* and Rick Perry**

In the race for the 2012 GOP Presidential nomination, Texas Governor Rick Perry put out a campaign advertisement that musically paraphrased Copland, while Perry delivered a monolog on why he should be elected over incumbent Barack Obama. Perry had been positioning himself as the socially conservative candidate, with a strong allegiance to the Christian Right. During the primary, the Rick Perry campaign released this television commercial “Strong,” aiming to solidify Perry’s position against incumbent President Barack Obama. In the ad, Perry takes issue with Obama’s end of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and subsequent allowance of gays to serve openly in the military, with public schools not allowing overt prayer in school, and blanket opposition to Obama’s ostensible “War on Religion.”

When the Rick Perry 2012 campaign released the “Strong” video advertisement, it put forth a video with musical accompaniment falling into the category of Coplandia encompassing music that paraphrases Copland’s own music, and writes around the selection. The “Strong” advertisement paraphrases Copland’s *Billy the Kid*, the 1938 ballet about the outlaw title character. Copland’s ballet has overt Wild West themes that are echoed musically in the campaign advertisement, further amplified by the visual and rhetorical content of the advertisement. Perry’s campaign video uses token musical ideas from *Billy the Kid*, and the remaining music is heavily synthesized sounds emulating ideals of Coplandia found in the category that selects aspects of Copland’s music and combines them with more generic sounds typical of commercial music.

In comparison, Copland’s *Billy the Kid* opens with a motif that resurfaces throughout the ballet; it is this small section of music that the Rick Perry video paraphrases. The

opening measure of the opening section “Introduction: The Open Prairie,” is instrumentally sparse. Two clarinets and an oboe play descending thirds at the open, parallel fifth. The aurally prominent descending third is an octave doubling between the oboe’s descent from E-flat 4 to C4 and the upper clarinet an octave higher, while the lower clarinet sounds E-flat 5–C5. This tilting minor third doubled at the fifth and octave, lingering on the lower sonority, is a sort of sigh motive. Motion at the parallel fifth continues throughout much of the movement, normalizing the parallelism that is typically forbidden.

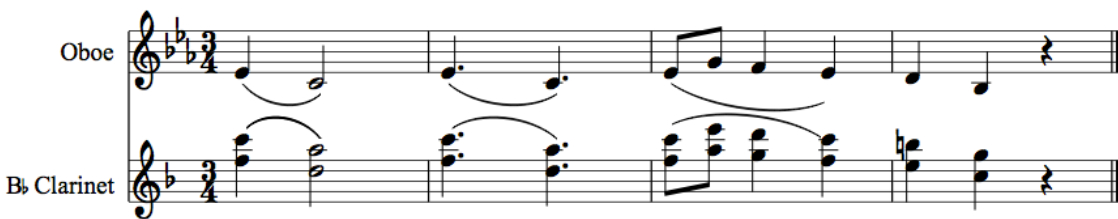


Figure 3 Copland, *Billy the Kid*, Introduction: The open Prairie, opening

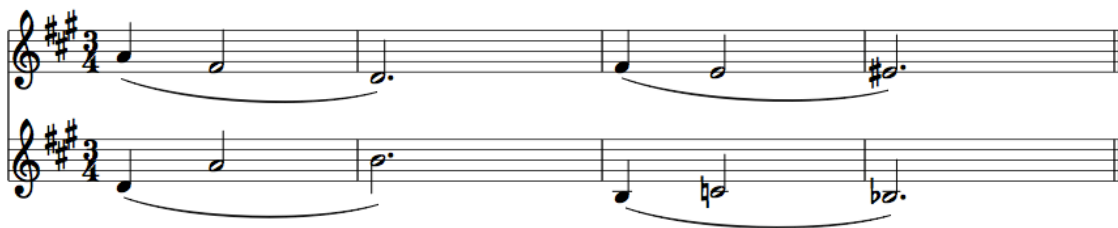


Figure 4 Rick Perry, “Strong,” opening

The immediate parallels between *Billy the Kid* and the Rick Perry campaign advertisement end after the first phrase of *Billy the Kid*. “Strong” opens with a minor third falling from A4 to F-sharp 4, remaining approximately one beat of the unmetred music on the first note, and two beats on the second, echoing the opening of *Billy the Kid*. The instruments throughout the video are synthesized, but the instruments in the immediate opening are made to sound like woodwinds, and the descending minor third has a flute-like timbre. Perhaps if these instruments were not in the woodwind family, the connection to

Billy the Kid would not be so strong. But the characteristic reedy woodwind sound prevalent throughout Copland's music aids in the connection between Copland's music and its commercial imitators.

The music underscoring of "Strong" is only somewhat related to Copland's own music. It opens with a motive from *Billy the Kid*, then quickly veers into a generic imitation of contemporary film music. Even in imitation, the music lacks a quality of human liveness associated with film scores recorded by an orchestra comprised of live human performers. With "Strong," the synthesized sounds approximating both Copland's ballet, along with the surrounding style approximating film music, distances the music from its source enough to be disappointing to listeners accustomed to an art music style, but leaves it close enough to that style to be recognizable to the non-specialist listener. So long as a listener is entrenched in the US media culture, the music of "Strong" will fit stylistically with a familiar genre.

For this video, the musical borrowing from Copland is complicated by the rhetorical message of the commercial. Rick Perry, campaigning as the social conservative with consistently right-wing policy, exists in stark political opposition to Aaron Copland, whose communist sympathies, Jewishness, and homosexuality have long been well-known. "Strong" centers around Perry's purported Christianity, heteronormativity, and militarism.

"Strong" misappropriates Copland's style, but fairly appropriates Coplandia, the genre distanced from Copland. It is ideologically distant from Copland, yet it fits within sentiments of Americanism that Coplandia has accompanied in recent decades. That in itself is the central issue in the genre: Coplandia is temporally and stylistically removed from Copland. Copland's own music was both subtle in its radicalism, and radical in its

subtlety. In its disassociation from Copland, Coplandia becomes an ad-hoc quasi-folk music. Its practice is unregulated by musical or industrial gatekeepers, and the patriotic rhetoric it has long accompanied makes it an enticing style for political use.

Rick Perry's "Strong" advertisement is only one example of countless uses of Coplandia. It's everywhere from campaign advertisements like this one, to war movies, to baseball movies, to celebration of liberalism, to commercials for household cleaning products.³⁵ Regardless of the ideology the music underscores, the music fits. Coplandia is everywhere, without discrimination as to what it accompanies.

³⁵ There are too many examples of Coplandia in advertising, television, and film to exhaustively list. Contemporary examples include incidental music from *Veep*, *30 Rock*, *Mad Men*, and *The West Wing*; and countless product commercials.

Conclusion

The music Copland composed allowed him ways to deal with his own place in society. That music accompanied visual aspects of the fictionalized American dream. In an interview, he related to music of the Southwest saying “I suppose in once sense it’s just a feat of the imagination, but after all, a kid in Brooklyn would have seen movies with cowboys in them.”³⁶ Copland’s music related to an imagined identity, not his embodied self. The music accompanies a complicated version of the American dream, as it includes aspects of uncertainty and difficult Modernism. It both presented and challenged American idealism. Despite Copland’s outsider qualities, his populist music shows a desire to fit in with normative society and achieve the fictional American dream. Coplandia—the appropriation of Copland’s populist musical techniques in popular settings—ignores some of the circumstances of its source material. It picks up on the longing for conformity, while overlooking the reasons why its creators needed to conform in the first place. This appropriation and ignorance of the source is perfectly acceptable, since the source itself was so conflicted. Copland was proud of his outsider qualities, though his music offered temporary escape from his minority status. The music intends to represent majority America. It is allowed to stand for motivations at any point along the spectrum of isolated marginality to traditional embodiment of the American dream.

³⁶ Aaron Copland, quoted in *Keeping Score: Copland and the American Sound*, San Francisco Symphony Media, 2006, DVD.

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