

14. Turning Diagetic sound into non-diagetic or vice-versa

The diagesis is the world that a fictional narrative creates. Therefore sound which is of that world (a door slamming, someone speaking) is diagetic and sound which is not (soundtrack, voiceover) is non-diagetic.

Consider the use of 'Danny Boy' in the opening scene of 'Miller's Crossing' (Joel Coen 1990) or of Van Morrison in the opening of 'Welcome to Sarajevo' (Michael Winterbottom 1997). 'In the name of the Father' (Jim Sheridan 1993) features a character miming to Jimi Hendrix. As a riot breaks out, the music becomes soundtrack. Choose your music and create a scene which is appropriate to it. The scene should suggest events before and after it. Now, introduce the music as diagetic (on a radio perhaps) and a trigger event that makes it non-diagetic.