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Justin Timberlake's Two-Part Complementary Forms: Groove, Extension, and Maturity in Twenty-First-Century Popular Music

Throughout their short-lived but commercially lucrative career, which ran principally from "I Want You Back" in 1996 to the third and final album, 2001's Celebrity, Justin Timberlake's boyband NSYNC plowed a familiar late twentieth-century pop musical furrow.[1] NSYNC flirted with the perceived authenticity of various black urban forms, from the balladry of groups such as Boys 2 Men to the swinging R&B of New Edition, while sticking closely to marketable "white" imagery all the same. This can be seen in the soft-focus, vocal-led acoustic balladry of audience-flattering songs such as "(God Must Have Spent) A Little More Time on You" (1998) and "This I Promise You" (2000), as much as it can on the more urgent and driving dance pop with echoes of New Jack Swing of "Tearin' Up My Heart" (1997), "Bye Bye Bye" (2000), and "It's Gonna Be Me" (2000).[2] All of this music walks a fine line between, on the one hand, sexual danger and supposed credibility and, on the other, a carefully managed and canny "marketing of androgyny" similar to that discussed by Daryl Jamieson chiefly in relation to the Backstreet Boys, a group that shared early managers and an ethos with NSYNC.[3]

Complicating these sexual and racial codes in NSYNC'S work were various other influences, from a prevalence of propulsive, programmed sounds derived from recent Eurodance musics to more up-to-date bells and whistles from club and pop music of the time as sourced by leading writers and producers such as Kristian Lundin and Max Martin at Cheiron Productions in Sweden. All of these various influences from 1980s and 1990s black and white club, R&B, and pop music were blended together, via typical backroom creative control, to produce pop surfaces of gleaming, safe hybridity. In this NSYNC managed the neat pop trick of successfully juggling

complex racial and generic signifiers for commercial and creative ends that also defines many other acts, from recent boybands such as New Kids on the Block to earlier figures like Elvis Presley.[4] NSYNC, then, drew on "portable blackness" in the sounds of and imagery attached to their music while hewing closely to normative whiteness at the same time, or at least to what was left of it in an era where whiteness was in some ways "becoming dislodged from the center of US life."[5]

But the familiar narrative of bright-eyed boyband shilling for the pop dollar within a racially and generically complex musical environment that I've been laying out doesn't tell the full story. Already with their second album, 1998's No Strings Attached, NSYNC were both engaging in legal battles against their former manager (Lou Pearlman) and label (Sony BMG) and explicitly trying to send up their image, the cover wittily playing against the album's title by picturing the group's members as puppets hanging limply from strings. The prominence of group member JC Chasez as a featured writer on No Strings, in contrast to the roster of producers credited on the band's eponymous 1997 debut, was also significant. This was matched and surpassed on the 2001 follow-up by the emergence of another member, Justin Timberlake, as key creative figurehead (though Chasez also contributed heavily to this release). Sowing seeds he'd reap on his debut solo release, 2002's Justified, Timberlake fruitfully collaborated on Celebrity with leading contemporary dance and hip-hop producers, such as the Neptunes and Wade Robson.[6] This level of authorial control was matched by a new band image and sound from top to bottom, mature, knowing, and seen to be more in control. Celebrity still featured the ballads and R&B-influenced beats from before, but the emotions were less canned and the sounds more box fresh than on previous releases, just as the pop poses of the videos and visuals could be

compared to those of the band's previous work but also seemed to operate with different goals in mind.

Trappings of early 2000s teenybop music therefore rubbed up against signifiers of growing maturity on Celebrity. A track such as "Gone," for example, might seem to fall into the audience-flattering soft-focus camp, particularly with the gorgeously posed band performance in the video and the falsetto-sweet vocals of the hook, but its lyrics featured a darker narrative and less resolved emotions and its music a more adventurous harmonic language than before. The video for the lead single, "Pop," likewise plays with signs of maturity. Its hyperreal setting, where "pop" is a commodity that explodes time and shudders affect, seemingly both appeals to and bates pop audiences' desire for fizz and excitement, giving off a speedy, unsettling quality also found in the jerking, beatboxing electronic club sounds of the song. This duality of commercialism and expansion can also be seen on other tracks. "Girlfriend," for example, features lyrics that might be seen as hackneyed, with the main hook running "Why don't you be my girlfriend, I'll treat you good." But these lyrics are attached to an enigmatic G-sharp major / G minor repeated harmonic figure that creates an appealing and unsettling musical haze that complicates the song's impact.

All of this is to say that NSYNC and, as we'll see, Timberlake's later solo career collectively embody two kinds of cultural scripts: first, the upholding of a mass-marketable, corporate-pop formula; second, the carefully choreographed evolution away from that formula into what might be seen as more mature, credible contexts. In NSYNC and Timberlake's case, this evolution was set in motion in earnest with No Strings and particularly Celebrity, continued on Justified; and arguably completed by the time of Timberlake's second, third, and fourth solo albums, FutureSex/LoveSounds (2006) and the two volumes of The 20/20 Experience (both

2013).[7] These latter albums explore a wide range of pop sounds in soul, dance, and hip-hop-inflected music that feels a world away from the early formulaic NSYNC, though it's important to bear in mind that this second cultural script of "credible" creativity is no less formulaic or marketable than the first.

In the rest of this article, I analytically examine this process of historically (and racially and generically) coded maturation. My examination is theoretical in both the musical and cultural senses in its focus on a key musical feature, the two-part complementary forms of my title that are found in ten songs on FutureSex/LoveSounds and The 20/20 Experience, Part One. (The 20/20 Experience, Part Two doesn't include any clear two-part forms--although "Amnesia" and "Only When I Walk Away" come close--so it's addressed at relevant points below.) I analytically place these forms and other significant musical features into a broad stylistic context related to extended and groove-based forms. In this I focus particularly on various black or black-derived musics built on what Jeff Pressing has called the "Black Atlantic" rhythm (or "African and African diasporic" rhythm), which uses the framework of a repetitious "groove or feel" and exists within the context of what has variously been called "intensional" or "call-response" music.[8] I then frame the forms as meaningful pragmatic and creative responses to particular industrial, racial, and generic circumstances. The article tries to balance music analysis with culturally and historically grounded interpretation, a pairing that is laid out in sequence but also overlaps throughout.

Two-Part Complementary Form and Formal Conventions

Modern Western popular music, like any institutional form of culture, is well known for its reliance on formula. This plays out in pop's case across various levels, from stylistic range to

marketable sounds. Form--the hierarchical patterning of distinct sections such as verses and choruses--is of course no exception, as we can see across Justin Timberlake's work. Many of Timberlake's songs, both as a solo artist and as a member of NSYNC, use the kinds of verse-chorus or simple verse forms discussed by John Covach as prevalent in black and white pop music in his primer on rock form.[9] But something a little different has been going on in Timberlake's more recent solo music, where extended songs split into two seemingly discrete parts and feature variation and integration across the two sections. These two-part extended forms connect back in significant ways to fairly established strategies of formal extension in popular music without being fully identifiable with any one existing example or tradition. They also continue to operate within the grooving, dance-based contexts of earlier NSYNC while doubling down on and transforming the importance of grooves built on repeated interlocking motifs that already drove much of that earlier music.

As I said, I want to cite the "call-response" and "intensional" concepts of Samuel A. Floyd and Richard Middleton, respectively, as historical models for understanding Timberlake's forms. Call-response music, according to Floyd, denotes the fundamentally "dialogical, conversational character of black music," where repetitions based on what James A. Snead called the "cut" principle (akin to a cyclical loop) accumulatively and through "troping"--defined by Floyd as both the "borrowing" and "variation" and the rhetorical and figurative "transformation" of musical material--produce a "swing" feeling.[10] (This swing feeling might be analogous in later terms to a groove.) Swing occurs "when sound-events Signify on the time line (the original has time-line, could we preserve that form?), against the flow of its pulse," creating "slight resistances" that Floyd describes as "lilting" but that we might also describe in terms of syncopation.[11] These slight resistances combine together in the musical flow, with that flow's

constituent elements being repeated and varied over time and in this way creating perceptual tension and "swing." This is the organizational basis of much Western popular music. We can see a significant example of this in David Brackett's lengthy analysis of James Brown's "Superbad," where short melodic motifs and timbral contrasts, troped and looped against a pulsing hierarchical time line (time-line?), create movement and continuity in the absence of "background" harmonic directionality.[12]

This kind of interlocking, intensive riff-based process will of course be familiar from many popular musical forms, from hip-hop to afrobeat to funk to techno to dubstep to italo disco and beyond. Middleton uses the term "intensional" to describe this mode of musical organization, where small units of sounds signify against or within repeating pulse, timbre, and harmonic cycles or cuts. This is in contrast to the "extension" of less groove-based music, such as common practice symphonic repertoire, where traditionally understood goal direction is built from longer phrases linking together in a syntactical, linear narrative-like way.[13] Goal direction is a little bit moot as a point of difference, though. Groove-based popular music, often seen in opposition to goal direction, actually opens up multiple teleological or goal-directed possibilities. Its surging climaxes, its syncopations, and its moments of dynamic or textural release create rise-and-fall and forward-directed tension. These climaxes and crescendos invest the cumulative intensional "circularity"--as Middleton calls it--with a sense of linearity and movement, as seen with Brackett, Brown, and Floyd's slight resistances.[14] Robert Fink's discussion of the teleology of concert minimalism and disco as "recombinant," "intermediate," and "polymorphously perverse" describes well how many groove-based musics create a feeling of both stasis and movement.[15]

Timberlake's two-part forms derive from this context of grooving cyclical music, as described by Floyd, with troping and call-response signification against a time line (time-line), by Middleton with his circular (but also climactic) intensional forms, and by Pressing and his framework of a repetitious, groove, or feel-based Black Atlantic rhythm. This last analytical model, like the others, sees "perceptual multiplicity and rivalry" emerging from the setting up of recurring, expected events that the music tugs at and toys with through local variation within the looping grid.[16] So Timberlake very much exists within this musical context. But as with NSYNC's juggling of black and white musical and cultural signifiers, Timberlake's music, in its forms and otherwise, both directly derives from and contrasts with this black or black-derived organizational basis. Groove-based designs are used in a like manner by someone like James Brown, albeit with a constrained sense of swing and any "slight resistances" condensed in Timberlake to the narrow machine groove familiar from modern dance and pop music. But these designs are invested with their own kind of narrative force here through their extension and refraction over two substantial parts. Whereas in Brown and similar musics, as seen in the Brackett analysis, each "cut" sees intensive variation of small motifs producing new resistances and perceptual rivalries for listeners, in Timberlake variation is like this but also broader, more linear, stretched across time as the basis for a whole new part. So whereas "movement" is still based on intensional models here, Timberlake and close collaborators, such as his producing partner Timbaland, supplement their grooves with extensionality, where whole new sections are introduced that extend the songs' forms in a linear way. This augments the intensive grooves that are already present. We'll look at this in more detail over the next couple of sections.

Two-Part Complementary Form: General Characteristics

The two-part complementary forms are novel responses to pop formula, like rock concept albums or hip-hop skits before them, in this case using verses and choruses but supplementing these with additional parts. They consist of two separate but complementary parts: the main song (s.I) and an extended passage that serves either as a quasi coda or quasi introduction (s.II, regardless of position). I associate the s.IIs with these traditional formal paradigms due to the fact that they can be seen in almost every case to work effectively either as an anticipation builder for the later parts of the song or as a refracting distillation of some aspects of the preceding music. These second parts are therefore "chorus-like" and "introduction-like" in how they operate.

The two "section groups" (s.I and s.II) of these songs--a useful term that was originally coined by Brad Osborn to describe the way that different sections cluster together in discrete groups in through-composed rock/metal music--are in a close complementary relationship where integration is built out of subtle processes of development and variation.[17] Dramatic resolution is sometimes achieved. But in most cases the two section groups outline a strange kind of iterative accumulation where the basic musical template is maintained but subtly rewired in the move from one to the other, giving the music a sense of going somewhere without belaboring or overdoing the going-ness of that journey. The switchback, reversed lyrical perspective of the two-part song "What Goes Around . . . Comes Around" (2006) is emblematic of how these two-part forms build complementarity and contrast in a wider sense through subtle variation and shifts in intensity, material, or narrative perspective.

The ten two-part and twelve non-two-part songs on FutureSex and 20/20--like much of Timberlake and NSYNC's earlier output--make considerable use of conventional formal patterns. Many operate in the context of the repeating grooves built on riffs, cuts, and slight resistances

that I've been discussing and that form the basis of soul, hip-hop, and other black diasporic forms. For instance, "SexyBack," from FutureSex, is based for its whole four minutes on a four-bar, minor-second, syncopated, doubled, synthesizer and bass riff that creates slight resistance in its 3-3-2 feel against the 4-4 of a repeated drum loop, with an intensification in vocal texture and arrangement marking out the choruses from the verses. Others, such as "That Girl" from The 20/20 Experience, Part One, use the kind of monostructural verse-chorus or simple verse forms of a repeating A section that is found across blues and soul and early rock.[18] Others still, such as the same album's "Let the Groove In," use the extended repetitive and additive groove of funk and disco that is again based on interlocking short riffs that go against and resist the time line (time-line) implied by drum loops, all of whose timbres and rhythms are varied across the length of the song. Meanwhile, a range of other songs, such as "Summer Lovin" from FutureSex, "Damn Girl" from 20/20, Part One, and "You Got It On" from Part Two, simply follow the conventional verse-chorus or compound AABA (where verse-chorus = A and bridge = B) patterns of rock, soul, and other traditional forms of popular music. The non-two-part forms therefore embody typical pop intensional/extensional hybridity, where linear goal direction and discursive repetition of phrases often emerges from, fades into, or is built upon the additive "epic circularity" of Black Atlantic riff forms.

The ten two-part complementary tracks embody similarly flexible formal principles. While the second parts of these songs can in general be seen to derive from standard formal procedures, just as the s.Is draw on formula likewise, the various musical interrelations of the songs' two section groups, in addition to the substantive nature of the second sections in themselves, mark these two-part forms out from previous examples of superficially similar two-part pop form that actually treat their extended intros as subservient and independent (see

Bowie's "Station to Station" or the Stone Roses' "I Am the Resurrection," for respective examples).[19] And this is not to mention the many medley-type two-part forms found in rock music where integration is beside the point, from the Beatles' "Kansas City / Hey-Hey-Hey-Hey!" to Metallica's "Last Caress / Green Hell."[20] None of these songs contains the kind of internal integration and refractive relationships that can be found in Timberlake's more elaborate designs. More suitable comparison points, as I suggested above, are the grooving intensional forms of black or black-derived genres, where movement is achieved through repetition and variation of and within cuts, even if Timberlake's extensional linear variations suggest allegiance to traditionally extensional music as much as his grooves do to black diasporic forms.

Two-Part Complementary Form: Specific Characteristics

The two-part forms follow two different models. The first sees s.I emerging out of a preparatory opening s.II, usually with the effect of an increase in intensity and excitement. The second has s.II arriving after s.I, serving as a kind of extended coda. This second type of complementary section provides a kind of commentary on and an easing out of s.I. In both cases the relationship between the two section groups is complementary, sometimes premised on dynamic resolution but more often on repetitious intensification or decompression, the kinds of perspective shifts discussed earlier. Table 1 provides an analytical overview of the two-part complementary forms.

<**TABLE 1 HERE**>

As can be seen, the s.IIs are universally shorter than the s.Is. This reflects the hierarchized relationship of s.I and s.II implied by their respective labels. Similarly, the introduction-like s.IIs tend to be shorter than the coda-like s.IIs. The two-part forms are always organized around either some global pitch or tonal center, or at least some close tonal relationship. We find many

different tonal and pitch-organizational systems in play on these albums, as is common for contemporary popular music.[21] Some of the Timberlake songs operate comfortably within common-practice tonal conventions, while some make use of a blues and funk-derived pentatonicism. Others complicate the picture by, for example, drawing on hip-hop and dance music conventions of establishing pitch centricity more through structural assertion and rhythmic emphasis than through conventional processes of voice leading or harmonic movement. Eight of the ten songs here are harmonically closed, while the remaining two, "My Love" and "What Goes Around . . . Comes Around," make use of interesting harmonic contrasts that suggest that the apparent tonal shifts that take place across their section groups actually serve as more of an expressive tonicization of the fundamental home key than as a modulation, a point supported in the case of "What Goes Around" by the D major chord heard throughout s.I's A minor (though this might also suggest A Dorian).

While as I've just shown key and pitch centers build continuity between the section groups, even if chord sequences are sometimes varied or discrete to create contrast, arrangements and lyrics most often express some sense of difference or variation from one section group to another. All but two of the ten two-part forms use a different arrangement to some degree across the section groups. While a sense of contrast is sometimes created by broad shifts in arrangement, as with "My Love," in many cases the arrangement only subtly changes across the groups, as for example with the drum loop--a slowed sample from Prince's "Raspberry Beret"--that anchors s.I of "Until the End of Time" but is absent from its s.II.[22] Lyrics more generally perform a similar function to the arrangements, marking both difference and continuity across the two section groups, with some featuring repeated and others different lyrics in their s.II, albeit in some cases with the title phrase carried over in order to create some sense of continuity.

Texture, finally, is also frequently used to mark difference; I discuss this less easily parsed aspect in more depth in the case studies. Lyrics, texture, and arrangement are therefore used to express variation across the two section groups, even while some aspects, for instance, a lyrical title phrase or the basic shape of an arrangement, are used to build continuity.

My table doesn't mention rhythmic pulsing and beat, as contrasts of pulse are only important on two of the tracks. The primary pulse pattern (the "tactus" or "beat" that listeners would likely nod along with) is halved across the two sections of "My Love," while it's doubled on "Suit and Tie." This creates a sense of contrast and a tension-and-release pattern between the two section groups while also ensuring a potent sense of continuity. My table also doesn't mention melodic design, perhaps the most important mechanism of variation and contrast in Timberlake's two-part forms. In every one of the ten tracks, the melodies and melodic motives of the s.Is are significantly different from those of the s.IIs. Some tracks, such as "My Love," use a completely different melodic design from section group to section group. Other tracks, such as "Pusher Lover Girl," maintain the pitch content of the earlier melodies but fragment the melodic motifs and transform their tone colors. Melodic design is a natural go-to for a pop artist as a resource for variation, since the kind of background voice leading and harmonic structures used by classical composers are generally absent.

All these smaller details add up to a clear-enough picture of what's going on in terms of musical content in these two-part forms. Contrast and variation in a more general context of built continuity are crucial to understanding the relationship between the two parts. Apart from consistencies of length, we've seen that chord sequences, lyrics, arrangements, textures, and melodic design are important mechanism of variation, while tempo, pitch or tonal center, the title

phrase of the lyrics, and some aspects of the arrangement are often used to create continuity**.** I'll take a closer look at some of the two-part forms to flesh this scheme out.

Case Studies 1 and 2: FutureSex/LoveSounds

<**TABLE 2 HERE**>

"Let Me Talk to You (Prelude) / My Love" was a key single from FutureSex and a U.S. number 1 hit in late 2006. As mentioned above, the pulse relation between the song's two section groups is based on a halving of the primary beat, with the introduction-like s.II being in <4/4> <quarter note symbol> = 120 and s.I being in <4/4> <quarter note symbol> = 60. (While other interpretations are possible, various musical factors argue for this one, chiefly the snare accents within each section group.) This halving is accompanied by shifts in arrangement, texture, lyrics, and chord sequence. As can be seen in example 1 below--which notates the final bars of s.II, the transition, and the opening of s.I--the track moves from the banging call-response replete with tinkering percussion and a quasi-breakdown feel in s.II into the protodubstep half-speed kick drum and staccato synthesizer electro pop of s.I. The lyrics also register this shift; the carnal come-ons of s.II ("Lips look so sweet, like cotton candy") contrast in tone with the more sincere projections of s.I ("I can see us holding hands, walking on the beach, our toes in the sand"). This lyrical variation is balanced by the fact that all of the lyrics across both s.II and s.I are organized around an address of the "my love" figure.

All of these transforming elements come together to create a sense of both release and intensification at the sudden change, where the chanting two-note "my love" pattern drops out and a swirling processed vocal and synth sample of the melodic motif that later serves as a bridge into s.I's chorus is introduced. As can be seen from the example, the vocal sample is

differentiated in melodic shape from the informal, almost spoken interjections that dominate s.II in the form of the "my love" chant and the interjected "Hey!" (not to mention the conversational exchanges between Timberlake and Timbaland that happen earlier in the song). The transitional vocal motif, in comparison to the chanting and chatting of s.II, is much more traditionally melodic, with its leaps and sequences and its wide intervallic span, even if the digital processing it undergoes means that it feels more spectral than the notation would suggest. The difference between the chanting, percussion-heavy groove of s.II and the transitional motif allows it to serve as a very effective portal into s.I's staccato and stuttering short-short-long synth motif, its halved-time drums, and its falsetto/head vocals. The opening of s.I's verse melody, with its pleasing melodic arcs and its soft, exposed delivery, likewise underscores contrast. That verse melody is sung legato with an ingratiating vulnerability that contrasts with the grooving antiphony of s.II while also playing within s.I against those skittery synths and low and spare drums to create a strong sense of gestural contrast and musical space.

<**MUSICAL EXAMPLE 1 HERE**>

So the two section groups of "My Love" have a strikingly dramatic relationship. One leads into the other in a kind of answering tension-and-release pattern--or, to put it in Floyd's language, in a troping signification--that means s.II functions very similarly to an extended introduction in other pop songs. However, as always, there are two key points to consider. First, Timberlake and his collaborators build such subtle musical correspondences and variations (of pitch center, lyrics, melodic design, and pulse in this case) into the two sections that they feel more closely integrated than would usually be the case. Second, the introduction here is extended and vibrant enough in itself that it behaves differently from more conventional pop introductions. The same point about integration could equally be made about the previously mentioned s.II

(0′00″-2′09″) of “Let Me Set the Mood (Prelude) / Until the End of Time.” Also from FutureSex, this s.II feels almost like a classical variation of the main song, so subtle and so effective is the negotiation of very slight difference across the two section groups. The dramatic tension-and-release pattern of “My Love” is absent in this case. Instead, the two halves fit together smoothly, with their shared chinoiserie of major-pentatonic arpeggios, close harmony supporting vocals, soft attacks, flat dynamics, and silken timbres, not to mention their shared melodic emphasis on the third and sixth scale degrees and the soft-focus, praiseworthy lyrics of the two groups. So close are the more general links here that the two section groups feel like two halves, or different versions, of the same thought.

<**TABLE 3 HERE**>

The reflective functioning common to the coda-like s.IIs (with the exception of the intensification we find on “Hold the Wall”), which contrasts with the usual anticipatory tension building of most of the introduction-like s.IIs, is very much found in “LoveStoned / I Think That She Knows,” the fourth single from FutureSex/LoveSounds. Here, the typically Timberlakian dance-oriented seduction pop of s.I, built on a funky minor-pentatonic bass riff in F doubled by Philly soul strings and thrusting drums and filled out with staccato disco guitar and characteristic high-energy percussive vocal loops (all of this equating to the kind of intensional, cyclical “cut” based on the interlocking Black Atlantic rhythms I discussed earlier), shifts into a reflective s.II. In that s.II, the reverberant and legato guitar motifs introduced in the transition between the section groups take over completely. We move here from dancing thrust to meditative longing. The guitar lines in s.II outline a pivot between F minor and A-flat major, a new tonal relationship and detail that leavens the hard-bitten, bluesy funk of s.I with minor/major poignancy, assisted by s.II’s timbral and textural atmosphere of reverb-heavy, silvery, and soft voices and guitars.

This “leavening” also applies to the lyrics, which are largely maintained from one section group to the other (“She’s got me lovestoned, I think that she knows” is crucial in both), while shifting their emphasis and tone as a result of the new sonic context at the same time.

So variation is accomplished here through a new chord sequence in the same pitch area, through shifts in texture and arrangement, and through changing melodic design, with the voice in particular evoking pathos in its move into a higher range and a softer mode of articulation in s.II. Continuity is ensured through a global pitch center, the lyrics, and the variational relationship of the new chord sequence, melodies, and arrangement to those of the first part. Here s.II functions as a decompressing agent, transforming the thrusting intensity of s.I into a much more meditative, sonically feathery sensibility.

Case Studies 3 and 4: The 20/20 Experience

<**TABLE 4 HERE**>

“Suit and Tie,” with its anticipatory s.II building tension that is released with the arrival via a hushed solo vocal anacrusis of s.I, functions dramatically in much the same way that “My Love” does. That is, s.I here releases tension built up by s.II while also moving listeners into new emotional and textural territory. The two songs’ shared emphasis on a shifting primary beat or pulse as articulating element is key, with s.I in this case ratcheting up the excitement by moving from s.II’s <quarter note symbol> = 102/3 to <eighth note symbol> = 204/6. (The <eighth note symbol> = 204 beat might be seen as an important divisional pulse group over a maintained primary beat pattern, but the prominence of the hi-hat marking out those eighth notess suggests entrainment at that level to me.) And yet despite these similarities, “Suit and Tie” features an array of strategies of variation and continuity across its two sections that mark it out from “My

Love." For example, unlike in "My Love," we actually find a similar arrangement across the two section groups of "Suit and Tie." This similarity of arrangement, in addition to the characteristic shared use of the lyrical title phrase, ensures a degree of continuity. Conversely, the lugubrious drums and vocals of s.II contrast with the animated, invested vocals and punchy drums of s.I, as do the richly colored major seventh, minor seventh, and major ninth extended chords of s.I (based on a sample from Sly, Slick and Wicked's "Sho' Nuff"), which are implicit but unvoiced in s.II. The two section groups are therefore configured in terms of a relationship of variation that creates both continuity and difference.

"Suit and Tie" is also differentiated from "My Love," as indeed it is from all the other two-part songs, in its repetition of its s.II. Underneath Jay-Z's guest rap (3′15″<EN>-4′11″), which follows two verses and two choruses within s.I, the pulse shifts back to s.II's <quarter note symbol> = 102/3, with the arrangement likewise moving back to the more disjointed, doleful motion of s.II. This return to the material of s.II is maintained into a chorus with Timberlake's vocals (4′12″<EN>-4′49″). This chorus stands as a kind of development and condensation of the two earlier blocks of material, s.II and s.I, now brought into alignment. This alignment finally gives way through a very effective propulsive shift to s.I's beat of <eighth note symbol> = 204/6 for a short instrumental outro (4′50″<EN>-5′31″). The s.II of "Suit and Tie" is therefore treated in somewhat conventional terms as a kind of movable element resembling the introduction/bridge crossbreed commonly found in pop songs. But even in this slightly different framework, the song retains some of the formal strangeness and ingenuity that so distinguish the two-part complementary forms more generally.

<**TABLE 5 HERE**>

The same kind of characteristic decompressing transformation of musical material and mood discussed above in relation to "LoveStoned" takes place in s.II of "Mirrors," a big hit single from The 20/20 Experience, Part One. As can be seen in example 2--which reduces the ensemble parts for the sake of concision, obviously losing some musical detail as a result--s.II features the return of the wordless melody from the closing sections of s.I alongside a new melody and lyrics. The texture thins in s.II, and the arrangement shifts in focus from brass and guitars to wispy and silky electronic effects (though I haven't shown that in the notation). The repeated wordless linking melody is treated as a kind of emotive refrain throughout s.II, calling back to s.I while also contrasting in tone with the new lyrics and softer, higher-range melody of s.II's verse.

The emphasis in s.II is on poignant spareness and quietude compared to the triumphant heft and thrust of s.I. "Mirrors" achieves this poignancy in large part by emphasizing the B-minor chord sequence of s.I's verse, which had felt like a stopping point in that original context, as opposed to the triumphal and exultant D major of its choruses and closing section (the latter of which is visible in the example). The repeated lyrical ostinato of s.II's "you are the love of my life," sung, as can be seen, in the low tenor register against the tender head voice main melody, certainly also helps emphasize poignancy.

<**MUSICAL EXAMPLE 2 HERE**>

Besides their shared global pitch center, continuity between the two section groups of "Mirrors" is achieved through direct motivic correspondence: each section group prominently features the linkingvocal motif shown at the start of example 2, albeit heard in subtly different contexts as just mentioned. This motivic strategy echoes similar (re)deployments in some of the other two-part songs, notably the versatile bridging vocal motif of "My Love" and the pentatonic

arpeggio pattern underlying the whole of "Set the Mood / Until the End of Time." Continuity, meanwhile, is also achieved in the case of "Mirrors" through the presence of a similar lyrical theme and an identical tempo and pulse across its two section groups. The s.II of "Mirrors" is therefore reflective in the same sense that the s.II of "LoveStoned" was, subtly developing some of the inherent qualities of s.I's material, from its chords to its lyrical theme to its arrangement, while moving into more reflective emotional territory at the same time.

"Pusher Love Girl," the opening track on Part One, features similar variation of musical material, although its two groups actually agree emotionally despite disagreeing or contrasting musically. Its s.I features bright hip-hop-infused soul composed of fully scored string and horn sections and talkbox vocal sounds, traditional compound AABA structure, idiomatic blues chords (I, bIII, bVII, and ii/IV), and blue-eyed soul falsetto delivery. The s.II resembles the s.I in some key respects, notably the chord sequence and the bluesy but squarely $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$ melody, but its textural and timbral transformations are acute. It features textures of flangy, echoic, and twisting and turning loops of treated and delayed voice samples repeating the title phrase and other elements of the lyrics. Drums and touches of strings fill out the now much thinner perforated textures. The strings and treated voice samples that are heard in this second part are borrowed from s.I (another example of the kind of motivic redeployment just discussed), but they operate very differently here. These substantial transformations of arrangement and color mean that the two complementary section groups of "Pusher Love Girl" feel sonically and stylistically distinct. But the continuity that is present in the section groups' melodic design (where precisely the same melodies are used), in their single chord progression, and in their lyrics means that, unusually, the joyous and buoyant mood of s.I of "Pusher Love Girl" is maintained throughout the song.

Analytical Conclusions

These forms suggest a range of complementary relationships between their two parts. The total repertoire of complementary functioning in these songs includes reflective reinventions of the preceding song ("LoveStoned," "Mirrors," "Spaceship Coupe," and "What Goes Around . . . Comes Around"); the refractive intensification of "Hold the Wall"; in terms of the intro-like s.IIs, dramatic anticipation and release, with pre-echoes of the main song ("My Love," "Suit and Tie"); close pre-echoes of the song to come on "Until the End of Time"; and musical variation within close continuity of mood on "Pusher Love Girl." This scheme reinforces the point that the coda-like s.IIs usually subtly transform the mood and musical material of s.I, while the intros usually serve as anticipatory tension builders for s.I. As we've seen, these effects are achieved through subtle continuities and contrasts, such as motivic redeployment and shared pitch center, lyrics, pulse, and tempo in the first place and textural, melodic, chordal, and timbral shifts in the second. The two-part forms are therefore unusually variational and extensional while nevertheless building that extension on the kinds of "cuts" and grooves discussed as characteristic of black or black-derived or diasporic pop forms by Snead, Pressing, and the other writers mentioned above.

Tonal prolongation/interruption/resolution and large-scale (traditionally understood) structural goal direction are less important in this music than a "foreground" sense of felt continuity, where such things as rhythmic and melodic shifts are used to express local variation, and shifts in timbre and texture create dynamic global contrast. This is, of course, typical for black diasporic forms of music. Indeed, as Jonathan Kramer pointed out in relation to popular and other musics: "In the absence of the tonal system's a priori goal definition . . . changes of texture, timbre, figuration or register help to define contrasting phrases."[23] Brad Osborn,

meanwhile, gestured implicitly to my "foreground sense of felt continuity" when discussing progressive rock and his "post-millennial rock genres": "When compared to deep background structure in common-practice music, thematic unity in this repertoire is relatively localized and immediately discernable."[24]

Unity here, whether we think of Timberlake, of James Brown, or of other popular artists and styles, is largely a matter of foreground musical continuities "immediately discernible" to listeners due to their surface interrelationships, where contrast and movement derive from simple but extremely subtle and effective contrasts in things like meter/tempo and timbre, and in broad signification against and slight resistances in the context of a time line (time-line). These "superficial" organizational models dominate popular music. For example, Mark Butler's 2006 Unlocking the Groove contains an analysis of the loops and sequences that make up dance music sets, and Robin Attas, in her 2011 dissertation, has an extended discussion of similar grooving processes in Motown and disco.[25] The models apparently lack the background depth of classical music, but they actually negotiate constantly between different senses of surface and depth, and movement and stasis. They often, for example, include carefully calibrated builds based on clever contrasts in dynamic, texture, and pulse and on the rise-and-fall and tension-and-release patterns linked to individual embodied experience of grooves as processes unfolding in time. This is the sense in which Butler offers his model of DJs' "dramatic reinterpretation" of basic grooves, where those DJs use metrical dissonance, swells, interruptions, and so on to create dynamism over long spans of material.[26] Listeners themselves, pace Attas, clearly also participate in their own dramatic, cognitive, and affective (re)interpretations of grooves.

It's in this kind of groove-based, additive, process- or goal-suggesting, multigenre formal tradition that we could most firmly locate Timberlake, two-part forms or not; repeating groove

structures are crucial on The 20/20 Experience, Part Two, for instance, as seen on "TKO," "Take Back the Night," and "Cabaret." Short interlocking repeated patterns and sequences dominate his work, as seen for instance in both examples 1 and 2 and in the importance of to-ing and fro-ing percussion and riff loops in songs such as "SexyBack," "LoveStoned," and "Pusher Love Girl." The two-part forms, with their setting up of two distinct, if closely related, grooves across an extensional line, might be seen to complicate the matter of Timberlake's place in the groove tradition. But if anything, the two section groups' connections, where Timberlake uses basic elements like lyrics and pitch center to build continuity across the song, actually suggest that those two groups might be seen not simply as different section groups but also as different iterations of what Attas calls one groove state, though it's obviously a matter of interpretation as to whether they actually constitute a shift in groove or merely a variation of a single groove state.[27] These connections also suggest that we might see the two section groups as tropes of each other in the Floydian sense, therefore anchoring them further in call-response processes.

Either way, what is pointedly clear here is the grooving basis of this music, where short musical patterns interlock and trope on each other to produce emergent metrical and harmonic patterns. Also clear is a shift in perspective from the groove state (or groove) of one section group to the other. The two groups function in this way as tropes or commentaries on each other, creating a strange sense of linear movement across the run of each song. Variation here is not just local in the manner of the motivic and rhythmic resistances of James Brown but also global and extensional. Timberlake in this way achieves a kind of refracted, troping linearity, emblematized lyrically and dramatically in "What Goes Around . . . Comes Around," where s.II sees a pivot away from s.I's lyrical address of a girl presumed to have cheated on the narrator to a narration of how the person the girl cheated with is now cheating on her in turn, a turnaround that's

accompanied by a striking descent to the dominant key of E minor. This linearity is both highly distinctive and of a piece with previous groove-based music.

So Timberlake's two-part forms are both inside a groove, Black Atlantic tradition and outside it, just as they relate to and are different from other previous examples of extended pop form, from suites with harmonic and rhythmic correspondences akin to Timberlake (e.g., Crosby, Stills & Nash's "Judy Blue Eyes") to other miscellaneous extended pieces, such as Prince's two-part but recapitulating "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man" and Blur's five (nonintegrated) two-part forms on 13 (1999).[28] Timberlake's multigenre sympathies in these respects can perhaps be taken to be emblematic of an increasingly mongrel twenty-first-century pop field, where digital means and (post)postmodern sensibilities have made the whole of pop history present and available as a tool of inspiration and influence. But while their place in and outside different traditions seems clear, there's one final aspect of these forms that is crucial: their meaning.

Meaning and Timberlake's Two-Part Complementary Forms

The most obvious interpretation of the two-part forms would see them as fairly straightforward historically and generically coded signifiers of maturity and credibility, as I suggested at the outset. The other extended forms on the The 20/20 Experience albums, for instance, the groove plateaus of the first album's "Let the Groove In" and the iterative and developing repetitions of the second's "TKO" or "Only When I Walk Away," take part in this process likewise.

Popular music audiences and critics are readily attuned to a conventional encoding of maturity of this kind. Musical strategies of extension, sustained conceptualization, and thematic integration have long been tied to a reception context of perceived artistic seriousness and

maturity. Timberlake's reception history in the popular music press and indeed his attitude to his own work over the course of the release cycle of each album confirm this. Most reviews have either granted maturity or credibility to Timberlake or examined him and his music through those lenses. Robert Christgau, for example, described Timberlake in 2006 as a "liberated" and "maturing loverman."[29] Genevieve Koski suggested in a 2013 review of The 20/20 Experience, Part One that Timberlake had been able to "transcend" and "shake off his teenybopper past" to the point where it has "become a career footnote."[30] David Meller, on the other hand, quotes Timberlake himself asking rhetorically why, if Led Zeppelin and others can, he himself can't do "ten-minute long songs." Meller underlines, following this quote, how Timberlake sees himself not only as a credible artist but even, perhaps, as a "saviour of the Album."[31] We are here clearly far from the teenybopper past referenced by Koski and discussed above.

Timberlake's two-part forms, in addition to the other extended forms and the non<EN>-pop genre coding, and indeed the loose but sustained lyrical focus on seduction/love of each "mature" solo album, connote to culturally savvy audiences and critics a set of cultural meanings tied to gendered and genre-anchored notions of credibility and maturity. These notions are tied in turn to male rock or pop "seriousness," where the artist is the author, who is in turn "authentic," serious, and complicated.

This coding of maturity and credibility has a racial dimension. This is because Timberlake, as with other artists operating within a cultural landscape of changing racial identities and authenticities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, has used both musical sounds and forms and extramusical affiliations to signify a complex racial mix. Both whiteness and blackness, as in NSYNC's work (though the mix here is characterized differently), are important to the sound, framing, and reception of Timberlake's solo albums. His close

collaborations with black producers such as Timbaland and James Fauntleroy (the former of whom is usually recognized as coauthor alongside Timberlake), his citing of black artists such as Michael Jackson as being crucially important to his work, and his use of grooving forms and looping sounds all mean that Timberlake can clearly be seen to deploy an artistic strategy of "immersion" similar to that discussed by Mikey Hess, in his case with relation to white rappers keen to signify proximity to black culture.[32] But even in kissing its ring, Timberlake arguably never burlesques black culture nor indeed disavows his "white" identity as a performer. This admixture is both unexceptional for a person and artist who grew up in the 1990s in the United States and also highly marketable as a cultural image that reflects just the kind of racial and musical blend that twenty-first-century pop audiences and critics seem to approve of (for whatever reason). Traditional rock and artistic "authenticity" anchored in authorship and self-expression are invoked in Timberlake's work but are also therefore given a modern texture by the dual racial coding of his music and image.

So Timberlake's recent music signifies maturity and credibility sieved through racial, generic, and historical frames. What's of particular note here is that such coding in other examples often happens at something of a remove from the "music," anchored primarily at the level of image and perceived authorship through things like statements made in interviews by or on behalf of the artist's creative control or through songwriting or producing credits on album sleeves. It might also be conveyed and experienced through broad genre synecdoches (i.e., sonic references) in the music, where in the case of Timberlake the use of hip-hop and electronic sounds on Celebrity and Justified marked those albums out as distinct, or where darker or more satirical lyrical themes on both albums again signified new goals and methods to audiences. But generally the coding conventionally happens outside or around the sounds.

With the two-part complementary forms, however, we can *also* see the coding of perceived maturity and credibility happening at the level of musical structure "itself." The forms take their place in Timberlake's historically and generically coded maturation process alongside carefully performed notions of authorship, artistic independence, and nonpop allegiance, and, on The 20/20 Experience, Part Two, further extended forms, genre hybridity, and structures built on the dialectical tension between groove and movement. They flesh out broad genre references and organizational models with carefully developed creative responses and inventions that raise the temperature of this familiar encoding process. They invoke formal convention but move beyond or suppress it in the subtle variations, linear troping, and switched perspectives of their section groups. Timberlake's solo work ends up as a particularly developed response to and performance of such maturing narratives, where the familiar story of boy band fame moving to solo critical credibility is accomplished through the usual channels of broad genre switches and growing claims on creative control, but also through the switches and subtle variations happening at the level of musical form and sound.

In locating the forms within a meaningful context, though, it's important to attend to the particular ways that they reshape convention. By simply adding a whole part to conventional formal models such as verse-chorus and repeating grooves, Timberlake can be seen to have his cake and eat it too. After all, the two-part forms are easily edited into conventional songs featuring no troublesome formal extension. This has indeed happened on numerous occasions, as, for instance, on the promotional trail for "Mirrors," where the song's s.II was not included in live performances or in the radio edit. The two-part forms underscore Timberlake's perceived ambition and credibility, then, without at the same time breaking the fundamental commitment he perhaps has to his audiences to produce music that is generically familiar and that repeats and

has hooks. The fact that the more extended--but not modular and therefore easily editable--singles from The 20/20 Experience, Part Two didn't claim anything like as much attention as those from Part One might support this point, though audience fatigue should also be factored in.

Perceptions of Timberlake's maturity and credibility as an artist are clearly reinforced by the cleverly designed two-part forms of his songs. By extending his songs to seven and eight minutes in length, by working closely with a respected producer such as Timbaland (and adopting various other "immersive" strategies), by making clear his own authorial role in proceedings, and by toying with adult lyrical themes and sustained lyrical conceits, Timberlake can be seen to have engineered a creative response to historical and generic circumstances. This response tropes and develops those circumstances ingeniously in creating a culturally recognizable but unique and highly marketable image. The two-part forms, among all these other elements, underscore and add a sense of artistic adventure to Timberlake's image. This sense of adventure moves the perception of Timberlake's music further from its pop beginnings into even more firmly entrenched and racially and generically mixed, mature, and credible contexts.

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[1] NSYNC, "I Want You Back," on NSYNC, BMG, 1997, CD; NSYNC, Celebrity, Jive, 2001, CD.

[2] NSYNC, No Strings Attached, Jive, 2000, CD; NSYNC, Celebrity.

[3] Daryl Jamieson, "Marketing Androgyny: The Evolution of the Backstreet Boys," Popular Music 26 (May 2007): 245-58.

[4] For a discussion of such hybridized racial codes across the music of Elvis alongside Timberlake's contemporary Eminem, see Kimberly Chabot Davis, "Beyond the White Negro:

Eminem, Danny Hoch, and Race Treason in Contemporary America," in At Home and Abroad: Historicizing Twentieth-Century Whiteness in Literature and Performance, ed. La Vinia Delois Jennings (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 221-54.

[5] For "portable blackness," see Harry Elam Jr., "Change Clothes and Go: A Postscript to Postblackness," in Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture, ed. Harry Elam Jr. and Kennel Jackson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 379-88. The text quote is from Loren Kajikawa, "Eminem's 'My Name Is': Signifying Whiteness, Rearticulating Race," Journal of the Society for American Music 3, no. 3 (August 2009): 342.

[6] Justin Timberlake, Justified, Jive, 2002, CD.

[7] Justin Timberlake, FutureSex/LoveSounds, Jive, 2006, CD; Timberlake, 20/20 Experience, Part One, RCA, 2013, CD; Timberlake, 20/20 Experience, Part Two, RCA, 2013.

[8] Jeff Pressing, "Black Atlantic Rhythm: Its Computational and Transcultural Foundations," Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal 19, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 285. For use of the term "intensional," see Richard Middleton, "Form," in Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture, ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 141-155. For "call-response," see Samuel A. Floyd, "Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Musical Inquiry," in Signifyin(g), Sanctifyin', & Slam Dunking: A Reader in African American Expressive Culture, ed. Gena Dagel Caponi (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 135-56.

[9] John Covach, "Form in Rock Music: A Primer," in Engaging Music, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65-76.

[10] Black music's dialogical character is discussed in Floyd, "Ring Shout!," 146. Snead cited in David Brackett, "James Brown's 'Superbad' and the Double-Voiced Utterance," in Interpreting

Popular Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 118. Variation and transformation are discussed in Floyd, "Ring Shout!," 141.

[11] Floyd, "Ring Shout!," 143.

[12] Brackett, "James Brown," 108-56; pages 129-33 lay out the series of melodic figures and variations used in the grooving process of "Superbad."

[13] Middleton, "Form," 146-47.

[14] Ibid., 148.

[15] Robert Fink, Repeating Ourselves (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 39-43.

[16] Pressing, "Black Atlantic Rhythm," 285.

[17] Brad Osborn, "Understanding Through-Composition in Post-rock, Math-Metal, and Other Post-millennial Rock Genres," Musical Theory Online 17, no. 3 (October 2011), http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.osborn.html.

[18] "Simple--Verse" in Covach, "Form in Rock Music," 74; "chorus form" in Middleton, "Form," 149.

[19] David Bowie, "Station to Station," on Station to Station, EMI, 1999 [1976], CD; The Stone Roses, "I Am the Resurrection," on The Stone Roses, Silvertone Records, 1989, CD.

[20] The Beatles, "Kansas City / Hey-Hey-Hey," on Beatles for Sale, Parlophone, 1998 [1964], CD; Metallica, "Last Caress / Green Hell," on The $5.98 E.P.: Garage Days Re-revisited, Elektra, 1987, cassette.

[21] Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," in Music Theory Online 10, no. 4, http://mto.societymusictheory.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/.

[22] Prince, "Raspberry Beret," on Around the World in a Day, Paisley Park, 1985, LP.

[23] Jonathan Kramer, The Time of Music (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 33.

[24] Osborn, "Understanding Through-Composition," [6].

[25] Mark Butler, Unlocking the Groove (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); and Robin Attas, "Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2011).

[26] Butler, Unlocking, 4-6.

[27] Attas, "Meter as Process," 25.

[28] Crosby, Stills & Nash, "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," on Crosby, Stills & Nash, Atlantic, 1994 [1969], CD; Prince, "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man," on Sign 'o' the Times, Paisley Park, 1987, LP; Blur, 13, Food, Food, Food, 1999, CD.

[29] Robert Christgau, "Justin Timberlake: FutureSex/LoveSounds," Rolling Stone, 7 September 2006, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/futuresex-lovesounds-20060907.

[30] Genevieve Koski, "Justin Timberlake: 20/20 Experience," in AV Club, http://www.avclub.com/articles/justin-timberlake-the-2020-experience,93905/.

[31] David Meller, "20/20 Experience," Music OMH, http://www.musicomh.com/reviews/albums/justin-timberlake-the-2020-experience.

[32] See Kajikawa, "Signifying Whiteness," 344.