



Narrative Coherence between Soundtracks and Their Series In *Layangan Putus*, *Queen of Tears*, and *Doctor Foster*

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the narrative coherence between the soundtrack and the film series of *Layangan Putus*, *Queen of Tears*, and *Doctor Foster*. Using the theory of narrative coherence proposed by West and Turner (2010), this research explores three main elements: structural, material, and characterological coherence. The soundtracks in all three series play an important role in reinforcing emotional and narrative themes. Structural coherence is seen in how the soundtrack marks emotional transitions and plot developments, such as the change from quiet moments to conflict and climax. Material coherence is reflected in the harmony between the main themes of the story and the emotional atmosphere established by the soundtrack. Characterological coherence is seen from the consistency in the soundtrack that reflects the emotional portrayal of the main character. The soundtrack in the film not only supports the storyline, but also reinforces the character development and emotional atmosphere in the story, making it an essential element in building a deep narrative.

Keywords: *narrative coherence, soundtrack, film, series*

INTRODUCTION

Film soundtracks play an important role in shaping the audience's emotions and understanding of the story being told. According to Cohen (2001), music in film functions as an emotion giver. Music can also increase emotional intensity conveyed through the story in the film. The presence of a soundtrack in a film is able to increase the emotional intensity that the audiences feel when watching, and help build the atmosphere. Soundtrack also plays a role in reinforcing the message in the film or giving additional meaning to the visuals. This shows that soundtrack is not just a supplement, but an essential element in creating an immersive cinematic experience. These characters, plot, and themes interrelate with each other to form a coherent narrative. Narrative coherence, as studied by West and Turner (2010), plays a significant role in directing the audiences to grasp the messages of the stories

through the unity of the intrinsic elements. From this understanding, in the context of soundtracks and films, the coherence of the two is of necessity since they complement each other in delivering particular messages of the films. One of the examples is a film with love affair theme where both the films and the soundtracks have to sustain each other's narratives.

The film series *Layangan Putus* roughly translated into *Broken Kite* was released in 2021. *Layangan Putus* tells about the journey of love and emotional struggles in domestic life. The series tell about the affair of a company director named Aris with a teacher named Lydia from his daughter's school. Lydia is a psychologist who is able to attract Aris's attention. Lydia is able to fulfil Aris's biological needs, which Aris is unable to get from his wife who is pregnant. Aris dared to give his wealth without calculation to Lydia. The series has a soundtrack song titled *Sahabat Dulu* sung by Prinsa Mandagie. The song *Sahabat Dulu* has lyrics that describe the confusion of someone who wonders why his/her partner suddenly left him/her, whether there is something else to ensure that his/her partner forgets him/her who has always been loyal to him. The soundtrack title *Sahabat Dulu* on the *Layangan Putus* film has a narrative coherence with the themes of the story and the emotions that the series is trying to convey. The *Layangan Putus* series depicts conflicts in relationships, especially in marriage, which often involve feelings of betrayal, loss, and changing relationship dynamics between two people who were once very close. *Sahabat Dulu* suggests a relationship that was once very intimate and warm, perhaps between two people who once trusted each other and were close like best friends. In the context of the story *Layangan Putus*, this could refer to how the couple in the marriage used to be very close, like best friends, but the relationship changed or broke down.

The title could also reflect the change from an affectionate and friendly relationship to something different, perhaps colder or conflicted, as time goes on and major issues, such as infidelity, become the core conflict in the story. As with a film series that has a similar theme to *Layangan Putus*, namely *Queen of Tears*. The soundtrack *The Reason of Smile* from the drama series *Queen of Tears* has a close connection with the theme and feel of the series. The song *The Reason of Smile* reflects the feelings and struggles of the main characters in *Queen of Tears*. The lyrics and melody of the song often imply emotions such as hope, sadness, and resilience which are central themes in the film. The song often serves as a representation of the emotional journey of the characters in the play. By reflecting the feelings experienced by the main characters, *The Reason of Smile* helps the audience understand and feel the emotional journey that the characters go through. Soundtrack in film serves to deepen the emotional experience of the audience. *The Reason of Smile* may be used at key moments in the series to amplify the emotional impact and convey the deeper

feelings of the characters, such as when the characters struggle to find a reason to smile in the midst of adversity. Overall, the connection between soundtrack *The Reason of Smile* and *Queen of Tears* lies in how the song complements and deepens the themes and emotions faced by the characters in the film. There is also the *Doctor Foster* film series which has a similar theme to *Layangan Putus* and *Queen of Tears*. The soundtrack *For you* is one of the compositions written by composer Rae Morris for the British film series *Doctor Foster*. The soundtrack is part of the musical score used in the show to amplify the emotions and atmosphere in various scenes. *Doctor Foster* is a series about a female doctor who faces a personal and professional crisis after discovering her husband is having an affair. The soundtrack in the film series, including *For you*, helps to create atmosphere and add emotional depth to the story.

Previous studies that talk about soundtracks in films, flourish. First study by Bako, Hafiddin, Ramadhina (2024) to reveal the role of soundtracks in increasing audience understanding of watching films and influencing audience emotional reactions and film narratives. The second study by Ansani, Marini, Poggi, and Mallia (2022) explores how soundtracks induce mood-coherent bias, but not through mood induction. The third study by Groves, Farbood, Ripolles, and Zuanazzi (2023) investigates how music can evoke strong emotions in the listener and most of its elements do not overlap with the scene setting, characters, and objects of the film. The fourth study by Xu (2022) studies the role soundtracks hint at the development of film plots, create atmosphere, express the feelings and thoughts of characters, and become film icons. The fifth study from Gillick and Bamman (2018) examines soundtracks play an important role in carrying the story of a film, in a corpus of films and television shows matched with subtitles and soundtracks and analyzing the relationship between stories, songs, and audience reception.

The gap left by previous studies is narrative coherence between soundtracks and films. Departing from the issues, we formulated a question, how do the soundtracks of *Queen of Tears*, *Layangan Putus*, and *Doctor Foster* cohere with their film series?

The soundtracks of *Layangan Putus*, *Queen of Tears*, and *Doctor Foster* each play a crucial role in reinforcing the emotional tone and narrative themes of their respective series. The theory proposed by West and Turner (2010) explains that a coherent story is based on three specific types of consistency. First, structural coherence refers to how elements in a story, such as plot, sequence of events, and narrative structure are organized and interconnected to form a clear and harmonious whole story. Second, material coherence relates to the harmony between the story content and the other elements that accompany it, such as symbolism and audiovisual elements working together to support the emotions of the story's main theme. And third, characterological

coherence focuses on the consistency of characters in the story and how they interact with other elements. Based on this theory, the author analyzes how the soundtracks of *Layangan Putus, Queen of Tears, and Doctor Foster* cohere with their film series. By considering structural coherence, material coherence, and characterological coherence, are able to see how the soundtrack is not only a background but also an important element that enriches the narrative and emotions in each story.

Narrative, as implied by Fisher (1987), means not a specific genre, but rather it is mode of social influence. Coherence refers to the internal consistency of a narrative. Narrative possess coherence when all the pieces of the story are predicted elements of the story in any way. As implied by West and Turner (2010), a coherent story is based on three specific types of consistency. This theory emphasizes that narrative coherence involves the internal consistency of story elements to ensure that the audience is able to follow the flow and understand the meaning of the story as a whole. If the story is well organized, has a clear flow, and conveys a message that the audience is able to relate to, then the story is considered to have strong narrative coherence. This coherence helps the audience not only in following the development of the story, but also in judging whether the story is believable and relevant to their experience or knowledge.

Narrative coherence according to West and Turner (2010) is divided into three: structural coherence, material coherence, and characterological coherence. These three aspects guarantee that a story can be received by the audience logically, harmoniously and credibly.

1. Structural Coherence

This part is based on the extent to which story elements flow smoothly and harmoniously. When the flow of the story is confusing, when one part does not seem to lead to the next, or when the plot is unclear, then the story loses structural coherence.

2. Material Coherence

Material coherence refers to the extent to which the story is consistent with other stories that appear to be related to it, thus creating a logical and mutually supportive connection.

3. Characterological Coherence

Characterological coherence refers to the credibility or believability of the characters in the story, where the characters must act and behave in a way that is believable and appropriate to their role and nature in the context of the narrative. These three forms of coherence: structural, material, and characterological serve to create a strong story that is acceptable to the audience. Soundtracks, as studied by Cohen (2001), are an important part of a film, helping to shape the audience's emotions, create atmosphere, and influence their perception of certain scenes. Cohen believes that music and sound in a film not only complement the visual

elements, but also encourage the audience to understand and absorb the story more deeply. In a theory called Congruence-Association Model (CAM), Cohen explains that music serves to enhance visual meaning through the emotional and cognitive associations that occur when audiences hear music along with images. Soundtrack, as implied by Cohen (2001), is more than just background noise, but an integral part that helps audiovisual media better convey emotions and stories.

METHOD

The data of this qualitative study were in textual and visual forms. Textual data forms were dialogues in the films and lyrics of the songs that indicate the presence of coherence while the visual data were the images that supported the coherence between the films and the soundtracks.

Table 1. Data Sources

Film Series Title	Song Title	Reason
Layangan Putus	Sahabat Dulu	<i>Sahabat Dulu</i> has deep emotional overtones, it is able to appeal to the audience's empathy, strengthening their attachment to Kinan's feelings and inner journey. The lyrics in this song make the audience feel the sadness and frustration that the main character is going through.
Queen of Tears	The reason of My Smile	<i>The Reasons of My Smile</i> depicts a simple yet profound feeling of love, in line with the main character's romantic journey in <i>Queen of Tears</i> . The series features the twisted dynamics of love, and this song provides a touch of optimism and hope amidst the conflict. The lyrics, which focus on the reasons for happiness and love, reflect the characters' efforts to find happiness amidst the difficulties of their lives and relationships.
Doctor Foster	For you	Rae Morris' "For You" soundtrack was chosen for use in the Doctor Foster series as it fits thematically and emotionally with the main story. The song depicts the complex dynamics of love, betrayal and vulnerability that are at the core of the emotional conflict of the main character, Gemma Foster. With a melancholic melody and meaningful lyrics, the song elevates the introspective scenes, creating a deep resonance between the audience and Gemma's emotional journey.

This study employed techniques of analysis by Spradley (2016) that covered four phases of analysis. They were domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme. In domain analysis, we employed the theory of narrative coherence by West and Turner (2010) to reveal whether the coherences between the selected soundtracks and films were categorized into structural, material, or characterological coherences. In taxonomy analysis, the types of coherences were further investigated by investigating how they were applied in the classification of story elements and how the soundtrack is strategically placed to reinforce the meaning of each category. For example, in a tension-filled climactic scene, fast-paced and high-pitched soundtrack is able to underscore the mounting conflict, while in a reflective scene, soft and repetitive melodies are able to reinforce the character's contemplative mood. In the componential analysis of film series *Layangan Putus, Queen of Tears, and Doctor Foster*, the soundtrack plays an important role at the intersection of character and plot with the dimensions of structural coherence, material coherence, and characterological coherence. Structural coherence is often achieved through the use of a soundtrack that marks significant transitions in the plot or shifts in tone, helping to maintain narrative flow. Material coherence is reflected in the choice of soundtrack that aligns with central themes, such as loss, betrayal, or emotional vulnerability, reinforcing the story's underlying messages. Characterological coherence is established when specific musical motifs are associated with a character's emotional journey, providing continuity and depth to their development. In each film series, the soundtrack not only enhances the emotional impact of scenes but also plays a crucial role in shaping the audience's understanding of character and narrative progression. In cultural theme analysis, the relations between coherences, song elements, and narrative elements would be revealed to indicate whether soundtracks and films have a complete and compelling narrative experience.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research found that the three series analyzed, *Layangan Putus, Queen of Tears, and Doctor Foster*, share similarities in narrative structure and characterisation that form a strong connection between the story in the film series and the use of the soundtrack. Theory West and Turner (2010) in the concept of narrative coherence, emphasizing the internal consistency and believability of a story's structure, events, and characters. According to the theory, a coherent narrative must exhibit structural, material, and characterological coherence. This study shows that soundtracks are not only a complementary element, but also play an important role in supporting the development of the story and reinforcing the emotions experienced by the

characters, creating a deep narrative cohesion between the visuals and audio in the three series.

Structural Coherence

Structural coherence depends on the extent to which the elements of the story flow together smoothly and harmoniously. When the storyline seems confusing, one part does not connect with another, or the plot is unclear, the story loses its structural coherence. Good structural coherence ensures that each element of the story supports and reinforces the others, creating an organized and comprehensible narrative for the audience thus that the viewing experience is more satisfying and meaningful.

Structural coherence is seen when the soundtrack with the title *Sahabat Dulu* in the film series *Layangan Putus* is used to mark the transition of character emotions and storylines. Seen in the change from a calm moment to a big conflict between Aris as the male lead and Kinan, his wife. Structural coherence is seen when the soundtrack with the title *Sahabat Dulu* in the *Layangan Putus* film series is used to mark the transition of character emotions and storylines. It can be seen in the change from a calm moment to a big conflict between Aris as the male lead and Kinan, his wife. Kinan is a doctor who is on break due to the pregnancy of her second child. As in episode 2A when Kinan is suspicious of Aris's behaviour as he often comes home late at night and even goes to work on weekends, never gives Kinan his update news and Aris is difficult to contact. Kinan became even more suspicious when she found one earring from Aris' coat pocket. Then, while taking her daughter to school, Kinan meets Miranda, Aris' work colleague, wearing the exact same earring she found. Kinan then followed Miranda to the hotel and raided her, but it turned out that Miranda was not with Aris, but another man. After Kinan leaves the hotel, Miranda calls Aris and tells him that Kinan came to her hotel room. Then Aris went home feeling angry and the next day Aris gave the earring to Kinan, that was supposed to be given to Lydia. Then Kinan admitted that last night she had followed Miranda and Aris' anger broke out. It is also in episode 6B when Kinan finds out that Aris bought Lydia a luxury apartment and gave her a free holiday to Cappadocia, the place where Kinan dreams of going up in a hot air balloon. Aris takes Lydia to Cappadocia as proof that Lydia and Kinan are in the same position because Lydia keeps asking if there is a future for their relationship. Kinan learnt all this with the help of her best friend Lola, a lawyer. Kinan calls her friends when Aris suddenly leaves and leaves only a sticky note on the table. Ola then provided data about Aris and Lydia, whose names were listed on the flight schedule to Turkey that morning. After Aris returned from Cappadocia, Kinan produced all the evidence before him. But Aris continued to be evasive and there was an argument until Kinan's

stomach aches and had to give birth to her second child, who was only 7 months old in the womb.

Structural coherence is evident through the use of cinematic elements such as soundtrack and lighting, which effectively mark emotional transitions and plot developments in the series *Queen of Tears*. This is particularly reflected in the song titled *The Reasons of My Smile*. In the dating scene between Baek Hyun-woo and Hong Hae-in, a married couple who have faced numerous conflicts during their three-year marriage, a significant shift in atmosphere occurs. Hyun-woo has endured immense pressure from Hae-in's family, including legal issues involving family members and the expectation of having children. He feels that Hae-in does not support him and even exacerbates the situation, both at home and at work. All this pressure has led Hyun-woo to consider ending their marriage through divorce. However, in episode 13, their date at a flower garden becomes a critical emotional turning point. From an initially awkward and tense atmosphere, the dynamic gradually shifts to something warmer and more intimate as they begin to open up to each other. This scene highlights their effort to mend their relationship and rediscover the emotional connection they had lost. The romantic and serene atmosphere of the flower garden provides a space for them to speak honestly, express feelings that had been difficult to articulate, and engage in relaxed and warm dialogue. This scene symbolizes their attempt to accept each other, learn from past experiences, and rebuild their relationship. With soft lighting and a soundtrack that reflects emotional shifts, this scene serves as a culmination of their journey together.

Structural coherence is seen through the use of Rae Morris' "For You" soundtrack in the *Doctor Foster* series to mark characters' emotional transitions and story evolution. *Doctor Foster* is a movie that illustrates how marital betrayal can destroy a person's trust. with the main character Gemma Foster, a smart and principled doctor who is betrayed by her husband Simon. Her husband Simon works in property and construction while Kate Parks is a young girl who comes from wealthy parents, so she depends on her parents. The business relationship between Kate's father and Simon is the beginning of the affair between Simon and Kate. In episode 5 of *Doctor Foster*'s first season is the height of tension when Gemma Foster reveals her husband Simon's affair with Kate Parks at a dinner, featuring Simon, Kate, Kate's parents. Gemma exposes their illicit relationship as well as Kate's pregnancy, destroying Simon's reputation in front of everyone. In episode 5 of the first season, about 35 minutes long, the song appears when Gemma confronts Simon over his infidelity. The song highlights the transition from a calm atmosphere to one full of conflict, amplifying the intensity and deep emotion of the scene.

Material Coherence

Material coherence refers to the extent to which the story is consistent with other stories that seem to be related to it, thus creating a logical and mutually beneficial relationship. In this context, the main story is able to be reinforced by other well-integrated elements, such as themes, characters or events, which strengthen the overall meaning of the story. These linkages form a more complete and coherent narrative that enhances the audience's understanding and appreciation of the message you are trying to convey.

Material coherence is seen in the soundtrack of *Sahabat Dulu* reinforces or supports the emotional state of the characters in *Layangan Putus* when facing problems and the core of the story. It able to be seen from the soundtrack that reflects feelings of loss and betrayal reinforcing the storyline about the destruction of Kinan's household due to Aris' affair with Lydia. The soundtrack is heard when Kinan feels betrayed by Aris, the husband she trusted so much. Kinan feels that she has lost the leader of the household who should be able to maintain the harmony of his family. Until in episode 5B, while sleeping, Kinan dreamed of her, Aris, and her daughter Raya playing kites in a lakeside park. In the dream, when the kite string was held by Kinan, Aris and Raya walked away from Kinan and left Kinan alone with the kite that suddenly broke due to strong winds. It can also be seen in episode 7B that Kinan was depressed to lose Reno, her second child who died just after being born. Kinan continues to blame Aris for being forced to give birth to Reno in a bad condition after a big argument with Aris.

Material coherence is reflected in the soundtrack used during the date scene between Hyun-woo and Hae-in, which amplifies the characters' emotional states and reinforces the core of the narrative. The selected soundtrack reflects the gradual shift in their relationship from mutual hesitation to deeper, more sincere feelings. For instance, when Hyun-woo confesses that he always feels comfortable around Hae-in, the soundtrack shifts to a warmer tone, symbolizing the sincerity and affection emerging between them. This soundtrack choice supports the development of the storyline as their relationship, initially professional, begins to delve into a more emotional sphere.

Material coherence in *Doctor Foster* is powerfully enhanced by Rae Morris' song *For You*, which aligns seamlessly with the series' core themes of broken love, betrayal, and the emotional journey toward recovery. The song's sombre melody and poignant lyrics capture the emotional depth of Gemma Foster's character as she grapples with the devastating consequences of her husband Simon's infidelity. The choice of this particular song is significant as it mirrors Gemma's feelings of loss, anger, and confusion, which she experiences in the aftermath of discovering Simon's affair with Kate. The lyrics, filled with sorrow and longing, reflect the pain and heartbreak she endures as

her world unravels. The slow, melancholic tone of the music mirrors her internal struggle, amplifying the emotional weight of her journey. The song serves as a soundscape for Gemma's state of mind, allowing viewers to connect with her on a deeper, emotional level. In addition to reflecting Gemma's emotional state, *For You* reinforces the larger narrative of destruction and recovery. The song underscores the devastation caused by Simon's betrayal, highlighting the disintegration of Gemma's marriage and her personal sense of security. The peaceful and controlled life she once had is shattered, and the song's music perfectly mirrors this rupture. As the melody shifts, it emphasizes the growing emotional distance between Gemma and Simon, highlighting the tension that has been building throughout the series.

Characterological Coherence

Characterological coherence refers to the credibility or believability of characters in the story, where characters should act and behave in a way that makes sense and is consistent with their role and nature in the context of the story. Characters who are consistent with their characteristics and react appropriately to the situations they face will increase the audience's trust in the story. When characters behave or make decisions that go against their nature, the story therefore loses characterological coherence, which is able to make the audience feel disconnected from the storyline.

Characterological coherence is reflected in the *Sahabat Dulu* soundtrack and appears in scenes that show Kinan's emotional development in the *Layangan Putus* storyline. The lyrics of the soundtrack show the scene in episode 5B where Kinan is confused about what went wrong therefore that she was cheated on by Aris while investigating with the help of Lola. It can also be seen in episode 6B Kinan who is disappointed by the revelation of the truth of Aris' affair with a woman named Lydia Danira from the evidence he obtained with Lola. Then in episode 7B Kinan, who felt that she lost her second child because she was too depressed about Aris' affair until her health declined, Kinan was confused about her feelings to maintain her household for her daughter Raya or divorce and bring the case of Aris and Lydia's affair to the police.

Characterological coherence is also maintained in this scene, where the actions and dialogue of Hyun-woo and Hae-in align with the personalities that have been consistently established throughout the series. Hae-in, initially portrayed as cold and reserved, gradually becomes more vulnerable and open in front of Hyun-woo. Meanwhile, Hyun-woo, who has always been portrayed as patient and attentive, remains consistent in his efforts to make Hae-in feel at ease. The soundtrack in this scene is strategically used at key moments, such as when Hae-in subtly smiles after Hyun-woo praises her courage and dedication. The soft, hopeful soundtrack underscores the moment, symbolizing the emotional walls around Hae-in starting to crumble. This

reflects Hae-in's emotional journey as she slowly accepts that there might be a space for happiness amidst her struggles.

Characterological coherence is able to be seen in the presence of the song *For You* by Rae Morris, and serves as a powerful tool for highlighting Gemma's emotional evolution throughout the narrative. As the central character grapples with the internal turmoil of her marriage, the song becomes a musical mirror of her struggles, subtly underscoring the tension between her desire for reconciliation and the pull of vengeance. In moments of confrontation and reflection, such as when Gemma confronts Simon about his betrayal, the song's evocative melodies amplify the emotional weight of the scene. The layered mix of anger, sorrow, and a simmering desire for justice is brought to life by the haunting lyrics and the gentle piano arrangement. The track resonates with Gemma's inner chaos, providing a sonic backdrop that deepens the audience's understanding of her conflicting emotions. Moreover, as the story unfolds, the recurrence of the song at pivotal points when Gemma faces difficult choices or takes decisive actions helps to create a sense of characterological coherence. The song's melancholic tone captures her evolving internal conflict: at once yearning for healing and peace, while also acknowledging the darker pull of retribution. The juxtaposition of these emotions, accentuated by the song, lends a lyrical quality to Gemma's character arc, marking her journey from vulnerability to strength. By aligning the song with key narrative moments, the soundtrack enhances not only the emotional depth of Gemma's character but also the film's thematic exploration of forgiveness, betrayal, and personal transformation. Through its melancholic yet empowering presence, *For You* becomes an emotional touchstone that underscores the complexity of Gemma's journey and her ultimate choices.

CONCLUSION

The soundtracks in series such as *Layangan Putus*, *Queen of Tears*, and *Doctor Foster* play an important role in building narrative cohesion through three aspects of coherence: structural, material, and character. In terms of structural coherence, the soundtrack serves as a marker of changing emotions and story dynamics, be it from calm to intense conflict or from tension to moments of intimacy. In terms of material coherence, the soundtrack supports the main themes of the story, such as betrayal or relationship development, by reinforcing the emotional atmosphere that the main characters feel. Then character coherence is seen in the consistency of the soundtrack in significant moments that accompany the character's emotional development, such as confusion, loss, and attempts to open up or let go of grudges. Overall, the soundtrack becomes an essential cinematic element that supports the

narrative, deepens characterisation, and conveys the hidden feelings within the characters' emotional journey.

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