

Vox Lux

the people know **vox** from **vox populi**: so **Pop** is implied, for the film's average viewer.

with little Latin, i assumed: **voice of luxury**.

luxury (n.) from Old French *luxurie* "debauchery, dissoluteness, lust" from Latin *luxuria* "excess, extravagant living, profusion; delicacy"¹

pop is not innocuous, or vacuous, in **Vox Lux**: which means, in the end, **Voice of Lucifer**.

a place of color

the Devil is near, he presides over highschool shootings. is Friend of ugly misanthropes.

Devil & the Shooter have a grievance with their relative hegemon.

her time with the Devil is her time with the Shooter, transposed: the dialogue raised into its archetype.

she's lying on the classroom floor, her brain awash in cortisol & opioids. the Devil needs you dosed, to be seen. he enters from within, by the endocrine system.

her offer to the Shooter shows her heart is good, she's open to the hateful Outsider.

her words with the Shooter signal to the Devil that she'll bargain.

this has been a Horror film, a Documentary

the late reveal, a shock to cue the credit-roll: THIS HAS BEEN A HORROR FILM.

i'd love to see a RomCom that ends in a Valentine's bloodbath: the meet-cute & the charming patter, lit up murder-red in our recall. we're stunned in our seats: love has been pulled into the Slasher Pic axiom, that Sex = Death.

Dafoe says **the Devil**, and he's been there all along. **the Devil**, says Dafoe, and disrupts my presumption of genre, that it's Fiction. for two days after i rented **The Exorcist**, my sister wouldn't sleep. she lay on her futon deathly rigid, staring at the ceiling. the movie left her open to possession.

¹ Online Etymology Dictionary

we'd come up from the basement in a daze. the tape hit its end, rewind, & played again. the theme tinkled thru the house autonomous, mocking us. rose from below into the kitchen as we worried how to stop it.

the Devil says Dafoe and the awful twist is THIS IS TRUE, AND LOCAL. the coil of rope in corner's dark is a snake, watching you. the lights come up and seated ahead, it's the black-haired girl from **The Ring**.

in our mass fascination with psychopaths, the Mafia, with Shakespeare's killer kings we're prey in the kill-trance.

the Spectacle sees, is a giant compound Eye inhuman and carnivorous.²

Dafoe says **the Devil** and the City isn't safe from the screen. the screen can't keep the diabolic meme in quarantine. the movie's light enters us and takes our weight, goes into the street.

who is this V.O.? what is his relation to the actor Dafoe? Dafoe & V.O. both know the sisters' secret.

what is Sia's place among the divas whom Celeste is sum of? Sia, too, hides her face, and sells them all her special compositions.

she opens small; ends in an apocalypse

her child's song, her tiny vigil aria, morphs into a bomb by the end. her home-coming show has a sickening sub-tone, a rumbling low in the stadium.

the shrieking tweens feel the throb, know that they are close to death.

And though *Her Smell* has clearly been devised to be more gritty than the soapy *Rose*, their crests (and weirdly, run times of 134 minutes) are identical—as the end nears, not without palpable tension, we are meant to wonder if our protagonist here is going to make it through her last performance alive or die onstage.³

i, too, awake in hopes of another 9/11. i want exciting news, i admit.

the bomb is off-screen; or going off all along: is diva-pop from '99 on: an explosion of color & song.

relation of her music to the Massacre

I don't want people to have to think too hard. I just want them to feel good

theory A: **her song is analgesic.** Celeste is here to soothe us into death. we may as well be happy as it falls apart. she sings us to eternal rest, is the string quintet on the Titanic.

Pop is the sound of our spreading success, of humans having sex. so as it all ends, her song is a nostalgia of Life: we're fond in the head, dying.

theory B: **her song abets a biosphere's collapse.** her song is of a girl overcoming: even as our life-world fails, she urges on our self-production.

Even as a child, her innate showbiz instincts redirected violence toward a narrative of regeneration, turning the girl of trembling sensitivity into an icon of endurance.⁴

² **an animal exits**, p 890

³ Rich Juzwiak, **Elisabeth Moss Rocks (and Strikes) Out in Fictional Biopic *Her Smell***. *The Muse*, Sep 26, 2018.

⁴ Lesley Chow, **Bright Lights Film Journal**

the awful tunnel

going, she can feel it, somewhere bad.

the rolling road evokes the early credit scroll, the upward running words: evoking, from Auteur history, **The Shining**. evoking the Lynchian highway: the lens roving low to the asphalt.

the paint-lines are ellipses, inducers of hypnosis. the paint lines are for transiting scenes or planes of existence.

she pulls us in, even this critique

1. schoolboards in Sweden convene at the dawn of the American Teen, plan to keep their kids immune with **afterschool band-class**: which gets the kids home for prime-time tv; & helps them write hits in their twenties.

2. gunmen don her icon mask to impute the liberal debauchery; also for the thrill of it, the special horror. they stalk the beach as S&M death-lords; are killing nearly-naked girls in a gimp mask.

3. in naming **Ariana Grande**, this piece is made more shareable. even to disparage her, my essay is of interest to her fans, is a relevant outrage. in typing **Ariana Grande**, i prime the search-term, enter wider tweet-streams - so owe some success to her & her producers.

i, too, feel the thrill, typing **killing nearly-naked girls**.

Childhood's End

in **Childhood's End** our kids exceed us. they bend within, lock into an info-stream we misperceive as catatonic autism.

in **Childhood's End**, 'adult' means your App is lame: you're sharing in an eaten-thru ecosystem. home from the film, i searched **Max Martin**, again, and was baffled: the comments under **Tik Tok** all now praising Ke\$ha's prescience, of what? she's ancient now, a prophetess - of what?

Vox.com explains: it's new & Chinese, and bigger already than Snapchat. a spreading sea of selfie karaoke.

we're prone to malign the Numinous

in **Childhood's End**, we'd think it was a demon: from ancient fear of humanoids with horns.

The Chalice & the Blade contends: the Snake would raise our consciousness, free us from a King & Temple tyranny: who've trained us so we only hear the hiss.

Celeste is good, was raised within Christendom. is sure she's sold us out to *Satan*. is twisted by this certainty, made cynical.

Celeste is a sacrifice

Celeste is good, she'd save the whole class - herself & Shooter included. **At least let everyone else go**: invites him into prayer, where she'll advocate to God on his behalf.

Celeste is a sacrifice, she'll morally degrade. the Signal is excessive, the Song's chosen Carrier disintegrates.

The ascetic, for the greater glory of God, degrades and mortifies the flesh; Judas did the same with the spirit. He renounced honour, good, peace, the Kingdom of Heaven, as others, less heroically, renounced pleasure⁵

Celeste is a sacrifice: her eighteen missing years recall the Jesus narrative.⁶

she's 'sold her soul', given up her goodness.

her music is perhaps a net Benevolence

her music is perhaps a net Benevolence. will save us somehow, somewhere in the Century ahead.

she shows our species narcissism, brings us into clarity, at least. her song is loud, her show well-lit, a multi-modal neuro-synch. she keeps our eyes open to the word-flash: the virus code exposed on a forty-foot LED board.

the KFC Double-Down repulses me. i see the ad and am a brahmin, briefly: a virtuous eater, relative to America. the monstrous image stays with me, the memorable extreme: and soon i see my own kitchen critically. the vegan mayo, obviously - gluten-free, transfat-free, nutrient-free; and see how soft i cook my beans, purée a dozen plants into a P.C. flavor-bomb, a "curry".

art is half-aware, half-culpable

to let in song, a singer stays open to the mystery. must worship ambiguity. Hollywood & Broadway are trans-friendly, predictably.

a blurring in the credits, at the origins of song: of Muse & musician, performer & producer. a fusing in the lines of inspiration. the players e.g. are prone to an innocent plagiarism. Carol Kaye seems to be "a wonderful, warm, loving person"⁷ and a legend already - i believe she *thinks*, not just claims, it's her on all those Motown hits.

⁵ Borges, **Three Versions of Judas**

⁶ Daniel, my brother-in-law [an email correspondence]

⁷ Allan Slutsky, **Who Played 'I Was Made to Love'**