INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FILM AND MEDIA ARTS (2022) Vol. 7, Nº. 2 pp. 125-148

ijfma.ulusofona.pt
doi: 10.24140/ijfma.v7.n2.07

ACOUSMATIC FOLEY: SON-EN-SCÈNE

SARA PINHEIRO
CENTER OF AUDIOVISUAL STUDIES FAMU
(CZECH REPUBLIC)

Sara Pinheiro graduated in Cinema (Lisbon, 2008) and holds a Master of Music in Sonology (The Hague, 2012), where she is a guest lecturer. She teaches at CAS – FAMU since 2013. Her PhD project "acousmatic foley" is supported by the Parry Williams scholarship, at The School of Music and Media, in the Bangor University (Uk). https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2519-2075

Corresponding Author
Sara Pinheiro
sara.pinheiro@famu.cz
Filmová a televizní fakulta Akademie múzických umění
Smetanovo nábř. 2
116 65 Praha 1
Czech Republic

Acknowledgements
This publication is the outcome of the project "Acousmatic Foley" that was supported by the The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – Institutional Support for Long-term Development of Research Organisations - Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 2019.

Paper submitted: 9th January 2022
Accepted for publication: 18th April 2022
Published online: 13th December 2022

Abstract

"Acousmatic Foley" is practice-based research on sound dramaturgy stemming from *musique concrète* and Foley Art. This article sets out a theory based on the concept of "son-en-scène", which forms the sonic content of the mise-en-scène, as perceived (esthesic sound). The theory departs from the well-known features of a soundscape (R. M. Schafer, 1999) and the listening modes in film as asserted by Chion (1994), in order to arrive at three main concepts: sound-prop, sound-actor and sound-motif. Throughout their conceptualization, the study theorizes a sonic dramaturgy that focuses on the sounds themselves and their practical influence on film's story-telling strategies. For that, it conveys an assessment of sound in film-history based on the "montage of attractions" and foley art, together with the principles of acousmatic listening. In line with Kulezic-Wilson's proposal on an "integrated soundtrack", this research concludes that film-sound should be to sound designers what a "sonorous object" is to *musique concrète,* albeit conveying all of sound's fictional aspects.

Keywords: Acousmatic, Foley, Soundscape, Sound-Motifs, Sound-Actors, Sound-Props.

'But there is a microphone, to catch the last gargles'
Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson),
in *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950).

Sound design, foley art and *musique concrète*

As part of the sound post-production in filmmaking, Foley Art consists of performing the sounds from a certain action in the film in-sync with the image at display. It is a specific technique created with the purpose of adding the sonic details to a scene, either because they were not captured originally or because they were not *readable* enough. Thus, in most cases, foley is concerned with the actions performed by the characters, as seen in the image.

The technique itself emerged in the early years of sound in film, mostly due to technological limitations: recording sound-on-set was preoccupied with dialogue and the magnetic tape did not allow for recording several layers separately as we know of now (provided by multitrack systems). Therefore, at that time the concept of post-production was limited and consisted in creating all sounds at once in an alternative stage and simultaneously with the film image. Nowadays, this strategy persists because it remains very efficient, even if the post-production process has become way more complex.

In an apparent parallelism, Pierre Schaffer brought attention to daily sounds and their *musicality*, advocating for the potential patterns, gestures and envelopes in any and every recorded sound. *Musique concrète* actually emerged as a tape technique, building a tradition based on recording mundane sounds, which once brought to the studio would be manipulated and deprived of context. The principles of musique concrète go side by side with the concept of acousmatic listening: a mode of listening that focuses on the sonic traits of the recording instead of focusing on "what is" recorded. Both fields (foley art and musique concrète) share a focus on sound, but whereas foley is an audiovisual practice, *musique concrète* is dedicated to a compositional practice. And while foley art produces sound that is visually justifiable (even if the object used to create the sound is not the same as in the image); *musique concrète* disengages and emancipates sound from visual references, towards acousmatic composition. However, within this difference, the concept of acousmatic is oddly shared by both practices.[1]

In this line, "Acousmatic Foley" foregrounds the shared principles of foley art and *musique concrète* by looking at the common traits in their crafting modes. It is divided into two different perspectives: the *son-in-scène*, which focuses on the sound of the mise-en-scène and foregrounds the sonic content as perceived – as seen in the image; and the *mise-en-son* which focuses on the making of the sounds (in the studio or the foley pit), to be rendered as seen in the image later. And while the latter explores the idea of "the foley artist as an acousmatic listener", the relationship between the foley artist and the sound-objects chosen at the foley pit and in particular with the idea of gesture; the former puts forward a theory of sound design that is at its core fictional and dramaturgic. In a way, "mise-en-son" and "son-en-scène" unfold the acousmatic and the foley in "Acousmatic Foley", respectively. For that reason, the research echoes the core difference between Sound Design ("perceiving a sound") as a practice for a visual medium, and Concrete Music ("making a sound") as a practice of reduced listening while, at the same time, foregrounding their similitude. This dichotomy establishes the "son-en-scène" as the *esthesic* sound (refering to the processes that receivers undertake when perceiving a work) and the "mise-en-son" as the *poietic* sound

1 Although not new, there has been an increasing combination of the acousmatic concept in film in the recent years. I would like to clarify that a sound "off-screen" is not necessarily an acousmatic sound simply because it is not seen. The acousmatic concept is directly related to a certain disposal of causality, a decontextualization, and usually a sound off-screen in film is still as causal or contextualized as a sound on-screen.

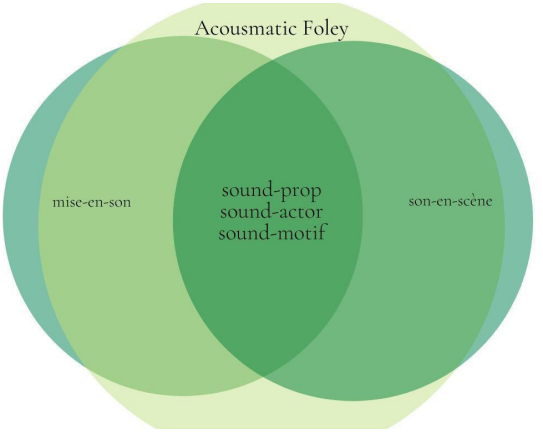

Fig. 1 Acousmatic Foley conceptual structure.

(refering to the creative processes that generate a work) according to Nattiez semiologic distinction (1990).[2]

Thus, although the formulation "Acousmatic Foley" seems to be an oxymoron, it exposes their shared principles: given that the foley artist chooses their props according to the sound it makes; and that the intrinsic sense of crafting in foley which is actually analogous to the process of making of *musique concrète*, the acousmatic mode of listening is in fact at the core of foley practice. Along the way, this research joins well-established references in both fields, highlighting the common traces in both paths, towards a dramaturgic understanding of sound.

To that end, this study will focus on the concept of son-en-scène. Hence, it will depart from a parallelism between the "three features of a soundscape", as proposed by R. M. Schafer (1999, p. 9) and the 'three listening modes' described by Chion[3], because the former focuses on the content of what is heard, and the latter on how that content is perceived. While the soundscape concept emerged within the context of acoustic ecology, and Michel Chion's 'listening modes' emerged from a general perception of the film apparatus, 'Acousmatic Foley' proposes a take on storytelling from a practical perspective, and it exclusively concerns the sonic mise-en-scène.

In line with this, the fictional soundscape is composed to serve the story – manufactured, unlike the natural soundscape which results from a given landscape. And while Schafer's concept pertains to a different context, this parallelism precedes yet another sequence of concepts that evoke the fictional craft intrinsic to foley, as well as the listening approach specific to acousmatic practice.

In sum, 'Acousmatic Foley' evolves from these concepts in order to propose a theory of storytelling that is specific to sound. The premise is to think of sound through the sound itself. Hence, three main concepts emerge: sound-prop, sound-actor and sound-motif[4], in order to advocate for an understanding of sound dramaturgy; sound as a tool of fiction-making, in its manufacturing nature and its 'make-believe' effect.[5]

Soundscape and listening modes

According to Murray Schafer, there are three layers in a soundscape (1999, p. 9). These layers are sonic features of a given location, unfolding in time as the space unravels.

2 See also Kane (2014).

3 Hagood (2014) also proposes a partial adaptation of R. M. Schafer's and Chion's theories to Foley, but through the concepts of "schizophonia" and "syncresis", respectively.

4 Bordwell, Thompson and Smith also use the term 'sound motif' but as a generic device to keep the attention throughout a narrative (2009, p. 295-296). In a way, their concept is similar to the idea of 'auditory driving' (Boltz, M. G). The 'sound-motif' hereby proposed will aim at a more precise sonic-dramaturgic function.

5 "Make-believe" is a core concept of fiction. See Currie (2008) and Stecker (2009). Etymologically, fiction implies the making or manufacturing of something. It presupposes a creator. Additionally, it requires 'the willing suspension of disbelief' (Coleridge and Shaw 1817), which suggests that it is not completely detached from reality despite being a construct.

In that sense, any sound may belong to one or the other feature according to context, and none of these positions are rigid.[6]

The first layer of a soundscape is a 'keynote'. It refers to sounds that affect our immediate perception. It comprises recognition on a primary level, providing an idea of general context (urban, countryside, indoors, outdoors, big, small, etc). Because it is very immediate, it is also almost unconscious and unnoticed. In Chion's 'listening modes' (which are also three) this would be naturally equivalent to the "causal listening". The context, event, action or location justifies what is heard. It is also the most common mode in film: diegetic sound. The opening of *The Other Side of Hope* (Kaurismäki, 2017) illustrates this. As it begins, the sound of the seashore, cranes, cargo ships and workers contextualize the initial location of the story, without further detail or particular information and in a cordial relationship with the image. In this sense, a 'keynote' is the equivalent of an establishing shot.

The second layer will then have a certain additional value, implying not only contextualization but something further. It is a 'sound-signal', going beyond the immediacy of a keynote. Eventually, it produces a conclusion or reaction according to the context. It is a semantic sound: for example, a subject is driving on the road. Then, s/he hears an ambulance's siren approaching and moves aside to let it pass over. The ambulance's siren acquires a semiotic meaning. Whether this meaning exists due to social premises or it has been established within the story, the sound is heard in a 'semantic listening mode'.[7] These sounds are commonly used off-screen because they are easily recognized. For example, in *Blackmail* (Hitchcock, 1929 - *talkie* version), the sound of the doorbell chiming in the main shop acquires a specific and direct meaning within this fictional context. It has been established along the narrative and it means precisely that "someone is coming in". At some point towards the end, that sound announces the arrival of the inspector who will close the case and arrest the suspects and it rushes to the conclusion of the plot.[8] This is

6 See also Truax for a take of soundscape as "how the individual and society as a whole understand the acoustic environment through listening" (1984, p. 12).

7 In the recently revised version of "Audio-vision. Sound on Screen", Chion opts for the term "codal listening" instead of semantic (2019, p. 25). On the same note, he now subdivides causal listening into "detective" and "figurative" (2019, p. 22). Although causal-detective briefly considers foley as a craft and mentions a profilmic listening mode, none of these changes are pertinent to the "Acousmatic Foley" argument, which will continue referring to the first edition (1994).

8 *Blackmail* has been widely analysed [see, for example, Barr (1983), Ryall (1993), Telotte (2001), Borger (2012) and McDonald (2015)]. It marks the beginning of what Weis called Hitchcock's "aural style" (1978, p. 42 *as cited in* Telotte, 2001, p. 186), which comprises using many sounds off-screen, subjective sound, dislocated sound, asynchronous sound, among other techniques. In sum, a "mode characterized by the [great] control of sonic material" (McDonald, 2015: 50), whose credit should be shared with his partner Alma Reville who worked alongside him since 1923. The plot concerns Alice (Anny Ondra), who kills a man in self-defence, and Tracy (Donald Calthrop), who blackmails her. The detective (John Longden) is trying to exonerate her, in the name of their romance. Some of the action takes place in a shop, whose door has a bell (like a chime). The meaning of this sound is established very simply: the prop hanging on the door produces an identifiable noise every time someone opens the door. The sound occurs a couple of times throughout the narrative, becoming easily associated with the idea of "someone walking into the shop". First at 00:48:15, in a rough way and then repeated at 00:50:07 (it should have happened earlier, with the cue from Alice's eyes 00:49:58). Finally, it becomes definitely established when Alice is already sitting at the breakfast table. As the chime is heard, she appears tense even as her father merely announces that a customer has arrived (from 00:50:17 to 00:50:20). Later in the story, towards its resolution, there is a moment of heavy tension between the three main protagonists. They are in the living/dining room right next to the shop's room (which has been previously established). At that point, they know (and so does the audience) that any time the police inspector will arrive to solve the crime. As the tension grows and the blackmailer tries to get the most out of the situation, Alice hears (in panic) the sound of the bell from the shop's door: the police inspector is coming and she will be denounced now (or so she thinks).
Blackmail exists also in a silent version and the editing of this scene is considerably different. Comparing both versions shows how sound affected the narrative. It also shows "the sort of narrative tension that attended" resulting from combining sound with image (Telotte, 2001, p.187). In the silent version, the detective's gesture shows that he has noticed someone arriving in the other room. Then, Tracy escapes

a moment of 'semantic listening' (Chion, 1994, p. 26) shared between the audience and the characters.

Last, the third layer is the 'sound-mark'. It comprises sounds that have a certain specificity to them, a uniqueness. It can refer to a sound existing only in a specific location, as a landmark, but it can also refer to a sound that acquires that uniqueness *in relation to* something. That can be the context (such as childhood memories), it can be in relation to other sounds (various sounds in combination with one another) or even the specificity of the acoustics in that location (which render the experience unique). A sound-mark can be immediate and/or semantic, or none. It is not only sounds that one finds in specific conditions, but can be a finding in itself. It requires attentive listening and thus involves a certain engagement from the listener, hence it may depend on one's personal relationship with it. In film, a sound-mark could be a *specific* sound, associated with a *specific* character. Again, not necessarily a single sound *per se*, but perhaps a combination of sounds or even a general aesthetic or texture.

The sound design of *Bad Boy Bubby* (de Heer, 1993) is one such example. The film opens with Mam (Claire Benito) shaving Bubby (Nicholas Hope), her grown-up son she has held captive his entire life. James Currie's sound design is unconventional: the atmosphere is quite noisy, bassy – the kind of spectrum usually cleaned away from the original recording. Besides that, the perspective is the most striking aspect: the sound of Bubby's actions is very close and sharp, while the sound of Mam's actions is barely audible (even when she is in the foreground and he is in the background). The sound is very harsh (close-microphone), sometimes on the threshold of lo-fi. According to the director's statement in The London Film Festival Guide (1993b), the whole sound was recorded with a set of binaural microphones sewn into Hope's wig. In this way, the main perspective is always Bubby's: what is closer to him is the most audible. This technical decision, together with unusually evident atmospheres (ambiances), had a clear impact on the general perception of the film.[9] In this sense, the sound is very specific to Bubby's position. It gave the 'soundtrack a unique sound that closely resembled what the character would actually be hearing' (de Heer, 1993b).

Following the parallelism, the sound-mark would be equivalent to the 'reduced listening mode', which is equally ambiguous to define. Chion (1994) borrowed the concept from P. Schaeffer (2013), outlining the focus 'on the sound traits of sound itself, independent of its cause and its meaning' (1994, p. 29). But, in spite of reduced listening emerging from the wish to focus on the sound itself, 'the audiovisual contract' challenges this idea. While in P. Schaeffer's *In Search of a Concrete Music* (2013), the 'reduced' premise does justice to the 'acousmatic'

through the window and it becomes a consequence of the detective's action. In this way, the focus is on the two male characters and Alice's expression is absent. In the sound version, however, the focus is more on her fear.
There are other significant differences concerning both versions. When Alice sneaks in her room she is promptly awoken by her mother, who is misled to think her daughter has been sleeping all night. However, in the music version, the scene goes by quickly with her mother reporting to her that a murder has happened and hurrying her to wake up (naturally, through intertiles). She then walks downstairs immediately after her mother (00:43:21). This scene lasts slightly longer: her mother uncovers a bird cage as she wakes up Alice. Ever since, the bird sings along (00:44:30), and Alice is shown dressing up. In the silent version, the bird does not exist. Thus, in the sound version, the shot of Alice out of her room happens only later (00:46:31). Clearly, the sound directly affects the narrative through its potential for meaning-making and audience response. For a full comparison between both versions please refer to Barr (1983). Finally, rumour has it that Czech native Anny Ondra was uncomfortable with the novelty of her voice being recorded and has asked to make a sound test (McDonald, 2015, p. 46). This recording can be found online:
http://www.openculture.com/2014/12/alfred-hitchcock-conducts-a-politically-incorrect-sound-test.html. In the end, she was dubbed by Joan Barry.

9 "The film also used 31 individual directors of photography to shoot different scenes. Once Bubby escapes the apartment, a different director of photography is used for every location until the last third of the film, allowing an individual visual slant on everything Bubby sees for the first time. No director of photography was allowed to refer to the work of the others" (de Heer 1993b).

listening experience, in an audiovisual context there is a certain cause vs. effect, a relation between sound and image, a natural illation taken from it. As Chion posed it, 'we never see the same thing when we also hear [and] we don't hear the same thing when we see as well' (1994, p. XXVI).[10]

While many variations of the original 'reduced listening' have emerged throughout the years (See Dhomont 1989, Smalley 1997, Chion 2009, Tuuri & Eerola 2012, Gorne 2018); for this purpose it matters mostly that 'reduced listening' is also dependent on the listener's engagement and becomes an active perceptual experience. Possibly, *Bad Boy Bubby* is an example of a sound-mark (or of reduced listening) because of its sonic 'added value' (Chion 1994, p. 5) and potentially transcendent experience.[11] Additionally, it sustains Thom's point that "characters have ears too" (2005) by proposing characters themselves experiencing different listening modes according to the different functions of the dramaturgic soundscape. And, in a manner of speaking, Bubby himself is experiencing reduced listening.

Nonetheless, a sound is never just one thing, one sound. Every sound is an accumulation of sounds (unless a synthetic pure sinusoidal wave). In this line, no sound would correspond only to one feature of a soundscape. Depending on the context and/or on their relationship with one another, a sound may occur as a keynote, a signal or a mark. For instance, the sound of a church bell can be a keynote if it is perceived in general terms, to contextualize the location (for example, in an establishing shot, overlooking the village where the story will take place). But it can also be a sound-signal if it informs the listener of something precise, such as the starting/ending of the mass. Eventually, it could be a sound-mark if it implies something even more specific, such as the Big Ben bells.

Furthermore, these sounds occur neither all at once, nor fatally as one layer – the perception of a space is time-dependent and therefore these soundscape features may unfold as a process. This should be particularly true in the case of a fabricated product such as a film, for its artistic intent, because the content might be handed-in also in an intentionally progressive way. By the same token, a sound heard causally can also acquire a meaning along the way and, depending on how it is used, become a reduced listening experience.

Soundscape and sound design

From this perspective, the process of designing the sound for a film scene is in fact very close to rebuilding these layers of a soundscape. Either when recording location sound or when layering the atmospheres in post-production, one starts with an "ambiance" that fills in the general elements of the scene, matching the expectations of such location. Then, perhaps one tries to add more information, something slightly less generic and eventually more precise with that specific location, story or scene. The more layers one adds, the more details one aims at shaping. For example, a scene in a restaurant will start being crafted with an ambiance that covers the visuals in general. That is, it should match the amount of people in the restaurant, if they are eating or not; if talking amongst themselves, etc. Then, a second layer will be added for further information: if it is very busy, if it is very loud, if it is posh and quiet, etc. This will help justify the mood of the scene and of the characters.

Then, one can also hear the mumbling specific to that language (walla), not only matching the idiom of the film for example, but also the genre (comedy, drama, and action genres will all have different approaches). Once the sounds provide realism to a highly faked scene, one can add more textures

10 Chion's listening modes are a necessary simplification of Schaeffer's proposal given that they are applied to the audiovisual context.

11 The idea of the 'audiovisual contract' being incompatible or somewhat contradictory with 'reduced listening' has been denied by Michel Chion (Pinheiro, 2020).

and details (for example, the humming of a fridge or a ventilator, footsteps, etc.). All these, in articulation, will compose the perception of the scene. In the end, sound designers aim at crafting their own sound-marks, seeking not only for unique sounds but perhaps an individual aesthetic within the fictional soundscapes created. The idea that sound designing is like composing a soundscape emphasizes the textures, rhythms and diverse layers one listens to. For example, the soundscapes (atmospheres) created in *Headless Woman* (Martel, 2008) contribute to portraying the main character; and addressing the attention to their emotional condition.

In this line, also *We Need To Talk About Kevin* (Ramsay, 2011) illustrates a case of sonic composition. Throughout the film, besides the general atmospheres, there is the sound of the water sprinklers in particular contributing to the perception of the story. First, that sound becomes familiar and well established within the context: it opens the film and occurs a few times subsequently. Later on, it becomes a suggestion of danger and tension, illustrating the mother's fear (Tilda Swinton, from 01:17:10), as a sound-signal. As Power puts it, "every event hints at disaster" (2012, p. 80). Towards the end, it colors the very cathartic and lonely moment of the mother coming back home (01:38:55). She arrives at an empty home after the catastrophic episode at her son's school. That previous suggestion of danger has now been confirmed. The water sprinklers amplify the whole experience and in this moment of confirmation they fill in the empty space, literally and figuratively, giving voice to the mother's emotions. This sprinkler sound belongs to the soundscape of the family's home and therefore the memories associated with it. It illustrates many aspects of the narrative and it evolves from a signal into a soundmark of the film.[12]

There are several examples in history that can illustrate the value of sound in film, but too often the focus is either on dialogue or on the music soundtrack. "Son-en-scène" aims at taking the sonic components of the mise-en-scène itself in order to put forward the specificity of sonic dramaturgy. The concept of foley carries on this heritage. Whether or not the sound of the sprinklers were done through foley technique or hard-effects (sound library), it is not relevant.[13] The concept of foley carries on this legacy of crafting the fiction which allows directing the attention for the sounds in-scene. If we observe these sounds in detail, we understand the concept of sonic dramaturgy.

Towards a sonic mise-en-scène (or a varying history of sound for film)

The assessment of film-sound history throughout the sonic mise-en-scène derives usually from two strands: on the one hand, the "Montage of Attractions" that marked the aesthetics of Soviet cinema; and on the other, the "broadway-alike" musicals that conducted the transition to sound in Hollywood.

Long before the advent of sound for film, Dziga Vertov had manifested his interest in recording sound. In 1916, he started field recording with a phonograph and with these sounds he composed two pieces: *From the Rumor of a Cascade* and *From the Rumor of a Sawmill* (1916). However, the technology could not do justice to the listening experience on site, so

12 In fact, the sound designer Paul Davies has a number of "fetish" sounds, which can be heard along his filmography. For example, in *You Were Never Really Here* (Ramsay, 2017), we can hear a constant play with the barely recognizable high whistle/hiss of a train, which provides a proper texture to the main character's emotional condition (for example, 00:14:00). In *The Florida Project* (Baker, 2017) the sound of water sprinklers is also constantly used (along with helicopters). In this case, both provide a sense of routine of this place, but also suggest a sense of *nothing happening,* of emptiness. At the same time, for their repetition, they illustrate the deteriorating situation of that mother. In this case, the sprinklers are not carrying any meaning beyond its dramaturgic function as part of the soundscape, they certainly add value to the interpretation/experience of the narrative.

13 In a recent interview, Paul Davies explains that the sound of the sprinklers was created by combining two different library sounds. See Pinheiro (2022).

he tried filmmaking instead (Hicks 2007). *The Man With The Movie Camera* (1929) showed his interest in registering the quotidian, and preceded its sonic counterpoint: *Enthusiasm – The Symphony of the Donbass* (1931). While the former was considered an ode to the film camera; the latter was an ode to the microphone and sound (Bulgakowa and Bordwell 2006: 236; or "The Woman with the Earphones", Fischer, 1977, p. 29). This counterpoint is very visible in the protagonists: the man leading the "kino-eye", moving around the city; and the woman leading the "kino-ear" (Vertov, 1925). *Enthusiasm* is an examination into the Soviet miners and a paean to machines. But it is also a sound-film, particularly location sound. The sound drives the editing, triggers the changes, making those 'mechanical sounds woven together, producing a symphony-like effect' (Vertov, 2016). The continuity is held by these rhythms and changes in sound (sometimes these changes are also triggered or motivated by the perspective of the radialist). It is the sound that justifies the cuts and the perspectives.[14]

In this line, Vertov stated 'it will not be through opera or theatre representations that we will prepare. We will be intensely ready to offer proletarians from all countries the possibility of seeing and hearing the whole of the world in an organised manner. Of being mutually seen, heard and understood'. (Vertov, 1925, p. 5).[15] But these manifestos were not exclusively musical – rather, they were a new perspective in music. In other words, this attention to sound began with the 'montage of attractions' (Eisenstein and Gerould, 1974), in which sound was one of the formal elements under the principle of harmonic and melodic resonances as a stimulus to keep the spectator's attention.

In the same period, the transition to sound in Hollywood was also motivated by music. In hindsight, it seems a natural transition taking into account that music was already present as an accompaniment during the projections. In this sense, it was quite smooth: the orchestra moved from the theaters to the shooting location. This might be taken as a North American version of the 'montage of attractions' since it also follows patterns of consonance, melody and rhythm. It smooths the editing and is entertaining, and keeps the spectator's attention. For example, Rouben Mamoulian's *Love Me Tonight* (1932) opens with a growing accumulation of sounds, establishing a very clear rhythmical pattern. According to Power, "*Love Me Tonight* opens with Mamoulian's original Symphony of Noises, adapted from the stage version of Porgy and transferred from Catfish Row in Charleston, where it anticipates domestic tragedy, to an idealized comedic Paris" (Power, 2018: 100); this "Symphony of Noises" (Power, 2018) introduces the film, setting up the comic tone.

The film begins with sound in sync with the image: the first five strikes of the church's bell justifying the cuts. And then, the sound of a man hitting the floor with a pickaxe. In a way, this "Symphony of Noises" is edited based on the same principle of 'montage of attractions'; that is, keeping the interest throughout the scene through 'a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated (...) to produce (...) certain emotional shocks (...) [and] ideological conclusion[s] (Eisenstein and Gerould, 1974, p. 78). In this case, it is achieved not by 'subtextual meaning' but through syncopation. It is not an ode to machines themselves, but also to the working-class.[16]

14 Fischer offered a very detailed list of the "reflexive aural" techniques in the film, accounting to 15 different editing strategies. See Fischer (1977, p. 30-31).

15 In fact, these ideas would also be advocated later in *The Liberation of Sound*, in which Varèse and Wen-shun claim music to be organised sounds, and Varèse himself 'a worker in rhythms, frequencies, and intensities' (1966: 18).

16 With this approach, Vertov echoes Russolo's futurist manifesto *The Art of Noises* (1931). According to Russolo, music should benefit from all electronic achievements in order to surpass its own (analogic) limitations (Warner and Cox, 2004, p. 10). In the meantime,

From a technical point of view, shooting dialogue introduced a whole new kind of craft and aesthetics. The implementation of direct sound changed numerous layers in the making of a film: it affected the framing of the action, the actors' performance and, consequently, introduced new content in screenplays. While the transition was progressive, the impact of sound recording was noticeable from this very early stage until the concept of sound design was then established.[17] In sum, this paper proposes a take on the sound objects, events or actions that not only provide an augmented understanding of the scenes, but also move forward the story itself. These either belong to the mise-en-scène, were written beforehand or have been crafted in the editing stage.

Thus, the focus is directed towards the idea of foley precisely because foley is preoccupied with the sounds of the mise-en-scène and how that provides a reading of the story, often in very subtle ways. For example, in "Battle of the Sexes" (Dayton and Faris, 2017), there is a crucial scene in which tennis star Billie Jean King (Emma Stone) is clearly "accepting the call for adventure" and, to emphasize the emotion of the moment, her clothing becomes very audible.[18] In short, she challenged a couple of men, promoters of the tennis tournament, saying she will make her own (due to the unequal payments between female and male tennis players). As she walks out of their office with Gladys Heldman (Sarah Silverman), they are petrified with what they just said and their clothes make a lot of noise as they walk away. Usually, this kind of noise is diminished, hidden, or used to a minimum. In this scene, it is maximized precisely because it punctuates the emotion of the moment. It is also a subtle illustration of their "femininenes" but showing the impracticality of their clothing (which incidentally is also a subject of the plot given that the female tennis players had to follow, so to speak, a dress code to which the men were not similarly obliged).

Yet, approaches can also be way more explicit. For example, the opening sequence of *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Leone, 1968) as an example of a counterpoint for waiting, building an expectation while at the same time pretending *nothing is happening*. And yet, so many things are actually happening: several squeaks and swings, changing in perspective: a metal swing somewhere, a rocking chair and a wind turbine; footsteps, water splashes and a telegraph, water drops, a fly buzzing and finally the whistle of a train approaching. In this case, the narrative is clearly provided by the sounds of the mise-en-scène illustrating how the story is told by the foley sounds; that is, by the son-en-scène.

Foley art, towards the son-en-scène

Amongst other novelties, the advent of sound for film brought the possibility to record dialogue, to dispose of the theater-alike staging, and to discard the intertitles. With this, new challenges arose.[19] In Hollywood, musicals represented the biggest tendency, alongside westerns (MacGowan, 1956,

17 The term Sound Design is often attributed to Walter Murch, for being the first appearing as such in the final credits of Coppola's *The Rain People* (1969). The term was ultimately popularized later with another Coppola film, *Apocalypse Now* (1979). See Ondaatje and Murch (2003). For valuable testimonies of early sound recording on set see LoBrutto (1994). For an assessment of the technical changes and strategies in early sound, concerning multitrack, dubbing and post-production conceptions see Hanson (2007), in which she proposes the concept of "affective soundscapes" as an addition to sound designers's attempt at "theorising their own practices and creative decisions" (31). Accordingly, she also puts forward cases in which the sound "creates and leads [the emotional] expectation" (41), also based on early examples.

18 Call for adventure is one of the 12 steps in the "Hero's Journey". See Christopher Vogler, T*he Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Seattle: Michael Wiese Productions, 2007).

19 The change itself has been portrayed years later in *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950), in which former silent-film star Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) struggles with the change in the industry. Two years later, *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly, 1952) made a plot out of a similar premise: two silent film-stars (Don Lockwood and Kathy Selden – played by Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds) are facing the end of their careers, until Cosmo Brown (Donald O'Connor) decides to include music in their films. The plot revolves around the fact that Selden is completely

p. 292). One particular challenge for musicals concerned the physicality of all the dancing and moving in general. Most of the singing was dubbed through ADR; a process that excludes any other sound rather than recording the voice itself.[20] But in this way, it would seem very detached and unrealistic. While the voice and the music were optimal, all the tapping and other gestures were as if mute. There was no embodiment.[21] For that reason, the sound engineers had to make separate recordings with professional dancers, in order to capture the noises of such movement (mainly the footsteps). This technique was named after the first known technician working on it: (Jack) Foley.[22]

Yet, foley comprised more than the dancing and the body movements of the actors/characters.[23] It included objects whose movement had to be audible too (as, for example, the door chimes in Hitchcock's film mentioned earlier). The original technique implied re-enacting the actions in order to produce the same sounds. It comprised a re-staging of the scene in one room while playing the image in another: the artist watches the actions in a projection across a window and establishes a number of cues to match. Since engineers did not have access to multitrack recording, this was a limited task and had to be executed in sync with the image. As technological developments introduced more possibilities (such as multitrack recording), foley also expanded as a technique and began to include more actions (Lobrutto, 1994).[24] In that sense, foley brought credibility to the scenes because it made them physically believable but it also evinced all the other existing sounds that were missing.[25] It was a step further in the

unable to sing and even her speaking voice is laughable. For that reason, she is dubbed by Lina Lamont (Jean Hagen). The big climax occurs when Kathy is singing in front of the audience and the real singer (Lina) is revealed behind the curtain. Without turning this example into anecdotal, the "curtain veil" analogy is unavoidable. See Kane (2014).

20 ADR is a technique for "Automated Dialogue Replacement". In this period, the technique was underdeveloped and the lip-sync is sometimes very noticeable. For example, the bridge scene in Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* (1962) illustrates the lack of accuracy (from 00:13:55 to 00:15:22). Eventually, this limitation would also influence the director's choices. In "La Point Court" (1955), Varda's framing very often avoids a clear view on the protagonists, letting them having long walks and conversations which were then added in post-sync. The director often explained that she transcribed all the actors said on set, in order to be able to re-stage it later. Nowadays, the technique is even more common, but less noticeable.

21 The idea of sound embodiment could lead to a completely different discussion. See, for example, Campbell (2017). In the context of this research, Pauletto summarizes the idea very clearly: "if the voice delivers the threats, Foley delivers the punch" (Pauletto, 200, 342), alluding to the physicality foley brings to the image.

22 For a romanticized version of a Foley Artist, see *Lisbon Story* (Wenders, 1995).

23 According to Ament, "it is common for most cineastes to confuse an edited sound effect for Foley and vice versa. The simple explanation is that the Foley artist is concerned with what the actor is doing, whereas the sound editor is editing in effects that deal with the action or environment. However, this is not always the case." (2009, XV) In fact, Foley does not concern the result sound itself, but the crafting of it. The same sound can be considered a foley sound in one project or an effect in another, depending on how it was crafted. In fact, no sound should be noticed as foley, because all foley sounds should blend in with the image and seem originally recorded with it (while a sound effect can actually produce a certain "artificial" impact on the audience). For that reason, "son-en-scène" comprises foley as the sounds that belong to the scene, in contrast with sounds that are obviously an artificial effect. For more on Foley Art, please refer to Ament (2009) or LoBrutto (1994). Additionally, "sound effect" may also refer to signal processing, either unnoticed (equalization, compression, etc.) or more noticeable (reverb, delay, vocoder, etc.). See Pauletto and/or De Man (Filimowicz, 2020).

24 For a general assessment of the technical changes and strategies in early sound post-production conceptions see Hanson (2007), for a particular assessment of such on foley, see Wright (2014). The second part of this study focuses on the idea of "foley gesture" and therefore goes more in-depth about foley itself. Pinheiro, Sara (2023). *Foley Gesture, mise-en-son* [unpublished manuscript]

25 For instance, the classic song-scene 'Good Morning' in *Singin' in the Rain* (Donen and Kelly 1952). The three friends have been talking all night and have finally realized it is morning. Their footsteps during the dialogue are not accurate (01:00:44). When the song starts and the characters start tap-dancing, every footstep is clearly marked and audible (01:01:49).

history of sound design – particularly under the perspective of mise-en-scène – because it brought in another layer of communication. It conditions the understanding of a given scene, and in most of the cases without notice.[26]

In this way, the implementation of diegetic sounds brought in a new possibility to *show* and *tell* without showing or telling visually.[27] Through the years, many conventions have been developed around this possibility. Some sound choices are purely technical – such as using the sound of closing a door to justify the cut (which is much closer to what Bordwell, Thompson and Smith mean as 'sound motif', and Boltz proposes as 'sound driving'). Others are somewhere in between technical and aesthetic choices, such as using the whistling of a kettle to convey the idea of growing tension – as seen in *Desperately Seeking Susan* (01:25:40; Seidelman, 1985), *All Good Things* (01:05:37; Jarecki, 2010); *Trust* (01:27:37; Hartley, 1990). Or yet some are meaningful, such as the sound of flies signifying something disgusting – as seen in *Case for a Rookie Hangman* (00:06:40; Jurácek, 1970); *Cutting Heads* (00:28:40; Rocha, 1970); *Westworld* (Season 1, Episode 3; 00:32:09; Nolan, 2016).

Finally, some are habits that have been implemented: floors always squeak in situations of quietness, swings are rusty, hearts pound loudly, cats always purr or meow, dogs always bark in villages, microphones always feedback, etc. For example, a face punch is a case that "film tradition" built up on. There is an established expectation of how it should sound (Burtt, in LoBrutto 1994, p. 140). Sometimes it can be a precious value in a film, such as *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1980).[28] All these cases (sounds that trigger cuts, sounds that convey emotions or actions that are expected to sound in a certain way) establish the conventions of sound for film. Some of them occurred so often that they became syntactic. Other times, they are only idiosyncratic, isolated, specific cases in which the syntax is established within. In fact, the syntax draws from film tradition, but the semantics are self-contained within that one film. Instead of reduced listening, it is augmented listening – as in amplified by film culture. To start with, this syntactic is set up by sound-props.

---

26 Mamoulian himself seemed to be aware of this. Before *Love Me Tonight,* there are a few punctuations worth mentioning in *Applause* (1929). Again, the plot revolves around the backstage of a theater. It tells of Kitty Darling (Helen Morgan), a fading burlesque star who tries to keep her well-educated daughter away from her own decadent life. April Darling (Joan Peers) seems to be indeed an ingénue. She has run away from the convent and is completely shocked by her mother's life. As her disappointment peaks, she meets a random man in the street and sits with him, talking in a bar all night long. When the bar is about to close, neither April nor Tony (Henry Wandsworth) wish to separate. As they are about to leave, they discuss where to go next. In this somewhat misogynistic environment, she should be more cautious and the audience should fear for her. By the door, the owner is at the cash register, next to them. His gestures are rough and he makes noises with all the coins and the cash register (00:47:07). These sounds are loud. They disturb the understanding of the dialogue and it is not by chance. They are there to cause discomfort. This moment might have different interpretations or go by unnoticed, but it nevertheless disturbs the perception of the events. Right after that, they go to the Brooklyn Bridge (as planned). The first seconds of this scene have an unusual dark atmosphere, which only emphasizes a sense of danger. Soon enough it dissipates and gives room for their dialogue, suggesting the validity of their romance. Fischer rightly points out that "Mamoulian freed the camera, while exploring a range of sonic dynamics that added immeasurably to the film's effect" (in Weis and Belton, 1985: 236), which is also why some moments are impressive, as when April walks through the sidewalk with a mid-shot of her lower legs and all the crowd seems overwhelming because of the sound chaos, portraying her own emotions (00:42:24).

27 "Show vs. Tell" is a concept initially proposed by Anton Chekhov (See Yarmolinsky, 1954; and Lubbock, 1921).

28 Frank Warner explained extensively how these punching (and fighting) sounds were created In LoBrutto (1994: 36). In the same series of interviews, Paul Zydel and Ben Burt also provide information about how this 'punch sound' became recurring in many other soundtracks (103 and 139). See also Hagood (2014).

Sound-props

In theater, a prop is part of the *mise-en-scène*: an adornment or another means of characterization, which contributes to the development of the action or the characters. It may help comprehend some of the psychological traits of the characters. A sound-prop is, then, a sonorous object that has been included as a feature of the character. It is chosen according to its sonic-dramaturgic function. It denotes and performs as the character. It is often through the use of a sound-prop that the film is able to produce subtle meaning.

In *Bye Bye Monkey* (Ferreri, 1978) there is such a case. Lafayette (Gérard Depardieu) is a young and errant electrician who works at a wax museum. At the start, he is trying to sell fake fabric to his boss, Andreas Flaxman (Kames Coco); they argue. As Lafayette leaves, he blows a whistle in protest (00:05:22). This whistle appears after the cut, he was not seen with it before that and he is holding it now out of the blue. Instead of arguing with words, he blows the whistle. From then on, Lafayette always carries it. As the narrative develops, the whistle acquires different functions and it is implemented as Lafayette's own keynote (00:07:32; 00:22:23; 00:23:29). Often, Lafayette blows the whistle instead of talking. He blows it as a punctuation, dynamically. First, he answers his friend Luigi (Marcello Mastroianni) with the whistle twice. First, when Luigi is calling for help (00:25:06), and then, also protesting because Luigi bounced back the "WHY?" inscribed on the wall (00:46:51). Later, he has an intimate conversation with Rosa Maria Calogero (herself), in which he only "talks" through the whistle (01:08:27); just as in the sensual interaction with his girlfriend Angelica (Abigail Clayton) right after (01:15:55). The whistle becomes part of his character. It never acquires any particular meaning beyond the immediacy of its existence, but it mediates the perception of this character and his story.

Another example of a sound-prop is found in *The Sky Trembles and The Earth Is Afraid and the Two Eyes Are Not Brothers* (Rivers, 2015). This film-on-film veers between different planes of reality. At one point, Oliver Laxe's character shows-up with an outfit made of cans and their metal lids (00:55:00).[29] Going forward, as his tongue has been cut off, this outfit is his form of expression. It illustrates his mood. If he moves more calmly or more intensely, the sound is symptomatic of his intentions. His body becomes a whole sound-prop, and the sound-prop becomes the main character. Hence, a sound-prop is not just a prop. The sound properties of this prop will help characterizing the agents in the story. It is a syntactic sound, implementing a lexicon with direct associations. However, this syntax is purely technical; as the sound does not carry any distinctive meaning besides what it stands for (thus equivalent to a keynote, in a causal listening mode). It is an object, as the *musique concrète* 'sonorous object', but without musical aspirations (yet).[30]

Finally, *Tuvalu* (Helmer, 1999) bridges all the layers among the examples above. The opening sequence (excluding the prelude in the ship, thus from 00:02:45) is also a collection of sounds, but in this case, the sounds are not just keynotes nor "music makers". They shape the aesthetics of the characters, they establish the rhythm of the scene but they are also incorporated in the actions diegetically. In this hyper stylized film, every sound is almost a character on its own. Their use goes beyond characterization: each sound has a function

29 People start dressing him with the costume (00:51:01:00) and then he's pulled by a horse, with the costume fully on him (00:55:00:00).

30 Wong (2012) listed a series of different considerations on "sound-object", which has been extensively redefined. The common denominator among them all is the musical potential of the "object". Recently, there is a transition to the idea of "sonorous object", after the translation of *Treatise on Musical Objects: An Essay across Disciplines* (P. Schaeffer, 2017). For a shorter assessment, please see Godøy, 2006. Often, in foley a "sound-object" alludes to a sonic body as a material object which is the source of a sound, versus the *musique concrète "*sonorous-object" which is the frozen recorded sound (a 'closed groove') with a beginning and an end, and which will then be possible to transform and manipulate.

beyond being featuring the characters. For example, the cane is a sound-prop (00:03:23), then blending in with all the other rhythms and textures (00:03:29); but the broom plays a sound-signal (00:04:05 and 00:04:24).[31] In a film with sparse dialogue and a blind character, all textures are prominent and meaningful. When a sound-prop becomes a specific signal, and its general meaning (keynote) becomes articulated into some specific role in the narrative, it becomes a sound-actor.[32]

Sound-actors

Sound-props become sound-actors when acquiring a functional role within the narrative. They produce meaningful associations, besides their immediate presence. The prop is implemented beyond its referential value and acquires a precise role in the story. Its meaning is a consequence of the associations established in the course of the film. In other words, it unfolds from being a keynote to becoming the character's own sound-signal (and thus heard in a semantic listening mode).

In *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* (Gilliam, 2009), Valentina (Lily Cole) carries an anklet all the time. This prop is quite discreet but prominently closes the story. Throughout the narrative the sound is Valentina's keynote. When she is present, her anklet is audible (00:31:14). Then, towards the end of the film, her father (doctor Parnassus – Christopher Plummer) is a beggar on a high avenue (their paths diverged). As he is keeping his head down, he hears his daughter's anklet when she walks by him (01:51:20). He had no visual contact before he recognized her sound. He then follows her, finding her faith, happy and healthy. The story ends with this resolution. This sound-prop is actually a (esthesic) sound-actor for its role goes beyond the immediacy of the sound (as a keynote) and it develops into a specific role in the narrative.

That is also the case of the lighter (a zippo) in *The Butcher* (Chabrol, 1970). However, instead of having only, in a manner of speaking, one "line" in the film; it accompanies the intrigue the whole time. As the story goes, there was a murder. Within the story, there has been a zippo light which passes on from character to character, and it carries the suspicion of who the murderer might be. In other words, those who carry the zippo become the target suspect. Finally, in a moment of increasing suspense and tension, the village's teacher Hélène (Stéphane Audran) is trapped in a classroom. She hears the sound of the lighter coming from the other room (01:15:27). This sound is informative: whoever shows behind the door is the murderer. The zippo is a prop, but it has a precise dramaturgic function. Therefore, it is an *esthesic* sound-actor within its dramaturgic role. It was included in the story for its sonic value. That is, it was chosen because it could make a distinct sound.

Finally, in *Anna Karenina* (Brown, 1935) there is another sound-signal. Early on in the film, Anna Karenina (Greta Garbo) goes to the main railway station. When she is about to leave, the departing train is marked by a combination of sounds including hammering. It first happens in a causal listening mode, with a man checking the ice on the rail (00:09:55). When the train departs, sudden shouts ring out. The crowd (and the audience) understands that someone committed suicide on the railtrack (00:10:42). Anna Karenina notices it too, but carries on. When her journey is reaching a dramatic end, she returns to the station. This sequence seems almost like *déjà vu*; immediately recalling the earlier scene. The growing tension is confirmed when the hammering is heard once more (01:28:46). The signal is composed of two sounds that carry no particular understanding. As objects, there is a train and a hammer. As actions, there is a train about to depart, and a hammer being used to break the ice stuck on a train rail. But

31 The idea of signal is, in fact, used throughout the whole time. For example, when both characters mimic certain sounds and actions (sound-signals) to convince the owner of a crowded swimming pool (00:05:54:00).

32 In "son-en-scène", this is the "esthesic" sound-actor, in contrast with the "poietic" sound-actor from "mise-en-son".

this sound has been grounded in a collective memory in this context. For "in a narrative there exist simultaneously a linear dimension – events happen at different moments in time – and relations of cause and effect between these different events" (Nattiez 1990, p. 242), the hammering corresponds immediately and directly to the idea of suicide.[33]

Thus, the hammer becomes an esthesic sound-actor too. A sound-actor with musical aspirations, for it blends in with music. Its existence is so well justified that it can afford desynchronisation, gaining autonomy from the image, synchronising with different movements in the frame. It extends the waiting, giving it a tempo, increasing the suspense and the expectation. It starts in a causal listening mode, it moves onto semantic mode and eventually becomes reduced too. It matches the breaking of the ice, the movement of the train departing and finally becomes part of the musical theme. It is not a musical composition by itself, but shows musical aspiration.

Sound-motifs

Stemming from the musical concept of *leitmotif* (a musical phrase that presents a recurring idea or theme), a motif creates a pattern, defining a sort of internal logic. It operates slightly differently from a *leitmotif* because it is more *concrete* to sound means rather than musical arrangements (as in "sound-object" rather than "musical instrument", because its meaning is embedded as the sound-actor, rather than on tonal principles).

From the development of a sound-prop into a sound-actor emerges the possibility of composing a sound-motif.[34] The sound-motif is the result of developing the sound-prop into a sound-actor, and the sound-actor into a musical construction. As with the features in a soundscape, these are layers in the sound-design. In the same way that one sound can be a keynote (prop), and evolve into a signal (actor); a prop or an actor can evolve into a sound-motif. That happens when the sound develops into a construction that is *liberated* from these references, without disposing of them, and becomes a *sentence* in itself.

In this way, the sound-motif has a specific fictional role, as the sound-actor, but it is mostly perceived as an aesthetic value (in parallel with a sound-mark). The harmonica in *Once Upon a Time in The West* (Leone, 1968) is an example of a sound-signal/sound-actor that turned into a sound-motif. In this case, it happens to be a musical object but its existence is intrinsically connected with the plot. In spite of being a musical instrument, the harmonica is a sound-prop with an *acting* role, due to its semantic function. Thus, the harmonica is no different from the hammer; except that its relevance in the plot is more complex. In the opening scene, the sound of the harmonica announces a key character's arrival (Charles Bronson; 00:11:44). From that moment on, it is his keynote. When the harmonica is heard, his presence is assured (00:33:13). However, the harmonica carries the whole background-story of the character. It is revealed through the harmonica why this man is there, and why he wants revenge (02:26:26). Although it builds on the film's musical theme, its sonic value is beyond the music itself. The sound of a harmonica signifies more than just the presence of a person; it is the signifier of death. Therefore, the harmonica is a sound-prop that evolves as a sound-actor and becomes also a sound-motif.

33 A more recent adaptation by Joe Wright (2012), also made use of the train as a motif but in the opposite way, that is, visually independent: the image of the train reappears constantly (and exhaustively), most of the time with an insert of the rail for transitioning to another scene.

34 Pickett proposes a similar terminology ("sounding object motif") which is a crossover of "[P.] Schaeffer's sound object and Tenney's perceived *clang"* (in Filimowicz, 2020). The argument is based on the idea that alike a composer, the sound designer too is an "organizer of sounds". However, Pickett imposes musical measures (notes, fundamental tones, tempo, harmony, etc.) into sound designing, instead of actually liberating sound from musical conventions.

However, in the *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo* (Coixet, 2009) there is a sound-motif without intrinsic musical connotations. From the beginning, the sound design is quite exquisite: the opening is a selective perspective on two characters, albeit in a crowded room. As it continues after the credits, the first scene in the market also has a slight touch of sonic montage of attractions, in the sense that the sound drives the editing but also embellishes it. The motif first happens there, when Ryu (Rinko Kikuchi) and Takeo Nakahara (Min Tanaka) are introduced as good friends. The motif is a sampling of her walking in the market where she works, because his character is a professional sound recordist (00:09:20). They become distant after Ryu starts having an affair with David (Sérgi Lopez). The recordings Takeo made of their conversations and moments together become the tool for his nostalgic narration. He narrates while listening to the recordings. The sounds narrate with him. While he is listening to one of the recordings, there is a subtle crescendo rhythm (ca. 00:10:55). Slowly, that becomes again the sound of her walking in the market (ca. 00:11:07). Under this "headphone filter", the sample establishes itself as a recorded sound, reproducible and recognizable (ca. 00:11:13 until 00:11:56). This sound marks their relationship, but also their separation. It illustrates the prospects he had deposited in them, and at the same time their misfiring. It is not very clear how, but he continues on recording her when she is meeting David (00:43:27). He listens to them. The sound-motif stands for his pain while he listens to her enjoying falling in love (00:51:49).[35] It is a sound-motif because the structure of the original sound has been modified. It is treated, arranged, altered. Such shows an intention beyond the original source. An aesthetic intention. The sound-motif is the artistic artifact, the *poiesis*.

In other words, the sound-motif is a possibility of 'sound to be itself' in its full compositional possibilities and, at the same time, transcend its own origins. As argued before, the 'audiovisual contract' holds onto a certain relationship between both sources of information (visual and sonorous). Thus, the sound-motif is the possibility to bridge an audiovisual experience into a reduced listening moment. It is the sound-mark of that story, of that character, of the filmmaker or, ideally, of the sound-designer. It carries the possibility of composing with sound objects. It proposes to compose the soundtrack of the film with the sounds of the film.[36]

Another example, *Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton, 1991) provides a sound-motif in these terms. The narrative takes place in the Crenshaw ghetto of Los Angeles, and deals with the challenges of such an environment. Much of the story revolves around Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.) and his father, Furious Styles (Laurence Fishburne) who is very invested in raising him outside the patterns of violence and substance abuse heavily caused by racism. Many times, we follow the father's concerns as his kid grows up to be a teenager, and the subjacent complications.

35 There is another sound that punctuates her "betrayal". We first see Ryu eating ramen with Takeo. He tells her that if she makes no noise while eating it, she is not eating it properly. Later, she transfers the game to her lover David, until David himself makes the noise too and this achievement becomes a special moment for them.

36 *Madame B.* (Bal and Williams-Gamaker, 2013) was approached in a similar way. In this unconventional adaptation of Flaubert's classic, Emma Bovary (Marja Skaffari) faces her own void in a society where she, as a woman, cannot have an active role. She then drags herself in a futile and excessive consumerism. In a scene where she is bored, with nothing to do, all the objects in her living room are simultaneously interesting and a source of boredom. She drinks a cup of tea. She stares at it, insists on stirring the spoon, stops stirring. The sound of this movement has been processed, magnified, reversed, among other techniques. Every time the audience will see her bored again, this sound reverberates in the audio mix. Additionally, the three men in her life have a sound-motif. As it happens, she wore three different dresses in three crucial moments for these relationships. They were all chosen according to the noise they make, and individually became recognizable as the sound-motif of that relationship. Altogether these become the sound-motif of Emma herself – as if she was the sum of all these encounters (including the boredom-motif). These motifs are available at https://soundcloud.com/sarapini/sets/madame-b.

Fig. 2 Boyz n the Hood, 1991, John Singleton.
The image the J cut transitions to (~00:37:51:00).

In this film, there is a sound-prop that accompanies the father occasionally. First, there is a quite heavy sequence: Tre finds a lost child and returns the child to a troubled mother. As he continues his way, he is grabbed by a group of boys in a car, who point a gun at him, just for fun. Tre is trying to seem tough, but he is obviously scared. As the car drives away, we hear the sound-prop for the first time. It can be described as a metallic sound, and it gives the cue for a J cut. That is, the sound precedes the cut and we only see the source of the sound after: the father is sitting at his desk and holds two metal marbles in his hands, bouncing them. The image below shows what the sound cuts to:

In this sequence, they sound again later on (00:43:00:00), while the father is listening to Tre clearly making up some story he supposedly had with a girl. At this point, the sound is not very meaningful. However, the father carries these marbles around, they are also seen at his workspace's office later (00:01:02:00). The sound becomes familiar, and also slowly acquires a connection to the father's concerns: he always seems pensive and worried when "playing" with the marbles. This becomes more explicit because the story also has become more problematic, and the marbles become a clear sound-signal of the father's worries about his son. Then, there is a conflict already started between two groups of "kids", and that escalates quickly. When Ricky gets killed, Tre finally surrenders and tries to get revenge too.

In the meantime, the father is home, worried, waiting for his son. He plays with the marbles again (01:36:07:00). By now, this sound-prop becomes an actor because it acquires a particular meaning in the narrative. In fact, at this moment it will go beyond that meaning because it develops into a motif, a sound-motif. In this scene, this sound now cues for a L-cut and blends in both with the (integrated) soundtrack, the diegetic sounds of guns being handled and loaded. Besides that, it also blends in with the (musical) soundtrack becoming one more layer in the composition alike the instruments used (mostly a drone and a chime). The sound of the marbles is transposed to a completely different scene, but actually, its meaning remains the same because Tre is shown struggling with his own decision of seeking revenge and wants to quit it.

The marbles repeat its gesture and remind Tre and us alike of the father's principles, of a life without succumbing to the ghetto's marginalization. As the music increases form, the sound continues and eventually cuts back to the father waiting at home, spinning the marbles as if this mantra could bring his son back. The editing keeps intercalating with the son in the car, and he finally asks to be "let out". The sound of the marbles seems to faint subtly, until returning to the father at home, waiting. He then stops spinning them. When Tre returns home, his father is waiting for him and makes the sound again with the marbles, trying to decide what to think of his son's blooded clothes (01:41:17:00).

The most striking aspect of these marbles is that the sound belongs both to the *poesic* process, as they were clearly included in the way the story was written; as to the esthesic process, as they clearly inform the perception of the story. Besides, they were not a mere adornment of a character, and they were not merely signifying something within the

narrative. This sound goes beyond that because it establishes a *sentence*, a recurring theme and it communicates that idea both diegetically and extra-diegetically. This falls in line with the dramaturgic concept of acousmatic foley, for showing sound as a tool of fiction-making; but also with the concept of "integrated soundtrack" as proposed by Kulezić-Wilson. Accordingly, the concept reckons "the interconnectedness of all soundtrack elements: [...] score, speech and sound effects" (2020: 3) favoring less the music elements, rather than providing an equal understanding of all the sound-design elements. Incidentally, this concept informs the participatory cases by participatory cases of *musique concrète* and/or sound art in films.

In summary, the concept of sound-motif proposes a take on the soundtrack that actually integrates the diegetic elements into its musical compositions. These music compositions would not be decorative or mood-orienting only, they would be informed by the narrative and informing too. As seen below, these concepts rely on mutualism, just as much as the elements of the soundtrack should too. They are parallel but also transversal (Figure 3):

Conclusion

In line with Altman asserting that every "sound initiates an event" (1992, p. 19), and Nancy stating that "to listen is to always be on the edge of meaning" (2007, p. 7), Acousmatic Foley aims at proposing a take on sound for film that is, in fact, specific to sound's influence on the dramaturgy. As an emancipation from voice, text and musical soundtracks' interpretations, this paper proposes a take on film dramaturgy that focuses on the sonic components of the mise-en-scène and how these drive the narrative. Many of the examples aforementioned have been widely referred to in film analysis, but rarely with a focus on its elementary narrative function. From an early stage, it is possible to observe that the scripts were already affected by the possibility of including sound (beyond dialogue and music) but by combining the common assessment of film-sound history with the sonic perspective of *musique concrète*, the concept of son-en-scène exposes the "sound-object" in the mise-en-scène.

The core difference between the Acousmatic Foley theory and those from narratology and film studies lies precisely on *musique concrète*'s well established idea of sonic data: a

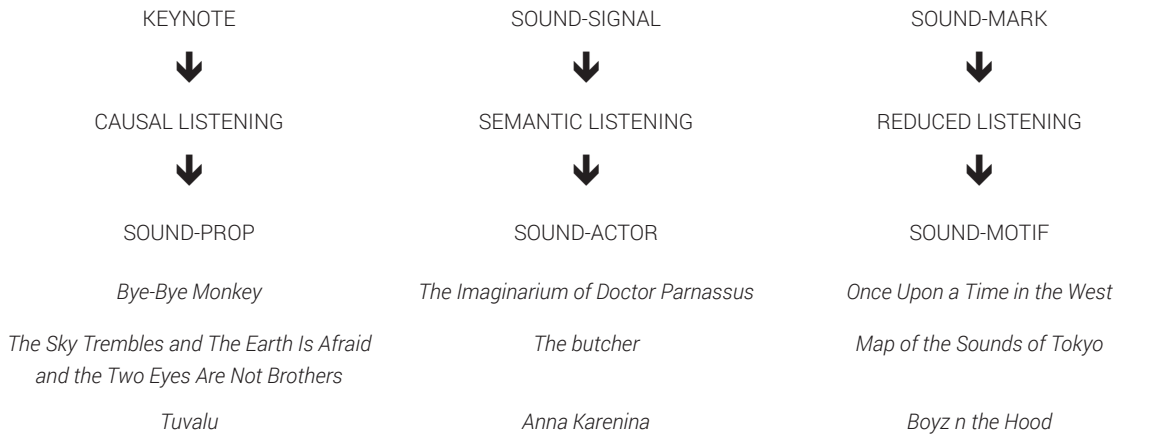

Fig. 3 Illustration of the parallelism between the concepts

sonic render of auditive information. Needless to say, within an audiovisual relationship, this render is tied to the visuals themselves. For this reason, other theoretic approaches consider the audiovisual context, the narrative, the voice and other sources of meaning rather than looking at the performative aspect of the sonic events – which is not the same as an acousmatic context. For example, Machatý (1933) shows the same interest in a train sound in Ecstasy (01:00:56:00) as Pierre Schaffer in his earliest studies. However, Machatý's sound is used to convey diegetic information.

Many times, these analyses focus on audible information indeed, but not on the sounds themselves. For example, in *Edward Scissorhands* (Burton, 1990), Edward's (Johnny Depp) hands are his own keynote. Although not used extensively, there are at least two moments in which the sound is used with an extended purpose.[37] However and more importantly, this feature of Edward's character has not been chosen for sound purposes specifically. Perhaps due to that, it is seldom, and subtle. Unlike the whistle in *Bye Bye Monkey* or the "dress" in *The Sky Trembles*, which are used for their sonic value, Edward's scissorhands are not a sound-prop.

In order to assert this specificity of sound dramaturgy hereby proposed, Acousmatic Foley combines the "acousmatic" focus on sound, while informed by the fictional crafting of "foley". In a first instance, it looks at the examples of son-en-scène in order to exemplify how sounds can convey dramaturgic meaning. That is, those cases in which the narrative is told by the sound of an object in the mise-en-scène. This turns the object into a sound-prop, a mere adornment of characterization. When the sound-prop actually plays a specific role in the development of the narrative, then it evolves into a sound-actor. If this very same sound is actually able to compose the musical theme of the film, it is a sound-motif. And so, in this conceptualization of a sound-motif, one finally sees the materialization of a *sonorous object* as proposed by *musique concrète*, even if attached to visuals.

Under this perspective, a chance has been missed in *Inception* (Nolan, 2010). The main character, Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio), carries a totem with him. It is a spinning top that he relies on, to find out in what (reality) dimension he is living in. If he is dreaming, the spinning top spins ceaselessly. If he is awake, it should fall at some point. In the final scene, Cobb finally makes it home and tests the totem one last time. And only then, it is possible to slightly hear this potential sound-actor. Precisely because one should wonder if it will fall or not, the sound is accentuated. This totem is, in its potential, a sound-prop. Additionally, its sound could have played a role in the narrative, a character of its own and then, eventually, it could have become a sound-motif. But the sound of prop was never really established, the sound itself never acquired particular meaning, and certainly was not part of the musical theme. Had this motif been implemented, there would be no need for so much "music driving" in the film. This totem could have been to the soundtrack what a sonorous-object is to *musique concrète.* As a sound-prop, it could have developed itself as a signal, taking the causal listening mode towards reduced listening within that fictional experience.

When Foley takes an active part in the sonic dramaturgy, it tends towards a form of acousmatic composition, albeit in a cinematic context. In fact, the idea of acousmatic music to be a form of "cinema for the ears" (Dhomont and Bayle in Kane, 2014, p. 51) is not new, for the form of presentation in acousmatic music is by all means similar to cinema's.

Acousmatic Foley only proposes concepts which materialize that. The sound-prop summarizes both *musique concrete* and

37 First, Edward is trimming the bushes in the garden and his presence is audible off-screen (00:48:11 and/or 01:14:10). The sound off-screen keeps scene continuity but conceivably also implements a sound that should be recognized and associated with him all the time. Then, he accidentally cuts Kim's hand (Winona Ryder; 01:17:33) and is now perceived as dangerous and threatening. From this moment, the sound of his scissor-fingers is emphasized. His hands start making more noise than usual (01:19:33; 01:22:35).

Foley practices, as much as the principle of the sound-motif is, in the end, acousmatic. Its musicality will not depend on whether we recognize the sources, despite this being their previous function in the narrative. This exchange between sound design and the *musique concrète* culture is long due. Kulezić-Wilson also proposes an understanding of sound design and its elements under this light, suggesting the term "integrated soundtrack" to approach sound design in a way that paramounts music in a less hierarchical way. But, controversially, this proposal still draws attention to sound design precisely through its similitude with the musical soundtrack, proposing to erase the boundaries between them.

Ultimately, the proposal is to liberate the soundtracks from their musical leanings, while at the same time establishing sonic patterns which are simultaneously story-telling and musical. That is the proposition of *son-en-scène*: a sonic content rooted in fiction (the sonic scene) which can have a grammar of its own and therefore be specific to sound dramaturgy. In the end, the sound-prop is in fact a prop (something fictional) that makes sound (something sonorous) liable to convey meaning within that narrative – and an aesthetic experience outside it.

References

Ament, Vanessa (2009) *The Foley Grail.* Focal Press.

Altman, Rick, ed. (1992) *Sound Theory/Sound Practice.* Routledge.

Barr, C. (1983). Blackmail: silent and sound. *Sight and Sound*, 52(2), 123-126.

Bradley, Edwin (2004) *The First Hollywood Musicals: A Critical Filmography of 171 Features, 1927 Through 1932*. McFarland.

Boltz, Marilyn. (2017) Auditory Driving Cinematic Art, in *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 1. pp. 77-93

Bordwell, Thompson & Smith (2009). Functions of Film sound in Film Art. In *In Film Art: An Introduction.* McGraw-Hill Education. pp 318-326.

Borger, Laura D. (2012). There's Something British about that: Aural Expressionism and Montage in Hitchcock's Blackmail, Psycho, and The Birds. *Research Papers*. Paper 260.

Bulgakowa, Oksana, and Bordwell, David (2006). The Ear against the Eye: Vertov's 'Symphony' [with Response]. *Monatshefte*, vol. 98, no. 2, pp. 219-243.

Campbel, I. (2017). John Cage, Gilles Deleuze, and the Idea of Sound. *Parallax*, 23:3, 361-378, DOI: 10.1080/13534645.2017.1343785

"John Cage, Gilles Deleuze, and the Idea of Sound". Parallax Vol 23, Issue 3: Sounding/Thinking. Abingdon: Routledge

Chion, Michel (1994) *Audio-vision. Sound on Screen*. Columbia University Press.

_____ (2009) Guide to Sound Objects. Translation by Dack, John and North, Christine. (available at http://ears.pierrecouprie.fr/spip.php?article3597)

_____ (2019) Audio-vision. Sound on Screen. Columbia University Press

Crafton, Donald (1997/1999). The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926–1931. University of California Press.

Currie, Gertrude (2008) *The Nature of Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2008

de Heer, R. (1993). *Directors Statement - London Film Festival Guide* (available at https://archive.org/details/badboybubby-scree00rolf)

Eisenstein, S. & Gerould, D. (1974). Montage of Attractions: For "Enough Stupidity in Every Wiseman". In The Drama Review: TDR, Vol. 18, No. 1, *Popular Entertainments*. pp. 77-85.

Filimowicz, M. (2020). *Foundations in Sound Design for Linear Media. A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Routledge.

Fischer, L. (1977). "Enthusiasm": From Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye. *Film Quarterly, 31*(2), 25-34. doi:10.2307/1211784

Geller, T. (2003). Arzner, Dorothy. *Senses of Cinema.* http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/arzner/

Hagood, M. (2014). Unpacking a Punch: Transduction and the Sound of Combat Foley in Fight Club. *Cinema Journal* 53(4):98–120.

Hanson, H. (2007). Sound Affects: Post-production Sound, Soundscapes and Sound Design in Hollywood's Studio Era. *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image, 1*, 27 - 49.

Hicks, J. (2007). *Dziga Vertov: Defining Documentary Film.* I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Kahn, D. (1999). *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts.* MIT Press

Kane, B. (2014). *Sound Unseen. Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice.* Oxford University Press.

Kittler, F. A. (1986) *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford University Press

LoBrutto, V. (1994). *Sound-On-Film: Interviews with Creators of Film Sound*. Westport.

Lubbock, P. (1921). *The Craft of Fiction*. Charles Scribner's Sons.

MacGowan, K. (1956). *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television,* Vol. 10, No. 3. University of California Press, pp. 288-301.

McDonald, M. (2015). Hitchcock's Blackmail and the Threat of Recorded Sound. *Music and the Moving Image, 8*(3), 40-51. doi:10.5406/musimoviimag.8.3.0040

Nancy, Jean-Luc (2007). *Listening*. New York: Fordham University Press

Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. (1990). Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music? In *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115(2). pp. 240-257

Ondaatje, M. & Murch, W. (2003) *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film.* Bloomsbury.

Pauletto, S. (2017). If the voice delivers the threats, Foley delivers the punch. In Mera, M., Sadoff, R., & Winters, B. (Eds.) (2017). *The Routledge Companion to Screen Music and Sound* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315681047

Power, D. (2012). We Need to Talk About Kevin. *The New Soundtrack*, Volume 2 Issue 2, Page 79-81, ISSN 2042-8855.

Power, D. (2018) Symphonies of Noise: The Urban Scoundcape in Rouben Mamoulian's Applause, City Lights, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Love Me Tonight. *The New Soundtrack.* Volume 8 Issue 2, Page 91-101, ISSN 2042-8855

Pinheiro, S. (2021). Sound has always been immersive. An Interview with Michel Chion. *Artacta* #5. https://arteacta.cz/

sound-has-always-been-immersive-an-interview-with-michel-chion/

Pinheiro, S. (2022). Beyond pristine sound. An Interview with Paul Davies. *Artacta* #7

Ryall, T. (1993). *Blackmail*. British Film Institute.

Schafer, R. M. (1999). *Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Inner Traditions Bear and Company.

Schaeffer, P. (2013). *In Search of a Concrete Music*. University of California Press.

Scruton, R. (2009) *Understanding Music: Philosophy and Interpretation*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.

Smalley, D. (1997). Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes. *Organised Sound* 2 (2): 107–126.

Stecker, R. (2009). Fiction, Nature of, in Davies, S. Et al. *Companion to Aesthetics*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 275-278.

Thom, R. (2019). Screenwriting for Sound. https://randythomblog.wordpress.com/2019/04/11/screenwriting-for-sound/

Telotte, J. P. (2001) The Sounds of Blackmail: Hitchcock and Sound Aesthetic, in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 28:4, 184-191, DOI: 10.1080/01956050109602840

Truax, B. (1984). *Acoustic Communication*. USA: Ablex Publishing Corporation

Tuuri, Kai & Eerola, Tuomas (2012). Formulating a Revised Taxonomy for Modes of Listening. *Journal of New Music Research*, 41:2, 137-152.

Varèse, E. & Wen-chung, C. (1966). The Liberation of Sound. *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 11-19.

Vertov, D. (2016, July 14) in Tanabe, R. New World Encyclopedia. //www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Dziga_Vertov&oldid=997659.

Vertov, Dziga (1984) *Kino-Eye: The Writings Of Dziga Vertov*. University of California Press.

Warner, D. & Cox, C. (2004). *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group LTD. pp. 10–14.

Weale, R. (2006). Discovering How Accessible Electro-acoustic Music Can Be: The Intention/Reception project. *Organised Sound* 11(2): 189-200.

Weis, E. (1978). The Sound of One Wing Flapping. *Film Comment* 14.5 (1978): *42-48.*

Weis, E. & Belton, J. (1985). *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. Columbia University Press.

Wong, S. (2012). *Sound Objects: Speculative Perspectives*. University of California.

Wright, B. (2014). Footsteps with character: The art and craft of Foley. *Screen.* 55. 204-220. 10.1093/screen/hju010.

Yarmolinsky, A. (1954). *The Unknown Chekhov: Stories and Other Writings Hitherto Untranslated by Anton Chekhov.* Noonday Press, p. 14.

Filmography

Bal and Williams-Gamaker (2013). *Madame B.*

Brown, C. (1935). *Anna Karenina.*

Burton, T. (1990). *Edward Scissorhands.*

Baker, S. (2017). *Florida Project.*

Cassavetes, J. (1974). *A Woman Under Influence.*

Chabrol, C. (1970). *The Butcher.*

Coixet, I. (2009). *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo.*

Coppola, F. F. (1969). *The Rain People.*

Coppola, F. F. (1979). *Apocalypse now.*

de Heer, R. (1993). *Bad Boy Bubby.*

Donen, S. & Kelly, G. (1952). *Singin' in the Rain.*

Ferreri, M. (1978). *Bye Bye Monkey.*

Gilliam, 2009. *The imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus.*

Hartley, T. (1990). *Trust.*

Helmer, V. (1999). *Tuvalu.*

Hitchcock, A. (1929). *Blackmail.*

Jarecki, A. (2010). *All Good Things.*

Jurácek, P. (1970). *Case for a Rookie Hangman.*

Kaurismäki, A. (2017). *The Other Side of Hope.*

Leone, S. (1968). *Once Upon a Time in the West.*

Machatý, G. (1933). *Ecstasy.*

Mamoulian, R. (1929). *Applause.*

Mamoulian, R. (1932). *Love Me tonight.*

Martel, L. (2008), *The Headless Woman.*

Nolan, C. (2010). *Inception.*

Nolan, C. (2016). *Westworld.*

Ramsay, L. (2011). *Need To Talk About Kevin.*

Ramsay, L. (2017). *You Were Never Really Here.*

Rivers, B. (2015). *The Sky Trembles and the Earth Is Afraid and the Two Eyes Are Not Brothers.*

Rocha, G. (1970). *Cutting Heads.*

Scorsese, M. (1980). *Raging Bull.*

Seidelman, S. (1985). *Desperately Seeking Susan.*

Singleton, J. (1991). *Boyz n the hood.*

Truffaut, F. (1962). *Jules and Jim.*

Varda, A. (1955). *La Point Court.*

Wenders, W. (1995). *Lisbon Story.*

Wilder, B. (1950). *Sunset Boulevard.*