

ABSTRACT

The presented thesis describes the relevance that sound design displays to the narrativity of the radio drama. After a few introductory words, the author devotes himself to the archaeological excavations surrounding the radio play. Where do the terms that describe this own world of radio drama come from, and why are they so closely interwoven with those of sound design? From a historical work-up, we soon move on to a mapping, an illustration of the topology and classification of the audioplay landscape. A definition of the various surveys and landmarks lead the reader directly to a definition of theoretical methods, which seem relevant for the preparation of the present area of research. Scientific methods for the processing of auditory phenomena are included in the methodical toolbox as well as structuralist approaches. After this inventory of available tools, the author sets out to dissect individual works based on their narrative in relation to their sound design. Every radio play is chosen for another aspect of narrativity. This diverse features generate a pool of quantizable data, which then will be used in the conclusion for an in-depth analysis. Among other things, the author investigates the question of the lexical nature of sound, but also raises new questions, such as: Is radio play music?

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Fabian Schober (born 1993) commits his life to the artistic work on sound and image. After completing his Bachelor in Multimedia Art, specializing in Film at the FH Salzburg, he began to focus mainly on the shaping of sounds and designing a vivid auditive storytelling. Near numerous artistic approaches he soon also finished his master's thesis. Schober is currently researching the connections between narration and sound design and its instrumentalization, connecting his scientific with his artistic research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Before diving into the topics of narratology and sound design it was necessary to mark out the field of research, as well to lay out a media archaeological basis to work with in the further chapters. The overall question was which narrative functions sounddesign in the radio drama take and how this impacts the overall nature of the medium. The very rich historical background and connections to experimental music forms such as musique concrete comprised material for an extensive journey through the development of radio drama.

Taking a step forward I introduce various methodologies for analyzing such radio dramas, as well as an overview over the terminology and actual topology. An important factor of this chapter had to be the declaration of what radio drama is and what is not, as well as declaring concepts like “hearing”, “music”, and “silence”. As theoretical framework I finally introduce structuralism and the term “diegesis”, which join in the field of narratology.

As preparation of the analysis completes I now start dissecting some common radio dramas (of various genres, eras and dramatic intentions) in order to work out common features of how sounddesign tells a story. Mauricio Kagel’s “Aufnahmezustand”, Ammer und Einheit’s “Radio Inferno” und Jandl’s “Röcheln der Mona Lisa” are just a few to be named. It now becomes more and more clear that the focus of research shifted throughout the process of writing to the overall narratology of radio drama, which implicates that all sound of a radio drama might be treated as sounddesign.

So, the research of this thesis was designed with a lot of space to navigate flexibly around the conjoined fields of radio drama, sounddesign and narratology, with no presumable outcome to start with.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the question about sounddesign and its functions soon was replaced with the question about the overall narratology of radio drama, as the three constructing elements of the medium – voice, music and sounds – all together construct the concept of sounddesign. This conclusion is based widely on the influence of the “new radio drama”, which propagates the borderless treatment of all elements as equal storytellers.

During the analysis, I discovered that all of the portraited radio dramas work with some sort of *lexicality*. Which means, that every story that has been told works through generating images in our so-called *inner stage*. It can be words, that trigger those images, but also all sorts of sounds, that call memories, emotions, smells and synthetics of all senses, based on personal experience. It is our very personal database of experiences that serves as the *lexicon*, and the radio drama is simply the collection of pointers which points at those entries. This makes it possible for the inner stage to work at a very personal level. This thesis leaves of with some furthering questions: How is lexicality designed for people that lack one or more senses and how could this be put in an instrumentalized and generalized way of composing not only with sounds, but with pointers?

KEY LITERATURE

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