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The captivating use of silence in film:

How silence affects the emotional aspect of cinema

Erik Bihl

Tutor: Linus de Petris

Examiner: Kåre Synnes

Abstrakt

I detta kandidatarbete använder jag både Dense Clarity - Clear Density samt Kvalitativ Intervju som metoder för att vägleda mig igenom denna forskning om ljuddesign. Jag kommer att studera andra verk och utföra egna experiment, med detta vill jag se om det finns ett behov av att använda ljud och tystnad på ett kreativt sätt för att väcka känslor. Jag granskar, samt undersöker både film och litteratur från 1960-talet, ända fram till 2000-talet för att se hur användningen av tystnad i film har utfällt sig genom åren. Med att jag skapar en visuell produktion, så stärks min teori, som är att tystnad kan påverka filmens narrativ, oerhört. Men denna uppsats kretsar inte bara runt tystnad, utan även runt ljud som korrelerar med känslor och hur man kan använda sig av deras relation för att skapa en starkare produktion.

Nyckelord: *Dense Clarity - Clear Density, Kvalitativ Intervju, ljuddesign, visuell design*

Abstract

In this thesis I use both Dense Clarity - Clear Density as well as qualitative interviewing as methods to guide me through this examination of sound design. Through studying other works and executing personal tests I try to find out if there is a need to use sound and silence in a creative way to evoke emotion. I examine films as well as literature from the 1960s all the way to the 2000s, to see how the use of silence has unfolded over the years. I also create a visual production that strengthens my theory that silence affects narrative more than its credited for. But the essay isn't just about silence, it's revolved around sound too, expanding into how sound correlates with emotion and how one can apply it to their production.

Keywords: *Dense Clarity - Clear Density, Qualitative Interviewing, sound design, visual design*

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1. Preamble

In this chapter I'll discuss what my aim is with this thesis, as well as covering both my research question and my background for this project. I will also talk about the previous and current research that exists on this matter.

1.1 Background

Sound design has always had a key part in film. Creating landscapes of sound and extending pallets to new heights. Getting sound and silence to work together really flourish a composition. Silence emphasizes on the emotion that every single sound creates. The term for this type of silence in film is called "filmic silence". Filmic silence is defined as the lack of sound in a scene where only a quiet ambient track is present. This act is present in the most suspenseful sequences in a film order to elevate it further.

The use of filmic silence goes back to the origin of film where silent movies were introduced. And throughout time that developed into a method that could activate certain parts of our brains to trigger different emotions. This technique was used in a lot of movies then as well as today, even if the understanding of emotion is unimaginable because of the vast number of people with different tastes and experiences. To be able to pinpoint each individual's emotional response and to foresee their reaction is an extremely difficult and long process.

To illustrate this technique i've chosen three movies from three separate time periods. *Blow-up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966), *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998) and *There Will Be Blood* (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2007). In the final scene of the movie *Blow-up* (1966) the protagonist returns to the park where he discovers that the corpse that he projected in the blow-ups of his pictures is not there anymore. Michelangelo Antonioni amplifies the characters reaction to this when he removes almost every sound effect from this scene, causing the audience to react to the quietness.

The same way that sequence hit us hard, the Omaha Beach part of *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) were equally moving. The contrast in this film was that the director created a rollercoaster of emotions through having silent parts when the characters were underwater, then every time they went up for air the sound resurfaced. This way the audience really could understand how brutal this war was through implementing a contrast of almost complete silence, connected to some of the most extreme soundscapes to exist.

The third movie introduces the spectator straightaway to the function filmic silence can have. The opening scene of said film shows us a character working and struggling through a hot day. The absence of sound in this sequence doesn't change the visual narrative too much, it only enhances the story by being there.

So while watching films, like the ones mentioned, I got the idea that sound could affect a visual production in ways that haven't really been addressed before. It's relevant to discuss this matter as it could make more people aware of this method, so they can implement it in their own work. However, after writing about sound and how it correlates to emotion in an earlier course, I wanted to narrow it down to filmic silence. But I still wanted to keep a few vital parts of my earlier research from that course to make the reader understand the whole picture.

Paula Flash (*Film scoring today - Theory, practice and analysis*, 2012) mentions that by using music in film the creator can evoke certain feelings that hadn't been triggered otherwise. So my theory is that by not only using music, sound and picture, a composer could also work with silence to get to that emotional peak. I think that by having all four types of sound design, I could create a superior form of film. So by compiling this theory, I came to the conclusion that I was going to make a film with sound and silence as the main focal point, instead of having the picture in the center of attention as most films have. I will be guided by Walter Murch's (2005) method *Dense Clarity - Clear Density*, which takes sound as well as color and explore their correlation.

My production is directly built upon my theory, having both sound and silence in the center with a primitive visual aspect. The video is going to be based on the technique “ink dropping”. Ink dropping occurs when dropping small amounts of ink into a glass container (aquarium, water tank), while as filming the process. I’ll use different color combinations to create a broad spectrum of hue. All of the colors I’m going to use, will represent various emotions and every one of them will have its own auditory element as well. So for instance, if I drop a green color in the aquarium, the viewer could hear drums playing and that way creating a certain feeling from that action. So I want to create a film where the color palette changes depending on how the sound and the dearth of it evolves.

By doing these two workings, writing a text about silence and how it affects cinema as well as crafting an actual visual experience to go with it, I hope to create a deeper and better understanding of the issue at hand, getting the audience to genuinely appreciate the use of silence and sound when it is suitable for the emotional experience.

1.2 Aim

In my opinion, the most important part of being a sound designer is to understand what purpose sound has and how to exploit it to stimulate emotions. As a composer myself I feel that it's completely logical to use tone and noise to provoke the audience and to create a conversation about what they just experienced. But if you ask someone who doesn't work with sound on a daily basis and knows very little about it, then it may not be as obvious for them what it really does for a visual production.

The correlation between sound and emotion can be self-explanatory as most refer to music as sound and tones that arouses feelings. Film composers often considers music to be the language of emotion meaning that all pitches, tones and volumes affect a movie in their own ways. However, the same thing can't always be said about silence. If I want to tell a visual story, I need to have auditive parts that further illustrates it, in my opinion.

But what if having silent sequences elevates it additionally? As I mentioned earlier the use of silence has existed since the birth of cinema where silent movies were created. Back then the absence of sound were everywhere. Nowadays filmmakers use silence as a way to display peacefulness. I want to see how these methods work in practice and if they could affect or improve the medium of film. That way, i'll create an improved version of my film, as it now has another layer to it. That layer being silence.

1.3 Research Question

How does silence impact emotional response in audiovisual productions?

1.4 Previous and Current Research

In this segment I will explain the fundamentals of sound and silence, as well as the research behind it. I'll cover how they work together as well as how they work separately. I will also demonstrate why the need to learn how emotion and music correlates is vital for this work, as well as how sound can influence a visual story. The association between sound and picture has existed for a very long time and is still used in the same way today. To tell a more compelling and imperative story, the need to have auditive parts that further illustrates it can be evident. As a result you'll get a more complete and accessible production. So simply: sound is implemented into a motion picture to emphasize the experience as a whole.

1.4.1 The correlation of sound and emotion in visual media

The relationship sound and emotion has, goes beyond film and cinema. The two have been correlating since ancient times where theatrical plays used sound and music to get the audience to flourish feelings. It later developed into a crucial part of a performance. Whether it was ballet, drama or a play, there now was a need for something auditory. So when the artists in the early 1860s wanted a new form of entertainment, Richard Davis (*Complete Guide to Film Scoring*, 1999) claims that they were certainly going to use sound as a big part of it. That brings us to the late 1800s and the birth of cinema.

The concept of using music in visual art had already been established, while the use of dialog and ambience had not. Davis (1999) says there were a few sound effects thrown into the music, but in no way a full sound experience. This might not take people by surprise, as the first couple of movies created were under the term "silent film". In silent films the music made all the difference: it set the mood, the tempo and the story of the film and it utilised what the audience should feel in every single scene.

After the beginning of the 20th century, every year that went by, the use of sound and music spread like wildfire. Most filmmakers started using music as a technique to bring out certain feelings and to highlight a particular moment or scene in a film. An example of this can be seen in the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) where Dorothy starts to sing about how she fantasizes about a land far away from home. That way the audience gets a better picture of how she feels in that specific moment. This phenomenon is called “diegetic sound” says Flash (2012).

Diegetic sound is music or other sound sources that exist in the film and is something that the characters are able to hear and control. But the filmmakers have another card up their sleeve, called non-diegetic sound, which basically is the opposite. Background music, narrator's commentary or added sound effects who don't appear on screen, are some of the instances of this adds Patrik N. Juslin and John Sloboda (*Handbook of Music and Emotion*, 2011). Especially if watching a horror flick, seeing these two colliding with each other and creating different results are quite noticeable. Sometimes in a movie the characters hear something scary and starts to run, but at another time in the film it may only be the spectator who are meant to be affected by the sound. This is the purpose of diegetic and non-diegetic sound. These two new approaches to sound design took the film industry by storm. It was now possible to control the minds of moviegoers like never before.

To put all of the above in perspective you'll have to understand the conception of music as a form of sound design as well. Using music is the most common way to evoke emotion. It's so effective that pretty much every film creator today values music immensely and implements it in all of their films. Doing that will elevate the movie greatly. Reaching this emotional bliss can be challenging however, due to the fact that most tones and chords have already been used in other films.

Film composers often talk about music as the language of emotions, meaning that all pitches, tones and volumes affect a movie differently. These three things all contribute to reaching that ultimate euphoric experience.

When understanding the complexity of interacting with sound and music, you begin to question other works of art that doesn't implement them the same way. Something that's usually criticised by movie critics is how filmmakers build their sound palette says Davis (1999). A sound palette is simply the films colors. Every sound, tone or noise is a distinct hue or shade. Similar to painters the sound artists want to paint the movie with the suitable colors. For example in this case blue is often considered cold were red is often deemed as warm. At the same time grey equals dull and black could mean something eerie or even complete silence. All these different tones establish the films sound palette.

1.4.2 The use of silence in cinema

Silence is the calm before the storm, the quiet method to spark emotion in a scene and the easy way to show peace of mind. It's used in ways that amplifies a moment or the complete opposite. Letting us to take a minute to think about what just happened, but at the same time preparing us for what to come. But it could be so much more since we encounter the absence of sound every day in our real lives. According to Sven Raeymaeker (*Filmic Silence: An analytic framework, 2014*) silence in film is under the term Filmic Silence, as mentioned before.

Filmic silence is no mere representation of "real" silence, however it encompasses the essential parts. It's just there to complement the visual aspect, not to drag attention away from it. There is a specific order in most films where sound is removed, but that isn't always clear for the viewer. Over the film's timeline silence is scattered to endorse a certain feeling. Nonetheless absolute silence is pretty much unachievable due to the acoustics of the room, as most rooms doesn't have enough sound absorbers. Because of that, there is always some form of background noise even if the listeners aren't able to hear it.

The semantic possibilities in silence is almost endless, yet often ignored. Raeymaeker (2014) describes this in his thesis:

“The spectator is guided in the interpretation of semantic content by the relation of the currently presented silence to the corresponding images and the rest of the soundtrack. The relation between silence, sound, image, and the spectator is completed by the inclusion of narrative, which is more than simply the sum of sound and image. It is through the combination of these factors that the semantic possibilities for silence are created.”

Someone who works with sound production needs to take these semantic opportunities into account, as they are part of the fundamental mechanics of filmic silence. They help to spur the story and the narrative in it.

The creation of filmsound made silence possible claims Juslin and Sloboda (2011). It was necessary to interrupt the sound and the voices in the film so that it could probe more deeply into the matter at hand. That way film creators got a new element in their creation. But how do we accomplish perfect silence? To reach this euphoria it's required to consider the specifics of the scene in focus that's supposed to have the sound removed in. Every place that the sound engineers record have different levels of sound and absorption. So for example if they film on a location where there are big skyscrapers, they need the appropriate sound and silence specific to that place, a city ambience.

The engineers record something called *ambient silence*, which is used later in the background of the films dialog to create the desired feeling that this special action is briefly silent. Furthermore the ever lasting impression of this does not just come from the absence of sound. It's only apparent when it is put in the context and preparation. The easiest way to do this is to precede the silenced scene with a noise-loaded sequence. Like Michel Chion (1990) writes in his book “Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen” (1990):

“Silence is never a neutral emptiness. It is the negative of sound we've heard beforehand or imagined; it is the product of a contrast.”

In addition to this, John Cage (*Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 1961) adds that sound designers can express silence through subjecting the spectator to noises. Different noises can get us in different headspaces, like how the sound of the sea makes us calm, while the sound of a fire alarm has the reverse effect. So when they remove these sounds in a track the audience feels the divergence. A great instance of this is from the movie *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), where the director has us watching a close up of a cat in the spaceship, where they remove most of the sound from the alien to create the feeling of disconcerting silence to predate menacing developments. The film scenes preceding this are sonically rich to prepare us for the void that follows. But at the same time Ridley Scott (*Alien*, 1979) doesn't make it too obvious as the silence doesn't strike too quickly or suddenly, that leads us to form a bridge of emptiness.

One more way silence is used like this is through the rise of volume. This could be a ticking alarm clock that gets higher and higher or ambient music getting louder in the background as the scene goes on. Paradoxically we wind up with an anxiety-generating feeling of silence. When you have a sound that gets stronger and bigger every second, where the exclusion of other sounds make it even more intense, the filmmaker ends up with a scene that's terribly frightening. Alberto Cavalcanti (*Sound in film*, 1985) puts all of the above in perspective in a simple sentence:

“Silence can be the loudest of noises, just as black, in a brilliant design, can be the brightest of colors”

How does this relate to the soundtrack of a film? Can music be considered as a silent manifestation? According to Prof. Paul Théberge (*Almost Silent: The Interplay of Sound and Silence*, 2008), music can be thought of as a somewhat silent medium. The definition of music, however, comes from sound, not from the absence of it. But having silent elements in a song or composition can elevate the track. That's what he meant when he was talking about music as a form of silence: never actual silence, only partial.

Théberge (2008) continues to expand on the idea stating that silencing the conventional diegetic world pushes a dramatic score to the next level. Thus creating another layer where you get access to the mental life of a character in the film experiencing a dream sequence, like in the movie *Inception* (Christopher Nolan, 2010) for example where the film characters are thrown into each other's minds. In those scenes the sound and dialog is cut out and is succeeded by quiet ambient tracks. This sort of film act is referred to by Théberge (2008) as a metadiegetic moment, expanding the film's narrative with the use of diegetic silence.

Diegetic silence is used a lot nowadays in movies all over the world. Another instance of this is in the movie *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994) where the director generates a slow motion dream world around a scene after the main protagonist use drugs. As the protagonist get deeper into his phantasmagoria, the diegetic sounds are removed and the sequence appears silent before it's replaced by in this circumstance pop music. Keep in mind that these diegetic silences doesn't always just show the transition from reality to surrealism, they can also be used to represent inner dialogs, fantasies and even moments of cerebral anguish. That said, silence isn't always the opposite of sound, it can also be a combination of the two. Simply, almost silent.

To bring out the most of these audible and non-audible elements the need for a profitable method is clear. This will be done by using the method *Dense Clarity - Clear Density* (Walter Murch, 2005), that speaks about auditory functions that relates to visual colors. Through the connection between these components of sound design and emotion, it becomes apparent how this method can affect and improve the concept of film in our society ranging all the way from silent parts to visual aspects. The challenge with sound design is to enhance a visual project. This can be done with *Dense Clarity - Clear Density* (Walter Murch, 2005).

The previous and current research on this matter, as discussed above, shows that silence can have so many different purposes in a film. The research also displays that sound and silence cooperates efficiently, thus creating a fuller experience when implemented into a visual production.

2.0 Methods

In this chapter I'll discuss what methods I've chosen for this thesis, covering both designing and qualitative techniques. I will also talk about what means I used to create my short film and how these methods helped me complete it.

2.1 Design

My short film is based on the technique *Ink Dropping*, implementing both colors and lights to narrate the experience. Through using these colors and shades, I wanted to drive the narrative forward and challenge the viewer as the video doesn't include any dialog, only soundscapes. These soundscapes makes up my sound palette which includes not only sound and music, but also silence. These three areas of sound design is the focus of the movie and is used to stimulate emotion in the story. All of these different colors are directly related to sound and silence, creating an extensive range of audible hue.

Imagine a white background with lights that change color depending on what music or sound is played. The spectator follows a moving object, which in this case is the main protagonist, that goes through different feelings that are represented by both visual and audible colors. Then a flood of black covers the white background and the absence of sound gets more intense every second, then it turns into complete silence. This way I stimulate the "correct" emotions that triggers the "correct" reactions, creating a full film experience. My film is about just that, proving that dialog isn't mandatory and that silence can be a powerful source of emotive material.

2.2 Methodology

When doing a study around auditory aesthetics and emotional response, there is a need to contemplate if there is a right or wrong answer. Studying emotion isn't equitable as every text I read have multiple authors behind them, as different authors have different opinions and that equals to having no real truth or fact about this field of work. Emotion isn't really something that can be studied, as it is individual depending on your own situated knowledge. This situated knowledge comes from all directions of the spectrum and affects the reliability of the research I find. However, the research that I do collect is considered by many the "correct" answer, but it can't be for certain. If the authors have any hidden agendas, the text becomes inaccurate. Knowing this, I use the this research as a way to show all sides. It's not really about finding the answer or the facts, it's about starting a conversation about them. This is why I implemented a qualitative interview into my method, to see for myself if this information is valid.

2.2.1 Qualitative Interviewing

My bachelor thesis research question covers what I want to achieve with this work: I want to show that silence can have a great impact in the film industry. As of right now it has a vital part in soundscaping, but I'd like it to expand further. While reading several books and documents touching on this situated topic I figured that I should be using the method qualitative interviewing so I could get actual reactions to the issue at hand.

Qualitative interviewing is based on a few aspects says Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland (*Handbook of Psychology of Emotion*, 2013). By reading their book I interpreted that the interview could be done in two separate ways: Informal and conversational way or a guided adapted way. How do they differ? Well the first includes merely non predetermined questions, so the interview gets as natural and sincere as possible, while the second has a more guided way to lead the interviewee through it. In this paper i'm using a combination of the two approaches.

In this thesis I'm focusing on a distinct group, getting only results from a specific crowd. Edwards and Holland (2013) describes this in their book:

“Many definitions of focus groups exist in the literature, but essentially they involve a small group of people engaging in collective discussion of a topic previously selected by the researcher.”

By narrowing it down to only a handful of people I get a small but still as important grasp of information. Given the time stretch, there wasn't enough time to get a broader spectrum in the interviewing part of this thesis. I wanted to see how adolescents in their twenties reacted to silence and its impact in visual media. These subjects had a very limited knowledge of both sound design as well as visual design. Doing this I will get information directly surrounding this matter without having to go through someone else's research.

This is how the interview is structured:

The interviewee gets to watch a short film twice, one version with sound that I've implemented and the other one being the original taken from Philip Sansom (*The Back Hole*, 2008). The first video has a very minimal sound palette with a few elements of diegetic sound and a focus around silence. The second time I'll swap it with a video that's visually identical, but with both non-diegetic music as well as diegetic silence, that is created by me. This way I will get two diverse films where the emotional aspect is different in each part. Depending on what results I get from the interviews I will be able to see with my own eyes how the subject really works. This way I get to see if my research question is necessary or if the film can stand on it's own without the means of diegetic and almost perfect silence. I will also find out if sound is as important as I thought in a visual creation.

This interview consist of four questions with four purposes:

1. Did the emotional aspect change at any point in the video? **Emotional response**
2. Did you notice when the silent parts appeared? **Importance of silence**
3. How do the films differ from each other? **Comparison of sound efficiency**
4. Which one did you think added the most: narratively and audibly? **Awareness of audible elements structured to variate the narrative**

These four questions have their own purposes.

1. Emotional response is a way to get the viewer to think, meaning that whatever triggers a feeling in our brain could affect the visual production immensely. With this I want to see which part of the videos had a noticeable change of emotion. This way, learning how I could exploit it in my film.
2. The importance of silence is my main focus in this task. I want to know if the participants can observe that there is silent parts in the film. This could really get my research going with actual results to how silence affects visual projects.
3. Understanding the sounds efficiency could be vital for my assignment. By having my interviewees comparing the two videos, it'll let me decide which approach to sound design worked the best.
4. This is a continuation on question number three. This will make it clear how aware the uninitiated was of auditory elements, leading me to finally understand how to use my sound pallet to maximise emotional response.

For me the contrast of the short films is evident, but for someone who isn't in the sound industry it probably is not as apparent. It's important for me to see how external people react to sound and silence. That way I can adapt my work for that focus group and get closer to finding a theory that elevates my short film that I'm creating.

2.2.2 Dense Clarity - Clear Density

In this section of the methodology I'm using Walter Murch's (2005) theory Dense Clarity - Clear Density as my design method. Walter Murch is a sound editor and mixer who has worked on a vast number of films including *Apocalypse Now* (1979). When Dense Clarity - Clear Density were invented, he released a supporting essay called *Womb Tone* (2005) where he goes into detail about the method.

Murch (2005) says that you should see sound and music in terms of light. Various lights, colors and shades are all sounds in distinct ways. He says that not only can they differ from each other, they can also complement each other. Here is an example from his essay that makes this issue quite clear:

“White light, for instance, which looks so simple, is in fact a tangled superimposure of every wavelength (that is to say, every color) of light simultaneously. You can observe this in reverse when you shine a flashlight through a prism and see the white beam fan out into the familiar rainbow of colors from violet (the shortest wavelength of visible light) – through indigo, blue, green, yellow, and orange – to red (the longest wavelength).”

All of these colors make up the movie's spectrum of sound. In this spectrum there are multiple colors with each own's purpose and function. Two examples of these are termed *Encoded Sound* (in this instance speech) and *Embodied Sound* (in this instance music). Murch (2005) attaches the color violet to *Encoded Sound* and the color red to *Embodied Sound*. The sound palette consists of these different colors to create the language of noise. Like every language, sound and music needs to be learnt the same way: through extensive studying and practicing.

In my film I implement all of these segments to get a broad spectrum of *color*, that way covering the whole range of sound and music. Sound in film is in my opinion often used as a way to evoke emotional response. Like editors C. Mohiyeddini, M. Eysenck and S. Bauer mentions in their book *Handbook of Psychology of Emotion* (2013): Sound and music is the language of emotion.

But is silence included in that vocabulary of emotion? If you ask me, sound, music and silence together makes up a audible experience. These three fragments of sound design I usually refer to as the fundamentals of my craft. Without one or the other the moving picture can get stale and unfulfilling. Murch (2005) has a similar view of silence, he adds that it can be a strong and powerful force in a film's narrative, if it is handled correctly.

In my visual production I use his method to go from loud to quiet, highs becoming lows, this way creating an extensive emotional journey. Murch (2005) has a great example of this from his film *Apocalypse Now* (Walter Murch, 1979), where the american helicopters appear from the sky to ruin the Vietnameses land, he adds:

“This first section I’m going to play for you, from the Valkyries sequence in Apocalypse Now, is what I would call “locational silence.” It’s done for the purposes of demonstrating a shift in location but also for the visceral effect of a sudden transition from loudness to silence. This sudden silence – cutting to a quiet schoolyard, also helps you share the point of view of the Vietnamese, who are shortly going to be overwhelmed with the noise and violence coming at them.”

I intended to conquer the highs of my short film and really get the emotional response going when transitioning to the lows. That was possible with the means of this method.

2.3 Technical Approaches

2.3.1 Creating the Film

To create this film I chose a camera that could separate light from darkness and do it well, as the focus had to be on the aquarium and the ink dropping. It was vital to not let any exterior light reflect on the camera lens, so I had to do it in a dark room with excessive camera flashes that brightens only the colors and the background, thus getting a clear and sharp picture. Having this well filmed footage, I started to test some color grading. Color grading makes small variations of the shades getting a slightly alternative looking hue. This way I got the exact tint that I wanted. For instance if I desired a darker shade of blue then what I had when filming the ink dropping, I could with just a click of a button change it. Then after this was done the only task that remained was editing the video and implementing the audio files.

2.3.2 Designing the Sound

As the auditory elements will be the focal point of this film, most of the time went into getting the right sounds. To boost the silences in the film I needed to have the appropriate audio script, building up to the grand finale of the story. The sounds in this project I recorded through a high quality microphone that's connected to my soundcard. This mic was essential due to the fact that it has a clear sound and generate fine recordings. Through having two different audio programs at my disposal, I got the most out of my recordings. Then after I was done with mixing the sounds, I could prepare the audio files for the video directly through the editing software and then save the file, thus finishing my short film.

With these methods, I got the most out of the research I collected, thus making it easier to discuss my work in the chapter below. These elemental parts is the foundation of this stage, which makes me able to draw conclusions, which leads to creating results.

3.0 Results and Discussion

In this segment I'll discuss how I arranged my time to fully reach my goal with this assignment. I will also show the results of my qualitative interview as well as the results of my work and research question.

3.1 Time Arrangement and Structure

In the beginning of this project I created a thoughtful planning to achieve my goal quicker. With this I were always on par with my work and kept the pace high with writing as well as crafting my production. I worked around the theory of writing a page per day, knowing that this would keep me on time with the assignments. However, this wasn't succeeded fully as I had a major change in my work after the center seminar. My professor thought that I should've focused more on the topic *Silence* instead of having a more general approach to feelings and music. He liked how I presented the objective of my short film, that was going to have audio in the center and the visuals as a form of support, but also what I wanted to achieve with it.

This brought a few complications as well as opportunities. Now I was centering my research around something that isn't as familiar, but is a lot more interesting. But I still kept my idea of creating a visual production with sound in focus, as it simply included the absence of said sound as well.

I planned my production in the same way. Having both the concept and the execution ready for my project. But around the same time I found that by using ink dropping I was reaching that climax of color and sound. I came to the conclusion that I needed an aquarium and a set of acrylic paint. I figured that after experimenting with this technique a few times creating visual colors, I should be ready to film the process and edit it in a film editing program. I estimated that I needed to develop audible elements at the same time as this and add them in post-production when I edited the film. This way completing my film.

3.2 Qualitative Interview Outcome

To present these results in a logical manner, I've decided to summaries the answers in each separate category. To make this clear, this will summaries all of the response of each question into its own column.

3.2.1 The First Video

1. Did the emotional aspect change at any point in the video?

The place mentioned most often was the ending, where the black hole dissolved. This had the most impact in the spectators minds. They mentioned things such as greed, frightment and insanity that affected them. One person also thought that the main character got happier as the video were playing when he found the black hole.

2. Did you notice when the silent parts appeared?

This question divided my focus group. Some thought that it was easy to catch and the others didn't even see it at all. When I mentioned the silent parts with this question, a few interviewees changed their minds now claiming to have noticed the silence. A small percentage of them saw it when the volume dropped to zero.

3.2.2 The Second Video

1. Did the emotional aspect change at any point in the video?

In this case there wasn't a particular place that were mentioned. Everywhere from the beginning to the end were pointed out. The participants told me that it was a constant curve of sound and intensity. The most common emotions that were brought up were excitement, disgust and some even felt uncomfortable during the film. They said that the music were the key aspect of it.

2. Did you notice when the silent parts appeared

With this video, the interviewees said that the silent parts were obvious. The ending were once again the most popular place to mention and they did not notice silence anywhere else in the film.

3.2.3 Comparing the Short Films

1. How do the films differ from each other?

The majority though that the two films had different emotions, as that affected them greatly. It was also spoken about how the silence were more present in the the first of the short films. They told me that the first one were unsettling and worrying, having parts that were clearer as to where the narrative was going, as the second one were more suspenseful and dreamy. Most felt that there were big differences in the storytelling. They also noticed that the first had a lot more sound effects, as the other one only had music.

2. Which one did you think added the most: narratively and audibly?

This inquiry got a few alternate responses. They told me that the first video had better sound design and that the second had better narrative. This was agreed upon by almost all of the participants. Using music was a way for them to get into the story and use their imagination, whereas having a lot of sound effects kind of put them in an already predetermined one. Also adding that the first video explained the circumstances with its sound effects and that way it was easier for them to predict the ending, while the second one had a more open interpretation. One person didn't agree with the rest thought, calling the first one the winner both narratively and audibly.

3.2.4 Outcome

After completing these interviews I realised that when asking only four questions the interviewee had a desire to overanalyze instead of giving simple answers. This wasn't something I'd anticipated. However, that doesn't mean that it was a negative thing, quite the opposite. I got really well thought out responses that had valid points. So even if this was a surprise for me, it turned out to be a positive revelation. If I had been using extended questions, like how or why, I could've got a different outcome. Even the fact that I chose to combine the first and second approach to qualitative interviewing it didn't matter, as when it came down to it, I let the interviewee guide me through the interview in a way. I only stated my query, then they took over to evaluate the films in their own measure. So by letting the participants handle the interview I got natural answers that felt genuine.

Most of response I got from the interviews wasn't a shock to me. Everything from what they said, about how the first video had more sound effects to that the second video had more emotional substance, made sense. However, there were one thing that caught me surprise: barely anyone noticed the silent parts.

Silence in film at this time is considered an unknown method for uninitiated people. So even if I brought out that aspect with these videos and really showcased how it could affect visual media, the interviewees would've completely missed it if I hadn't asked them about it. It was very interesting to see what this focus group noticed in these videos, unfortunately it wasn't silence that they noticed. But that represented what I feared from the beginning: that silence is an undiscovered gem in sound design. This actually helps my work though, as I went out my way to show this concept and what purpose it has. If it is one thing that these interviews demonstrated, it is that silence is effective and will no doubt be expanded upon in the future.

3.3 Conclusions

Through having a solid time plan and the appropriate methods I achieved the goal I set for myself: showcasing the need for silence in visual media. Even though I encountered a few problems and distractions on the way, it didn't really matter too much as I had taken that into the equation when I made my planning. So even considering the ups and downs of this past few months with changing the subject midterm, I was satisfied with the results that I got in the end.

By following the method Dense Clarity - Clear Density (Walter Murch, 2005), I created a short film that exceeded my expectations, as it included all my newfound research regarding the visual relation to auditory. The method elevated the film to new highs, since I learned how to implement sound, color and light together in a comprehensive way. As my production is built upon *Ink Dropping*, the importance of knowing how the colors and shades associates with the sound and silence is imminent. By using this new knowledge I got a more hard hitting design that brought out the emotional aspect further. Without having used Walter Murch's theory, my film wouldn't have reached this new bliss of sound design. The film would have felt unfulfilling as I lacked the expertise in visual design before this course. This was something I gained from using his method, the insight of an area that I hadn't explored before.

By doing a qualitative interview I got actual results to my query. This was an eye-opening experience, as I found out that silence really isn't that noticeable for a person that isn't embedded in sound. If I hadn't done these interviews I wouldn't have known how uninitiated individuals responded to sound and silence in visual and auditory form. This information strengthened my confidence in creating short films, which is apparent when you watch the video I created, as I could now bring all of these skills into the making of it. This got me the understanding that silence is needed in visual media and that it is vital for evoking emotional response in cinema, thus meaning that my theory about silence in film were in some regards correct.

But, how does silence impact emotional response in audiovisual productions? Silence impacts emotional response when added in the intermissive sections of the films timeline. This way, creating a vibrant sound experience, having both high highs and low lows. Silence is used to extend the film's sound pallet, getting us to recognize the full range of feelings in it. That is what creates the emotional response: The change in volume, both literally and figuratively.

4.0 Dictionary

Filmic Silence - Silence in film where only a quiet ambient track is present.

Diegetic Sound - Sound that is visible on screen like the characters voices, music coming from a radio or sound from objects.

Non-Diegetic Sound - Sound that isn't visible on screen like narrator's commentary or music that only the audience can hear.

Ambience - An audible version of the atmosphere of a place.

Qualitative Interview - Conversational interview that focuses on subjectivity.

Situated Knowledge - Knowledge specific to a particular person.

Dense Clarity - Clear Density - A theory that indicates the importance of the correlation of color, light and sound.

Audio script - A compiled list of sound effects.

Color grading - Altering and enhancing color of a film.

Post-production - Work done on a film after the production has taken place.

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5.1 Filmography

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6.0 Technical Specifications

6.1 Adobe Premiere Pro

Premiere Pro is an editing software for filmmaking created by Adobe. I used it to edit my short film before going into post-production.

6.2 Adobe After Effects

After Effects is a post-editing software for filmmaking created by Adobe. It focuses on visual effects in post-production.

6.3 Propellerheads Reason 8

Reason 8 is a sound and music editing software created by Propellerhead. With it I mixed my sounds and music for this thesis.

6.4 Ableton Live

Ableton Live is a sound and music software created by Ableton. It focuses on recording and sampling sound.