

Investigating the Making of Cinematic Silence

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PhD by Creative Practice

University of York
Theatre, Film and Television
June 2019

Abstract

Despite extensive research on the notion of silence across a wide range of disciplines (music, philosophy, literature, architecture, theology) little is known about silence in film. The key concerns in the published literature on the topic are the relative nature of cinematic silence and its intrinsic connection to sound. This research will study directorial approaches applied by selected filmmakers in the construction and use of cinematic silence. It will then explore, through the design and production of the creative practice pieces submitted (a short and a feature-length documentary film), the notion of cinematic silence as a strong narrative device that can contribute to the representation of human experience and bring attention to questions related to cinematic language.

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List of Accompanying Material

A memory stick that includes three files:

Two MP4:

- *Three Pianos* (2016) - documentary short pilot film
- *Narara and Kiko* (2018) - feature length documentary film

One PDF document:

- The Thesis
 1. an academic dissertation: Chapters 1-6 and Chapter 8 (37 100 words)
 2. two reflective essays: Chapter 7 (10 000 words)

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my supervisors Dr Sandra Pauletto and Professor Duncan Petrie.

Dr Pauletto's interest in the subject of my research and her support throughout my PhD study gave me confidence to move forward. Professor Petrie's timely and generous input significantly refined my written work. I would also like to thank Dr Fiona Keenan for our fruitful discussions, her advice on the technical aspects of film sound during the production and her help with the final mix of *Narara and Kiko* in the post-production stages. The invaluable voluntary support during the post-production stages of *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018) were provided also by Master students at the TFTV, Bianca Cassinelli, Ewan Marshall-Atherton and Samantha Bayram.

This study has been funded by the Theatre, Film and Television Department at the University of York and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

This work is dedicated to my parents, Karine and Razmik Gasparyans, and my children - Elen and Arman.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis, as well as two documentary films attached - *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018) - are a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. The thesis has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

The initial idea for a case study 'Investigating the making of cinematic silence in Chantal Akerman's *D'Est*' (Chapter 4) derives from a conference paper by the present author, entitled 'Silence in Chantal Akerman's films'. The author presented the paper for the 'After Chantal' International Conference at the University of Westminster, on the 6th November 2016.

The present author was given the Award for Best Research Poster at the British Association for Film, Television and Screen Studies Conference (BAFTSS) on the 26th April 2019.

The film *Narara and Kiko* (2018) had screenings at the following events:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 13 June 2018 | Premiere screening hosted by AGBU 'Open Stage'
Alex Manoogian Cultural Center, at 118 rue de Courcelles,
Paris 17, France |
| 16 November 2018 | KIN International Women's Film Festival, AGBU centre,
Yerevan, Armenia |
| 20 March 2019 | Mapping Spaces, Sounding Places, Geographies of Sound in
Audiovisual Media International Conference
Teatro Monteverdi, Cremona, Italy |
| 8 July 2019 | Golden Apricot International Film Festival, Moscow Cinema
Opening film for 'Artistic Portraits' category
Yerevan, Armenia |
| 16 November 2019 | Pomegranate Film Festival, Hamazkayin Theatre
Official selection for a short film category
Toronto, Canada |

1. Introduction

The context for this research by creative practice is the constantly evolving area of observational documentary. This form of filmmaking, known also as cinema vérité, direct cinema or fly-on-the-wall, has been introduced in the late 1960s and holds an experimental status as it accepts no clear boundaries between narrative styles. To further refine the cinematic language within the context of observational documentary, the principal research question for this project is:

What are the main directorial approaches in making cinematic silence?

From this the following sub-questions are investigated:

How can we understand the concept of cinematic silence?

To what extent there is a tendency to fill any silence with music and/or speech/ in cinema?

How is silence experienced by film audiences?

The methodologies adopted to answer the research questions involve the analysis of film case studies which make use of cinematic silence - *D'Est* (1993) by Chantal Akerman and *Hidden* (2005) by Michael Haneke - and the analysis of the interviews focused directly on the aspects of the introduction and use of silence conducted with film practitioners, Larry Sider and Paul Davies. These analyses contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of silence in the filmmaking process, and inform a set of directorial techniques adopted in my own filmmaking process during the production of two original documentary films - *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018). The first directorial technique I applied was to emphasize my off-screen presence behind the camera through explicit interaction with the on-screen film subjects. The communication and explicit sharing of space with the film protagonists, allowed more genuine interaction with me, the film creator, and as a result, had an impact on on-screen performance. Secondly, my tendency to allow visual and audio recording to continue in duration beyond the expected limits, the extended duration, introduced the element of tension or invoked an unexpected. Thirdly, I focused on (often) unimportant and unwanted diegetic sounds (e.g. noise from the boiler, purring of the cat) that became valuable material to use artistically to create sound-silence audio contrasts and repetitions in order to enable the filmic narrative to work more effectively. Fourthly, I paid particular attention to detail when filming the interaction between people and/or animals, as it added a layer of silent understanding of subject's relationship to their environment and contributed to a film character development.

This project seeks to contribute to knowledge by exploring the notion and use of cinematic silence in film. The special focus on the work of selected filmmakers from the late 1960s onwards, coupled with original interviews and the production of two observational documentary films, by using my newly extended concept and directorial techniques of making cinematic silence, allow to build a rigorous concept of cinematic silence - a unique narrative device that can affect and refine cinematic language and contribute greatly to the art of film storytelling.

The thesis is broken down into eight chapters, which aim to contribute from a different perspective to a better understanding of the ambivalent, deep and not extensively explored event of silence in cinema. Chapter 1 is the introduction to a thesis, where the rationale, content, structure and ultimate ambitions of the research project are set out. Chapter 2 will elaborate on the chosen methods to address the principal research question. The creative practice-based research, as methodology model will be discussed by drawing attention to my role as the investigator - the insider-outsider, involved in the process of meaning making. Chapter 3 will trace the emergence of 'silence' in film sound history, and consider existing classifications of silence in contemporary cinema, helping to define the concept of 'cinematic silence'. Chapter 4 will provide the analysis of two case studies: *D'Est* (1993) by Chantal Akerman and *Hidden* (2005) by Michael Haneke, by exploring the application of cinematic silence in these films which are different in style, genre and theme. Here silence takes on different roles and has contrasting effects on the narrative structure of the film as a whole. Chapter 5 will draw on interviews with two film sound practitioners - Larry Sider and Paul Davies – in which the concept of 'cinematic silence' is discussed through their film practice. Chapter 6, a creative portfolio, will introduce and describe the origination and development of my two films created as part of the research by creative practice for this project - *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018). Chapter 7 comprises of two reflective essays on these films, where the process of 'making' silence is analysed. Chapter 8, the conclusion, considers the main finding achieved through the methods advanced by this study, evaluates the extent to which the research questions have been addressed, and ponders the prospects for further developments of cinematic silence.

The inspiration, interest and desire to examine the role of silence in film practice derive from my professional background. A ten-year film practice as a director for the Armenian television industry, and the last eight years as an independent filmmaker in the UK, brought an understanding of the subject, cinematic silence, as being underrated by film spectators. This may be the result of limited research undertaken on the subject by the

film creators and film theoreticians. The concept of 'cinematic silence' is a challenge, motivation and a great source of inspiration for any film creator who is constantly in search for new ways to communicate what is beyond the words and the seen in cinematic language.

2. Methodology: creative practice based research

The methods used to address the principal research question, hence further elaborate on the concept of cinematic silence, will be discussed in this chapter. Being a filmmaker involved in the process of creating a ‘record of ... [her own] subjective interaction with the world’ (Winston 2008, 290) - the documentary film - while at the same time being an academic researcher in the process of producing knowledge that is meaningful to others, is a stimulating endeavour. This two-fold role of practitioner-researcher is present in all stages of the project: the analysis of existing films (case studies), the interviews with sound specialists discussing the term cinematic silence within the context of their own practice, the documentary filmmaking (creative practice) and the reflection of the creative practice work.

2.1 The investigator’s background: a note of intention

I’ve never had a method of working. I change according to circumstances; I don’t employ any particular technique or style. I make films instinctively, more with my belly than with my brain.

Michelangelo Antonioni

Di Carlo, Tinazzi, Cottino-Jones 1996, 161

I want to go make a documentary without knowing what I’m doing.

They always demand, “Tell us what you’re going to do.”

And all I can tell you is that I just don’t know.

It’s precisely because of this lack of knowledge that there can be a film.

Chantal Akerman, 2004

While working as a film director for Armenian television, I became perplexed by the constant request of producers to cover the awkward moments of relative silence in films with music, or to cut the scene early. This raised the interest in the role and the hidden potential of cinematic silence. Later, while taking the MA course in screen documentary at Goldsmiths, the weight of ten-years practical experience became an obstacle. The first group-work with classmates was a shock. I could not tolerate the use of the jump-cut, as my peers would stick close-up next to close-up during the editing process.

This did not fit with the solid knowledge acquired on the basic principles of editing and filming. My supervisor, Professor Tony Dowmunt, then advised to break the rules. The subsequent joy of letting my own style taking shape informed my graduation work, the film diary *Armenian Woman with a Movie Camera* (2011). Here I experimented with unconventional image and sound combinations, including my first attempt to use long stretches of ambient sound to portray silence. I also explored ideas of dislocation, gender and identity as a woman filmmaker living far from home. This was a new step in my personal development as an artist, liberated from constraints and established rules, trusting my own instincts, and finding the main motive for creative choices in my own intuition and feelings.

However, the longer one is involved in creative practice, the clearer the inexplicable nature of the filmmaking process becomes. It is not an easy quest to simplify the reasons that lead to directorial choices while in the process of developing an idea for a film, trying to make these ideas take shape during filming, and re-thinking the choices again while putting the separate pieces of the filmed material together. These three separate stages of filmmaking involve an uninterrupted chain of choices, overcoming failures, use findings, and recognise victories.

The exact sequence of cause and effect underlying the creative choices made is almost unattainable to an artist while in the process of making. There is no single rule applicable to all filmmakers. The desire to explore the boundaries, to find one's own style and voice, to experiment with the material, to test the limits and to refine the craft of filmmaking is constantly changing and challenging. Thus to unpack the practical knowledge, which Robin Nelson compares with an attempt to explain the 'knowing how to ride a bike'¹(2013, 9) - in our case, 'knowing how to make a film' - brings us back to Antonioni's and Akerman's quotes at the start of this chapter. There is no easy or only one way to verbalise and make more explicit the nebulous know-how of an insider, which Nelson categorises as 'experimental' and 'tacit embodied knowledge' (ibid. 37). This is the basis as well as the challenge for a film practitioner embarking on a quest to produce 'knowledge via filmmaking' (Gibson 2017, VI), in other words, for a researcher with a movie camera willing to contribute to knowledge creation and its dissemination in the academic world.

¹ Philosopher David Pears's remark: 'I know how to ride a bicycle, but I cannot say how I balance because I

2.2 Research question and literature review

To gain insight into and a better understanding of cinematic silence, both within the process of filmmaking and as a narrative tool that can further refine the cinematic language to tell compelling stories, the following research question was formulated: What are the directorial approaches applied in making cinematic silence? Sound designer David Sonnenschein finds it possible to trace in sound ‘the evolution of religion, music, language, weaponry, medicine, architecture, and psychology, not to mention cinema’ (2001, xix), suggesting that there is the potential to find a tread of the evolution of cinematic silence through the evolution of cinema. To better place this concept of cinematic silence in its historical context and identify gaps in knowledge, a literature review was conducted.

There are different views on whether to have a traditional literature review in case of the practice-based-research or not. Robin Nelson (2013) and Susan Kerrigan (2018) find that a ‘practice review’, or ‘the location of work in a lineage of practice’ (Nelson 2013, 35) can help identify the existent practitioners and relevant works (films, documentaries, etc.) created around the subject. Moreover, Nelson argues that ‘something has gone wrong in the PaR [Practice as Research] inquiry if a practitioner researcher feels that she needs to grab at the theory to justify the practice’ (Nelson 2013, 32). Similarly, Erik Knudsen proposes that a ‘contextual review’, which explores how a study can ‘enhance our existing practices or understanding of practices’ (2018, 124) is more suitable. Considering these ideas, it can be useful to follow Linda Candy’s advice, borrowed from literary critic Frederick Crew: ‘one should follow the ethic of respecting that which is known, acknowledging what is still unknown and acting as if one cared about the difference’ (Candy 2006, 6).

2.3 Research Design

There are important aspects that need consideration prior to addressing the methods used for designing a research project by creative practice. The first is my role as a film practitioner, which necessitates an insider’s view, the person directly involved in the process of meaning-making through the production of a film. The second is my role as a researcher, which produces an outsider’s view, articulated in a particular kind of text. In ‘A Practice Based research: Guide’ Linda Candy states that ‘the outcomes of practice must be accompanied by documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection’ (2006, 2).

Being aware of the two-lenses approach of a practitioner-researcher, or insider-outsider, is crucial prior to embarking on a research by creative practice. Ros Gibson describes this as a ‘cognitive two-step’ comprised of, firstly, an ‘immersed investigation... [and secondly] of reflective knowing outside and after the event’ (2017, VII). This is further complicated by trying to find a suitable approach within the variety of modes of academic research by creative practice: practice-based research, practice-led research, research-led practice, method-led research and practice-as-research. Leo Berkeley, while discussing the specificity of research in screen production, sees this lack of definition as a problem for the discipline, as it ‘risks research projects generating outcomes that are not well aligned with the problem and issues that are of concern to practitioners’ (2018, 31). The difference between research ‘based’ or ‘led’ practice, as noted by Candy, helps to situate this research study as a practice-based research:

Practice-based Research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. In a doctoral thesis, claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the form of designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to the outcomes.

Candy 2006, 1

In the case of the practice ‘led’ research, Candy explains that the outcomes are fully expressed in a written form often without inclusion of the practice outcome.

The main methods used in this project include the consideration of key critical and academic debates relevant to the research question, the analysis of case study films by the contemporary filmmakers; interviews conducted with film sound practitioners; and a critical reflection on my, the practitioner/ researcher’s own creative practice. The creative component of this study comprises of two original experimental documentary films – a 10 minute short, *Three Pianos* (2016) and a 45 minute documentary, *Narara and Kiko* (2018). The detailed consideration of the decisions made in regard to the use of mixed qualitative and creative practice paradigms for data collection, data processing and data analysis to answer the original research question will be discussed below.

2.4 Qualitative methods

You cannot open up a question without leaving yourself open to it.

You cannot scrutinise a 'subject' [...] without being scrutinised by it.

Lyotard 2013, 24

For an artist, the separation between the self and the object within the process of making is difficult to achieve. Similarly, this study is difficult to imagine without my experience of silence and immersion in listening to the everyday, trusting my own feelings and associations brought about by and through sound. Jean-Luc Nancy (2004, 7) differentiates between the notions of 'hearing' and 'listening' and points out that to be listening 'is always to be on the edge of meaning' (ibid.) and 'to be at the same time outside and inside (ibid. 14).

To hear is to understand the sense ([...] to hear a siren, a bird, or a drum is already each time to understand at least the rough outline of a situation, a context...), 'to listen' is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible.

Nancy 2002, 6

Thus, silence-seeking becomes a facilitation method in itself for this research and creates a holistic approach for this study. In this regard, the artist Vong Phaophanit's description of how silence can contribute to the process of approaching the 'unknown' is relevant, especially if the 'unknown' is silence itself: 'I like the idea that the work starts with the silence to rest your mind and then things, ideas sort of come, start building up and questions start coming from that silence. But it is important, it is crucial for me to impose that silence through the work' (2013, 83).

It can be argued that silence – the space in between – is necessary for both an artist's being (seeing, listening, thinking and feeling) and doing/making. The tight relationship between the artist and her practice, the duality of my, the investigator's role as a researcher and practitioner, requires qualitative methods which provide a clear separation between observer and object of observation. In this research project, several qualitative methods have been used to achieve, in terms of Nelson's modes of knowing, the 'know-that' or the 'outsider's distant knowledge' (2013, 37).

2.5 Case studies

A list of filmmakers who apply cinematic silence in their film practice was identified and the grid analysis were created as part of the literature review. Of them, Chantal Akerman's *D'Est* (1993) and Michael Haneke's *Hidden* (2005) were selected as case studies in order to explore the specific role that cinematic silence occupies in these particular films². There are three reasons for the selection of these filmmakers and works. Firstly, one of the common characteristics of both directors is their avoidance of extensive use of music in their practice, using instead cinematic silence resulting in a minimalistic filmmaking style. Secondly, it is interesting to observe similarities and differences in how silence works, for example in terms of narrative flow, in two different film productions: an experimental documentary and a feature drama respectively. Thirdly, both works have major historical events as a background story: the Jewish Holocaust in *D'Est* and the Algerian War in *Hidden*. It is evident that these historical events had an impact on Akerman and Haneke, and have been indirectly portrayed in the films³. Even though these historical themes are not made very explicit in the films, the metaphorical and indirect implications expressed through silence are interesting to observe.

2.6 Interviews with sound practitioners

While working on the literature review, it became apparent that the current knowledge on film sound is predominantly framed by film theoreticians and music specialists. This drew attention to the necessity to hear the voice of film practitioners, the people who produce the sound we hear in films, and to gather their reflections on the idea of silence in the art of cinema. My roles as an interviewer-investigator and a film director undoubtedly influenced the questions raised. These were primarily concerned with the aesthetics of film sound and the portrayal of silence; the interviewees' thoughts on the existing theory on cinematic silence; the nature of their collaboration, as sound designers, with film directors and the ways decisions on the use of silence in film projects are made. Contributors were selected on the basis of their active involvement within the film industry, the use of silence in their practice, and their current involvement in teaching film practice. Engagement with filmmakers working in higher education can also provide an

² The Grid Analysis for the selected films, *D'Est* (1993) and *Hidden* (2005), are presented in the Appendix 1.

³ Similarly, in *Narara and Kiko* (2018), one of the creative outputs in this project, the historical trauma of the Armenian Genocide (1915) is indirectly portrayed as a background story.

insight on the use and degree of innovation that students display in applying cinematic silence in practice.

A thorough analysis of the interviewees' application of cinematic silence in their own film practice was an important consideration. The first contributor, Paul Davies, is an experienced supervising sound editor and sound designer working in film and television with prominent directors such as Steve McQueen (*Hunger* (2008)) and Lynne Ramsay (*Ratcatcher* (1999), *Let's Talk About Kevin* (2011)). In *Ratcatcher*, Davies not only used cinematic silence but also applied complete silence (the absence of any sound) on the soundtrack. Davies is currently a visiting tutor for the MA in Sound Design for Film and Television at the UK's National Film and Television School (NFTS). The second contributor, Larry Sider, is a film editor, sound designer and the director of The School of Sound, a community of film and sound experts exploring the creative use of sound in arts and media. Between 2002-6 Sider was Head of Post-Production at the NFTS. He currently leads a MA course on Sound Recording and Design at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is co-editor of *Soundscape: The School of Sound Lectures 1998-2001* and *The New Soundtrack Journal*. The documentary films *London* (1994) and *Robinson in Space* (1997) both directed by Patrick Keiller, use cinematic silence created by Sider that are of particular interest for this study.

The conversation with both practitioners brought various concerns. Firstly, the term cinematic silence provoked various interpretations that underlined the unstable ground of the notion of silence in general, and possibly as a result of this, in film in particular. Secondly, the degree of mistrust of practitioners about film sound theory written mainly by film academics became obvious. The necessity of the involvement of film practitioners in theorising the subject of film sound and cinematic silence to create a balance in opinions around the subject is a useful consideration for this study. Thirdly, the acknowledgment of the fact that the noisy environment of our everyday life plays a role on the film soundtrack and its audience today. As a result, this might suggest that 'less noisy' films belong in a separate category (e.g. 'slow cinema') both in the minds of the audience, as they are less used to them, and the film producers.

2.7 Filmmaking as a research method

Filmmaking, as primary research method, is in this study used to explore the unanticipated directions cinematic silence can take, questioning the range of interpretations

cinematic silence can raise, and to reflect on unexpected findings. This choice has several interpretations. The first is curiosity:

Artistic creativity in me has always manifested itself as hunger. With quiet satisfaction I have acknowledged this need, but I have never in my whole conscious life asked myself where this hunger has come from and why it kept demanding satisfaction... The reason is curiosity. A limitless, never satisfied, ever renewed, unbearable curiosity, drives me forward, never leaves me in peace... I feel like a prisoner who, after a long detention, suddenly stumbles out into the hurly-burly of life. I am in the grip of an uncontrollable curiosity. I note, I observe, I look everywhere; everything is unreal, fantastic, frightening, or ridiculous.

Bergman 1994, 51

This is the articulation of a filmmaker's need for venturing into the process of enquiry through the art of filmmaking. This resonates with Akerman's (2004) need for a 'lack of knowledge' stated earlier as a pre-condition: 'It's precisely because of this lack of knowledge that there can be a film' (2004). The process of filmmaking becomes an act of wondering⁴ about the unknown. My state of wonder about the research enquiry, cinematic silence, the state of not knowing and the need to know, the curiosity, is the necessary trigger for the artist to create. This can suggest that for a filmmaker a film production can become a knowledge production in itself, as one starts with a lack of knowledge and uses film to fill this gap.

The second reason for choosing filmmaking as a research method is to discover how silence can develop during the process of making documentary film. Here by selecting the 'interactive documentary mode'⁵ of representation, the implementation of interviews as a way of interaction of a filmmaker with the subject becomes apparent. Bill Nichols highlights the importance of 'how do filmmaker and social actor respond to each other; do they react to overtones or implications in each other's speech; do they see how power and desire flow between them?' (1991, 44). In this regard, the way medical practitioners approach the aspect of listening in their day-to day work with patients can be a useful observation for this study. Physician Roger Neighbour (2005, 63-75), in his bestseller book

⁴ Definition of 'wonder' by Oxford dictionary: 1) desire to know something; feel curious; 2) feel doubt; 3) feel admiration and amazement; marvel.

⁵This is one of the four modes - expository, observational, interactive and reflexive - coined by Bill Nichols. Interactive documentary mode 'arose from the availability of... more mobile equipment and a desire to make the filmmaker's perspective more evident. Interactive documentarists wanted to engage with individuals more directly while not reverting to classic exposition. Interview styles and interventionist tactics arose, allowing the filmmaker to participate more actively in present events' (Nichols 1991,33)

‘The Inner Consultation: How to develop an effective and intuitive consulting style’, describes certain aspects of a physician’s listening, speaking and thinking during a medical consultation process, where the act of listening can closely relate to filmmakers’ silent observation of their subjects. Neighbour describes the idea of ‘two-heads’ (ibid.): an organiser - the intellectual part of the human brain, whose preferred mode of thought is analytical, logical and verbal, and a responder - the intuitive, spontaneous, uncritical and naive part of human. These two heads take it in turn to be in control in internal dialogue. To stay in the here and now and avoid being distracted by the organiser’s thoughts that tends to take over the process of attentive listening, Neighbour suggests the following method:

Think of yourself as a camera that registers without editing. Follow the patient’s facial expressions; her eye movements and gaze; her posture and gestures. Notice her breathing rate, and the places in her body where tension seems to be located. Listen to the pitch of her voice; its volume and pace; its rise and fall.

Neighbour 2005, 245-6

The role of a filmmaker-responder can be relevant for a process of a silent, naive, patient and attentive observation that is not opinionated or judgmental. As a filmmaking method, this has been tested during the making of *Three Pianos* and *Narara and Kiko* for locations, interviews with the protagonist, other observations, i.e. the environment of Naira’s house, where its chaos could generate new ideas.

The third reason for applying filmmaking as a research method is to test what effect and role silence can play as a narrative device. To achieve this the slow representation of time through long shots, a choice of a single location in both films applied (St Pancras International in *Three Pianos* and the artist Naira’s house in *Narara and Kiko*) and the repetitive sequences in both films used can be traced. In *Three Pianos* frequent shift between three spaces around the three pianos, while in *Narara and Kiko* the scenes captured in summer, winter and spring. These films are methodological tools for investigation.

After producing the films, the filmmaker needs to critically reflect on the process and results and make evident ‘what works’. The reflections on *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018) express the results of the investigation of making of cinematic silence in practice, discuss and reflect on ‘what works’. Here the ‘doing-making-thinking’ (Fisher 2013, 107) process, either in this order or in any other combination, is at play and

the ‘thinking’ from inside-out steps outside to reflect on what one is ‘doing’. Nelson describes this as ‘know what’, in this case, know what cinematic silence can offer, by using critical reflection to make the tacit more explicit (2013, 37).

2.8 Conclusion

At the centre of this investigation is the desire to trace the conditions necessary to create cinematic silence, and identify the role and meaning the cinematic silence can have in film narrative. Through a set of methods described in this chapter – a written literature review, analysis of selected relevant films, reflection on interviews with film practitioners, the production of two films that use cinematic silence and reflective essays based on the films created - different strategies to make, convey and approach cinematic silence have been investigated and articulated. The filmmaking process has been prioritised as a primary method for this inquiry in order to test the unknown via the process of making, where my role as a filmmaker is to explore the subject through silence, using techniques such as film locations, contrasts, repetitions and long takes to create slow observations through stretches of time.

To conclude, it is worth returning to the quest for an unknown, which as it has been pointed out, is a strong motivation for an artist to embark on an art making process. This motivation is also at the heart of this research project. The outcome is not a rulebook on how to make cinematic silence, but only a proposition based on similar patterns and techniques identified in film practice, film sound theory, and some aspects from other disciplines that touch the subject of silence. As silence remains something which is going to seep and escape and with an intrinsically ineffable meaning, a study of cinematic silence can only reveal some aspects of this complex effect, while at the same time opening up new questions that can continue to tickle the curiosity of filmmakers for years and centuries to come.

3. The key developments of ‘silence’ in cinema

3.1 Introduction

If in the beginning was the word (Genesis, John 1:1) then what existed before the word? Was the act of creation also the act of breaking the silence? Was it a silence, noise or chaos? It is beyond the scope of this research to explore the beginning of the world. The focus here is on the ability of human beings to ‘hear’ silence and listen to it in relation to sound (O’Rawe 2006, 395). Philosopher Roy Sorensen criticizes Aristotle’s idea in ‘De Anima’, where ‘sight has color, hearing sound, and taste flavor’ (ii.6, 418b13). Sorensen (2009) argues that not only sound, but also silence can be heard. There is a rich body of work on the concept of silence and its relationship to sound written by philosophers, theologians, medical experts (particularly psychiatrists), linguists, novelists and artists (O’Rawe 2009, 87). As Sara Maitland (2008, 27-28) points out, contemporary thinking about silence is often negative, tending to regard it as a lack, absence, emptiness, blank, gap, black, death, vacuum and void. The Oxford dictionary⁶ gives another negative definition of silence: the complete absence of sound; the fact or state of abstaining from speech; the avoidance of mentioning or discussing something. Losseff and Doctor criticise this ‘European narrow perspective’ by writing that ‘the idea that silence can be perceived as a form of communication - expressing reflection, for instance, as it might in Japanese culture - is less widespread in Western social contexts’ (2007, 1). Furthermore, Bloustien describes silence represented by white noise: as ‘sounds that we choose not to, or have forgotten how to ‘hear’ (2010, 92).

The need for silence in an age of noise is timely and relevant. However, the notion of silence in cinema, its meaning, negative and/or positive interpretations, and considerations for further discovery has not to date been explored and articulated extensively. Thus, this chapter will briefly describe the presence and development of silence during the three historical eras of film sound: silent, sound and Dolby eras. In addition, a few existing classifications of filmic silence formulated by different film practitioners, and film theorists in cinema from the late 1960s onwards and the concept of cinematic silence will be presented. As a result, the literature review will bring attention to the key parameters necessary for establishing ground for a discourse on cinematic silence:

⁶ <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com> (Accessed 3.01.2016)

the emergence of the notion of silence in cinema history and relevance; the scope it occupies in film practice; and its role in film narrative construction.

3.2 The emergence of cinematic silence as a concept

Film sound theorist Michel Chion reminds us of Robert Bresson's famous aphorism from 'Notes on Cinematography'(1975) - 'the soundtrack invented silence'- and finds it paradoxical: 'it was necessary to have sounds and voices so that the interruption of them could probe more deeply into this thing called silence'(Chion 1994, 57). Thus, we ought to consider filmic silence by always referring to and learning about film sound. Film sound is a huge topic, one as potent and puzzling today as at any other time in history. The literature on film sound covers all three stages of the development of sound: starting from so-called silent cinema from 1894 to 1927. Chion refers to this period as 'deaf cinema' (2009, 3), since the spectators watching a film know that the characters are speaking even in the absence of sound because they see them speak. This was followed by sound film's birth and development from 1927 (the year of *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland), which is considered the first talkie) to 1971, the year of *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick) the first film to use the noise reduction system introduced by Dolby. Dolby technology initially targeted the music industry to reduce the background noise of the audio tape (a 'hiss' obvious especially in the silent or quiet passages of the recording), as a result of the improved frequency response, sharper highs and lower lows, became possible. The Dolby era from 1971 to the present, also known as 'the second coming of sound' (Sergi 1994, 56), is a period when 'silence' as a cinematic experience has been rediscovered anew, hence it becomes especially relevant for this study.

3.2.1 The 'sound' of silent films: 1894-1927

At the very beginning of the medium's history, film was considered as an exclusively visual art form (Altman 2004, 6). Sounds were expressed primarily through images: smoke coming out of the guns, warring of swords, church bells, sea waves, etc. It was phenomenal to see 'things moving without making any sound' (Chion 2009, 3). Then came the first attempts to fill the gap, the silence: first with live commentary, or rudimentary sound effects such as rain, wind, animal noises etc. When film exhibition moved to purpose-built cinemas musical accompaniment became common from a single pianist to a live pit orchestra in larger halls. Filmmaker Alberto Cavalcanti (1985, 100; Hughes 2007, 87) points out two purposes music came to address: to drown out the noise of the projectors and to create emotional atmosphere. The music here played a role of a 'transcription', where the 'poetic distance' between the pit and screen 'allowed filmgoers to continue their aural dreaming' (Chion 2009, 9-10).

Around 1910, as films became longer, an additional support emerged in form of the intertitles - at the time known as leaders, titles, captions, headings, and sub(-)titles - arrived to narrate the story in a clear and concise way. Here the use of special fonts, italics, bold/larger types, or graphics - imply vocal interpretations as well as serve to convey the real meaning of the words. Chion (2009, 10-17) notes the additional agency given to intertitles the role of a narrator, which could function as a distancing device between the characters of the film and the audience due to, often ironic, commentary used in the text. Moreover, Torey Liepa (2008, 40) notices that 'the intertitles discriminated between those who could read and those who could not', which suggests a shift in the class of the cinema audience as opposed to the accessible five cent theatre nickelodeon era⁷.

To compensate for the lack of sound, characters were 'chatty' and would 'speak' not only with the movement of their lips but through the whole body and exaggerated mime. This explains Chion's disagreement with the French expression 'mute cinema', as 'it is not that the film's characters were mute, but rather that the film was deaf to them' (Chion 1999, 8). The audience was free to imagine a voice they wish to the actors with moving lips on screen. In this regard, Slavoj Žižek (2007, 134) points out, that 'the most famous scream in the history of cinema is also silent', by referring to the scene from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), directed by Sergei Eisenstein, where a mother grasps her head as witnesses her son being shot down by soldiers at Odessa staircase.

⁷ Nickelodeon -*nickel* and *odeion*: a small five-cent theater. The first indoor space for projecting short 10-15min length movies. Audiences at nickelodeons were mainly working-class people who could not afford a higher ticket price.

Today it is widely accepted that film was a silent medium because of technical limitations rather aesthetic choice of the filmmaker (Sim 2007, 123). Nevertheless, it is important not to misread the significant role the silent era played in preparing an audience that is able to imagine and hear internally the voices and noises absent on screen. Chion (2009, 17) describes, ‘the arrival of real sound could seem like an intrusion, a rather vulgar appeal to hyperrealism’, as it was perceived as a sound invasion to our dream world.

3.2.2 Technological innovations with coming of sound: 1927- 1971

Douglas Gomery (1985, 5) points out the apparently quick conversion to sound in Hollywood which happened within two years of the release of the first talking films. By the end of 1930, studio stages were soundproofed, dialogue replaced intertitles, and sight and sound coordination became a prerogative of studio engineers. However, Gomery regards this technical change as being driven by the desire to control patents and increase profit, which involved stages of ‘invention, innovation and diffusion’ (ibid. 5) in the process of thirty-year of transformation. Moreover, he links the coming of sound to the complex system of world film exchange. Hence, the sound film arrived as ‘a technological and commercial reality first and as a dramatic medium second’ (Handzo, 1985, 384). Nevertheless, the connection between sound technology and film aesthetics is hard to overlook, and the technological evolution of film sound during this era will be outlined briefly, drawing on ‘A Narrative Glossary of Film Sound Technology’ by Stephen Handzo (1985, 383-426). This will provide necessary background to link the technological breakthrough to the aesthetic transformations discussed later in this chapter.

The first ‘talkie’ *The Jazz Singer* (1927) has been premiered on a sound-on-disc system called the Vitaphone (1926-1931). The soundtrack was recorded and played separately on phonograph records which were easy to break, crack, or simply misplace. The editing of the soundtrack was not possible, and the exterior shots needed to be silent. The alternative sound-on-film system, developed by Movietone, printed sound directly onto the film which was a major advance in terms of exhibition. It also introduced the outdoor sync sound recording and the ability to take different takes, angles, and length of sound, producing materials which could be subsequently spliced together. The downside of the latter was that the editor needed to cut 20 frames ahead of the action to avoid losing words, and as a result the overlap of ambience sound from the previous frame on the next shot was hard to avoid.

During this transitional stage, the noisy cameras were placed in the wooden bulky soundproofed ‘icebox’ booths with a window, from where directors and technicians were

operating. The early carbon and condenser microphones were fragile and non-directional. To capture clear sound they needed to be placed closer to the speaking object (e.g. during dialogue recording), though considering the rule to avoid mics being in the frame this resulted in capturing a voice mainly in closeups. As the cameras had limited movement capability the panning and tracking at the same time was not possible and led to prevalence of static and long takes. As a result of these restrictions, productions featured long dialogue scenes with minimal visual action, which created the effect of photographed plays. Later, in 1930, cameras were liberated from booths by the invention of the 'blimp', a covering that dampened camera noise, which restored flexibility in movement. This in turn stimulated improvements in the microphone setups: the significant upgrade was sync-sound shooting with wider than 25mm angle lenses.

The double system sound-on-film (1929-1951) separated the sound from the picture: instead of projection sync, the editorial sync was applied by a new invention, the synchroniser. First manual, and later motorized, this was introduced by Moviola Company and entailed a set of interlocked sprocket-hole-for-sprocket-hole wheels that could hold two or three strips of film. The tendency towards fast cutting, which was achieved in late silent films (Average Shot Length being 5 seconds), became possible once more due to introduction of rubber/edge numbering and the synchroniser. With the separation of tracks, recording of music and sound effects on separate tracks became possible, by lining these up to the picture later at the editing. Later this developed into mixing process with multiple tracks, which set off the development of musicals and the shooting in several languages.

With the double system sound with magnetic film (1951-1960), even though the editing was the same, a magnetic head was added to the synchronizer to point the sync-mark that would then be punched with a hole. Moreover, this system offered better fidelity, less noise, due to fine grain emulsions for the sound recording negative, and less quality loss when copied.

The final recording medium introduced was a double system sound with ¼ tape and sync-pulse (1960-present). The first tape machine, the Nagra, allowed instead of magnetic a regular tape for original recording; sync between a camera and a recorder was possible by plugging both into the same power source; and it was much lighter and smaller. In the 1960s this was used extensively by documentary filmmakers, as the liberating lightweight equipment was one of the main elements of cinema verite movement.

Rick Altman points out that in the 1930s the technological advancements (e.g. directional microphones, camera blimps, microphone booms, incandescent lights) were all ruled by the desire 'to reduce all traces of the sound work from the soundtrack [...] to

produce a persuasive illusion of real people speaking real words' (1985, 47). As Altman reminds, it is worth to consider that parallel to 'inaudible sound editing' the 'invisible image editing' (e.g. color films, mobile cameras, reduction of graininess and artificial lighting) was developing in film history. Between the 1930s and 1940s, the sound technology was also an image technology, with all sounds expressed in optical terms, since despite the ongoing audio improvements, the optical recording and printing technology still was the same. Even though the improved magnetic stereo sound recording allowed a split between image and sound, multiple-channel mixing, and the use of radio microphones with actors gaining freedom from microphones, this had no immediate reception until the early 1950s. The new widescreen formats such as Cinerama (1952), CinemaScope (1953) and Todd-AO (1955), offered wider visual field for the soundtrack to create the illusion of real space through duplicate stereo sound. Chion (2009, 148) notices that 'the power of silence' or a 'silence of the loudspeakers' was realized by some directors before the coming of Dolby, and draws attention to the films, *West Side Story* (Wise and Robbins, 1961), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968) and *Playtime* (Tati, 1967), shot in 70mm with a magnetic sound. For example, Stanley Kubrick in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) goes as far as having not only long stretches of ambient sound, but even complete silence on the soundtrack, lasting several seconds, when the computer Hal murders Frank Poole by remote control. Here, Chion highlights the 'silence of thoughts' associated with the theme of dissimulation and deception (ibid. 148). The magnetic prints, which would provide better quality sound, were more expensive, hence, the reason why most theatres would play on the optical prints. In comparison, the conversion to a Dolby system was cheaper (Schreger 1985, 354). Moreover, the introduction of Dolby, as Charles Schreger (ibid.) describes, will bring 'heightened realism' due to technical 'superior sound fidelity', and aesthetic 'moviemakers are pledging fidelity to superior sound' changes. Dolby will break the wall separating the audience from a film world, and will create an impression of being there.

3.2.3 Film Sound: 1927- late 1971

'One could idealize the pioneering period [1927-1930] of the sound film as easily as one can caricature it' (Chion 2009, 48). In 1927 it was the 'talkie' that was introduced rather than the sound film as such (Doane 1985, 58). *The Jazz Singer*, widely accepted as the first sound film by historians, is mainly a silent production featuring a prerecorded musical track and intertitles for the dialogue scenes. Jakie, the son of a Jewish Cantor, refuses to follow family traditions and leaves the family house for good to pursue his

dream of becoming a jazz singer. This film contains only one talking scene and several musical numbers, which has given it its place in cinema history, the famous symbolic scene that has been marked as the 'invention of silence' in film (Chion 2009, 32). Jakie's father arrives and finds his son playing and singing 'Blue skies'. He shouts 'STOP!' Then there is an absolute startling silence on the soundtrack. After, the orchestra again plays Tchaikovsky's 'Romeo and Juliet'. Many film critics find this scene especially interesting for its jump from the sound to silence and back. For example, Alan Williams characterises these jumps as 'almost physically painful and from the latter to the former as liberation'(1992, 131). He refers to that striking "Stop!" as 'the most momentous spoken words in all of sound cinema, wrenching the film out of its most developed music-with-speech sequence and back into the traditional discourse of 'silent' cinema' (as cited in Link 2007, 73). Interestingly, Link emphasises here the greatest power of incomplete technological advancement where *The Jazz Singer* 'reveals the deepest experimental investment in sound: a sense of being' (ibid.).

Audiovisual synchronization, one of the main novelties that the sound film introduced, brought heated debates between film critics. Alberto Cavalcanti (1985, 98-111), in his essay 'Sound in Films' describes, by looking at three sound elements in film (speech, music and natural sound or noise), that with synchronized sound 'the films went speech-mad' (ibid.101), 'the actors from the theatre poured into the studios [and] this lesson had to be learned all over again'(ibid.103) - stage acting is not the same as film acting. Cavalcanti's proposition for useful exploitation of new sound element is the 'nonsync'(ibid.). Furthermore, he suggests the inclusion of silence in the element of noise by pointing on the application of 'cut dead' by the orchestra to serve as a big dramatic moment in silent days adopted by classical music (ibid.111). Arthur Knight (1985, 213) highlights a significant role of the pioneer directors who made films 'move and learn to talk' again. Ernst Lubitsch experimented with the process of post-synchronization or dubbing, the adding of sounds to scenes shot later with a silent camera in the recording studio. This helped directors understand the control they had over the soundtrack, which comprises of many sounds - voices, music, and all sorts of noises and effects (ibid.215).

In the films *Applause* (1929) and *City Streets* (1931), Rouben Mamoulian revolutionised the misconception that the audience will not understand the sound without seeing the source. In *Applause* (1929), Lucy Fisher (1985, 233) notices the director's attention invested on a setting: 'Mamoulian seeks to 'build a world'- one that his characters and audience seem to inhabit' (ibid. 233). Thus, a new emphasis on space, on both a visual level (given through a length, height, and depth of image) and, importantly, an audio level

(the spatial ambience created through refusing to eliminate all ambient noises), were facilitated. Fisher notices Mamoulian's achievement in 'rendering of silence perceived' (ibid. 241) through sounds that we can hear miles away. Here Fisher pushes forward the effect proposed by Bela Balazs stating that 'silence, is an acoustic effect, but only where sounds can be heard' (1985, 116-119), which reveals the capacity of the sound of silence to provide '*a spatial experience*' (Fisher 1985, 240, italics in the original).

Prominent interventions were made by the soviet film-makers. Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov shared similar views on the method of non-synchronization - a divorce of image and sound - by treating the two as separate and equal montage elements. Eisenstein's theory of montage that arises from the collision of independent shots to invoke inner speech and creation of metaphors conflicted with the coming of outer speech. In their famous 'Statement on Sound' (1928), Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov expressed their wish for 'only a contrapuntal use of sound in relation to the visual montage' (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov 1985, 84) - a juxtaposition of sound and image that is different to the harmonization of the two, a dominant model of the development of sound in Hollywood's continuity mode. Fisher (1985) in her analysis of documentary *Enthusiasm* (1931) points out at Vertov's aim for 'sabotaging all filmic illusions'(ibid.), making the audience aware of the fact that they are watching a film, and here the aural cinematic illusion is in target. However, unlike Eisenstein, Vertov was far from proposing only a contrapuntal method. Fischer draws attention to Vertov's use of various techniques to confuse the audience by contrasting, disembodied, inappropriate and metaphorical sounds, all to serve the goal of breaking the illusion of a real space. Fischer draws attention to the fact that if in Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) we are made aware of the Cinema-Eye, in *Enthusiasm* (or 'Woman with the Earphones') we are forced to be conscious of the Cinema-Ear (ibid. 253), where the woman sound engineer is a sound monitor and the audience at the same time.

Later experiments exploring the spatiality of sound, making the audience aware of the space through the direction, depth and distance of sound, are highlighted in Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948) and *Touch of Evil* (1958) by Penny Mintz (1985, 290). Here the director focuses on the 'little' sounds such as footsteps, birdsongs, rustle of the trees, to take the audience beyond the aural reality, and intentionally separate the sound from space and its source. Welles uses sound as a device to make smooth transitions, and as a mechanism to divert the audience's attention. Since he is aware that sudden changes in quality of sound can attract human attention, he achieves reactivation of the focus and play with perception by introducing especially off screen sounds. Alfred Hitchcock, who was

responsible for the first British sound film *Blackmail* (1929), was against excessive use of dialogue. Elizabeth Weis (1985, 298) while looking at *The Birds* (1963) - a film that is greatly depends on sound – notes the director’s focus on how the character says something, rather than what s/he says, and more importantly, brings attention to the reluctance to speak- the mute characters. Hitchcock orchestrates the soundtrack contrapuntal to his image, where the silence plays a central motif to express negative moral values of his murderers. Here machines sound like birds, or imply the human emotions; the birds resemble to Hitchcockian human murderers, where ‘their silence is a sign of their control’ (ibid. 307-10). The director combines contrasting sounds of on- and off- screen spaces to enter to the inner reality of the protagonists, which involves the shift from noise to silence. Everything is to create tension and to control the fear of his audience.

The desire to push cinematic language away from a theatrical form, in which the role of sound becomes fundamental, is central to the work of the French auteurs Robert Bresson and Jean-Luc Godard. Lindley Hanlon (1985, 323) notes how *Mouchette* (1967) highlights the depiction of on- an off-screen spaces by describing the hallmark of Bresson’s trademark austere style: once the source of the sound is established the sound can stand alone without image and replace the change of shot. All sounds are important in Bresson’s work: the flapping of bird wings, the rustle of dry leaves, the crunch of footsteps, distant bark of dogs, the sound of wind, the sound of drinking or empty glasses. Hanlon (ibid. 326) highlights the importance of and the ability through the medium of sound express the physical reality of the world around characters of *Mouchette* - here cold, empty, hard - thus director displays through the ‘physicality’ of objects the materiality of the world. Bresson (Ciment 1998, 499) listened attentively to his films as he made them, and relied on ‘the picture to conform to sound rather than the other way around’⁸(ibid.). The ability of sound to challenge the audience to see, feel and imagine outside the field of vision, advocated by Bresson, has been accepted and practiced by the next generation of auteur filmmakers later in the film history: notably Andrey Tarkovsky, Michelangelo Antonioni, Abbas Kiarostami, Michael Haneke and Chantal Akerman. The latter, also found inspiration in Jean-Luc Godard, one of the activists of Nouvelle Vague⁹ (1950s-

⁸ A quote from the interview with Bresson conducted by Michel Ciment (1998, 499): ‘I [Bresson] use the word 'composition' as opposed to the word 'construction'. I listen to my films as I make them, the way a pianist listens to the sonata he is performing, and I make the picture conform to sound rather than the other way round. Transitions from one picture to another, from one scene to the next are like shifts in a musical scale. Our eyesight occupies a large proportion of our brain, perhaps as much as two-thirds. Yet our eyes are not so powerful a means of imagination, not so varied and profound as our ears’.

⁹ French New Wave cinema (1950s-1960s), also considered as European Art Cinema that would refuse traditional cinema of plots and would widely experiment with audio, visual, narrative, editing components of cinema construction.

1960s).

Godard finds sounds that are mechanical in nature as material to employ in narrative - the roar of the metro, car horns, construction and traffic noise - when these combined with an abrupt cut can create silence. Alan Williams describes the effect of these sounds able to 'assault the spectator' (1985, 336) that is less adapted to urban noise than Godard's characters. These abrupt cuts from noisy urban space to almost silence, to describe the inner state of the characters in film, have been used extensively by Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni and will be elaborated later on. Thus, Godard's structural use of sound through stylised 'sonic realism' (ibid. 337) is apparent especially in location sound. As Williams describes, Godard refuses to do the 'spectator's work': e.g. ambient sound remains present and on the same level when the 'more important' information appears (dialogue), or, instead of seamless transitions he emphasizes the cut through contrasts of silence and noises, described earlier. Williams finds this stylistic use of sound similar to the Bazinian realism¹⁰ of 1940-1950s in which 'long takes with great depth of field' were privileged over montage techniques. By using the physicality of the 'raw material', Godard moves away from classical editing which aimed to conceal all traces of apparatus common to Hollywood films.

During the period of 1927-1971, sound was concerned with finding its most suitable role to play for integration into the cinema realm. The early focus on lip-sync sound, where 'the sound operated on the image like a pressure cooker lid' (Chion 2009, 206), tempted to pull cinema into the theatrical model. Hence it was 'talk' that concerned the first critics of sound, and 'their arguments *against* sound were not necessarily arguments *for* silence' (italics as in O'Rawe, 2009). Conversely to primitive copying of sound to image, the contrapuntal treatment of asynchronous sound to serve the montage development to create a rhetoric 'were for the wrong reasons' (Kracauer 1985, 137), and in fact, 'what it did create was the off-screen space' (Chion 2009, 208). Film theorists often underline that insufficient theoretical attention was being given to sound in relation to image, hence the film vocabulary is that it prefers analogies to vision - e.g. 'visual medium', 'spectators' (Altman 1985, 52; Altman 1992, 171; Bordwell and Thompson 2013, 268). Altman sees the reason for this in relation to two existing fallacies surrounding 'marginalised sound'. One is linked to the historical argument of sound being merely an 'afterthought' to the reigning image. The other is the ontological fallacy defended by early film theorists Rudolf Arnheim and Bela Balazs that 'film being a visual medium suggests that the images are the carriers of the meaning and structure' (ibid. 51), which can suggest

¹⁰ Film critic Andre Bazin's (1918-1958) theory of realism is against audience manipulation- e.g. overused editing.

that sound has little effect on overall structure of the film. However, the quality of sound, 'its lack of the concreteness which is conducive to an ideology of empiricism... [in comparison to the image, evokes] different truth and another order of reality' (Doane 1985, 55), based on mood and atmosphere created by the music and sound effects.

However, if early cinema film theory was worried about the sound-invasion in our dream world, the advent of sound led to more emphasis given to the 'realist aspect of the cinema' (Armes 1974, 19). As a result, the noticed spatial qualities of sound - the off-screen space detected through the off-screen sound, the rising interest in little sounds, the realisation of the film creators' control over soundtrack - these are all valuable explorations to play fundamental role in sound and silence development. Moreover, by unlocking the perceptual power of sound to direct the audience's attention and, to evoke sound designer and editor Walter Murch, by learning that special 'dance'¹¹ where sound can act independently from image, (and narrative flow), a space that silence could fill was starting to emerge.

¹¹ Image and sound are linked together in a dance. And like some kinds of dance, they do not always have to be clasping each other around the waist: they can go off and dance on their own, in a kind of ballet. There are times when they must touch, there must be moments when they make some sort of contrast, but then they can be off again (Murch 1985, 356)

3.2.4 The second coming of Sound: 1971 - present

As with most technological innovations, the arrival of Dolby also did not immediately change the history of cinema. This period in film history is referred by a film critic Charles Schreger as ‘the second coming of sound’ (Sergi 2004, 56), or ‘The Second Sound Revolution’ (Schreger 1985, 348), one where the new expressive element has been introduced - the silence of the loudspeakers and as a consequence of this, the audience’s attentive silence (Chion 2009, 148). In this regard, four key innovations made by Dolby are essential to mention: the noise reduction system, stereo, digital and, now Atmos. Dolby Laboratories first successfully implemented ‘Dolby A’ noise reduction professional system for the music industry in late 1960s. At that time, the movie industry was in danger of disappearing, due to domesticity with television and other forms of leisure leading to the decline of cinema going from the 1950s onwards. Thus, the response to the introduction of the noise reduction system for the movie industry that would improve the sound quality and open the possibility for clear silence, without background hiss and distortion, was welcomed (Sergi 2004, 16-18).

Although some noise reduction had been used for film recording prior to *A Clockwork Orange*, this film is known as the first movie to use noise reduction on all the pre-mixes (Allen 2004, 93). It required ‘extensive mixing of the picture in the re-recording phase, where as many as five generations of magnetic material were overlaid without appreciable noise accumulation’ (Beck 2016, 166). Nevertheless, because there was no system in place to reduce noise in theatrical presentations, the final release print was an optical mono track. Dolby’s entrance into the movie industry is considered to have been ‘a very slow start’ (Sergi 2004, 19). The improvement of sound quality was not yet convincing enough for exhibitors to pay for their film theatres to be upgraded. George Lucas’s *Star Wars* (1977), released in a 35mm, 4-channel optical copy and 70mm, 6-track magnetic copy, was the film that came to explore and to test the new possibilities offered by Dolby Stereo¹² sound. This was also the first time film creators approached the issue of sound in the pre-production stage and Lucas gave sound designer Ben Burtt the independence and freedom to create sound (ibid.). As Schreger (1985, 352) notices, Burtt had more than a year to collect necessary sounds from different locations (e.g. airports, factories) for the film. The iconic opening scene of *Star Wars*, ‘where a giant spaceship audibly travels from the back of the theatre to the front’ (Kernis 2011, 32) contributed

¹² http://cdn-blog.dolby.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/HistoryofSound_Final.jpg (Accessed 20.02.2016)
Dolby Stereo is a way of encoding 4 channels of sound down to 2 channels to record on film, then decoding them back to 4 allowed for stereo in the limited space on film stock

vastly to public consciousness and attention to quality sound. As a result, the innovations that Dolby brought to film in 1977 included*¹³ wider frequency range, the ability to go lower in the lows and higher in the highs, increased dynamic range, a much wider range of contrasts, multitrack sound. This technological advance facilitated an arsenal of sounds such as breathing, scratching, clicking, buzzing, to be fully used in a soundtrack, and now sound, rather than the image, could establish the filmic space. For the first time, in a cinema ‘a giant ear were turned towards us ready to pick up the tiniest sounds we make. We are no longer just listening to the film; we are being listened to by it’ (Chion 2009, 148).

As a result, in the USA the number of exhibitors that were willing to upgrade their theatres to Dolby standards increased from 46 in 1977 to 2,000 by 1981. In 1992 Dolby Digital premiered with *Batman Returns* (Tim Burton). As Dolby Digital’s official website specifies, this is a form of digital audio coding that makes possible to store and transmit high-quality digital sound more efficiently than before¹⁴. This system provides 6 channels of sound (centre, left, right, left surround, right surround and low frequency channel) or commonly known as a 5.1 system. Mark Kerins points out that despite the significant change in the new sound system, the debut of *Batman Returns* (1992) went ‘largely unnoticed by the general public’ (2011, 39) and media. The main obstacle was the cost of conversion of theatres to a new digital surround system: Dolby SR-D format. In contrary to *Batman Returns*, a year later, one of the most commercially popular Hollywood directors, Steven Spielberg, stormed the cinema world with *Jurassic Park* (1993). This film introduced a developed and cheaper Digital Theatre Systems (DTS), and gained major success depending on the computer graphics used to create the leading characters (dinosaurs) the first time in the film history. A sound designer of *Jurassic Park*, Gary Rydstrom, received Academy awards on the best sound effects created. In 2012, with the release of computer- animated film *Brave* (2012), Dolby Laboratories introduced the next invention, Dolby Atmos. This allows sound to move around in three-dimensional space; adds an extra overhead dimension - feeling objects moving over your head; renders every

¹³ M. Chion, *Film, A sound Art, A physical reaffirmation of sound*, p.124, 2009

¹⁴ <http://www.dolby.com/us/en/technologies/dolby-digital.html> (Accessed 23.02. 2016) The role of each channel in 5.1 system: 3 front channels (Left, Centre and Right) provide crisp, clean dialogue and accurate placement of onscreen sounds; 2 rear surround channels (Left Surround and Right Surround) create the sense of being in the middle of action; the low-frequency effects (LFE) channel delivers deep, powerful bass effects that can be felt as well as heard. As it needs only about one-tenth the bandwidth of each of the other channels, the LFE channel is referred to as a ‘1’ channel.

sound to provide more clarity, detail, depth and richness. As a result, an immersive effect, a feeling of being inside the cinema world is created¹⁵. This new format had a contradicting reception among film creators. Mark Kerins notices film director Alfonso Cuarón's 'praise for Atmos' (2015, 151) regarding it 'as a dream come true' while working on *Gravity* (2013), whereas others are 'inherently skeptical of sound coming from anywhere other than the screen' (ibid.). Similarly, the directors of *Brave* (2012), Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman, had concerns about mixing the film in Dolby Atmos initially. However, later in his interview for the Sound Works Collection, director Andrews (2012) makes a statement on changing his view, which sound designer Gary Rydstrom shares too: '[Dolby Atmos] is more 3D than 3D visuals, because it puts you in the environment and it shoves you into that screen'. Nevertheless, by quoting Gianluca Sergi, Kerins expresses the existing fear of considering Dolby Atmos 'as yet another entry in a long list of technological innovations aimed at providing greater sensual engagement at the expense of film narrative' (2015, 152).

To better place our research on *cinematic silence* within Dolby era the impact Dolby revolution had on film aesthetics needs to be reiterated. Two new elements that are clearly highlighted by Chion (2009, 153), and are necessary conditions for the silence to reside equally next to sound, dialogue and music on a soundtrack are: the new nature of silence and the new possibilities of microediting of extremely short fragments of sound.

Even though directors like Akira Kurosawa, Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard and Michelangelo Antonioni envisaged the potential and practised silence before coming of Dolby, it is due to technical advancements that the enhanced experience of silence anew became possible. Moreover, for making of silence the possibilities arise with multi-track era are essential to achieve sensory effect. Sound designer Walter Murch (1985, 359) recalls about editing with 160 tracks for *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Coppola, 1979), the ideal he always strives for is 'to get the audience to a point, where they can imagine the sound' and [...] 'that is where you swing between zero tracks and 160 tracks'(ibid.). What 'the swing between zero and 160 tracks' (ibid.) creates is the suspicion that the history of cinema made a full circle: 'there have always been sound films... [and] there will always be silent films' (ibid. 360), since the part of our brain will seek to reach the point of silence to feel with sounds of our own thoughts and dreams.

¹⁵ <https://www.dolby.com/us/en/brands/dolby-atmos.html> (Accessed 23.05. 2019)

3.3 Classifications of silence in film

Chion (2009, 203) notes that like all true stories the chain of events of film sound evolved not exactly as expected. Sound film was meant to synchronise the image with music, as a result opened space for speech; Dolby arrived for rock music and spatialized sounds, opened a space for noise and sensory effects. Nevertheless, Murray Schafer predicted in 'The Turning of The World' that 'all research into sound must conclude with silence - not the silence of negative vacuum, but the positive silence of perfection and fulfilment'(1977, 262). However, today the associations the audience has with relation to silence in film are mainly negative, often connected to how silence is applied in thrillers and horror movies. There is no clear-cut route that takes us to a 'silence of perfection and fulfilment' as described by Schafer. Thus, to explore further how silence has been theorized, the various classifications of silence in film and the notion of cinematic silence will be discussed here.

Following Bordwell and Thompson (2013, 284), it is accepted that sound provides a crucial unit of film narrative. It comprises diegetic /actual sound (actors' dialogue, sounds coming from the objects seen in the story world, music that comes from a sound system in the story) and non-diegetic (any extra sound, not part of the story, added for effect, for example, a music or a score to enhance the emotions, narration). However, as we approach the concept of silence in cinema, the notion of diegesis becomes complex because of the relative nature of cinematic silence. In an attempt to find a distinction between blurred boundaries of the existing categories, Bordwell and Thompson (ibid. 288) propose 'internal' (inside the mind of the character) and 'external' (sound that has a physical source in the scene) diegetic sounds. Furthermore, Chion proposes that 'internal sounds' (1994, 222) can be the sounds of our imagination and body movements. With recent films that stretch and cross the boundaries between the conventions of 'diegetic', it is hard to put in place a clear borderline where the 'internal' or 'diegetic' silence belongs.

Two case studies of films by Michael Haneke - *Hidden* (2005) and Chantal Akerman - *D'Est* (1993) in Chapter 4 will draw attention to this aspect of silence. However, as Chion argues: 'Silence is never a neutral emptiness [...]; It is the product of contrast [...] and consists in subjecting the listener to [...] noises' (Chion 1994, 57). Even though an emerging interest in filmic silence can be traced during the last two decades, there is no widely accepted terminology for the use of silence in film (Theberge 2008, 51-67). The following section presents a few existing classifications of filmic silence formulated by different filmmakers and film theorists.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter (Film Sound), one of the first statements in film theory on silence as an acoustic effect has been expressed by Bela Balazs (1985, 117-19) in 'Theory of Film' (1948). Des O'Rawe (2006) recognizes Balazs as the first major film theorist that realized the coming of sound as also the coming of silence. Balazs grants sound an agency to reveal our acoustic environment, the 'speech of things and the intimate whispering of nature' (1985, 116), silence is 'when we can hear very distant sounds in a very large space' (ibid.118), or 'a silent glance [of a character that] can speak volumes'(ibid. 119):

If a sound film shows us any object surrounded by the noises of everyday life and then suddenly cuts out all sound and brings it up to us in isolated close-up, then the physiognomy of that object takes on a significance and tension that seems to provoke and invite the event which is to follow...

Balazs 1985, 119

Bearing in mind the time in film history when Balazs articulated his vision on the faculty of silence, when technology allowed to separate image from sound and have more than one soundtrack, this provides a significant insight on the potential of silence. It is true that, as Abbas Kiarostami argues, 'No matter how wide we can make the screen, it still doesn't compare to what our eyes can see of life. And the only way out of this dilemma is sound' (Saeed-Vafa and Rosenbaum 2003, 114).

In the late 1960s, Noel Burch drew attention to the structural use of silence in Godard's *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* (1967). Burch welcomed the director's variations between the different 'colors of silence' (a complete dead space on the soundtrack, studio silence, silence in the country, and so forth), thus noticing some of the structural roles silences can play (Burch, 1985). Writing fifty years after Burch, Paul Theberge (2008, 51-67) explores silence as an element of narrative structure in cinema and television and classifies these as *relative*, *relational* (diegetic, musical, or dialogue), *structural*, *stylistic*, and *generic* silences. Theberge shows skepticism regarding the concept of *complete silence* (nothing on the soundtrack), hence the title of his essay 'Almost silent', by drawing attention to existing contradicting ideas in film theory on this type of silence. On the one hand, this complete silence can be perceived as a technical malfunction; on the other hand, it becomes possible as a consequence of the coming of synchronised sound. In addition, Theberge highlights the existing uncertainty in the cultural understanding of silence, as mentioned in the introduction, given the difference in the perception of silence

experienced in different cultures - eg. America as opposed to East Asia. On the contrary, filmmaker Mike Figgis did not seem to worry about the two things that normally are never done in film - 'one: never look into the lens directly, it's too frightening for the audience [...]; two: you can never have silence [which here means having nothing on the soundtrack]' (2003, 1). Figgis uses complete silence in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) in the scene in which Ben (Nicolas Cage) is extremely drunk and hits the rail. Figgis recalls:

I then discovered why they say 'don't do that [complete silence]... It's very disconcerting for an audience because you've been programmed and conditioned to never have a direct confrontation with the film. The film is always very gently and politely just looking over your shoulder, and the actors never really look at you, unless it's a horror film...

Figgis 2003, 1-14

Theberge argues that this type of silence is usually used for 'intensely dramatic or violent acts' (2008), and by placing the audience in the direct confrontation with the audience and the film causes 'extremely powerful [...] level of discomfort' (ibid.). Sven Raeymaekers, whose developed framework of silence will be elaborated further, adds that this type of silence also 'forces us to confront ourselves' (2014, 26). As a result, Theberge focuses only on forms of silences where a full soundtrack - speech, music, sound effects - is present. Thus, *relative silence* is a specific effect of reducing the soundtrack to near silence in order to accentuate the necessary sound. This became especially easy to reach at the age of Dolby, which made it possible to introduce in the soundtrack a wide range of close-up sounds that can be heard only when other sounds are silent and when we pay enough attention to them. These include the wind, rain, insect flying, clock ticking, room tone and etc. Nevertheless, these developments are not only sonic in nature but also relate to audience's attention. *Relational silence* creates meaning by contrasting sounds to enhance dramatic moments in film, and to create 'various relationships of presence and absence' (ibid. 56). Here Theberge categorizes three types of silence: diegetic, music and dialogue.

Diegetic silence has no diegetic sound but is filled with music or other non-diegetic sounds: 'used not only to represent the inner life of characters ...[but also] when the real becomes surreal' (ibid. 57). Thaberge brings an example from *Kandahar* (2001) by Mohsen Makhmalbaf, where 'music dominates the soundtrack in a sequence where the victims of landmine explosions hobble, on crutches, out into the desert as a prosthetic limbs, air - dropped by parachute, fall from the sky'' (ibid. 57). This method can be also useful in road

movies to evoke a sense of time passing. *Musical silence* is applied when there is a contrast between presence and absence of music, to intensify the sense of character's isolation. This is typically used in films with the themes of murder, terror and violence. Among many examples Theberge mentions Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994) where the 'pairing of violent events with popular songs as source of music' (ibid. 59) are in place. *Dialogue silence* appears as a function of a script or produced by actors in the context of performing a particular role or scene – such as speechless characters in films of Hitchcock. Music and dialogue silences are not obvious, and can remain unnoticed to the audience.

Whereas *relative* and *relational* silences are designed to enhance dramatic moments in a film, *structural*, *generic* and *stylistic*, silences are crucial for the overall narrative structure or stylistic approach of the films. The concept of *structural* silence was first introduced by Claudia Gorbman who argued: 'A structural silence occurs where sound previously present in a film is later absent at structurally corresponding points. The film thus encourages us to expect the (musical) sound as before, so that when in fact there is no music, we are aware of its absence' (1987, 19). Theberge finds Gorbman's concept of structural silence relatively undeveloped, and aims to develop the idea of silence having structural, stylistic, or generic implications. By doing so, he expands the idea of structural silence by analysing Victor Fleming's *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941). Here, 'once we have become accustomed to witnessing Jekyll's transformations accompanied by music (and nondiegetic sound), Fleming chooses to stage one transformation in complete silence: [...] where Jekyll/Hyde is forced to reveal the secret of his psychological experiment to his colleagues [...]; by highlighting the scene in this way, Fleming marks the revelation as a significant point in the story' (2008, 61). As a result, sound/silence used as an analytic tool to play a crucial role in the overall narrative structure of the film.

To describe *generic* silence Theberge refers to *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) by Lars von Trier. The main protagonist Selma (singer Björk) sings without the accompaniment of a non-diegetic orchestra (as has been before this scene) and all other sounds in the execution chamber are muted. In addition, by having most of the film's diegetic sound in mono, while the victim's voice in the production numbers and the final scene are in stereo, the filmmakers enhance the role of the audience's perception by 'enveloping and wrapping them within the same acoustic space as the victim' (2008, 62). But most importantly, Theberge highlights the combination of diegetic and nondiegetic sound that is typical to the musical genre with the absence of the orchestra sound in the end, which creates an empty space and makes the silence more momentous by signifying the final switch from 'musical

heroine to melodramatic victim'(ibid. 62).

Stylistic silence, as Theberge notes, is a tendency towards a greater stylization in television drama, since there is a need to make the television series easily identified by sound through a signature tune or background scoring. As examples, he refers to *The West Wing* (1999-2006) a political drama, *NYPD Blue* (1993-2005) a crime series and *ER* (1994-2009) a hospital drama. Here even the use of different types of silences can become an element of style. For instance, in *The West Wing* the characters around the White House are constantly talking and the sequences where we see dialogue continue but we do not hear it, or, in other scenes, the action continues but we hear a pop song are representing stylized diegetic world of the series. This can have different narrative purposes, such as a way of indication of secrets or predictable conversations. Structural and generic silence in the overall film composition can serve as repetitive motives to evoke certain impression and/or hidden meanings.

Gerry Bloustien (2010) examines silence in the successful mainstream television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003). He classifies silence in four different modes - interrupted speech flow, wordless, empty and reflexive - by focusing on the function of silence-sound in film narrative. *Interrupted speech flow*, or mini-silences, encompasses pauses, stuttering, faltering dialogue. As an example, Bloustien defines the 'moments when self-control and self-possession are lost' (2010, 93). For instance, in the opening episode, *Welcome to the Hellmouth* (1.1) the character Willow explains her fear of expressing feelings: 'No, no, no, no. No speaking up. That way leads to madness and sweaty palms'(ibid.). Thus, these mini-silences, as Raeymaekers notices, make 'the protagonists even more perfect and ideal, but also believable'(2014, 23) for the audience to relate with. Hence, this silence creates 'humanization of the universe presented to us rather than an alienation through representation of the unknown' (ibid). Being mini-silences, within the dialogues, these can hardly play a significant role, if at all, in the film construction. In *wordless silence* all dialogue is removed and replaced by diegetic and non-diegetic sounds. For example, there is a non-diegetic score in a sequence when Dawn prepares herself for her sacrifice in the episode *The Gift* (5.22) by thoroughly folding her clothes. Here the gap filled with a melodramatic score enhances the sadness 'which has been silenced' (Bloustien 2010, 95) by creating tension. With *empty silence* there is neither dialogue nor a musical score. Since this type of silence goes against the audience expectations, it usually either comes after distorted or dislocated sound (to reinforce the surreal atmosphere) or followed by the limited ambient sounds. For example, we hear Buffy's footsteps across the kitchen floor, the wind chimes as she opens the door to the garden, the sounds of the street

and everyday life continuing from birds and the children's shouts, and the sound of Buffy's own retching as she vomits on the floor. This silence evokes Theberge's relative silence; however, it is not common for the television medium, something sound designers Larry Sider and Paul Davies will reflect upon further in their interviews discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Finally, in the case of the *reflexive mode* - a revelation - 'that which cannot be spoken, is made overt and forced into articulation' (ibid. 96). It is a silence not that is not heard, but revealed through non-diegetic music (songs), exaggerated through physical humor (e.g. a face expression).

Bloustien's aim is to put forward the complex role of silence as a narrative technique in a television series where a text and music are central. The negative presence of silences in the complexity of a modern world is underlined through symbolising personal doubts, referring to what has been silenced - the losing of self-control. It is possible to notice how silence becomes part of the blurred line between the natural and unnatural, the symbolic and concrete, even the worlds between cinema and reality. Bloustein is primarily looking at the narrative function of silence even though she refers to the moments when actors talk about themselves as actors, or point deliberately to the audience, or deliver lines such as 'Anya: It was like we were being watched... Like there was a wall missing' (ibid.). This immediately draws attention to another layer of silence between the two worlds that lacks articulation in this essay: the presence of an attentive audience placed in the direct confrontation or encounter with the film and with themselves.

The celebrated sound designer Walter Murch - *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1997) - is also a supporter of the artistic use of silence in film. In a 1998 lecture in London, Murch expressed his view on transitions to silence often having psychological component, and emphasised two types of silence he had applied in practice for *Apocalypse Now* : locational and psychological. The former is 'done for the purposes of demonstrating a shift in location but also for the visceral effect of a sudden transition from loudness to silence (95, 2003). The latter is 'how fast you bring the sound to silence'(ibid. 96) - here there is no change in the location and the audience feel almost the same as the characters onscreen:

The trick here [psychological silence] is to orchestrate the gradual elimination of 'orchestral' elements of the jungle soundtrack: if it is done too fast, the audience is taken out of the moment; to slow, and the effect we were after, the tense moment before the tiger jumps, wouldn't have been as sharp.

Murch 2003, 96

The descriptions of these silence demonstrate that these two contrasting types of silence - *locational and psychological* - are performed differently (abrupt cut versus gradual elimination), as well as perceived by the audience in a different way and context. Both are powerful and can be applied by noise/sound effects, which serve to the purpose of this study that will look at the making of silence by the use of diegetic sounds only.

In order to explore filmic silence, Sven Raemaekers in ‘Filmic Silence: an Analytic Framework’ (2014) applies five silences: metaphorical, silence by negation, actual, virtual, absolute silences. He explains the connection of the framework based on Lacanian triadic structure of the mind formula (Figure 1), and finds that metaphorical silence, silence by negation and virtual silence are more applicable to film than actual and absolute silences (symbolic and imaginary based on Lacanian triadic motion).

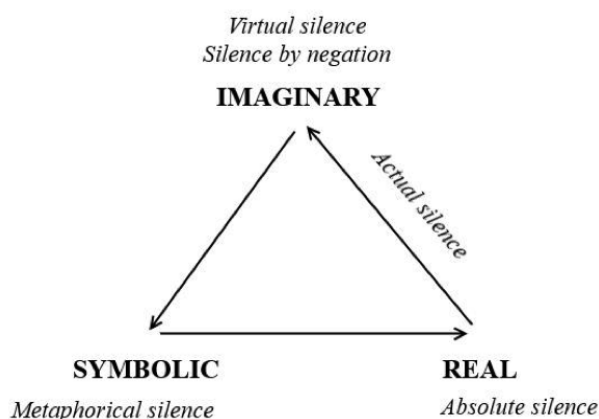


Figure1: ‘Filmic Silence: an Analytic Framework’ (Raemaekers 2014, 12)

Thus, Raemaekers describes *metaphorical silence* as the most common and ambivalent conception of silence. By representing absence, this metaphor, with no fixed meaning, needs to be filled with our own interpretation within the context. For instance, Raemaekers refers to metaphorical silence in visual arts: sculpture and paintings. Here we witness a ‘frozen moment in time [...], and the void represented by sculptures and paintings forces either an alienated disinterest or an empathic personal interpretation’ (ibid.12-13). He finds this particular silence especially interesting in film, since within the context of sound and image it can create a unique and direct cinematic experience for the audience. *Silence by negation* is imaginative silence; an experience or a place, where we ignore the quietest sounds and perceive it as if there is silence present. Hence, ‘it is a form of silence that

negotiates between the complete absence of sound and our perception thereof” (ibid.13). In this context, Raemaekers notices Theberge’s definition of ‘almost silent’ (2008, 51) corresponds to the silence by negation in film. Since this is not an absence of silence but the use of very low volume ambient sounds (e.g. the sound of an insect). *Actual silence* is the physical limit of sound. As Raemaekers describes, even though we cannot experience silence in physical sense ‘this does not mean that extracorporeal silence does not exist’ (2014, 14). Thus, since sound and silence are defined by each other we cannot experience actual silence unless through death (ibid.14). Raemaekers’s *virtual silence* is the silence that exists in the infinite space next to perceptible sounds. He describes virtual silence as a combination of actual silence and silence by negation. Unlike actual silence, which exists through the existence of sound, virtual explains how silence exists in sound. In contrary to silence by negation, the sounds that are present are not unconsciously ignored. Thus, Raemaekers concludes that ‘almost every cinematic experience of silence will be virtual silence’ (ibid.14). Finally, *absolute silence* is a silence beyond the sound /metaphysical silence and a place of nothing. This also explains the associations of silence with unknown and mysterious. It also interprets ‘the power and ubiquity of silence as representation of the fears and anxieties brought about by the possibility of an encounter with absolute silence’ (ibid. 15).

Raemaekers’ analytic framework has a holistic approach as it encompasses the important aspects of silence in relation to narrative, image, soundtrack and spectator’s experience. He coordinates the classifications by Theberge and Bloustien according to his five modes. However, he focuses primarily on the metaphorical silence, silence by negation and virtual silence as the main applicable modes relevant to film (symbolic and imaginary based on Lacanian triadic motion (Figure 1, ibid.12). As a result Theberge’s structural, stylistic and generic silences, that suggest individual application and dependency on a soundtrack, have been omitted from this framework and present project. Bloustien’s silences, as well as Theberge’s relational silence (diegetic, dialogue, music), that often depend and are constructed by non-diegetic sounds, remain omitted too. Moreover, complete silence, the absence of sound on a soundtrack, even though discussed further in the thesis will not be used in the creative practice aspect of this project.

As a result, the classifications of silence introduced by Raemaekers (2014, 85) can be analysed in relation to our perception and in relation to the rest of the soundtrack. However, when integrating the modes of silence (Theberge’s and Bloustien’s) into the proposed framework - virtual, metaphorical and silence by negation - it becomes obvious that the discussed silences have an overlapping, coexisting and ambivalent nature. Hence, a

clear depiction of the types of silences that are applicable for our study is important. As a result, relative (Theberge) and locational (Murch) silences, that are created primarily by diegetic sounds (and image), will be further discussed and practiced. These are the principal ways to construct ‘cinematic silence’, in terms of the way in which, as explored in the next section, this concept will be explored and used in this project.

3.4 The concept of cinematic silence

After considering the relevance of the concept of silence in the historical development of film sound, and in the theoretical discourse, the definition of cinematic silence needs further explication.

Human bodies are never silent, and human beings do not perceive complete absence of sound. It is therefore no surprise that the absence of sound in films awakens the fear of the absence of life (Sonnenschein 2001, 125). Nevertheless, we do have a concept of silence and this is used in our day-to-day life in ways that are clear and understandable to other human beings. Expressions like ‘deafening silence’, ‘to break the silence’ or sentences such as ‘There was silence when I entered the room’, or ‘We looked at the sea in silence’ use the word silence to mean many different things, but not the complete absence of sound. The meaning of silence is clearly very complex, and has been the object of investigation for specialists in different fields. It is beyond the scope of this research to scrutinise this wider scholarly terrain. Rather, this project will limit the focus to the complexity of how filmmakers conceptualise and think about silence.

With the various technological developments explored earlier in this chapter, a cinematic silence that ‘feels true...[but] have nothing to do with what is true’ (Chion 2009, 241) became possible to achieve. This invokes the question of auditory realism: the ‘real and the rendered¹⁶’ sound effects in film contemplated by Chion: ‘Cinema has created codes of ‘truth’ - in fact what *feels true* - that have nothing to do with what *is* true. (italics as in original text, *ibid.* 241). While discussing the matter, Chion describes Leonardo da Vinci’s surprise expressed in artist’s notebooks: ‘If a man jumps up and down on his toes, his weight makes no noise’ (*ibid.* 237). Yet in films there is a widespread exaggeration of sounds and the use of natural sound is not common. As Chion notes, ‘Films rarely use the real sound (less loud and defined) of a punch, gunshot, or slamming door but instead

¹⁶ Rendering: the use of sounds to convey the feelings or effects associated with the situation on screen - often in opposition to faithful reproduction of the sounds that might be heard in the situation on reality. Rendering frequently translates an aglorate of sensations. (from Glossary in Chion 1994, 224)

translate the physical, psychological, even metaphysical *impact* of the action on the sender or the receiver' (italics in original 2009, 139). Similarly, by silence it is not the absence of sound, but the rendering of what we refer to as silence in our life that is created.

Film sound is finalised during the post-production stage, which involves making creative choices based on the available production sound. These include sound recorded on location (which involves the elimination of certain sounds, the enhancement of chosen sounds to exaggerate or highlight contrasts, and the insertion of a room tone or environmental silence), Foley Effects (addition of other sounds recorded in studio, or libraries, from different locations, etc.) and Automatic Dialogue Replacement (ADR) - a process of re-recording of the dialogue in a post-production studio to match the original footage, for different reasons (e.g. the location was too noisy, microphones malfunction, not desirable sounds recorded together with the dialogue). These elements are manipulated in the construction of a soundtrack that does not provide real sound, but rather creates audio deployed in conjunction with visuals to tell a story. If silence is used this is not a complete absence of sound on a soundtrack, but rather an effect is created that evokes particular emotions, feelings, associations, sensations that are essential to the story.

Since late 1960s, as 'silence... [becomes] clear with Dolby' (Schreger 1985, 352), silence has been discussed predominantly by music theorists such as Michel Chion, Murray Schafer and Claudia Gorbman. Furthermore, most readings on silence in film tend to refer to the assertion by composer John Cage of the non-existence of silence (1970, 146). Essayist George Michelsen (2010, 63) in his book 'Zero Decibels' voices skepticism about originality of Cages's ideas, as various composers before his silent piece *4'33* (1952) elaborated on the potential of silence through practice. Examples include Alphonse Allais 'March for the Funeral of a Deaf Celebrity' (1897) and Erwin Schulhoff 'In futurum' (1919). However, the crucial point Michelsen expresses is his suspicion of the unpopularity of 'silent/suggested music' (Michelsen 2010, 67), similar to print losing popularity with images, connected with the mental work and effort necessary from the audience to interpret silence (ibid. 67). As Des O'Rawe points out:

[...] if we are to explore and develop more fully our understanding of filmic silence, its forms, variations, and interpretive implications, then maybe we should look not to traditional film theory and criticism but rather to the body of critical work on silence that exists in the field of music and sonic arts.

O'Rawe 2009, 97

It is true that the value of silence can be appreciated by music specialists. Cinematic silence can be used as cinematic compositional techniques, almost create a ‘musicality’ to the piece, in order to render the idea of silence. As Rene Predal in the essay ‘Robert Bresson: L'aventure Intérieure’ (‘The Inner Adventure’) elaborates on ‘The Music of Sounds’:

In his ‘Notes of Cinematographer’, Bresson acknowledges that it took him a long time to use silence as a compositional and emotional element. Just as one shouldn’t seek the poetry of his films in the dialogue, but in the images, the musicality should not be found in the soundtrack, but should reinforce the filmic construction.

Predal 1998, 102

This evokes Michelangelo Antonioni’s elaboration on the use of music in his film practice:

[...] when I say ‘soundtrack’, I allude to natural sounds, to noises, rather than to music. [...] The ideal would be to compose with noises an impressive soundtrack and to appoint an orchestra conductor to direct it. But then the only orchestra conductor capable of doing it- wouldn’t he be the director of the film?...

Di Carlo, Tinazzi, Cottino-Jones 1996, 139

Hence by looking at the what makes film silence ‘cinematic’, we can discover how it participates in filmic construction and communication, and how it requires the creative labour of an audience. As O’Rawe (2006) reflects, arguably silence present in the non-representational abstract films of Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol, Michael Snow is to ‘capture’ the sound of light’ (2006, 405); in the essay films by Chris Marker and Errol Morris to heighten the sense of ‘fragility, uncertainty and despair’ (ibid.) and in the feature films of Andrey Tarkovsky, Theo Angelopoulos or Stanley Kubrick to find the ‘great secret’ (ibid.) of the cinema.

Across all kinds of film-making, this research will focus on four crucial elements: sound contrast, extended shot, inactive image and repetition of silent phrases.

3.4.1 Sound - silence contrast

As Schafer argues, ‘When silence precedes sound, nervous anticipation makes it more vibrant. When it interrupts or follows sound, it reverberates with the tissue of that which sounded and this state continuous as long as the memory holds it. Ergo, however dimly, silence sounds’ (1977, 257). As noted earlier, silence can state its presence when

combined with contrasting sounds, as can be shown in works by Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni and Michael Haneke. This quality of silence has also been described by various sound theorists. For instance, Chion notes, '[Silence] is a product of contrast' (Chion 1994, 57), while Sonnenschein argues that 'combining the neurological factors with the storytelling necessities, contrast becomes an indispensable item in the strategy of capturing the audience's attention' (2001, 128). Thus, the 'sudden cessation of sound can give rise to a feeling of aesthetic perplexity or emotional anxiety. The power of silence at an unexpected moment can be deafening' (ibid. 166). Even though the coupling of loud and soft sounds has been applied by the film creators before Dolby innovations, it is accepted that this creative strategy especially powerful with the great potential of the dynamic range (Kerins 201, 61). This method fits perfectly with Murch's description of locational silence and has been practised by Michael Haneke in *Hidden* (2005) that will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.4.2 Extended duration

Time is an essential requirement in order to gradually build up tension, provoke curiosity, raise a question, hear/see beyond the image/sound, to provoke attention or boredom. Similarly, time is needed for the generation of silence. Film critic and screenwriter Paul Schrader (2018, 3) finds that French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's works that cover two perceptual periods in the history of cinema - 'Cinema 1: Movement-Image' (until after World War II) and 'Cinema 2: The Time-Image' (post-World War II) - help to understand the 'phenomenology of perception through time' (ibid. 3). Schrader simplifies Deleuze's theory, by pointing at the main idea of the shift in perception from movement-image to time-image based on the edit (or for our purposes here the cut) that is led not by the action but 'by the creative desire to associate images over time' (ibid.3): 'Man exits one room, enters another - that's movement-image editing. Man exits one room, shot of trees in the wind, shot of train passing... [or] Man exits one room, the screen lingers on the empty door. That's time-image editing' (Schrader 2018, 4-5). As a result, the 'time-image' aims to reach not only the conscious mind by telling stories, but also to the unconscious (memories, fantasies, and dreams). The latter is a world and work that involves the presence of silence. This partly explains the prevailing use of prolonged, uncut and almost silent shots in the slow cinema of Andrej Tarkovsky, Michelangelo Antonioni, Chantal Akerman, Bela Tarr, Michael Haneke, to name a few. Schrader while describing Tarkovsky's long take writes:

The Tarkovsky long shot is more than long. It's meditative. The psychological effect of slow cinema's 'long take' is unlike any other film technique. Film techniques are about 'getting there'- telling story, explaining action, evoking an emotion - whereas the long take is about 'being there'.

Schrader 2018, 8

The roots of slow cinema, where the film style itself becomes the subject matter, rather than narrative causality and action, derive from avant-garde films of late 1960s such as Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), or Andy Warhol's *Empire* (1964). One of the early examples of experimental slow cinema that took inspiration from these works is Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), a 201 minutes long film, where the daily routine of a middle-aged widow is portrayed with meticulous precision. Hence, the audience is left puzzled why they are made to watch what this woman is doing for so long (Margulies 1996, 68). Ivone Margulies notes that Akerman expressed her intention to use 'duration as a presence rather than for mood' (1996, 68), and argues that 'it is the nature of the image ... that invites us to enter a diegetic process' (ibid. 68). It can be argued that equally it is the nature of the almost silent sound of daily life (washing dishes, Jeanne's slow or fast footsteps in a flat, her abrupt or peaceful movements and gestures) combined with the extended real-time shots that create an invitation for the audience to enter to Jeanne's uneventful everyday. It is hard to imagine that the same effect of presence, or Schrader's similar comment on 'being there' in relation to Tarkovsky's long take, would be possible to create with accompanying music.

A famous signature eight minutes uncut shot in Tarkovsky's oeuvre is in *Nostalghia* (1983), where the challenge of the protagonist, a Russian homesick writer Andrei Gorchakov (Oleg Yankovskiy), is to walk from one end to the other across the drained mineral pool of St Catherine, by keeping a lighted candle in his hands against the wind. Oleg Yankovsky remembers that Tarkovsky wanted him to 'display an entire human life in one shot, without any editing, from beginning to end, from birth to the very moment of death' (Loughlin 2009, 376). The candle keeps on blowing out, and Gorchakov comes back again to relight it, and by shielding the flame from wind with his coat or his hand tries to reach the far side of the pool. The camera follows, in an extended tracking shot, Gorchakov: from time to time he looks around if anyone can see him; we hear his footsteps in paddles and on the ground, his stumbling at something metallic, his breathing, sniffing, a sigh of despair, drops of water, a click of a lighter, and barking of the dogs in far distance. The music starts only after eight minutes of almost silence, when Gorchakov exhausted

places the flickering candle on the stone ledge. The shot starts and finishes with the protagonist's hands holding the candle, though when the candle is placed we hear Gorchakov falling down on the ground and dying off screen.

To return to John Cage's *4'33* (1952) mentioned earlier, it is worth considering that the primal role of his famous work is on listening, rather than on silence. This becomes a durational frame through which the artist makes the audience to listen to whatever is there. This methodology is one of the directorial techniques I will test in my creative practice, by placing a still camera for an extended duration of time, in order to observe possible audio and video events in filmic space to create suspense and/or add an element of unpredictability. This economy of shots, the focus on the banal events of life for an extended duration of time - a 'dead time' or 'temps mort' - is widely applied by slow cinema creators. This allow space and freedom for the spectator and the listener to respond and to scrutinise the limited information on screen, and forces to see beyond and 'between the images'(as proposed by Ivone Margulies 1996, 4). Equally, between and beyond the sounds: to hear the silence that hides something beyond the seen surface. The realism of surface created through the stretching of cinematic time has been advocated by film theorists since the 1940s: Andre Bazin ('What is Cinema?' vol.2, 1971), Cesare Zavattini ('Some Ideas on the Cinema' 1953) and others.

Thus, the proposed 'sound-silence contrast' and 'extended duration', the two different types of cuts, correspond to Schrader's (2018, 18) description of a 'smash cut' (as a form of aggression) and a 'delayed cut' (as a form of passive aggression). Even though both can be seen as directorial manipulations, Schrader notices a significant difference in them: 'manipulating film time to create suspense and manipulating time to create boredom' (ibid): the first 'depreciates the viewer's participation' and the second, 'demands it' (ibid.). Despite the difference in purpose and nature of manipulation through the cut, both techniques capable to create the effect of cinematic silence, and will be elaborated further in Chapter 4.

3.4.3 Non-dominant image

To make silence heard and felt requires a re-focus of attention on the part of the viewer/listener. The loaded image, where there is too much action or diverse information is less likely to open a space for silence to emerge. A way of 'emptying' the image can be achieved through the use of static camera, of empty spaces/landscapes and of passive, monochrome colours, since the less dominant image is capable of bringing attention to what is beyond the visual. The immobile, static shot to emphasize silence works most

efficiently with uncut extended takes described earlier. An unobstructed camera gaze is similar to a person observing carefully or staring at the object silently from outside. This unmotivated stare makes each sound more palpable and distinct. Silence created through empty spaces can have different roles in the film construction. For example, in Frederick Wiseman's observational documentary it works where the main protagonist is often a public institution: a prison in *Titicut Follies* (1967), the eponymous *Hospital* (1970) and *National Gallery* (2015). In such films, deserted corridors or shots from the doorways are necessary elements to create a breath, a silence. In Michelangelo Antonioni's features such as *Blow up* (1967) or *L'Avventura* (1960), the ambience of the locations give impression of what the protagonist feels inside. In Patrick Keiller's documentaries *London* (1994) and *Robinson in Space* (1997) the hypnotic landscapes represent absence. Additionally, while discussing the main directorial techniques of slow cinema, Schrader (2018, 16) sees the choice of filmmakers to apply black and white, when the color image is a norm, as a 'withholding device', a way to give less. However, this method can be also applied to imply the feelings of nostalgia and memory.

3.4.4 Repetition

Lawrence Kramer argues that 'Repetition is a basic structural feature of most music and poetry' (1984, 25). This is also true for the art of cinema, where various repetitive silent phrases recall a familiar theme and give an impression of the continuous unfolding. This patterned structure that involves repetitive motifs, for example, the routine behaviour described earlier in *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), often reveals the essence, the hidden layer, that is the core meaning of the film. Schrader points out on the leitmotif 'planimetric compositions with a central corridor or road' (2018, 14) taking away from the camera in works of Ozu. The characters may walk through these or not, the aim is 'to make the viewer aware of context' (ibid.14).

As Delmotte observes, 'Cinematic silences, with or without audible signals, are space builders. However, sound designers often have to battle to impose silence as a rich terrain on which to build sounds' (2013, 112). Technological enhancements have had a significant impact on the way silence is portrayed in film: the way sound design practitioners approach silence, the rich interactions between the representations of silence in cinema, the space where these scenes are presented, and the audience. Sound designers Skip Lievsay in *No Country for Old Men* (2007), Glenn Freemantle in *Gravity* (2013),

Guillaume Sciama in Michael Haneke's *Amour* (2012) and Paul Davies in *Hunger* (2008) make silence as a fundamental element of film construction.

3.5 Conclusion

As we can observe from the overview of the history of film sound, the development and broadening of the soundtrack was a gradual process. Technological advances had a huge impact on the development and quality of film sound we can experience today in the cinema. This can explain the existing tendency of considering sound as a technical, rather than a creative and artistic part of filmmaking. As award winning sound designer Gary Rydstrom - *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1998), *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1999) - reflects in his interview with Sergi: 'film is a perfect blend, a 50/50 of art and technology. [...] and it's a little insulting when parts of filmmaking, like sound, are considered more technical than artistic, or sometimes all technical' (Rydstrom 2004, 179). With the re-evaluation of the noises achieved in cinema, dialogue and music become less predominant to the soundtrack. Silence as an acoustic spatial event, even if reluctant to speak explicitly, has reflexive and communicative qualities able to call attention to its absent presence, which makes it even more rich for further exploration.

As evidence, the abundance of silences classified earlier in this chapter - relative, relational, structural, generic, stylistic, empty, wordless, reflexive, locational, psychological, metaphorical, actual, virtual - demonstrate the active interest in the subject by theorists in recent decades. In this study, the term cinematic silence will be used to indicate the many ways in which the idea of silence is portrayed in cinema. This will not refer to the absolute absence of sound on the soundtrack, as discussed earlier in this chapter with regard to Theberge's complete silence, but rather to the ways in which filmmakers portray, with images and sounds, the silent moments in the life of the film and the audience's feelings associated with them. Cinematic silence constructed by diegetic sounds, as a strong narrative device, can refine and enrich the language of cinema art. As a result of the trimming of expository texts, dialogues and music, the director can use a 'less is more' approach to evoke, provoke, translate, inflate and stimulate various crucial emotions. This creates, in the process, a pregnant space between the sounds, images, words and faces to allow silence to enter and talk for itself, to reach beyond the surface of the two-dimensional screen.

4. Film Case Studies

This chapter will look at the application of cinematic silence in two case-studies: the experimental documentary *D'Est* (1993) by Chantal Akerman, and the psychological thriller *Hidden* (2005) by Michael Haneke. Despite the drastic difference in directorial styles and film genres, these works have a number of similarities. First, there is the immediate question that can emerge in the audience: 'Why, they ask, is *the director of this film* doing this *to me*? (Wheatley 2009, 31, italics in the original). Even though Catherine Wheatley poses this question in relation to Haneke's films on how they induce 'experience of unpleasure' or 'hostile reactions' (ibid. 85-88) among the audience, the same question is valid for Akerman's works. Here, through the earlier discussed forms of manipulation (e.g. through delayed cuts) a sense of waiting, uncertainty and boredom is created. The second is the tendency of both filmmakers to intermingle between documentary and fiction filmmaking: Akerman in her experimental documentary incorporates aspects of fiction construction (e.g. staged interior setups in *D'Est*), while Haneke deploys in a number of scenes an aesthetic often found in documentary (e.g. surveillance footage). Third, in both films the power of the absent presence of the director is palpable. This is heard and seen through the silent gaze and void created through silence that is left to be filled by the audience. Moreover, there are silent tapes, silent observations, hidden guilt, hidden memories and a hidden camera. These are all rich layers dealing with the present, past and dreams in both works. Both these films touch on the subject of historical trauma in their own peculiar ways, and create a participatory dynamic through silence, audio-visual contrast and the portrayal of a banal quotidian. Nevertheless, even though the methods to create cinematic silence applied in these films can seem very similar, Akerman's and Haneke's critical aesthetic remains different. As Wheatley points out,

[...] while Haneke builds upon modernist techniques in order to take film in a different direction, he is clearly not an anti-narrative film-maker in the sense that Akerman and Godard were... [His aim is to] 'generate a new spectatorial experience which focuses on the spectator's ethical position in relation to the film.

Wheatley 2009, 87

The sense of waiting and uncertainty created in Akerman's works have a different purpose: the constant exploration of her Jewish identity and memory take the audience through a hypnotic, often plotless, journey to the unconscious. In this chapter, the extensive use of cinematic silence alongside different narrative conventions will be analysed. Moreover, the

off-screen silent (but obvious) presence of the filmmakers, which is crucial in both works, will bring attention to the role of the silent director in the narrative construction.

4.1 Investigation of Akerman's Cinematic Silence in *D'Est*

The career of Chantal Akerman started with the explosive *Saute ma Ville (Blow Up My Town, 1968)*, an experimental black and white short inspired by Jean-Luc Godard's New Wave film *Pierrot le Fou (Pierrot the Madman, 1965)*. In *Saute ma Ville* Akerman plays as a Chaplinesque teenager who, after performing a number of domestic rituals (cooking, cleaning, polishing shoes and eating), blows herself up in a kitchen. The minimalistic style of the director is self-evident in this 13 minute work. The film uses asynchronous sound, so that the culmination is not seen but only heard against a black screen; repetitive ritualised movements in narrow spaces (domestic work in a kitchen); on screen and off-screen (inner/psychic or sexual) explosions; and a camera placed at the director's eye level.

In numerous interviews, Akerman has commented on the significant role her family history played on her cinema: in particular, she has focused on her Jewish Polish immigrant parents and her mother's silence about the horrors of the Holocaust. She noted that she 'wanted to fill this noisy silence with silent noise, in a space-time. I wanted to make films' (Schmid 2017, 2). The director's Jewishness is portrayed in her films through the extensive use of rituals, life song performances, kitchen settings, a sense of homelessness and, of course, the use of silence. Possibly, by invoking a 'noisy silence' Akerman refers to one of the nine silences introduced by writer and a psychotherapist Paul Goodman¹⁷: the silence caused by a trauma and as a result the reluctance to share the horrors of past events (1971, 15).

During her career Akerman 'composed' over 50 films and video works in a wide variety of genres touching diverse topics, but even in her more commercial work, she remained true to her signature minimalistic, hyper-realist and 'anti-illusionist' (Schmid 2017, 1) style. Later, she reflected in an interview that: 'At the beginning I thought that since she [her mother, Nelly Akerman] didn't have any voice, I would be speaking for her, but it turned out not to be so true, it was just my way of explaining things' (Lebovici,

¹⁷ According to Goodman, there are nine kinds of silence in life: 1) dumb silence of slumber or apathy; 2) the sober silence that goes with a solemn animal face; 3) the fertile silence of awareness, pasturing the soul, whence emerge new thoughts; 4) the alive silence of alert perception, ready to say, "This... this..."; 5) the musical silence that accompanies absorbed activity; 6) the silence of listening to another speak, catching the drift and helping him be clear; 7) the noisy silence of resentment and self-recrimination, loud and subvocal speech but sullen to say it; 8) baffled silence; the silence of peaceful accord with other persons or communion with the cosmos.

2011-2012). The focus of this enquiry is to explore Akerman's 'way of explaining things': the way she orchestrates her film composition by applying cinematic silence as a narrative device to tell her story.

4.1.1 Influences on Akerman's cinematic silence

Chantal Akerman started her filmmaking career in the late 1960s, a time when active discussions on the aesthetics and meaning of silence, as well as technological innovations improving the quality of sound in music and film, drew attention to the importance of silence in art. In the 1960s, Susan Sontag, a critic of modernism, claimed that 'the art of our time is noisy with appeals for silence [...] One recognizes the imperative of silence, but goes on speaking anyway.' (Sontag, 1964). In the context of silence, Sontag's two essays are of particular significance: *Against Interpretation* (1964), which is a writer's rebellion against the act of interpretation of an artwork, where Sontag argues for the primacy of form over content; and *The Aesthetics of Silence* (1969) where Sontag discusses the mediation of art as a form of spirituality. In the latter essay, Sontag considers the agency of silence as part of the artist's 'spiritual project' for liberation (from him/herself, from history, from the artwork), and a way to point to transcendence, as 'behind the appeals for silence lies the wish for a perceptual and cultural clean slate' (Sontag, 1969). Sontag's ideas evoke composer John Cage's views on the non-existence of silence, and silence being not just an acoustic event but rather a 'change of mind' (Cage 1990). In his *Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* writer Stuart Sim (2007, 110), while discussing Sontag's and Cage's aesthetics of silence, highlights the unity in the thinkers attention on

[...] the symbiotic relationship between silence and the opposite (speech, noise, sound, however we want to characterise it), and [how] each seeks to keep the two in fruitful interplay. Even if there is agreement that absolute silence is an impossible condition and that noise in some form will always be present to our consciousness, silence continues to be, at the very least, a useful term within artistic discourse - a 'boundary notion', in Sontag's phrase.

Sim 2007, 110

It has been discussed that in the late 1960s significant technological changes in film sound developed by Dolby Laboratories improved the dynamic range of a film soundtrack to allow for more subtle 'acoustic close-ups' (Balazs 1985, 121), very low and soft sound

effects: e.g. the ticking of a clock in an empty room, footsteps in the snow, water drips, etc. As a result, this made the creative use of the contrast sound vs silence finally possible. In this context, the complex and relative nature of cinematic silence prompts a number of questions: is the silence perceived by the audience the same silence experienced by the characters in the film? Does this silence 'exist' in the story or in the cinema? Silence is never a neutral emptiness, but rather a product of contrast, and consists in subjecting the listener to noises (Chion 1994, 57). These might be environmental noises, which exist in the soundtrack (wind, room tone, or bird song), or noises that exist in the cinema (people breathing, slight movements, etc.). Even though there are exceptions where Theberge's 'complete silence' has been deployed - by Jean-Luc Godard in *Band of Outsiders* (1964), Jacques Tati in *Playtime* (1967), Mike Figgis in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995), Abbas Kiarostami in *The Chorus* (1982), Stanley Kubrick Kubrick, in *2001: A space Odyssey* (1968) and Lynne Ramsay in *Ratcatcher* (1999) – it normally has a disruptive effect on the audience, as pointed out in Chapter 3. When deployed, complete silence draws attention to the constructed nature of the soundtrack (Godard), or to create scenes of interrupted life (Kubrick, Ramsay), or to make the audience experience the protagonist's deafness (Kiarostami), or experience of being drunk (Figgis). Apart from these examples of complete silence, in most cases silence in films is portrayed through some sounds in the soundtrack. However, since the 'sound' of silence escapes a clear categorisation (described as 'internal and external' (Bordwell and Thompson 2013, 288), 'internal' (Chion 1994, 222) or 'insounds' (Delmotte, 2013)), Sontag's 'boundary nature' and ambivalence in relation to the acoustic effect of silence is again relevant.

These significant insights on the role and meaning of silence in art, including the aesthetic and technological changes, had an impact on emerging filmmakers like Akerman. Her cinema is consequently rich with contrasts and oppositions (e.g. presence and absence, movement and immobility, external and internal, stasis and movement, day and night, past and present, expectation and reality), which suggest and explain the contrast of images and sounds of trains, open windows, busy roads, footsteps, on-screen and off-screen explosions that we encounter in most of her films. Akerman's main characters remain almost always silent, such as Jeanne Dielman (*Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels, 1975*), Anne Silver (*Les Rendez-vous d'Anna, 1978*), Ariane (*La Captive, 2000*) or the location/landscape itself in *D'Est*, and this creates an ambiguous aura around them, and suggests the need for the pregnant silence to be broken. To understand Akerman's intentions, the consideration of directorial methods applied and examination of the narrative devices used to involve the audience intellectually and emotionally in one of her

complex and multi layered documentary works *D'Est (From the East, 1993)* will follow. Influenced by developments within the French New Wave, Akerman choses a hybrid form combining documentary and fiction and explains: 'After the documentary is shot and edited, if it does not open a breach into the imaginary, if fiction does not slip into it, for me, it is not a documentary. As for fiction, if no documentary aspects slip into it, then I find it difficult to think of it as a fiction film (Schmid 2010, 99). Interestingly *D'Est* has not only 'opened a breach into the imaginary', but it is Akerman's first film that moved from cinema screen to art gallery as an art installation project *Bordering on Fiction* (1995) two years after its official release.

4.1.2 Akerman's filmic space, time and camera in *D'Est*

D'Est (From the East, 1993) takes the form of an essay portrait of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rise of Perestroika in the Soviet Union. As in her early essay film, *News from Home* (1977), Akerman applies a non-expository¹⁸ style of storytelling (Nichols 2010, 31). Unlike the 'expository mode' where argumentative logic and verbal commentary are used to convince the audience, *News from Home* and *D'Est* include no verbal commentary and have long static and tracking shots where the location itself becomes the main silent protagonist of the story. Walsh (2004) suggests that *D'Est* can also be seen as an extension of the last sequence of *News from Home*, where in the final ten minutes, after almost 70 minutes of mainly static shots, the camera moves up to the New York skyline. The human and mechanical traffic structured around a sense of the absence of Akerman's mother and/or Akerman herself is present in both works - *News from Home* and *D'Est* - where the director's meditative and evocative camera is capable to tell a story through framing and movement.

D'Est is structured as a chain of seemingly separate parts. The 107 minute film consists of 67 shots (about 50 static and 17 tracking shots), and mainly out of sync sounds that often counterpoint rather than complement the image. As sound helps the spectator to imagine beyond the reach of their vision (Saeed-Vafa and Rosenbaum 2003, 114) and defines the on-screen and off-screen space to give a sense of distance and perspective,

¹⁸ The six principal modes of documentary filmmaking by Bill Nichols are: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, performative.

understanding how Akerman creates that filmic space¹⁹ (Massera, 2010) through sound and image is essential.

The first 27 minutes of the film can seem as ‘le temps mort’ (dead time) or empty moments (Rascaroli and Rhodes 2011, 9). These are moments in which it seems that ‘nothing happens’ (Margulies 1996, 23). The chain of static long takes of interior and exterior locations is accompanied by mainly diegetic sounds. These include a radio playing a German song in a café; the sound of passing cars, trains, lorries and trams, horse-drawn carts; the Polish language concert by the sea; the open air night concert in the Russian language; birds chirping; a light breeze; footsteps of people walking on a wet/dry pavements; the crunching sound of footsteps in the snow; a tractor engine and metal buckets in the hands of potato pickers in a field. This image-sound orchestration moves the viewer through East Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Russia by creating an anonymous and hypnotic filmic space. Akerman through her minimalistic style, in which ‘less is more’, creates space for silence to enter in her work. As Susan Sontag notes: ‘Everyone has experienced how, when punctuated by long silences, words weigh more; they become almost palpable. Or how, when one talks less, one begins feeling more fully one’s physical presence in a given space’ (Sontag, 1967). Known as one of the ‘difficult directors’ (Schmid 2010, 13), Akerman demands her audience to put the pieces together on their own and expects them to fill what is missing to the limits of their imagination and intellectual experience.

Akerman’s subjects in the film remain ‘mute’. The potato pickers gradually approach the camera, commenting on and reacting to the presence of the crew, ‘Are you taking photos?’ (translation from Russian by the present author). But even when it is possible to hear the potato pickers, the director and her crew stay invisible and voiceless. Moreover, the director’s decision not to provide any translation and subtitles for the viewer allows no room for the subjects’ self-representation. The potato pickers are instantly associated with the gleaners of feminist New Wave filmmaker Agnès Varda (*Gleaners and I*, 2000). Thus, the focus of attention moves to the subject’s body, posture, gestures, and to the human face, which Akerman’s patient and curious camera studies in thorough detail as ‘an expressive landscape’ (Schmid 2010, 98).

¹⁹ Here the term ‘filmic space’ refers to Eric Rohmer’s three types of space: (1) the architectural (the physical location where the film is shot, the set design and the decoration of the *mise-en-scène*), (2) the pictorial (related to the film image - the type of camera lens used, the depth of field, height and tilt, etc.) and (3) the filmic (includes both the audio and the off-screen space by creating an imaginary place through a shot sequence or a montage). Filmic space articulates both the pictorial and architectonic space within the given narrative.

By designing her own silence on screen, which becomes ‘a stretch of time being perforated by sound’ (Sontag, 1967), Akerman uses cinematic silence as a device to focus the attention of her viewer on particular feelings - departure, helplessness, hopelessness, uncertainty, waiting - a Beckettian ‘Waiting for Godot’. The suspense built through the use of real-time, the withheld information and repetitive structure created by the participatory dynamic space for the spectator to reflect on, to feel, to search, to wait and to find their own answers. Silence requires time and for Akerman time is all we have (Akerman, 2010). Her art becomes a form of her own thinking: here the choice of prevailing static shots is almost instinctive. These prolonged silent and static staring (not looking) shots in pursuit of truth become a way of steering the audience’s attention. Sontag’s (1967) definition of ‘staring’²⁰, as steady, unmodulated and ‘fixed’, describes Akerman’s camera glance.

The interior shots in the first 27 minutes of *D’Est* are long, static, frontal, and clearly staged in a kitchen settings, reminiscent of the filmmaker’s iconic feature film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975). They include a silent young woman in an orange dress sitting on a green sofa with a piece of white paper in her hand looking straight into the camera. The window is open and a soft breeze moves the white curtains behind her. The off-screen sound of a Polish song (overlapped from the previous shot) is playing. An old woman is sitting in a living room next to a table with two sets of teacups. Through the open window a distant noise of passing cars can be heard. Then there is a side view of an old man through the kitchen door eating at the table, we hear the sound of the cutlery while he is eating, and drinking and cars passing in a distance. Another old woman, neatly dressed with an apron on is sitting at the table and looking to the side, the soundtrack contains only room tone.

Apart from the shot with the old man that is sitting sideways, the other three shots are frontal. For Akerman, making films is about frontality: the filmmaker facing the ‘Other’: the subject and the viewer. Akerman often quotes the French philosopher of Jewish origin Emmanuel Lévinas:

When you see the face of the Other, you already hear the words ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (‘You shall not kill’). These frontal staged static shots, which are present also

²⁰ Susan Sontag considers ‘the difference between *looking* and *staring*. A look is voluntary; it is also mobile, rising and falling in intensity as its foci of interest are taken up and then exhausted. A stare has, essentially, the character of a compulsion... Traditional art invites a look. Art that is silent engenders a stare. Silent art allows— at least in principle— no release from attention, because there has never, in principle, been any soliciting of it. A stare is perhaps as far from history, as close to eternity, as contemporary art can get.’ (*Styles of Radical Will*, Sontag)

later in the film, are silent dialogues between the filmmaker and the 'Other': director-subject and director-spectator.

Lebovici 2011-2012

Thus, the only camera movement in the first 27 minutes is more than a minute long, tracking from right to left, a side view of an old woman with a plastic shopping bag walking behind the row of cars. This poses questions for the audience. Where is she going with this bag? What journey are the audience being taken on? Is this the woman connected to the man we saw sitting on a bench and looking purposeless? Will they meet later in the film? A 'walking woman' has been extensively repeated in most of Akerman's films (e.g. *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), *Rendez Vous Avec Anna* (1978), *La Captive* (2000)). Hence in *D'Est* too, the transformed image of an old 'walking woman' with a shopping bag, with hardly perceivable footsteps on a pavement in a noisy street (as opposed to the sound of the high heels in the above mentioned films), instantly evoke the series of *Walking Woman* (1961-1967) by Akerman's favourite experimental artist Michael Snow. Through repetition, the artist creates their own style, which they improvise in themes and variations throughout their work. In *D'Est* again Akerman 'plays' with her 'walking woman' to address the issues of meaning, perception and movement, as Snow improvised with his cut-out image of a 'walking woman' for over six years.

Anne Eakin Moss (2016, 170) finds a resemblance of the same image of a 'walking woman' with a shopping bag, with Kopchishka's mother leaving the market, or Kopchushka grown old in Vertov's *Kino Eye* (1924). Furthermore, Moss argues that Akerman not only applies 'Vertovian techniques'²¹ in *D'Est*, but also transforms these techniques by substituting the collective of kinoks with individual and gendered camera'. The director's off-screen silent 'ghostly presence' (Schmid 2010, 103) and her camera's 'game of hide and seek' (Moss 2016, 174) suggest that 'Akerman's camera aims to register not just the world [Vertov's approach of 'life as it is'], but also the world's reaction to her and her camera' (Moss 2016, 174). Similarly, Sontag has described the 'artist-spectator' relationship as a 'cat-and-mouse' game:

The artist maps reality. That's the between the artist and the world. And it's not just the artist who plays it. Each of us is in a cat-and-mouse game with our perceptual

²¹ Vertov used eight techniques for invisible camera: 1)filming anwares; 2)filming from an open observation point set up by the kinok- observers; 3) filming from hidden observation point; 4)filming when the attention of the subjects is diverted naturally; 5)filming when the attention of the subjects is diverted artificially; 6)filming at a distance; 7) filming in motion; 8)filming from above (162-163, 1984)

life. Do we really see ourselves? [...] do we simply watch without judgment, in the expectation of learning something?

Sontag, 1967

Neither the old walking woman nor the man sitting on a bench appear later in the film. One soon realises that there is no one human protagonist in the film. The image of a 'walking woman' during the first 27 minutes is significant, as it becomes an overture and an introduction for the main theme that will develop later: a theme of movement, dislocation and displacement.

The following 15 tracking shots of train stations, bus stops, 'kiosks', and endlessly waiting people (some shots are more than eight minutes long) are repetitive. Despite the fact that there is only one circular shot in the entire film, the frequency and length of the changing tracking shots produce an illusion of the camera panning around. When the camera is sliding from right to left while people are walking to the right, it feels almost as if the camera moves back and forth. The way Akerman narrates with her camera is reminiscent of Snow's camera movement trilogy: *Wavelength* (1967), *Back and Forth* (1969) and *Central Region* (1971). Snow's experiments with camera movement independent of any story and the extended duration of a moving image to make the spectator aware of the passage of time, are his narrative techniques to build suspense. Akerman further explores the potential of camera movement/stasis by looking at it beyond mere experiment, but as an essential part of her cinematic language.

The people waiting for buses or trains are clearly not happy with the presence of the camera, and they express their irritation either through body language (turning around, pretending that they do not see the crew, or walking away from it), or vocally. It can be heard: 'What are you filming?', 'How long is there still to wait?', 'Are we supposed to smile?', 'You better ask before filming...', 'Take your desired shot and go away from my sight' (the translation from Russian by the present author). Once again Akerman chooses not to provide any translation of her subjects' words, instead, an asynchronous off-screen sound is used: the sound of a cello playing. This emphasized distance expressed through contrast between the sound of the cello, imaginary, dreamy, beautiful and close to fantasy, with the realism of the image, the clear annoyance of the filmed subject with the presence of an off-screen apparatus and Akerman, is almost unbearable. This juxtaposition creates a space 'inbetween' image and sound. Akerman is aware that when sound and picture support each other, the sum is bland and weak (Quandt 1998, 501), the idea advocated by Robert Bresson which has been discussed in Chapter 3.

An old woman stepping forward is yelling in Russian: 'I am an invalid of the Second World War and waiting for more than an hour here. Shall I show you my pass? Are you filming all this chaos? How nice!' (the translation from Russian by the present author). It feels almost as if her screaming has silenced the cello. The spectator becomes the one who is 'waiting' too. Following Andre Bazin, Akerman's 'images [and sounds] are important not for what they add to reality but for what they reveal in it' (2009, 70). This endless waiting in lines, the sound of moving feet and passing cars relate to dislocation, evacuation and become reminders of people waiting in concentration camps. Again, the traumatic past of Akerman's own family assumes a voice, shape, colour, movement, glance in almost hallucinatory and 'most indirect [of forms] of autobiography' (Lebow 2008, 35). As Akerman describes: 'When you look at a picture, if you look just one second, you get the information, 'that's a corridor'. But after a while you forget it's a corridor, you just see that it's yellow, red; that it's lines; and then again it comes back as a corridor' (Margulies 1996, 43). The repetitive and endless drone of the sounds of the urban environment, the road noise of passing cars, people crowd, and hammering of footsteps, detaches the viewer not only from the image on screen but from the sound as well. The fine border between present, past and dream almost disappears, and the audience creates its own associative sound and image narrative.

4.1.3 Musical and architectural aspects of composition in *D'Est*

Akerman's filmic composition can be compared with the work of experimental composers such as John Cage (Batler, 1995). Her sound and image tracks welcome dissonances, noises, oppositions, variations of a main theme repeating in a loop, and not clear narrative structures. She carefully uses silence, as an essential musical component, in almost all her films. By looking through rather than at sounds and images, Akerman draws attention to 'little' sounds or 'acoustic close-ups' (footsteps in the snow, a car passing, the cawing of a crow, the turning of the disc of the telephone, the ringing of the bell of the tram) and seemingly 'unnecessary' images (e.g. cutting salami, putting lipstick) where 'nothing happens', yet at the same time, everything matters. These 'unintentional' (Fleming, 2016) sounds and images connect with intentional ones (a cello; a song on a music player; a female voice telling memories about the pianist woman; a young man playing on a piano while the TV is on; a song playing from unknown source; another song on a dancefloor) by forming a loop. After 27 minutes of mainly static shots, the overlapping 'double-voiced' pattern becomes apparent in the film. Almost as musical phrases, the constant repetition of intentional and non-intentional - documentary and

fiction create a unique narrative. Tracking shots that slide, scan and wander back and forth or in circle alternate with two-four static interior shots. The careful organization of repetitions in form of echo and/or variations define the content and move the story.

Akerman uses a two-voiced sonic repetition in one of the sequences where again the image and sound clearly do not correspond to each other. The tracking shot of the city at night accompanied by the female voice recounting her memories in Russian with no translation about 'Her, a great woman pianist'. Two minutes later, the same female voice tells us again, almost as an echo, about 'Her' in parallel to the first voice. This nostalgic narration in Russian language becomes a form of music itself.

In *D'Est* the extensive use of Walter Murch's 'locational silence' is applied to highlight a shift in location and the effect of a sudden transition from loudness to silence. Akerman further explores the 'locational silence' and her almost silent scenes become relative to one another. The viewer can become accustomed to a scene with repetitive, prolonged humming and droning sounds that can be easily ignored. A subsequent transition to a new scene with 'silent sound' can consequently feel louder or quieter in relation to the previous scene and requires a listening adaptation (Augoyard and Torgue 2005, 40) - e.g. the circular three minutes shot in a train station and interior sequence in a waiting hall.

Akerman therefore conducts her film not only as a director-composer, but also as a director-architect. She lets her subjects walk out of the frame without cutting to follow them, which creates nervousness in the audience as they wonder 'what can I not see?' and therefore they are left to try to hear what they cannot see. In addition, the doorways and hallways help Akerman to frame her shots. Frederick Wiseman (*Titicut Follies*, 1967; *Hospital*, 1970), documentary filmmaker whose subjects involve public institutions (a prison, a hospital, a school, a library), often uses hallways and doorways as transitional sequences not only to tell more about the building itself (i.e. a hospital, a prison, a school), but also to provide moments of silence (Garcia, 2010).

4.1.4 Concluding remarks on Akerman's *D'Est*

This film analysis draws attention to the use of cinematic silence in Chantal Akerman's *D'Est*: 'a portrait of a landscape and a landscape of many portraits' (Lebow, 2003). To address the issue of the fundamental dialectic role in cinema of contrasting and joining of sound with image (Burch 1985, 200), Akerman applies her 'way of explaining things' through the act of repetitions and rendered pauses: marching in the snow in straight lines or wandering in circles; looking through and listening through the sound and image. These create the dynamic participatory filmic space for silence to enter. The 'leftovers'

(Margulies 1996, 4) of conventional narrative (the images between the images) and, it can be argued, equally, the sounds between the sounds, are Akerman's preferred points of exploration and source of narrative economy. The director's constant (silent) off-screen presence embarks us on an ambiguous game of 'hide and seek' or 'cat-and mouse'. Does Akerman try to 'fill the gap' of silence on screen or does she take us to that 'strange and wonderful [silent] place [space] where the film becomes our own creation'²² (Murch 2003, 100)? The boundaries between on-screen and off-screen sound and silence confuse. The film becomes not only the director's, but the audience's creation. 'Often when people come out of a good film they would say that time flew without them noticing, what I want is to make people feel the passing of time. So I do not take two hours of their lives. They experience them. You are facing yourself' (Akerman 2010).

It is evident that Akerman was influenced by new ideas about the cinema, which motivated her use of long takes, repetitions, unobtrusive interplay between image and sound to capture 'unimportant' quotidian. Her tactic of letting the space breathe through silence makes the audience almost feel the created reality on a physical level. Technological advances continue to have a huge impact on the development and quality of film sound we experience today in the cinema. Nevertheless, Akerman is reluctant to embrace the perfect seamless and immersive cinematic experience that is increasingly possible today and she uses cinematic silence as a strong narrative tool to refine her cinematic language. *D'Est* is about the passage of time - from day to night - that has no clear closure. In this in mind, the final scene is abrupt, the moving image and soundtrack cut suddenly and leave the viewer with open questions and awareness of the filmic surface.

²² A quote from editor and sound designer Walter Murch: 'The ultimate metaphoric sound is silence. If you can get the film to a place with no sound where there should be sound, the audience will crowd that silence with sounds and feelings of their own making, and they will, individually, answer the question of, 'Why is it quiet?' If the slope to silence is at the right angle, you will get the audience to a strange and wonderful place where the film becomes their own creation in a way that is deeper than any other'. (Murch 2003, 100)

4.2 Cinematic Silence in *Hidden* (2005) by Michael Haneke

Michael Haneke's film *Hidden* (2005) - in French *Caché* - is one of the signature works of the director. It has been extensively analysed by academics and film critics in the last decade, regarded as 'part thriller, part mystery, part ghost story' (Ezra and Sillars, 2007), a description that best corresponds to the many hidden or silent aspects calling for interpretation. This film is arguably a masterpiece, which has received numerous awards including 'Best Director' at the Cannes Film Festival in 2005.

The comfortable existence of the French upper-class Laurents family - Georges (Daniel Auteuil) a successful host of a French literary TV talk show, his wife Anne (Juliette Binoche) a book editor, and their 12-year-old son Pierrot (Lester Makedonsky) - is interrupted by a series of surveillance videotapes and childish drawings left on their porch. Since the tapes do not contain an obvious or specific threat, the police refuse to help. The videotapes and drawings awaken hidden unpleasant childhood memories in Georges. He is even convinced that knows the identity of a sender, the orphaned Algerian Majid (Maurice Benichou), whose parents worked for Georges' family before they were killed in the Paris massacre (1961). A six-year-old George, unhappy with the idea that he may possibly share his comfortable life with another child, creates a chain of events and a number of made-up little lies to reach his goal: Georges' parents sent Majid to an orphanage. One of the videotapes leads George to Majid's modest apartment, where the soft spoken, vulnerable and humble Majid seems clueless about the tapes and drawings. To convince Georges of this, later Majid will invite Georges to his apartment, and he will slash his throat in front of him. As a result, Anne discovers the hidden side of her husband which he denied to confess. Majid's son accuses George of being a cause of his father's death. George takes sleeping pills (*cachés*) and in complete darkness goes to bed. In his dream (or flashback), he returns to the family estate and witnesses a scene where Majid is being forced to leave the house. In the credits' scene, Majid's and Georges' sons meet in front of Pierrot's school.

According to Michael Haneke, the moral tale *Hidden* is concerned with the question: 'How can I bear the fact of being guilty?... If I accept it, what do I do? If I do not accept it, what do I do?' (Haneke, 2005). Even though the story is narrated through a step by step revelation of hidden facts from the protagonists' life, in order to create tension, discomfort, curiosity and to hold the audience's attention throughout the film, *Hidden* hardly fits the category of a 'whodunnit'²³ films. For example, it can be unnerving that, even after watching the film, one cannot be certain about who sent the video tapes.

²³ A story or play about a murder in which the identity of the murderer is not revealed until the end.

Numerous academic articles (Ungureanu, 2014; Burris, 2011; Osterweil, 2006; Radstone, 2010; Ritzenhoff, 2008; Gavarini, 2011) on *Hidden* reflect on the issues of violence, trauma, cultural memory, surveillance, moral representation and the effects new media has on an audience. For our analysis, Max Silverman's (2010) article 'The Violence of the Cut: Michael Haneke's *Cache* and Cultural Memory' can serve as a starting point to explore the methods the director applies to construct his narrative through silence. Silverman highlights four types of 'cuts' in this film: violent physical cuts (eg. the childish drawings with spitting blood, Majid's suicide); cuts in the relationships between the characters (eg. Majid's separation from his parents, from Laurent's family house, Pierrot's rebel attempt to escape); cuts between George's protected zones (eg. Georges' bourgeois inside and outside worlds (TVcareer), present and past); and a 'filmic cut which splices up the real into disconnected images' (ibid.). It is the latter that is of most interest to our study. However, Silverman (2010, 58) is concerned with the prolonged 'uncut image', one that will eventually make clear that its seamlessness is the result of hidden cuts. The way of reading and the way of seeing will reveal the dialectical movement of the image (ibid.). Thus, Silverman's abstract 'filmic cut' revolves around the cut between the real and memory. This film analysis will elaborate on the directorial techniques applied to articulate the contrasting realities by 'cold' cut (as an editing element), repetitions, 'passive' and prolonged images.

4.2.1 Hidden revealed in coldness

The film is also partly about coldness. And now you can ask yourself: 'Does this coldness come from everything that was pushed under carpet?' Not only this childhood act, but a thousand other things that have been suppressed. What have you suppressed to be where you are now?

Haneke, 2005

The many layers of interpretation of what is suppressed reveal the contradictions of our reality and the impossibility to grasp, or find a clear answer, to what is always hidden: the truth. Thus, the director's reflection on coldness in *Hidden* is vital to understand the prevailing choice of abrupt audio-visual transitions applied in the film. These contrast cuts create separations, silences and become an intrinsic formal element of the film.

Haneke's invitation to the audience to join in 'the act of spying' (Osterweil, 2006) starts from the first sequence, which has been described as 'one of the most striking openings in

cinematic history' (Brunette 2010, 113): a prolonged static shot of a Parisian middle-class neighbourhood. This (almost still) image is accompanied by ambient sounds: birds chirping, flapping wings, and cars passing through off the screen space. Presumably, the audience expects the scene to change after the film credits have been shown, but instead the motionless image remains. Soon footsteps are heard off-screen. Then a man with a backpack appears and passes by. Next, we hear a door shutting off-screen and then, soon after, a woman leaves the building, and an iron gate clangs behind her. A cyclist swiftly streams out of the screen. Nothing seems to point out to the audience the significance of this almost three-minute long opening shot. This clearly corresponds to Catherine Wheatley's (2009, 93) discussion on 'the ethics of aggression' while analysing Haneke's earlier work *Funny Games* (1997). Wheatley's observation can easily refer to the opening scene of *Hidden*, and can be associated with director's style in general:

[...] when the image does not abruptly change... [...] the spectator is forced to do that which they do when confronted with a painting in a museum or a gallery: they must scrutinise the image, deconstruct it, consider the margins and borders of the frame, and 'contemplate' the structure of representational strategies that informed the creation of this image... [Moreover], the extended duration of the image, coupled with the lack of narrative drive, creates an awareness in the spectator of themselves *as a spectator*.

Wheatley 2009, 93 (italics in the original text)

An off-screen auditory intrusion abruptly breaks this nothingness: clear, close, detached and unidentified voices are heard. Man: 'Well?' Woman: 'Nothing'. Man: 'Where was it?' Woman: 'In a plastic bag on the porch'. Simultaneously to the street scene, we hear the footsteps from an off-screen interior space heading towards a certain direction: Woman: 'What's wrong?!' The familiar sound of a door that shuts and with this the image (al last) drastically changes to the same street again from a different angle in the dark. The iron gate clangs, and a man comes out of the gates, followed by a woman. A man, whom we can see now is George, is crossing the street and stands: George: 'He must have been there'. Anne: "Come inside!". We recognise their voices. George returns to the gates and together with Anne they enter the building and shut the door. The abrupt image cut returns to the uneventful street in the morning again. Suddenly, the sound and image rewind, as it becomes clear later, to find the point of Georges' exit from the building: Anne: 'The tape runs for two hours'...

At last the image cuts to the interior scene and we understand that the couple is watching the video footage on a screen in a dark living room. Ara Osterweil (2006) notes that ‘from this moment on, what is visible can never again be trusted’ and makes connection with Michelangelo Antonioni’s whimsical *Blow-up* (1966). Haneke has extensively expressed his mistrust of the manipulation of the image. In an interview with Michel Cieutat and Philippe Rouyer the director reflects:

You never show reality, you only show its manipulated image [...] but people are dishonest enough never to say it. I, on the other hand, show it to say it. I think it’s the exact opposite position. You can’t escape this problematic: as soon as you make a frame, it’s already a manipulation. I just try to do it in a transparent manner.

Brunette 2010, 152

Various realities are presented in *Hidden*: surveillance footage, George’s nightmares, footage from a literary television talk show, footage during the process of George cutting the video material of the show on the editing screen, TV news coverage and filmic reality. In all these scenes the source of the images and sounds - the point of view and the point of audition - are never clear from the outset, and mainly unfold through the course of time.

For the purpose of this analysis, the most significant element of the opening scene is the use of a sudden unidentified voice or sound intrusion after the prolonged static shot. This technique, where the sound appears earlier than image, a long J-cut, can be experienced here as a sharp and discomforting cold gesture, a sound cut-out able to depict the existence of combatting and contrasting realities mentioned earlier. These sound cuts leave the spectator unprepared and even shocked, and work perfectly with the director’s intention to contrast different realities present in our life (media, dream, reality, surveillance). As a result, the audience, similarly to Georges who is trying to locate the point of view of the camera, is trying to figure out the point of audition (and later view) of the sound events bursting from this unknown off-screen space. Karen Ritzenhoff sees this as, ‘a void that we have to fill with meaning and our own imagination’ (2008, 142). Hence, the cinematic silence is achieved through a combination of more than two minutes of Therberge’s relative silence with the uncut (or the ‘delayed cut’) and almost inactive image, where the audience experiences stages of wonder, boredom, increased attention. This ‘silence’ is interrupted by an abrupt audio cut that serves to move the listener/spectator to an off-screen unknown space.

There are other stylistic choices in this sequence that heighten the power of the cut. These introduce the way Haneke approaches the image ‘in transparent manner’ in almost all his works. Firstly, there is a minimalistic use of music, in *Hidden* in particular, the complete absence of non-diegetic music. As Haneke has noted: ‘I love music too much to use it to cover up my mistakes! In film, it’s often used this way, no? ... In my film [*Hidden*] there are no situations in which one would be listening to music. And I would have found it dishonest to try to cover up my mistakes’ (Brunette 2010, 152). As a result of this directorial choice, the absence of music in *Hidden* enhances a sense of place and its dynamic. Secondly, the motionless repetitive prolonged wide shots, e.g. from the stairs of Pierrot’s school, Laurent’s home at rue des Iris, George’s’ countryside family house, that are mainly accompanied by relative silence. This causes discomfort in the audience by evoking a feeling similar to that of being under a staring gaze. The director states: ‘I know that the audience has understood the shot after ten seconds and is waiting for the next shot. But when it keeps going, they become upset, then angry’ (Brunette 2010, 154). And, as it has been pointed earlier by Wheatley, this ‘creates an awareness in the spectator of themselves *as spectators*’. Thirdly, the image colour contrast (e.g. as in the opening scene from daylight to nightlight) intensifies the coldness of the cut and provides a feeling of fragmented or fractured reality. Moreover, the sudden freeze, fast-forward and rewind modes, which will appear repeatedly in the film, and soon, ‘just like Georges and Anne, we [will] begin to feel increasingly paranoid... with [the storyteller] playing knowing games with his viewers’ (Saxton, 2008, 108). This method of separation of different realities has been extensively practised by Haneke in other films such as *Benny’s Video* (1991), *Funny Games* (1997) and *Happy End* (2017).

The abrupt audio-visual cuts, with radical changes in volume to reach a shock value can be traced further in *Hidden*. After receiving the first video tape, George voices his suspicion of the cassettes being sent by Pierrot’s friends, who is late that evening. However, at the dinner table, Pierrot provides a credible alibi for his late arrival, and Anne confronts George by making a comment: ‘Maybe it’s one of your fans?’ There is no space provided here for the audience, or for George, to digest Anne’s words. The almost deafening effect of a noisy swimming pool in a succeeding scene, and the contrasting image of bright, saturated clear blue water, after the quiet evening meal table, has a startling effect. Here Pierrot is having a swimming lesson and the teacher, whom we do not see but hear, shouts instructions with an authoritarian voice: ‘Pierrot, don’t breath in breakout!... More depth!’ This scene is followed by another abrupt cut to the dark and almost silent street from the opening sequence at night. This relative silent shot runs for

almost three minutes where it looks like nothing is ever going to happen. At last we hear the off-screen sound of an approaching car being parked. The car lights switch off and the sound of the car doors shutting. Then we hear Georges' footsteps, before he appears on screen and heads towards the house gates. The implications are that this scene has been recorded by the 'ghost director'. However, we cannot be certain, as there are no obvious clues such as the use of the 'fast-forward mode' or 'pause'. Cut again, and from that suspicious silent night screen we are presented with an image of Georges on a bright TV screen addressing his viewers: 'See you at the same time in two weeks ...Goodbye'.

In this sequence the repetitive, abrupt sound-image transition technique, similar to a shift from scream to whisper - a way of manipulation 'to call the audience to acoustic attention' (Coulthard 2012, 6) - has been applied between four contrasting scenes in a respective order: an evening quiet dinner time; a noisy and bright swimming pool; an almost silent night street; and a bright and relatively loud TV screen. These four intersecting realities evoke the instructions of Pierrot's teacher - 'don't breathe in breakout!' - as no time is provided for the audience to reach 'More depth!'. These cold cuts between various realities construct an additional layer of reality: the audiences' subjective space ready for an interaction with the film to become a participant as well as an author. The creation of silence caused by the abrupt shifts in location can be understood in relation to Walter Murch's concept of locational silence and can be traced frequently in *Hidden*. As a result, Haneke applies two different type of cuts that fit with the description by Paul Schrader (2018, 18), that were discussed in Chapter 3 - 'smash cut' as a form of aggression and a 'delayed cut' as passive aggression.

Haneke communicates with his audience with the fewest number of shots possible. This economy refocuses the audience's attention on the minimum information provided, inviting them to search for clues in the extended images and repetitive sounds. Every detail in Haneke's works has its significant role to play and become an appeal for imagination and a silent inner interaction with the film. The repetitive prolonged shots - the stairs of Pierrot's school, Laurent's street at different times of the day, George's family estate house taken from inside the barn, Majid's flat - are all portrayed in a wide shots from a distance. These four scenes induce sense of waiting, where the visual barrier suggests a division of inside and outside worlds. The Laurent's house behind thick walls and heavy doors convey the impression that the inhabitants are imprisoned. These associations are reinforced by the family members' 'grey, shapeless clothes [that] are reminiscent of prison uniforms' (Ezra and Sillars 2007, 216), and the repetitive sounds of shutting doors as the ins and outs to their 'world'. The only occasion when Anne is in pure white outfit becomes

memorable, when her organised book presentation party is followed by an abrupt cut to George's dream: the beheading of the rooster by young Majid. The spit of blood from the animal is so sudden that leaves the audience with association of red blood and white fabric mixed together. The dream scene here finishes with the silent scream, or (perhaps) an attempt by young Majid to swallow George. George then jumps up breathless from the nightmare. Similar startling sound-image associations appear in the sequence where Georges takes out his anger on a passing black cyclist, and again, in Majid's unpredictable and horrific suicide, acted out in front of George. Here 'both, camera and Georges, react to Majid's suicide with the same immobility, each one a reflection upon the other. The mechanistic and depersonalized gaze recording the scene is the same gaze with which George watches Majid's death' (Burris 2011, 159).

The audience is in a constant state of interpreting the contrasts presented by the film: a real library in the living room evokes the fake library decor, a background scene for Georges' TV show. The way the guests of the show allocated is almost similar to the way family guests are placed at the Laurent family's dinner table. The swimming pool image, as well as the chaotic sound, evokes the drowning of 200 Algerians in the river Seine in 1961. A repetitive long blue corridor with closed doors leading to Majid's modest flat is associated with Georges' visit to hidden territories of his memory, where the suppressed stories and feelings hide beyond numerous closed doors. The sounds (as well as images) of doors are everywhere in the film, serving to divide, protect and hide. As Haneke explains:

For me, making references and going back to things that have already happened is an artistic pleasure. It's not absolutely necessary, but it enriches the dramatic construction. It's like a musical fugue. Of course, one can do the music differently, but the doubling of the theme brings in more complexity and pleasure.

Brunette 2010, 153

The 'doubling of the theme' of guilt and coldness through the use of analogue videotape format used as a narrative device to convey the past (Ritzenhoff, 2008; Ezra & Sillars, 2007; Gavarini, 2011). The past here is the war between the French (Georges) and the Algerian (Majid) independence movements from 1954 to 1962. Thus, Georges' lies mirror those of colonial and postcolonial France, and the anonymous 'raw footage provides the inner eye of conscience that he [George] is lacking' (Gavarini, 2011). The proposed identity of a 'ghost director'²⁴ (Ungureanu 2014, 5) or a 'child director'²⁵ (Radstone 2010,

²⁴ Ungureanu applies Derrida's figure of the ghost term (neither alive nor dead) to question the border

20), that might be the sender of the videotapes, who in a way becomes one of the silent film characters, remains hidden. He/she can be suggestive to the viewer of the methods of Freudian analysis where the patient on the couch should not see the analyst. Or in the case of Chion's *acousmètre*²⁶, where 'everything can boil down to a quest to bring the *acousmètre* into the light' or 'de-acousmatization' (1999, 23-24). Later in the film, the repetitive scene of George and Anne watching the surveillance video footage sitting on a couch in the living room facing backward to the camera, forward to the screen (as if to the past/ or the Freudian analyst) in the presence of numerous videotapes placed in the bookcase (similar to various hidden stories from the past). The couple watches as well as being watched. Even though Haneke's 'ghost-director', the sender of the videotapes, as Chion's 'acousmètre', has all four powers (the ability to be everywhere, to see all, to know all, to have complete power), the main difference is that it is always silent, invisible and remains hidden even after the film is complete.

4.2.2 Concluding remarks on Haneke's *Hidden*

The film begins with the desire to find an answer to a question: What is hidden? But it finishes with even more questions. This is reinforced through repetitions, contrasts, prolonged and inactive images. Many writings on *Hidden* pay special attention to the opening and closing sequences of the film. After Majid's suicide George goes to a cinema, and later takes 'cachets' (sleeping pills, the word of which reminds the title of the film) to sleep. Elizabeth Ezra and Jane Sillars (2007b, 221) draw attention to the repetition of ambient birdsong in the opening scene similar to the last dream sequence on Georges family estate: [...] 'we see chickens but we hear sparrows. In fact, the soundtrack in these two scenes sounds the same (including footsteps and car door slamming) but for one thing: Majid's screams have been removed from the opening shot' (ibid. 221). Jennifer Burris elaborates on the 'uncanny repetition of sound': these videos are material manifestations of George's fractured self. Television presenter and video editor, he is 'behind' the lens, terrorising himself with his own paranoia and fear (Burris 2011, 159).

between representation, fiction and reality.

²⁵ The child-director acts, rather, as the bearer of 'the implacable gaze of relentless and scandalously innocent onlooker, this time hidden behind the mechanical eye of the camera' (Mecchia 2007, 132). [Thus] under the watchful gaze of a child- witness who hides within all of us, *Hidden*'s child director reveals... truth that might otherwise remain concealed by the 'adult world of prejudice and deception' (Radstone 2010, 20)

²⁶ Here 'acousmatic presence' is a voice, and especially when this voice has not yet been visualized

The final scene from the stairs facing the entrance to Pierrot's school is a reminder of the opening: a long, wide static frontal shot, with hardly readable closing credits displayed, and again similar to the opening, the credits are gone long before the film finishes. Pierrot, who is having a conversation with Majid's son, can hardly be seen. The conversation, here almost a metaphor, can be interpreted as a promising future for Franco-Algerian relations. As a result, the audience is placed in an active spectatorship position: in a 'morally engaged viewing' (Wheatley 2009, 183) mode, which is a silent and inner work. As the director comments:

Although this scene happens in silence, I did actually write dialogue for it. The actors are actually speaking it and it might stand as an explanation for some. In any case, that dialogue will never be written in the published screenplay for the film and I told the actors never to reveal it to anyone. They are bound to silence forever and I hope they will have forgotten it by now, because they didn't know when they were shooting it what the significance of the scene might be.

Haneke, 2006

Hidden therefore provides a good example where the four elements required for the creation of cinematic silence are present. In this analysis a focus on the use of a contrast sound-silence cuts, repetitions, prolonged and inactive images have been made. Haneke compares various references and hidden layers that are possible to trace in the story similar to a Russian doll, Matryoshka (Brunette 2010, 153). A similar effect is created for Haneke's audience: each time revealing the next doll by peeling off the hidden layers. Moreover, the process of active participation in the narrative construction leads eventually to the confronting with ourselves.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter reports on the analysis of two different, but at the same time similar in many ways films: *D'Est* and *Hidden*. Both films hold our interest due to seemingly fragmentary structure, where the multiple boundary subjects (e.g. inside and outside, past and present, dead and alive, distinct and indistinct) create polyphonic film compositions. It can be suggestive that the cinematic silence applied through sound-silence contrasts, prolonged shots, repetitions and inactive images holds these fractured stories together. This becomes a narrative technique for Akerman to show indirectly the past about herself, and for Haneke a technique to provoke the moral spectatorship. In order to further explore the ways to approach silence in film practice, there is a need for a focused discussion on this

complex and rich subject with contemporary film sound practitioners. As with the Akerman and Haneke case studies, the involvement of the film practitioners who adopt different working styles and (even) share contradicting takes on the definition and role of silence, may contribute to a better understanding of the ways film practitioners approach the presence/absence of silence in film narrative construction.

5. Reflection on interviews with film practitioners

This chapter will look at the contemporary construction of cinematic silence in the age of noisy reality. Films that are able to allow silence to emerge reflect the current urge for silence. Sound practitioners Larry Sider and Paul Davies have shared with me their views on the notion of cinematic silence, its place on a film soundtrack, its role and recent acceptance within the context of theatrical cinema and television. Apart from the examples advanced by the interviewees that often derive from their film practice, further examples from Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975) and thoughts from classical filmmakers such as Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman and Andrey Tarkovsky will be considered in this chapter. This will highlight the importance of the diegetic sound and cinematic silence for the process of soundtrack composition, where cinematic silence is used to shape form and time leading to rhythm: a vital component to reach the audience.

5.1 Cinematic silence in the age of noise

Constant background noise is an unavoidable part of our daily life. This includes environmental (e.g. traffic, sirens, airplanes, construction) and social (e.g. radio, television, background music) noise playing in public spaces such as streets, bars, cafes and shopping centres. Aspects of the latter is also known as 'marketing noise', and aims to stimulate consumption, improve the image of a space and make employees happier (Sim 2007, 30; Augoyard and Torgue, 2005, 41). Composer and environmentalist Murray Schafer highlighted the increase in sound and the evolving meaning of the word noise²⁷. From a number of proposed meanings, he finds the subjective explanation 'unwanted sound' as the most suitable term. Sound being a vibration, if intense and prolonged can have hazardous effect not only on hearing, but on other parts of the body as well: it can cause headaches, reduced vision, nausea etc (Schaffer 1977, 183-185). However, most of the time people are not fully aware of the presence of this constant noise. Studies (Spence and Santangelo, 2010; Trevis and Wilson, 2017) in psychological sciences on auditory perception provide insights on the ability of our brain to recognise, monitor, and attach meaning to constant streams of sounds we hear in our everyday life. Trevis and Wilson point out:

²⁷ From a variety of meanings for 'noise' Schaffer brings attention to 1) unwanted sound; 2) unmusical sound; 3) any loud sound 4) disturbance in any signaling system (1977, 182-183).

Our brain helps us to ‘tune out’ or habituate to sounds that are not important for what we are doing at a given moment in time. This is a ‘top-down’ process that helps us to focus on the task at hand, ignore distractors, and prevent us from being constantly overwhelmed and bombarded by our noisy world. There are some exceptions to this rule – for example, alarm sounds that are loud, high pitched and hard to ignore, or the ‘cocktail party effect’²⁸ where our attention can be quickly drawn to the sound of our name even when it is part of the ‘soundscape’ of background noise. However, for the most part, our brain does an exceptional job of ignoring the ignorable.

Trevis and Wilson 2017, 2

The fact that ‘high pitched’ sounds are hard to ignore links to sound designer David Sonnenschein’s (2001, 128) writing which states that hearing, similarly to other senses, works on the concept of contrast: touch (hot-cold), sight (light-dark), taste (sweet-sour), smell (fresh-musty) and sound (loud-soft). This suggests that the mixture of speech, music and noise, as well as the loudness and pitch of sound, unless contrasted (e.g. from a noisy city traffic one enters to a quiet church) is not easy to describe, or even notice. Moreover, recent advances in technology offer various ways to mask, block or tune out external background noise by using personal gadgets like iPods, iPads, iPhones, that provide other chosen sounds. Obviously, this is not a way to eliminate the noise from a live background, but rather a way to block out, using other sounds, the overlapping constant streams of noise, over which we have little control.

In recent years, the need to find ways of escaping constant noise is manifested by the increased interest in self-help books that call for a quest for silence. Examples include *A Book of Silence: a journey in search of the pleasure and powers of silence*’ (2008) by British novelist Sara Maitland; *In Pursuit of Silence: Listening for Meaning in a world of Noise* (2010) by *New York Times* writer George Pronchik; and *Silence in the Age of Noise* (2017) by Norwegian explorer Erling Kagge. The titles of these books, as well as the overall content, seem to guide the reader to unlocking the power of silence by attempting to answer three questions summed up by Kagge: ‘What is silence? Where is it? Why is it more important now than ever?’ (2017, 5).

Among those who confront the everyday stream of unwanted and unavoidable noise are ourselves – the filmmakers and our audiences. It is obvious that in recent decades

²⁸A term proposed by psychologist Colin Cherry (1953) to describe selective attention in the brain by referring to ‘our ability to focus attention on the speech of a specific speaker by disregarding irrelevant information coming from the surroundings’ (Augoyard and Torgue, 2005, 28)

developments in sound technology have broadened the possibilities for filmmakers to manipulate the soundtrack. In the film realm it is the responsibility of the film creators to tune-out, filter, mask and block out sounds that are unnecessary for the film narrative or, as pointed earlier by Trevis and Wilson, to do the job of our brain of ‘ignoring the ignorable’. This can explain the interest in a quest to reveal the potential of cinematic silence, which can be one of the ways to enrich the power of cinema and provide a space for the film audience to reflect on their own life, for transformation of the self. Hence, a focus on the making of cinematic silence in the context of our noisy reality as a key concern. This is concerned with, firstly, the notion of cinematic silence; secondly, the place of cinematic silence in the soundtrack; and thirdly, the listening environment and audience, and in what ways these affect the filmmakers approach to silence. These three concerns shape a framework for an investigation into the making of cinematic silence based on debates on film practice in existing literature and interviews conducted with two practitioners: the sound designer, editor and director of the School of Sound, Larry Sider and the sound designer Paul Davies.

Larry Sider is an experienced sound practitioner, who worked for more than thirty five years on a wide range of film projects. In this interview Sider reflects on his collaboration with animation directors Quay Brothers (*Street of Crocodiles* (1996), *Institute Benjamenta* (1995)) and documentary filmmaker Patrick Keiller (*London* (1994), *Robinson in Space* (1997) and *Robinson in Ruins* (2010)). In 1998, Sider founded a School of Sound, which attracts the sound specialist from all around the world. The speakers of the event involve award winning editors and sound designers such as Walter Murch (*The Conversation* (1974), *The English Patient* (1996)) and Richard King (*Dunkirk* (2017), *The Dark Knight* (2008)). Larry Sider is a co-editor of the *The New Soundtrack* journal, and he teaches sound design extensively in the UK and beyond.

Paul Davies, is an award-winning sound designer who worked over thirty years on television documentary, low budget films and corporate productions. He is a long-time collaborator of filmmaker Lynne Ramsay (*Ratcatcher* (1999), *Morvern Callar* (2002), *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011), *You Were Never Really Here* (2018)). In 2003 Paul Davies founded his own sound post-production company PDSoundDesign, which credits include *The Queen* (2006) directed by Stephen Frears and *Hunger* (2008) by Steve McQueen. In this interview, Davies reflects on the use of ‘complete silence’ in *Ratcatcher* (1999).

5.2 The notion of cinematic silence in film practice

Prior to discussing the construction of silence in film practice it is worth considering how Stuart Sim (2007; 111-127) in his *Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* presents the issue of silence in different art forms. Sim discusses the silence of the artist as a rebellious act, describing it as a retreat from traditional artistic labour. The term is borrowed by psychoanalyst John Steiner. In Sim's analogy, the piece *4'33* (1952) with no notes by John Cage is a 'retreat from composition' (ibid. 111), and plotless and characterless play *Breath* (1969) by Samuel Beckett is a 'retreat from the word' (ibid.111), the 'monochrome' works *White on White* (1918) by Kazimir Malevich are 'a retreat from the portrayal of objects' (ibid.116), *Fountain* (1917) by Marcel Duchamp is a 'retreat from composition' (ibid. 122). Sim describes the aesthetics behind such 'retreats' in the following way: 'Something is being said about artistic activity by not being said: at the very least we wonder why the artist has chosen to remain silent rather than to add his contribution to the body of art in the world' (ibid. 123). In this context, Sim sees the art of cinema that is lacking of music or word as a retreat, and here silence is an exceptional structural device and a source of themes (ibid. 123-127). In particular, he focuses on the deliberate use of the oppressive silence of God or Death in Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence* (1963) and *The Seventh Seal* (1957) respectively.

It can be argued that in the film realm the silence this study is concerned with is a result of carefully constructed audio-visual composition, rather than a 'retreat from artistic labour'. The chosen sounds (as well as images) that precede and succeed moments of silence are vital for a filmmaker to achieve a desirable emotional response from the audience. As 'the impression of silence in a film scene does not simply come from an absence of noise. It can be produced as a result of context and preparation' (Chion 1994, 57). Similarly, the importance of preparation and a selection needed to approach sound in film has been highlighted by a filmmaker Andrey Tarkovsky:

The sounds of the world reproduced naturalistically in cinema are impossible to imagine: there would be a cacophony [...] If there is no selection then the film is tantamount to silent, since it has no sound expression of its own. In itself, accurately recorded sounds add nothing to the image system of cinema, for it still has no aesthetic content.

Tarkovsky 1987, 159

This can possibly suggest that the described cacophony of unmediated realistic sound can be equivalent to Sim's 'retreats from artistic labour'. Thus, the filmmakers' active involvement in the soundtrack construction and manipulation is necessary for the film aesthetics. The attentive organization of sounds that evoke (e.g. memories, characters), withhold, connect, divide/cut, reiterate, repeat, return (e.g. through leitmotiv themes) and orient movements, are all sonic references necessary to create an audience's auditory perception. Moreover, the use of cinematic silence can have a significant role in the aesthetic content of the film. It does so by suggesting a rhythm based on a length and dynamics of a shot; by creating a dramatic effect caused by a sound-silence contrast, by reactivating the audience's attention through the act of repetition; by creating a subtext or a meaning that lies beyond the screen through the image-sound interplay, monochrome colours or inactive image. These, as proposed in Chapter 3, are the methods which can allow space for silence to emerge. As a result, the way the filmmaker approaches quiet moments in film may become indicative of his or her style.

During the interviews with the film practitioners on their views on the concept of cinematic silence the complex nature of the term arose. The following two different descriptions of the term cinematic silence by contributors Larry Sider and Paul Davies suggest and reiterate the thin borderline between hearing something or nothing in a film soundtrack: 'I [Larry Sider²⁹] wouldn't know what it was because you can have very quiet sound, you can have the feeling of nothing but there is always something there. So it is a relative term'. As a reference to 'something being there' Sider reflects on his long time collaboration with Quay Brothers while working on surreal animation projects that have no spoken content - *Nocturna Artificialia* (1979), *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (1985), *The Street of Crocodiles* (1986) and *Institute Benjamenta, or This Dream People Call Human Life* (1995).

I think it is their [Quay Brothers] aesthetic to always have something there, like in the picture there is some grain, some texture, even when there is very black there is always something there. It is just your feeling of world that you are in. That is always going to have some little texture in it, something from far off... some little hiss, or little sound in the background, however small. And that would keep an illusion of the world going - of their [Quay Brothers] world.

²⁹ Larry Sider interviewed by author Hasmik Gasparyan, 6 June, 2017 on skype (Appendix 2.1)

In contrary, Paul Davies³⁰ finds that: ‘silence is a complete absence [of sound] rather than quietness’. As discussed in the previous chapters, a ‘complete silence’ on the soundtrack has a disruptive effect. It makes the audience aware of the interruption of continuity of action, life or a film world. However, to provide an example to the way ‘cinematic silence’ can be expressed in film, Davies points out two complete silent moments he created in Lynn Ramsay’s film *Ratcatcher* (1999). The first happens when a young boy, Ryan (Thomas McTaggart) is accidentally drowned in the canal by his friend James (William Eadie). After James pushes Ryan into the canal we expect him to come out of the water, as this seemed as part of their game. But the withheld action and complete silence reveal the horror of what has actually happened. The second moment of silence occurs soon after the tragic event, when James’s mother looks through the window onto a group of people surrounding a dead body. If in the first case by using complete silence the filmmaker constructed the effect of Ryan’s death, in the second case the mother’s silent gaze through a closed window evokes different interpretations: does she suspect that her son James is guilty for what has happened to Ryan, or is she simply horrified by recognising her son’s friend Ryan as being the victim? There is no one answer to what is not explicit, and each person in the audience can make his/her own assumptions. As Davies comments: ‘I suppose, what you are doing here is pulling the audience out of the film and making them aware. That is the risk you are running into, but the tension is interesting and powerful’.

This technique, partly or completely elimination of sound, is described by Sonnenschein (2011, 127):

The selective elimination of sound called suspension, occurs when the sounds that we naturally expect in a situation disappear, Kurosawa's *Dreams* [1990] has a howling snowstorm sequence in which the wind sound slowly dies away, even though the long hair of the woman continues to whirl in the gusts. French Jacques Tati take this creative courage to remove all sound in certain scenes, emphasizing the comedic or absurd aspect of the situation. Aladdin, the evil Jafar slides across the floor without any footstep sounds, a lurking menace. With this technique, the spectators feel the effect but usually are not consciously aware of what is causing this sensation.

³⁰ Paul Davies interviewed by author Hasmik Gasparyan, 22 April 2017, London (Appendix 2.2)

Davies's use of moments of complete silence in *Ratcatcher* (1999) evokes the complete silence in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A space Odyssey* (1968), and may suggest that this technique can be one of the ways to construct scenes of death in film. However, once all the sounds from a film soundtrack are removed, the created void, the gap, is then filled with the sounds of the space where the film is being projected (i.e. sound of the cinema hall and the audience in case of a theatrical screening; or a room tone in case of a home viewing on a computer/telephone/video player etc.). Here Sider's earlier description of cinematic silence, as having a feeling of 'nothing' yet 'something' being there, explains the fact that there is no total escape from sound, no realistic experience of absolute silence, as a 'noise is always there in some form or other' (Sim 2007, 112). Filmmakers can have full control over a soundtrack, but they cannot control the live soundtrack: the sounds and noises in the space of the audience, which will always be present. In this context, cinematic silence cannot merely be conceived as the elimination of sounds, which is an effect that is rarely used in film practice, but the creation of a realistic sensation of silence that includes the presence of sound/s on the soundtrack.

5.3 A place for cinematic silence

According to Chion, 'every place has its own unique silence, and it is for this reason that for sound recording on exterior locations, in a studio, or in an auditorium, care is taken to record several seconds of the 'silence' specific to that place' (1994, 57). Known as a 'room tone', this is widely applied in cinema practice to avoid having complete silence on the soundtrack. However, the definition of a 'place' the cinematic silence occupies on a full soundtrack can seem difficult to grasp. It exists in the slippery borderline between the two worlds: the world of film and the world of the audience; the world of image and the world of sound; the world on-screen and off-screen, etc. The audio-visual perception that is carefully organised by the filmmakers can provoke various interpretations, impressions and associations for each person sitting in the audience. During the interview with Larry Sider, who acted as an editor and sound designer on documentary film *London* (1994) - a part of the trilogy from *Robinson in Space* (1997) and *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) directed by Patrick Keiller - on the question of what were the film creators' intentions behind the decision to mute the ambient sound while the narration text in some distinctive parts is still heard - Sider recalls:

Because the way he [director Patrick Keiller] shot the film... He did it all mute. So I had to go to the places he filmed, almost the same day of the week and at the same time of the day he was, record the sound and put it in. It was a lot of work... After a while, we kept saying - 'ah, it is just going to be more traffic because it is London and it is more traffic, and trains and people' - so, we decided anything historical will not have sound. So all the shots that refer to historical, from the past, were silent.... I said, Patrick, I cannot think of anything to put there, and he said, let's not put anything there.

As an example, in one of these historical sequences, while the exterior ambience sound is muted for more than two minutes, we can see the images of Margaret Thatcher arriving, giving a (muted) speech at the Downing street, later, under the flashing lights of the photographers she smiles to the cameras and leaves the scene. Even though accompanied by 'ghostly' acousmatic voice of Paul Scofield's narration text, telling about his mysterious friend Robinson's reactions on the life 'in a one party state', the effect this combination creates (muted ambience, contrasting images and alienated surreal narrator's text) is a subtext: a sense of alienation that shows the distance between the government and people.

Hence the use of silence generates an audience's active involvement in their own film creation. Isabelle Delmotte (2013) in her thesis *Insounds: human sonic permeability and the practice of cinema sound design within ecologies of silences*, notes that our 'brains are wired to listen for pauses, internal signals and out of body auditory stimuli. What we do not hear, our brain is able to bring to life' (2013, 65). Delmotte suggests that 'silences are not synonyms for immobility and stillness, rather they are the dynamic elements of being 'insounds' (ibid. 78). Thus, in the process of 'composing' (a term used by Robert Bresson), or 'sculpting in time'³¹ (a term coined by Andrey Tarkovsky), or simply constructing and selecting the images and sounds, a space between the sounds, unheard sounds or 'insounds' can be created. Filmmakers have choices in relation to how long these moments of silence should last (when to cut the scene and why), how quiet these moments need to be, whether to 'fill' with music, dialogue, narrative text or create a cinematic silence. These are all important and valid concerns and possible directorial choices. However, the seemingly simple question 'why cut and not cut', which has been raised by Jean-Luc Godard in an

³¹ Andrei Tarkovsky's (1989, 63-4) term on the essence of the director's work: 'just as a sculptor takes a lump of marble, and, inwardly conscious of the features of his finished piece, removes everything that is not part of it—so the film-maker, from a 'lump of time' made up of an enormous, solid cluster of living facts, cuts off and discards whatever he does not need, leaving only what is to be an element of the finished film, what will prove to be integral to the cinematic image'.

interview with Bresson (Godard and Delanaye 1998, 462) and has been elaborated in previous chapters with regard to Paul Schrader's proposed 'smash cut' or 'delayed cut' (2018, 18) and the reference to philosopher Gilles Deleuze's mature 'time-image' cinema, becomes important, since it leads to one of the most important concepts of cinema: its form and rhythm. A filmmaker creates a certain 'form as pattern' (Bordwell and Thompson 2013, 51) designed through the use of mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound, colour, editing. That 'form leads to the rhythms ... [which are] the access to the audience' (Godard and Delanaye 1998, 462), as Bresson claims. However, the 'rhythm [...] is not the metrical sequence of pieces; what makes it is the time - thrust within the frames... [and] it is rhythm, and not the editing, as people tend to think, that is the main formative element of cinema' (Tarkovsky 1987, 119). It is known that Tarkovsky confronted Sergey Eisenstein's montage cinema of puzzles where a 'laconism is the starting point for intellectual cinema', e.g. two separate shots of mouth and a baby mean 'to scream' (Eisenstein and Taylor 1998, 13). It has been argued that cinematic silence too, requires time for the audience to experience it: it is a necessary breath that can take the spectator beyond the screen: access the world of memory, imagination and dreams. Larry Sider describes this as 'a point, when the film and the audience come together [...], the point when the audience is with themselves, [...] once you think it is quiet, you can make it even quieter, and you can make it quieter and quieter...'. These are moments of sensing, they allow 'a perception, that is a feeling-oneself-feel' Nancy (2007, 8). In the following example Davies describes the way to focus on sounds to create necessary for a film narrative perception. This can be a way the cinematic silence can be achieved:

Film pushes the focus: if we have a shot of a field and we see two people running through, but we choose not to have sound of people running, but just the sound of grass in the wind [...] The removal of the elements that we normally expect to hear [here the sound of the two people running]... and one sound is heightened [here sound of the grass in the wind], is like memory - is like our perception... Our perception is focused on the sound of the coffee machine, the laugh of the child's voice, sound of the swing squeaking - it is focused in general. And these are the sounds of our memories, I think. As filmmakers we have total control of what we choose to show or play to the audience.

The filmmakers' intervention through selective heightening and/or silencing, becomes a way to move the audience somewhere else - to stretch the boundaries beyond

the story. This composition aesthetic of almost a silent interplay of ambient sound and image allows room for the audience to interact. In this regard, Sider makes a reference to experimental filmmaker Peter Kubelka's point on sound and image interplay:

[...] the real life is synchronous - you clap your hands, you stamp your foot - life has synchrony, but film allows you to break that. To take the sound away from its source. And he [Peter Kubelka] said, in the gap you create, it is where the metaphor lays, and I [Larry Sider] think Walter Murch must know this, he must know Peter Kubelka, and he says, whenever I pull the sound away from the source interesting things began to happen in the film. And that's where that gap occurs. When you can kind of see 'through' and you can take the audience through that gap into somewhere quite quiet, somewhere beyond the soundtrack. It is that synchrony that locks you into this constant noise.

This evokes the aim of Bresson's film aesthetic to reach the point where you can 'leave the spectator free'³² to provide that space for the audience's various interpretations to arrive, based on who they are.

Similar to music composition, film composition implies contrasts and repetitive patterns. The director's creative decisions on the variations of contrasts and repetitions can help to create a unifying and dramatic element for the film form. Here the construction material for the music becomes the 'noise of a door opening and shutting, noise of footsteps, etc., for the sake of rhythm' (Hanlon 1998, 321). But this is also true in verbal narrative, as 'to get an important point across, it's wise to introduce a pause before and after the crux. Our brains prefer contrasts' (Kagge 2017,108). Hence, as a powerful dramatic effect, silence suggests necessary anticipation and tension. Larry Sider conveys the idea that has been described earlier, as a perceptual 'cocktail party effect', which draws attention to a sound-silence contrast possible to apply in film (e.g. for a dramatic effect):

³² 'It is true that the ear is much more creative than the eye. The eye is lazy, the ear, on the contrary, invents.... The whistle of a locomotive, for example, can evoke, imprint in you the vision of an entire railroad station, sometimes of a specific station that you know, sometimes of the atmosphere of a station, or of a railroad track, with a train stopped. What is good, too, with sound is that it leaves the spectator free. And it is towards that that we should tend - to leave the spectator as free as possible' (Godard and Delahaye, 1998, 458).

We respond to small changes.... When we hear something we focus on it, and when we focus on it we lose all other sounds. And it becomes almost like moments of silence: a stillness. Once you can tell that is dangerous or not dangerous you can move on and you can respond... It works the way the classical music works: the dynamics. You have quiet bits and you have loud bits. Too many loud bits get boring, too much quiet is boring. So you have to go, up and down and up and down. The wider the range more dramatic it is.

It has been pointed out earlier that directors can share different views on the use of narrative devices available at their disposal, i.e. music, word, silence. Some filmmakers deploy a minimalistic style that use music and dialogue sparingly for a variety of reasons. Ingmar Bergman seemed to be cautious in his use of 'words', and he deployed less and less music in his later films, applying 'commentative sound' instead: 'I think that film itself is music, and I can't put music in music' (Kaminsky and Hill 1975, 112). Similarly, Seymour Chatman (1985, 133) argues that Michelangelo Antonioni prefers 'commentative noises' over 'commentative music'.

In one of Antonioni's iconic films, *The Passenger* (1975), the famous seven-minute shot in a hotel room, where a protagonist American reporter David Locke's (Jack Nicholson) death takes place, has all suggested four elements of cinematic silence construction in place. This scene has no word text or a music score applied. The first element: a prolonged single shot that took eleven days to film (Di Carlo, Tinazzi, Cottino-Jones 1996, 126). This is due to its complexity and groundbreaking camera work that has been achieved with no use of a Steadicam at a time. With a 'slow creeping' movement, a camera moves through the iron barred window out of the room, and takes smooth 180 degree turn, and finally looks through the iron bars again to the room but from the outside - facing now dead Locke on the bed and his visitors. The second element: this empty and motionless (at first) image through the barred window becomes a metaphor for the lacking direction in his life Lock, trying to find an escape behind a dead businessman Robertson's identity. At first static image suggests Lock's point of view looking from his bed to almost empty square behind the bars, but after the gunshot the camera moves out of the room and the owner of the gaze becomes unclear. The third element: the repetitive sound of ins and outs of the cars outside the room ('Learning' car, the car by which arrived Lock's killer), the sound of the footsteps of a girl - student (Maria Schneider) moving purposeless forward and backward in an empty square, a distant sound of on and off trumpet play. The fourth element: an abrupt sound of a gunshot, and a little after the police sirens fills the

soundtrack. Although at first, the distant sound of the police sirens can seem as a sound of distant trumpet that gets closer. This seemingly boring scene, where can seem as not much is happening on screen, that provides minimum action or information, implies meaning that is beyond the surface, words and image. Even though most reviews on this scene highlight the innovative camera work, it can be argued that the combination of the four elements described, and as a result of which, the cinematic silence created heighten the effect of the unforgettable scene in cinema history.

Whatever the reason for limiting the use of dialogue and music in the works of certain film practitioners, the use of cinematic silence requires time, contrast, repetitive patterns and image-sound interplay to be generated and perceived by the audience. These attributes of a cinematic silence are also the prerogative for a certain rhythm composition of the film, which remains the powerful way to communicate and connect with the audience.

5.4 Today's audience and listening environment

If I [Robert Bresson] try to represent to myself what the audience will feel, I cannot help but say to myself: The audience, it is I. So, one does not work for an audience... It is a matter of making ourselves loved. Loved in what we love, and in the way in which we love things and people.

Godard and Delahaye 1998, 458

The questions on whether a filmmaker should follow the audience's current demands to 'fill up' the soundtrack, remains debatable. As the constant presence of an overloaded soundtrack in our everyday life changes society, and reflects the audience's preferences and habits both in terms of cinematic experience (the 'amount' of silence present in film today) and the way they are able to perceive the silence. As Sider reflects on the use of silence today:

I think older filmmakers probably did it more, I think now it becomes more of a stylistic thing to have silence. You have films like *Gravity* [by Cuaron, 2013], which has these big moments. But I think it is just different dynamic in older films, partly because of the technology, partly because of the society. I think now we have a lot of sound because people are hearing a lot of sound. And if you have an audience, that is going around with earphones for 18 hours a day, and give them a quiet part of the film they are bored. They think something is not right. [...] I would

not even say silent moments - quiet moments in film- when you left on your own, it is you and the film. And there is nothing happening, and you have to respond. I think lots of people find that very uncomfortable, which is why they fill it with music so often. And a lot of people not even thinking about the music being there, it's just there as a background, almost like a hum or a hiss. It is not a music it is just there to fill up the space.

In regard to the presence or absence of music in film, Davies adds that 'the absence of music forces the audience to listen. Music very often is a distancing device - it is not in the film- ...[and] exists outside the world of the film'. Furthermore, Davies notices that there is difference in reception of silent moments between cinema and television audiences. He explains the current tendency 'to fill the gaps with music to mean something' for television is based on the audience's control over what they are watching, which resulted in a kind of fear of the filmmakers and television producers towards gaps of silence in television film. In case of cinema, the audience is more captive. Similarly, Sider agrees on the reluctance by the television producers to accept prolonged silent moments in television:

I [Larry Sider] did that [applied silence] on a documentary once. I left long pauses, I do not remember what it was about, but I remember thinking, I am going to try this, as I wanted to look at the person who was talking. I wanted to look at them in between sentences rather cut away from them: watch them thinking. Those were the moments that the commissioning editor of the Channel 4 said: 'I think you can take those up, you do not have to look at those'. And you get used to that after a while.

This suggests that films with cinematic silence require careful consideration of the audience. They need to be ready to invest their time and attention to interact with the story and the film exhibition platform. Larry Sider sees the value of these films in their ability to 'take you to another space... and allow you to reflect and respond on your own life'.

5.5 Conclusion

Before looking at the making of cinematic silence, the reflection on the ways in which humans are able to shift their attention from the noisy reality, where little (if at all) silence is possible has been described. It becomes apparent that in contrary to the silence expressed by the creative artists in different art forms, 'cinematic silence' created in film can hardly (if at all) seen as 'retreats from artistic labour' proposed by Stuart Sim. In fact

the cinematic silence this study is concerned with is achieved through careful consideration of the relationship between images and sounds, described as composed, sculptured, selected or constructed. Larry Sider's and Paul Davies's views on the notion, place and role of silence today, the difference in audience's reception of cinematic silence in film as opposed to television, has been enriched by the examples from their film practice. As a result, certain patterns to create necessary audience perception traced in film practice provide insights into the elements necessary for the construction of cinematic silence. These may be possible solutions for film composition but never are they complete recipe for the approach of cinematic silence, a space where the role of the audience as a creator of the meaning and a contributor is vital. As a result, the original interview discussion with contributors, Sider and Davies, focusing directly on cinematic silence, proved the existence of undefined boundaries and (often) unclear definitions of the subject, which can invoke a certain degree of experiment for a film creator. These interviews also revealed valid considerations on receptiveness among the film audience and possible 'unpopularity' of silence in our noisy reality. For me, a film practitioner-investigator, prior to embarking on the film development stage for two observational documentary works – *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018) - these interviews became a fruitful creative brainstorming technique to reflect on the ways to approach silence in my own filmmaking process.

6. Creative Portfolio

This chapter summarises the main aspects (motivation, characters, practicalities) of the two films submitted as part of this thesis by creative practice: an experimental pilot documentary *Three Pianos* (2016) and a feature length documentary *Narara and Kiko* (2018). The observations presented in this chapter are part of film development stage, and served as a necessary component prior filming.

6.1 *Three Pianos* (2016)

6.1.1 Background

Three Pianos is a short documentary depicting the activity around the three pianos placed at St Pancras International Railway station in London. There are different reasons why the decision was made to film the pianos at St Pancras International. One is based on my personal memories of the first experience of the location: when I felt myself a ‘little foreigner’ in ‘big London’. The reason the pianos are located at the station is the *Play me I’m Yours*³³ - a public engagement art project by British artist Luke Jerram. In 2008 the project *Play me I’m Yours* started in Birmingham with 15 pianos. Today there are 1,900 pianos in almost 60 cities around the world. The pianos are normally placed in vibrant areas of the city: streets, airports, train stations, markets and parks. This becomes an open platform for interaction with music and the community. Each city that installed a piano has a website so that the public can post images and videos related to the project. The pianos are inclusive and open to all representatives of the society, irrespective of age, race, sex, religion and class. The simplicity of the concept makes it very special as well as functional. As the artist Luke Jerram recalls on the website:

The idea for Play Me, I’m Yours came from visiting my local launderette. I saw the same people there each weekend and yet no one talked to one another. I suddenly realised that within a city, there must be hundreds of these invisible communities, regularly spending time with one another in silence. Placing a piano into the space was my solution to this problem, acting as a catalyst for conversation and changing the dynamics of a space.

Luke Jerram

³³ <http://www.streetpianos.com/>

6.1.2 Synopsis

It is early morning on a normal working day at St Pancras International Railway Station. Commuters are rushing to their workplaces. Some of the travellers are tourists. They walk clumsily carrying lots of luggage and looking around with great curiosity. Along the walkway, towards the tube station, there are three pianos placed at a distance from each other. The pianos are old and locked with metallic chains to an iron bar. At different times of the day there are different scenes around these pianos. During rush hours there is a big crowd passing near them. Some people sit to play the piano or stop to listen to people playing. Some of the players are very good at playing, some are hardly able to play. Where are these people heading? What makes them stop in such a big public space to play piano or listen to it? Is this music, in a way, a pause, a moment of inner silence, contemplation, before the next destination of a performer and/or listener? How does it feel like to play in such a big public space? It seems as if no one is watching the pianists, since people are busy and rushing to reach their destinations, only some passers-by do actually notice the players.

6.1.3 Main Characters

The three pianos: the presence of a piano in a public space calls for attention, communication and gives voice to different human stories to be heard. It provokes, invites and accepts everyone with no restriction, as it's 'ours'. It is a static witness, opposed to an almost constant stream of people rushing, strolling and waiting. A piano becomes the reason for a change in dynamics, as it makes people stop, slow down, listen and notice.

The Black piano is located close to the escalators leading towards the platforms from where passengers take trains to different cities in the UK. There are various shops (clothing, accessories, etc.) located around this area. The lift facing the piano players gives another layer for participants' interaction. Occasionally people in a lift notice the players (and the camera). These fragmented reactions - smile or wave to a camera - enriches the experience of a space. There is constant movement around static piano: vertical (lifts) and horizontal (people heading in both directions from both sides of the piano) movement.

The Blue piano is located in the middle of the pathway of the station, between the black and brown pianos, right in front of the Eurostar gates. It is a resting point, as there are different cafes around this place. Moreover, this blue piano when closed, often becomes a place to sit and have a coffee on, to do make-up, or to lean on. It is not often that people play in this place, as it becomes very busy at the arrival times, and the main attention here is the timetable of the arrivals and the clock above it. The area becomes

especially rich for stories to emerge when people that were waiting for at last meet their dear relative, a lover, or a business partner. During these short periods of time both sides of the encounter are totally ignore the presence of the camera, since they are absolutely immersed in the present moment. These facial expressions and gestures suggest the human stories that might have happened before and may happen after this meeting.

The Brown piano is located near one exit of St Pancras International leading to the London underground and to the city. There is a bookshop located next to the piano as well as a tea room. As with black piano, there is a lift located opposite the piano, and this, being an exit/entrance point, produces a constant flow of vertical and horizontal movement around. People here, presumably either rushing to catch their train or looking for ways to kill time while waiting for the arrival of their train; are excited to explore London or focused to get to their duties in London.

The piano players can vary in their confidence and proficiency levels. They might have overcome their fear to perform in public or might feel proud of performing in front of an audience. They might have come to spend time while waiting for their train to arrive, they might have come deliberately (some players have brought music sheets and are dressed up to play the piano for an audience), or they might feel freer in an unknown place where no one can recognise them. They may be open to communication or shy to accept comments about their performance.

The audience has time to wait, or stop to enjoy a beautiful moment even if they are rushing. They are happy, or thoughtful, or curious. These people might have passed by, without even noticing the pianos, if there hadn't been music. The music becomes the glue that binds people on an emotional level even though they are strangers to each other.

6.1.4 Storyline and shooting environment

The 'life' of these three pianos (the activity around them, how they suggest action, the way people interact with them) will be the central focus of the film. The story will cover different stages of a day: early morning, afternoon, evening and night. The film will have no narration; instead, a narrative structure will emerge through the piano performances and the little episodes happening during the day around pianos. During the whole film, through the 'everyday life' of the three pianos, the audience will learn the reality of a busy St Pancras International. They will learn about its passengers, performers, listeners, shopkeepers and café lovers. The interesting acoustics of the station makes it a great place for spontaneous live music. During filming, the camera will be mostly distant from the pianists, in order to catch more authentic emotions when the subjects are not

aware of the camera. In the film, we will have brief, silent scenes. The sound-silence contrast created will make the audience aware of the noise that is mainly ignored by the passengers at St Pancras, and will create a sense of longing for quiet. The music of the performers will be the dominant voice of the film.

6.1.5 Pilot filming: challenges tested during pilot shooting

Sound space: Even though as a filmmaker one can be overwhelmed with the huge potential for story and visual diversity here, as a researcher focusing on cinematic silence, the location was rather challenging. It has a rich acoustic and is always filled with different noises, sounds and music. The location provided, however, with the opportunity to foster my ability to establish more structural ways to produce cinematic silence.

Accessibility: As one of the busiest destinations of the capital, St Pancras station is under security control for 24 hours a day. In order to test the accessibility of the location the decision was made to film the pilot as a ‘tourist’. As can be seen from the film *Three Pianos*, the quality of the picture, such as the stillness of the frame or clearness are not perfect. There are several reasons for choosing to film in this way: not to be distracted by railway security while filming; to discover the reactions of the piano players and people passing by to the fact that they are being filmed; to explore possible stories around three pianos; to analyse the potential for silence in this particular space.

Both the piano players and people passing by were positive about being filmed. Some of the players initiated a conversation with me and were willing to perform. This created trust and confidence to film freely. The automatic security announcements and Eurostar announcements create a special dynamic and sense of constant motion, flow, life and change, which becomes an interesting audio element to use in the film structure. As expected, the security personnel did approach me, a ‘tourist-director’, to find out the intentions for filming at St Pancras International. Even though they were tolerant and positive regarding the idea to film only the pianos, it became obvious that if one wanted to pursue the idea of producing a full feature length documentary at this location, an official permission would be needed, which also implied paying the associated high costs and following strict regulations.

6.1.6 A change in direction

Originally the short film *Three Pianos* was meant to be a kind of ‘taster’ film for a feature length project set at St Pancras International Railway station. Unfortunately, after the filming of the pilot version of *Three Pianos* it became obvious that the practicalities and difficulties related to filming at this specific location were insurmountable within the timeframe of this PhD. Various practical reasons predicted the impossibility of the extended version: the negotiations were made with the British Network Rail office to get permission to film with no or low (student fee) location fee applied. This was not approved, and instead, the budget of £350+VAT for 2 hours filming at this location has been requested. Considering the nature of the project, the observational style requires long hours of filming, the rates were not acceptable for the PhD film budget. Moreover, various additional technical restrictions such as time (filming only between 10am. - 4pm), use of limited equipment for safety regulations (e.g. tripods, boom mics, or lighting were not allowed at the location) and the distinct signs around the filming area stating ‘filming in progress’ was required. Attempts were made to find another suitable location (e.g. Sheffield station), but similar restrictions emerged there and the activity around the pianos in these locations was much less interesting.

Even though the extended version of the film has not been produced due to various practical reasons stated, *Three Pianos*, as part of the research output, embodies valuable findings that are put into practice to articulate directorial approaches applied to create cinematic silence. As a result, *Three Pianos* (2016) became an experimental short film project, a point of departure for a different feature length documentary *Narara and Kiko*.

6.2 *Narara and Kiko* (2018)

Logline: Armenian artist Naira Muradyan is working on the animation *Kiko* created by Zahrad - a poet of Armenian descent who lived in Turkey. Naira hopes to be allowed to cross the closed Armenia -Turkey borders to visit Zahrad's Istanbul to portrait the writer's city in her animation. Naira manages to create the scenes of Istanbul by crossing the closed borders only in her imagination.

6.2.1 Background: the animation project *Kiko*

Armenian artist Naira Muradyan's animation project *Kiko* was among the ten film and animation projects selected for pitching at the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform (ATCP) organisation³⁴. *Kiko* originally is a poem by Armenian poet Zahrad who was born and lived in Istanbul and created scenes of this city in his poetry. The pitching competition took place during the Golden Apricot International Film Festival, in summer 2017. As a result, after a successful pitch, Naira secured a grant to develop her *Kiko* project further, and was obliged by contract to complete it by the end of December 2017. As the main mission of the ATCP organisation is to facilitate the collaboration between artists of two countries to create joint Armenia-Turkey film projects, Naira was supposed to travel to Turkey to take images of Istanbul. Furthermore, Naira was required to collaborate with Turkish animators while working on *Kiko*. Neither the trip to Istanbul, nor the collaboration with Turkish animators happened due to political unrest in Turkey in summer 2017. The grant arrived only in December 2017, when Naira has completed the project³⁵.

6.2.2 A Note of Intention by animation director Naira Muradyan for the *Kiko* project

The need and desire to make films is always present. For every artist the inspiration is the key. Here my reason is Zahrad, a poet of Armenian descent, who lived in Turkey. I believe we need to be thankful to Istanbul for having a poet as Zahrad. Interestingly, even though I have not been in Istanbul, by knowing his characters - Kiko and Markos - I feel the city and love it. This animation film, based on Zahrad's poem *Kiko*, is an attempt to tell about the poet, a sensitive writer, who could live and create in a place where 'there are

³⁴ www.cinemaplatform.org/en/announcements/armenia-turkey-cinema-platform-2017

³⁵ The final animation film *Kiko* (2018) by Naira Muradyan can be seen at the following like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6->

[fSdKpG5mg&fbclid=IwAR33m6OHadv9xIOyUtRILifJMoJD3xokya8f8aZ7EAdZ8TC2xm_FzpL7RrE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-fSdKpG5mg&fbclid=IwAR33m6OHadv9xIOyUtRILifJMoJD3xokya8f8aZ7EAdZ8TC2xm_FzpL7RrE)

knives hanging from the sky - there are knives' ... But at the same time, there is also Kiko, standing on the bridge and getting excited with every ship arriving at the port. This little man, Kiko, knows the joy of looking at knives as well as arriving ships. With this film I wish to provoke the desire to look at this world with grateful eyes, and to awaken our ability to love it, no matter where we live (Naira Muradyan, 2017).

6.2.3 A Note of Intention by a filmmaker Hasmik Gasparyan for the *Narara and Kiko* documentary film project

Naira Muradyan is an inspirational and respected artist in her homeland, as well as outside Armenia. She is renowned not only for the professionalism in her work, but also for her lifestyle, her different views and experimental ideas. The 45-minute feature-length documentary *Narara and Kiko* took me to Armenia, my homeland, to meet an old friend and colleague, in order to find answers, or voice my own concerns, about the acceptance of the historical trauma related to Armenia and Turkey, about the role of an artist-mother-woman, and about the demystification of the creative process. It had been almost eight years since I last met Naira. She moved from the capital Yerevan to a village called Dzoraghbyur, 15km away from Yerevan, to avoid noise and speed. I moved to the UK to study documentary production. However, our communication via the internet, the exchange of thoughts and the need to find inspiration from each other, was always present. Before starting the film, there was a grain of doubt about whether or not I knew Naira well enough to make an intimate film-portrait. I had not met her in home environment, around close family members. That was a valid concern, and only after immersing myself into her world and observing Naira as an artist-mother-daughter-neighbour-dog owner, in her everyday surrounding, I was confident enough to start the filming process. This documentary was meant to be a silent observation of Naira Muradyan's creative process during the *Kiko* animation project development (exploring the city of Istanbul, where Zahrad was getting the poetic images to create); a production stage (long days and nights working in front of the computer to make the tragicomic characters of Kiko alive); and the post-production stages (the music recording and cooperation with the Armenian composer Hayk Karapetyan). However, not all went as planned and our encounter opened new avenues for discovery: new characters to observe (Naira's daughter Yeva and father Janik), a unique atmosphere of artist's modest house and the way Naira overcame the unpredicted obstacles to complete the animation *Kiko*. These all helped to enrich the protagonists' portrait and were interesting material to work with.

6.2.4 Main Characters

Naira is 58 years old and always young at heart, award-winning animator, illustrator, artist, mother of three children and grandmother of four grandchildren. She never follows trends, or accepted norms. She loves staying in her village- house, where there is silence and the surroundings are peaceful: here she creates, cooks, takes photos of its inhabitants, etc. Naira is constantly involved in different art projects (animation projects, creating illustrations for books, theatre decoration designs etc.). She has a big network of friends on various internet platforms and finds that the communication via the internet is just enough. The friends Naira wants to meet in person, she prefers to invite to her house, where she can stay up until late having long conversations, enjoy food, laugh and think about new projects.

Naira's father Janik is 90-year-old painter. He wakes up early in the morning, goes for a walk to buy bread and milk, sits to work at his canvas until lunch time, has his lunch in his room alone and after a short nap, he goes for a walk and then all over again. Janik follows the same routine every day: paint, walk, eat and sleep. He communicates rarely, only with Naira from time to time. Since Janik cannot hear very well, when he decides to switch on the radio or the TV the sound fills the whole house with noise.

Yeva is Naira's daughter and is 30 years old. She is a photographer and animator. Yeva constantly changes her style of work and (also) her appearance. She loves making selfies and to look after herself. It is obvious that she tries to find her own way in life. At the moment, her style of drawing, in particular, is drastically different from mother's and grandfather's - it is minimalistic, claustrophobic and pessimistic. Yeva is not shy, but closed in her own world of art-house films, music and drawings. She loves and is very proud of her mother, usually seeks her approval and opinion about new ventures in life.

6.2.5 Challenges during shooting

On the first day of filming Naira refused to open up in front of the cameraman that was supposed to be working with me initially. An alternative decision was then made where I took on the responsibility of being the main cinematographer (cameraperson) as well as the director of the film. As a result, the second cameraperson was involved in filming the opening scene (village scene with the drone) and the closing scenes of *Narara and Kiko*. The videocamcoder used for this project was EOS 5D Mark III, the additional equipment borrowed in Armenia were a Manfrotto tripod and monopod, lighting pointed

Skypanel S30-C and the sound equipment Zoom H4N Digital recorder. The use of lighting and one leg monopod was necessary to film in Naira's tiny and dark room. In Janik's studio natural lighting was used. The video material recorded was more than 30 hours long. One of the filming methods used was to leave the camera to roll unnoticed for about 10-15 minutes, where the situation could evolve unpredictably, i.e. in an empty common room focusing on the staircase. Post-production took almost six months (sessions taking place twice per week). After I completed the picture edit, two Master students joined the project to work on picture finishing (colour correction for black and white images, and creating credits) and final mixing, which took about five weeks.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter summarises my intentions, observations, motivations and findings during the process of development and production of *Three Pianos* and *Narara and Kiko*. It is evident that both films become an extension of my interests and experiences. The making of *Three Pianos* and *Narara and Kiko* involved constraints of time, human and financial resources. The fact that the locations for both projects were not easily accessible - London (*Three Pianos*) and Yerevan (*Narara and Kiko*) - restricted the full application of the 'continuous shooting over a fixed period of time technique' (Winston 2008, 155). As it was not feasible to apply constant 'wait and watch' (ibid.) method in case of the former - the life of St Pancras International station for 24 hours; as well as the latter - a six months working process of the artist on the animation project. Another factor worth considering was the decision to shoot both projects with a minimal crew, usually on my own. On the one hand, this provided a certain degree of trust and intimacy between the observed and the observer, which is essential to allow silence to enter to a process of filmmaking. On the other hand, this implied the difficulty for one person to deliver perfect sound and image simultaneously. The making of documentary often implies a certain degree of risk, since the outcomes are never entirely foreseen - there is no written script or final route to follow - thus my preparedness and inventiveness to adapt to possible changes of plans were necessary. An example of this was the ceasing of *Three Pianos* after the pilot stage, or the cancellation of a planned trip to Istanbul, which suggested a swift re-routing of the previously expected narrative of *Narara and Kiko*. Despite these challenges, the clear focus on the application of silence as a facilitation method for the creative process that involved making decisions without rushing and following artistic instincts was the driving force for achieving satisfying results.

7. Reflections on *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018)

This chapter will provide a reflection on the creation process of the two portfolio pieces *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018). In *Three Pianos*, the use of repetitions and sound-silence contrasts to create cinematic silence in a noisy location was tested. In *Narara and Kiko*, all four elements proposed for the construction of cinematic silence - sound-silence contrast, repetitions, empty and monochrome image interplay with sound, and prolonged shots - were applied. In both films my passive, (almost) silent presence behind the camera is palpable, became an important component for consideration. This presence allowed to stretch the on-screen space to reach not only the off-screen film space but also a space beyond the film world.

7.1 *Three Pianos* (2016)

The ten-minute long pilot project *Three Pianos* explores the possibilities of silence in the context of a noisy everyday location: the busy train station. ‘I [John Cage] never imagine anything until I experience it’ (1970, 133), and film is ‘an expression of experience by experience’ (Sobchak 1992, 3). This essay will reflect upon my experience through authorial decisions, visibly and audibly expressed before the spectator. More specifically, *Three Pianos* explores three things. Firstly, the use of sound-silence contrasts and repetitions to render cinematic silence. Secondly, a sense of inner silence and alienation from a noisy reality created through the manipulation of the soundtrack (a selection of what to hear and what to block out) and silent observation of the objects in space. And thirdly, my silent but obvious presence behind the camera, and the degree of control and quality of sound that allows for other voices to come through.

The decision to create *Three Pianos* is directly linked with my fascination for the chosen location: St Pancras International Railway station. Known as one of the busiest train stations in London, it has a whole spectra of sound and visual elements to challenge any artist to create in experimental ways. Through the formal directorial choices, interlinked with the location, which becomes the main protagonist of the story, the film represents a condensed image and sound of London: the avalanche of associations linked with consumerism, tourism, time constraints, migration, cultural and social diversity accompanied by the technological noise and security warnings. However, parallel to this typical chaotic image and sound of a modern metropolis, there is the human desire to

explore the unique possibilities of self-expression and experimentation in the bigger world represented by this large city. All of these things present London as an utterly attractive city for the visitor, and worrying at the same time.

Composer Murray Schafer, renowned for his work in acoustic ecology, describes how the slogan 'noise equals power' - which refers to how the industrial and electric revolutions conquered the sound of the church bells, the creaking of the wheels over cobblestones and blacksmith's hammer - can today be read more in terms of 'noise equals safety' (1977; 1993). Both slogans, 'noise equals power' and 'noise equals safety', are equally relevant for the location of St Pancras International. Presumably, the possibility of silence in the described noisy environment becomes questionable. However, the ideas about silence highlighted earlier in this thesis, such as the impossibility of the pure silence, hence all noise being a sound argued by John Cage, and Bela Balaz's proposition of silence being an acoustic effect only where sounds can be heard, challenge the listener to reach beyond the noisy surface of things. As a result, the rendered cinematic silence applied in *Three Pianos* (through the use of diegetic sounds) creates a space that appears 'more real than the reality is', as Walter Murch explains Chion's method of rendering (Murch 1994. xix). The achieved experience and feeling of a space is not a product of separate images (I see) and separate sounds (I hear) but rather result of the audio-visual relationship, as in the elusive gap between these two the meaning can be created.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, three pianos are located at St Pancras International station as part of the public engagement art project *Play me I'm yours* by artist Luke Jerram. The presence of pianos in a noisy and busy environment creates a striking contrast, and produces a space for a variety of interpretations. The role of the piano here is to provoke communication, where it can seem that no one listens to each other. Regardless of the social or cultural status of the people walking through the station, the piano invites passers by to stop, play and communicate. The 'making of silence' in this noisy reality is not an easy endeavour. It forces us to consider how each visitor is challenged to silence the everyday aural reality of the station (an irritating crosstalk of the numerous train announcements, security warnings, train sound, footsteps and suitcases' rolling wheels) in order to focus on the auditory and visual information that concerns only him/her. While working at this location, and during the whole creative process, I had a similar challenge, as if 'in pursuit of silence' aiming to 'listen for meaning in a world of noise' (Prochnik, 2010).

Being an experimental film, *Three Pianos*, a collage of disorder constructed from seemingly detached segments, offers no clearly defined protagonist that would typically

have a visual body, no causality links or temporal order as in more conventional storytelling. There is no voice-over narrator or specific cues that serve to guide the viewer/listener towards any specific or direct meaning that I aim to achieve. However, *Three Pianos* has clearly identifiable opening and closing sequences. The film starts with a ground angle shot, at the level of the pigeon strolling on tiles next to the 'feet' of the blue piano, and finishes with the tilt shot, from down to up, by leaving the piano and people surrounding it in a pigeon's viewing distance from above, or in a distant memory.

Following Chion's method of 'narrative analysis' the crucial questions 'What do I hear of what I see?' and 'What do I see of what I hear?' (Chion 1994, 207) will be considered further. In the set-up scene, the ground angle shot, there are images of abstract moving feet, the close-up reflection of the hardly comprehensible movements of people on a piano surface, and the pigeon strolling on the tiles. This is accompanied by the heightened sounds of the scuffs and squeaks of shoes on tiles, and the rolling wheels of suitcases. This image and sound interplay provides a space for the viewer to make connections and find associations within the limits of their imagination on where the events are presumably taking place. Hence the first association about the location is clearly identified not by an establishing shot or shots (as is the case in more conventional filmmaking methods before the development of sound), but through the sound of an unsettling security announcement: 'This is a security announcement. Please ensure that your personal things and your baggage are kept with you all the times. If you notice any suspicious items or behaviour, please report immediately to a member of staff of the British Transport Police'. This draws on Chion's (1994, 6) view on sound in film being voco- and verbocentric, as human beings are, since only after the viewer is reassured that this is happening at the British train station, he/she can focus on other sounds present. As a result, by withholding information (normally 'the sound asks the question 'where?' and the image respond/s' here!'" (Altman, 1992, 252)), this opening becomes an open question, a sign and indicator of meaning that is left to the audience to interpret. At the end of this sequence, the title of the film reveals the focus on the 'brown, black, blue: three pianos'.

As the film progresses, the continuous shift between the spaces around the three pianos becomes the material on which to construct the narrative. The separation between the sound spaces of the three pianos located in the concourse of St Pancras International are articulated through abrupt sound cut-outs. Here the term 'cut-out' refers to a sound effect that creates 'divisions between sound spaces' (Augoyard and Torgue 2005, 29- 36). For example, from car traffic zone to pedestrian, from residential to commercial zones, from open to closed spaces, or when by opening the window the traffic noise bursts into

the room or vice-versa. Thus a 'cut-out', similar to Walter Murch's 'locational silence', or the proposed silence-sound contrast, has a structural and compositional function in *Three Pianos*. Through the relative contrast, the silence is created to reactivate the audience's attention to move them from one place (one piano) to another.

Shortly after the cut, a wait, seeming excessively long, can take place: the listener hangs on to the sequence of events, her or his attention having been awakened by the surprising effect of the cut out. The adaptation of the ear to a new sound environment may lead to a refinement of listening, a better reception of weaker sounds and stronger attention in the initial moments; then, a less vigilant listening attitude reappears. The cut out effect therefore makes it possible to emphasize events following a rupture (when it is actually followed by other sounds).

Augoyard and Torgue 2005, 35

In particular, two such 'pauses', noticeable and relatively quiet, are in the area around the blue piano. Here one can see the timetable of the trains arriving and people waiting facing back towards the camera (e.g. a man standing and reading a newspaper, a woman looking up at the timetable). This is a waiting area and a meeting point for the arriving passengers traveling with Eurostar from Brussels and Paris to London. As a result, by applying Walter Murch's concept of locational silence, the space around the blue piano serves to give a narrative emphasis to the constant stream of sound. This evokes a similar role that a 'corridor' plays in Frederick Wiseman's films *Titicut Follies* (1967), *Hospital* (1970), or Chantal Akerman's 'hallway' in the interior scenes of the *D'Est* (1993). These phrases are necessary elements for the narrative construction. The sound-silence 'cut-out' audio effect, which initially produces the feeling of rapture of an interrupted action, becomes a rest, or a new beginning, a fertile pause that can reactivate the audience attention and provide an interval for the emergence of meaning. This 'pause' also allows changes in tempo, as it is relatively slow and quiet in comparison to the preceding or succeeding parts. The cinematic silence produced between two noisy scenes to serve as a narrative device capable to evoke emotion, rather than information, provides a space and time for the spectator to reflect and to fill it with personal thoughts and feelings.

In the third minute of the film, at last the arriving passengers meet relatives and friends waiting around the blue piano at the gates of the Eurostar. There is a deliberate increase in volume of the ambience of the train station: whistles, sound of the departing train and beepings. At this point, the emphasis on noise and sounds, rather than the image,

is clear. We hear not exactly what we see: the sound of a departing train is accompanied by muted images of the arriving passengers that laugh and talk; a young woman is taking a selfie with an old man who is playing the piano and they laugh together; or a wide shot of a crowd heading up the escalator. Here a shift in focus occurs, as the piano players and the people meeting in the waiting area become of less importance whereas the acousmatic off-screen presence of the implied but never seen trains is heightened. This moves the audience's attention to somewhere else, to another reality, and makes them aware of the implied meaning that is beyond the seen. Whose point of view (POV) and respectively whose point of audition (POA) is implied in this almost one minute silent noisy sequence is contestable: the director's, the on-screen subject's or the viewer's? It is not entirely clear. Moreover, by muting the sounds of on-screen subjects and increasing the volume of mainly off screen ambient sound, I make a pointing gesture. We do not need to talk when we are pointing. Thus, with this 'crescendo', the consistent presence of the ambience of the arriving and departing trains in a railway station that was constantly in the background but hardly (if ever) noticed, becomes evident and important. The trains that remain constantly off-screen, but present in the spectator's imagination, become a metaphor for the change, the passage of time, the temporality of life/people/events/memories. The sound of the departing train is not completely faded. The viewer, through an abrupt cut, has been 'dropped' to the space of the piano players, to 'here-and-now', from 'elsewhere' to reality. The saturated gesture of pointing becomes even more intense when articulated by abrupt sound and image cut-outs. This sequence, that re-collects variations of similar (but here mute) images and sound elements, produces attention.

There are a number of scenes that are variations of different piano players performing: the middle aged man improvising on the brown piano; a young 'dreamy girl', immersed in her own play and gently swinging to the rhythm of her music, is playing on the black piano. Looking at the faces of the players one feels as if they are in their own distant world, which is detached from the noisy reality. Here, the ability of the human brain to create silence, where the actual silence is least possible (Prochnik 2010, 63), seem suggestive and relevant. The rich diversity of ambient noise becomes a distancing device contrasting with the various piano players' calmness and ignorance of the noise, the rush or the curiosity of people staring at them. The mutual influence of sound and image, of 'audio-vision', creates a new entity, a new layer of experience and a new reality. Alongside the images of the 'dreamy girl' playing, and some people listening/watching her, the audience can also hear the last call for a departing train and can notice a man rushing, presumably to catch his train, a woman calmly checking her phone, as perhaps she has

plenty of time to wait, a little boy looking up with his mouth open in curiosity, and passers by taking photos on their mobile phones of the 'dreamy girl' playing in tranquility. The status of the music played by the performer does not suggest the mood or accompany the flow of images, as traditionally one could expect, but instead becomes a barrier between the exterior and interior worlds of the performers: the obvious and the hidden; the open and the closed; the noise and the inner silence. To break into the covert world or inner silence of the players or passer-by listeners, the spectator needs 'to hear' and 'to see' hence to feel the dissonance between the subject on a screen and the busy, fast and noisy reality. The reflections of the players on the glass of lifts creates a blurred and distant reality and becomes another way to visually transport the audience into the inner, silent and peaceful world of the piano players immersed in their own world.

The scenes that follow juxtapose the activities around the players and the passers-by between the black, the blue and the brown piano spaces. For example, the young Asian man at the black piano, presumably a tourist is trying hard by playing slowly and singing passionately; on the contrary, a smartly dressed blonde young man plays from a score and seems to be trying to impress with his proficiency at the brown piano. These two players are drastically different, something that is clear through their appearances, performances, and involvement of the listeners gathered around. The first genuine but imperfect performer sings and plays with all his passion and with a smile on his face. The second performer, plays fast but makes mistakes and seems too serious to approach. His emotions are unclear. The shift between these two spaces (the black and brown piano areas), combined with the 'silent waiting' and the brief performance by a clearly professional musician playing in a standing position, on the go, at the blue piano, create a progression of meaning. The developments around the young Asian player are obvious, as the attracted listeners get closer to the performer and also become players, and later this encounter turns into an improvised group performance with people of different ages, cultures and social classes involved in music playing: there are two old men (presumably around 70 years old), three young guys (25-30 years old) and one man (mid-fifties) singing. The range of happy listeners is also diverse. Furthermore, I become a part of the group, briefly reflected on the black piano; and this is further emphasised through the close distance to the players, their acceptance of the camera presence, that is evident through a relaxed and joyful performance, and the subjective, emotional and shaky camera.

Towards the end of the film, before the last closing sequences and after the short credits on the black screen, we see for the first time an image that can be identified as the establishing shot. As it has been mentioned earlier, this becomes a purposeful inversion of

a convention to allow sound to lead the way. However it is only now, in this wide shot that indicates the end of the day, as the light gets darker and the station is less busy, that we can see a recognisable ‘St Pancras International’ sign, written on the advertising light board, which reassures the audience about the exact location. The closing sequence is characterised by the sudden change of the soundtrack, a ‘cut out’ again, to almost silence. At this point, the degree of noise we were exposed to becomes obvious. This silence reveals what was unnoticeable until this point: the listener became accustomed to sound and noise. As in the first scene, the removal of sound information leaves the viewer in the position of making their own assumptions about the space they are in. The vertical pan of the camera, in the claustrophobic space of the lift in almost silence, leaves the last group of performers below. The movement stops when an automatic monotone voice says ‘Platform Level’. This robotic acousmatic voice resembles the unsettling security announcement from the first set-up sequence. This final sequence closes the circle. The sudden awakening shifts into a quiet claustrophobic space, the muffled ambient sound inside the lift, and it implies my possible POV and POA : another tourist, passer by affected by the space.

7.1.1 Influence of logistics and practicalities on directorial decisions

In *Three Pianos* I exercised a sufficient degree of control over the choice of location. I worked as a main cinematographer, editor, and supervised the sound-mixing process. A shared understanding of the main goals of the film with the sound mixer was a necessary condition to achieve appropriate results. It has been mentioned that the decision was made to act as a tourist, in order to learn about the access to players and the possible developments around the pianos, and to identify possible camera angles; understand what type of microphone/s should be used, and where they should be placed. My discreet appearance, filming with a lightweight semi-professional video camcorder (Sony Handycam HDR), and having curious point of view (POV), had a significant impact on the cinematic organisation of the production and became determinant of the style, tone, meaning and value of the film. As the filming was relatively covert, the decision was made to not use a tripod, lighting equipment or involve collaboration with additional potential members of the crew at this busy location. Hence the patterns of more genuine interaction of the players (e.g. waving ‘bye’ to the camera), passers-by (e.g. staring at the camera) and the listeners (e.g. smiling to the camera) to me, the person behind the camera.

Even though *Three Pianos* uses some of the techniques close to an observational style of filmmaking (e.g. the use of mobile camera, only production sound and music), it is unlike the late 1960s observational documentary style, as the presence of the director is

obvious. The decision to take-on a 'one-person crew' role, evokes an approach I was inspired by - Agnès Varda and Chantal Akerman - filmmakers who exercise a great deal of creativity in justified technical imperfections (wobbling frame, soundtrack distortion, out of focus image), which was both challenging and satisfying at the same time.

Chion (1994, 187) suggests that for the purposes of the film analysis 'to really see and really hear' one needs to listen to the sound by itself, without the images. The same applies respectively for the image. Thus in *Three Pianos*, if listen with no images, three main types of diegetic sounds emerge: the 'lasting noise' of the railway station as ambience throughout the film; the constantly changing motive of piano played; and the monotone robotic warnings and departure announcements. The latter sounds, even if different in content, have a similar effect on the listener: mechanical, detached, and indifferent to present reality. Hence, despite the changes in the volume and the dominance at various points in the film, the main sound texture (the railway station's ambience) links the seemingly separate sequences together by referring to the single location: St Pancras International Railway station. Chion's audiovisual analysis stresses the descriptive aspect of the method that avoids symbolization (i.e. psychoanalytic, psychological, political), which can suggest the interest in the acousmatic ambient noise of the train station interpreted as a model of constant, unstoppable and dynamic machinery. This experimental work is also similar to a musical 'polyphony' where different themes appear throughout the film. The piano players seem to project an 'audiovisual dissonance', a contrapunct, since the presence of peaceful performers contrasts with the dynamic, messy, robotic and noisy reality. As a result, the clear rhythmic, contextual and audiovisual contrast creates a rich potential for cinematic expression that brings it closer to poetry.

7.1.2 Conclusion

Three Pianos is a short experimental film where, through ambient noise and live music performance, the role of pregnant ‘absence’, cinematic silence, is introduced. This ‘absence’ is never a mere absence of sound, but rather a rendered absence. This has been articulated in *Three Pianos* through sound-silence contrasts (‘locational silence’) and manipulations of the soundtrack: a selective heightening and removal of the existing ambience. Moreover, the musical and poetic components of the film, such as repetitions (e.g. footsteps, returning to the same pianos) and pauses created by the cut-outs or sound-silence contrasts, contribute greatly to the construction of this non-narrative experimental film. Through a series of similarities, differences, comparisons, variations and metaphors, a pointing gesture is introduced that challenges the audience to steer their attention and to make assumptions, create interpretations, compare the elements and sum up the motifs seen and heard. By evoking a sensory experience through applied methods of cinematic silence this pilot film aims to suggest mood, rather than present information or a thoroughly constructed narrative.

7.2 *Narara and Kiko* (2018)

Narara and Kiko is an experimental 45 minute documentary, where I return to my homeland in Armenia to find an old friend, artist Naira Muradyan, who is in the process of creating a new animation. The film is a slow, contemplative reflection on two artists' respective creative processes, documentary film and animation, where each of us in our own medium and own way attempts to 'sound out' thoughts on the notions of historical trauma, motherhood and the inner and outer realities of an artist. *Narara and Kiko* is a story that emerges out of seemingly formless 'leftovers of conventional narrative' (Margulies 1996, 4), which Margulies describes as 'images between the images', a concept that is being transposed into 'sounds between the sounds'. The aim here is not so much that of creating meaning through an explicitly constructed story and the shaping of a point of view, but more through letting a story emerge through a loose structure. The 'dead', uneventful, empty moments, the seemingly 'unimportant' fragments, 'absences' created by awkward, disturbing, or meditative observations is rich material for the filmmaker to work with and to listen to. This is what becomes the substance of *Narara and Kiko* and the *cinematic silence*. This unadorned reality has a 'beauty' and is a valuable source of record worth consideration. The exploration of avenues for authorial subjectivity and artistic expression through looking at, and working with, what would get lost, the cinematic silence, is a stimulating endeavour (especially at a time when the concept of a well-defined story is usually paramount in filmmaking).

7.2.1 Background story to the production

When I first approached Naira Muradyan with the idea of following with the camera the process of creating the animation *Kiko*, the artist was reluctant, stressing that 'there is nothing interesting to film'. This 'nothing' sounded promising and intriguing for someone interested in cinematic silence. Naira's 'nothing' sounded rich and pregnant, and called for an exploration of the meaning beyond the surface. Convincing Naira to be filmed was achieved only by ensuring that she would not be distracted from her work, and that there would be no need to perform in front of the camera or give long interviews. The film was therefore planned to be a silent observation with minimum intervention to capture the artist's life during the creation of animation *Kiko*.

Kiko indirectly touches on the complex relationship between Armenia and Turkey. As a consequence, the documentary *Narara and Kiko* is indirectly connected to this. In this

regard, it is impossible to overstate the loaded meaning and preoccupations connected with the combination of these two words: Armenia and Turkey. Modern Turkey continues to deny the recognition of the Armenian Genocide happened during the Ottoman period in 1915. The borders between the two countries have remained closed for more than twenty five years, and the official relationship is close to non-existent. In this context, the relationship between Turkey and Armenia becomes a sort of background story to both projects (the animation and the documentary film). The Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform found a common ground between the two countries, which is a shared love for cinema. The goal of the Cinema platform is to connect, to reconcile, to express what has not been said in order to heal and to understand the neighbouring country. Thus, *Kiko*, as one of the selected projects for 2017, could potentially secure Naira Muradyan a visit to Istanbul to experience the atmosphere of Zahrad's homeland, to capture images of the city, with the aim of inspiring the background scenes for *Kiko*, as well as establish a cooperation between Armenian and Turkish animators in the realisation of this project. The prospect of Naira's visit to Istanbul brought the idea that *Narara and Kiko* could have elements of a 'road movie'. Soon it became clear that due to the political situation in Turkey (Summer-Autumn 2017) the trip to Istanbul had to be cancelled. Moreover, during the making of *Kiko*, there was no communication with the Turkish partners (July - early December 2017). This silence suggested that the travel grant for Naira to visit Istanbul was not available, and that the earlier planned cooperation between Armenian and Turkish animators was no longer possible. As a result of these unforeseen events, the style and the narrative of the film had to be reconsidered.

This draws attention on the debate over the filmmaker's control over the subject and the process of film production. The idea that 'documentary filmmakers exercise less control over their subject than their fictional counterparts do' (Nichols 1991, 13) has been hugely contested. Bill Nichols (ibid. 12-14) while discussing the concept of documentary from filmmaker's point of view, clearly rejects this claim made by Douglas Gomery, Robert Allen and Bordwell and Thompson (e.g. no script, rehearsals, sophisticated lighting equipment needed for documentary in comparison to fiction) and argues that 'control' is the key element of documentary: the degree of tight control over the production and post-production stages. Nichols adds that 'What the documentarist cannot fully control is his or her basic subject: history. By addressing the historical domain, the documentarist joins the company of other practitioners who 'lack control' over what they do' (Nichols 1991, 14). In case of *Narara and Kiko* is the artist's lack of control over *Kiko*'s logistics. However, the impossibility of visiting Istanbul and the lack of communication between

Armenian and Turkish artists is an example of the tension and the long lasting unresolved obstacles between these neighbouring countries. It should be stressed that the Armenia-Turkey relationship is only a background story for the film *Narara and Kiko* and the animation *Kiko*. The goal of these projects was never the depiction of this political tension, but rather, an attempt to establish a dialogue between the two countries. Quite surprisingly, the decision to focus on the close observation of the main subject (Naira and her work in the confined space of her house) created a wide space for creativity, and three different parallel themes emerged which can be traced.

7.2.2 Three main themes

Three different themes are entangled together in *Narara and Kiko* and produce a multilayered narrative. The first theme is the observation of the simple life the artist has chosen, in a village in the countryside away from the chaotic city life full of noise and speed. An almost silent observation of insignificant everyday events, where it can seem that nothing happens, a quiet study of the artist's surroundings, allows a sense of the true essence of the artist's character to emerge. The second theme is the cohabitation and work in a single isolated space of three different generations of artists: Naira, her father (a painter) and her daughter (a digital artist). As a result, the father and daughter, and the mother and daughter relationships, as well as the interrelationship between these three generations, are portrayed in the film. The third theme revolves around Naira's interest in poetry, and the world of Zahrad, the writer of the poem, on which *Kiko* is based, who was born, lived and was inspired by Istanbul. Since the poet's city was hard to reach, the desire of the artist to look beyond the political and practical problems and find ways to cross borders and overcome stereotypes through her imagination is significant and interesting to explore.

The protagonist's house in the Dzoraghbyur village is about 15 kilometers outside of the busy Armenian capital Yerevan. This island-house, almost half built, in which the events unfold creates an ambiguous ghostly atmosphere where all little sounds and actions become palpable. It provides a texture to the film and becomes the driving element of the story. Here everything is significant: the repetitive sounds (the noise of the boiler, the footsteps of the protagonists, the cat scratching the glass window etc.), the repetitive actions (climbing the stairs, the protagonists working habits, etc.), the sounds coming from the open or closed windows, the hand drawings on the walls and the sounds penetrating through them, the old furniture, the reflections, the light and colours. The house mirrors the nature of its inhabitants – Naira, her father Janik and her daughter Yeva - as they all prefer

to spend most of their day working here. In addition to the three artists, Hayk, Naira's eldest son lives here too. But unlike three protagonist- artists, Hayk is rarely at home. There is an old, huge dog called Godot, who lives in the untidy garden, as well as numerous cats that go in and out of the depicted space.

The long days and nights spent at Naira's modest house before the filming commenced were a patient and uninterrupted investigation of her everyday life in order to see, smell, listen, feel, get closer and become immersed in that life, to adjust to its rhythm. As a result, the director's experience and study of the filmic space had a significant impact on my directorial decisions and the cinematic style adopted. In fact, the initial worry about not knowing Naira well enough turned out to be wrong as the broader understanding of her character was achieved by learning about her home, family and daily life. This method of studying the subject in her natural setting is rooted in anthropology and has been widely applied in ethnography. Moreover, this tactic of studying the protagonists' 'dailiness', has been widely discussed in film theory: 'hyperrealist everyday' (Margulies 1996, 4), 'le temps mort'³⁶ / dead time (Rascaroli and Rhodes 201, 9), 'boredom' (Caglayan 2018,192), and practised by filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Andy Warhol, Jean-Luc Godard, Chantal Akerman, Bela Tarr etc. Moreover, the research about Naira Muradyan's 'uneventful everyday' provided a rich ground for the creation of a deeper meaning. It is interesting to note that the decision to focus on a singular location - the house - occurred later in the post-production stage. Two additional locations were filmed during the production stage: the huge supermarket in Yerevan where Naira is doing her weekly shopping, and at the Armenfilm cinema centre, where Naira, with the composer Hayk Karapetyan, signs the long awaited official financial documents for making the animation *Kiko*, but it became clear that it was unnecessary to include these additional locations. The focus on the village (Naira's house and the surrounding area) supported the unity of the film form and created a certain slow pace and rhythm that was natural to the protagonist's life flow.

The opening scene of the film is a slow, 53 seconds, wide vertical pan shot of an unidentified village captured by a drone. Even by the end of the film it will not be clear if this is an Armenian or a Turkish village, as the predominant factor here is the sensory experience created through the monotone grey image, slow, as if 'landing' movement and almost silent peaceful ambience. The extract from Zahrad's poem *Kiko* is on the screen

³⁶ 'The term borrowed from the French, a bust on another borrowed from the history of painting: la nature morte, or 'still life' in English. 'Places are shown before and after actors arrive at and depart from them...[...] we follow a character who seems to be 'killing time'... (Rascaroli & Rhodes 2011, 9)

with the ambient sound of a village that gets clearer when the view of the village becomes closer. The abrupt sound and image cut - black screen with intertitles accompanied with the opening of a metal door sound (similar to the opening of heavy metal prison doors) - is a rough shift, a 'cut-out' effect described in *Three Pianos*, and a disturbance from meditative experience of a distant and calming landscape. It gives us the impression of 'bursting into' someone's personal world. The black screen with intertitles is followed by Naira facing the camera, standing in front of the open metal door stroking Godot, her dog, in the garden: an 'old man', as she calls him. The contrast between the size of Godot and that of little Naira can be observed here. The opening scene sets the tone for the rest of the film, and clarifies the role of the audience as a contributor to meaning creation. The bold sound of the metal door, even though it is an opening sound, can be interpreted as a way to 'lock' Naira, and the audience, in her island and makes a clear separation between the outside and inside worlds.

Naira prefers to work on *Kiko* at night; usually she sleeps in the mornings and meets artist friends in the afternoons. Her cramped room could symbolise an escape from hustle and bustle of life and noisy reality. The seemingly mundane details of this filmic space are crucially important to construct the state of mind of the artist. Naira's hand drawings straight on the wall surface (e.g. a cat, a landscape), an insect walking on the wall under a spotlight at night, the 'unknowing' darkness behind the open window with the curtains slightly moving under the summer wind are all aspects that illustrate the space of her creativity. All these little 'wondering' details of the camera's gaze create 'dead moments' that are most powerful when silent. Hence in Naira's room the flying 'night visitors' (insects) she is annoyed with, or the cat's glance hand drawn on the wall facing artist's unfinished images of *Kiko*, evoke her voluntary alienation, resistance to accept standards and norms, and contribute to the description of her personality. Thus the film location, as the main landscape, not only portrays the simple life of the three artists, but reflects their inner world.

The peaceful cohabitation of the three different generations is eloquent from the first introduction. They each work in their separate silent rooms: Naira's father Janik, is working on a painting seen from a half open doorway in his studio early in the summer morning; Naira's daughter Yeva, is sitting in front of the computer screen and is hardly noticeable in a dark room. The dark curtains 'breathing' with the summer wind occupy most of the frame seen from an open doorway again. While Naira is captured in close-up, staring at the computer, where the testing extract from the animation *Kiko* is seen, followed by the title of the film. It appears that Naira talking to herself while working, only later in

the film does it becomes clear that she is referring to me standing behind the camera. The extensive use of shots through corridors, doorways, and the staircase, where the camera position constructs a POV of the presence of an absence, becomes the style for the rest of the film. These repetitive scenes with a static camera, which are most effective when stare in silence evoke a slow cinema aesthetic. Similarly Caglayan (2018, 77) notices the use of the camera as a silent observing agent also as typical to the work of Bela Tarr and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. By framing character's actions through doorways or corridors, Fassbinder 'emphasizes the entrapment... [...] and isolation from society at large' (Caglayan 2018, 77). Here the importance of the filmic space prevails, and the role of visuals to provide analytical aspects, and an auditory ambience to provide the emotional aspects is saturated to create moments of silence. There is minimum action and information in this three introduction-portraits shots of the artists: Janik, Yeva and Naira. A mere slow observation through the doorway. This method links to the elements necessary for the cinematic silence construction: prolonged shot and empty image to create the dead and empty moments (Deleuze's time-image) that were elaborated earlier in the case studies.

Even though Naira sees Janik as simply 'the colour of their house', her resemblance to her father is obvious: the passion for their work, the love of walking, even the difficulty remembering dates and numbers makes them similar. Their father-daughter meetings are almost always full of emotion: Naira teases her father for not remembering his brother's age, for which Janik is clearly annoyed as he shouts back that he is 90 years old and has lost his memory; or they both mesmerised by the view from a window and voice up to each other the preferred angle to capture the best image; and together they laugh when remembered about their favorite Godot's adventures.

The mother and daughter relationship is indirect: we do not see them communicating face to face. Nevertheless, both Naira and Yeva express admiration for each other. Yeva feels proud about her artist-mother being always in demand and creating, Naira finds Yeva's world utterly new and interesting to explore. Yet their art is drastically different: Yeva's is rebel, loud, minimalistic, emotionally detached and 'flat', and Naira's is dreamy, multilayered and melancholic. Throughout the whole film we never see all three protagonists together (e.g. having a meal, or a family discussion), but mainly each in their separate worlds/rooms. A direct communication between Naira and Janik became possible to capture, but not between Naira and Yeva. Even though an attempt was made to organise mother-daughter meal preparation, the recorded scene was not used, since it created a staged and not natural interaction between the two. It can seem as if the cohabitation of these three artists of different generations, and working in different art mediums, is only

possible through their chosen lifestyle. As Yeva explains, there are days that they might not say a word to each other. All three understand the value of their 'escape'. Here each in their silent room /studio feel connected to one's own inner and art world, and feel free to create.

The third theme - Naira's inspiration by the poem *Kiko* and the change of the plans to visit Istanbul - can appear as the main framework on which the whole story is constructed. At this point the earlier touched issue on the filmmaker's degree of control over the subject becomes relevant. My initial intention to remain 'invisible' proved to be unworkable. Right from the beginning of the process, Naira was reluctant to play 'hide and seek', pretend not to notice the camera and me, her friend, behind it. Rather she kept acknowledging my presence through her glance (sometimes straight to the camera), smiles, hesitations, questions and jokes. My direct engagement with Naira also involved 'talking head' interviews, conversations during Naira's working process in her cramped room or in a spacious communal area downstairs, and relatively silent sequences of Naira working during the night. As a result, the chosen style for the documentary is far from being pure observational. The decision to include interviews, arose at the post-production stage. Before starting the filming process, there was a long conversation (almost two hours long) between Naira and myself in front of the camera. The initial idea was to record the interview to remember. However, Naira's sitting pose, her gestures, her confidence looking straight to the camera, the little accidents that happened (e.g. the incident with Hayk wanting a shower which will be discussed later) were so genuine and not fabricated that the decision was to use these in the film. Thus, the filmmaker-subject encounter became a layer to analyse the themes we, two women artists, are concerned with (woman-artist's life and historical trauma) while working in our own mediums. Naira's thoughts during the process of making of *Kiko* on the author Zahrad's character, her interpretations of 'little man' Kiko, even her own similarities with Zahrad and Kiko, and her preferred style of 'not knowing' ahead where the story will take her next, are shared voluntarily with me. As a result, this becomes also an example of the 'participatory' as coined by Bill Nichols (2010, 184) or 'interactive' (Nichols 1991, 44-56) documentary mode, which suggests that 'what we see is what we can see only when a camera, or filmmaker, is there instead of ourselves... [as a result of this] the truth of an encounter rather than absolute or untampered truth' can emerge (Nichols 2010,185). In this regard, questions such as "Whose story is it?", "How is it told?" or "What is the relationship between the filmmaker, the protagonist and the camera?" become important. In this regard my role of an

acousmatic director (not seen but heard), whom we can hear asking questions or reacting to protagonists' actions, expands the off-screen space.

The first interview with Naira, where she discusses the influence her artist parents had on her during her childhood, is an important sequence. This was interrupted by Naira's son Hayk needing to have a shower. This meant switching on the noisy boiler, which had been turned off for the recording of the interview. The first significance of this sequence is the awareness of all parties - the filmmaker, the subject and the spectator - of the presence of the camera. The interruption of the interview provides that moment of silent 'agreement' between all three sides of the film event and the awareness and acceptance of the presence of the camera's gaze. The other interesting aspect of this sequence is the sound of the boiler itself. Normally, such a noise would be either eliminated or masked as a disturbing noise or a technical break during the post-production. In this film however, the noise is used as a way to reveal the truthfulness of the situation. There are another two important directorial decisions that were made, which became part of the style for the rest of the film. First, the 'on and off' noise of the boiler is introduced as a characteristic sound of Naira's house, as it will appear again later in the film. The choice to keep this noise highlights not only the unadorned reality that is recorded (as well as providing an explanation on the source of the noise for the rest of the film), but it also opens the space for the noise itself to play a role in creation of meaning. Here, the repetitive 'on and off' boiler in different circumstances (e.g. it switches on when Janik slowly climbing up the stairs, or when Naira is working in the common room at night) creates a contrast that makes the moments of silence clearly more desirable and accentuated. After the film was completed, the emergence of the third hidden metaphorical meaning appeared. This sound can also symbolize a long lasting problem: a prolonged noise that requires 'fixing' before having a damaging effect on the inhabitants that are longing for peace. The boiler evokes Antonioni's 'commentative noise'³⁷ that he preferred to apply instead of the commentary music: 'they are not only naturalistic components of the situation in which character finds himself/herself but auditory objective correlative to his/her feelings' (Chatman 1985, 133).

Almost halfway through the film, we find Naira sitting in a spacious and empty downstairs room, drawing scenes of Istanbul at night for *Kiko*. More than two minutes of cinematic silence, or Taberge's 'relative silence', is applied as she works, which is represented by the sounds of Naira's pencil, an eraser, the 'on and off' boiler, her sigh and eventually, a thunder followed by heavy summer rain. This sound orchestration provides

³⁷ Antonioni has substituted 'commentative noises' such as industrial heavy pulsing of jets of smoke forced through pipes, the hum of wires carrying enormous voltages, the clamor of factory machines, the roar of a ship's funnel...for commentative music' (Chatman 1985, 133)

insight into the protagonist's inner state and thoughts. Through constructed cinematic silence an intimate atmosphere is created that allows the audience to feel the protagonist's inner world. Here silence serves as a bridge between the subject and the audience. This is then interrupted by the news about the cancelled trip to Istanbul, conveyed through the text on a black screen and Naira's frontal interview in which she evaluates the situation. The artist's decision is to give up the idea of waiting, or postponing the project, and stick to 'her Istanbul'. Naira's Istanbul is based on her imagination and the black and white photos of well known Armenian-Turkish photojournalist Ara Guler, whom she later describes as the 'man of the world'. This shows Naira's desire to keep on working-creating on a story she has committed to tell despite the challenges as the artist's imagination does not recognise borders.

7.2.3 Mixed narrative styles

As an experimental documentary, *Narara and Kiko* is characterised by a fluid combination of different narrative styles. It has an identifiable 'slow cinema' aesthetic that were predominantly applied in feature films by Chantal Akerman (*Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels* 1975), Andrei Tarkovsky (*The Mirror*, 1975), Bela Tarr (*Satantango*, 1994) and Abbas Kiarostami (*Taste of Cherry*, 1995). It also embraces aspects of the 'participatory/interactive' documentary mode as articulated by Bill Nichols (2010, 149). This can be seen in Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronicle of a Summer* 1960 and Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* 1985 and implies the 'negotiation between filmmaker and subject' (ibid.). Here the 'participatory' mode has a clear reference to the 'cinéma vérité' style of documentary, a term borrowed by Rouch and Morin from the Vertovian kinopravda ('film truth'). In *Narara and Kiko* the fragmented narrative is interrupted by the use of intertitles - a text on the black screen - similar to the way this was done in silent cinema, to give information on the progression of events related to the production of the animation *Kiko*. If in the case of 'slow cinema' it is hard to identify the chain of cause-effects and the protagonist's motivations and obstacles are not obvious, the participatory mode foregrounds the filmmaker's engagement with the protagonist through frontal interviews, and the open sharing of the artist's thoughts on intimate and personal aspects of her life leave no room for ambiguity. This combination of slow cinema and the participatory documentary mode rejects the mainstream dominant way of storytelling, where it can seem as there is always one thing pinned as being true.

As discussed earlier, 'slow cinema' is renowned for its minimalistic style, as opposed to the mainstream tendency to produce a story driven, technically perfect, spectacle that aims to entertain and immerse the spectator into the story world. The defining characteristics of this style, include long takes, deserted landscapes, claustrophobic spaces and is referred as 'cinema of walking' (Caglayan 2018, Jenkins 1995) and dead or empty time. All these can be traced in *Narara and Kiko*. Moreover, similarly to many examples of slow cinema, *Narara and Kiko* is a low budget production, made on location with minimal crew and a reflection of the seamless and perfect image/sound aesthetic allowed by technological advancement. Unrestrained from conventional storytelling, which implies carefully structured character development, and a clear narrative arc, in 'slow cinema' a sometime monotone, repetitive and slow narrative has no conscious intention to entertain, amuse and surprise the spectator. Caglayan (2018, 10) highlights the process of this 'contemplation as a meaning-seeking process', where the difference between mainstream and slow cinema, is in the narrative stillness and monotony caused by slow camera movement, or the movement of material bodies, and narrative structure. This approach has been applied to help the viewer/listener to concentrate and slow down, to understand the reality beyond the limits of the screen. The film world is living its own life. This liberation leaves the audience in a state of stare and waiting. As a result neither the story nor the protagonist/s are the main subject of the film narrative, but rather the spectator's sensory experience created by this cinematic style.

Janik's role in *Narara and Kiko* is interesting in relation to the aesthetics of slow cinema. Throughout the film he is often seen through the doorway of his studio while working on a painting. By this visual isolation, his full concentration, his passion and love for drawing can be observed. He is also depicted sitting on the sofa, in his studio, doing nothing and staring unresponsively, or looking through the window at Godot in the abandoned garden, or walking slowly up and down the staircase. Thus Janik, with his silence, slow movements, and detached glance has the characteristics of 'flâneur'³⁸ protagonists such as Janos in Bella Tarr's *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000). Caglayan points out the widespread use of such 'figure flâneurs' in slow cinema and argues that 'the

³⁸ From 'flânerie' meaning 'to stroll' or 'strolling' in French. This has been defined as a mode of strolling by the poet Charles Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century. 'For Baudelaire, flânerie is a specific mode of strolling in which the flâneur exercises a spatial practice, observing the interior and exterior public spaces of a city, reading the population and its social texts' (Caglayan 2018, 69).

very act of flânerie substantiates the claims for aesthetic slowness' (2018, 70). Caglayan traces back the historical roots of 'aimless wandering', which is opposed to the rhythm of modern life, to *Bicycle Thieves* (1948). Others he brings forward include 1960s films *La Notte* (1961), *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1961), featuring women in search for meaning; and 1980s films on the subject of homelessness, such as *Boy Meets Girl* (1984) and *Vagabond* 1996. However, Caglayan points out that even if the walking changes due to cinema history, their function remains the same - they have a 'dual identity... [...] both an insider and an outsider, familiar to others, and yet eccentric enough to be viewed as an outcast, which enables a special position for observation' (Caglayan 2018, 71). To return to Janik's 'figure flâneur', whose story is not constructed or told but emerges on its own through silence, movements, glance and work, in the rare occasions in the film when he does make short comments, these are not comprehensible and do not add much to his character. There is a wide shot of Janik walking into his studio and finding a place on the couch facing the camera, where piles of dozens of old canvas paintings 'look' at him. Janik here seems to face more than 90 years of history, and he does not seem happy to confront it. The routine of life heard through distant sound, the cinematic silence depicted through the heightened monotone ticking of the clock in his studio and distant bark of Godot in the garden that might be asking for a company, assume symbolic and poetic meaning: there is no escape from the passage of time.

There is a recurrent shot of the staircase that plays a role in the film narrative. Numerous times during the film Yeva, Naira and the cats climb swiftly up and down the stairs. However, Janik's slow footsteps, highlighted through the monotone sound, are the predominant characteristic of this shot. The texture of the sound of Janik's footwear changes with the seasons: squeaky sandals change to heavy boots. Sonnenschein draws attention to the role of 'footsteps [that] can lend an identity to the walker' (2001, 180) even if out of screen. The slow pace and almost robotic rhythm of Janik's footsteps bring similar associations as with the ticking of a clock in his studio. Here the importance of hearing beyond the sounds and seeing beyond the images give voice to what has been hidden and silenced. As a result, the effect of 'dedramatisation' (Caglayan 2018, 56) is achieved based on monotony and the repetition of mundane events. Bella Tarr (2004), in his interview with Phil Ballard, draws attention to the risk of 'missing the logic of life' if we are following the modern tendency of the story as of 'information-cut, information-cut, information-cut'. The main material Tarr tends to focus on is not verbal information, but rather time and landscape. There is hardly a more powerful way to say without saying, and to show without showing. Like the 'landscape of faces' of people waiting hopelessly in Chantal

Akerman's *D'Est* (1993), Janik's repetitive monotone actions, slow movements and expression on his face are more powerful than the rare words he says: silence is louder than words. Similarly, while discussing Antonioni's aesthetic minimalism Chatman (1985, 2) compares his works with modern novels and explains that 'the omission of explicit text paradoxically adds implicit meaning' (Chatman 1985, 2).

Even though it is hard to define a narrative arc throughout the film, the opening scene, the set-up and the closing scenes are closely connected and complete a circle. After the last intertitles on the black screen, the metal door opens again and Naira interacts with the dog as in the opening scene. We have learned from the intertitles that Naira has completed the animation *Kiko*, which suggests the end for the *Narara and Kiko*. Everything seems the same, apart from the season changed and the appearance of the little dog, which implies that Godot who was sick in winter has not recovered. Naira feeds the new little dog that now occupies Godot's territory, enters the house and shuts the metal door, and is back to her voluntary secret escape to create her next work. However the perception of these two scenes (opening and closing) is drastically different as the spectator is by the end of the film able to predict the artist's usual 'everyday', fill the gaps and construct his/her own narrative.

7.2.4 A Note on Colour

The use of the black-and-white image in *Narara and Kiko* is not incidental. This, combined with the extracts in colour from animation *Kiko*, offers several interpretations. The first, which is the most obvious, is the clear division between the two worlds: mine, the documentary film and Naira's animation *Kiko*, my creative world and the creative world of the artist. The second is to show the contrast between Naira's outside reality, coloured by pessimism, insecurity and tension, and her creative world, the animation *Kiko*, which is full of colour, layers, dreams and hope. Caglayan (2018, 93), while discussing the black-and-white monochrome image in Bela Tarr's works, highlights the similarity with the aesthetics of documentary. Similarly, the recent black and white drama *Roma* (2018), directed by Alfonso Cuarón based on director's memories of childhood in the early 1970s, is another example. The discourse of nostalgia can equally relate to *Narara and Kiko* where, with the use of the black and white intertitles, the reference to a silent cinema period is apparent. The third, and in this study becomes the main reason for using black and white, is the intention to focus on sound through the loss of the intensity of color or details in the image. The idea behind this choice was to empty the image in order to allow sound to lead the way and let the listening ear to open the inner reality.

7.2.5 Conclusion

The reflection on *Narara and Kiko* draws attention on different aspects of documentary film construction heightened by the use of cinematic silence. The elaboration on the three main themes (location, three artists living under one roof and Naira has to move closed 'Armenia-Turkey borders' to complete her animation) around which the narrative of the film evolved has been discussed. One of the key factors in this project was the focus made on a singular location to reveal potential for cinematic silence. This was only possible by my thorough study of a space, paying careful attention to little, loud, monotone, repetitive, contrast, unusual sounds and images. The identifications of the places (e.g. the stairs) and times of the day (e.g. Naira works at nights), where the silence is not fabricated but becomes part of the protagonist's routine, make the effect work more efficiently. The choice of the mixed narrative construction (slow cinema aesthetics, as well as interactive and observational documentary modes) opened a way to develop the second theme around the three artists. This provokes the important consideration of the degree of control the filmmaker has over the subject. In this case, the reluctance of Naira to play games with camera and ignore me, her filmmaker- friend behind it resulted in a stimulating dialogue between us, which expanded the on-screen and off-screen spaces. Here the silence emerged in relation to a subject Naira and I were concerned with, or between the almost mute character of 90 years old Janik. By following a slow cinema aesthetic that involves long takes, repetitive scenes, walking and mute characters, as well as monochrome colors, cinematic silence was created. The third theme, of not lesser importance, since the whole narrative was constructed around it, is Naira's goal to overcome the obstacles occurred during the work process and to complete *Kiko*. Additionally, the directorial choice to separate with vivid colors the extracts of Naira's animation to reveal or to hint at the passion towards her work was described. This also explained her voluntary entrapment from the outside world. Naira pushes the borders of her imagination and creates the scenes of Istanbul during silent nights. This film becomes a way for the artist and myself to work on our concerns and uncertainties, which is hardly explicit on screen but rather felt through the moments of created cinematic silence since 'documentary film can never simply represent the real, that instead it is a dialectical conjunction of a real space and the filmmakers that invade it' (Bruzzy 2006,153).

8. Conclusions

To address the principal question of this thesis - What are the main directorial approaches in making cinematic silence? - understanding the unfolding of the story of silence in the context of film sound history is crucial. Considering the stages of so-called 'silent film', film sound and Dolby eras uncovers the key developments that advanced the presence and the role of cinematic silence. Despite the fact that the sound – labelled by Chion as 'the intruder' (2004, 16) - arrived to disturb the audience's silent aural dreaming, the first definitions of cinematic silence erupt: Bresson's aphorism 'sound film made silence possible' (Chion 1994, 56) or 'silence is an acoustic effect where distant sounds in a large space can be heard' (Balazs 2010, 191). However, since 1927, sound technology had evolved to reach one of its most important goals (the elimination of noise of the projector, of the camera, of recordings) in order to conceal the presence of the apparatus of production. But it was only since the late 1960s, with the improvements in quality of sound introduced by Dolby laboratories - a noise reduction system, dolby stereo, dolby digital and dolby atmos – that the importance of silence in cinema became especially relevant.

Nevertheless, it becomes clear that (slow and gradual) technical progress of broadening of the soundtrack is not the only prerogative for the emergence of cinematic silence. The aesthetic innovations pioneered by the key figures in the development of art cinema - Robert Bresson, Jean-Luc Godard, Stanley Kubrick, Michelangelo Antonioni, Andrey Tarkovsky - that have distinctive individual styles remain important. By taking control over the soundtrack (and image), these filmmakers not only liberated sound from the image, extended the screen space, and used unnoticeable close-up sounds (little or unimportant) as elements necessary for refinement of cinematic language, they also freed cinema from the constraints of conscious (text and story). Thus, this 'mature cinema' (Schrader 2018, 5), analysed by Gilles Deleuze as a time-image stage, enabled cinema to communicate with and evoke the unconscious, and address our silent memories, dreams, fantasies. For Deleuze, the difference between these two equally important stages - of cinema before the WW2 (the movement-image) and after the WW2 (the time-image) - resides in the questions which become the problem for the audience to respond to: 'What are we going to see [to hear] in the next image? (2005, 261)' shifts towards 'What is there to see [also to hear] in the image?' (ibid.). Hence, it is true that the technological advancements in sound allowed silence to find an equal place on a soundtrack (alongside and in conjunction with music, dialogue and sound effects), but most importantly, it is the

aesthetic evolution brought up by film pioneers that granted silence a crucial role to communicate with the unsaid.

When approaching cinematic silence, complications arise in an attempt to clarify how much is heard (if at all) on a film soundtrack. The attempts in recent decades to fit elusive silence into frameworks (Raemaekers), into categories (Bloustein, Murch and Taberge), or efforts made to interpret the hidden meanings of silence on screen (the scene with flickering candle in Andrey Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia* (1983), the final scene in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Passenger* (1975)), become problematic. As Sontag notes: 'Silence and allied ideas (like emptiness, reduction, the "zero degree") are boundary notions with a complex set of uses; leading terms of a particular spiritual and cultural rhetoric' (1967, 5). Hence, there is no precise answer or clear-cut approach to this 'boundary notion', and when applied to the cinematic realm, the answer resides somewhere 'in between'. In between the sounds, images, thoughts and realities. Thus, to open up the space for cinematic silence to emerge, a proposition to consider the space in between sound-image events where primarily diegetic sounds are heard was forwarded. Four techniques for creating cinematic silence were applied: sound-silence contrast (Walter Murch's 'locational silence'); extended duration (prolonged shot); non dominant image (empty spaces, monochrome colours and static camera), and repetitions. To test the application of these elements of cinematic silence construction, the analysis of film case studies, interviews with the film sound practitioners, and the production of two original documentary works (with an accompanying reflection on the filmmaking process) were provided.

The chosen case studies suggest that even when drastically different in style and context, the articulated elements to create cinematic silence work efficiently in Chantal Akerman's experimental documentary *D'Est* (1993) and in Michael Haneke's psychological thriller *Hidden* (2005). Furthermore, the emergence of silence in these films also creates an ambiguous layer that draws attention to the role of a filmmaker beyond the screen space, even if silent and unseen, but utterly palpable. It is no surprise that the stylistic solutions of these filmmakers, and their works in general, avoid the characteristics of Hollywood films. Chantal Akerman's dream or memory like plotless journey to *D'Est* (1993) is a repetitive scanning through the landscape of numerous faces and places, as well as a prolonged interior waiting that are far from narrative driven approach. Similarly, Haneke's preferred mistrust to images articulated by a constant switch between different realities (dream, surveillance footage, television material) in *Hidden*, avoid the seamless presence of the apparatus and/or filmmaker, which is a norm in mainstream cinema. Both

Haneke and Akerman demand the audience to put the pieces of their film-puzzles together, and to fill the extended or empty time with audience's own thoughts and feelings.

The constant noise and speed transform the way silence is experienced by film audiences today. The interviews with film sound practitioners - Larry Sider and Paul Davies - draw attention to the unpopularity of cinematic silence, which derives from its ambivalent nature, and the audience's fear of unusual quietness. However, filmmakers that step beyond the industry rules, or accepted standards, and follow a deeper vision of the world, confront the trends of instant gratification – the implicit meanings, fast actions, and instant reactions that are often lead by dialogues and/or music. They create cinema of questions able to pull the audience into the quest for meaning: into their internal search.

The two original films created for this study- *Three Pianos* (2016) and *Narara and Kiko* (2018) – provide an opportunity to test the ways of making of cinematic silence proposed through documentary practice. Ironically the documentary film too 'occupies no fixed territory' (Nichols 1991, 12), similar to the notion of silence. Both films become encounters based on my curiosity, where I seek to listen, to read the situation, to see beyond the seen and heard. Moreover, in both cases, the catalyst to provoke silence is the location: a noisy St Pancras International in *Three Pianos*, and the artist's remote and silent house in *Narara and Kiko*. These films are far from journalistic or factual documentary in style and as the filmmaker, I navigate the mentioned spaces not as 'a fly on a wall', but as an acousmatic participant of the story. *Three Pianos* tests the coupling of relatively sound-silence moments ('locational silence') in order to traverse the audience in a singular space from piano to piano. Here the focus on the repetitive sounds (footsteps, announcements, piano play, rolling of the suitcases) and constant noise create the experience of a space where the volunteer piano performers ought to create silence in their minds to be able to perform. In *Narara and Kiko*, by following the ordinary uneventful everyday of an artist Naira Muradyan, the narrative intermingles between slow cinema, observational and interactive (participatory) documentary aesthetics. Here the proposed four elements of cinematic silence construction have been applied through the focus on a space, three generations of artist protagonists and Naira's internal silent journey of crossing the closed Turkey-Armenia borders to complete her animation *Kiko*.

Cinematic silence is an effect capable of attracting audience's attention and taking them through a journey in their inner worlds. This requires time, stillness and often a quietness to be generated in the human mind. However, cinematic silence can be conceived also as an uncomfortable face-to-face encounter, which arouses feelings based on the audience's inner response, and evoke a meeting with our own self. But the point of art is to

provide a platform for the audience to engage on an inner level. As Andrey Tarkovsky states, and his cinema art practice utterly proves, ‘Only one kind of journey is possible: the one we undertake to our inside world. [...] You can’t escape from yourself; what you are, you carry with you. [...] Wherever you get to, you are still seeking your own soul’ (2006, 93).

The next question this study raises is the world outside the film: the cinema exhibition space and an audience research. Today we watch films not only in the ‘dark and secret’ space of the cinema theatre, or at home in quiet and private, but also on our ipads and mobile phones while commuting, or exercising on a treadmill at the gym. Therefore, the perception of moments of silence can vary according to the cinema space where these are experienced. It is hard to imagine the similar effect of Andrey Tarkovsky’s *The Mirror* (1975) or *Nostalgia* (1983) experienced on a busy train instead of in a cinema hall. Thus, when approaching cinematic silence, the space and the audience outside the film world become crucial to consider. This aspect, however, remained beyond the scope of this research, and opens doors for further discovery in order to understand the rich potential of cinematic silence experience in film.

Appendix 1

A1.1 Grid Analysis: *D'Est* (1993)

Extract 1:

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long shot, inactive image
Length of the episode	03:48 -04:45
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: A man is sitting on a bench. First he is staring at the camera, after looking at both sides. Smoking. There is a beer bottle on the ground.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Off screen sound of trains and cars passing by. Almost silent.
What was before the shot	Static exterior shot. Sound of trains. A big lorry approaches from a distance, a cyclist passes. It gets very noisy when the lorry makes a turn slowly, enters the frame from the right and moves off the screen.
What is after the shot	There are metal rubbish bins in front of the row of tall buildings: block of flats.
Camera	static
Audience's reaction	Is this film about this poor man?

Extract 2: a 'walking woman'

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long tracking shot
Length of the episode	4:57- 06:16
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: a side view of an old woman with a plastic shopping bag walking behind the row of cars.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Off screen sound of cars passing, people say something randomly in unknown language. Very soft sound of footsteps of the woman.
What was before the shot	There are metal rubbish bins in front of the row of tall buildings: block of flats. Almost silent.
What is after the shot	At the sea. Happy song in Polish presumably.
Camera	tracking from right to left - following the walking woman.
Audience's reaction	Where is the woman going with this bag? Is this the woman connected to the man we saw sitting on a bench and looking purposeless? Will they meet later in the film?

Extract 3:

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long shot, inactive image
Length of the episode	11:52 :12:23
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: Another old woman is sitting in the living room next to a table with two sets of teacups. Looking at the camera motionless. The window is open.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Through the open window distant noise of passing cars can be heard .
What was before the shot	Exterior: People are walking towards and away from the camera. Loud sound of footsteps of a crowd is heard.
What is after the shot	A prolonged shot: a side view of an old man through the kitchen door eating at the table, we hear the sound of the cutlery while he is eating, and drinking and cars passing in a distance.
Camera	static
Audience's reaction	What is there to see? Why the woman stares at me?

Extract 4: the potato pickers

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long shot, inactive image
Length of the episode	20:54 :23:04
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: a wide shot of 13 old women working in the open field and a tractor moving with them slowly. By picking potatoes, the group of women gradually approach very close to a camera. Some of them stand and smile to a camera, thinking it is a photo shoot, and leave away from the shot by still picking up the potatoes. At the end the wide shot of the empty field.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	The noisy tractor engine working monotonously. The sound of metal buckets. When the women approach close to the camera they ask if the photos of them are being taken (in Russian).
What was before the shot	Exterior: Village. Distant sound of radio playing music, a rooster calling and cars moving.
What is after the shot	Exterior: almost silent shot of group of people moving from far distance towards the camera. Cars passing from time to time.
Camera	Static wide shot
Audience's reaction	Interesting to observe them working collectively and joking together while doing a hard job.

Extract 5: walking in the snow

Silence type	Relative
Length of the episode	25:06-26:06
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: a wide shot of winter landscape. Two rows of trees. In between the empty from cars road. About ten people walking from camera to a far distance.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Footsteps in the snow
What was before the shot	Exterior: people walking in a snow
What is after the shot	Exterior: long tracking shot of a morning winter city. People walking to their workplaces (presumably, as have bags).
Camera	Static wide shot
Audience's reaction	The sound of footsteps in a snow makes feel the cold the people feel in the film, the difficulty and the discomfort of walking such distance in winter...

Extract 6: 'waitings'

Silence type	Relative
Length of the episode	40:56-43:51
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: crowd of people in a waiting halls of train or bus station. They look exhausted, poor, unhappy with heavy bags and suitcases- some stare at the camera, some pretend to be not noticing it... Some are sitting, some lay down, some are standing...
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Noise of a crowd in a waiting hall - big space with echo..
What was before the shot	Exterior: tracking shot of unhappy and annoyed with camera presence people waiting at the bus stop.
What is after the shot	Interior: A young lady is putting on her lipstick. A girl looking detached to a side. A sound of an off screen baby is heard.
Camera	Tracking shot from right to left
Audience's reaction	Feel sorry for them

Extract 7: 'waitings'

Silence type	Relative
Length of the episode	46:39-49:54
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: Train station. Waiting and walking crowd
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Noise of a crowd in a train station
What was before the shot	Interior shot of a woman standing in the kitchen, listening to a sad song and having her coffee. She looks thoughtful...
What is after the shot	Exterior: a winter snowy city street at night. Cars have dimmed lights on moving slowly in the snow...
Camera	Static wide shot
Audience's reaction	What is it I cannot see?

Extract 8: 'waitings'

Silence type	Locational and Relative
Length of the episode	1:33:49- 1:39:14
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: Blue colored image of a morning city. Some people walking from right to left some from the left to the right...A long row of people waiting for a bust (presumably). They look at camera in question, embarrassment, despair...
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Morning city noise, from time to time people make sarcastic comments (in Russian)...
What was before the shot	Interior shot of a young man playing a beautiful relaxing music on a piano. A boy sitting with his back to a camera is watching TV which is on...
What is after the shot	Interior: a concert hall. Applauds to greet a cello-woman entered comes to an empty stage and getting ready to play.
Camera	Tracking shot of a city: people, cars, shops and long rows of waiting people facing a camera
Audience's reaction	The waiting is unbearable...

A1.2 Grid Analysis: *Hidden* (2005)

Extract 1: the opening scene

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long shot, inactive image
Length of the episode	00-00 -02:58
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: Parisian middle class neighbourhood. Morning. Opening credits. A man with a backpack passes by. A cyclist swiftly streams out of the screen. A woman leaves the building.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Birds chirping and flapping wings, bicycle passes by, an iron gate “clangs”. Off screen: cars passing, footsteps, door shuts. Off screen interior dialogue starts from 2:30- 2:58 Man: ‘Well?’ Woman: ‘Nothing’. Man: ‘Where was it?’ Woman: ‘In a plastic bag on the porch’. Footsteps heading towards a certain direction: Woman: ‘What’s wrong?!’
What was before the shot	-
What is after the shot	Exterior: Evening light. George comes out to check the point of view of the director of the footage.
Camera	static
Audience’s reaction	Initially interested, bored with nothing changes after the credits end, puzzled with the coming off-screen voices, involved when the extract is finished

Extract 2:

Silence type	locational and relative sound-silence contrast, inactive and long shot
Length of the episode	08:56- 11:28
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: Night street. A car passed by. George returns from work, enters the building
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Almost silent, the sound of the car passed, distant traffic noise, gates clang Off screen: an approaching car being parked, footsteps
What was before the shot	Interior: Noisy and bright swimming pool. The off-screen instructor shouting commands to Pierrot
What is after the shot	Interior: Georges on a bright TV screen addressing his viewers: ‘See you at the same time in two weeks ...Goodbye’.
Camera	static

Audience's reaction	Not sure if this a surveillance footage again or not
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Extract 3: a dream scene

Silence type	locational and relative Sound-silence contrast
Length of the episode	19:14- 19:52
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: A view from above to narrow street with parked cars in a row at night. Cut: Camera slowly creeps closer to a boy. The boy turns to a camera and we see his mouth is in blood. He was coughing blood.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Almost silent. Breathing. Coughing...
What was before the shot	Interior: George drives Pierrot home from school. Noise of the car engine, and conversation about a 'strange postcard' George sent to Pierrot that arrived at school.
What is after the shot	Exterior: Morning street in front of Laurent's building. George and Pierrot come out of the flat, and heading towards their car.
Camera	Static at first. Slow zoom towards a boy.
Audience's reaction	Not sure if this a surveillance footage again, or maybe just a dream

Extract 4:

Silence type	locational and relative sound-silence contrast
Length of the episode	38:19- 40:02
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: A view to an unknown street from car front window. Someone is walking through a long corridor where there are numerous blue doors. The image stops on the door '047'. The footage starts to rewind back, slows down and forward/backward again.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Noise of a car engine. Footsteps in a corridor. Breathing. Sound of a tape rewinding and screeching. From a point of rewind the off-screen dialogue between George and Anne: Anne: There was a street sign! George: I cannot make it out. Anne: Le..nin?...
What was before the shot	Interior: George opened the door to a room: Bonjour Mama. Presumably to have breakfast with his mum as they planned the night before.
What is after the shot	Interior: Georges and Anne sitting on a couch in front of a TV screen watching the anonymous footage in the dark living room.

Camera	Moving the car, then with the person moving towards the blue door.
Audience's reaction	What is happening, who is driving the car, who is walking through a corridor? Will we see him/her at last? When the footage suddenly stops we understand that have been fooled again- it is the surveillance footage again.

Extract 5:

Silence type	locational and relative Sound-silence contrast
Length of the episode	44:11- 45:12
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: A street, cars passing. Cut. George is in a cafe and looking through a window while having his coffee. Cut. A corridor leading towards '047'. George rings the bell. Majid opens the door and lets George to come inside.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Street noise. In a cafe, off screen noise of a coffee machine. Footsteps in the corridor. Doorbell ring. Majid off-screen: 'Coming...'. On-screen 'Look, who is here...'. George: 'Who are you?' Majid: 'Wonna come?'
What was before the shot	Interior: George and Anne having a big and loud argument about trust. George says: 'If you could hear yourself'. Ann slams the door. Cut.
What is after the shot	Interior: Georges and Majid having their first meeting, where Majid lets George know that he has no idea about the cassettes and drawings. George threatens Majid.
Camera	Static street view. Static cafe scene. Moving with George through the corridor.
Audience's reaction	We are anxious to find out who is behind that door '047'. Majid's appearance and attitude do not look scary at all.

Extract 6: 'kidnapping' of Pierrot

Silence type	relative
Length of the episode	1:13:56- 1:14:45
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: At night. On the move in a police van: close ups of George, Majid and his son. The night street light clover from time to time the faces. The car bounces... and shakes the passengers. They are in their thoughts.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen)	The noise of a moving van. The oise of a metal bars with

can we hear?	shaking of the car heard.
What was before the shot	Esxterior: At night street, in front of a police station. George is talking to Anne on the phone about the updates on the possible 'kidnapping of Pierrot. George gets on the police van. Doors shot.
What is after the shot	Interior: in Laurent's quiet living room friends are with Anne to 'calm her down'.
Camera	Shaky and bouncy
Audience's reaction	We are thinking with the three protagonists during their journey: can it be that Majid and his son really kidnapped Pierrot? It does not really seem like...

Extract 7: Majid's suicide

Silence type	relative
Length of the episode	1:24:42- 1:26:13
What can we see in the shot?	Interior: Majid's shocking suicide. After this George facing back to a camera moves in and out of the frame. He is coughing and looking at the dead Majid on the floor.
What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	After the loud Majid's dead body fall on the kitchen floor, George's footsteps in the silent room are clear.
What was before the shot	Interior: George walked through the corridor rang the doorbell of '047', as Majid asked him to come.
What is after the shot	Very noisy night scene in front of the cinema. The colorful adverts of the current films. George exits the cinema building.
Camera	Static
Audience's reaction	We are horrified with the act of Majid's suicide. George's indifferent reaction is unbearable to witness.

Extract 8: the closing scene

Silence type	Locational: sound-silence contrast, long shot, inactive image
Length of the episode	1:46:08 -1:49:23
What can we see in the shot?	Exterior: George's family estate house. A green car arrives. A man and woman get off the car, a woman entered a house. After some time she comes out with a suitcase. A couple with a boy exit the house too. A man and a woman try to force a boy to get into the car, but he tries to escape. A watching couple leaves the boy with the man and a woman that arrived on the car. At last they manage to push the boy inside the car and shortly after leave.

What diegetic sound (on/off screen) can we hear?	Birds chirping and flapping wings, a noise of hens, the sound of a car arriving and leaving the scene. A car door open and shot, footsteps, running. A voice: 'Come back!' A boy screams: 'Let go of me! I don't wanna go! No!'
What was before the shot	Interior: George took sleeping medication, closed all the curtains in the room and went to bed. It is dark and silent in the room.
What is after the shot	Exterior: Long shot in front of Pierrot's school. It is crowded. In a distance Pierrot and Majid's son meet to talk. Tiny closing credits roll up.
Camera	Static and distant from the events.
Audience's reaction	Puzzled, thinking, need time to put the pieces together.

Appendix 2

A2.1 Interview with Larry Sider - 6 June 2017 (on skype)

H.G.³⁹ Thank you very much for finding time in your busy schedule for this project, Larry.

L.S.⁴⁰ It is Ok. I am sorry it took so long. It is just finding time to sit down and concentrate.
Are you in York at the moment?

H.G. No I am in Sheffield. I live in Sheffield and commute to York for my PhD. Now as a part of the project there are a series of interviews I am having with film practitioners and specialists. I cannot imagine doing this project without your involvement, knowing your involvement as a creator of the School of Sound and as an experienced sound editor and film editor. We know that by talking about silence we need to refer and learn about sound. There is no escape.

L.S. Yes, I hope I can give you some ideas, because I thought this will be quite easy, but when started reading your questions I thought that this is a difficult subject.

H.G. Is there any question that you would like to raise before moving to the interview questions. Related to the documents I sent or the project...

L.S. The only thing was on a release form, which is fine, but I would prefer nothing appear on YOUTUBE. If that is fine... No but I had a question for you, two questions... One is, why I you asking this question? What made you to take on this project, this topic?

H.G. I think when I used to work on a TV, I was making too many documentaries, TV programmes where there was so much talking, so much has been said... I got really tired of all these words and started to look for other meanings, other ways to express what you want to say without saying. The other aspect of my interest is what has also been mentioned during this year SOS symposium, is the audience's participation- when they become 'active'- start to be present with you (the film creator) in the quest, journey which is the film story. So, from practice comes my interest in sound/silence...

L.S. ... and my second question might be, but you do not have to answer if you do not want to, is what you think silence is?

³⁹ H.G - Hasmik Gasparian, a present author

⁴⁰ L.S- Larry Sider

H.G. Maybe that exactly what made me to look for the wiser answers... When you try to put it into words you contradict yourself and maybe at the end of my research I will have more meaningful answer to this.

L.S. That is how I feel about the School of Sound, that this is a research project, that goes on for a long time. And after is all over I might have some ideas about sound. But it has taken 18 years so far... 19 years...

H.G. But the process is more important.

L.S. Yes the journey is more important then getting there.

H.G. Thank you for your questions. So the first question is that I would like to know your take on silence.

L.S. Yes, when I started to think, I thought that, oh yes, we can talk about this easily. It is not a definite state. It is a poetic term really. ... it is when you stop doing something, stop talking, you silenced somebody... That's what the dictionary says, silence is absence of voice, the absence of sounds. I think that is something just relative that you feel that something is silent, because some things have been taken away, the sound has been taken away, the sound has gone away... its been reduced. You feel in a state of quiet. Silent? You cannot have silence, because once you get rid of all the sounds your body is still making sounds, we know. So can never get away from some noise. But silence just seems to me when I am working on films, its finding the point when the audience is with themselves. I think that is it. I think whenever I am working with somebody, or on my own in the studio we trying to find that point, where is you said before, talking stops and the world just empties... and you get deeper and deeper into that. That can be, once you think its quiet, you can make it even quieter, and you can make it quieter and you can make it quieter... and the audience is with themselves- the individual. Can feel themselves. I am probably getting into one of the other questions, if you do not mind that?

H.G. No please.

L.S. It was always this thing when you worked in film, because you have the noise of the soundtrack, you always have the hiss that if you took away all the sound, the prepared sound the engineer of the mixing will say, you cannot do that, why not? Why we cannot have no sound? He will say, because you have got the hiss and you do not want to people to listen to the hiss of the film soundtrack. So you cannot takeaway all the

sound, you always have to have something in there. That's why I was surprised about your question about that directors do not wanting the silence. I always find it the other way: the director wanted the silence and the engineers would not give it to them. And it was always this thing about, or you cannot do that because all you can hear is the technical sound of the film, you are hearing the soundtrack, but you are not hearing any intentional recorded sound. So they would always say, we can't do this, we have to put atmosphere- that's your bottom layer, once you taken that away until you hadn't Dolby, you would hear this khhhhh... (Larry is making the sound). So I remember hearing Mike Figgis's talks about this, do you know this story? Of course, *Leaving Las Vegas*... and that's what he said...he said, 'finally! I got them to do it. But I had to work very hard because they always say, oh you cannot takeaway all the sound'.

H.G. So is there such a thing as 'cinematic silence', you think?

L.S. No. I wouldn't know what it was because, you can have very quiet sound, you can have the feeling of nothing but there is always something there. So it is a relative term. You know the Michel Chion quote, 'we did not have silence until we had Dolby, and once we had Dolby we got rid of the hiss' ... so you could feel like there was nothing there, all you would hear is the audience around you, but that was not until Dolby got rid of the background sound.

H.G. Yes, and I mentioned also in my project description that I am looking at silence from late 1960s when the Dolby inventions made a prominent change in the silence we experience today in cinemas.

L.S. Yes, I think Michel Chion was very good on that... he talked about it at the SOS one year. I forgot which film he showed, but he said something about, you know, now if you've had players in an orchestra, and two of them stopped and one continuous, you could hear the difference without the background sound filling it in. Suddenly you could hear one instrument and when the one instrument stopped you could hear nothing and that's because of Dolby. Otherwise you always had this accompaniment that you did not want but it was there. Probably most people would have not noticed it but it is something. So here we have a Dolby to thank for about.

H.G. This means, that when Bresson says that 'sound film made silence possible' that is not really true.

L.S. No, I think that where Chion answering him that we did not have silence until we had Dolby. And if you work in 16mm, did you ever worked in 16mm?

H.G. No.

L.S. That was very noisy. 35mm. was pretty good... feature film were better because they had more quality, but 16mm was very noisy and you were feeling that the film is going through the projector... that constant background hissiness, which was very annoying. So even if you wanted silence, you could not get it.

H.G. Talking about your practice, especially your work with director Patrick Keiller on *London* and *Robinson in Space*... For example in *London* there are very definite moments of a play with silence and sound, where you mute the ambient voice, which also makes a political meaning – a meaning of the distance (government and people)... It is interesting how you agreed with the director about this. Was it your intention?

L.S. It was partly because we run out of things to do, we could not come with any other ideas. Because the way he shot the film, he did not shoot any sound, so I had to go back. He did it all mute. So had to go to the places he filmed almost the same day of the week and same time of the day he was, recorded the sound and put it in. It was a lot of work. What happened was, that after a while, we kept saying, ‘ah, it is just going to be more traffic, because it is London and it is more traffic, and trains and people’...so, we decided anything historical will not have sound. So all the shots that refer to historical, from the past, were silent. It was more out of frustration. I said, Patrick, I cannot think anything to put there, and he said, let’s not put anything there.

H.G. It worked very well. It is as an artistic approach. That is the thing with the silence if you use and it does not fit it looks as a mistake and a technical break, as they say.

L.S. That is the fear that people will think that the sound broke.

H.G. By looking at your works with Quay Brothers, there is no silence at all, there is always lots of sound going on... although it is a dreamy, fantasy reality.

L.S. I think, if one had to think why, there are points when it gets very quiet, and then again a lot of their earlier work was done on 16mm and that was noisy. So we were aware of the fact that we had to have some sound there. But I think it is their aesthetic to always have something there, like in the picture there is some grain, some texture, even when there is very black there is always something there. It is just your feeling of

world that you are in. That is always going to have some little texture in it, something from far off... some little hiss, or little sound in the background, however small. And that would keep an illusion of the world going, of their world. If you ever had a chance to go to their studio they would always have a music playing, often that was the music of the film they were working on, but very-very low, way in the background. You would even wonder what was that? Is that somebody outside? But it is just little thing getting into your head... and they would play very high on the speakers up on shelves and will be in the background almost like a dust in the air. That's how their soundtrack works...so these always little something.

H.G. It is very interesting, these are very different directors and it was interesting to observe the use of sound and silence you have in these works. I also would like to know what do you think about the existing negative approach to silence. We always think that there is something bad is going to happen if it is silent. Maybe it comes with Hitchcock's' horror movies...

L.S. Walter Murch talks about it too. You always have something quiet before something dramatic happens. And it is very operatic, theatrical idea. We get very quiet and then BOOM! Big explosion happens, animal jumps out, or... I guess it is partly based on, I would guess if I want be very scientific; it is probably based on neurology. The idea of that's how we respond to the world. We respond to small changes. So we all are listening, it is in our brain... from way back we listening to the small changes, so when we hear something -we focus on it, and when you focus on it we loose all the other sounds. And it becomes almost like a moments of silence – stillness- and then once you can tell that's dangerous or if it is not dangerous you can move on and you can respond. So, I think that's the Hitchcock version of that is – I am going to concentrate you on, I am going to focus you on and then something will happen. And you are in a heightened state of alertness. And that's how Walter Murch works. He talks about the scene in *Apocalypse Now* where a lion jumps out of the bushes unexpected, but there is this moment of 5 seconds, where it goes very quiet and you and the character in the film are just concentrating. So it is a form of making the audience concentrate with the film. It is that point when the film and the audience come together. You are doing what the actors doing and what's the film is doing. And this works. It works the way the classical music works: dynamics. You have quiet bits and you have loud bits. Too many loud bits gets boring, too much quiet is boring. So you have to go, up and down and up and down. The wider that range more dramatic it

is. It is just as theatrics in that sense. I do not think it is always has to be sad. I do not think it is always has to be frightening. I think, if you look at Patrick Keiler's last film *Robinson in Ruins* that has quite quiet behind the voice. Not always... There is one section of the bee, working around the flower, I think it goes for about 5 minutes and you are just drawn into this, I do not believe there is any sound, except the voice over which comes and goes, but that's fascinating! It is very enjoyable too. To have that kind of concentration, it is almost like a meditation.

H.G. Talking about meditation, in Japan the silence does have meditative and positive connotations.

L.S. But it is also, there is something else, I was thinking while reading the questions, and it maybe cultural, I think probably is based on what you just said, we do not like being with ourselves. A lot of people do not like their own company. They do not like quiet, they do not like solitude. They find that very uncomfortable. So, I think that's one of the reasons why people do not like quiet moments, I would not even say silent moments, quiet moments in film when you left on your own. It is you and the film. And there is nothing happening and you have to respond. I think lots of people find that very uncomfortable, which is why they fill it with music so often. And a lot of people not even thinking about the music being there, its just there as a background, almost like a hum or a hiss. It is not a music it just there to fill up the space.

H.G. While I was doing the literature review in my first year of study, I realized there is such a big gap: Noel Burch talks about Godard's silence in 2-3 *Thinks I Know About Her* and there is a gap of 50 years saying almost nothing about silence in cinema, till Theberge in the book *Lowering the boom*, in article *Almost silent* brings his classification of different types of silence(s). I found interesting that gap of 50years to say nothing about such a powerful artistic narrative tool, which directors could use. After Thaberge, in the *Soundscape* Murch brought his classification of silence: locational and psychological. Recently, there is more interest and attention. What is your experience as a director of SOS, looking at film practitioner's use of silence? Why was that neglect?

L.S. It is interesting, 50 years ago, what does it make, 1967- *Salt and Papper*- Noel Burch, when the Dolby comes, late 1960s? I think part of it is, I do not know if it is clear, that the idea of silence before Dolby- did anyone really think about silence? I know there were silent films, but then of course you have music over and things like that, but I

think it is with Dolby people thought oh, now we have it, what to do we with it? Before it was a relative term, you could have quiet, but the Godard did, he just took the sound off, which nobody did, since they have all these engineers telling them you cannot do it. And then there is a Dolby telling you can do it now. So maybe everybody forgot about it for a while. We have now *2001 Space Odyssey*, we have quiet in outer space... oh, no, that was before that.

H.G. Yes, Kubrick experimented with complete silence even before Dolby's noise reduction.

L.S. He probably gave his sound engineers very hard time about that. I don't know, I think it is one of those things, it is slightly an academic idea, hence Noel Burch is writing about it, whereas most film practitioners would say you cannot have it or why would you want it? Might be the question... because when there is no sound, the film world does not exist in a way. If you think film has the sense of reality, sense of naturalism, you hear air, we hear atmospheres, we hear the sounds around us, we have acoustics, once you take that away then where are you?

H.G. You are in your own world?

L.S. ...and there aren't many films that want you to do that. They want you to be in the screen and when you break that that's very powerful. It is not the sort of thing your average film is going to do. So you want continuity... this continuation of the world. Hence, when Mike Figgis said, 'I finally got silence, I finally got that moment, where there was nothing', and it is quite powerful moment a lot of people would say maybe that did not do with his career any good (H.G. not sure, not clear to listen)... (laughing). But it is something that comes up and when you in a sound mix and you are going to take the sound out, people go oh, are you sure you want to do that? There is always that doubt. A little sound will remind us that the film has not stopped. In fact just the other day, I was looking at the student's film, it is about a man who is getting Alzheimer's, it is coming that his son is worrying about him, and we see him walking out on the street and he has this moments of confusion. The first time we saw, the editor had put in some humming sounds, you know it gave you some sense of something not being right. Then the sound designer said I have another idea for you, and we looked at it yesterday, and there was no sound there. She has just taken all sound out. I was a bit confused and said, 'you are working on it, yeh?'. She said: 'no, that's it. I just took it all out'. I said 'why?' She said 'I found that confusing'. I said

‘yes, it is confusing, but it is confusing for us, because we are wondering what has happen, we are not experiencing the confusion of the character’. And she said: ‘Oh well, I did’ (laughing). Because my first reaction was what’s happened with the soundtrack? You actually need to hear the change from sound to silence. You need to go through that confusion with your character. She just cut it. And it was like you are thinking about the film, rather than being in it.

H.G. Yes, it is a risky trick to use the complete silence.

L.S. Whereas, as Walter talks about it psychological silence, the scene in *The Godfather*, with the Michel killing a police chef, you just have this moment, when he drops the gun, I think there is a moment of silence in there- where it is still- very short, but it is still, and you feel like the world has just stopped, and then he picks up again and he reacts. I think in that sense it is quite effective, because you do almost hold your breath, not quite know what is happening, it is like being in the airplane and it is suddenly deeps very quickly and you are wondering what’s happened. And it is only a matter of seconds and you hopefully come out of that... I think it is the same with silence. If it continues then you start thinking about why, and once you start thinking you are not in the film. And that is even in the Godard’s films, and that’s different.

H.G. I remember with Paul Davies when I had an interview, he was very strict that there is no cinematic silence: there is a complete silence, which they did reach in *Ratcatcher* and quiet.... And I started to think more about the notion of this term ‘cinematic silence’, it is something I thought to open and explore to understand better, and more I talk with film practitioners more I understand that this categorical non-acceptance...

L.S. It depends on the film, if you go back to *Em*, which I think is a really good example, it is a terribly modern film, possibly not intentionally you have shots with sound and you have shouts with no sound. And you do not really get lost, you understand there is a film going on, but you know it is an early sound film, so you make adjustments. But as I said to my students, why does every shot has to have a sound? And why does every sound have to have a shot? Why cannot have a black on screen? There are plenty sound pieces that carry our attention... We have to be modern, we can do with energies, and sound and websites and games, but suddenly you take the sound away and everyone goes crazy. I think it is just technicians, myself, and they tell you what to do...

H.G. While I was looking on theory, I again found more music specialists' talking/writing about silence rather than film practitioners. So there is a lot coming from music- is it about orchestration in a way. Do you find that cinematic silence, let's still call it like that, can be a narrative tool for telling compelling stories?

L.S. But I think it is about how you want to tell your story. I think that is the difference. I am thinking a lot about now, because of course I am teaching now, which is becomes very televisual. They are short films but they are all dialogue driven- what is happening in front of you is all about action, about people doing things, and if someone want to say I want to make it silent at one point, I want to take away the sound, you will ask why, because the film is just not allow for that, the film does not allow anything except dialogue, really, and once you have that reality, that is what the film is, it is just that. If you want to tell a different kind of story, if you want to take your audience to a certain place, and leave them there and let them think and respond, feel, then it is very good to take away the sound. You can take away the picture too. The Quay Brothers sometime do that, the picture becomes quite vague in some of their films, because they have the greys and blacks, and where the shadow is going by, those are very special moments but you have to have the right film for it. Not every film can take that. I mean the Quays, usually say why we have to have a sound on every image? Can we just look at it? It is a nice image. It is a shadow or a movement... oh ok, then let's leave sound off, but their esthetic works. TV movie could not quite do that or it turns into something else. And what happens is when you work in these areas professionally, commercially all of those moments that you think are going to be special, and that might build it to your editor to your soundtrack are the things that people will respond to, and tell you to take out, because they are different. I did that on a documentary once. I left long pauses, I do not remember what was it about, but I guess remember thinking, I am going to try this, as I wanted to look at the person who was talking, I wanted to look at them in between sentences, rather than cut away from them, watch them thinking and those were the things that the commissioning editor of the Channel 4 said, 'I think you can taken those up, you do not have to look at those'. And you get used to that after awhile. Every time you do something a little bit different it draws everybody's attention. And if you say why not, they get bored, they do not like you. They think you are being difficult.

H.G. I found an interesting quote in the SOS symposium package that I would like to quote. 'To overcome the language by means of language is obviously impossible,

turning within you will find only words and images that are part of yourself, but if you turn outside yourself to the birds and animals and quickly changing places where they live, you may hear something beyond the words. Even humans can find silence if they can bring themselves to forget the silence they are looking for'. This was 'The silence of animals' by John Grey. I found this quite fits with the idea I have about 'cinematic silence', it is not the complete silence, even though it has been practiced in film ...

L.S. ...but it is beyond the sound. Occasionally you can find that but it has to be a part of the film. Not many people will edit like that. Not many people will write like that. But I know working with students on certain types of projects and exercises even, at the National Film School we are doing an exercise without images, so it is basically sound pieces, but they are so used to work with images all year, we say, 'ok, right, you just need your sound piece.' And this could be a radio piece, radio drama, it can be a sound art, it can be anything and it is becoming harder to get people to listen to the gaps between the sounds, whereas sometimes they do, they start going – 'this is amazing! I can do things with sound, I cannot do when I have images, because I have to keep up with images. And it is very hard to break away from that. But once you do, you find all this space. And it is exactly what you were reading there... you can go beyond that. It is almost like driving down the road, you cannot cross the central line, because when you do that that is an anarchy that is death, and it is like working on a film, it is very hard to break away from the image, from that synchrony, between sound and image, once you do, wonderful things began to happen. In fact, do you know the filmmaker, Peter Kubelka, avant-garde filmmaker 1950-60s, he is still around but he is now teaches cooking, he would do this evenings of films and cooking together. But he says this thing, he started up as a commercials filmmaker/advertising, and he became very experimental. He was obsessed with the idea of one frame of sound and one frame of image and the duration – for him a frame had a beginning, middle and end- there is a lot happening over that period. He said the real life is synchronous- you clap your hand, your stamp your foot- life has synchrony, but film allows you to break that. To take the sound away from its source. And he said, in the gap you create, it is where the metaphor lays, and I think Walter Murch must know this, he must know Peter Kubelka, and he says whenever I pull the sound away from the source interesting things began to happen in the film. And that's where that gap occurs. When you can kind of see through and you can take the audience through that gap into somewhere quite quiet, somewhere beyond the soundtrack. It is that synchrony that locks you into

this constant noise. And when the students can break that, they suddenly start working in a different way. But it is really hard to get people to break that.

H.G. Thank you Larry, very interesting point. And you also, smoothly moved to my next questions on the filmmakers and sound designers you find best create silence and sound in film.

L.S. Kubelka, Walter Murch –he knows what he is doing. He is allowed to work in a big way. A lot of films I think are not being silent, but being quiet, that allowing room for the audience. They are not coming at you, but they are pulling you in. That is what the silence does. It is a void that you feel. Again when Walter Murch talks in his introduction for Chion's book, talking about creating gaps, we have to feel with our imagination. I think that is what silence does, it is a gap that were allowed to enter. I think of Peter Weir, he somebody who is very good at that. You will not see it through the whole film but will feel it in very definite moments, you feel like an active part of the film. I think Kubrick does it. I think older filmmakers probably did it more, I think now it becomes more of a stylistic thing to have silence. You have films like *Gravity*, which has these big moments. But I think it is just different dynamic in older films, partly because of the technology, partly because of the society. I think now we have a lot of sound because people are hearing a lot of sound. And if you are having an audience, that is going around with earphones for 18 hours a day and you give them a quiet part of the film they bored. They think something is not right. It is not a soundtrack, we have to fill it up. We have to make it more exciting. Directors - Haneke.

H.G. He is one of the directors I am looking at and working on his films as case studies. And interestingly, most of the time when I start to list the filmmakers I am looking at, people do not know them- maybe it is a society thing as you say, they are not mainstream...

L.S. Atom Egoyan. There is a very beautiful short of him that my wife produced about his son. It is a 5 min film. I can send it to you. I have a very bad copy of it on a file. But it is just a voice over, on this beautiful, old VHS video footage of his young son, he must be 2 or 3 years old. But there is such a gap between the sound and image. That you feel you are in a silence, except of this voice. There were series of directors making a film about the work of art and he picked the picture of painter Archile Gorky, with his mother, because his son's name is Archile. It is a letter to his son on why he was

named Archile. I think of his films, where there are some very uncomfortable moments of silence, of quiet, you know if you are sitting and someone is telling you a story and pause and you have this moment when you are kind of going ‘And... and?’ I think that of him. You said there is lot comes from music and it is, this orchestration – sound and silence. The Quay Brothers...Gosh, it is hard to think of quiet films. I will think about this more. I mean the particular film that have moments, very powerful moments, but I have to write those down.

H.G. There is only one question left which we touched, but I will still try to ask it. Now when our reality, as well as cinema, bombarded with noise and different sounds, do you think silence/ cinematic silence, can be an escape in achieving a deeper understanding of the world?

L.S. It can be for certain people. I think certain people cannot do it. They cannot stay quiet, they cannot stay in room by themselves. We are communal. We want people around us. Which is in any way is quite unnatural and artificial. Most of our lives do not have quiet moments. You know even when we are in the womb it is meant to be very loud. So to be somewhere quiet is to be somewhere dangerous. The woman I used to work with, who is at the SOS -Annabelle Pangborn, always used to say ‘a music is when the filmmaker hands the film to the audience’. Says, ok this is now is for you. This passage. You are on your own. You have to find your own way through this... and you come out of that and you back to the narrative. I think silence can do that too, it is even more dramatic, now you do not even have the music, we are just taking you to the certain space. There is a wonderful woman doing radio in France, I cannot think of the name at the moment, she is Australian, she does radio documentaries, and she always used to say ‘ I think the reason we make this programmes for people to find their own space, and reflect on their own lives. The stuff that we put in front of us, or your ears, is just a way of getting you to somewhere else. It is not about that, it is about letting you to reflect’. It is very popular to talk about it, but it is almost a way of hypnosis. What the programme does is just moving you to another space.

H.G. Thanks you very much, Larry.

L.S. It is a pleasure. Thank you for making me to think about it.

A2.2 Interview with Paul Davies - 21 April 2017, London

H. G. Could you please take me through evolution of your work in sound design?

P.D.⁴¹ I feel a bit self-conscious now... I think, as I said last year was that, I started recording electronic music in South Wales, and then I entered the National Film and Television School in sound course... and...I don't know what specifically...It is quite general question...

H.G. Especially I am interested in attention to sound, the development of the film sound as you probably notice, the role of sound is not the same as was 20 years ago; your collaboration with the directors you have now...

P.D. I am not so certain about that. You are right in one sense, there is more focus on it now and it brought on sound designer and that is been an influence coming from American film particularly. But I think that there were people who were always involved in sound, wouldn't come as sound designers necessarily, supervising sound editors, sound editors... My point of view is that my collaboration with the directors was always the same.

H.G. Do you find you are the lucky one?

P.D. I am not sure. It depends how focused the director is on... or what importance director puts on sound, the sound design... Certainly, I was always aware that one looking even on television drama, directors places great deal importance on sound and relayed on a sound to tell stories. I suppose the first professional relationship I had was with director John Maybury, and that was *Love is the Devil* in 1997. And John was very clear that sound was entirely important for the film. I think that maybe it has to do with perhaps a style of the British film. Perhaps previous period British film was known for its naturalism, realism, social-realism and its still there and still is a great part of the tradition. I think what has changed, 20 years ago, or little longer then that, we had a generation of film that was very visual, and we were making films in not naturalistic style...

⁴¹ P. D.- Paul Davies

H.G. So the structural use of sound was not so much in place, maybe...

P.D. I am not sure that is true... I certainly remember *Ban Birds* (H.G. *not sure about the name*) talking about the first James Bond film, and Kubrick... you know, these are British films... *The Shining*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Barry Lyndon*... *2001 Odyssey*... they made by British crews...

H.G. And in *2001 Odyssey* even the first time Kubrick used complete silence, which was a big step...

P.D. ... and Ridley Scott's *Alien*?

H.G. As we mentioned about silence, what do you think about the famous quote by Bresson that 'sound made silence possible'. What do you think of this? And is there such a thing as 'cinematic silence'?

P.D. Yes, he is quite correct. I mean, but the actual fact is, of course in reality, a silent film was never silent, as we know. They had music, sound effects in a big city auditorium theaters they had vacature accompaniments- these all was engaging and participating in film... I remember, I was talking to my mother recently, she is in her mid 70s, and I was talking about silent cinema, she said: 'Of course, imagine in the 1940s, when we were children, before the main feature, they were showing silent films, and people would read out subtitles loud and would talking comments upon it...'. So it is a participatory... (laughing...)

H.G. The focus of my research is from the late 1960s, when Dolby Laboratories made their inventions as noise reduction, later were Dolby Stereo and Dolby Digital. When we could hear sounds like this (making scrunching on the table) more clearly and these all made us possible to hear silence in cinemas- cinematic silence. Because before we had all the hiss and noise...

P.D. Yes, I mean traditionally I remember when I was taught at film school, even in the late 1980s-1990s, it was that 'you can never go to absolute silence, you have to have at least some room tone, to cover the hiss and crack of the optical soundtrack.

H.G. Mike Figgis mentioned that there were two taboos in film: no front shot, looking to the camera, unless it is a horror film and no complete silence... Which (silence) he tried to experiment in his *Leaving Las Vegas*...

P.D. Yes, and we did in the *Ratcatcher*... And there are two points of absolute silence in that film. He said (Figgis) that because it is a very strong gesture.

H.G. It is good you mentioned that film (*Ratcatcher*), as I wanted to discuss your approach on how did you come to that idea of using silence. For example in the *Hunger* I feel as it is a structured sound –we have almost silent in the beginning and goes gradually to very loud and we have almost silent again in the end...

P.D. In *Hunger*? I do not think I go to absolute silence in *Hunger*...

H.G. Not an absolute silence, but almost silent... It is building up till the very loud in a prison, the strike scene...

P.D. Yes.

H.G. The film has that curve in a way of almost silent-noisy-almost silent again. Is it an intentional? Do you make sort of structures before starting the film?

P.D. I am thinking carefully about that.

H.G. Also in your other two films, you start your opening scenes very quiet and whimsical. Taking the audience into the mood of discovery...

P.D. Within *Ratcatcher*, you mean?

H.G. In the *Ratcatcher* and in *Morvern Callar* also... the opening scenes are very quiet...

P.D. It is quiet but it is not silent.

H.G. 'Almost silent' is a term that Theberge brought, as it is never complete silent...

P.D. I mean, in the *Ratcatcher* there is lots of sound going in the beginning... depends how you listen to it... there is drowning sound, and then the kids playing... how do you watch it. It is actually very deep sound...

H.G. All that is very distant... so you do not count this as silent moments...

P.D. No, I do not think it is. And *Morvern Callar* either... The silent moments occur later on. I punctuated the moments: when the boy going into the water and mother looking outside the window. These are the points of silence. There is plenty of sound, just playing on a lower level. No, I do not find it silent.

H.G. So do you find that, for instance sounds of the nature the bird flying, bee buzzing... these cannot count as silent moments?

P.D. No. Silence is absence... complete, rather quiet.

H.G. So coming back again to my question about constructing the sound, did you have in mind to bring all to that point- to absolute silence?

P.D. I think that in *Ratcatcher*, those two moments of silence were always clear in a picture edit. I think that was the role of Lean to attract the picture editor – Luchi to that decision. My recollection is that probably decide to go to absolute silence in a mix, rather than just quiet. Complete absence. *Hunger*, you see is a lot of sound, I do not think there is ever absolute silence there.

H.G. I think that the term of ‘almost silent’ would fit with beginning and end of the film.’

P.D. But there is all the sound of folly, the breath... so there is plenty inactivity.

H.G. So you are very clear with describing ‘cinematic silence’ as an absolute silence only.

P.D. Yes.

H.G. While looking at the literature review- in sound theory, there are many differentiations/variations of silence...

P.D. I think, my interpretation is, I was interested in electronic music and in avantgarde music, ... John Cage, there is a difference between sound, quiet and absolute silence...

H.G. So with director Lynn Ramsay, did you have a discussion on having absolute silence or not?

P.D. My recollection is that this was her idea to go to *absolute silence* in mentioned two points - removal of sound. So I think there is a difference between quietness and stillness, and absolute silence. I was wondering in literature, one thing I feel a bit problematic with academic theory is, non-sound practitioners written by. Michel Chion is a practitioner. But I think there is lot of non- practitioners and their interpretation of silence and quietness is perhaps confused in that respect.

H.G. Is there such a thing as 'fear of silence'? The filmmakers tend to fill the gaps of silence in film.

P.D. There is a fear in filmmakers and television producers of gaps and silence, that's a different thing. Filmmakers as Lynn Ramsay and Steven McQueen are not bothered about it. In television regularly they see the gaps and absence as place to fill with music to mean something, otherwise the audience will switch off and turn over... The certain fear I think in television is that the audience has a control on what are they watching. The fear of the filmmakers is about that. In cinema the audience is more captive. My issue is a lot of time with mainstream American cinema, which is absolutely full of sounds; there is sound for everything. And I do not think that was always the case- in classic genre filmmaking of the 1980s- James Cameron, Ridley Scott- would not afraid of stillness and quietness.

H.G. During the training Eddy Joseph mentioned that in his practice he struggled with directors that would not be happy to have silence. And is it more common in American cinema?

P.D. Yes. I think it is a style of filmmaking. I think quietness or silence is probably something more common in European filmmaking. Maybe in American, but

depend what American cinema as well. I think it goes against the Hollywood-story telling narrative driven approach, score of music and sound to have the constant flow of narrative editing... I think that in European independent cinema, with Bresson, Bergman and Tarkovsky, it is more common.

H.G. ...and the audience is different.

P.D. Yes, the audience is different. The audience is able to tolerate something that is less busy, less active.

H.G. And the audience becomes active by going into the quest of discovery... it is more deeper, more rather inside work. Maybe the American audience wants to be entertained?

P.D. Maybe just the general audience. I think actually what Hollywood is so good at is making films entertaining. I think there is probably examples of American cinema in the 1970s where absorbs in European film assessing... (H.G. not sure in this sentence as cannot hear clearly ... it is too noisy). Certainly the mainstream cinema now has always sound. There is fear of silence, fear of quiet...

H.G. Is it also connected with the culture? In Japanese culture, for instance silence is meditative and has positive connotations. In European it is usually negative. The associations with it are darkness, death, and void... What do you think?

P.D. Probably. There are very few filmmakers like Ramsay and McQueen who will embrace stillness and quiet. In general filmmaking practice, sound editing practice, yes you are right, you have a sound, you have folly, the atmosphere... I think at the end of the *Suffragettes*, when the woman went on the race track and is killed by the famous incidents the sound is removed and becomes silent, I felt its awkward. It did not work. It has to work with the visuals. The visuals of Ramsay and McQueen let that gesture work. You know it is right, silence is possible because of the sound around it.

H.G. It also needs to have a contrast, probably to feel it better...

- P.D. Yes, It is going another way from becoming big orchestral surge, or swell... it is a reverse but is the same effect.
- H.G. Do you find it as an orchestral piece needs contrasts, crescendos... which explains why there are so many theoreticians in sound coming from music. In silence in particular we have Cage...
- P.D. The Cage's point is there is no such a thing as silence. He would say, in cinema there is a sound of the air conditioner, the sound of the audience... I suppose what you are doing here is pulling the audience out of the film and making him aware. That is a risk you are running, but the tension is interesting and powerful.
- H.G. So, do you agree that the cinematic silence can be a strong narrative tool in storytelling?
- P.D. Yes, it is a very strong narrative tool, which has to be used within context, and it cannot fit everywhere. Because, I think you are right in terms of that it became possible to have an absolute silence with digital sound. So the technology allowed it.
- H.G. Do you have directors and sound designers that you admire, who use the cinematic silence and they use it within the context?
- P.D. I suppose those are the directors like Bresson and Tarkovsky. But maybe it is not an absolute silence but stillness (laughing). I think if there is activity, even something is happening, then it is not silence.
- H.G. I have a challenge in working on this topic, as there is much written in theology, architecture, philosophy but not in sound theory.
- P.D. Well there is not much said on sound in film, in general.
- H.G. But in the last 20 years I can notice a shift.

P.D. There is not very much really. There were no insights. I may seem arrogant. I think there is Michel Chion, there is lot of other stuff, but maybe ... I don't know... There is obviously a School of Sound- Larry.. I suppose, I am irritated by theoreticians, I think that the non sound practitioners not understand the narrative use of sound and silence.

H.G. By looking to silence we always refer to sound, so you are right in terms that if there is no about sound, obviously there is no about silence written...

P.D. I mean, I may be seem arrogant, just dismiss it, but there is very little insight. In term of visual, picture or even music as well there are lots of books written but a film sound is a neglected area and tends to be occupied by certain academic viewpoints which I feel often completely way off the mark, about these tools which are under disposal of a filmmaker to construct narrative, and weather we have lots of sound or no sound... Also the composition esthetic as well, I feel because often the focus becomes narrative and there is neglect of the meaning image and sound play together. Which is it is difficult to describe, because if we could, we could just write a book.

H.G. Is it a your decision, or you come to the agreement with the director to not have a music? Because, most of your films, well I am not talking about Sex Pistols which is based on the music group...

P.D. Of course lots of mainstream films as well... I think that decision often comes from the director, about absence of music or the minimal use of music. That is always clear from the beginning, largely. Especially in *Ratchatcher* that was the case and in *Hunger* that was clear ... I mean the reference to Steven McQueen for *Hunger* was *Man Escaped*, Bresson. That was clear that we are not going into conventional prison movie- distant clanging, doors and keys- Steven did not want any of that. That is his decision. From that we moved forward and knowing what sort of film we are making... so we focused on the close up sounds, of the Foley, adr breath and just general lower athmos... and some burst of violence. Final foot (???) of the film is more stylized, has more stylized atmospheres, is more sound designed...

H.G. This also gives more raw experience, because the music would dictate the mood...

P.D. Because the absence of music forces the audience to listen. Music very often is a distancing device- it is not in the film- for me it exists outside of the world of the film. It is a pit orchestra playing in the front... I think in Kevin (meant the film *We Need to Talk About Kevin*) what was interesting I felt, music and sound design were totally integrated in that film. In a way that is the most complete film. I do not think there was much silence there much...

H.G. No, I did not find.... I loved the film. But as the mother of two, I was really disturbed by it. Even though I was watching to look at sound, the sound and image were so united that drove me completely into it... The reaction was very deep.

By looking to the questions I have left to ask... Now when our reality, as well as cinema, bombarded with noise and different sounds, do you think silence/cinematic silence, can be an escape in achieving deeper understanding of the world? We slightly touched this topic in our conversation. Would you like to comment on this?

P.D. I suppose, with the film pushes focus... if you were in a shot of the field and we see two people running through but we choose to not have the sound of people running through but just the sound of the grass in the wind...

H.G. This reminded me a scene from Antonioni's *Blow up*...

P.D. Yes. The removal of the elements we normally expect to hear and one sound is heightened- that's like memory, that's like our perception. It is more of a model of our perception. Our perception is not every single ones... Our perception is focused on sound of the coffee machine, of the person there... I think the problem with the sound that it is mixing into film industriminents (???- not sure if hear the last word correctly here) ... I do not think we perceive the world like that. It might be the laugh of the child's voice, sound of the swing squeaking... It is focused in general. And these are the sounds of our memories. So as filmmakers, we have a total control of which sound to choose to show or play for the audience.

H.G. So, as filmmakers, do we also have our portion of guilt in making our audience feeling bad about the silence- associating it with negative events, for instance in

Hitchcock's horror films there is always that negative feeling that is something wrong is going to happen soon...

P.D. Maybe that is perception as well. Maybe it is not ... if you wake up in the middle of the night, we hear cricking... maybe its evolutionary.... You know, I was talking about relative quiet, about grass and wind in summer day, perhaps but there is danger is coming. There are quiet, cricks in the night, footsteps...and what's that sound? Someone is trying to break in to the house...

H.G. So if we have this power to make the audience to afraid of quiet in film, can we also make the audience feel/have positive reaction on silence as well?

P.D. I think both silent moments we are talking in the *Ratcatcher* are the negative moments. But I am sure there are some positive moments as well.

H.G. Yes, such as the dream field... for me that was like an alive painting...

P.D. I think that you are right that the sound draining away is very often has negative connotation, just as one sound- crick, the door, or the wind outside, or whatever, yes, it is a horror film – it is a thriller.

H.G. Thank you very much for finding time in your hectic schedule. It must have been a challenge to concentrate on these questions, when your mind is busy with approaching deadline for finishing the project. Thank You.

P.D. Hope that was useful.

Appendix 3

A3.1 *Narara and Kiko* screening at the AGBU Performing Arts 'Open stage' event

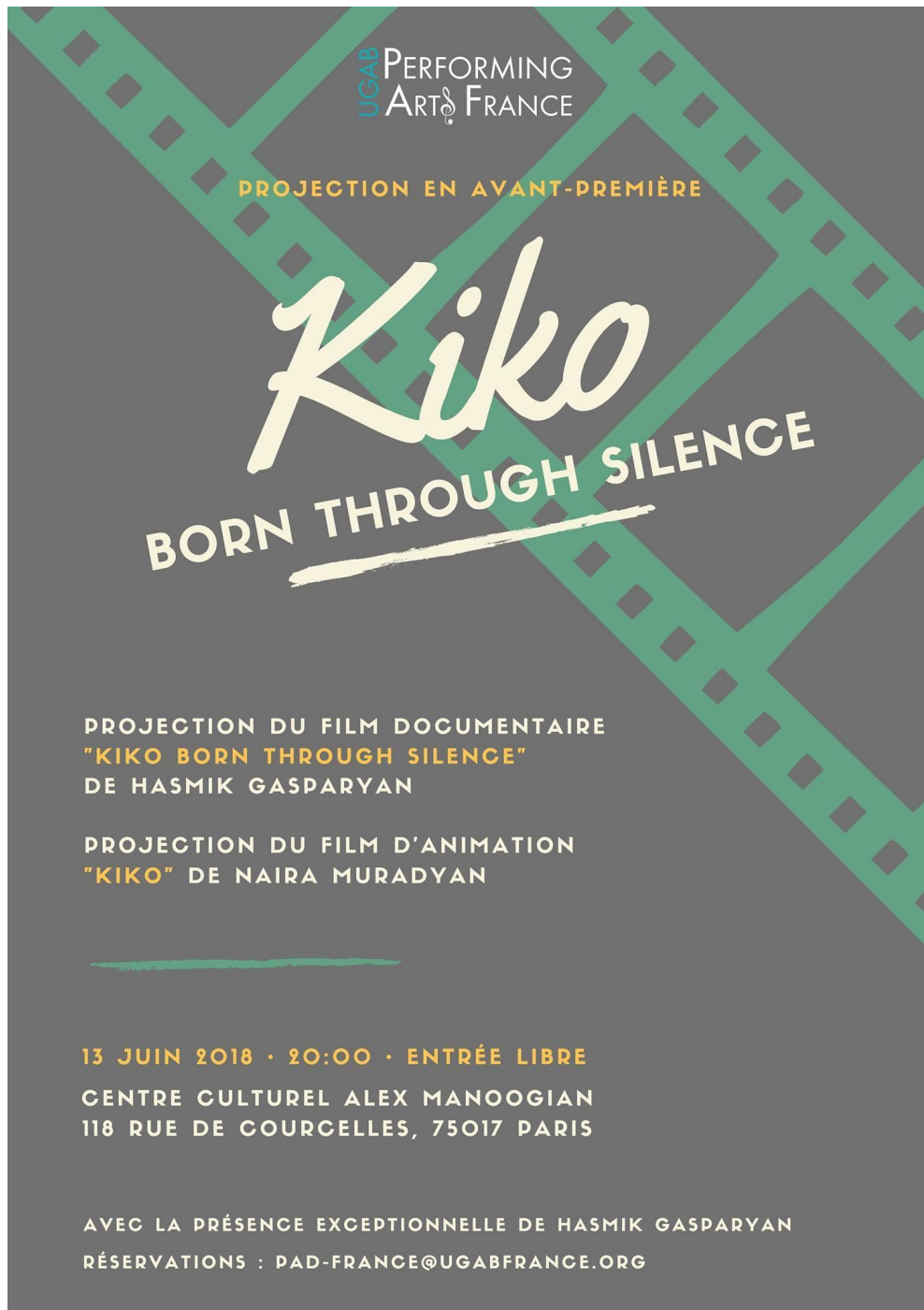


Figure 2: AGBU Performing Arts event 'Open Stage' -13 June 2018, Paris, France


A3.2 *Narara and Kiko* screening at the 15th KIN International Film Festival

15-19 November 2018 – Yerevan, Armenia

<https://kinfestival.com/>

Screening in a guest programme category:

- Q&A session after the screening - 16 November, 2018
- Master class session - 19 November, 2018 at the Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography



Հասմիկ Գասպարյան Hasmik Gasparyan

Նա աշխատել է Հայկական հեռուստատեսությունում (2000-2010) և բրիտանական անկախ կինոնախագծերում (2010-2018) որպես սցենարիստ, մոնտաժող և ռեժիսոր: Ներկայումս հանդիսանում է Զորքի համալսարանի (ՄԹ) 4-րդ կուրսի ուղկտորանտ: Նրա թեզը կազմված է «Կինոյության ստեղծման ուսումնասիրությունը» գրավոր աշխատանքից և «Նարարա և Կիկո» վավերագրական ֆիլմ-դիմանկարից:

She is a director working for Armenian Television (2000-2010) and British Independent cinema (2010-2018) projects in different roles - as writer, editor but primarily as Director. She is currently a PhD by creative practice 4th Year student at The University of York, UK. Her thesis comprises written work 'Investigating the Making of Cinematic Silence' and practice work the documentary portrait *Narara and Kiko*.

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Նարարա և Կիկո

2018, ՄԹ, Ֆրանսիա, Հայաստան, 45 րոպե, վավերագրական
Սց./Ռեժ./Մոնտ./Պրոդ.
Օպ.
Հնչ.
Արտ.

Հասմիկ Գասպարյան
Հասմիկ Գասպարյան, Ալեն Գասպարյան
Յունես Մարշալ - Աթերտոն
The University of York, AGBU London and Paris

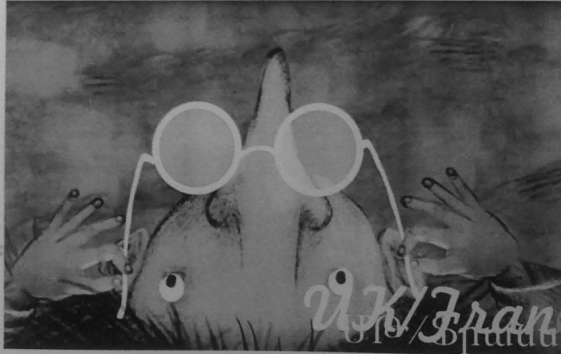
Սպասելիս նկարիչը կարող է տեղաշարժել սահմաններ, կոտրել կարծրատիպեր և բացահայտել նոր հորիզոններ՝ նկարիչը ապրում է և ստեղծագործում:

Նաիրա Մուրադյանը հայ նկարչուհի է, ով աշխատում է "Կիկո" անիմացիոն ֆիլմի վրա, որը պատմում է Ստամբուլում ապրող թուրքահայ պոետ Զահրադի մասին: Հայ-Թուրքական ֆիլմերի հարթակի աջակցության շնորհիվ, Նաիրան հույս ունի տեսնել Զահրադի Ստամբուլը, սակայն աջակցությանը սպասելով Նաիրան ստեղծում է Ստամբուլի իր սեփական պատկերը:

Narara and Kiko

2018, UK, France, Armenia, 45 min, documentary
Script/Director/Editor/Producer Hasmik Gasparyan
Camera Hasmik Gasparyan, Alen Gasparyan
Sound Ewan Marshall- Atherton
Produced by The University of York, AGBU London and Paris

While waiting, an artist can move borders, overcome stereotypes, open new horizons – the artist lives and creates.
Naira Muradyan is an Armenian artist who is in the process of creating Kiko, an animation based on the poetry of Zhrad, a poet of Armenian descent from Turkey.
The Armenia-Turkey conflict has lasted for over a century. The Armenian Genocide is not recognized by Turkey, and the borders between the two countries remain closed. Naira hopes to visit Zhrad's Istanbul with the support of the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform.
While waiting for support, Naira lives and traverses the closed borders with Turkey to create her own Istanbul.



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Figure 3: KIN International Women's Film Festival - 15-19 2018, Yerevan, Armenia

A3.3 *Narara and Kiko* screening at the Mapping Spaces, Sounding Places Geographies of Sound in Audiovisual media International Conference

19-22 March 2019 – Cremona, Italy

Oral presentation of the research project and a film screening at the Teatro Monteverdi (Via Dante 149, Cremona)

14:30 – 16:00		5
<p>C1: RECONFIGURING OPERA IN MEDIA SPACES <i>chair: Emilio Sala</i></p> <p>Bianca De Mario (Università di Milano) <i>Pills of Opera. Editing, Fruition and Impact of the Opera Trailer</i></p> <p>Alison Furlong (independent scholar) <i>On Hearing, Overhearing, and the Cinema of Mistrust</i></p> <p>Henriette Engelke (Universität Wien) <i>From Score to Screen: (Re-)Interpreting Music and (Re-)Defining Spaces in Film Adaptations of Operas</i></p>	<p>C2: SOUNDSCAPE AND THE IDENTITY OF PLACE <i>chair: Dominique Nasta</i></p> <p>Maria Fuchs (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Wien) <i>Soundscapes of "Home" through the Mediation of Film</i></p> <p>Konrad Klejsa (Uniwersytet Łódzki) <i>Dazed and Confused: Dubbing in People's Republic of Poland 1950–1980</i></p> <p>John O'Flynn (Dublin City University) <i>Music, Sound Design and Demarcations of Ethnicity and Place in "Troubles"-based Documentary Film in Northern Ireland, 1995–2000</i></p>	
16:00 – 16:30: COFFEE BREAK		
16:30 – 17:30		
<p>D1: FANTASTIC SOUNDSCAPES <i>chair: Massimo Privitera</i></p> <p>Marco Bellano (Università di Padova) <i>Fantasonic Revisited. Imaginary Musical Landscapes in Disney's "Fantasia"</i></p> <p>Florian Guilloux (Sorbonne Université - IReMus) <i>Music and Soundscapes of René Laloux's Fantastic Planets</i></p> <p>Armando Ianniello (Università di Udine) <i>Soundscape in "Revenant" by Alejandro González Iñárritu: A Case of Interaction between Composition and Sound Art</i></p>	<p>D2: SPACE, SOUND AND POPULAR CULTURE <i>chair: Willem Strank</i></p> <p>Marco Cosci (Università di Pavia) <i>Mapping "Stella by Starlight": From Haunted Houses to Television Studios</i></p> <p>Jeff Yunek (Kennesaw State University, Georgia) <i>Capturing the Zeitgeist: Preserving American Music and Culture in the Mashups of DJ Earworm</i></p> <p>Costanza Salvi (independent scholar) <i>The Spaces of Cowboy and Folk Songs in 1930s American Midwest</i></p>	
19:30		
<p>SPECIAL SESSION 2 Screenings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Odin's Gully</i> (2018) Simon Connor (University of Huddersfield) ▶ <i>Mill Study</i> (2017) Geoffrey Cox (University of Huddersfield) ▶ <i>Coccolith</i> (2016) Christopher Brown (University of Sussex) & Andrew Knight-Hill (University of Greenwich) ▶ <i>Narara and Kiko</i> (2018) Hasmik Gasparyan (University of York) 		

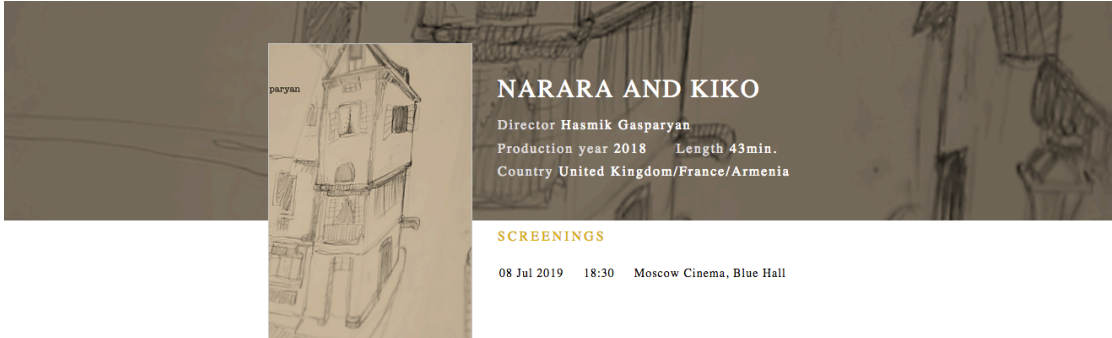
Figure 4: MSSP International Conference - 19-22 March 2019, Cremona, Italy

A3.4 *Narara and Kiko* screening at the 16th Golden Apricot International Film Festival

7-14 July 2019 – Yerevan, Armenia

<http://www.gaiff.am/films/2019/narara-and-kiko>

Opening film for a non-competition Pret-A-Portrait programme:



NARARA AND KIKO
Director Hasmik Gasparyan
Production year 2018 Length 43min.
Country United Kingdom/France/Armenia

SCREENINGS
08 Jul 2019 18:30 Moscow Cinema, Blue Hall

SYNOPSIS

Armenian artist Naira Muradyan is working on the animation *Kiko* by poet Zahrad. Artist hopes to be allowed to cross the closed Armenia-Turkey borders to visit poet's Istanbul. Naira manages by crossing borders only in her imagination.

CAST & CREW



Producer Hasmik Gasparyan

Script Hasmik Gasparyan

Director of Photography Hasmik Gasparyan, Alen Gasparyan

Sound Ewan Marshall-Atherton

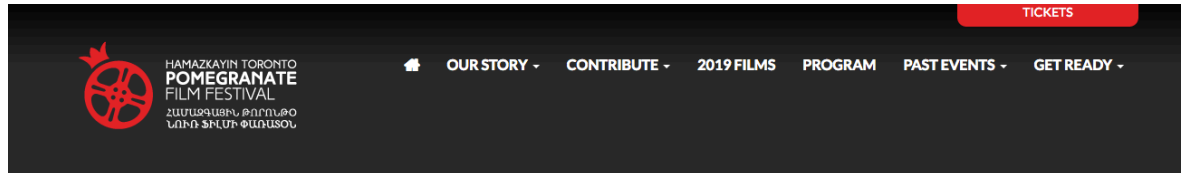
Edit Hasmik Gasparyan, Bianca Cassinelli

A3.5 *Narara and Kiko* screening at the 14th Pomegranate Film Festival

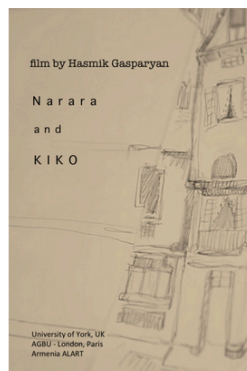
13-17 November 2019 – Toronto, Canada

<http://pomegranatefilmfestival.com/films/narara-kiko/>

In competition for ‘Short but Sweet’ programme:



14TH POMEGRANATE FILM FESTIVAL, NOVEMBER 13-17, 2019



NARARA & KIKO

Directed by Hasmik Gasparyan

Country: Armenia

Saturday, November 16 at 11:00 am

Location: Armenian Youth Centre

Duration: 43 min

Armenian artist Naira Muradyan is working on the animation *Kiko* by poet Zahrad and dreams of crossing the closed Armenia-Turkey borders to visit poet's native Istanbul. Naira takes a vivid journey only in her imagination.

Hasmik Gasparyan is a PhD candidate at University of York in the UK. She holds a Specialist Diploma in Feature Film Direction from Yerevan State Pedagogical University and a MA in Screen Documentary from Goldsmiths, University of London.

GET YOUR TICKET

Appendix 4

A4.1 Film Review 1

6. 09. 2019

<http://www.aztagdaily.com>

This is an extract dedicated to ‘Narara and Kiko’ (2018) taken from the Golden Apricot International Film Festival 2019 film programme review. The original text is in Western Armenian. Written and translated by Dr Hratch Barsoumian.

A very beautiful movie that depicts the world of Naira (Narara) Muradyan.

Narara is working on an animation inspired from the relatively long poem “A Brief Biography of Kiko” by Zahrat (1924-2007 An Armenia poet who lived and died in Istanbul). Kiko is the “little man” who lives in a giant city (Istanbul). The artist has never been there, she imagines the metropolis based on the photographs of the legendary Armenian photographer Ara Güler (1928-2018). The “plot” of the poem, however, is not preserved.

Kiko watches people from the “top of the bridge”, from a high angle, that is.

An Armenian living in Istanbul has to “levitate”, otherwise life will be poisoned by hatred. “Can you fly?” Asks Güler (The lens faced man in the frame shown) to Kiko. Kiko flies over the city. All houses look the same seen from “above”, as the poem says:

“ All houses look alike

The inhabitants too”

The opening scene shows the “look alike” houses.

Kiko has got glasses for his eyes

Wherever he looks, he sees blue

In Gasparyan’s film we only see short extracts of Narara’s project, so based on this film alone one cannot decipher metaphors like rolling green cabbages. For some reason the artist has changed the color of Kiko’s eyeglasses from blue to green. I have had the pleasure of watching the full movie (several times). (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-fSdKpG5mg>)

Gasparyan’s movie lingers the personal life of Narara. We see her 90 year old father who is almost deaf but full of life. Lives in the nature and paints half naked ... just like old Picasso... In that house even a plaster bust of a woman in the window has her eyes on the nature outside (Dzoraxbyur). There are silent still moments that drive the viewer to contemplation. Naira speaks briefly about her three children. There is a tattered but precious antique mirror on the wall that suggests that Naira is a woman AND a man. We do not see her man. In the opening scenes we see

her dying gambler "Godot" (Armenian shepherd dog, yes Godot as in the play). In the closing scene we see Narara feeding a puppy. A clearly symbolic frame.

A4.2 Film Review 2

10 July, 2019

<https://kinoashkharh.am/2019/07/narara-kiko-film-dimankar/>

The original text is in Armenian. Written by film critic and historian Professor Siranush Galstyan.
Translation in English by Hasmik Gasparyan

Hasmik Gasparyan's 'Narara and Kiko' documentary takes us into the world of animator Naira Muradyan. We not only enter the artist's 'kitchen', that is, the artist's creation space, but also, we 'invade' the artist's domestic kitchen, where she prepares nice food for family and guests. The camera becomes a 'privileged observer' that is allowed to move freely almost everywhere in this intimate space. Famous artist's home-workshop is also home to her artist-father, daughter, son, paintings, cats, and an old dog named Godot. Our acquaintance with the main protagonist starts with Naira standing at the front door of her house, stroking a weak, giant and old dog - 'Bidza' (Armenian for 'old man') she calls him. The film ends with the following captions:

'The animation 'Kiko' is being screened at international film festivals.
Godot did not recover. Naira's fourth grandson is born'.

This symbolic caption is followed by the closing scene of the film, which is again symbolic. As in the first scene with the protagonist, the metal door opens, but this time Naira Muradyan feeds the new dog - a little puppy...

In essence the axis of this film-portrait is the process of making the animation 'Kiko', thanks to which a comprehensive portrayal of its author is presented. Hasmik Gasparyan's film is principally black-and-white, in colour are only the extracts from Naira Muradyan's animation. In the film, as in Naira's life, the presence of her artist father, as well as her paintings, is important. The basis of Naira's animated film is 'A Brief Biography of Kiko', a biopic poem by the Istanbul-based Armenian poet Zahrad.

In the opening scene, the camera looks up from the sky at, in Zahrad's words, 'houses that look alike', however, as it soon becomes clear, with not alike inhabitants: Naira Muradyan, her father and her children are different individuals. Of course, young people bring their own rhythm, but no one interferes as they live in this house without invading one another's territory. Mutual respect reigns.

It is raining. The cows pass by... Life flows slowly in the village, almost like the artist's characters taking shape under the roof. On a computer screen we see Kiko slowly climbing up some stairs, almost like Naira's 90-year-old father slowly climbs the stairs in the house they live in, and the cat

follows swiftly behind him. The animated image of Kiko on the screen reminds of its creator, and, to some extent, of Norshtein's famous Hedgehog from the cartoon 'Hedgehog in the Fog'. Of course, these similarities are not deliberate, but are the result of a natural creative process. Finally, the author Zahrad himself resembles his hero Kiko. To recreate the scenes from Istanbul for the animation, Naira, having never visited the city, studies the works of the renowned photographer Ara Guler - 'the eye of Istanbul'. Those old black-and-white illustrations become a source of visual inspiration for the artist. It is no coincidence that Muradyan's 'Kiko' too, has a photo-camera character that symbolises the photographer. And the city presents itself as a polyphonic figure from which Kiko wants to escape, but at the same time, doesn't. According to Zahrad, his Kiko is 'the one who cherishes the rails of the bridge'. Kiko is a 'little' man, and in that sense, he resembles Gogol's Akaki Akakievich from 'The Overcoat'. One can agree or disagree with Naira's opinion on Zahrad's talent voiced in the film, but it is clear that the artist has managed to create a beautiful original animation work.

The poetry is internal in nature, hence the visibility of it too. Yet in the art of animation everything must be transformed into visible: visible characters and scenes. Naira, inspired by Zahrad's poetry thinks and works in that direction.

'Narara and Kiko' success as a film-portrait is certainly not only due to its storytelling structure, directorial approach, original, close relationship between the author and the protagonist, but also through great cinematography. The sound design of the film is also remarkable. It is dynamic, in 'close-ups', as well as, distant. In this documentary about Naira Muradyan, Hasmik Gasparyan, our compatriot in the United Kingdom, has been able to present the artist's restless image and her creative world.

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List of Films

- 2001, A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)
- 2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967)
- A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1972)
- Amour* (Michael Haneke, 2012)
- Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979)
- Applause* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1929)
- Armenian Woman with a Movie Camera* (Hasmik Gasparyan, 2011)
- Back and Forth* (Michael Snow, 1969)
- Band of Outsiders* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1964)
- Batman Returns* (Tim Burton, 1992)
- Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)
- Benny's Video* (Michael Haneke, 1991)
- Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)
- Blackmail* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929)
- Blow up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1967)
- Brave* (Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman, 2012)
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon, 1997-2003)
- Central Region*, (Michael Snow, 1971)
- Chronicle of a Summer* (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1961)
- City Streets* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1931)
- Cleo from 5 to 7* (Agnès Varda, 1962)
- Dancer in the Dark* (Lars von Trier, 2000)

Dr Jerkyll and Mr. Hyde (Victor Fleming, 1941)

Dunkirk (Christopher Nolan, 2017)

D'Est (Chantal Akerman, 1993)

Empire (Andy Warhol, 1964)

Enthusiasm (Dziga Vertov 1931)

ER (Michael Crichton, 1994-2009)

Funny Games (Michael Haneke, 1997)

Gravity (Alfonso Cuaron, 2013)

Happy End (Michael Haneke, 2017)

Hidden (Michael Haneke, 2005)

Hospital (Frederick Wiseman, 1970)

Hunger (Steve McQueen, 2008)

Institute Benjamenta, or This Dream People Call Human Life (Quay Brothers, 1995)

Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels Akerman (Chantal Akerman, 1975)

Jurassic Park (Steven Spielberg 1993)

Kandahar (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2001)

Kiko Eye (Dziga Vertov, 1924)

La Captive (Chantal Akerman, 2000)

La Notte (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1961)

Leaving Las Vegas (Mike Figgis, 1995)

Les Rendez-vous d'Anna (Chantal Akerman, 1978)

Let's Talk About Kevin (Lynne Ramsay, 2011)

London (Patrick Keiller, 1994)

L'Avventura (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960)

Man with the Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, 1929)

Morvern Callar (Lynne Ramsay, 2002)

Mouchette (Robert Bresson, 1967)

Narara and Kiko (Hasmik Gasparyan, 2018)

National Gallery (Frederick Wiseman, 2015)

News from Home (Chantal Akerman, 1977)

No Country for Old Men (Ethan Coen, Joel Coen, 2007)

Nocturna Artificialia (Quay Brothers, 1979),

Nostalgia (Andrey Tarkovsky, 1983)

NYPD Blue (Steven Bochco and David Milch, 1993-2005)

Pierrot the Madman (Jean-Luc Godard 1965)

Playtime (Jacques Tati, 1967)

Pulp Fiction (Quentin Tarantino, 1994)

Ratcatcher (Lynne Ramsay, 1999)

Reservoir Dogs (Quentin Tarantino, 1992)

Robinson in Ruins (Patrick Keiller, 2010)

Robinson in Space (Patrick Keiller, 1997)

Roma (Alfonso Cuarón, 2018)

Sátántangó (Bela Tarr, 1994)

Saute ma Ville (Chantal Akerman, 1968)

Saving Private Ryan (Steven Spielberg, 1998)

Shoah (Claude Lanzmann, 1985)

Star Wars (George Lucas, 1977)

Taste of Cherry (Abbas Kiarostami, 1999)

The Birds (Alfred Hitchcock, 1963)

The Chorus (Abbas Kiarostami, 1982)

The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)

The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, 2008)

The English Patient (Anthony Minghella, 1997)

The Epic of Gilgamesh (Quay Brothers, 1985),

The Gleaners and I (Agnes Varda, 2000)

The Jazz Singer (Alan Crosland, 1927)

The Lady from Shanghai (Orson Welles, 1948)

The Mirror (Andrey Tarkovsky, 1975)

The Passenger (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1975)

The Queen (Stephen Frears, 2006)

The Seventh Seal (Ingmar Bergman, 1957)

The Silence (Ingmar Bergman, 1963)

The Street of Crocodiles (Quay Brothers, 1986)

The West Wing (Aaron Sorkin, 1999-2006)

Three Pianos (Hasmik Gasparian, 2016)

Titanic (James Cameron, 1998)

Titicut Follies (Frederick Wiseman, 1967)

Touch of Evil (Orson Welles, 1958)

Vagabond (Agnès Varda, 1985)

Wavelength (Michael Snow, 1967)

We Need to Talk About Kevin (Lynne Ramsay, 2011)

Werckmeister Harmonies (Bela Tarr, 2000)

West Side Story (Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 1961)

You Were Never Really Here (Lynne Ramsay, 2018)

List of Other Art Works

4'33 (silent musical composition by John Cage, 1952)

Bordering on Fiction (museum installation by Chantal Akerman, 1995)

Breath (a play by Samuel Beckett, 1969)

Fountain (a readymade sculpture by Marcel Duchamp, 1917)

In futurum (silent musical composition by Erwin Schulhoff , 1919)

March for the Funeral of a Deaf Celebrity (silent musical composition by Alphonse Allais, 1897)

Play me I'm yours (public engagement art project by Luke Jerram (2008)) [Online]. Available at: <http://www.streetpianos.com/> [Accessed 15 October 2015].

Walking Woman (series of art works by Michael Snow 1961-1967)

White on White (an abstract painting by Kazimir Malevich, 1918)