

Chapter 9

Sound and Story

OVERVIEW: Functions of sound in audio story

- Functions of Sound in Story
 - Commercial and aesthetic
 - Setting the scene
 - Subjective perspective
 - Structural functions
 - Creating characters
 - Believability and immersion
 - Connotation and metaphor
 - Mood and emotion

- Audio Story analysis
- Spotting a Script
- Cue Sheets & Asset Lists

Intro: Audio “Stories”

- Fiction or non-fiction
- Podcasts
- Radio dramas
- Audiobooks
- Smart speaker stories
- Interactive audio stories



Commercial & Aesthetic Functions

- Branding
- Idents
- Bumpers
- stingers



Netflix Ident

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYzaEnt0kxs>

Setting the Scene

- How do we distill an environment's sound to its essence?
- Environment as shift in scene
- Soundscapes for mood



<https://pixabay.com/photos/wyoming-state-fair-ferris-wheel-1678957/>



<https://pixabay.com/photos/smiley-emoticon-anger-angry-2979107/>

Subjective Perspective

Where is our “listener”?

How does perspective change throughout the story?

What does perspective say about the story?



<https://pixabay.com/images>

Vs.



<https://pixabay.com/images>

Structural Functions

Transitions: Links, segues, tails: fades, cuts

Change in narrative

- Foreshadowing
- Flashbacks
- Dreams
- In-the-head

Silence

How are changes in scene indicated in sound?

Creating Characters

Leitmotifs

What characteristics can we know about a character by their sound?

Non-human characters



<https://www.starwars.com/databank/darth-vader>

Believability and Immersion

Believability versus realism: Cinematic realism

Audience expectation

Immersion

Connotation and metaphor

Sonic metaphors

Juxtaposition: closure and incompleteness

Hyperbole

Anthropomorphism

“the best pictures are in the head”

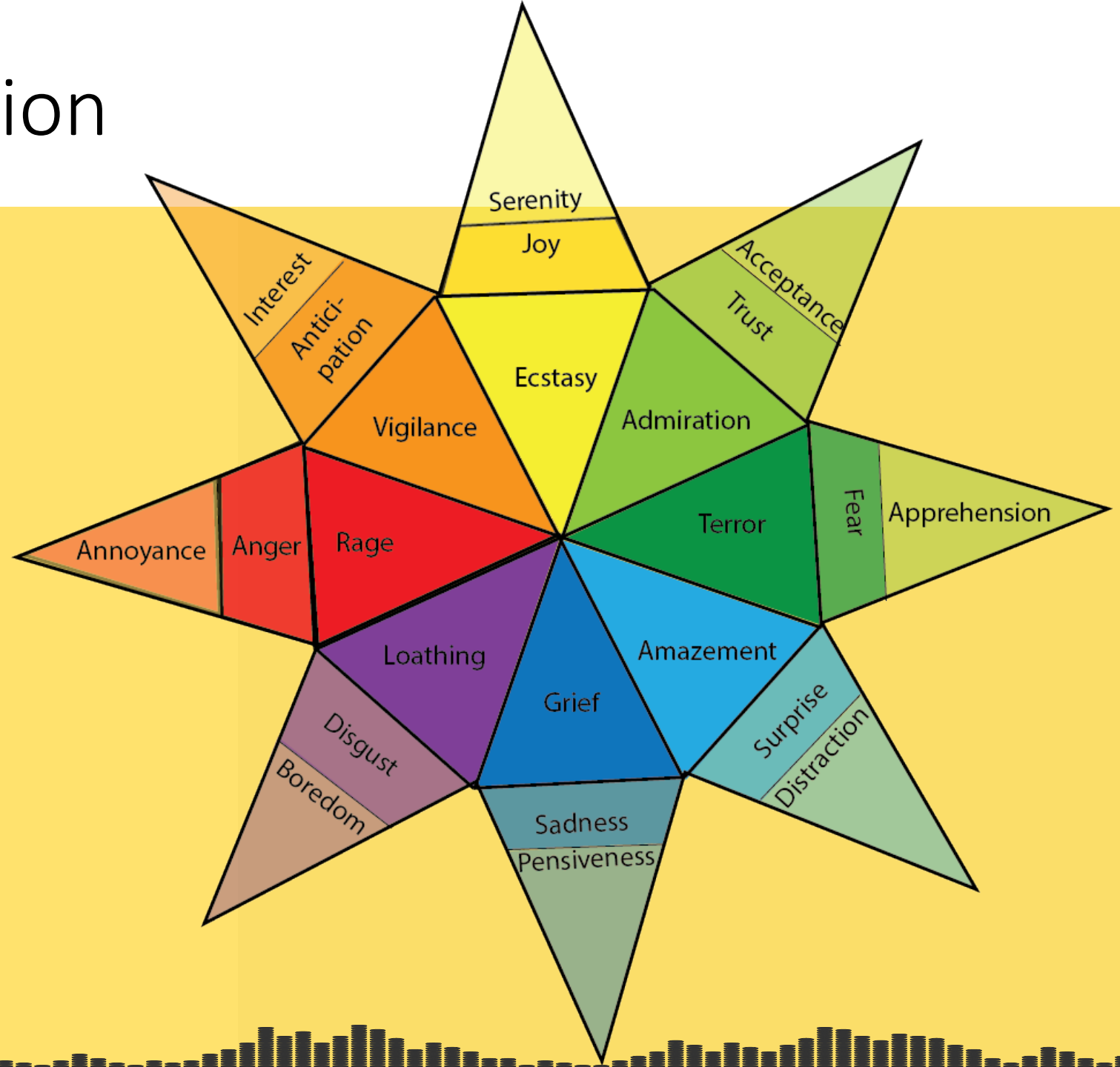


<https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/249179185/lightning-mcqueen-cars-movie-instant>



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie_the_Pooh_\(Disney_character\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie_the_Pooh_(Disney_character))

Mood and Emotion



Audio Research

- Finding comparison material
- Temp tracks



Audio Story Analysis

Sound selection:

How does genre affect sound design choices?

What sounds are used, where, and why?

How are characters delineated by sound?

What tropes or stereotypes are inherent in the sounds chosen?

Which sounds are symbolic or metaphoric and what do they signify?

What sounds are used (or emphasized) for believability, rather than realism?

Which sounds evoke a bodily response, and why? Which sounds evoke a haptic or visual response? What actions are heard in the sounds?

Audio Story Analysis

Effects (DSPs):

- What effects are used, where and why?
- What impact do the effects have on the listener and why?
- As we have touched on to some extent, sound effects can alter the feeling of a particular sound.
- How are flashbacks (if any), or in-head thoughts and feelings created sonically through effects?

Audio Story Analysis

Functions:

- What functions does the sound play in the audio drama at different points, and why?



Audio Story Analysis

Mix:

- How does foreground, middleground and background change in the mix (if at all)?
- Are mixing choices realistic or creative?
- Why do you think they chose to mix it that way?
- How is the sound mixed in relation to music and dialogue?
- How is dynamic range used to emphasize certain sounds over others?
- What is the most important scene and how is that shown in sound?

Audio Story Analysis

Structural:

- How are scene changes shown in sound?
- How do they build tension?
- What sounds carry between scenes and why?
- What sounds are specific to scenes and why?

Audio Story Analysis

Spatialization:

- Is it in stereo, binaural audio or some other format? Why do you think they chose this format?
- What tools are used to spatialize sound in a way that supports the story?
- consider the different points of audition: how does the sound help us to empathize with characters through point of audition?
- What techniques support the point of audition?

Spotting a script (* text from BBC radio series *The Wire* for the episode “The Startling Truths of Old World Sparrows” by Fiona Evans)

STAN'S KITCHEN. DAY.

DOG WHINES.

STAN

What's the matter baby? Do you want to go out? She doesn't like the snow, especially when it's deep. With her being so small. Poor thing..

STAN UNLOCKS AND OPENS THE BACK DOOR

Her belly gets wet. Go on, go out for a wee.

KIDS LAUGHING. A WHEELY BIN IS KICKED OVER. THE KIDS CALL HIM NAMES

STAN GOES OUTSIDE. SHOUTING AFTER THEM.

KIDS RUN OFF.

Oi! What do you think you're doing? Oi... Don't you come near my house again, do you hear me?

Bloody snow! Can't run in this can I?

What shall I do? I'll clear the path. That way I can run after 'em next time.

Steps to spotting a script

First read:

- Read whole script, pay attention to objects, environments, actions, emotions.
- Circle keywords that indicate special sounds.
- Think about tension and release points
- Write down any immediate thoughts or notes

Steps to Spotting a Script

Second read:

- What can sound bring to the story?
- What is the theme, and what sounds do you associate with it?
- What sonic generalizations or stereotypes can you use?
- How will you enhance mood/emotion of key scenes
- What moods do you associate with what scenes?
- What is the overall arc of emotion? What is the peak?
- What is the genre and what sounds do you associate with it?

Cue Sheets

Identify individual cues in script and what sounds and music you want.

Types of music cues:

- Bridge
- Fades
- Beds
- Sting
- Under
- Duck Under
- Establish
- Play through and out

The Asset List

List of all sounds need to find, record, make or design.

Scene	Sound	Filename	Category	Notes	Finished?
Fireplace	Fire crackle	Fire_01.wav	Ambience	Loop. Still needs reverb.	-
Fireplace	Dog whimper	Dog_02.wav	Spot	Get John to voice this.	-