An Acoustic Exploration Of Sound In Martin Scorsese’s Movie Shutter Island

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Abstract: Technology has a long history in the making of sound movies that often juxtapose movements with sounds. Establishing a unique parameter for the analysis of sound has often been a difficult task for scientists across the globe. Numerous interpretations and documentations on soundscape have ideologically established ‘sound’ as an integral ingredient in film making; as the ultimate repository and supplier of humour, textuality and connotation. A movie does not bloom only on visual effects. It needs a meaningful soundtrack to add intelligibility and coherence to the visual experience. The present paper attempts to explore how the theme of violence, power, truth, grief and masculinity built on an exploratory of the movie Shutter Island. Martin Scorsese, the well-known filmmaker, has created a unique style through his fabrication and use of music to contrive the soundtracks of this movie. Scorsese’s use of a unique pattern and style of sound effects in the movie Shutter Island, is one of the prominent and fundamental factors engaging our attention to enumerate the technicalities of soundscape in the acoustic phase of film making.

Index Terms: Dramatic Music, Film Studies, Lobotomy, Music, Sound Film, Soundtracks, Still images

1 INTRODUCTION

A ‘film’ or a ‘movie’ can be elucidated as a sequence of still images shown on a big screen to create the illusion of ‘a walking, talking sequence’ of animations. The focus of film is on the artistic, theoretical and the technical aspects. Motion pictures or moving pictures are films that are developed through photography of original scenes with a motion picture camera. Many modern techniques are pressed into service in filmmaking, which is both an art and industry, in addition to being an employment generator today. An Optical soundtrack is usually included in films which are a graphic recording of the spoken words, music and other sounds that ought to be in sync with the animation of images. Amy Villarejo’s Film Studies: The Basics defines sound: “Sound as many critics have taught us, functions in a variety of different ways. Not mere accompaniment to the image, sound actively shapes how we perceive and interpret the image. It directs our attention within the image, and it cues us to form expectations. Just as elements of the image function motifs, so too do elements or types of sound. Just as images harden quickly into clichés, so too do elements or types of sound: thunder cracks to announce a storm, cartires squeal to signal a cracks to announce a storm, cartires squeal to signal a...

There are untold varieties of styles of music depending upon the nature of the film and what its creator expects to convey. The movie Shutter Island directed by Martin Scorsese is an exemplary example of the utility of the influence of sound and music in creative art.

2 SHUTTER ISLAND: MOVIE REVIEW

Shutter Island is an American psychological thriller released in 2010, directed by Martin Scorsese and written by Laeta Kalogrid. The movie is based on the 2003 novel Shutter Island by Dennis Lehane. The movie begins with U.S. Marshal, Teddy Daniels and his new partner Chuck Aule’s travel to the Ashecliffe hospital in the Shutter Island in Boston Harbour for the investigation of Rachel Solando’s missing case. Rachel Solando is a criminal patient who was imprisoned for drowning her three kids. The investigators find everything suspicious inside the hospital especially the behavior of the doctors. The chief Psychiatrist Dr. John Cawley’s disinterest in the matter of co-operating with the investigation team’s overwhelming eagerness to check the records – as if he was rather shrinking from it – is one. How Solando’s doctor Dr. Lester Sheehan left the island ‘suddenly’ after Solando went missing, is equally significant and is a point of interest to the audience. The authorities permitting ‘restricted’ entry into the hospital – ‘censoring’ their ‘freedom’ in ward C adds to the mystery. The lighthouse is a picture of a completely foraged structure. Crowning these, come the disturbing dreams of Daniels whose beloved wife Dolores Chanal has been assassinated in a fire set by a local arsonist Andrew Laeddis. Daniels, determined to investigate ‘whatever it is’ in the Ward C, and in the lighthouse, ‘smells a rat’ in conversation with one patient named Noyce. He learns of several ‘mysterious happenings’. Those, patients taken to the light house to be lobotomized, more often than not, do not survive. That, everyone in the asylum is playing a ‘complicated game’, etc. Daniels, ‘nosing into’ the lighthouse, catches ‘a significant scent’ to things from a lady’s claims that she is the real Rachel Solando, the former Psychiatrist at the Ashecliffe hospital. Rachel, the psychiatrist, is experimenting with psychotropic medication and trans-orbital lobotomy in an attempt to develop mind control techniques. But ‘curiously’, before reporting the results of her experiments to the

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The stunning, and unexpected closing of the movie Shutter Island leaves the viewers in an eerie excitement that comes closest to the description "a rush of mystification" — and it is, indeed, a ‘pleasant mystification’. From the beginning to the end, the movie successfully creates an atmosphere where each note makes mystery follow mystery, making the viewers ride on crust after crust of the strong waves of curiosity. What begins as a US Marshal searching for a missing patient concludes as a role-play game manoeuvre stage managed by the doctors in the Asylum — where every sound Scorsese supplies adds an ‘artistic’ to the depth of the drama portrayed, which cannot but leave the viewer ‘more happily confused’. On the technicality of the maker of this movie, one is inevitably reminded of the words of Andrew Dix in his book, The Basic Film Studies: "The language of film analysis aids in our task of watching films closely to notice their construction. We may isolate six elements of what is "put in" to a given shot, or of mise-en-scene: setting, lighting, costume, hair, make-up, and figure behavior. Cinematography encompasses all that is to do with the camera: framing, angle, focus, movement, and composing. The five types of edits (cut, dissolve, fade, wipe, and iris) serve different functions in different contexts, whether within the system of continuity editing associated with the narrative form of classical Hollywood cinema or other cinematic contexts. Finally, the three types of sound (speech, music and noise) actively shape how we work with images. Experiment with readings of brief sequences to practice the terminology: once it comes quickly and easily start to put it to use! [53]. (Andrew Dix, 2010)."

REFERENCES