

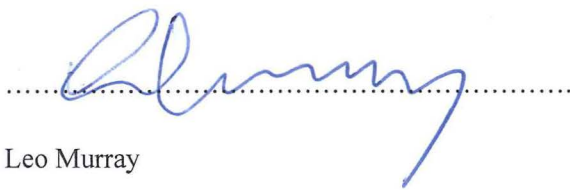
Film sound: Applying Peircean semiotics  
to create theory grounded in practice

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University

2013

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

  
.....

Leo Murray

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the theoretical approaches to the use of sound in film. It argues that there is a gap between film sound theory and film sound practice and seeks instead to formulate sound theory which is based on sound practice which can therefore be applied to both the product and the process: the soundtracks themselves and the processes which create them.

This thesis argues that the analytical methodologies typically applied in other areas of film studies do not readily lend themselves to the analysis of sound, or sound/image combinations. A semiotic model developed by Charles Sanders Peirce is proposed as being adaptable to the purposes of sound critique supporting both the practice of sound and the analysis of the language of sound.

A tripartite research approach involving traditional textual analysis, interviews with a number of industry practitioners and self-reflection on my own industry practice was adopted in order to test the chosen model as a means of analysing the soundtrack, as a way of analysing industry practice, and as a measure of the usefulness and applicability of the model in informing and influencing practice through my own experience as a film sound practitioner.

This approach to the analysis of both the soundtrack itself and the creative processes involved in its production allows for sound to be discussed in relation to the functions it performs. As such the model can provide a comprehensive and powerful tool for the analysis, practice and teaching of film sound.



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## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank my principal supervisor Associate Professor Gail Phillips, whose academic rigour, practical advice and endless patience have enabled me to complete this work. I am grateful to my co-supervisor Associate Professor Martin Mhando whose academic insights and broad knowledge were a constant source of encouragement. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Alec McHoul for sharing his time and expertise and to whom I still owe pencils and tobacco.

I would also like to thank the industry practitioners who agreed to be interviewed as part of this research: James Currie, Rolf de Heer, Graham Ross, Tony Murtagh, Kallis Shamaris, Steve Haynes, Ric Curtin and Glen Martin. Thanks also to the filmmakers with whom I have worked during the course of this thesis whose films are included, and without whom I would not have learned so much.

Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful wife Liz without whose support this thesis could not have been completed, and to my children Tom and Bella, who were very small when this thesis began. This thesis is dedicated to my family.