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Résumé de l'article

Cet essai note la tendance à réduire le son à une cause d'autre chose. Une telle position contraint la construction théorique à des schémas de cause à effet. Je soutiens que nous devons élargir notre compréhension du son pour inclure ce que je nomme des figures sonores, qui reconnaissent que les sons peuvent représenter le monde. Je conclus en proposant une interprétation des figures sonores liées à leur résonance.

Response to Groarke: Figuring Sound

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Abstract: This essay notes the tendency to reduce sound to a cause of something else. Such a position constrains theory construction to only cause and effect schemes. I argue that we should expand our understanding of sound to include what I term sound figures, which acknowledge that sounds can represent the world. I conclude by offering an understanding of sound figures tied to their resonance.

Résumé: Cet essai note la tendance à réduire le son à une cause d'autre chose. Une telle position contraint la construction théorique à des schémas de cause à effet. Je soutiens que nous devons élargir notre compréhension du son pour inclure ce que je nomme des figures sonores, qui reconnaissent que les sons peuvent représenter le monde. Je conclus en proposant une interprétation des figures sonores liées à leur résonance.

Keywords: auditory argument; causism; sound figures; resonance; sound studies

1. Response to Groarke

Leo Groarke's writing on visual argumentation was field-defining. Now, he turns his attention to the importance of sound with "Auditory Arguments." "Auditory Arguments" is an important, significant contribution to the growing literature on sound and argumentation. His provocative claims push us to consider how the hubbub of life supplies ordinary people with evidence for a conclusion. Sound buzzes with potential conclusions. Throughout "Auditory Arguments," Groarke evidences how sound supplies evidence for a conclusion (informal logic), offers strategic resources to persuade an audience (rhetoric), or furnishes dialogue types with strategies to enhance, undermine, or regulate disagreement (dialectic). But, expanding argumentation's object domain bumps into a translation problem

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(Eckstein, 2017a; Eckstein 2017b). Even though we might use words to point out a sonic event, or use language to describe a sound, or use onomatopoeia to create a similar sound, none captures the immediacy of a sonic event, "because non-verbal sounds are (like visuals) notoriously difficult to express in words" (Groarke, 2018 p.4). Transcribing sound into text draws into relief the phenomenological gulf between the written and spoken word. Despite this transient quality, we can study sound because written and spoken argumentation share a "fundamental structure […of] premises, evidence, an inference, and a conclusion" (Groarke, 2018, p.10).

Auditory arguments are meaningful but "do not have defined meanings in the way words do" (p.3). Groarke's examples include "the *sounds that animals make*; natural sounds like *the sound of* thunder and the wind; *sounds made by* machines" (emphasis mine, p.3). Here, sound is indexed by cause; it is the animal, a storm pattern, and machines that create sound. The same tendency to reduce sound to cause is further elaborated in numbered examples throughout the essay. Consider the following three:

> *Example 10:* A hunter hears a loud noise in the bush and concludes that there is a moose close by.
>
> *Example 11:* A referee at a football match blows a whistle and the players conclude that they must stop playing.
>
> *Example 12*: We hear a voice on our phone and conclude it is our father calling (p.4).

The sound *of a* moose (in the bush), the sound *of a* referee (in a game), the sound *of* Dad (on a phone call). Sound is only understood in relation to the cause. In each example, it is a *sound of* that is heard as an effect *of something else* and not the sound in and of itself.

When sound is meaningful only *as an effect of something else*, we limit our potential for theory construction. Consider the following scenario: In a small, concrete room, I tap my pen against a glass creating a ping. What *causes* the ping? There are a number of potential reasonable answers: you might say that the sound came from the pen tip striking the glass; others might point to the reverberation of the

glass as the culprit; some might say that it was actually the swinging of the hand that inaugurated the sound; perhaps others might point to the sparse, flat walls as generating the sound through excess reverberations. Sound emerges not from a single source, but an acoustic ecology. Any attempt to elevate *a cause* to *the cause* displaces other potential actors. The reduction of sound to *a cause* (as opposed to a complex multiplicity) comes from a desire to manage sound's ambiguity. If sound can be circumscribed to something external and verifiable, then it can become amenable to objective inquiry.

The habit of reducing sound to the sound of something else is *causism* (Chion, 2017). In causism, the formulation of sound as the "*sound of*" requires recourse to the other senses to generate force: It can only ever be the smoke to some greater, more important fire. Sound is heard with other contextual cues that prompt conclusions so quickly as to appear to come from only the sound. Consider Michel Chion's (2017) example of hearing a footstep:

> I hear a footstep in the room next door; logically this can only be the person with whom I share the apartment, and I therefore hear footstep of *that* person and visualize him or her mentally. In such instances, we are often convinced the sound tells us all this by itself (p.113).

The auditor realizes the footstep is coming from a roommate because of a number of other contextual factors that help select a cause. The same "sound of a footstep" might mean something entirely different if the auditor lived alone or with many other people. When sound is understood only when it is tied to a cause and stabilized by the conventionalized context, it can only be epiphenomenal, secondary. For argumentation scholars, this model constrains sound's potential to cause-effect schemes.

Some might consider causism as a conventionalized, convergent argument that draws across modalities—more multimodal than sound. Like the hunter, football player, mechanic, doctor, banker, and various other modes of audition sprinkled throughout the essay, causism does contain valuable, contextually driven information. But, if sound only indexes something else, then it cannot grapple with the

ordinary ways people argue. If part of an informal logician's task is to ask "critical questions associated with argument schemes (argument by analogy, causal reasoning, etc.); by applying standard accounts of deductive and inductive validity; and so on," then an exclusively causal approach to sound studies is overly limiting (Graorke, 2018 p.13). What is needed is an additional way to problematize sound, not only as a cause, but also as representation.

Sound figures, or sound-as-representation, supplement Groarke's "auditory argument." Originally from the study of film, sound figures are intentionally designed to resemble *something*. Sound figures in a film can include a score to represent a mood, the hum to represent a lightsaber, the screech of tires to represent a car. If causism constitutes a cause-effect scheme between sound and meaning, then sound figures positions sound through representation. The difference between *the sound of a car* and *a car sound* illustrates the difference. In the former, sound is tied to a specific car moving through space; in the latter, a car is iconic, a sound standing in for the multiplicity of vibrations enveloping any given car. Sound figures become relevant to the study of argumentation when intentionally designed to modify the conditions for an arguer to accept or reject a standpoint.

When used as an argument, sound figures involve drawing a resonance from one domain of embodied experience to speculate on another. What makes sonic figures unique is that they trade in ineffable experiences located in time. In some of my other work, I identify and assess sound figures in a variety of contexts (Eckstein 2017a, Eckstein 2017b). Sound figures define reasonableness as resonance. By drawing on resonance, I follow Viet Erlmann's reclamation of the term to adduce a conception of reason that surpasses the logic/emotion binary. Resonance "call[s] into question the notion that the nature of things resides in their essence and that this essence can be exhausted by a sign, a discourse, or a logos" (Eerlman 2015, p.181). When something resonates, it just *feels right*. Feeling resists the universalization into an ahistorical, disembodied normative system and is instead located in a durational moment, residing in the gut or the heart. Even the critic relies on a feeling of rightness when

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identifying, reconstructing, and assessing argumentation. These often ineffable and fleeting feelings offer a premise for a conclusion, a resource for invention, or an element embedded in a procedure. Resonance expands the potential domains of reasoning to the ineffable, difficult to describe features of the body. If sound can be *intentionally designed to resonate*, then these sounds might actually *be* an argument.

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