

# THE USE OF DIEGETIC SOUNDS IN BUILDING A JUMP SCARE IN THE *A QUIET PLACE* (2018) MOVIE

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## Abstract

This research is conducted to analyze the diegetic sound and the components that built it played in the constructions of the jump scare in the *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie. There are two problem statements that the researcher formulated in this research, first what are the *diegetic sound* components that are part of the *jump scare* in the *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie? Second, how does the *diegetic sound* build *jump scare* in the *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie? The researcher used the qualitative method to examine the problem. The theory and approaches that the researcher used is Film Analysis, Diegetic Sounds, and Jump Scare. This study also includes the procedures of collecting data and procedure of analyzing data. The result of this study, first the diegetic sound indicated by the sound that came from the film's world shown by the situation by dominantly incorporating various natural or environmental diegetic sounds and using minimal dialogue in the *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie. Second, includes the roles of diegetic sounds in building jump scare in *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie.

**Keywords:** diegetic sounds, jump scare, movie

## Introduction

In modern times like today, media has a very strong influence on the formation of people cognition. The media provides information and knowledge which can create different perceptions of each individual. The development of media is increasing from time to time. One media which has a big influence in society is film. The main important things and must be present in the film are picture, music, the word used by film players as a communication tool and the sound that support the images in the film. Music is one of the most important elements in strengthening nuance and atmosphere of the film. Music can be classified into two types, that are music illustrations and songs. Music itself can play a role as a part of the film story (diegetic) and can also be separated from the film story (non-diegetic).

The diegetic sounds issue can be found in the *A Quiet Place* (2018) was directed by John Krasinski. *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie has many awards in the sound editing. So that this film is worthy of being an object of research. This research is focused on one point of the field so that the analysis can be more focused, one of the highlights of the film *A Quite Place* (2018) is in the

field of sound arrangement in diegetic sound which is proven by its achievements in that field. Research under the topic "*The Use of Diegetic Sounds in Building a Jump Scare in the A Quiet Place (2018) movie*" aims to identify how *diegetic sound* acts as a *jump scare* builder in the film *A Quiet Place (2018)* and see what components are in *diegetic sound* and the roles of each of these components.

## **Literary Review**

### **1. Sound in Film**

From many film theorists' perspective, sound and image are two equally distinct yet interconnected components that create a film. The distinction between the two can be explored in the different ways the two are perceived. Thus, image tends to be more easily perceived by human as it relates more closely with the source object as opposed to sound that can be perceived even as its source cannot be identified. This precedence of vision provides human more reliable guides for movement in the world by being able to help locate the objects more accurately than through hearing.

As two main components, sound and image may appear simultaneously in motion. Both components carry large amount of information in its own. However, there are two possible ways sound and image can complement each other: sound and image may confirm the information presented in each other or the sound and image may oppose each other's information. When sound and image work simultaneously and complement each other, it can put the spectators' subjectivity into play. Similar with the camera work that position spectators into a certain point-of-view, sound can also affectively position the spectators into certain position, location, and emotion which can help them "*cease to be its audience and become its subject*" (Link, 2004: 77).

### **2. Diegetic Sound and Non-Diegetic Sound**

Diegetic sound is the sound of on-screen dialogue, object's natural sound effects, as well as the sound of music or songs that come from the world of the film's story such as the ones that are played or listened to by the characters on-screen. Whether the sound's source is visible or not, as long as it happens within the film's world then it can be said to be diegetic sound.

As a well-known discourse that connects the film studies with literary studies, Neumeyer (2009) proposed a model that can be used to help interpreting the role of the sound in film by using the diegetic and non-diegetic components as its reliable tools:

*Anchoring* → *Diegesis* → *Narration*

(Neumeyer, 2009: 29)

To put it simply, *anchoring* is a process where its focus is on the basic identification of sound, *diegesis* is a process focuses in determining whether the sound heard by the spectators is diegetic or non-diegetic, and the last is *narration* it is focus on this level is to relate the sound to the other narrative elements in the film.

### **3. Jump Scare in Horror Film**

Jump scare is described as a technique that is used to trigger physical reactions to horror. From the psychological perspective, jump scare is more effective in creating physical reaction because it targets a startle response that exists in many species through the sudden presence of sound, light, and touch in a state of heightened anxiety. The main idea of a jump scare is to deceive the spectators into expecting the coming of threats and then presenting it in such a sudden or different way that they are failing for a microseconds to overcome it. In accordance with this, jump scare is almost identical to a magic trick in a sense that it will make the spectators look to a certain way only to present other things from the other way.

#### **Research Method**

The method used in this research is qualitative method. Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative research is an approach that has the aim of exploring and understanding meaning. Then, data is collected and analyzed. After that, the researcher can make interpretations of the meaning in the data. Qualitative method is used by the researcher to explore what components of diegetic sound and what roles each components has in building jump scares in John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place* (2018) based on its description in the film subtitle. The research is consisting upon the researcher's way to present the descriptions and interpretations of the subject that are related to the issue. The data will also be supported with relevant theories and sources that can support the researcher's arguments.

The object selected to be analyzed in this research is *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie that first released in 2018 by Paramount Pictures. The director of this movie is John Krasinski. With 90 minutes running time. The researcher uses all forms of words, sentences, pictures, and related discourses contained in the film subtitle of *A Quiet Place* (2018).

In the steps of collecting data from *A Quiet Place* (2018) movie, the researcher uses observation the method, they are, watching, reading, identifying, classifying, and selecting. In this thesis also contains of method of analyzing the data, they are, displaying, explaining, and interpreting.

#### **Data Analysis**

In this chapter, the researcher will present the issue related to the components of diegetic sound and its roles in building jump scare in *A Quiet Place* (2018).

Within the category of diegetic sound, there are several components of it that can be distinguished in the film. It is distinguishable based on where the sound comes from in the film's world. This process is called *anchoring*. The process is perceived as the most basic and important step as it helps the spectators to identify and interpret the sound they heard.

The main story of the film itself focuses on the Abbott family which consists of Lee, the husband; Evelyn, the wife who is pregnant; Regan, the

oldest daughter who was born deaf; Marcus, the oldest son; and Beau, the Abbott family's youngest child who died at the beginning of the attack. In the opening scene, the film shows the condition of a deserted town after the monsters' invasion with only the rushing sound of the wind heard. In the description below, the camera is then inside an empty and abandoned general store almost in complete silence except for the low sound of the wind in the distance when suddenly a child's feet jump into the screen.

*TINY FEET JUMP INTO THE MOVING FRAME, RUNNING*

[child's barefoot feet hitting the floor]

[softly panting]

(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 00.01.18 – 00.01.20)

The scene described above depicts one of the first jump scares in the film. Referring to the Neumeyer (2009)'s *anchoring* → *diegesis* process, the sound of the child's barefoot feet hitting the floor while running across the screen and the soft panting sound he makes can be anchored its source as coming from the child on the screen. The child is then revealed to be Beau. Thus, the two sounds are part of the diegetic as the spectators can tell that it is directly come from within the film's world.

The scene described above also shows the interconnection between image and sound in film. When the sudden image of the child's feet enters the screen, it is accompanied by the panting sound from the child and the sound of the foot on the floor as depicted in *A Quiet Place* (00.01.20). The simultaneous presence of both sound and image in the scene complements and confirms each component's information.

With one of their children being deaf, coupled with the hypersensitive hearing of the monsters around them, the Abbott family communicated mainly using American Sign Language (ASL) throughout the film. In some moments, the film follows Regan's point of view and provides the spectators with complete silence to convey the experience of deafness that Regan experiences. This is illustrated in one of the most intense scenes in the film, in which the spectators get a glimpse of the monster's appearance for the first time. This incident also occurs to be the moment when Beau gets caught by the monster.

In the previous scene, Regan gives Beau batteries for a shuttle toy he found at the store so that it can be turned on. However, once it is turned on it will produce loud noises. Once they come across the bridge, Beau—who is behind everyone else—turns the toy on.

[toy's loud playful beeping noise]

[horrifying screech]

*LEE RUNNING*

[panting]

[rustling and snapping]

[monster's shriek]

*THE MONSTER CATCH THE BOY*

(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 00.09.50 – 00.10. 07)

Once the toy is turned on by Beau, a loud beeping noise comes from it. The sound makes Lee and Evelyn look back with a horrified reaction. Lee then runs across the bridge toward Beau with a loud audible panting sound while the rustling and snapping off-screen sounds come from the wood around them. Right after that, the spectators can hear the monster's shriek right before it catches Beau.

There are two ways the sound and image can complement each other. While they can confirm each other information as evident in the previous scene discussed, the scene above also shows the way the sound and image may be problematized by other cinematic and narrative elements so they do not go hand in hand. When the whirring and beeping sound from the toy is first heard by the spectators, the image does not show the toy as the source of the sound but instead shows the image of Lee walking across the bridge. This puts the toy's sound as an off-screen diegetic sound. The spectators get to see the source of the sound only after Lee turns around and sees Beau with the toy in his hand as seen in *A Quiet Place* (00.09.51). For a few seconds after that, the spectators are also put into Regan's point of view so that only a really low and vague sound can be heard before it switched back and the sound can be fully heard again.

The scene above illustrates the precedence of human's hearing ability compared to vision. A moment before the toy's sound can be heard, the image shows Lee as he walks across the bridge with his eyes focus on what is in front of him. When the toy suddenly makes a noise, the spectators can see his reactions toward the sound. This indicates that even though his vision is directed forward and only there, his hearing can hear sounds that are coming not only from one direction but from all around him. In this specific circumstance, the scene also depicts the sound to move around faster and more seamlessly than the image.

However, the same argument cannot be applied when the spectators are put into Regan's perspective. With her inability to hear the sound, the image then has the precedence in delivering information about the situation more effectively. This is proven in the way the spectators can see the changes in Regan's expression in reaction to the situation only after she watches her parents' reaction. As one of the components that trigger the human's startle response, loud noises can always be found in every jump scare scenes in horror films. One of the examples is depicted in the scene where the Abbot family is sitting around playing Monopoly in silence. On one occasion, Regan accidentally knocks the lantern beside her which resulted in a loud shattering sound of a glass and a blazing sound of fire as it catches the rug underneath it. As they all looked around and waiting in silence, there is suddenly a loud crashing noise from the roof. Lee then walks up to the window to take a peek outside.

[a whir of screeching and growling]  
[heavy breathing]

[loud thud]

*TWO RACOONS HIT THE GROUND*

(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 00.20.10 – 00.20.15)

With no non-diegetic sound in the scene, the shattering sound of the lantern, the loud crashing sound on the roof, and the raccoons' sounds in the scene can be anchored as diegetic sounds as the characters in the film can hear the sounds as well.

While the lantern's shattering sound can be perceived as an on-screen diegetic sound as the spectators can identify the source of the sound directly on the screen as proven in *A Quiet Place* (00.19.22), the loud crashing sound on the roof is an off-screen diegetic sound in which the spectators cannot directly identify its source. When the sound is first heard, the image is on the face of Lee that seems to be suddenly tensed. The image on the screen is presented as a way that cancels or problematizes the information that the sound carries. It, once again, illustrates the way sound moves around the space faster and with less constraint than the image from the vision. The sounds of the falling raccoons, however, can still be understood as an on-screen diegetic sound as the spectators can identify it as a sound of a falling object even though it can only be fully identified after the camera shows the raccoons on the ground.

The incorporation can also be in the form of a sound effect that mimics the diegetic sound used at the same moment. This is evident in the scene that follows the previous one. During this scene, the camera follows the two raccoons into the cornfield. As the raccoons move on the path approaching the camera, suddenly a big black claw of the monster reaches beyond the cornfield and smashed one of the raccoons to the ground.

[raccoons chittering]

[a thud]

*THE MONSTER'S CLAW SMASH THE RACCOON TO THE GROUND*

[raccoon whimpers]

[blood splashed]

(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 00.21.40 – 00.21.45)

The diegetic sound in the scene above consists of the sound of the raccoons chittering along the cornfield path and whimpering when it is being smashed by the claw. The spectators can also hear the splashing sound as the raccoon's blood is splashed under the grip of the claw.

In *A Quiet Place* (00.21.44), the image provides the spectators with the synchronized information with the sound that can be heard including the raccoons, the monster's claw, and the splashing of blood. This makes the diegetic sounds in this scene can be anchored as directly come from the objects on the screen.

The same technique is also present in the scene following Evelyn's childbirth process. After Evelyn gave birth in the bathtub, the spectators follow

Lee as he looking for her in the house. When he arrives at the bathroom, he found the blood-smearred bathtub empty. He then sits beside the bathtub with a glass door on the other side, silently weeping and thinking that his wife has not made it through the process.

[muffled sound]  
[a thud on glass door]  
EVELYN'S BLOODY HAND ON THE GLASS DOOR  
(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 00.53.25 – 00.53.30)

The scene incorporates both diegetic and non-diegetic sounds as previously mentioned. In *A Quiet Place* (00.53.28), the muffled sound can be anchored as coming from Lee as he tries to hold his tears after seeing the empty bathtub, thus can be identified as an on-screen diegetic sound as it is in sync with the image displayed. However, the part when Evelyn's bloody hand appears behind the glass door uses both an on-screen diegetic sound.

With diegetic sound covers all the sound that comes from inside the world where the narrative takes place, it is also important to use the object's natural sound and location sound to convey to the spectators the kind of surrounding or situation which the characters are in. It is exceptionally prominent in this film as it sparingly uses any sound at all. The natural as well as the location sound carry all the pieces of information that are equally important as the ones that the image is carrying. It further highlights the common human's helplessness in perceiving sound; with the vision, they have more power in choosing what they want to see—as it is limited to their point of view, but they do not have that much power in hearing sound including from their surroundings.

On one occasion, Regan—who wanders silently in the cornfield after escaping the monster's presence—comes across a tractor. Near the tractor, she found a flashlight and she is about to pick it up when something grabs her hand.

[rustling and snapping sounds]  
REGAN GET ON HER KNEES NEAR THE FLASHLIGHT  
[grabbing sound]  
A HAND REACHES AND GRABS REGAN'S HAND  
(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 01.00.47 - 01.00.54)

The rustling and snapping sounds in this scene can be anchored to the dry corn leaves, seeds, and grass that cover the ground of the cornfield as Regan moves and steps on it. As seen in *A Quiet Place* (01.00.53), the sounds are part of the location and the object's natural sounds as the spectators can identify it as coming from the surrounding in which Regan is entering into. The grabbing sound when the mysterious hand—which was later identified to be Marcus'—suddenly grabs Regan's hand sounds just like what happens when a hand grabs another object. Therefore, these two sounds can be understood as

diegetic sounds as the sources can be anchored within the scene and the screen.

As the main means of communication in the film, sign language substitutes the verbal way of speaking between the characters in the film. One of which happens during a scene when Regan and Marcus are hiding on the roof of the silo waiting for their father. They are depicted as having an argument on whether their father will come and save them or not. As they roam about the roof while arguing in sign language, suddenly one of the trap doors to the storage space underneath Marcus opened and plunges him to the ground.

[muffled voice]  
Regan (signing) : “We can’t stay here. We need to move.”  
Marcus (signing) : “He’ll come for us.”  
[stepping sound]  
Marcus (signing) : “He WILL come for us.”  
Regan (signing) : “He will come for you.”  
[metal creaking]  
Marcus (signing) : “No! You’re wrong. I—”  
[loud metal door’s creaking sound]  
*THE TRAP DOOR BENEATH MARCUS OPENED*  
(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 01.06.40 - 01.06.49)

During the argument, even though both siblings use sign language to communicate, the spectators can also hear their muffled voices as it escapes their mouths when they both try to articulate their words with their moving lips. While the spectators may not be able to audibly perceive the way the characters communicate, the sign language still counts as a dialogue as it delivers pieces of information to the spectators. As the dialogue is delivered by the characters in the film, the dialogue is then understood as coming from within the film's world. In this sense, the sign language can also be perceived as a sound—or more precisely the diegetic one—regardless of how the spectators perceive it.

As the roof of the silo is made of metal, the audible sound that comes whenever they step and move on it can be perceived as the object's natural sound. The startling moment comes a few moments after the metal on the roof creaks as they step around it when the metal trap door that is revealed to be positioned right underneath Marcus suddenly opens as seen in *A Quiet Place* (01.06.49). It makes a loud creaking sound just like the sound that comes when two sides of a metal gate are being pushed open. Based on what is provided on screen—that the roof is indeed made of metal and the existence of the trap door on it, the sounds that are heard can be identified as diegetic as all of it can be anchored to its objects.

After she finds out that Marcus fell into a mountain of corns below the roof, Regan decided to jump into the silo. She and Marcus are now inside the



silo with grains all around them. With all the loud noise they made a minute before, they are now silently anticipating the incoming of the monster.

[metal door's creaking]  
[humming sound of wind]  
[heavy breathing]  
[a loud thud]  
[gasping]  
THE MONSTER SUDDENLY JUMPS FROM ABOVE  
[loud shrieks]  
(*A Quiet Place*, 2018, 01.09.25 – 01.09.41)

During the scene, the siblings hear the metal around them creaks as they slowly investigate their surroundings with their flashlights. The spectators can also hear the low humming sound from the wind outside the silo. Right after that, the metal door from which they come from swings and makes a creaking sound. In anticipation, as the camera focus on Regan's face, the spectators can hear the heavy breathing sound she makes before she gasps as the monster suddenly appears behind her from above.

As seen in *A Quiet Place* (01.09.40), when the monster lands on the ground, it makes a loud thud sound like a heavy object that hits the surface and then let out an ear-piercing shriek. The thudding and shrieking sounds that anchored from the monster can be identified as on-screen diegetic sounds as it comes at the same time the monster—the object that makes the sounds—appears on the screen. On the other hand, the metal door's creaking sound is first heard as an off-screen diegetic sound as the camera is still focusing on the two siblings before they look up and the spectators can finally identify it as coming from the swinging of the metal door above. Meanwhile, the humming sound of the wind can be identified as coming from outside as the wind blows into the surface of the silo's walls that are mainly made of metal thus it is a diegetic sound and can also be perceived as a location or object's natural sound.

## Conclusion

The objectives of this research are to find out the diegetic sound and the components that built it played in the constructions of the jump scare in the *A Quiet Place (2018)* movie. Based on the research finding and discussion above, the researcher disclosure the definition of the diegetic sound and the jump scare. It is includes the diegetic sound indicated by the sound that came from the film's world shown by the situation by dominantly incorporating various natural or environmental diegetic sounds and using minimal dialogue in the *A Quiet Place (2018)* movie. It is hoped that film creators around the world pay attention for the use of the diegetic sounds, the right diegetic sound can create a natural impression so that the audience's mind will enter into the film's story as if they feel the same way as the character in the film. Research

on sound can be done with a more detailed sound such as *timbre* and *fidelity*. This will provide a very good reference for film reviews, especially in the realm of sound.

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