



## **Sound as narrative mediation in cinema: sonic remediation and its limits in the film *August Rush***

### **O som como mediação narrativa no cinema: remediação sonora e seus limites no filme *August Rush***

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines how the soundtrack and ambient sounds remediate the narrative of the film *August Rush* by substituting and expanding functions traditionally assigned to verbal dialogue. Methodologically, the study adopts a close reading approach articulated with the concept of remediation, applied to the analysis of three moments in which audio assumes a leading role. The study identifies three key motives underlying sonic remediation: narrative substitution, narrative expansion, and remediation of insufficiency. It is observed that sound, although structurally significant, depends on visual anchors for semantic comprehension. The investigation further reinforces the interdependence between sound and image in audiovisual media and suggests a replicable analytical approach for future studies in cinematic sound design.

**Keywords:** remediation; audiovisual narrative; film; sound design; close reading.

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**RESUMO:** Neste artigo, analisa-se como a trilha sonora e os sons ambientes remidiam a narrativa do filme *August Rush* (*O Som do Coração*), ao substituir e expandir funções tradicionalmente atribuídas ao diálogo verbal. Metodologicamente, adota-se a técnica de leitura atenta (*close reading*), articulada ao conceito de remediação, aplicada à análise de três momentos em que o áudio assume protagonismo. O estudo identifica três motivos-chave que sustentam a remediação sonora: substituição narrativa, expansão narrativa e remediação de insuficiência. Nota-se que o som, embora estruturalmente relevante, depende de âncoras visuais para a compreensão semântica. A investigação reforça ainda mais a interdependência entre som e imagem na mídia audiovisual e sugere uma abordagem analítica replicável para estudos futuros em *design* de som cinematográfico.

**Palavras-chave:** remediação; narrativa audiovisual; filme; *design* de som; *close reading*.

## INTRODUCTION

For listeners, sounds permeate virtually every moment of daily life and shape how interactions with objects and environments are perceived and interpreted. The auditory dimension influences cognitive, emotional, and communicative processes (MURRAY, 1998), encompassing natural stimuli such as birdsong and the buzzing of insects, as well as urban sound production, the human voice, automobile noise, and mechanical sounds.

In audiovisual contexts, particularly in cinematic experiences, sounds function not merely as accompaniment to images but as autonomous signifiers capable of framing and suggesting meanings and significance within narratives. Musical cues may amplify emotions, establish symbolic connections, and reorganize perception (GORBMAN, 1987). Chion (1994) argues that the interrelations between sound and image are central to film analysis, as audiovisuality determines the expressive impact of a given moment within the cinematic work.

However, the growing prominence of sound in certain works also reveals tensions. The absence of clear visual references or symbolic anchoring mechanisms may compromise narrative intelligibility, especially when the soundtrack performs functions typically associated with verbal dialogue. Such tension may be understood through what Bizzocchi (2001) terms narrative texture—the gradual and sensitive articulation of narrative elements throughout the viewer’s experience. Bizzocchi (2001, p. 2) defines “narrative texture” as the “broad infusion of narrative sensibilities across the experience,” stimulated by diverse expressive devices, ranging from cinematic and sonic narratives to interactive and multimedia media forms.

Contrary to the still-common assumption that sound occupies a “secondary” position in relation to image, film sound studies identify a series of historical “fallacies” that reduce audio to a mere accessory (ALTMAN, 1992). Within this perspective, the concept of audio-vision sustains an epistemological equivalence between sound and image: we do not “see”

and “hear” separately but perceive a trans-sensory whole in which sound can generate added value, guide causal interpretation, and reorganize the reading of the frame (CHION, 2019). This theoretical framework is central to the present study, as it repositions the soundtrack and ambient sounds as narrative operators rather than ornamental elements, thereby enabling a more rigorous discussion of sonic remediation.

Accordingly, this article argues that the soundtrack can enhance narrative texture through remediation, reconstructing the relationship between sound and image and reducing narrative tensions, provided that consistent and multimodal articulations are established.

To examine narrative remediation, this study considers *August Rush* as its object of analysis. The film was selected based on the premise that its music and ambient sounds function as dominant narrative resources capable of substituting verbal utterances with musical and environmental sound structures, thereby generating narrative architecture.

The dramatic progression of the film relies primarily on sonic experiences translated into images to convey the plot, foregrounding musicality as its organizing axis. The analysis originated from the perception that sonic remediation is expressively powerful; however, the success of a narrative ultimately depends on its consistent articulation across media, images, and signifying cues capable of sustaining more complex layers of meaning.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The term *remediation*, introduced by Bolter and Grusin (1999), was used to describe how one art form or medium is reused, altered, or reshaped by another. In the field of audiovisual production—and particularly in the film analyzed in this study—the theory of remediation allows for the understanding of how sound may assume narrative functions that were previously performed by the image or, more specifically, by verbal language.

Applying “remediation” (BOLTER; GRUSIN, 1999) within a single cinematic work requires clarifying a conceptual shift: here, remediation does not refer merely to “one medium replacing another” at the industrial level, but rather to the way a semiotic layer (sounds, music, noise, silence) reuses and reconfigures narrative functions historically associated with other layers (especially speech and certain forms of visual anchoring). In practical terms, the soundtrack may remediate dialogue by assuming tasks such as causal orientation, transition marking, affective state construction, and intention signaling—functions that, in more text-centered regimes, would be made explicit through verbal statements. This framework remains faithful to the core of the concept (reconfiguration through reuse and reintegration) while recognizing that cinema is already a hybrid form, integrated through audio-vision (CHION, 2019).

Manovich (2002) argues that modern digital media have accelerated the blending of expressive languages and that audiovisual systems are becoming increasingly integrated. Within this context, music certainly serves an illustrative function, but it also operates as a potentially active and often prominent element within discursivity, capable of organizing meaning and structuring the plot. Chion (1994) develops this perspective by demonstrating that sound reconfigures the reading of the image, producing a range of effects: affective synchronization, narrative causality, and dramatic intensification. However, he also emphasizes that audiovisual meaning does not emerge from the isolated autonomy of each language, but rather from the interaction between them.

To avoid an image-centered interpretation, this study also draws on Altman’s (1992) critique of the “fallacies” that naturalize sound as a mere appendage and, in parallel, on more recent contributions that systematize sound design as a central axis of meaning production. Kalinak (2015), for instance, highlights how dialogue, music, and sound effects operate collaboratively and transformatively in the construction of cinematic meaning, challenging the notion that sound merely “illustrates” what the image already conveys. Thus, the analysis of *August Rush* treats audio

as a structural component of narrative, capable of organizing attention, spatiality, and dramatic temporality.

Although this article initially approaches sound as a technical resource, the discussion advances toward understanding it as a primary semiotic agent in narrative construction, making this the argument to be consolidated throughout the study. This perspective also situates sound within a broader historical and cultural framework, acknowledging that its symbolic functions precede and sustain its contemporary narrative role. The development of sound and music became a cultural practice in prehistoric times, when such resources were used for hunting, communication, rituals, and the formation of social bonds.

The oldest musical instrument discovered in Europe—a flute made from bird and mammal bones—was found in caves and dates back more than 50,000 years (CONARD; MALINA; MÜNDEL, 2009). Music, as a medium of expression, extends beyond verbal language; it also functions as entertainment and cultural expression. Its technological foundation has evolved across generations. Whereas music was once performed exclusively through acoustic instruments, it is now widely shared in digital formats, particularly through streaming platforms (CHESKY; HENRIQUEZ, 2015).

Music first entered cinema as a soundtrack in the late nineteenth century, during the silent film era, when screenings were accompanied by live musical performances. Only in 1927 did synchronized soundtracks appear in films, such as *The Jazz Singer* (1927), directed by Alan Crosland (COOKE, 2008). Since then, music and sound in general have become fundamental to cinema and a means of remediating narratives, expanding layers of meaning and complementing or reshaping visual perception, often through elements more readily communicated through dialogue or even through the image itself. In doing so, soundtracks may convey conflict and indicate intention without the need for verbal articulation.

Regarding the transition from silent to sound cinema, it is important to move beyond the technical “arrival” of synchronized sound and consider the reconfiguration of industrial, aesthetic, and narrative practices.

Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson (1985) demonstrate that the stabilization of classical Hollywood cinema involved an integrated arrangement of production modes and stylistic conventions, in which sound altered editing patterns, staging, and performance—not as a mere addition, but as a systemic reorganization. This perspective supports the thesis that when sound assumes narrative prominence in *August Rush*, it does not merely decorate the image but operates coherent narrative shifts aligned with the audiovisual logic of cinema.

For example, in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Kubrick's decision not to use any of his own dialogue is counterbalanced by classical compositions that evoke grandeur and mystery (GORBMAN, 1987).

The following section presents the film *August Rush* and examines instances in which sound is employed to remediate the narrative and support its development.

### **Object of Analysis: Film August Rush**

This study focuses on the film *August Rush*, released in Brazil under the title *O Som do Coração*. The central narrative follows Evan, a ten-year-old boy whose dream of one day finding his parents sustains his imagination and aspirations. A dreamer and remarkably sensitive to sound, Evan believes that music will guide him to them. After the orphanage forbids him from pursuing his musical vocation, he ultimately runs away in search of his future.

Parallel to Evan's journey, the film also explores the trajectories of his parents, Lyla and Louis. Lyla is an acclaimed classical musician, while Louis is a rock singer. Their paths intersect briefly, and a fleeting yet consequential relationship results in Evan's conception. Lyla's father disapproves of the relationship and intervenes when an accident leads to a premature birth. Without Lyla's knowledge, he arranges for the child to be placed for adoption and falsely informs her that the baby died. Lyla remains unaware of the truth until years later, when her father confesses on his deathbed. From that moment on, she begins to hope for the possibility

of finding her son. Louis, having lost contact with Lyla, still loves her and hopes for a reunion, unaware that she has given birth to a child.

This study examines three scenes in which music and ambient sound assume a central narrative function: the opening sequence, the protagonist's arrival in New York City, and the composition of his musical work.

### **Opening sequence**

The film opens with the Warner Bros. logo, the company holding the rights to the work, followed by a fade-out accompanied by Evan's voice-over narration, the story's protagonist. He asks, "Listen, can you hear it?" as the opening credits begin to roll. He continues, "The music?" and adds, "I can hear it everywhere."

As his narration unfolds, background<sup>6</sup> sounds are introduced alongside images of a wheat field swaying in the wind. Evan's voice continues: "The music is all around us. All you have to do is open yourself up." At this moment, the boy appears in the middle of the field, concluding, "You just have to listen." The visual focus intensifies on the wheat, emphasizing the movement of the stalks in the breeze, accompanied by a louder and more impactful soundtrack. Immersed in this atmosphere, the boy gestures like a conductor, as if leading an orchestra. This bucolic scene is abruptly interrupted by the sound of the orphanage door opening. The scene described can be observed in Figure 1; one of Evan's friends runs out, attempting to escape from an abusive supervisor who demands to know Evan's whereabouts.

From an interpretive standpoint, the sequence mobilizes the notions of added value and audiovisual synchronization (*synchresis*): the soundtrack and the wind do not merely accompany the wheat field; rather, they construct the narrative hypothesis that Evan "hears" the world as music, anticipating his role as a mediator between environment and composition (CHION, 2019). Here, remediation appears as a partial substitution of verbal discourse: instead of explicitly explaining "who he is," the sonic texture invites the viewer to infer the character's mode of perception.

Figure 1 – Evan in the Wheat Field (00:00:00–00:02:08)



**Source:** Stylized drawing produced from a frame of the film *August Rush*, directed by Kirsten Sheridan (2007), originally in audiovisual format and transformed using a generative artificial intelligence tool (ChatGPT, 5.1 OpenAI).

### **Arrival in New York City**

Evan arrives in New York after hitching a ride with a truck driver. As they part ways, the man hands him a note containing useful contact information along with a few coins. The note is torn from Evan's hand by the wind and falls into a sewer grate. Startled, the boy begins to notice the surrounding sounds emerging from multiple sources: a bell, the subway, car horns, the wind, pigeons, as can be observed in Figure 2. He walks across a metal grate above the subway tunnel, imagining musical beats synchronized with each passing train, aligned with the joints of the tracks. A single step heightens his awareness of additional sounds: a chimney, a traffic light, a skateboard, a loudspeaker, a water jug, a mechanical broom, a whistle, a barking dog, a tire, a manhole cover, a revolving door, and electric welding. As he absorbs these noises, he imitates the gestures

of a conductor, his movements intensifying as new sounds arise from a bicycle, a flag, a siren, roller skates, welding sparks, a drill, a pigeon, and a plastic bag. Clearly, no sound escapes the boy's attention.

In this urban passage, sound editing functions as an operator of causality and rhythmic organization of space: dispersed noises are transformed

Figure 2 – Evan in New York (00:26:46–00:28:29)



**Source:** Stylized drawing produced from a frame of the film *August Rush*, directed by Kirsten Sheridan (2007), originally in audiovisual format and transformed using a generative artificial intelligence tool (ChatGPT, 5.1 OpenAI).

into “instruments” and begin to be perceived as part of a musical grammar. This constitutes a typical case of narrative expansion: the image provides anchoring (sources and actions), while sound reorganizes the scene as a cognitive-affective experience of discovery. The “breaking point” (the loss of the note) reveals the limit of remediation: without a clear visual or object-based anchor for the character’s future, audio alone cannot resolve all ambiguities of intention.

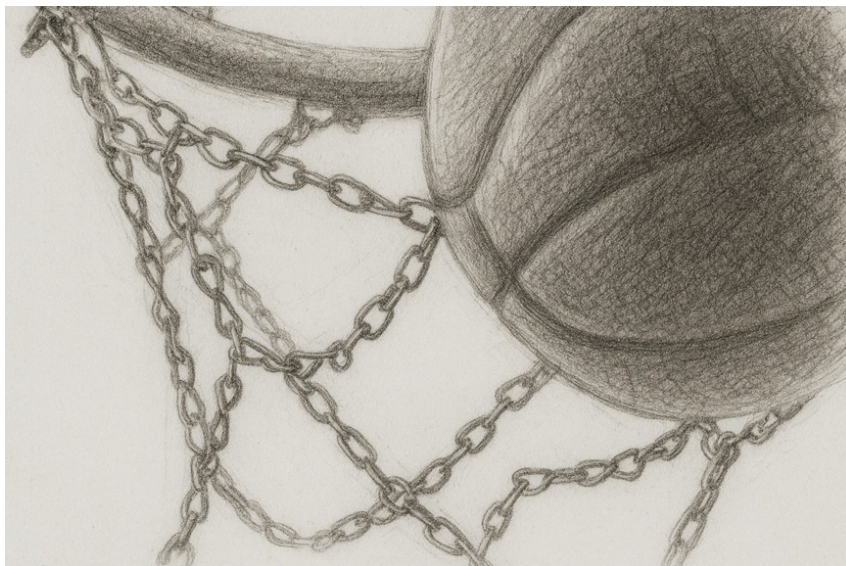
### **Composition of the rhapsody**

The boy encounters a small church choir and finds refuge in a hidden room. There, he begins composing music inspired by the sounds entering through the window—starting with the rhythmic bounce of a basketball striking the glass, accompanied by the metallic creaking of the hoop’s chains. The visual representation of this moment appears in Figure 3. Evan transcribes each note triggered by these everyday noises.

After completing his composition, he tapes the sheets to the walls of the room, which gradually become covered with musical notation, astonishing the girl who has sheltered him. When she returns from school and recognizes the boy’s talent, she is deeply impressed. She calls the reverend, who was previously unaware of Evan’s presence. Together, they observe him as he performs his composition on the church’s pipe organ.

Here, the film makes explicit the transition from ambient sound to composed sound: the bounce of the ball and the metallic resonance of the chains are “translated” into musical notes, rendering the mediating process visible. Remediation approaches a form of narrative transcoding: everyday noise is reinserted as musical material, thereby eliminating the need for explanatory dialogue regarding talent and vocation. At the same time, when the reverend and the girl resume speaking, the film suggests a hybrid regime (*audio-vision*): verbal language reappears to stabilize social interpretations (recognition, legitimation), while sound sustains the affective and procedural dimensions of the scene.

Figure 3 – Sounds That Inspire Evan to Compose (01:11:13–01:14:21)



**Source:** Stylized drawing produced from a frame of the film *August Rush*, directed by Kirsten Sheridan (2007), originally in audiovisual format and transformed using a generative artificial intelligence tool (ChatGPT, 5.1 OpenAI).

## METHODOLOGY

This research is grounded in a qualitative methodology and employs the close reading technique, applied to audiovisual narrative studies in accordance with the proposal of Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum (2011).

Three scenes from the film *August Rush* were selected as case studies for the application of this technique. The primary selection criterion was the extent to which sound substitutes for or enhances verbal dialogue, prioritizing scenes in which the soundtrack is explicitly linked to the narrative process. Thus, the three scenes were included because their narrative conditions sufficiently demonstrate the potential for speech to be maintained through visual cues while simultaneously communicating complex meanings and layers of significance.

The selected scenes, defined as units of analysis, derive from continuous narrative segments in which sound and image are directly articulated as the story unfolds. A structured analytical protocol was developed based on the following dimensions:

- Narrative function of sound;
- Sound-image relationship;
- Presence or absence of visual anchoring;
- Perceptual and emotional effects;
- Indicators of remediation according to Bolter and Grusin (1999).

All scenes were viewed at least ten times in order to minimize interpretive bias and increase analytical reliability.

The data were organized in a matrix to enable systematic comparison of recurring patterns and detailed scene analysis. This matrix included observable interface components such as voice-over narration, soundtrack, natural sounds, and classical music.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the Charts 1, 2 and 3, readers will identify the primary points of convergence and observe how narrative elements interact within them. The analysis also reveals how the story unfolds and which perceptions emerge through music and remediation.

Three fundamental characteristics that emerged from this study are as follows:

- The first may be termed “narrative substitution” (substitution), in which sound fully assumes the function of dialogue and drives the narrative without significant verbal support. In this case, the soundtrack becomes the primary mediator of meaning, articulating dramatic progression and emotional expression;
- The second is “narrative expansion” (complementation), whose distinguishing feature is the intensification of narrative meaning through the use of sound, although it still relies on visual anchors to ensure

Chart 1 – Close Reading: Evan in the Wheat Field

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>1st Reading</b> Introduction featuring voice-over narration, moving images, and a soundtrack combining natural sounds and classical music.</p>	<p>The film opens with a black screen and the voice-over narration of the protagonist, Evan, accompanied by the opening credits and a soundtrack blending the sound of wind with musical notes. The first images depict wheat stalks under sunlight and drifting clouds, while birdsong can be heard, followed by Evan's appearance in the field, moving in rhythm with the wind like a conductor. The soundtrack intensifies, evoking a classical concert that underscores his reverie, until it is abruptly interrupted by the sound and image of the orphanage door opening. Marked by the synchronization of sound and image, the sequence conveys a sense of nostalgia and tranquility.</p>
<p><b>2nd Reading</b> Background sound increases in volume as the scenes progress</p>	<p>This segment of the film reveals a bucolic setting that, combined with the soundtrack, leads the viewer into an immersive yet subtly unsettling experience, as the sounds gradually intensify in parallel with the protagonist's movements in rhythm with the swaying wheat stalks.</p>
<p><b>3rd Reading</b> There are no dialogue or additional visual graphic elements.</p>	<p>The viewer experiences a sense of tension while being immersed in the fullness of the scene and in the sounds that suggest something is about to unfold.</p>
<p><b>4th Reading</b> Images captured from ground-level and aerial perspectives, enhanced by effects that emphasize the movement of the wind.</p>	<p>The poetics of remediation appears particularly characteristic in this object, as sound and the soundtrack assume a central role, suggesting that beyond merely "playing" in the wheat field, the boy is "conducting" an orchestra in his imagination.</p>
<p><b>5th Reading</b> The viewer feels immersed in the musical "narrative."</p>	<p>There is no dialogue throughout the sequence; nevertheless, it is impossible to remain indifferent to the images and soundtrack.</p>
<p><b>6th Reading</b> User (viewer) engaged.</p>	<p>Closer shots of the wheat swaying in the wind arouse curiosity and create a sense of anticipation.</p>
<p><b>7th Reading</b> Visual appeal captivates the viewer.</p>	<p>The beauty and visual plasticity of the scenes place the viewer within the film, evoking a sensory desire to touch the wheat stalks.</p>
<p><b>8th Reading</b> The protagonist uses text (speech) as narrative and poses questions.</p>	<p>The plot invites the viewer to reflect on their present moment upon hearing Evan's questions about music. There appears to be an awakening toward reflection and contemplation.</p>
<p><b>9th Reading</b> Images make an impact and sound effects evoke emotions.</p>	<p>Those who have played in fields and experienced the wind may gain insights that encourage participation in the story or evoke memories of their own lived experiences.</p>

Continues...

### Chart 1 – Continuation

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>10th Reading</b> Synchronization between scenes and soundtrack enhances the user experience.</p>	<p>Even without reading the film’s synopsis, one can perceive through the scenes a strong message of connection and introspection. The viewer is led to reflect on life itself, regardless of the narrative developments that follow.</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

### Chart 2 – Close reading: Evan in New York

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>1st Reading</b> Rapid editing presenting different elements of the urban scene synchronized with the rhythm of the music.</p>	<p>After receiving a few coins from the man who drove him to New York, Evan walks attentively, captivated by the metal bells struck by the wind and by the sounds emerging from the subway tunnel. The train’s horn startles him, and the wind passing through the grates prompts him to follow, with subtle head movements, each train car moving along the tracks. Various sounds—from his own footsteps to the glide of a skateboard, machinery, whistles, and barking—organize themselves into an urban melody. Immersed in this soundscape, the boy behaves like a conductor in the midst of composition, until at the peak of his trance, he loses the note containing the contact of someone who might have helped him.</p>
<p><b>2nd Reading</b> Presence of something imminent. The use of blur around the boy may suggest a disconnection between the real world and his psychological experience.</p>	<p>The sound of bells at the beginning of the scene, combined with the image of the boy’s feet on the subway grate, conveys a sense of foreboding and captures the viewer’s attention. The sequence portrays a lost child, while the sounds and Evan’s expressions suggest that he is savoring the moment, immersed in imagination.</p>
<p><b>3rd Reading</b> The soundtrack amplifies emotions and communicates what the image alone cannot achieve.</p>	<p>The film situates the viewer within an urban setting familiar to most people, prompting reflection on what we fail to see or notice in such environments.</p>
<p><b>4th Reading</b> The composition of the scene, its framing, and Evan’s movements indicates his familiarity with the stimuli he receives.</p>	<p>There is no dialogue, yet the character’s gestures and the soundtrack composed of music and environmental sounds suggest that the boy uses his gift to create compositions mentally from the stimuli surrounding him.</p>

Continues...

Chart 2 – Continuation

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>5th Reading</b> Object: images and sounds.</p>	<p>It becomes evident that the object transforms the environment, as the narrative is understood even in the absence of spoken dialogue.</p>
<p><b>6th Reading</b> Cuts and transitions impact narrative fluidity.</p>	<p>Throughout the sequence, music remediates the narrative, guiding the character toward new challenges that arise with each step he takes through downtown New York.</p>
<p><b>7th Reading</b> Lack of interface design. It is not possible to fully grasp everything the author proposes solely through images and soundtrack.</p>	<p>It is noteworthy that the sounds are at times explicit in meaning, while at other moments they appear to leave the viewer with unresolved questions.</p>
<p><b>8th Reading</b> Moments of disconnection; lack of visual or auditory support; break in immersion.</p>	<p>When Evan looks at the skyscrapers (00:27:17), it is unclear whether he feels lost, joyful, indifferent, or whether he continues to “compose” in his imagination. His expression is entirely neutral. What is the music “saying” at this moment?</p>
<p><b>9th Reading</b> Clear and objective communication through scenes of explicit meaning.</p>	<p>When standing on the grate and noticing the subway (00:27:11), Evan moves his head in rhythm with the sounds he hears. This action, combined with the noise of the tracks, is edited to demonstrate that the boy is using the stimuli to pursue his musical purpose and imagine himself conducting or composing.</p>
<p><b>10th Reading</b> For improved application, it is suggested the manipulation of ambient sound and selective omission. Emphasize natural and inseparable sounds, such as footsteps, as well as artificially produced environmental sounds (e.g., factory noise or car engines). Assess how noise pollution interferes with and impairs human perception and cognition.</p>	<p>This experience invites reflection on the sounds that surround us and how they influence daily life. For the character, none go unnoticed; for us, most are ignored. What consequences might this entail? How do sounds transform environments? What kind of world would we have if there was less noise, if we listened more attentively, and if we communicated more effectively?</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Chart 3 – Close Reading: Sounds That Inspire Evan to Compose

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>1st Reading</b> High-volume sound mixing is used to enhance the scene and allow Evan to identify on the piano keys the same tones coming from outside.</p>	<p>Evan is hiding in a church room, where the girl who sheltered him lives. Seated at a desk and observing sheet music, he hears the sound of a ball striking the window. The boy becomes absorbed in the sounds coming from the basketball court. The noise of the hoop's chains and the bouncing ball are amplified, and he attempts to find the same pitch on the piano keys. He writes these notes into a score and thus begins to compose. The inspiration originates from the game, and the ambient noise is reinforced by a more immersive soundtrack.</p>
<p><b>2nd Reading</b> Explicit images ensure comprehension even without text.</p>	<p>Other sounds gain prominence with new elements such as the dragging of players' feet, the rope encouraging children to jump, and the creaking chains of a swing. In this segment, there is no dialogue, yet the images clearly indicate that Evan is composing.</p>
<p><b>3rd Reading</b> Music gives way to dialogue that advances the narrative.</p>	<p>The girl who had sheltered and hidden Evan in her room returns from school and is shocked to see the walls covered with sheet music containing his compositions. She runs to call the church's reverend.</p>
<p><b>4th Reading</b> Soundtrack that enhances imagination and stimulates creation.</p>	<p>There is a subliminal message suggesting that inspiration may arise from anywhere and from any sound. Meanwhile, Evan explores the church's interior and notices the pipe organ. He sits at the organ and is visibly impressed by the instrument.</p>
<p><b>5th Reading</b> Scenes with explicit understanding that require no additional support.</p>	<p>The boy begins to perform his composition and appears satisfied with the sounds produced by the organ.</p>
<p><b>6th Reading</b> Dialogue reemerges as the primary narrative driver, excluding music and/or environmental sounds.</p>	<p>Pulled by the girl, the reverend is led to the church's main hall, where she explains that she has been hiding a boy. She also tells him that she showed Evan musical scales and that he resembles a great composer the reverend had once mentioned. Here, dialogue reappears mainly to associate Evan's image with that of a classical music master.</p>
<p><b>7th Reading</b> Immersion through spectacle.</p>	<p>Upon arriving in the main hall, the two pause to admire the boy's talent as he performs his work with mastery.</p>
<p><b>8th Reading</b> Image remediates the narrative and assumes greater prominence than the soundtrack.</p>	<p>Unlike the two previous excerpts selected for analysis, in this segment, the images take on greater prominence, as they explicitly convey the author's intention by demonstrating that sounds stimulate the boy to compose.</p>

Continues...

Chart 3 – Continuation

Interface Aspects	Content and Remediation Analysis
<p><b>9th Reading</b> Sound design reinforces the understanding that it is possible to construct an artifact using music as a medium of remediation, provided that appropriate knowledge of style, arrangement, acoustics, and musical cognition is respected.</p>	<p>For more than three minutes, environmental sounds and the soundtrack sustain the viewer's engagement, who feels immersed in a well-crafted narrative, virtually without dialogue.</p>
<p><b>10th Reading</b> Few elements are lacking for complete immersion.</p>	<p>Music, as a medium that remediates the narrative, provides direction to the film's plot, suggesting that the older medium—text (character dialogue)—is entirely dispensable (or would be) in telling the story.</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

semantic clarity. Thus, sound enhances the expressive-signifying experience but does not sustain meaning entirely autonomously;

- The third is remediation of insufficiency (dependence), in which auditory sound cannot fully convey narrative content without iconographic or visual reinforcement. Consequently, the absence of clear visual cues generates interpretive ambiguities and reduces communicative effectiveness.

Empirically, these categorized modalities enabled the articulation of the data gathered in this specific study—through the close reading approach—with the theoretical positions of Chion (1994) and Bolter and Grusin (1999). The findings demonstrate that, beyond the possibility of autonomy, sonic remediation unfolds gradually and depends on multi-modal articulations.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article argues that the soundtrack may operate within narrative texture through remediation, thereby reducing the tension between

sound and image. The soundtrack supported narrative texture by substituting and expanding functions traditionally attributed to verbal dialogue, organizing dramatic progression, affective dimension, and plot comprehension through sonic articulations anchored in consistent visual cues.

In terms of contribution, the article proposes a delimited use of remediation to describe how sound reconfigures narrative functions internal to the film (particularly those traditionally verbalized), while acknowledging that the experience remains audiovisual and relational. As a limitation, it is recognized that sound autonomy is not “total” within classical narrative cinema: at various moments, intelligibility depends on visual anchoring and genre/style conventions (ALTMAN, 1992; CHION, 2019).

Therefore, it is suggested that the tension between sound and image is reduced because, in moments when sound assumes narrative prominence, a multimodal relationship of complementarity is established, which preserves semantic intelligibility, avoids interpretive ruptures, and ensures narrative cohesion.

Methodologically, this research proposes the integration of the close reading technique with the concept of remediation, constituting an analytical protocol that may be replicated. This contributes to greater rigor in qualitative audiovisual studies.

From a practical standpoint, the findings indicate that decisions related to sound design, mixing, and scoring should be planned in conjunction with visual grammar in order to ensure narrative clarity, semantic cohesion, and enhanced audience engagement.

Finally, future research is encouraged to apply this analytical model to other contexts, such as urban environments, commercial spaces, and digital platforms, investigating how sonic expressions influence behavior, aesthetic-affective experiences, and logical-cognitive interpretations.

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**Authors' contributions:** Cruz, P.P.: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – first draft, writing – revision and editing. Sousa, R.P.L.: writing – revision and editing, methodology, formal analysis. Fadel, L.M.: writing – revision and editing, methodology, formal analysis.

**Data availability statement:** All the data supporting the results of this study were published in the article itself.

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