Marvellous Noise and Modest Recording Instruments: Dada, Surrealism, and Early Sound Cinema

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Abstract

This thesis assesses the ways in which films related to Dada and Surrealism used sound techniques during the 1920s and 1930s. It argues that their audio-visual approaches were distinctive, and related to important concepts and strategies within the movements such as collage, juxtaposition, and the Surrealist ‘marvellous.’ Historical research is combined with close analysis and theoretical interpretation to examine the early sound film context in detail, while also bringing a new aural perspective to Dada and Surrealist cinema studies. The project addresses an important, yet neglected, part of film sound history, while also pushing art historical interpretation of these works beyond a long-held visual bias.

Dada and Surrealist cinema's heyday coincided with the period of transition from silent to sound film, and several filmmakers associated with these movements, including Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, Jean Cocteau, and Hans Richter, were at the forefront of this change, producing some of the earliest sound films in their countries of work. Audio-visual experimentation flourished during this period, providing opportunities for these and other filmmakers to try a range of provocative, idiosyncratic methods that prioritised irrationality and sensation.

Dada and Surrealist practices were inherently heterogeneous, and their soundtrack approaches were too, mixing silent and sound film methods: from using pre-existing gramophone accompaniments to creating composite sound and image collages, from remixing dance music to silencing the leading lady. Informed by the contemporary debates around asynchrony and counterpoint, I investigate these experiments to establish what Dada or Surrealism audio-visuality actually was.

This thesis is essentially a historical corrective, which questions assumptions about this film period, and reinterprets how Dada and Surrealist works fit into it. Case studies of works by Buñuel and Dalí, Cocteau, Richter, Man Ray, Len Lye, and Joseph Cornell illustrate discussions of pre-existing music use, audio collage techniques, and the role of voices. Sound is demonstrated to have been fundamental in creating the irrational, disorientating, or immersive experiences most valued in Dada and Surrealism film.
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For my husband Anthony and son Arthur,
my rock and my sunshine.
Introduction

It began with a mistake. Years ago, I attended a screening of the Surrealist classic *L’Âge d'or (The Golden Age, Buñuel and Dali, 1930)* at a prominent arthouse cinema. During that pre-DVD and streaming era, I was excited about this opportunity to see a seldom shown film. But about fifteen minutes in, I began to feel bored and rather disappointed. The film was entirely silent, and without any musical accompaniment it dragged tiresomely for its sixty-three minute duration. Daydreaming through it, I mentally noted *L’Âge d'or* as an overrated film, to be avoided unless accompanied by a live soundtrack.

Some ten years later, studying Dada and Surrealist film as part of a master’s degree in art history, I stumbled across a reference to *L’Âge d'or's* sound effects.¹ This discovery shocked and excited me. As a result of the earlier screening, I had always assumed *L’Âge d'or* was a silent film, and that Surrealism hadn't participated in the transition to sound. Only belatedly did I realise that I had seen the entire film with the sound switched off, and despite the packed auditorium, nobody had questioned this at the time. We had all deferred, that afternoon, to the presumed wisdom of the cinema staff. The assumption that old Surrealist films were completely silent had affected my understanding of Dada and Surrealism, corroborated by the scant attention given to sound in substantial studies such as Alain and Odette Virmaux's *Les Surréalistes et le cinéma*, Linda Williams's *Figures of Desire*, or Robert Short's *The Age of Gold*.²

When I finally experienced *L’Âge d'or* with its full soundtrack it shimmered into life with aggressive drum tattoos, a portmanteau of classical repertoire orchestrations, yells, barks, bells, and toilet flushes. With the audio switched off, it had been a tame and overlong sequence of disjointed images. Seen and heard in audio-visual entirety it jolted viewing expectations, revealing the muscular,

confrontational streak that resulted in its long prohibition in France from 1930 until 1981.

This thesis explores the use of sound in that film, and others associated with Dada and Surrealism, during the early sound period. It assesses the important contributions that music, speech and sound effects made to those films, identifying and analysing audio-visual strategies and approaches, and situating these in their cinematic and artistic contexts. The broad question I ask is whether such films contain a demonstrable Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuality. I argue that they do, using various methods that, while related to transition era practices, differ in their application, emphasising elements such as surprise, fragmentation, or subversion.

My research takes a revisionist approach to Dada and Surrealist film history, proposing that audio-visuals were an essential component. It approaches the material in two new ways. Firstly, by a historical re-assessment of the period and its films, addressing some of the elisions, assumptions and even errors concerning the films in existing scholarship. Secondly, I have adopted close audio-visual analysis techniques from modern film sound studies, providing a new, largely unexplored perspective on these films, and gaining a deeper understanding of how image and sound work together. This intervention shifts critical focus from the visual bias that has dominated interpretation for decades, towards acknowledging audio as an important creative element. In some cases, my research has uncovered audio-visual innovation that still awaits due recognition. In other places I have discovered a deeper level of audio-visual involvement from filmmakers than expected that challenges preconceptions about the artistry, randomness or definitiveness of the work. In every case, I have listened out for new ways to understand these films, and Dada and Surrealism in general, and to bring a sidelined area of art and film sound history centre stage.

Cinema was a major tool and inspiration within both Dada and Surrealism. Dada-related artist-filmmakers produced abstract and kinetic works such as Rhythmus 21 (Rhythm 21, Richter, 1921), Le Retour à la raison (The Return to Reason, Man Ray, 1923), Symphonie diagonale (Diagonal Symphony, Eggeling, 3

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1924), and *Anémic cinéma* (*Anaemic Cinema*, Duchamp, 1926). Such films explored optical sensation and critiqued visual representation, and shared a common interest with the contemporary avant-garde, in ‘capturing the sensation of physical movement.’ Other Dada-related films were less abstract, and introduced humour through illogical mock narratives, combined with a desire to surprise and provoke de-familiarisation. Films such as *Entr'acte (Intermission*, Clair, 1924) or *Vormittaggsspuk (Ghosts Before Breakfast*, Richter, 1928) displayed what Francis Picabia, *Entr'acte's* co-creator, called ‘the pleasure of life... the desire to burst out laughing.’

According to Paul Hammond, the Surrealist response to cinema was ‘passionate, poetic, Romantic.’ The challenge to perceptual and cultural norms demonstrated in Dada-related cinema mixed with Surrealism's prime interests in dreams and subconscious thought. Surrealism-related film continued to develop Dada strategies of narrative disruption and defamiliarisation, but with an increased use of recognisable film structures and representational imagery. The crossover from Dada to Surrealist film practice is blurry, sometimes pitched on the release of *Un Chien andalou (An Andalusian Dog*, Buñuel and Dali, 1929), but which actually built force before then through works such as *Filmstudie (Film Study*, Richter, 1926), *La Coquille et le clergyman (The Shell and the Clergyman*, Dulac, 1928), written by Antonin Artaud, and *L'Étoile de mer (The Starfish*, Man Ray, 1928), co-created with Robert Desnos. General Surrealist interest in cinema had developed much earlier, growing from enthusiastic spectatorship into film criticism and literature; as seen, for example, in articles such as Louis Aragon's 1918 ‘On Décour,’ or Philippe Soupault's 1924 ‘Cinema USA.’ It is also apparent in the proliferation of Surrealist-authored film scenarios during the mid-1920s, texts for imaginary films, developed from the ‘films racontés’ (‘told films’) publishing format popular during the period.

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8 Richard Abel, ‘Exploring the Discursive Field of the Surrealist Scenario Text,’ in Kuenzli, *Dada and Surrealist Film*. 
Surrealism considered film to be the ideal medium for linking conscious and unconscious modes of thought, a major Surrealist aspiration. The goal was to combine dreamlike and naturalistic experiences, rather than to transcribe dreams onto the screen. Jacques Brunius, filmmaker and avant-garde film chronicler, claimed that cinema possessed ‘an incomparable facility for crossing the bridge in both directions,’ allowing two-way exchanges between contradictory modes of understanding such as ‘action and speculation, common sense and utopia, psychology and the dream.’

Whether it was the experimental challenges of *Un Chien andalou* or mainstream Buster Keaton comedies or Hollywood musicals, cinema was considered a valuable medium for bridging contradictory states, and producing the subjective experiences considered most desirable by Surrealists.

André Breton, leader of the Paris-based Surrealist group, and author of its manifestos, described this cinematic power in his 1951 essay ‘As In A Wood,’ in which he stated ‘I think that what we valued most in it, to the point of taking no interest in anything else, was its power to disorient.’ Breton praised film’s magnetism and exhilarating effects, especially when encountered by chance. He also cited Jean Goudal's 1925 essay ‘Surrealism and Cinema,’ which suggested film spectatorship ‘corresponds exactly to a conscious hallucination.’ Goudal praised film's potential to repudiate logic, and mentioned the important concept of ‘the marvellous,’ an idealised transcendent surreal experience, usually precipitated by a random encounter or juxtaposition. While Goudal and Breton were dismissive of sound film in general, and nostalgic for the silent films of their own youth, casting the net wider reveals more variety of responses.

Dada/Surrealism-related films shared an ambition of defamiliarising social reality via various cinematic strategies. Rudolf Kuenzli identifies differences between their approaches however, arguing that while Dada films constantly defamiliarised through cinematic manipulation and resisting psychological ‘realism,’ Surrealist works exploited conventions of cinematic ‘realism’ with an aim.

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of disrupting this representation.\textsuperscript{14} Surrealist film from \textit{Un Chien andalou} onwards, Ian Christie suggests, relied on ‘procedures of subversion, rupture and the dysfunction of dominant narrative cinema.’\textsuperscript{15} In my opinion, the use of sound contributed to, and enhanced, such procedures. The introduction of audio increased the sensory impact of film, and provided more potential opportunities for manipulation and narrative disruption. The various ways in which various Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers did this is the subject of my investigation.

As chapter one discusses, there exists a longstanding visual and literary bias in Dada and Surrealist criticism, including film criticism. Art and film history have traditionally ignored listening in favour of visual interpretation. Until relatively recently, the soundtracks of the films studied here were largely ignored, and certainly not considered systematically or in their own right. Ramona Fotiade's summary of Surrealist film theory, for example, argues that it ‘concentrates on the essentially visual nature of the medium and reflects the influence of avant-garde painting and of early experiments in photography.’\textsuperscript{16} Surrealism in particular has been positioned as a literary and visual arts movement, following Breton's lead, whose \textit{Surrealism and Painting} (1929) declared hearing to be far inferior to vision, and music a confusing form which must be refused.\textsuperscript{17}

Martin Jay has explained this ocularcentric bias within Breton-led Surrealism as a way of distancing itself from preceding artistic and poetic movements that stressed musicality or aural performance, particularly Dada, with the aim of establishing a model of visionary revelation.\textsuperscript{18} Such bias has continued in the study of Surrealism-related film through the lens of art history. Despite the emergence in the late twentieth century of ‘new art histories’ which have widened contexts and interpretation, the dominant readings of art and art movements remain primarily visual. Art history, as Eric Fernie argues, is ‘a subject which has as its first defining asset the expertise of the eye... and as its second the \textit{concrete} character of its subject

\textsuperscript{14} Kuenzli, ‘Introduction,’ p. 10.
\textsuperscript{15} Ian Christie, ‘French Avant-garde Film in the Twenties: from “Specificity” to Surrealism,’ in \textit{Film as Film: Formal Experiment in Film 1910-1975} (London: Hayward Gallery and Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979), p. 44.
Traditionally, the study of Dada/Surrealism-related film has paid little attention to developing an expertise of the ear, or in considering non-concrete subject matter such as sound. Assessing art in terms of its aurality unsettles the dominance of the visual value ascribed to it, long supported by the surrounding culture of exhibition, commerce and criticism. As chapter one demonstrates, it is the more recent academic field of film sound studies that underpins my challenge to this visual bias.

This thesis forms the first large survey of audio-visual across different films related to Dada and Surrealism. It stakes new territory, bringing methods from screen and sound studies to an art historical subject. I have tried to achieve a balance throughout, not only in the back and forth exchanges inherent to interdisciplinary study, but also in the overlapping cinematic contexts surrounding these works. With this in mind, I not only discuss the historical avant-garde but also other, sometimes mainstream, films of the period, an approach which diverges from the often hermetic approach of avant-garde or experimental film studies.

My research argues for a recognised place for Dada/Surrealism-related soundtracks within art history and early sound film narratives. This thesis redresses the lack of recognition for the audio-visual diversity and innovation in these works, critiquing assumptions about early sound film and Dada/Surrealism-related cinema. Demonstrating the audio contribution to meaning and impact in these works changes our perception of what was actually innovative about them. Increased film sound awareness is not only relevant to my own academic niche, but has the potential to impact upon our wider aural experiences. An enhanced understanding of sound-image relations in screen arts can benefit our interpretation of audio-visuals beyond the screen, helping us access the ‘multisensory splendour’ buried beneath the dominant visual culture, which has been championed by academics studying the role of the senses in culture.

As my next chapter explains, the last thirty years have shown a steady increase in academic interest in aurality, especially in the area of film sound. In 1992, Rick Altman, one of the main trailblazers of film sound studies, made an

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appeal for the investigation of cinema's 'dark corners,' stressing that academics must 'broaden our scope' beyond the familiar areas 'if we want to understand the workings of film sound in its overall cultural context.' Apart from small-scale or single film analyses, there have been no integrated attempts at audio-visual analysis or contextualisation of Dada/Surrealism-related film to date. To do so here brings these curious, difficult to assimilate works into the narratives of early sound film.

Heterogeneity is a hallmark of Dada/Surrealism-related practice. It is impossible to define one unifying style or method of Dada or Surrealist visual art, and the same applies to its audio-visual approaches. Instead, I have investigated a cluster of inter-related techniques and tactics, which relate in turn to their wider cinematic and artistic contexts. Dada and Surrealism interest me because of their slippery diversity, their seductive contrariness; attempting to run by rules and manifestos they are at the same time unruly, heterogeneous to the core. This diversity applies especially to their films, and their audio-visuality. To be realistic, rather than seeking a neat definition of Dada audio-visuals or Surrealist audio-visuality, one must settle for the intriguing, multiple tendencies of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visualities, however less cut-and-dried this may seem.

The arrival of sound film is bookmarked in the popular imagination by the breakthrough success of The Jazz Singer (Crosland, 1927), although most film historians agree on a long, slow build-up of audio-visual cinema before this point. The transition era, when sound film took over from silent, was roughly coincident with the golden age of Surrealist film, and several filmmakers related to the movement, including Buñuel and Dali, Hans Richter, and Jean Cocteau, were active participants in the transition. The chronological scope of my thesis is between 1926 and 1937, a period roughly coincident to the introduction and then widespread adoption of synchronized sound film. My focus throughout is on films made within this period that responded to the introduction of sound, either by intentionally using or planning to use recorded sound, or by resisting standard uses of sound, as well as silently made films from this period that were later sonorised with permanent soundtracks by their directors.

Dada and Surrealism were diffuse, international artistic movements that evolved one into the other, and cannot be cleanly disentangled. Throughout the thesis I use the term Dada/Surrealism-related film that, although cumbersome, reflects the complexities of attribution and definition. Dada/Surrealism-related works overlap in terms of dates, practitioners and content, and also with the broader avant-garde scene within which they were produced, circulated, and discussed. Neither film nor art history scholarship agree on a definitive canon of Dada and/or Surrealist film. As Elsa Adamowicz argues, ‘the corpus of actual film production is relatively insubstantial,’ with even the classifications from Surrealists fluctuating over the years, ‘determined primarily by disputes and conjunctural strategies,’ as witnessed in the list of films in 1938’s *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* (*Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism*).23 Brunius's classic history of the period, *En marge du cinéma français*, divided avant-garde filmmaking into four stages, placing most Surrealist films in the final stage.24 It was concerned overall with national cinema however, and not the diffusion of Dada/Surrealism-related films beyond France. Other authorities, including Alain and Odette Virmaux, and Paul Hammond, differ in which films they class as Surrealist.25 The problems of attribution and contribution are manifold and, as Kuenzli points out, if we attempt to label such works ‘we realise that these connections are highly complex.’26 Inclusion may depend upon diverse, often conflicting, issues such as whether it was created by an official Surrealist group member, whether it featured in a Surrealist publication, who favoured it, where it was exhibited, or whether it was considered to have a Dada or Surrealist ‘sensibility.’ The only unequivocally Surrealist film was *L'Âge d'or*, a collective endeavour by the Paris Surrealist group, promoted in their literature, and launched with a collectively signed manifesto.27

Unable therefore to follow any existing agreed canon, for my own study I have made my own decisions regarding inclusion. I discuss *Les Mystères du château*

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26 Kuenzli, *Dada and Surrealist Film*, p. 1.

du dé (The Mysteries of the Castle of Dice, Man Ray, 1929), a film sometimes sidelined in Surrealism criticism, despite Man Ray's embedded involvement with Dada and Surrealism, as well as its Surrealism-associated exhibition history and subject matter.  

I also include, perhaps more controversially, Le Sang d'un poète (Blood of a Poet, Cocteau, 1930), an avant-garde classic that was, along with its creator, openly reviled by the Surrealist group, but misattributed abroad as Surrealist, and whose subject matter, stylistic approach, and reception are entwined with the movement. It is not my intent to argue whether these works, or films by Len Lye or Joseph Cornell which I also examine, are definitively Dada or Surrealist. Such a game of classification would prove little. There is a danger in establishing rigid categories of Dada and Surrealist film, when there was so much overlapping experimentation within the wider avant-garde. James Clifford's proposal of an expanded notion of Surrealism, which considers the ‘fellow travellers’ beyond the groups and schisms, is more helpful and rewarding here.

Following the traces of a ‘history of diffused Surrealism,’ less marked by partisan interests, opens the door to filmmakers who were associated with Dada and Surrealist exhibitions and concerns without being group ideologues.

Such an approach has many advantages, one of which is the potential to explore a conception of Surrealism less dominated by Breton and his explicit dislike of music. It also enables the assessment of films across national and group boundaries, to analyse audio-visual styles and structures, and to investigate the rich experimentation existing in the margins of Dada and Surrealism. A controlled expansion of Dada/Surrealism-related film permits the inclusion of approaches less acceptable within Breton's ‘mainstream’ of Surrealism, such as Cocteau's overtly homoerotic audio-visuality, Lye's musical kineticism, or audio-visual ideas Antonin Artaud drafted after his ‘excommunication’ from the Surrealist group in 1927.

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28 Michael Richardson, for example, dismisses Man Ray's films as ‘little more than home movies’ with only historical interest; Michael Richardson, Surrealism and Cinema (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006), p. 11.
31 Christie, ‘French Avant-Garde Film in the Twenties,’ p. 43.
This expansion has been carefully considered however, taking account of the historical specificities of Dada and Surrealism and early sound cinema.

The films chosen for my case studies vary in terms of style, genre, length, nationality, and scale, reflecting the heterogeneity that makes Dada and Surrealism fascinating to study but often difficult to pinpoint. Substantial emphasis is placed on L’Âge d’or, befitting its importance as a major Surrealist film and early sound feature. Where relevant I consider its influential predecessor Un Chien andalou, and also Buñuel's third film, Las Hurdes (The Hurdes, a.k.a. Land Without Bread, Buñuel, 1933), a scathing documentary with fewer direct links to Surrealism. As mentioned, Le Sang d’un poète has an intriguingly antagonistic relation to Surrealism, commissioned and funded alongside L’Âge d’or by the Vicomte de Noailles, and counted among France's earliest sound films.

I include Man Ray's short films Emak Bakia (Man Ray, 1926), L'Étoile de mer, and Les Mystères du château du dé, the latter also commissioned by de Noailles. Although filmed silently, these were intended to have musical accompaniment, and were later sonorised under Man Ray's instructions.\(^{33}\) Hans Richter's Alles Dreht Sich, Alles Bewegt Sich (Everything Turns, Everything Revolves, 1929) is also considered; it was not only Richter's first sound film, but one of Germany's first.\(^{34}\) It synthesised Dada and Surrealist approaches, producing an innovative combination of audio-visual montage and trickery also evident in Richter's later sonorisation of his other films from this period, Inflation (Richter, 1928), Every Day (Richter, 1929/1969), and Zweigroschenzauber (Richter, Two-Pence Magic 1930).

Len Lye's works from this period are studied, with Rainbow Dance (Lye, 1936) and Trade Tattoo (Lye, 1937) singled out for special consideration. Lye, a New Zealander by birth, exhibited paintings at the 1936 International Surrealist Exhibition in London, and his films were included in non-official screenings of ‘Surrealist’ films, but he was never a full member, feeling incompatible with

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Surrealism’s group mentality and overly literary approach.\(^{35}\) His hand-painted films, synched to dance music, reveal a dynamic approach exemplary of the cut-and-paste audio-visuality I argue as important within Dada/Surrealism-related early sound film.

Joseph Cornell is the final filmmaker I consider. An American artist only ever partially aligned with the movement, he was and remains frequently exhibited and discussed in Surrealist contexts. I analyse his seminal found-footage film *Rose Hobart* (circa 1936), which converted a talkie feature into a strangely oneiric form of silent film. These case studies are supported by Dada/Surrealism-related texts, such as unfilmed scenarios by Artaud and Brunius, which demonstrated related attitudes towards film sound.

In order to construct a legible concept of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuality within the scope of a doctoral project it has been necessary to focus my research on three key areas - the use of pre-existing music, audio-visual collage, and attitudes to speech. As a result, earlier important but intentionally-silent Dada-related films, including *Le Retour à la raison, Anémic cinema*, and *La Coquille et le clergymen*, or films that had original scores for live performance, such as *Entr'acte* and *Ballet mécanique* (*Mechanical Ballet*, Léger and Murphy, 1924), with their live scores by Erik Satie and George Antheil respectively, are less germane to my investigation. Jean Painlevé’s extraordinary science documentaries from this period, including his most successful film *L’Hippocampe* (*The Seahorse*, Painlevé, 1934), scored by Darius Milhaud, could not be covered here, although certainly deserve future examination.\(^ {36}\) Also excluded are works with lost scores, such as Lye's *Tusalava* (Lye, 1929) or Richter's *Vormittagsspuk*.

The period this thesis covers was rich in terms of audio-visual experimentation, but also in terms of expressing Dada/Surrealism-related themes. As the 1930s progressed, increasing right-wing censorship, economic uncertainty, rising costs and logistics necessitated by sound film production, and the growth of fascism culminating in World War Two, all contributed to a decline in Dada/Surrealism-

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\(^{35}\) For example, Lye’s work was included in a ‘season of surrealist and avant-garde film’ at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, in 1937; Roger Horrocks, *Len Lye: A Biography* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), p. 150.

related film production and the ciné-clubs and specialist cinemas upon which they depended for exhibition. Much non-mainstream filmmaking shifted towards documentary practices, socially conscious filmmaking and advertising. While many Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers including Buñuel, Lye, Richter, as well as Brunius, Jean Painlevé, and Humphrey Jennings, worked within these fields, others such as Cocteau and Man Ray temporarily, or even permanently, abandoned filmmaking.

Concentration on this delineated period unfortunately necessitates excluding Dada/Surrealism-related films produced after 1937, when sound was firmly established. This means ignoring innovative documentaries such as Humphrey Jennings Spare Time (Jennings, 1939) and Listen to Britain (Jennings, 1942) or Jacques Brunius's Violons d'Ingres (Violins of Ingres, Brunius, 1937), or Richter's Dada/Surrealist portmanteau feature Dreams That Money Can Buy (Richter, 1947). Such films would detract from a research focus on the sometimes rough and ready experimentation of the early years of sound film. Works of the late 1930s and beyond, while perhaps demonstrating related approaches to my findings, do not share the irregular, often artisan early sound experimentation that interests me here.

My research methodology has been shaped by the project's interdisciplinary nature, and by an awareness of Altman's approach of exploring the ‘diverse discursive layers’ of film texts in relation to their contexts. Close audio-visual readings are central to my discussion, but supported by historical contextualisation and theoretical analysis, in view of an integrated approach to sound film studies. This approach, although challenging in terms of managing separate threads, fills a critical gap between existing small-scale audio-visual studies and larger art or film histories that only footnote sound. Using cinema and artist archives in the UK, France and North America, my research includes a variety of supporting evidence, including shooting scripts, correspondence, record catalogues, press books, and historical journals, which has deepened my understanding of both the transition era and my specific case studies. However, while historical and archival, my study is also theoretical. It is important to my approach that we understand how audio-visuals work in these films, and consider their effects. Audio-visual analysis methods gleaned from the previous three decades of film sound studies, particularly

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the work of Michel Chion and Altman, have enabled me to construct new ways of discussing Dada/Surrealism-related cinema.

Several difficulties have emerged when studying Dada/Surrealism-related film through the lens (or rather earpiece) of early film sound, not least the difficulty of accessing reliable sources of archival or historical information. The diffuse internationalism of these movements, the range of nationalities of my chosen filmmakers, and the disruptions of World War Two, all present major problems. Film prints and versions are often multiple and differing, with no consensus on originals. Archives are piecemeal, and a fuller study would necessitate worldwide travel, with no guarantee of results. In addition, the variety of languages associated with my case studies (mainly English, French, German, and Spanish) posed a greater linguistic challenge than was possible within the limits of PhD study. For pragmatic reasons I have predominantly focussed on archives and research in English and French. Had my overall approach been entirely historical or industrial, these obstacles would perhaps have been more problematic, but less so when mixing history with theoretical investigation. Depending on subject matter, certain thesis chapters have a greater historical bent, while others are more theoretically inclined.

Chapter one introduces some of the major critical concepts relevant to this thesis. I position my own study of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuality against the existing literature in the fields of Dada and Surrealism studies, film sound studies, and film music studies, highlighting the need for a cross-disciplinary, cross-work study. I summarise aurality within Dada and Surrealism more generally, and specifically locate texts within Dada/Surrealism-related discourse dealing with cinema sound, identifying significant ideas. This chapter also contains critical explanations of important concepts within early sound film and Dada and Surrealism. The prevalence of counterpoint and asynchrony within early sound film discourse is discussed, establishing its importance in distinguishing serious artistic film from supposedly less prestigious commercial cinema. Asynchrony dominated film sound discussions during the transition period, and was an important issue within the films I study. I ask if these works are truly distinctive, or merely representative of standard artistic film practice of their time. I also discuss ‘the marvellous,’ a prominent Surrealist concept repeatedly used by Breton and other Surrealist writers to describe a much prized, transcendent subjective experience. The ‘marvellous noise’ of my title is a nod to this term, and a running question
throughout the thesis is whether or not these films provided, or tried to provide, access to such an experience via their audio-visuals.

The second chapter, ‘Readymade Soundtracks,’ explores the use of pre-existing music, mostly in the form of gramophone records, to soundtrack Dada/Surrealism-related films. Accompanying silent films with pre-existing music was a common practice throughout the silent and transition era, and I consider the implications of supposedly radical or experimental films using such a mainstream practice. I analyse the use of well-known classical music in L’Âge d’or and Las Hurdes, the eclectic choices Man Ray made for some of his silent films, and Joseph Cornell's distinctive approach to mood and music in Rose Hobart. These are all interpreted comparatively to major concepts within Dada and Surrealism - the readymade, objective chance, and the use of bricolage. Shifting perspective of these terms from visual or literary applications to audio-visual ones encourages a fresh take on these works.

In ‘Cut and Paste Cinema,’ my third chapter, I evaluate the uses of audio-visual collage and juxtaposition within Dada/Surrealism-related filmmaking, arguing that they push beyond contemporary interests in asynchrony and counterpoint. I define two broad collage strategies: audio-visual combination, where sounds were added to existing visuals, and audio-visual manipulation, where the soundtrack itself was cut or audibly manipulated. The two early sound features L’Âge d’or and Le Sang d’un poète provide examples of the first method, presenting strange combinations of sound and image that brazenly rejected cinematic verisimilitude. In terms of audio-visual manipulation I explore the pioneering work of Len Lye who, aided by his sound editor Jack Ellit, created what could potentially be the first dance remix. In this category we also encounter Richter's extraordinary Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich, which radically treated sound and image as equally plastic, creating radical audio-visual montage that deliberately covets ambiguity and surprising sensation.

In the fourth chapter, ‘Spoken Words, Silent Mouths,’ I turn my attention to speech in Dada/Surrealism-related films. I explore relationships between Surrealist ideas around orality, such as the concept of a ‘Surrealist voice,’ suggesting that certain films related to these through their representations of voice and body. Dada/Surrealism-related early sound films tended to disrupt or avoid conventions of narrative dialogue that prioritised clarity and character authenticity. Discussion of
the unconventional uses of spoken language in *L’Âge d'or* are followed by analysis of an instance of deliberate voice-body separation in the same film, using overdubbing, of screen voices and bodies, an idea also touched upon in scenarios by Artaud and Brunius. The final section studies the use of mute characters in *Rose Hobart* and *Le Sang d'un poète*. I suggest that the representations of voiceless characters in these films not only challenged the customs of the talkies, but also that this silence was integral to the films' depictions of romantic fantasy or sexual desire. My final chapter summarises my research findings, drawing conclusions and pointing out possible directions for future study.
Chapter One

Concepts and Contexts of Dada/Surrealism-related Audio-visuality

This thesis constitutes the first sustained analysis of audio-visuals in Dada/Surrealism-related film across multiple works. My overall argument, and conviction, is that Dada/Surrealism-related films hold an important, yet overlooked, place within early film sound history, with innovative approaches to sound that distinguished them from their contemporaries. This chapter reviews the academic and historical contexts behind my research, and considers where this project fits, what it adds, and why it might be needed. It reviews the existing scholarship on the subject, and draws out some of the major issues that impact on my findings. It is both a literature review and a conceptual overview. It is not my intent to provide here a full history of the transition era, nor a detailed account of any one nation's conversion period. There are many excellent books that already cover this subject, often using a framework of national cinema, for example Donald Crafton's *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound 1926-1931* or Charles O'Brien's *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the US*. 

Instead, I have combined information and scholarship from the overlapping areas of my interdisciplinary research – art history, film studies, film sound studies, and film music studies. Wherever possible, I have tried to maintain a balance between historical research that enables a deeper understanding of the period, and theoretical methods, largely derived from film sound studies, which support close audio-visual analysis.

I begin by surveying the related texts and concepts within and around Dada and Surrealism. First of all, I assess texts that directly engaged with the issue of film sound, gathering together observations not previously considered alongside one another, after which my focus expands towards a wider discussion of Dada/Surrealism-related aurality. This leads to a short consideration of ‘the

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marvellous,’ a key concept within Surrealism referred to throughout the course of this thesis as a potentially audio-visual experience. I follow this with an assessment of the relevant academic research to date covering Dada and Surrealist film, with initial focus on the small percentage that has considered sound.

The remaining sections move beyond the immediate context of Dada and Surrealism, to introduce issues of early film sound that help us understand my chosen case studies within their contemporary context, and consider them in a broader cinematic perspective. My main focus is on asynchrony and counterpoint, in recognition of their methodological importance during the early sound period, and their relevance to these films. The final part of the chapter surveys the three main areas of existing film sound scholarship that have impacted on my own research – film sound history, film sound theory, and film music studies. My research method has been to integrate these approaches wherever possible, to provide a new perspective on the early sound period.

**Surrealist Texts on Film Sound**

During the transition period, references to film sound were not found in the official Surrealist journals *La révolution surréaliste* (1924-1929) and *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930-1933). Instead, small texts and essays by filmmakers and writers associated with the movements were published in a variety of other journals and newspapers, including *Bifur* (1929-1931), *Le Soir* (1887-present), and the Surrealism-related *Documents* (1929-1930). Many of these were critical, if not of sound in principle than certainly of its applications, suggesting it would push cinema towards banal realism, and rob spectators of the oneiric experience of silent film. For example, Robert Desnos's 1928 article in *Le Soir*, ‘Films parlants,’ claimed that talkies threatened cinema’s connection to dreams, thereby somehow endangering individuality and liberty.39 ‘Surrealism and Cinema,’ written by Jean Goudal in 1925, declared that synchronized sound would damage the essential artificiality of cinematic Surrealism, and plunge it detrimentally into realism.40

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40 Goudal, ‘Surrealism and Cinema.’
Natural history filmmaker Jean Painlevé, who later embraced sound, wrote at the time ‘I am an opponent of current talking film and all the anti-cinematographic horrors it leads to.’ 41 Even after the conversion period a Surrealist ideal of silent film spectatorship, that would absorb a spectator into a situation midway between dreaming and wakefulness, turned up in texts such as Jacques Brunius's *En marge du cinéma français* (completed in 1947), André Breton's 1951 ‘As In A Wood,’ or Joseph Cornell’s 1941 essay ‘“Enchanted Wanderer”: Excerpt from a Journey Album for Hedy Lamarr.’ 42

This negativity was part of a wider avant-garde resistance to sound film, apparent in the responses from prominent filmmakers including Germaine Dulac and Marcel l'Herbier, who identified with film as an art form that used a silent film grammar conceptualised around visual rhythm. 43 Some of this hostility was due to economic and artistic dependence on artisan production scales and the supportive networks of ciné-clubs and film societies, without easy access to the resources and finances necessary for making and showing sound films. 44

Not all Dada/Surrealism-related texts were anti-sound, however. Some texts dated from the transition period itself, while others were penned at a later date, and either testified to audio-visual interest, or contained suggestions for audio-visual creativity that would develop ideas of asynchrony. While most of these, in common with the ‘Statement on Sound’ written by Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, promoted audio-visual asynchrony and freedom, the Dada/Surrealism-related texts tended more towards aims of disorientation and anti-rationality, effects developed in the films themselves. 45

While unequivocal support was rare, some figures championed a creative audio-visual approach, often emphasising the potential for cinematic disorientation, illogicality, or sensory immersion. Michel Leiris penned enthusiastic support in a

1929 *Documents* article about talkies. Dismissing ‘narrow-minded’ forecasters of ‘the end of cinema,’ he celebrated sound film's sensory potential:

we can at last allow ourselves to be possessed body and soul by scenes of ardent sensuality, cast adrift on the raft of voices while everything collapses around us except perhaps, a troubling movement of lip or throat, a trembling of fingertips, an oracular speech issuing from the mouth of an amorous woman, with the heart-rending accent of the mountains. 46

Man Ray also showed consistent interest in a sensory cinema, going against the stereotypes of silent art film, as he stated in 1951:

as for being a purist to the extent of preferring old, silent, black-and-white film, this criticism is purely arbitrary because I insisted from the start on sound accompaniment, longed for the use of color and three-dimensions, even hoped for the addition of the sensations of warmth, cold, taste, and smell to film, so that the spectator, coming out into the fresh air at last, could be totally in enjoyment of all his senses, with the added advantage of being the principal actor! 47

One of the most distinctive and developed arguments came from Benjamin Fondane, a Romanian writer affiliated with the Paris Surrealist group during its early years. In a 1930 *Bifur* article, ‘From Silent to Talkie: the Rise and Fall of the Cinema,’ Fondane condemned the introduction of sound as a ‘terrible blow’ to cinema. 48 Like many of his contemporaries, Fondane differentiated between sound films and talking films, considering the script-bound theatricals of the latter to hold less artistic value. 49 Fondane blamed sound for immobilising film imagery (early sound film required fixed microphones and heavy, almost static cameras) and paralysing the visual film grammar of montage. Bemoaning early sound film's shortcomings, including an over-emphasis on speech, lack of rhythm, and tendency towards audio-visual reduplication (showing an image with its matching sound), Fondane suggested a few audio-visual methods in retaliation.

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His two main audio-visual proposals were ‘superimposition’ and ‘arbitrary’ sound. The former would translate into audio terms the commonly used visual device of simultaneously showing multiple images. Different sounds could be superimposed into an existing scene, suggesting objects or locations from outside the frame, perhaps relating metonymically or metaphorically with the scene to provide extra levels of information. Most of Fondane's examples differed little from those given by the Soviet directors in the ‘Statement on Sound,’ or Pudovkin's 1929 ‘Asynchronism as a Principle of Sound Film.’ They included off-screen, diegetically related sounds (‘an automobile that arrives and is not seen’), ironic contrast (‘the sobbing of an abandoned woman, heard with the image of the happy couple going off’), and audio-visual metaphor, to the point of pathetic fallacy (‘the noise of ocean surf, in a scene of a stormy family argument’). Fondane's most radical suggestion was ‘the noise of a glass that breaks in a shot of a man whose happiness is destroyed and is remembering,’ suggesting a non-literal, metaphoric or poetic use of sound.

Audio-visual ‘superimpositions’ such as these are fairly easy to locate in early sound cinema, particularly in the most acclaimed works. They occurred in the brawl backed by the sound of a rugby match in Le Million (The Million, Clair, 1931), in offscreen music spilling through in Der blaue Engel (The Blue Angel, von Sternberg, 1930), and the audio highlighting of the word ‘knife’ conveying subjective guilt in Blackmail (Hitchcock, 1929), for example. But in Dada/Surrealism-related films examples of audio-visual ‘superimposition’ include unseen cowbells, wind and music combining in a mirror in L'Âge d'or, the reverberations of rubbed glass and engine noise accompanying an angel in Le Sang d'un poète, or animal roars when men shake hands in Zweigroschenzauber. In these films, audio-visual combinations or ‘superimpositions’ functioned less logically or legibly. They increased impact rather than expanded or explained the narrative. In this way, audio-visuals created a more open, and less readable, film. This was as Fondane advocated when he wrote ‘words and noises are useable for creating a new

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50 Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53.
51 Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, ‘Statement on Sound’; V.I. Pudovkin, ‘Asynchronism as a Principle of Sound Film,’ trans. Marie Seton and Ivor Montagu, in Weis and Belton, Film Sound.
52 Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53. The use of orchestral instruments to imitate wind was later used in Rapt (Kirsanoff, 1934), whose screenplay adaptation was written by Fondane.
53 Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie’, p. 53.
art only if they agree to collaborate toward the image's intensity, its thickening,’ and will be returned to in chapter three.  

Arbitrariness, Fondane's other audio-visual principle, was ‘the only track available to film,’ and essential for art. Freedom, dislocation even, between sound and image was admirable, while sonic reiteration of visuals was the worst possible use of sound film. Sound should be used sparingly, he wrote, preferably in the form of ‘unnatural, heightened or deformed sound or speech.’ He called for sound film to contrast silence with speech and noise to create new cinematic experiences ‘capable of making us drunk with new intoxications.’  

While Fondane's article did not directly discuss Dada or Surrealism, which he referred to elsewhere as dying movements, and his dislike of film sound intensified further over the years, his suggestions in this essay offered practical resistance against the filmed-theatre style of early sound film, with strategies to continue the poetic openness valued in silent films.

Robert Desnos also recommended dislocation between sound and image, this time between voice and body. In ‘Projet de réalisation d'opéras-films’ (‘Project to Make Opera-Films’), a rare direct comment on film sound by a Surrealist writer, Desnos criticised the deplorable state of the sound film, the lack of sonic interest from directors, and a dearth of interesting sound gags. The best he could mention was a sequence from Jean de la lune (Choux, 1931), in which the repeated rhythm of the name ‘Jean de la lune’ is heard in a train's rhythm, taking on disproportionate importance. His praise for this scene reflected his own unrealised notes for sound effects, indicated on a manuscript copy of L'Étoile de mer (1928), where he wrote ‘during the moment of the train and the boat; silence cut by indistinct cries and spaces: ah! ah.’

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54 Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53.
55 Fondane, p. 53.
57 Robert Desnos, ‘Projet de réalisation d'opéras-films,’ in Les Rayons et les ombres, cinéma. This particular text is undated.
59 Bouhours and de Haas, Man Ray, p. 63.
Desnos, who had a career in radio broadcasting throughout the 1930s, placed sound at the forefront of his conception of opera-film.\textsuperscript{60} He made the striking suggestion to use dubbing to overcome the difficulty of finding leads with equal singing and acting abilities, effectively separating voice and body.\textsuperscript{61} Using ‘invisible’ voices would be pragmatic, and provide consistent quality between audio and visuals. Such a proposition became not only standard in Hollywood musicals, famously lampooned in Singin’ in the Rain (Donen, 1952), but taken to stylistic extremes in the film of Wagner's Parsifal (Syberberg, 1982), in which the title role was mimed by multiple actors, both male and female. While Desnos's audio-visual suggestions were more practical than radical, his interest in the separate treatment of voice and body are noteworthy in line with issues I return to in chapter four.

The final text I consider is ‘Another Kind of Cinema,’ written in 1955 by the Belgian Surrealist writer, artist and filmmaker Marcel Mariën.\textsuperscript{62} Although obviously written outside the transition period, Mariën's critique is notable because of its Surrealist take on film sound, tracing current mediocrity to the arrival of the talkies. Like Fondate before him, Mariën criticised sound film's ‘immobility,’ and the lack of chance and spontaneity involved in its creation, calling a sound film director ‘the servile executor’ of a ‘theoretical schema.’ In his view, editing was the main focus of cinema, and his text provided practical suggestions for ‘a radical transformation in present working methods’ by non-parallel, antagonistic editing of audio and visuals. Mariën's proposals to ‘revitalize’ film were revolutionary in tone, and intended to open up film production to anyone, however amateur. His zeal related to his conviction that film images and sounds are part of life, forming ‘a sort of satellite of our existence,’ and therefore revitalising cinema would also revitalise life.\textsuperscript{63}

By recycling pre-existing or found footage, augmenting with original material only where needed, chance could be a fundamental method of film construction after shooting. Calling it ‘the new alchemy,’ Mariën assured that all


\textsuperscript{61} Desnos, ‘Projet de réalisation d'opéras-films,’ p. 303.


\textsuperscript{63} Mariën, ‘Another Kind of Cinema,’ pp. 138-46.
visual material could be reformed into an assemblage (‘everything is useful, 
*everything is good*’), an ‘intervention’ with just a Moviola, a sound recorder, and a 
pair of scissors. The start of the process described resembles film sound theorist 
Michel Chion's ‘masking’ method for audio-visual analysis, in which a film's sound 
and images are listened to or viewed in isolation. Mariën, however, doesn't 
propose analysis, but re-construction: 

stripped of the sound track, each one of the film's visual elements would be 
studied in silent projection, particularly those sequences conserving emotional 
residues or charged with intellectual significance. From this operation a new 
script, modifying the interrelationships of people or objects, could be elaborated. 
The new continuity could then be enriched with appropriate dialogue.

According to Mariën, this was only one possible method among thousands. 
One could ‘proceed inversely from the dialogue and sound track,’ keeping it intact, 
and construct instead a visual montage of ‘borrowed’ images. This collage, or 
assemblage, approach discarded traditional, logical narrative structures while 
retaining ‘emotional effects.’ Another expressed aim was the disassembling of 
cinematic constructions of character, with audio-visual suggestions including ‘the 
destruction of a given character's identity by constant modifications of voice and 
dialogue over his visage in a single shot, or a rigorously invariable voice issuing 
from ten different mouths.’ Again, one notices a fierce resistance against 
representing unified characters and bodies, with believably synchronised voices, in 
an approach reminiscent of Fondane's recommendations of audio modification, and 
Desnos's notes on overdubbing. Such attitudes are of importance in considering 
Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuality, and will be expanded further in chapter four.

**Dada and Surrealist Aurality and Marvellous Noise**

André Breton's lack of interest, indeed disapproval, of music, is well documented. 
His clearest rejection came in 1928's *Surrealism and Painting*:

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64 Mariën, ‘Another Kind of Cinema,’ pp.142-43. 
67 Mariën, p. 143.
I shall never cease to refuse musical expression, the most deeply confusing of all forms. Auditive images, in fact, are inferior to visual images not only in clarity but also in strictness, and, with all due respect to a few melomaniacs, they are not destined to strengthen the idea of human greatness.68

*Surrealism and Painting* marked a turning point in conceptualising Surrealism as a visual art movement, building on its literary foundations. In it, Breton cited ‘No Music,’ an essay by the painter and Surrealist ‘precursor’ Giorgio de Chirico, which also argued for the superiority of visual arts, declaring ‘no music: music cannot express the essence of sensation.’69 Breton partly retracted his position in ‘Silence Is Golden,’ published in *Modern Music* in 1946, confessing his ignorance of music, and suggesting a ‘reunification’ of sound, sight, and poetry via the medium of song.70 This essay's title and literary bias suggested little real change of heart, however. Warnings, rather than anti-music statements per se, were also a main featured in ‘Music is Dangerous,’ an extended essay written in 1929 by Belgian Surrealist Paul Nougé.71

Such strong dismissals of sound and music were in keeping with attempts to distinguish Surrealism from Dada (many of the Surrealists having been active Dada participants) and establish it as an autonomous group. Dada, particularly in its Zurich and Paris incarnations from 1916 and 1920 respectively, had been particularly performance-based, and both Christopher Schiff and Annabelle Melzer have documented the extent to which it used sound.72 Dada sonic ideas overlapped with Futurist ideas that developed from 1913 onwards, including uses of noise, simultaneous recitations, and experimental compositions. Live Dada was a noisy affair, and anecdotal recollections of performances at Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire mention made-up languages, enthusiastic drumming sessions, and sound effects that included hiccups, meows, cowbells and klaxons, sharing stage with renditions of

71 Paul Nougé, ‘Music Is Dangerous,’ *View*, no. 7 (December 1946).
Russian folk songs, Rachmaninoff, and Schoenberg. Of this bright, brief scene, Melzer writes that the emphasis was clearly on sound rather than meaning.\textsuperscript{73} An unpredictable use of aural effects vitalised Dada audiences, provoking participation – at the Cabaret Voltaire ‘we made our good citizens roar like lions,’ according to co-founder Marcel Janco.\textsuperscript{74}

By the late-teens, sonic experimentation had spread onto Parisian stages. \textit{Parade} (1917), a Ballet Russes co-production involving Erik Satie, Pablo Picasso and Jean Cocteau, and Guillaume Apollinaire’s play \textit{Les Mamelles de Tirésias} (\textit{The Breasts of Tiresias}, produced 1917) both featured separate scores for music and noise effects, planning strange and provocative sounds.\textsuperscript{75} Paris Dada events, or ‘soirées,’ began in 1920, continuing the trend towards the audio experimentation characteristic of both Zurich Dada and the wider contemporary avant-garde. Sonic eclecticism was again in evidence, and more conventional musical performances alternated with poetry recitations drowned out by electric bells, or items such as Tristan Tzara's ‘Vaseline symphonique’ (‘Symphonic Vaseline,’ 1920) in which twenty people sang ascending scales with different syllables, a piece whose ‘wanton musicality’ caused Breton to storm outside, ‘grinding his teeth.’\textsuperscript{76}

However, much of this audio experimentation was abandoned in the transition from Dada to Surrealism, which was marked by the appearance of \textit{La Révolution surréaliste} and Breton's ‘Manifesto of Surrealism’ in 1924, and the switch of priorities towards literature, automatism, the subconscious and, later, visual art.\textsuperscript{77} Surrealist interest in music was driven underground, with tensions existing between official Surrealist interests and actual Surrealism-related practice. Trained musicians involved in the movement maintained absurd double-lives, as was the case with Belgian Surrealists, E.L.T. Mesens and André Souris.\textsuperscript{78} Man Ray described keeping his love of music secret during this period:

\begin{quote}
in my studio I installed the radio, which played while I worked, except when I had a visit from one of my Surrealist friends. The Surrealists disapproved of
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item Melzer, \textit{Latest Rage the Big Drum}, pp.30-77.
\item Melzer, p. 43.
\item Schiff, ‘Surrealism Banging on the Windowpane,’ p. 149.
\item Schiff, p. 152.
\item Schiff, ‘Surrealism Banging on the Windowpane,’ p. 175.
\end{footnotes}
music – there were no musicians in the group – since they were considered of an inferior mentality. 79

Nonetheless, Man Ray was not a lone enthusiast. Among other Surrealist group members, Michel Leiris, Robert Desnos, Paul Éluard and André Masson also enjoyed, and were inspired by, jazz. 80 Outside of Breton's ranks, interest in music was strong among the Surrealism-related avant-garde, as seen in the frequent music articles that appeared in Documents, or in Jean Cocteau's drumming appearances at legendary cabaret Le Boeuf sur le toit (The Ox on the Roof) and close involvement with the group of contemporary French composers nicknamed Les Six. 81

Surrealist music, or music within Surrealism (not always the same thing) occasionally surfaces in reference to twentieth-century avant-garde composition, in Nicolas Slonimsky's article ‘Music and Surrealism’ for example, or Anne LeBaron's ‘Reflections of Surrealism in Postmodern Musics,’ or in discussions of Dada/Surrealism-associated figures who (sometimes discreetly) worked in music. 82

More recently, existing archival Dada/Surrealism-related audio material has been made available via CD and digital download, from LTM Recordings and the Centre Pompidou Audio Collections, and via the online hub UbuWeb, allowing access to recordings such as Robert Desnos's 1938 radio broadcast ‘Relation d'un rêve’ (‘Description of a Dream’), or modern interpretations of Marcel Duchamp's chance-based composition ‘Musical Erratum.’ 83

Even though Breton actively discouraged musical involvement, his theoretical formulation of Surrealism frequently used auditive terms. His original manifesto mentioned not only ‘la voix surréaliste’ (‘surrealist voice’) that required

82 Nicolas Slonimsky, ‘Music and Surrealism,’ Art Forum, vol. 5, no. 1 (September 1966); Anne LeBaron, ‘Reflections of Surrealism in Postmodern Musics,’ in Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). See also Schiff, ‘Surrealism Banging on the Windowpane,’ for discussions of George Ribemont-Dessaignes, Margueritte Buffet, Erik Satie (all of whom contributed music to Dada events), George Antheil (pianist and composer and the only musician named by André Breton in the first Surrealist manifesto), E.L.T. Mesens, and André Souris; Craig Adcock, ‘Marcel Duchamp’s Gap Music - Operations in the Space Between Art and Noise,’ in Kahn and Whitehead, Wireless Imagination.
83 Robert Desnos, ‘Relation d'un rêve,’ available on Surrealism Reviewed (LTMCD2343, 2002), CD; Marcel Duchamp, ‘Musical Erratum,’ available on Marcel Duchamp – Musical Erratum + In Conversation (LTMCD2504, 2008), CD.
heeding, but also ‘la merveilleuse partition’ (‘marvellous score’) that should be orchestrated. It is these sonically related metaphors that partly inspired my thesis title:

but we, who have made no effort whatsoever to filter, who in our works have made ourselves into simple receptacles of so many echoes, modest recording instruments who are not mesmerized by the drawings we are making, perhaps we serve an even nobler cause.

Jennifer Gibson dates Breton's first use of the term ‘modest recording instruments’ to 1916, after his first encounter with Emmanuel Régis's Précis de psychiatrie (Handbook of Psychiatry), whose phrase ‘simple recording instrument’ he modified. Although specifically referring to the process of recording free associated words, Gibson points out that ‘enregistreur’ was a common analogy in nineteenth century French, used to describe any one undertaking transcription, from a telegraph operator to a poet. My own use, to be sure, is only tangentially related to the process of automatist transcription, and instead uses the phrase as a springboard to ideas of sound recording and transmission, and the possibility of locating a specifically Dada/Surrealism-related approach to the soundtrack.

While chapter four returns to the concept of ‘the Surrealist voice,’ I wish to look more closely at this notion of a ‘marvellous score’ and how it relates to my own variation of ‘marvellous noise’ referred to in my thesis title. My own reference is to uses of sound that combine with film visuals to form new, often unexpected, audio-visual encounters capable of triggering an experience of the Surrealist ‘marvellous,’ the heightened, subjective state of awareness that transcends workaday perception. The noises themselves may or may not be fantastical, but their specific uses contribute towards this fundamental Surrealist experience.

Hal Foster considers ‘the marvellous’ a basic principle of Bretonian Surrealism, defining it as a rupture in the natural order. This idea of disruption is also found in Louis Aragon's 1925 definition, which stated ‘the marvellous is the

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87 Foster relates this definition back to medieval usage, while emphasising its important distinction from anything associated with the divine; Hal Foster, Compulsive Beauty (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1993), p. 19.
eruption of contradiction in the real." To Surrealist film scholar Paul Hammond ‘the marvellous’ is ‘the crucible of Surrealism,’ explained as ‘our experience of the perturbing flux between the imaginary and the real.’ Fluctuation between contradictory states, such as rational/irrational or conscious/subconscious, was at the heart of Surrealism, strikingly similar to Sigmund Freud's 1919 outlining of ‘the uncanny.’ Foster also notes this similarity, observing that Breton's examples of ‘the marvellous’ as existing in ruins and mannequins were all objects that suggested the coexistence of contradictory states (for example, animation and inanimation), provoking an uncanny sensation related to the coexistence of death within life. He proposes that all Breton's examples of ‘the marvellous’ oscillated between two such contradictory states or fantasies.

Surrealism (and also Dada) sought and prioritised states of disorientation and contradiction. This was especially so in relation to cinema, with Salvador Dalí writing in 1932 that sound film in particular had the ability to bring ‘marvellous impurity and estimable confusion’ to the spectator. Surrealist definitions of ‘the marvellous’ were also confusing or contradictory, with no clear consensus of the term's meaning or application. It appeared extensively throughout Breton's first ‘Manifesto of Surrealism,’ as well as in key texts of Surrealist cinema, including Kyrou's Le Surréalisme au cinéma and Brunius's En marge du cinéma français. Breton discussed the concept with a vagueness perhaps in keeping with its irrational status. We can still ascertain certain qualities, however: ‘the marvellous’ is in opposition to the realistic, rational and materialist attitudes that dominate adult life, it relates to things unknown or unclassifiable, its origins change throughout history, it features strongly in children’s stories, and it ‘is always beautiful.’

Confusion commonly arises with the related term ‘the fantastic,’ also inconsistently used within Surrealism-related prose, sometimes defined as fundamentally different to ‘the marvellous,’ while at other times nearly

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88 Quoted in Foster, Compulsive Beauty, p. 20.
91 Foster, Compulsive Beauty, p. 21.
94 Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, pp. 6-18.
interchangeable, as in Breton's statement that ‘what is admirable about the fantastic is that there is no longer anything fantastic: there is only the real.’ This claim, later recycled by both Buñuel and Brunius, implied that ‘the marvellous’ and ‘the fantastic’ are both heightened states of reality in which everything is accepted. This doesn't tally with Tzvetan Todorov's 1970 definition of ‘the fantastic’ in literature as a state of uncertainty distinct from both the uncanny and the ‘the marvellous.’ The issue is further complicated by Todorov's definition (derived from Roger Caillois) of ‘the fantastic’ as ‘a break in the acknowledged order, an irruption of the inadmissible,’ being so similar to Aragon's definition of ‘the marvellous.’ Although these are all terms for the eruption of the inexplicable into the familiar, Todorov's distinction is that a ‘fantastic’ encounter, like the uncanny, remains a hesitant, inassimilable experience, whereas, he argues, an experience of ‘the marvellous’ is always accepted.

A tendency to accept, rather than question, the inexplicable is important within Surrealism-related film, and this is also demonstrated in its audio-visuals. But the notions of flux, rupture, and surprise, also used as audio-visual strategies, are equally integral to ‘the fantastic’ and the uncanny, as well as to ‘the marvellous,’ and it is near impossible to draw clear borders around the concepts. Kyrou called ‘the marvellous’ the central point of Surrealism, but his definitions for its appearance in cinema were hardly clearer, with only two discernible characteristics. First, ‘the marvellous’ was concrete and earthly, therefore believable, with no whiff of spirituality. Second, he located it in popular or genre films, such as horror, science fiction, monster movies, serials, and B pictures, in which he identified a constant freedom of thought, which one can interpret as meaning they are accepting of unusual events in their narrative.

Brunius concurred with Kyrou in asserting that the cinematic ‘marvellous’ was directly connected to the believability of its representation. In his view, ‘the marvellous’ was

95 Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism, p. 15.
99 The ‘nœud majeur du surréalisme’; Kyrou's use of ‘nœud’ has a double-meaning, also suggesting ‘knot’. Kyrou, Le Surréalisme au Cinéma, p. 63, my translation.
100 Kyrou, Le Surréalisme au Cinéma, pp. 63-4.
101 Kyrou, Le Surréalisme au Cinéma, p. 90.
a widening, or freeing up, of our experience, which cinema was ideally equipped for.\textsuperscript{102}

At best we can summarise ‘the marvellous’ as a rupture or break in ordinary experience, a sense of fluctuation between contradictory states, and a full acceptance of an unusual situation. It is was fundamental to the processes of juxtaposition, re-contextualisation, and disorientation used in the Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuals identified in this thesis. In some cases, the use of sound was disruptive or surprising, breaking with expectations. In others it fluctuated between parody and suitability, while other uses exploited the instability, or uncanniness, of the sound film illusion to create contradictions between voices and bodies. The believability considered essential to the cinematic ‘marvellous’ was enhanced by the use of sound, grounding unusual events or combinations into a fuller sensory experience, while creative juxtapositions of audio and image intensified irrational or bizarre elements, concocting a heightened reality of marvellous noise.\textsuperscript{103}

\textbf{Literature on Dada/Surrealism-related Film Sound}

There has been very little research to date on the subject of Dada/Surrealism-related film sound, but what does exist suggests potential for development. The extensive literature covering the transition era rarely considers experimental or avant-garde film in detail, or beyond individual films, while Dada/Surrealism-related film scholarship has tended toward visual and psychological interpretations, indicative of attempts to position these works historically with visual art. Few attempts have been made to study them beyond a specific visual, avant-garde context, reflecting Ian Christie's observation that the historiography of avant-garde film has traditionally been more conventional than that of the mainstream cinema.\textsuperscript{104}

Very few authors have approached the idea of Dada and/or Surrealism-related audio-visuals in any depth or breadth. John Richardson's \textit{An Eye for Music: Popular Music and the Audiovisual Surreal}, from 2012, broadly introduces the concept, but is mainly concerned with present-day film and music culture, and not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} Brunius, \textit{En marge du cinéma français}, p. 71.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Breton locates Surrealism in the belief in ‘la réalité supérieure’. Breton, \textit{Manifestes du surréalisme}, p. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Christie, ‘Histories of the Future,’ p. 6.
\end{itemize}
historical Surrealism.\textsuperscript{105} Surrealism is merely used as ‘a productive analogy’ for audio-visual techniques the author identifies in a vast range of mostly mainstream media.\textsuperscript{106} While similar methods of identifying surreal elements in mainstream films were characteristic of Kyrrou's criticism, Richardson perhaps applies his ‘neosurrealist’ label too liberally. While the idea of an extended legacy of Surrealist audio-visuality is exciting, to spread the concept too broadly and without historical weight can be counter-productive. Surrealism becomes a red herring, obfuscating an informative discussion of postmodern audio-visuality in contemporary culture.

Elizabeth Benjamin's 2014 article ‘The Sound(track) of Silence: Hearing Things in Dada Film’ attempts to analyse Dada audio-visuality across different films.\textsuperscript{107} The soundtracks of eight Dada films, compiled on the Re:Voir/Pompidou Centre DVD \textit{Dada Cinema}, are discussed under soundtrack categories of original scores, replacement scores, or silence.\textsuperscript{108} Benjamin concludes that an overriding use of repetition in the scores of \textit{Ballet mécânique} and \textit{Entr'acte} increases narrative inconsistency and ‘ludic abstraction.’\textsuperscript{109} She analyses the disc's silent films (\textit{Le Retour à la raison}, \textit{Symphonie diagonale}, and \textit{Rhythmus 21}) within the conventions of sensory analogues, where visuals evoke semi-musical associations. Her studies of \textit{Vormittagsspuk}, \textit{Filmstudie}, and \textit{Emak Bakia} argue that they create tension through their use of soundtracks that differ from the original. This argument, however, overlooks the complex history of these films' ‘original’ accompaniments, and the filmmakers' own direct involvement in developing later or replacement soundtracks.

The majority of the remaining scholarship focuses on Buñuel and Dalí's early films. Among these, Paul Hammond's 1997 screen guide to \textit{L'Âge d'or} stands out for its insightful observations of audio-visual elements.\textsuperscript{110} Although extremely perceptive, these remain undeveloped, however, due to the limitations of the format. A similar situation occurs with Jean-Michel Bouhours' introduction to \textit{L'Âge d'or: correspondance Luis Buñuel-Charles de Noailles} (from 1993), which briefly displays characteristic sonic awareness, noting the film's use of voice-off, sound and

\textsuperscript{106} Richardson, \textit{An Eye for Music}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{107} Elizabeth Benjamin, ‘The Sound(track) of Silence: Hearing Things in Dada Film,’ \textit{Harts & Minds}, vol. 1, no. 4 (Spring 2014).
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Dada Cinéma} (Re:Voir and Centre Georges Pompidou, 2005), DVD.
\textsuperscript{109} Benjamin, ‘The Sound(track) of Silence,’ p. 6.
\textsuperscript{110} Paul Hammond, \textit{L'Âge d'or} (London: British Film Institute, 1997).
image discrepancies, asynchrony to accentuate dreamlike qualities, and sound used to disconcert.¹¹¹

Essays from Elisabeth H. Lyon (1973), Mercè Ibarz (2004), Barry Mauer (2008), and Rashna Wadia Richards (2008), also discuss Buñuel's uses of audio-visual techniques of dissociation, asynchrony and audio-visual counterpoint, although only Lyon tackles more than one film.¹¹² Richards' is the most sustained enquiry, addressing all three soundtrack elements (dialogue, sound effects, and music) of L’Âge d'or. Her article is also commendable for introducing contextual early sound film issues into her discussion, bringing the Soviet ‘Statement on Sound’ and the films of René Clair into comparison with Surrealism.¹¹³ While setting a tone for studying Surrealist films within a wider film sound context, two areas could benefit from further development. The term audio-visual counterpoint could be explored in a more nuanced way, such as is found Michel Chion or Torben Sangild's work, while the wider Surrealist context, cinematic and otherwise, could be considered in more detail.¹¹⁴

A few works explore music use in Dada or Surrealist film. Of particular note are Priscilla Barlow's ‘Surreal Symphonies: L’Âge d'or and the Discreet Charms of Classical Music,’ and Torben Sangild's ‘Buñuel's “Liebestod”: Wagner's Tristan in Luis Buñuel's Early Films: Un Chien andalou and L'Âge d'or.’¹¹⁵ Barlow pays detailed attention to L'Âge d'or's compilation score, identifying thematic connections and gags, and making the important, if underemphasised, observation that experimental filmmakers during this period often used standard soundtrack conventions to their advantage. However, Barlow is less persuasive across Dada/Surrealism-related film as a whole, for example claiming that original scores for Dada films were 'extremely rare,' when in fact Satie, Antheil, Paul Hindemith,

and (possibly) Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt scored *Entr'acte, Ballet mécanique, Vormittagsspuk,* and *Filmstudie* respectively.\(^{116}\) Her suggestion that Buñuel's use of music followed a trajectory established by Man Ray conflates the latter's ideas with those of Germaine Dulac, without demonstrating supporting knowledge.\(^{117}\) Awareness of Man Ray's soundtracks has been greatly enhanced by Jean-Michel Bouhours' restoration work, following the filmmaker's instructions, at the Musée national d'art moderne circa 1997, and Inez Hedges' close analysis of soundtrack notations on different manuscripts of *L'Étoile de mer.*\(^{118}\)

Sangild's analysis of Buñuel's use of Wagner displays a detailed understanding of the relationship between pre-existing music and Surrealist film. He suggests the films deflated the solemnity and metaphysical aspirations of Wagner's music, yet retained other expressive associations such as desire and transgression. He demonstrates how the music functions in different capacities – it highlights thematic correspondences (love and death, for example) between the original opera and the film, it accentuates particular scenes or images, and it adds ironic counterpoint. Sangild explores this issue of counterpoint more thoroughly than most, admitting that rather than being an issue of opposition, the relationship is purposefully ambiguous, sometimes positioning the music as simultaneously bourgeois and revolutionary for example.\(^{119}\)

Other notable works focus on individual films or filmmakers, without exploring the wider field. Douglas W. Gallez (1976) and Martin Miller Marks's (1997) separate analyses of Satie's score for *Entr'acte,* and David Chapman's 2009 discussion of Georges Auric's score for *Le Sang d'un poète* are informative, while James S. Williams's detailed 2006 reading of Cocteau's film as a 'cinema of the senses' suggests it deserves a major place within early sound film history, but the focus of these works is always highly specific.\(^{120}\) Catherine Corman's 2004 essay on

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\(^{116}\)Barlow, ‘Surreal Symphonies,’ p. 41. Several of the scores for Richter's films were lost during the Nazi period, resulting in a shortage of reliable information.

\(^{117}\)Barlow, ‘Surreal Symphonies,’ pp. 41-44.


Rose Hobart's soundtrack considers it in historical isolation, through a somewhat romantic haze of reverence, while Fred Camper references Cornell's film in ‘Sound and Silence in Narrative and Nonnarrative Cinema,’ but mainly in conjunction with later, intentionally silent US experimental films.\textsuperscript{121} Jamie Sexton's short summary of 1930s avant-garde film sound, published in 2007, approaches the area more broadly than most, considering French avant-garde, Soviet, and British documentary cinema alongside one another, but could benefit from a deeper understanding of Dada and Surrealism.\textsuperscript{122}

Clearly absent in the existing literature to date is a detailed comparative study of audio-visuals across a range of Dada/Surrealism-related film, incorporating awareness of the wider historical contexts of Dada and Surrealism and the transition to sound film. The disciplines supporting my own research –Dada and Surrealist art and film history, film sound and music studies, and general film history –are only intermittent in many of the above texts. There has also been an understandable, but dominant emphasis on L’Âge d’or, indicative perhaps of Buñuel's long-standing auteur status within film studies. As a result, in depth research has often been limited to one particular example of Dada/Surrealism-related film sound. There is still the need to explore this audio-visuality further, across a wider range of film examples, and in greater theoretical and contextual depth. Existing scholarship on Dada/Surrealism-related aurality and film sound is tantalising, but mostly atomised. This thesis draws these audio-visual ideas together, and explores the concepts and contexts behind them.

**Dada and Surrealist Film Studies**

Dada and Surrealist film studies has a long heritage, and a body of literature that has shaped understanding of what constitutes Dada and Surrealist cinema, traditionally


emphasising its visual and symbolic elements. Direction of study has moved from a tendency to subjective criticism towards theoretically informed academia, paralleling the general evolution of film criticism to academic film studies. Broadly speaking, focus has shifted from Surrealist-penned film criticism in a range of journals, to subjective criticism by later filmmaker-critics associated with Surrealism, such as Kyrou and Brunius, to critical anthologies that historicised the period, until reaching the critical analysis exemplified by the work of Linda Williams or Rudolf E. Kuenzli, for example.123

Essential starting points are Brunius's *En marge du cinéma français* and Kyrou's *Le Surréalisme au cinéma*, neither of which has been fully translated into English.124 Both authors were filmmakers as well as critics and, along with Desnos's collected film journalism, provide us with the most developed examples of Surrealist film criticism.125 None of these were interested in formal analysis, with Brunius in particular scorning critical ‘fake detachment’ and ‘doctoral posing.’126 Kyrou and Brunius both chronicled the avant-garde period with a heavy degree of subjectivity that they maintained was essential. While Brunius's focus was specifically French avant-garde film of the 1920s and 1930s, clarifying the use and misuse of certain categories along the way, Kyrou ranged freely across countries, periods, and genres, to explore the multitude of ways that films convey Surrealism to the spectator (himself) in both their manifest and latent content, via themes such as love, eroticism, revolt, and ‘the marvellous.’

Brunius's book, originally written in the 1930s, discussed Dada and Surrealist films alongside the work of important film contemporaries including Jean Vigo, René Clair, and Jean Epstein.127 He was intolerant of aesthetic ornamentation for its own sake and, like Breton, hostile towards Jean Cocteau. Like Kyrou, he had little interest in classifying films as Dada, Surrealist, or otherwise, instead discussing films on their merit, setting out a chronology that considered Alberto Cavalcanti

124 Brunius made several outstanding films during the 1930s, including *Violons d'Ingres* and *Records 37* (Brunius, 1937), as well as being Buñuel's assistant director on *L'Âge d'or*. Kyrou's films include *Le Palais idéal* (*The Ideal Palace*, Kyrou, 1958), and *Le Moine* (*The Monk*, Kyrou, 1972).
127 The full text was only published in 1954, with Kyrou's help, after which it fell into obscurity until a 1987 reprint. Brunius, *En marge du cinéma français*, pp.7-10.
alongside Buñuel, and in which Ballet mécanique rubbed shoulders with King Kong (Cooper and Schoedsack, 1933). He demonstrated the richness of this cinematic period, extending the avant-garde focus beyond the boundaries of specific art movements. Kyrour's seminal, unashamedly subjective Le surréalisme au cinéma appeared in 1953. During that decade Kyrour had co-created L'Âge du cinéma, a Surrealism-slanted film journal, and was film critic at Surrealist-sympathetic Positif, and his work conveys the opinion that watching and writing about cinema is an extension of Surrealist mentality. His 1963 monograph on Buñuel also contributed to the canonisation of the director as the ultimate Surrealist auteur.128 Le Surréalisme au cinéma assessed, rather than analysed, an enormous range of films for signs of potential or latent Surrealism. Kyrou's cinephiliac approach ranged across all periods and genres, making a case for Surrealist spectatorship with the assertion that cinema was fundamentally surreal.129 While some sections dealt with canonical Surrealist films, Kyrou also considered a generous amount of films from ‘around Surrealism’ (excepting Cocteau), and all other genres, both highbrow and mainstream, in an anti-hierarchic approach. Such films held merit in their ability to express, even unintentionally, qualities valued within Surrealism, such as eroticism or the ‘marvellous.’

Beyond France, influential accounts of experimental film in North America, such as Parker Tyler's Underground Film: A Critical History or P. Adams Sitney's Visionary Film, included Dada and Surrealist films in their discussions.130 However, their main role in these was as influential precursors of post-war US filmmaking. Viable challenges to the eclectic subjectivity of Surrealist criticism only began appearing in the 1970s. What Linda Williams has described as the ‘surfeit of love... [that] impedes analysis’ in Surrealist film writing made way for attention on the historical documents themselves.131 Critical assessments and anthologies emerged, anthologising the articles, scenarios, and written ephemera of Dada/Surrealism-

129 ‘Le cinéma est d’essence surréaliste’; Kyrou, Le Surréalisme au cinéma, p. 9.
131 Williams, Figures of Desire, p. xiii.
related film. Three books stand out as setting new paths for Dada/Surrealism-related film studies: J.H. Matthews's *Surrealism and Film*, Odette and Alain Virmaux's *Les Surréalistes et le cinéma*, and Paul Hammond's *The Shadow and its Shadow*.\(^{132}\)

*Surrealism and Film* appeared in 1971, two years after the first publication of the English translation of Breton's *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (and by the same publisher), and part of a growing Anglophone scholarly interest in Surrealism. While pointing out the intentional haphazardness of Surrealist cinema criticism, Matthews did not follow suit. His clearly arranged overview mixed history and analysis, providing detailed information on many still obscure films and writings. Although largely unconcerned with Dada, it was one of the first English language studies to extend the canon of Surrealist film beyond a handful of works to include filmmakers such as Brunius, Mariën, or Henri Storck. Intriguingly, Matthews showed some audio awareness, drawing attention to references and uses in the work of those filmmakers as well as Buñuel and Artaud. He paid attention to both filmed and unfilmed material, mostly in the form of scenarios, a direction also taken by Odette and Alain Virmaux, as well as in the later studies by Linda Williams and Rudolf E. Kuenzli.

Arguably the two most important anthologies of Surrealist writings on cinema are the Virmaux's *Les Surréalistes et le cinéma* (1976) and Hammond's *The Shadow and its Shadow* (1978). Both works began with an extended critical assessment, followed by a wide selection of texts by mostly Surrealist group members. Overlaps in their respective contents create a sense of certain texts, such as the ‘Manifesto of the Surrealists concerning L’Âge d’or’ or Louis Aragon's ‘On Decor,’ being at the core of what Hammond admits is a vast subject area.\(^{133}\) These anthologies were indicative of a historical turn in Dada and Surrealist studies at the time, witnessed in major exhibitions such as ‘Dada, Surrealism and their Heritage’ at The Museum of Modern Art in 1968, or ‘Dada and Surrealism Reviewed’ at the Hayward Gallery in 1978. This move towards historical contextualisation can also be noted in Ian Christie's 1979 essay ‘French Avant-Garde Film in the Twenties:


from “Specificity” to Surrealism,’ which urged a reassessment of the ‘received histories of the avant-garde,’ and stressed the complex overlap between Dada and Surrealist cinema.134 It advocated bringing a new intellectual rigour to the study of Surrealist film that would acknowledge its networked position within the surrounding artistic culture and make use of the pertinent issues of film studies.135

Linda Williams took an unapologetically theoretical approach in 1981 with *Figures of Desire*. From an informed feminist perspective, she used semiotic and psychoanalytic methods, drawn from Christian Metz and Jacques Lacan, to painstakingly unpick Buñuel and Dalí's films, and Surrealist film imagery in general.136 It provided one of the first ‘modern’ academic readings of Surrealist film, using rigorous analysis to understand the construction of Surrealist cinematic subjectivity. Ramona Fotiade consolidated what could be seen as the gradual academicising of Dada and Surrealist film over a series of articles published in *Screen* during the late 1990s, with a concentration on film aesthetics and theory.137

As I return to later in this thesis, an unquestioned male point-of-view largely dominates Surrealist work and discourse, and Elsa Adamowicz is another author who has refreshed Dada/Surrealism-related film studies with a feminist awareness.138 Her 2001 essay ‘Bodies Cut and Dissolved: Dada and Surrealist Film’ combined history and theory, influenced by Williams's use of Jacques Lacan, and Rosalind Krauss's work on Surrealist photography, contributing to the re-evaluation of male-produced cinematic portrayals within Dada/Surrealism-related cinema.139

Rudolf E. Kuenzli's 1996 edited collection *Dada and Surrealist Film* was another key work establishing the subject as a legitimate academic field. This collection, which included contributions from Linda Williams and Richard Abel, was both theoretically and historically engaged, with a defined focus on the 1920s and 1930s, and a carefully extended range of Dada/Surrealism-related figures including Fernand Léger, Man Ray, Fondane, Duchamp, Desnos, and Artaud.

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134 Christie suggests, for instance, that Man Ray's *L’Étoile de mer* and *Les Mystères de château du dé* belong ‘within the history of diffused Surrealism.’ Christie, ‘French Avant-garde Film in the Twenties,’ p. 43.
135 Christie, ‘French Avant-garde Film in the Twenties,’ p. 44.
138 Adamowicz, ‘Bodies Cut and Dissolved.’
Kuenzli, also director of the International Dada Archive at the University of Iowa, gave equal weighting to Dada film, encouraging its consideration as more than a mere antecedent of Surrealism. Thomas Elsaesser's contribution discussed Dada cinema as not necessarily separate from Surrealism, but as a set of films with its own neglected identity. Citing Richter's semi-autobiographical 1957 essay ‘Dada and the Film’ as a rare example, Elsaesser noted ‘the subject “Dada and Film” has not entered the histories of the movement, nor into film history as a distinct entity.’ Where Elsaesser took an analytical stance, Richter's own essay foregrounded the contradictory nature of Dada film, encapsulated in his proclamation ‘after I have stated this fact: Dada = abstract art, I happily wish to insist on the other point: Dada = non-abstract art.’ Richter highlighted the problems of labelling, and regarding Emak Bakia and his own Filmstudie he wrote:

though these two films were at that time already called surrealistic (after the fashion) they are more dada. I wonder, if the distinguishing line between the two can be drawn exactly as surrealism jumped out of the left ear of dada fully equipped and alive, making dadaists = surrealists overnight.

My own research approach has been informed by this problematic overlap. The point is less about attribution, labelling films as Surrealist or Dada, than about recognising common audio-visual strategies in works related to either movement.

While narrative-based studies, such as Steven Kovács's From Enchantment to Rage: The Story of Surrealist Cinema (1980) or Robert Short's The Age of Gold: Surrealist Cinema (2003) still have an important place, more recently other authors have tried to extend discussion of Dada/Surrealism-related film beyond familiar territory, such as Michael Richardson's Surrealism and Cinema (2006) or Graeme Harper and Rob Stone's The Unsilvered Screen (2007). Without the passionate egalitarianism of Kyrou's Surrealist convictions, such works sometimes tread a less successful path between scholarly analysis and subjective interpretation, reducing Surrealism to a stylistic element.

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140 Thomas Elsaesser, ‘Dada/Cinema?, ’ in Kuenzli, Dada and Surrealist Film.
142 Richter, ‘Dada and the Film,’ p. 66.
143 Richter, ‘Dada and the Film,’ p. 68.
144 Kovács, From Enchantment to Rage; Graeme Harper and Rob Stone, eds., The Unsilvered Screen: Surrealism on Film (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2007).
The academic heritage of historical documentation and theoretical depth described above brings me to a starting point able to draw on both approaches. It is a strategy that would surely have been derided by earlier Surrealist critics such as Brunius and Kyrour, but the rigour necessary to academia sits uneasily beside Surrealism's commitment to unbridled expression, or what Kyrour called the ‘poetic, frenetic kind of criticism that takes into account everything invisible, everything mysterious in a film.’ This is one of the most intriguing challenges for any scholar of Dada/Surrealism-related film.

The Asynchronism Context

The Dada/Surrealism-related films discussed in this thesis were made within, and responded to, a period of great change in filmmaking and exhibition practices. While it is not my intent to provide a detailed account of the transition period, it is still important to explain some of the main issues in early film sound that had an impact on my case studies, and provide contextual support for my findings.

Counterpoint and asynchrony were, and remain, common terms in early film sound discussion and analysis. As Andy Birtwistle states, ‘a largely art-cinematic model of audio visual counterpoint, originally formulated in the early years of sound cinema in opposition to an “illustrative” use of sound, continues to inform critical understanding of sound-image relations.’ The most influential source of this approach was Alexandrov, Eisenstein, and Pudovkin's ‘Statement on Sound,’ widely translated and published during the transition period. Its main message seemed clear: ‘only the contrapuntal use of sound vis-à-vis the visual fragment of montage will open up new possibilities for the development and perfection of montage.’ The statement set sound film up as a threat to the ‘indisputable’ aesthetics of visual

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146 Andy Birtwistle, Cinesonica: Sounding Film and Video (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 223.
montage. It aimed to implement film sound as ‘a new element of montage’ rather than follow the anticipated dead-end of exact synchronisation which its authors thought caused ‘inertia’, destroying the established ‘culture of montage.’ Aural montage would follow similar principles to visual montage, and be fundamentally based around ‘the juxtaposition of fragments.’ The statement proposed an upfront, almost aggressive, use of counterpoint – a ‘hammer and tongs approach’ – in which sound would be in ‘sharp discord’ with the images. Through such methods, the statement suggested, ‘cinema's cultural avant-garde’ would find a way out of their impasse to create an ‘absolute sound cinema.’

The ‘Statement on Sound’ was not a lone voice on this matter. Not only would its signatories develop their ideas in subsequent essays and films, but also counterpoint and asynchrony would remain a frequent topic of discussion in European and Soviet cinema over the coming years. Rudolf Arnheim, typically interested in both sound and image, predicted that the cinematic use of counterpoint would progress from mere audio-visual parallelism to sophisticated asynchronism. In *Film*, in 1933, he explained his hopes for acoustic montage, writing that ‘montage of sounds separated in time and space would then provide similar formative potentialities as those which have been described in detail for visible things.’ In the UK, John Grierson expressed great hopes for audio-visual counterpoint in his 1934 essay ‘The Creative Use of Sound,’ as demonstrated in *Song of Ceylon* (Basil Wright, 1934) for example. Even by the end of the decade, non-synchronous sound was still esteemed, as Alberto Cavalcanti attested in ‘Sound in Films.’

The term counterpoint was routinely used as a mark of quality. Some criticism, including the ‘Statement on Sound,’ drew on prevalent avant-garde analogies of film as visual music, and used counterpoint to describe the relationship of independent visual or sound elements in works such as Richter's abstract *Rhythmus* films (1921-1925) or Walter Ruttmann's experimental radio production, *Wochenende* (*Weekend*, 1930). But mostly counterpoint referred to moments of

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152 Alberto Cavalcanti, ‘Sound in Films,’ *Films (A Quarterly of Discussion and Analysis)*, vol. 1, no. 1 (November 1939).
asynchrony in sound film, any moments where image and sound did not exactly match. Pudovkin and Arnheim were keen to draw attention to audio-visual asynchrony as part of our normal perceptual experience of everyday life. Arnheim described a scene in *Sous les toits de Paris* (*Under the Roofs of Paris*, Clair, 1930) where a fight is accompanied by the sound of an off-screen train as ‘the kind of juxtaposition that can occur quite naturally in reality, and so does not seem forced.’ Discussions from the transition period reveal an implicit tension between the uses of contrast, discord even, in asynchrony, and its inherent naturalism. Audio-visual counterpoint therefore became both a method of experimentation and yet also of presumed cinematic realism.

Discussions of sound in later Dada/Surrealism-related film criticism frequently mention counterpoint. Buñuel and Dali's films are often described as contrapuntal, with both Aranda and Richards asserting that Buñuel intuitively adapted methods from the ‘Statement on Sound’ for *L’Âge d’or*, whether he had read it or not. Kyrou referred to a ‘triple counterpoint’ (voice, music and visuals) in *Las Hurdes*. In these discussions, counterpoint is usually used to describe a supposedly ironic relationship between sound and visual content, emotionally either opposed or indifferent to the visual scene. This differs from the early sound era's application of the term to audio-visual montage or juxtaposition, and also has little in common with traditional musical counterpoint. It corresponds more with what Chion calls the ‘anempathetic effect’, in which (usually diegetic) music plays with seeming indifference to the scene's emotional qualities. Chion critiques the prevailing binary notion, continued from Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, that film music either complements or contradicts a scene's visual content, arguing instead that film music functions on a spectrum running from empathetic (emotional mirroring) to anempathetic (emotional ignoring). One can identify different levels of audio-visual indifference and counterpoint within this spectrum performing different functions – sometimes emphasising an intellectual concept, sometimes

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154 Pudovkin, ‘Asynchronism as a Principle of Sound Film,’ p. 87; Arnheim, *Film*, p. 258.
157 Kyrou, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 43.
159 Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, pp. 430-35
undercutting emotion, sometimes reframing a situation. A simple label of ironic counterpoint does not always suffice.

In music, counterpoint is the combination of two or more melodic lines over time. Different lines come together and separate, with counterpoint formed from this interplay of agreement and disagreement rather than from parallel dissonance.\textsuperscript{160} Dissonance may occur, but rarely constantly, and the different melodies move separately but together in the same direction. Against this definition, almost all sound film is contrapuntal, but this is not how the term is usually used, which is usually to describe ironic contrast. Chion is of the opinion that the initial adoption of ‘counterpoint’ as an audio-visual term was misguided, and overly influenced by musical aesthetics, and has become a historically muddied concept. He maintains that the aesthetically superior audio-visual counterpoint pleaded for actually exists daily in television sport, without being noticed. Cinematic counterpoint, for Chion, was merely an intellectual speculation, and most cited cases were really ‘splendid examples of dissonant harmony.’\textsuperscript{161}

Where do Dada/Surrealism-related films fit among these often conflicting definitions? European and Soviet references to counterpoint during the 1920s and 1930s tended towards a creative use of audio-visual asynchronism at specific moments, in order to add an additional layer of psychological or expressive information, not dissimilar from Fondane's idea of audio superimposition. Mostly they referred to audio-visual clashes of individual sounds, resembling existing dialectic montage strategies, rather than the sustained counterpoints of music. Counterpoint ended up being used interchangeably with asynchrony to describe any audio-visual disconnection or clash. Chion's proposition is that ‘true’ audio-visual counterpoint only occurs when sounds do not ‘formally contradict or negate’ the visuals, but instead carry our perception of it ‘to another level.’ His example of ‘true free counterpoint’ is a scene in \textit{Solyaris} (\textit{Solaris}, Tarkovsky, 1972), in which we see the frozen body of Khari, who has killed herself by swallowing frozen oxygen, shudder back to life accompanied by the sounds of breaking glass.\textsuperscript{162} The audio-visual combination works poetically, and rather than contradicting what we see, the sound expands our understanding, connoting several ideas at once, such as fragility.

\textsuperscript{161} Chion, \textit{Audio-Vision}, pp. 35-37.
\textsuperscript{162} Chion, \textit{Audio-Vision}, pp. 38-39.
and artificiality. It is striking that this example, picked out by Chion, is so similar to Fondane's suggestion, mentioned earlier, of using the sound of broken glass to express emotions (and to different effect, the resonant glass sound used by Cocteau in *Le Sang d'une poète*), suggesting that such a ‘true free counterpoint’ may be an important factor within Dada/Surrealism-related sound film. On the other hand, pre-existing music use in several other of my case studies could be described as contrapuntal in the ironic or anempathetic sense mentioned above. The musical accompaniment seems to move forward with the imagery in apparent indifference, even contrast, with opportunities for sudden moments of coincidence. In such cases, conspicuously displaying difference between image and soundtrack was also an important audio-visual method, ultimately also central in the asynchrony arguments of the early sound period. Chapter two returns to the issue of how asynchronous soundtracks may or may not create impressions of indifference and irony, while chapter three will examine audio-visual juxtaposition, exploring ambiguous and poetic uses of asynchronous sound effects.

**Film Sound History**

Many works cover the history of the transition period, most of them concentrating on the Hollywood studio system, the locus for the sound film conversion that spread worldwide. Donald Crafton's outstanding 1997 work *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931* is more expansive than most, discussing a wide range of early sound films, even beyond the mainstream, including travelogues, cartoons, and European output. The French conversion era, which ran a couple of years behind the US, is detailed in Roger Icart's *La Révolution du parlant: vue par la presse française* from 1998, an exemplary survey and anthology presenting the variety of contemporary opinions rather than a tidy narrative.

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163 Crafton, *The Talkies.*

164 In the USA, *Don Juan* (Crosland, 1926), the first feature film with synchronised musical soundtrack, appeared in August 1926, with *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature length part-talkie, premiered in October 1927. In France, the first films with synchronized sound were shown in October 1928, with *The Jazz Singer* screened in January 1929, while the first French sound production was released in November 1929, *Les Trois Masques* (*The Three Masks*, Hugon, 1929). Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction* (London and New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), pp. 214-25.
Taken alongside Richard Abel's comprehensive anthologies of early French film criticism, these give a chronological and thematic picture of French responses to early sound film, revealing the contentious issues such as dubbing, and the sound films that were critically admired, such as the early sound films of René Clair, or *White Shadows in the South Seas* (Van Dyke and Flaherty, 1928).\(^\text{165}\)

A rare comparative study of sound conversion, Charles O'Brien's *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the U.S.* (2005), has been an invaluable resource for my work.\(^\text{166}\) Although Dudley Andrew addressed the issue of a distinctive French audio-visual style in ‘Sound in France: the Origins of a Native School’ (published 1980), O'Brien's study goes into far greater depth.\(^\text{167}\) Avoiding exclusive focus on acclaimed but atypical sound films, such as Clair's, O'Brien identifies broader cinematic trends, mapping the progress of French cinema towards its preference for direct sound.\(^\text{168}\) Suggesting film sound history is more about continuities than crisis points, his study challenges assumptions about gradual stylistic homogenisation during the early sound era. The diversity of smaller scale, flexible production methods in France during the period allowed a wider variety of audio-visual styles to develop. O'Brien points out the perpetuation of silent techniques within early sound film, an opinion shared with Chion who would also state: ‘there is no pure silent cinema on one side and sound (or talking) cinema on the other; they mutually implicate each other.’\(^\text{169}\) While neither Icart nor O'Brien discusses avant-garde or Dada/Surrealism-related films in any detail, they provide important background for understanding the transition era.

A significant issue flagged by O'Brien is the hierarchy of ‘films parlants’ and ‘films sonores’ (‘talking films’ or ‘talkies,’ and ‘sound films’ in Anglophone countries). ‘Films parlants’ were dialogue-driven, with synchronised sound usually recorded simultaneously to the visuals. ‘Films sonores’ featured minimal dialogue, if any, and were shot silently with the soundtrack overdubbed in post-production. Benjamin Fondane described sound films as the ‘twin brother of the talking film but

\(^{165}\) Abel, *French Film Theory and Criticism*.

\(^{166}\) O'Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound*.


\(^{168}\) Chion suggests snobbery and hypocrisy behind the French preference for direct sound (sound recorded alongside the visuals) over the post-production overdubbing typical of other nations. Chion, *Audio-Vision*, p. 119.

\(^{169}\) Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 184.
its whipping boy.'¹⁷⁰ These classifications formed ‘the essential conceptual tool for classifying conversion-era films,’ and were regularly used in film criticism during the period.¹⁷¹ The terms carried a degree of aesthetic snobbishness, and influential filmmakers and critics who disparaged the theatricality of talking films, referring to them as ‘canned theatre’, reiterated these values.¹⁷² ‘Films parlants’ were more popular, generating far more money than ‘films sonores,’ but the latter inherited the prestige of art films, the visual techniques of 1920s films, and avant-garde approval.¹⁷³

There was passionate resistance in Fondane's battle cry of ‘down with the hundred per cent talking and sound film!’, and many conversion era films, L’Âge d’or included, were what was called in English ‘part-talkies,’ mixing synchronised dialogue scenes with post-dubbed, silently shot scenes.¹⁷⁴ In fact such works were really both silent and sound films at the same time, oscillating between two states. It is unsurprising that filmmakers associated with the avant-garde primarily followed the ‘films sonores’ method (or part-talkie if funds allowed), given the expense and technical challenges of sound film, and the visual freedom of filming silently. A ‘films sonores’ approach retained some of the ‘elastic temporality’ of silent cinema techniques, especially visual montage. This method, going hand in hand with counterpoint and asynchrony, was considered the only viable, artistic way out of the dead-end of filmed theatre talkies. By 1934, critic B. Vivian Braun was complaining, while still vouching for the superiority of the ‘sound film,’ of ‘aesthetes’ who went to stylistic extremes to ‘crack up contrapuntal sound and sound imagery as grand artistic effects.’¹⁷⁵ A cautionary note to remember at this point, however, is that Dada and Surrealism had an antagonistic attitude towards the avant-garde and artistic prestige, and a positive, if ambiguous, regard towards the mainstream.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, placing allegiances clearly towards one side or other is a complicated matter.

¹⁷⁰ Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 52.
¹⁷⁴ Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53.
¹⁷⁶ ‘Their vehement repudiation of all avant-gardes was based on a polemical contempt for bourgeois art and a corresponding hatred of purist aesthetics’; Ian Christie, ‘French Avant-Garde Film in the Twenties,’ p. 44. See also Robert Desnos, ‘Cinéma d'avant-garde,’ Documents, vol. 1, no. 7 (December 1929).
The use of sound in silent film exhibition is another significant area of film sound history with regards to my project. This once-neglected domain has been researched in earnest over recent decades, with major studies including Richard Abel and Rick Altman's *The Sounds of Early Cinema* in 2001, Altman's *Silent Film Sound* in 2004, and Julie Brown and Annette Davison's *The Sounds of the Silents in Britain* in 2013.\(^{177}\) Research has developed to such an extent that it is now a ‘well-worn cliché that the “silent cinema” was never silent.’\(^{178}\) Such studies have revised understanding of silent cinema, raising awareness of the multitude of audio-visual practices that existed. The boundary between silent and sound film can be considered, as it is by Altman and Chion, more permeable than those terms imply, with the transition period understood as one of multiple, overlapping methods and identities, interpreted by Altman as a ‘crisis historiography.’\(^{179}\)

**Towards Film Sound Theory**

Although interest in film sound theory previously existed in the smaller scale of individual essays and discussions within longer texts, two works stand out as major contributions to establishing film sound as an academic subject in its own right: the special *Cinema/Sound* edition of *Yale French Studies* edited by Rick Altman in 1980, and Elisabeth Weis and John Belton's 1985 anthology *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*.\(^{180}\) To these academic compilations I would also add the emergence of Chion's highly individual approach to film sound in *The Voice in Cinema*, originally published in France in 1982 (and in English in 1999).\(^{181}\)

*Cinema/Sound* gathered together French and American perspectives on film sound, and many of its authors, including Claudia Gorbman, Mary Ann Doane, and Altman, would become central within film sound studies. Cinema sound had


\(^{179}\) Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, pp. 15-23; Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, pp. 182-84.

\(^{180}\) Several of the *Yale French Studies* articles were reprinted in *Film Sound*.

received French critical attention prior to this, mainly in intermittent articles in *Cahiers du cinéma* by theoretically inclined authors including Michel Fano, Serge Daney, and later on, Chion. Its contents directly influenced soundtrack scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s, especially Altman's anthology *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* and Gorbman's film music study *Unheard Melodies*. Bluntly rejecting formulaic transition era stories, these studies combined factual rigour with theoretical depth. The inclusion of Gorbman's 'Bibliography on Sound in Film,' later re-printed in Weis and Belton's *Film Sound*, was a statement of intent for establishing film sound studies as a discipline, providing directions for future teaching and research. The issue of sound's on-screen visibility was theorised from different angles by Christian Metz, Daniel Percheron, Altman, and Doane, indicative of its pivotal place in film sound theory. Doane's exploration of the unease of cinematic audio-visual relations built on the work of Pascal Bonitzer, which had introduced the theme of the power of off-screen voices. Doane's interpretation of cinematic voices, much like Chion's *The Voice in Cinema* and Kaja Silverman's 1988 feminist critique *The Acoustic Mirror*, was influenced by Jacques Lacan and Guy Rosolato's psychoanalytic concepts of identity, language and sound. The dichotomy of on-screen/off-screen sound has remained central to film sound studies ever since, including my own research.

The tension of off-screen sound has been most extensively explored by Chion, who introduced his concept of the ‘acousmêtre,’ or off-screen voice, in *The Voice in Cinema*. His neologism derived from musique concrète pioneer Pierre Schaeffer's 1952 term ‘acousmatic,’ which referred to ‘the auditory situation in

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which we hear sounds without seeing their cause or source. Chion's own *musique concrète* background informs his ability to analyse sound, and articulate how it functions in film. Over several books, including *Audio-Vision* (first published 1990) and *Film, A Sound Art* (first published 2003), Chion has identified and analysed a host of audio-visual techniques in an enormous range of films, while also providing practical methods for film sound analysis. His influence is corroborated by prominent figures within film sound. Sound designer Walter Murch states that ‘Chion's efforts to explore and synthesise a comprehensive theory of film sound – rather than polemicize it – are largely unprecedented even in Europe.’ Claudia Gorbman, also Chion's translator, admits ‘it is difficult to think of films and their evolution in quite the same way after reading Chion.’

Chion provides an important conceptual model for interpreting film sound. While his approach is not always as historically or culturally embedded as say Altman's, often concentrating on form and effect, his detailed understanding of the ways sound and image interact is a vital source of information and inspiration. And although his texts barely notice Dada/Surrealism-related film, the audio-visual theories developed within them have proved crucial to my own methods of audio-visual analysis.

Weis and Belton's *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, critical of the perceived scholarly bias towards movie music and the ‘birth’ of the talkies, suggested an alternative interlinked approach to film sound history, technology, and theory. Its judicious selection of important writings on film sound formed a potential canon of classical sound theory to support future educators and researchers. Historical texts by Arnheim, Clair, and Eisenstein were included alongside much later analysis from Altman, Doane, and Metz. This structuring suggested a historical development of film sound theory, while ensuring that sound theory maintained an important sense of historical perspective.

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189 Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 465. Chion, also a composer, was Schaeffer's assistant and colleague in the Groupe de recherches musicales during the 1970s. Founded in 1951, this group produced *musique concrète* works using found sounds.


Since the 2000s there has been increased academic interest in film sound, indicative of what Jim Drobnick has called the cross-disciplinary artistic ‘sonic turn’ within twenty-first century artistic and scholarly work. Specialist journals such as *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* (2007-present), *The Soundtrack* (2008-present), and *The New Soundtrack* (2011-present), together with events like the biannual symposium *The School of Sound*, have helped consolidate the area of film sound studies, establishing critical platforms for research and awareness. Books on film aurality have appeared in steady numbers, such as Philip Brophy's *100 Modern Soundtracks* (2004), Andy Birtwistle's *Cinesonica: Sounding Film and Video* (2010), K.J. Donnelly's *Occult Aesthetics: Synchronization in Sound Film* (2015), and Helen Hanson's *Hollywood Soundscapes: Film Sound Style, Craft and Production in the Classical Era* (2017). Edited volumes such as Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda's *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound* from 2008, or Graeme Harper's 2009 *Sound and Visual Media: An Overview*, have also become more common, registering the extent to which the popularity of film sound studies, and general interest in aural culture, has grown.

**Film Music Studies**

A broad knowledge of film music history is invaluable for understanding Dada/Surrealism-related soundtracks. My approach follows the lead of modern film sound studies, and considers the soundtrack as a whole, with music as an integral component. Cultural and historical readings of film music, and studies of musical audio-visual interaction, have aided my research more than musicological ones. Early dedicated works on film music, such as Kurt London's 1936 *Film Music*, took broad aim, covering history, recording techniques, the function of

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screen music, and the main roles involved (music director, composer, sound
recordist etc.). London, who claimed to have written the first sound era book on the
subject, reveals invaluable details. In particular, his section on the use of
gramophone records during the transition period provides valuable insight into an
oft-ignored but actually very common exhibition practice, also used by

Since then, the chronological narrative has been a familiar approach taken by
film music studies, mainly focused on Hollywood, interspersed with analyses of
individual case study scores. Roger Manvell's 1957 \textit{The Technique of Film Music}
and Roy M. Prendergast's \textit{Film Music: A Neglected Art}, from 1977, are both
representative of this approach.\footnote{Roger Manvell, \textit{The Technique of Film Music} (London: Focal Press, 1957); Roy M. Prendergast, \textit{Film Music: A Neglected Art} (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992).} In the 2000s, anthologies such as James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer's \textit{Music and Cinema} (2000), K.J. Donnelly's \textit{Film Music: Critical Approaches} (2001), and Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert's \textit{Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema} (2007), represent an increasing eclecticism of methodologies and subjects within film music

Although studies of Hollywood orchestral scores remain popular, we can
also see a wider focus in studies such as Mervyn Cooke's impressively
comprehensive \textit{A History of Film Music} (2008), which discusses both Hollywood
and global cinema, as well as sourced or pre-existing music, non-orchestral scoring,
live performance, and pop music.\footnote{Mervyn Cooke, \textit{A History of Film Music} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).} Discussion of avant-garde or experimental film
music is less common, excepting the studies mentioned earlier in this chapter,
although both Manvell's book and Gorbman's \textit{Unheard Melodies} analysed Maurice
Jaubert's score for \textit{Zéro de conduite} (\textit{Zero for Conduct}, Vigo, 1933).\footnote{Manvell, \textit{The Technique of Film Music}, p. 47; Gorbman, \textit{Unheard Melodies}, p. 138.} Russell
Lack's ambitious 1997 work, \textit{Twenty Four Frames Under: A Buried History of Film
Music}, while containing sections on avant-garde, Surrealist, and experimental film,
is less reliable in its content, and its section supposedly on Surrealism is mostly devoted to Vigo's (non-Surrealist) films.  

Two works still dominate film music literature: Adorno and Eisler's 1947 work *Composing for the Films*, and Gorbman's *Unheard Melodies*, from 1987. Both concerned with the relations between a film's music and its visuals and narrative, and the wider ideological ramifications of this, they conclude that scores should not be judged as ‘pure’ music. Adorno and Eisler's seminal text looked at classical Hollywood practice from a (European) musical standpoint, applying a Marxist-derived approach at a time when few considered film music, or even cinema, as a serious subject for study. They were highly critical of poor usage of film music for the sake of commercialism and easy interpretation. *Composing for the Films* remains relevant as a handbook of film music suggestions and (more often) criticisms of ‘defects’ (technical imperfections, conformity, deference to the ‘bad taste’ of the market). Its authors were typically disparaging of an inherent conservatism they identified within mass culture, and showed bias towards modern classical music, developed from Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique, that was in intellectual, but not popular, favour during the period. Their perspective on ‘the culture industry,’ however, runs a risk of elitism, dismissive of popular music, especially jazz, as an artless commodity.

Adorno and Eisler don't discuss Dada/Surrealism-related soundtracks, but their opinions are still interesting to consider in relation to them, suggesting an interesting conflict. Some recommendations in *Composing for the Films* are also highly applicable to my case studies, for example: film music must assert distance from the image and/or narrative, be tonally and rhythmically creative, avoid commercial audience-pleasing, and (in Graham McCann's paraphrase) encourage

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206 Adorno and Eisler, *Composing for the Films*, p. 81.
‘the normal made strange... a more troubled kind of entertainment.’ Yet Adorno and Eisler's disapproval of popular musical entertainment, including dance bands, jazz, mechanically reproduced music, stock music, re-worked classics, amateurism and (self-conscious) use of cliché, was in direct contrast to the role these idioms and techniques often played within Dada/Surrealism-related films. In his 1956 essay ‘Looking Back on Surrealism,’ Adorno would shrewdly identify the importance within Surrealism of ideas of obsolescence, unconscious familiarity, shock, and commodity fetish. We can also find such strategies of making the familiar strange through shocks and jolts, and rummaging and revelling in the everyday, prominent within Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuals, but assembled from popular musical materials, sound effects, and methods. Considered together, Adorno's writings on Surrealism, music and culture, while categorically in favour of professional art music over commercialism, can tempt impertinent thoughts of a bridge between early soundtrack creativity and throwaway, mass culture, identifiable in Dada/Surrealism-related cinema.

Unheard Melodies appeared forty years after Composing For the Films, the latter's reputation still high enough to merit an entire chapter. Gorbman considered Adorno and Eisler's the only existing 'rigorous, consistent, global critique' of classical film scoring, important but flawed. Avoiding personal preferences, which sometimes impaired Adorno and Eisler's message, Gorbman investigated music's function in narrative cinema, asking what the relationship is, and how it works. This method of inquiry connects Gorbman's work to Chion, whose translator she later became, and to Kathryn Kalinak's significant 1992 work, Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film. A major strength of Unheard Melodies was its questioning of received assumptions, such as that music originally accompanied films in order to mask the projector noise. Her insistent method resulted in a set of seven ‘principles’ of classical film music, somewhat like the Ten Commandments of Hollywood scoring. Under headings including ‘inaudibility,’

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210 Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, p. 99.
212 Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, pp. 5-33.
narrative cueing,’ or ‘continuity,’ these provide guidance to the standardised functions of 1930s and 1940s film music, against which we can measure the less standard films which might challenge or parody them.\textsuperscript{213}

In particular, principle number seven deserves consideration: ‘a given film score may violate any of the principles above, providing this violation is at the service of the other principles.’\textsuperscript{214} The extent to which soundtrack ‘violations’ within Dada/Surrealism-related films prevent what Gorbman identifies as classical cinema’s ‘goal’ – to create a ‘trancelike’ spectatorial immersion in the film – is an important question, and one which challenges the assumed inseparability of immersive spectatorship and classical narrative. Especially so when considering Surrealist attitudes to spectatorship. Breton eulogised the ‘unison’ of film and viewer who ‘slips into the fiction evolving before his eyes... passes through a critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping.’\textsuperscript{215} Goudal described spectatorship as a ‘conscious hallucination’ in which ‘our body itself submits to a sort of temporary depersonalization which takes away the feeling of its own existence.’\textsuperscript{216} Sound plays an important part in creating (or breaking) breaking cinematic unity and, as Gorbman suggests, ‘film music lowers the thresholds of belief.’\textsuperscript{217} Gorbman's film music theories, and related psychoanalytical approaches, are not without their critics; Jeff Smith, for one, is highly sceptical about the supposed inaudibility of film music, arguing it rests upon a false conception of passive spectatorship.\textsuperscript{218} My interest however, is not necessarily whether such a model of spectatorship is always true, but in its resemblance to, and related antagonism against, the film experiences celebrated and presented by Dada/Surrealism-related cinema.

The primary musical focus in this thesis, as mentioned, is the use of pre-existing music in Dada/Surrealism-related films. Research of early pre-synchronisation sound practices, including gramophone and cue sheet use, reminds us that there was a long tradition of films using pre-existing music. Essays such as

\textsuperscript{213} Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, p.73.
\textsuperscript{214} Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{215} Breton, ‘As In A Wood,’ p. 73.
\textsuperscript{216} Goudal, ‘Surrealism and Cinema,’ pp. 86-7.
\textsuperscript{217} Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, p. 6
Michael Allen's ‘“In the Mix”: How Electrical Reproducers Facilitated the Transition to Sound in British Cinemas’ (2001), or John Riley's ‘Sound at the Film Society’ (2013), provide vital insight into the extensive use of gramophone accompaniment during the transition era, in addition to Kurt London's historical text.\(^{219}\) Although still a less common area of film music studies, pre-existing soundtracks now attract scholarly attention in their own right, in dedicated works such as Phil Powrie and Robynn Stillwell's 2006 edited collection Changing Tunes: the Use of Pre-existing Robyn in Films, or Jonathan Godsall's 2013 doctoral thesis ‘Pre-existing Music in Fiction Sound Film.'\(^{220}\) These, as well as inclusions within broader film music histories such as those by Mervyn Cooke and Russell Lack, discuss it as a distinct method of film scoring that impacts film form and meaning.\(^{221}\) Studies generally agree that implications of using pre-existing scores such as familiarity, or poor synchronisation, can have powerful and intentional consequences.

Powrie and Stillwell's Changing Tunes divided its subject (as Cooke did) into two parts, covering classical and pop music, indicative of the assumed cultural differences between them, a relevant issue when considering Dada/Surrealism-related film's use of music across genres, from Mozart to Fats Waller to African percussion solos. Classical music remains a signifier of culture and class, resulting in its suitability as an ironic device. Popular music may still be treated as lowbrow, belonging to mass culture, never to art. Despite contemporary tolerance of individual ‘cut and paste’ cultural environments, divisions of high and low art remain strong.\(^{222}\) Dada/Surrealism-related cinema's borrowing across musical categories, and unusual re-contextualisations, broached boundaries of film music suitability, still noticeable today to some extent. In particular, Buñuel and Dalí's films used classical music extensively, especially Wagner, in ways that are considered parodic, but which also related to contemporary methods of musical borrowing. Jeongwan Joe and Sander L. Gilman's 2010 anthology Wagner and

\(^{219}\) Michael Allen, ‘“In the Mix”: How Electrical Reproducers Facilitated the Transition to Sound in British Cinemas,’ in Donnelly, Film Music; John Riley, ‘Sound at the Film Society,’ in Brown and Davison, The Sounds of the Silents in Britain; London, Film Music.

\(^{220}\) Phil Powrie and Robynn Stilwell, eds., Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-existing Music in Film (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006); Jonathan Godsall, ‘Pre-existing Music in Fiction Sound Film’ (PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 2013).

\(^{221}\) Mervyn Cooke, A History of Film Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

\(^{222}\) Ann Davies, ‘High and Low Culture: Bizet's Carmen and the Cinema,’ in Powrie and Stilwell, Changing Tunes, p. 46.
Cinema called attention to Wagner's status as one of the most quoted and referenced composers in cinema history, but this ubiquity has largely been ignored in readings of Buñuel and Dalí's work. 223

Gorbman's essay 'Ears Wide Open: Kubrick's Music,' included in Changing Tunes, identified a 'postclassical' practice of pre-existing music use which contrasts with the 'inaudibility' of a classical film score. 224 The 'postclassical' film may foreground pre-existing music, from a variety of idioms, in an often provocative or unconventional manner. Gorbman diagnoses a double-edged function for pre-existing music, which can be both ironic and 'sincerely appropriate,' modern yet harking back to silent film accompaniment. Alongside this ambiguity, pre-existing musical choices frequently convey different levels of irony, which Gorbman contrasts in two famous scenes, the elegant audio-visual irony of the waltzing space craft in 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick, 1968) with the blunter attack of Buñuel's use of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' to accompany a drunk and disorderly parody of The Last Supper in Viridiana (Buñuel, 1961). 225 As chapter two shows, the creation of audio-visual irony through the use of pre-existing music was already being explored by a number of my case study practitioners during the 1920s and 1930s.

The once commonplace assertion that film sound is a neglected area has become redundant. Although visual bias still exists, audio-visual studies is now a strongly established field. In 2010, Andy Birtwistle stated:

the body of literature that has developed since the early 1980s has now established the importance of the study of sound, and it is no longer as necessary as it once was to campaign for sound to be taken seriously. Rather, the task currently facing those working in film sound studies is to consider how thinking on the sonic dimensions of cinema might be developed further, and how areas of critical neglect within the discipline itself might be addressed. 226

The remainder of this thesis builds on this idea, understanding the 'sonic dimensions' of Dada/Surrealism-related film which, as demonstrated above, have been largely unexplored in film and art history. It follows Altman's counsel to take film sound studies into cinema's 'dark corners,' leaving the familiar subjects behind

to broaden scope and explore an expanded corpus of sound film studies. My research not only presents new audio-visual readings of works previously unconsidered in terms of their soundtracks, but also draws these together under the new premise of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuals. This chapter's exposition of the various academic and historical contexts relevant to the study of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuals exposes the extent of the current gap in knowledge. By bridging this with interdisciplinary, contextually informed research, I present a fresh perspective on early film sound and Dada and Surrealism. The chapters that now follow, dealing with pre-existing music, audio-visual collage, and speech strategies, head into mostly uncharted territory, prepared and informed by the scholarship and concepts outlined above.

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Chapter Two

Readymade Soundtracks

How I miss the cinemas of days gone by... the most touching romantic tunes from *Les Temps des cérises* to *The Blue Danube* followed each other without offending our ears...there is nothing more ominous, after the cinema orchestras with their pretentious airs, than a film projected in silence.228

A significant proportion of Dada/Surrealism-related films used pre-existing music for live accompaniment or a recorded soundtrack, frequently in the form of gramophone records. This was a common audio-visual practice in both mainstream and specialist exhibition, and in this chapter I assess the extent to which such filmmakers used this convention in distinctive, innovative, or even subversive ways. I propose that these were ‘readymade soundtracks,’ and explore them here in comparison with the readymades of Dada art practice, and the related ‘found objects’ of Surrealism. I argue that these films’ re-contextualisation of music constituted another creative application of pre-existing materials, but which has previously been overlooked. While embedded within silent film exhibition traditions that continued through the transition period, the use of music in these films anticipated audio-visual experiments of later filmmakers, as well as today's emergence of audio-visual remix practices and live soundtrack revival.

Soundtrack use connected these films to popular cinema practices, and distanced them from certain expectations of avant-garde exhibition and artistry discussed below, in accord with anti-art themes prominent in both Dada and Surrealism. It also aligned them with outgoing silent exhibition practices, partly due to financial and resource restrictions. Yet pre-existing music was not always just a pragmatic choice, as suggested by Buñuel's outright rejection of Stravinsky as composer for *L'Âge d'or* in favour of a compilation score.229

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Pre-existing music affects perception of a film at the levels of form, emotion, and meaning. For a spectator, individual associations to the borrowed music can complicate or clarify meaning, inviting ambiguity or irony. A ‘readymade soundtrack’ can be less permanent than a traditional score, especially when based on live accompaniment, which affects our understanding of film as audio-visually stable. And while synchronised scores are integrated with a film to guide interpretation, ‘readymade soundtracks’ are not, and may disrupt with chance juxtapositions. Such an approach embodies a spirit of bricolage, the artistic incorporation of found materials recognised as central to Dada and Surrealism, allowing filmmakers to control the soundtrack while loosening control on the signification.  

While original scores for Dada/Surrealism-related films have received scholarly attention, far more films used ‘readymade soundtracks.’ Pre-existing music played a major part in *Un chien Andalou*, *L’Âge d’or*, *Las Hurdes*, almost all of Man Ray's films, transition era films by Hans Richter and Jean Painlevé, and works by Len Lye and Joseph Cornell. An enormous variety of music was used, including classical, popular song, jazz, dance music, and African percussion. Yet, as the previous chapter discussed, they have largely been ignored beyond references to individual uses. This chapter recognises the use of pre-existing music as an important audio-visual approach used across historical Dada/Surrealism-related filmmaking and argues that it forms a critical element of how these films work and are perceived.

The case studies I have selected used pre-existing music in a foregrounded, relatively unaltered state – Buñuel's *Las Hurdes* and *L’Âge d’or* (with Dalí), Cornell's *Rose Hobart*, and Man Ray's short films from the 1920s (filmed silently but later sonorised). They have been chosen because of the (apparently) minimal intervention in the playback or arrangement of their chosen music, the pre-existing music appearing as intact. As chapter three will demonstrate, other Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers, such as Len Lye, also used pre-existing music,

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230 For example, Inez Hedges refers to Man Ray's early film work as bricolage; Hedges, ‘Constellated Visions,’ p.99; Godsall, ‘Pre-existing Music in Fiction Sound Film,’ p. 158.

231 For traditional score readings, see Marks, *Music and the Silent Film*; also, Chapman, *Chance Encounters*. Antheil's *Ballet mécanique* score, despite its unconventional instrumentation, remains in the contemporary concert repertoire.
but with significant alterations, which I consider as a separate collage-related process.

I begin by explaining this idea of ‘readymade music,’ looking at how it fits alongside an understanding of the visual readymade, and extending the discussion to include the concept of gramophone art within Dada and the wider avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s. This is followed by a contextual assessment of the use of pre-existing soundtracks, in particular gramophone accompaniment, within transition era film exhibition. I suggest that some of the soundtrack practices and choices of Dada/Surrealism-related film were at odds with attitudes demonstrated in the wider exhibition of avant-garde film.

My case studies are analysed through their uses of pre-existing music soundtracks, a previously unexplored area. The first is L'Âge d'or, and I examine its compilation score in terms of its subversive approach to established audio-visual conventions, drawing parallels between its musical re-contextualisation and Surrealist Paul Nougé's tract on listening, 'Music is Dangerous.' Following that, I explore musical concepts of pasticcio and bricolage by way of introduction to Man Ray's short films Emak Bakia, L'Étoile de mer and Les Mystères du château du dé. I interpret Man Ray's music uses as integral to his filmmaking approach, and suggest his ‘readymade jukebox’ method significantly structured these works, and anticipated later filmmaking approaches. I also demonstrate the importance of acknowledging impermanence and anachronism in these audio-visual combinations, and the problems of critical misattribution regarding definitive versions, an issue that also applies to Joseph Cornell's work.

The final part explores chance asynchrony, considering the centrality of the idea of chance encounters within Dada and Surrealist thought and work, and how the use of non-synchronised gramophone soundtracks contributed to this. I re-assess the use of a gramophone recording of Brahms' Fourth Symphony in Las Hurdes, long assumed as randomly and ironically applied to the film. Using close audio-visual analysis, my observations conclude that this soundtrack was not quite as aleatory as assumed, and while still loosely synched, was in fact perhaps calculated to give only an impression of randomness. These new findings challenge received critical understanding of Las Hurdes as a work based on randomness and ironic distance, suggesting that we be more critical of the presumed carelessness of Dada/Surrealism-related soundtracks. A short discussion concerning the intimacy of
record ownership and listening during the period, via the insights of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, precedes my last case study, Cornell's *Rose Hobart*. This draws on archival resources to propose a new audio-visual understanding of Cornell's film based on his considerable interest in re-working soundtracks and experiencing transcendental audio-visual ‘correspondences.’

**Readymade Music**

Luis Buñuel, J.H. Matthews notes, was not averse to using ‘ready-made’ music in his films.\(^\text{232}\) Jacques Brunius believed that ‘montage films’ (particularly documentaries) should involve as many ready-made components as possible, including noises from sound effects libraries and pre-recorded music.\(^\text{233}\) My term ‘readymade soundtracks’ is in tune with these observations. I do not claim such soundtracks were straight analogues of the sculptural Dada readymade, originally developed by Marcel Duchamp in famous works such as *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), a wheel mounted on a stool, or *Fountain* (1917), an upturned and signed urinal, or the direct legacy of Surrealist found objects and assemblages. Nevertheless, these soundtracks possess conceptual similarities to visual readymades, in that mass-produced items (here pieces of music or gramophone records) were selected and re-contextualised, altering perception of both the music and the film. As with a readymade, they rejected the original and the artisanal, and celebrated the pre-existing and the manufactured.

Readymades shifted artistic emphasis from making to choosing. Duchamp's editorial concerning Richard Mutt's *Fountain* (the pseudonym with which he 'signed' the urinal) prioritised choice and re-contextualisation:

> Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.\(^\text{234}\)

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\(^\text{232}\) Matthews, *Surrealism and Film*, p. 112.
\(^\text{233}\) Brunius, *En marge du cinéma français*, p. 79.
The artistry of a readymade lies in choice. Duchamp's statements on the unimportance of craftsmanship, the selection of everyday items and, most importantly, re-contextualisation as a creative method, have the potential to be applied to pre-existing soundtracks too. When Breton adapted readymade principles to the concept of Surrealist objects, he prioritised what he called the ‘personality of choice’ in selecting and assembling pre-existing materials ‘according to the unconscious desires of the maker.’ Pre-existing music soundtracks not only connect to the desires of the chooser, especially when loaded with personal significance, but potentially to those of any viewer.

Max Ernst, artist and collagist alumnus of both Dada and Surrealism, defined Surrealist encounter as the re-contextualisation of a ‘ready-made reality’ that suddenly finds itself juxtaposed with something unrelated, escaping its prior purpose and identity. The juxtaposition of readymade elements to create new experiences, fundamental to Dada and Surrealist literature and visual art, was found also in its audio-visuals, in the selection and re-contextualisation of pre-existing music with images. Admittedly, there already existed an embedded tradition of pre-existing music use within film exhibition, while visual readymades such as Duchamp's intentionally provoked outrage by shifting mundane objects into an artistic context. Dada/Surrealism-related readymade soundtracks followed certain established rules of musical accompaniment, and only conveyed shock or inappropriateness by contrast with the visual subject, as in Buñuel and Dalí's films. Essentially it is musical re-appropriation into an unexpected situation that conveys this contrast.

**Gramophone Art**

Among the bizarre objects filling the immersive ‘Exposition internationale du

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236 Max Ernst, quoted in Breton, ‘Surrealist Situation of the Object,’ p. 275. Ernst's example reworks the line from *Les Chants de Maldoror* (*The Songs of Maldoror*) by the Comte de Lautréamont, much-quoted and assumed to be a Surrealist motto: ‘the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella’; Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism*, p. 25.
surréalisme’ in Paris, 1938, was a strange gramophone. Nestled between sacks of coal and dead leaves, Jamais (Never) by Oscar Dominguez merged female mannequin parts with a music player. The legs dangled out of the horn, a hand extended instead of a stylus, while a pair of buttocks lay on the turntable. This extreme re-contextualisation of a gramophone synthesised human and machine, revealing Surrealist visual interest, via assemblage of readymade objects, in the relations between music and desire, between humans and reproducible sound.

Beyond this silent, sinister Surrealist gramophone, there are other traces of using gramophones to produce aural art within the wider avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s. Most of these have been lost or forgotten, with mostly only John Cage's influential incorporation of turntables into works from Imaginary Landscape No. 1 (1939) onwards widely remembered. But prior to Cage, Schaeffer's musique concrète, and magnetic tape experimentation, individuals had explored the creative use of gramophones through live performance, disc manipulation, and specifically designed gramophone music.

Several European composers associated with the avant-garde, Dada, and Surrealism experimented with the medium. Around 1930, Paul Hindemith, who had scored Richter's Vormittagsspuk, worked on ‘Grammophonmusik,’ now mostly lost, which he created by juxtaposing and superimposing sounds, and manipulating playback speed and direction. Darius Milhaud (one of Cocteau's ‘Les Six,’ who scored L'Hippocampe) and Georges Antheil also allegedly experimented with disc manipulation. Edgard Varèse, Ottorino Respighi, Kurt Weill, and artist László Moholy-Nagy, also made attempts to use the gramophone, or phonograph, as a creative, rather than reproductive, instrument, reflecting the strength of avant-garde interest in record players and pre-recorded music during this time, when ‘the idea of using machines to make music was indeed an expression of the Zeitgeist.’

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240 Katz, ‘Hindemith, Toch, and Grammophonmusik,’ pp. 168-74; László Moholy-Nagy, ‘Production-Reproduction: Potentialities of the Phonograph,’ in Cox and Warner, Audio Culture, p. 332. The terms gramophone and phonograph were often used interchangeably during the period to refer to similar machines playing disc recordings.
Composer Stefan Wolpe's gramophone performance at a 1920 Dada event stands out. He later recollected this artistically precocious performance in a lecture, saying:

I had eight gramophones, record players, at my disposal. And these were lovely record players because one could regulate their speed. Here you have only certain speeds – seventy-four [sic] and so on – but there you could play a Beethoven symphony very, very slow, and very quick at the same time that you could mix it with a popular tune. You could have a waltz, then you could have a funeral march. So I put things together in what one would call today a multifocal way.

Wolpe's experiment and lecture emphasised commitment to contrast, via simultaneity or juxtaposition, fundamental to both Dada and Surrealism. Wolpe argued that his musical approach ‘to bring together, to combine, to connect two opposites’ was antagonistic to ‘the classical position.’ This was epitomised in his symbolic ‘violation’ of a Bach fugue by combining it with ‘a gutter tune.’ His intention was to work creatively with ‘suddenesses, contradictions, extreme positions, shocks, simultaneities, dissociations.’

Chris Cutler suggests that Wolpe and other pre-Cage gramophone experimenters worked with ‘readymade fragments’ of recorded sound, but without receiving public recognition. They formed an important audio-based component of the wider avant-garde culture of ‘montage, collage, borrowing [and] bricolage,’ all of which were paramount within Dada and Surrealism. Plundering recorded sound for ‘resonant cultural fragments,’ Cutler calls these audio artists ‘bricoleurs,’ returning us to the idea of readymade music and audio bricolage. Cutler outlines a spectrum of pre-existing music/sound application in music and sound art, ranging from Cage's 'unequivocal importation of readymade material' to works in which the original source sound is rendered unrecognisable. The mid-way point is an aural equivalent of the Dada readymade – the total importation of an existing piece of music or sound, creating a ‘re-hearing’ experience. The ‘readymade soundtracks’ of Dada/Surrealism-related film flouted originality and uniqueness, and used audio-visual contrast, discontinuity, and inappropriateness to their advantage. Yet, while

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244 Cutler, ‘Plunderphonia,’ p. 144.
245 Cutler, p. 154-55.
keeping an eye on experimental musical re-contextualisation, such films were also indebted to contemporary exhibition practices, towards which we now look.

**Accompanying Films**

THERE IS the gramophone, which is a little machine
THERE IS the camera, which is another little machine. ²⁴⁶

It had long been standard practice to accompany all types of silent film with pre-existing music, and during the transition period gramophones offered an affordable alternative to both live music and synchronised sound. Altman describes film sound development as non-linear, a ‘crisis historiography of unsuccessful experiments and short-lived practices,’ and methods of using pre-existing music continued throughout the early sound era. ²⁴⁷ Film scholarship provides a wealth of information on film accompaniment issues such as the provision of gramophone records or sheet music for films, repertoire compilation, or handbooks classifying pieces by mood. ²⁴⁸ Selecting and adapting pre-existing music was commonplace, and audiences were used to hearing familiar music at the cinema.

Kurt London devoted a section of *Film Music* to gramophone accompaniment, stating ‘the idea of accompanying a film with mechanical music is as old as the film itself.’ ²⁴⁹ He connected the surge in mechanized musical accompaniment to an unfulfilled demand for sound film in Europe, where conversion lagged behind the US by several years. Michael Allen has more recently demonstrated that the shortfall of wired-for-sound cinemas in late 1920s Britain was temporarily filled by amplified gramophones, often featuring multiple turntables, faders, and mixing devices. ²⁵⁰ The gramophone operator (or ‘cinematic disc-jockey’ in Mervyn Cooke’s words) was also called an arranger, illustrator, or fitter of non-

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²⁴⁷ Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, p. 22.
²⁵⁰ Michael Allen, ‘In the Mix.’
synch music, a role Len Lye's sound editor, Jack Ellit, held at the London Film Society.\(^\text{251}\)

Gramophone accompaniment was popular at small cinemas and film clubs in France and the UK through the early 1930s, and remained popular whenever synch sound was not possible. Adverts and articles in the film press regularly recommended ‘records to fit pictures,’ stressing cost effectiveness.\(^\text{252}\) Even early synch-sound films maintained strong connections to popular music and records, and O'Brien notes the difficulty of finding any early French sound films that don't show a character playing a gramophone record.\(^\text{253}\)

The pragmatic use of gramophone accompaniment extended to auditoriums screening Dada/Surrealism-related films, including the renowned Studio 28 in Paris, as Jeffrey H. Jackson describes:

> In the mid-1920s, even before the advent of sound film, several specialized cinemas in Paris incorporated recorded music into their film programs. At the Montmartre theater Studio 28, according to one report, ‘The music issues from recesses in the right wall of the auditorium’, coming from two gramophones and an electric piano, the latter used ‘for variety.’\(^\text{254}\)

Man Ray recalled the customary presence of a phonograph in Paris's Vieux Colombier cinema where he premiered Emak Bakia, while Buñuel remembered hiding ‘behind the screen with the record player, alternating Argentinian tangos with Tristan und Isolde’ at the Studio des Ursulines for Un Chien andalou's first screening, armed with a pocketful of stones in case the crowd turned nasty.\(^\text{255}\)

Even in synch-sound films, pre-existing music was still common, sometimes functioning as an ‘overture’ in early Hollywood talkies such as Dracula (Browning, 1931) and The Mummy (Freund, 1932), which both use the Swan Theme from Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake.\(^\text{256}\) Travelogues lavished musical favourites over syrupy postcard content, such as Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture in Victoria and Vancouver: Gateways to Canada (Sharpe, 1936). In Composing for the Films,


\(^{252}\) Advertisement, Talkie Magazine, 23 September 1933; ‘Records and Amplifiers for Cinema,’ The Cinema, 3 April 1929.

\(^{253}\) O'Brien, Cinema's Conversion to Sound, p. 29.


\(^{255}\) Man Ray, Self Portrait, p. 221; Luis Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 106.

\(^{256}\) Both films were produced by Universal Pictures.
Adorno and Eisler derided the common use of stock music in ‘cheap pictures,’ adding ‘one of the worst practices is the incessant use of a limited number of worn-out musical pieces that are associated with the given screen situations by reason of their actual or traditional titles.’ Mass film production, they argued, relied on cliché and standardised methods of response arousal. Overuse of musical cliché, however, rendered it redundant, simultaneously intensifying and nullifying any emotional effect. They concluded that ‘psychologically, the whole phenomenon is ambiguous’ preferring an alternative of modern classical, or ‘avant-garde’ film scoring. Despite the scorn intended, this observation of pre-existing music's ambiguity conversely suggests a subversive potential, something that could appeal to makers of ‘cheap’ experimental films. Dada/Surrealism-related films actively resisted easy interpretation in favour of illogicality and ambiguity. Using pre-existing music, re-contextualising familiar music and accessing stock emotions, was a potential method of confusing interpretation.

Mood music works by identifying and matching a film's semantic and emotional content. However, interpretation of pre-existing music can be more subjective. Jonathan Godsall argues that it opens up the interpretative field, while Mike Cormack suggests that re-contextualising classical music causes semantic ambiguity, inevitably destabilising its meaning. This was exploited by L'Âge d'or's compilation score, which used famous pieces that could be recommended elsewhere as mood music. To some extent, the situations in L'Âge d'or matched audio-visual clichés – the ‘pastoral’ Waldweben’ (‘Forest Murmurs’) from Wagner's Siegfried accompanies a landscape, mixed with the sounds of wind and bells, and we hear Mozart's ‘religious’ ‘Ave Verum’ while we see bishops. But the landscape is a dream landscape in a mirror; the bishops sit on rocks and turn to skeletons. The

257 Adorno and Eisler, Composing for the Films, p. 9.
258 Adorno and Eisler, Composing for the Films, pp. 10-11.
260 F. Rawlings, How To Choose Music for Amateur Films (London: Focal Press, 1955), pp. 49-106. Although this British handbook to choosing pre-recorded music dates from a later period, its principles and categories of music selection are very similar to those widely used in the film cue music books of the teens and twenties, such as John S. Zamecnik's Sam Fox Moving Picture Music series, or Giuseppe Becce's popular Kinothek anthology; see Cooke, A History of Film Music, p. 16. ‘Ave Verum’ usually signified religious situations, even if ambiguously; Chion calls it an ‘unexpected spiritual thunderbolt’ when it is heard in Le Plaisir (Pleasure, Ophüls, 1952); Chion, Film, A Sound Art, p. 450.
initial superficial mood may match the popular association, but the fuller context is less predictable.

**What Music?**

While familiar classical and popular music was frequently the accompaniment of choice for Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers, a different pattern emerged in their films' wider distribution, indicating different expectations of audio-visual aesthetics. At San Francisco Museum of Art's 1947 avant-garde cinema retrospective, Hans Richter was asked about film accompaniment, replying 'I believe firmly... that music for the silent avantgarde [sic] film is essential. Of course it depends what music.'

In the case of non-sonorised films however, music was often down to the decision of the exhibitor, unless otherwise prescribed by the filmmaker, highlighting again the audio-visual impermanence of these films. Further afield, film societies and art galleries promoting avant-garde cinema had vested interests in film as art, and often inclined towards either serious art music or silence. For example, between 1927-1930, London Film Society's screenings of *Emak Bakia*, *L'Étoile de mer*, *Les Mystères du château du dé*, *Anémic cinéma* (here called *An Abstract Film*) and *Filmstudie* were all 'unaccompanied by music.' But despite the society showing keen interest in audio-visual developments during this period, particularly visual rhythm and musical synchronisation, they regarded these works as purely visual, emphasising notions of ‘absolute’ film. In 1940 The Museum of Modern Art's influential film library catalogue followed suit, listing *L'Étoile de mer* as requiring no audio.

Paul Velguth's notes from the 1947 San Francisco retrospective reveal differences between Richter and Man Ray's approaches and Velguth's own selections from 'the less familiar sections of the available record library.’ Velguth stressed the importance of using music ‘sufficiently unknown to provide a little

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262 *The Film Society Programmes*, pp. 46-141. A note from 1925, concerning *Raskolnikov* (Wiene, 1923) reveals the democracy behind accompaniment decisions, reading ‘the Council has decided, by majority vote, that music and interval are alike unsuitable for this picture’; *The Film Society Programmes*, p. 11.
interest and at the same time not detract from the picture,’ whose unfamiliarity would limit associations and smooth transmission. While Richter's suggestion to accompany Léger and Murphy's *Ballet mécanique* with African drums, a polka, and a boogie-woogie was followed, the exhibition played safe with the other films, avoiding style clashes and (like Adorno and Eisler) favouring cerebral and rhythmic modern classical music, for instance Shostakovich’s ‘Preludes’ with Richter's *Rhythmus 21*. Vague suggestions from Man Ray were followed – ‘any collection of old jazz will do’ for *Emak Bakia*, and ‘French popular music’ for *L'Étoile de mer* – but with more predictable results than in the filmmaker's own sonorisation. For example, for the rail sequence in *L'Étoile de mer*, Edith Piaf's ‘Paris Méditerranée’ was chosen, a song about a train complete with imitative sounds, in contrast to the more ambiguous and haunting Andalusian ‘Sieta’ Man Ray would use. Another accompaniment decision had *Un Chien andalou's* infamous eye-slitting prologue screened in silence, cushioning its shock, rather than the jolt of extreme violence when accompanied by a jaunty anempathetic tango.²⁶⁴

These audio-visual alterations above emphasised serious artistry, and reduced ambiguous interpretation, conducive to the construction of an avant-garde cinema canon. Amie Siegel has identified five consistent approaches to music usage in experimental and avant-garde film to date. Having no sound at all, the images themselves considered ‘musical,’ has been one common method, while another tactic has been to use avant-garde music. Two other popular methods are based on chance – to accompany the film with pre-recorded music, relying on chance synchronisation, or to use live musical accompaniment or audio-visual mixing.²⁶⁵ The last method she mentions is to use fragmented musical quotation, highlighting its audio-visual construction. Although some Dada/Surrealism-related films, such as *Le Retour à la raison* or *Entr'acte* were indeed screened in silence or scored by avant-garde composers, I would argue that at least as many used soundtrack methods that engaged with re-appropriation, chance, and quotation. Silently made films that used readymade, record-based accompaniments were especially open to re-interpretation via change of soundtrack, indicated in the multiple audio versions

²⁶⁴ Paul Velguth, ‘Notes on the Musical Accompaniment to the Silent Films,’ pp. 91-93.
²⁶⁵ Amie Siegel, ‘Violations, Indiscretions and Narrative Expectation in Film Sound,’ in Sider, Freeman, and Sider, *Soundscape*, p. 139.
Man Ray and Cornell planned for their films.\textsuperscript{266} Those that used pre-existing music for their synchronised soundtrack, such as \textit{L'Âge d'or}, took advantage of popular exhibition conventions, and the potential for ambiguous signification, rather than subscribing to purist attitudes to avant-garde film soundtracks.

\textbf{Buñuel and Dalí – Dangerous Music}

Buñuel and Dalí's films became the most famous, and infamous, of Surrealism. The pair were co-opted into the Surrealist group after their uncompromising short, \textit{Un Chien andalou} became a Paris sensation. The follow up feature, \textit{L'Âge d'or} would be Surrealism's only official film, with contributions from group members, and launched with a (barely comprehensible) manifesto.\textsuperscript{267} Its oblique narrative, difficult to summarise, is a compilation of six sections, representing Surrealist concerns in scenes that take liberties with timescale, logic, and continuity. A prologue of fighting scorpions, using footage culled from a documentary, is followed by loosely connected absurd sequences of the founding of the Roman Empire, and the ill fated attempts of a woman (Lya Lys) and a man (Gaston Modot) to consummate their love.\textsuperscript{268} \textit{L'Âge d'or}’s epilogue is like the scorpion's sting, and somewhat disjointed from the preceding narrative, showing characters from the Marquis de Sade's \textit{120 Days of Sodom} leaving their castle after months of sadistic depravity.\textsuperscript{269} When their leader, the Duc de Blangis, emerges he looks like the popular image of Jesus.

It was commissioned as one of France's first sound films, and proclaimed the first ‘Surrealist talking film,’ by wealthy arts patrons the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles, who also commissioned Cocteau's \textit{Le Sang d'un poète} and Man Ray's \textit{Les Mystères du château du dé}.\textsuperscript{270} For \textit{Un Chien andalou}, Buñuel and Dalí accompanied the silent images with alternately played gramophone recordings of Wagner's ‘Liebestod’ (‘Love-Death’) from \textit{Tristan und Isolde}, and two (still

\textsuperscript{266} See Bouhours and de Haas, \textit{Man Ray}; Joseph Cornell Papers, Smithsonian Institute Archives of American Art, \texttt{<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/joseph-cornell-papers-5790>} [accessed September 2016].

\textsuperscript{267} The Surrealist Group, ‘Manifesto of the Surrealists concerning \textit{L'Âge d'or},’ in Hammond, \textit{The Shadow and its Shadow}. All specific references to these films in this thesis refer to \textit{Un Chien andalou} / \textit{L'Âge d'or} (British Film Institute, 2004), DVD.

\textsuperscript{268} Hammond, \textit{L'Âge d'or}, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{269} Hammond calls the epilogue ‘the poison sac’; Hammond, \textit{L'Âge d'Or}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{270} ‘Film parlant surréaliste’; original \textit{L'Âge d'or} programme, Cinémathèque Française, Paris.
(unidentified) tangos, fixed under Buñuel's direction in the 1960 sonorisation.\footnote{Dalí attempted to recycle the combination of Wagner (Tannhäuser this time) and tango in his 1932 scenario ‘Babaouo’; ‘Extract from “Babaouo”’, in The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí, pp. 141-45.}

Despite considerable financial backing for L'Âge d'or, Buñuel rejected his sponsor's suggestion of a Stravinsky score and opted again for pre-existing music. Rather than gramophone records, it featured a compilation score of eleven separate pieces, arranged by Georges Van Parys with suitably scaled-down orchestration, plus a recording of the Good Friday drums of Calanda performed by twelve drummers of the Republican Guard.\footnote{Buñuel, L'Âge d'or: correspondance, p. 28. Van Parys would become known for his score for Le Million. The score was conducted by Armand Bernard, who also conducted A nous la liberté (Freedom For Us, Clair, 1931) and arranged Sous les Toits de Paris. The Clair connection is interesting, as his films were regarded as sonically sophisticated, unlike L'Âge d'or: ‘in a film called L'Âge d'or... I defy any finished technician to find the faintest artistic value’; Richard Pierre Budin, ‘Review of L'Âge d'or,’ Le Figaro, 7 December 1930.}

L'Âge d'or's soundtrack followed the tradition of compilation scores and cue sheets that ‘dismembered’ the great classics in search of film accompaniment.\footnote{Altman, Silent Film Sound, p. 361.} Almost all the tunes were plundered from well-known composers. It featured Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave) and Symphony No. 4 in A Major (Italian Symphony), Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Debussy's ‘La Mer est plus belle,’ Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus, and Schubert's Symphony No. 8 in B Minor (the Unfinished), and an uncredited ‘Paso Doble.’ Wagner was also prominent in three pieces – the ‘Vorspiel’ (‘Prelude’) and ‘Liebestod’ from Tristan und Isolde, and ‘Waldweben’ from Siegfried. This approach was consistent with later Buñuel films, where some of these pieces turned up once again, matching Buñuel's noted avoidance of stylistic adornment and foregrounding of everyday materials.\footnote{Music from Tristan und Isolde was used in Abismos de Pasión (Wuthering Heights, Buñuel, 1953), and the Good Friday drums in Nazarín (Buñuel, 1959).}

Hammond claims Buñuel's accompaniment ideas came from his time as Jean Epstein's assistant on Mauprat (Epstein, 1926), which was apparently accompanied with recordings of Wagner, Schubert, Mozart and Beethoven.\footnote{Hammond, L'Âge d'or, p. 45. Hammond's assertion that the soundtrack was recorded from gramophone records, kept by assistant director Brunius until his death, does not tally with written evidence that the score was an arranged and conducted by Van Parys and Bernard, nor its moderated orchestration and uniform sound. See Buñuel, L'Âge d'or: correspondance, p. 28.} Hammond also notes ‘Buñuel never ceased working within–and across–the dominant Hollywood
codes,’ to which I would add audio-visual codes.\footnote{Hammond, *L’Âge d’or*, p. 37.} *L’Âge d'or*’s relationship to mainstream audio-visuals remains largely unexplored, but its specific accompaniment choices were (excepting the drums) hardly unique. For example, the *Tristan und Isolde* ‘Vorspiel’ (here called overture) was also used prominently in *Murder!* (Hitchcock, 1930), as a diegetic radio accompaniment for Herbert Marshall's audible internal monologue. The music added gravitas to a dramatic scene where we witness a worthy character's thoughts. Whereas in *L’Âge d'or* it accompanied deliberately provocative moments of masturbation, toilets, and shit. In both of Buñuel and Dalí’s films, *Tristan und Isolde* was original in its re-contextualisation, not in its presence.

An issue of audio-visual suitability lying behind the use of mood music is important here. To some extent, musical choices in *L’Âge d'or* were suitable, providing temporal structure and enhancing emotional resonances such as tension or longing, and offering thematic support to the narrative. The difference being that placed in their visual contexts, these highly conventional musical references took associative sideways leaps, or jokes. For example, Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony* scored the patently absurd ‘founding of Rome’ sequence, itself partly composed of stock footage. The *Hebrides Overture*, a celebration of the Romantic natural sublime, became associated with aggressive scorpions, a less pleasant aspect of nature.

Wagner's music played a privileged, integral role within *L’Âge d'or* in comparison to the other pieces. The ‘Liebestod’ was the only music mentioned in the original shooting script, which clearly indicated that Lys and Modot's garden tryst be constructed around an orchestra playing ‘la mort de Tristan et Yseult’ (death of Tristan and Isolde).\footnote{Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, *La Bête andalouse*, original shooting script, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. *La Bête andalouse* was the original title for the film.} This indicates that the piece was conceptually central to the film, whereas the other pieces were supplementary. No other music is mentioned in the script, save some annotations for (non-specific) religious music to accompany the bishops, which became the *Ave Verum* in the film. Using Wagner as a ‘readymade soundtrack’ may have been standard accompaniment convention, but its specific context was not. In the scene, an orchestra plays the ‘Liebestod’ to an impassive, bourgeois audience, while on the other side of a garden hedge Lys and
Modot engage in increasingly bizarre attempts to have sex, apparently inspired by the music. It parodically mirrors the opera's second act, when doomed lovers Tristan and Isolde meet secretly in a garden. The audio-visual pairing foregrounds, and parodies, the music's more intense, less socially acceptable, associations.

Buñuel confessed to being a ‘hopeless Wagnerian’ who relished the composer's ‘characteristic sick imagination.’ 278 His use of Wagner is structurally and thematically interesting, while referencing the ordinarness of what was a popular instrumental orchestral piece. The ‘Liebestod’ (Wagner called it ‘Verklärung,’ meaning transfiguration) is Tristan und Isolde's climax, an epic of rapturous longing caused by a love potion, sung by Isolde with her final breaths to her dead lover Tristan. 279 In his writings about his opera, Wagner described its characters' torrid insatiability, which was picked up and amplified in Buñuel's comedic mirroring of unconsummated love – ‘desire without attainment; for each fruition sows the seeds of a fresh desire.’ 280 The ‘Liebestod’ famously evades harmonic resolution, rising and swelling in deferred climax, reinforcing the representations of unfulfilled sexual encounters in both L'Âge d'or and Un Chien andalou.

Attitudes to Tristan und Isolde tend to polarise around mocking its pretensions or proclaiming it as the ultimate art. 281 Both attitudes seem evident in L'Âge d'or, particularly when the music contributes to audio-visual bathos. For example, the ‘Vorspiel’ is used during moments of overt, cinematically unconventional, sexuality, which the editing implies as Gaston Modot's fantasies. We hear it when their public embracing is forcibly separated, and a close-up of Modot's yearning face cuts to Lys sitting on a toilet, before dissolving to the toilet alone. The music is suddenly interrupted by the sound of a loud, six second toilet flush, and the image of bubbling brown liquid, supposedly shit, before the ‘Vorspiel’ resumes. Dalí's correspondence with Buñuel suggests scatological sound effects were his own enthusiastic contribution, important within his schema, but what was

278 Aranda, Luis Buñuel, pp. 91-163; Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 35.
especially outlandish was the insertion of the lavatory sound right into the Wagner piece, which seemingly steps aside to include cruder sounds of life.  

The ‘Vorspiel’ returns again in the film, a renewed audio motif of the protagonists' erotic connection. We see a silent, focused image of Lys lying still during (or immediately post) masturbated orgasm, for twenty-three seconds, then the music cuts in. In both instances, the music's sexual connotations are played against its acquired social respectability, ‘blended with profane sexual fantasy in a Surreal montage’ according to Sangild. Barlow reminds us that the opera's 1865 shock value, musical and thematic, was already lost to 1930s audiences, and *L'Âge d'or* reboots some of that shock value via musical re-contextualisation.

Music is not anodyne in *L'Âge d'or*. In 1929, Belgian Surrealist Paul Nougé penned ‘Music Is Dangerous,’ a lecture discussing the effects of listening to music. Rejecting pleasurable motivations, Nougé suggested that music could exert a strong, even dangerous, physical and mental power over a listener. He described individuals ‘mortally stricken’ after hearing particular music, specifically citing a young man who committed suicide after hearing Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Insisting that music was experienced bodily, Nougé stated it ‘exists first as physical object’ to which we respond with internalisation and mimicry. This, he believed, was a dangerous power, and in self-defence listeners attempt to be disinterested spectators, creating a false gulf between audience and performance, a role Nougé called ‘one of the grossest imaginable.’ If we were to suspend this illusion, he wrote, we would not be ‘long in realizing that actually we are not judging something, but taking part in something.’ Nougé's standpoint can be related to the parody of concert attendance in *L'Âge d'or*, and the interest in immersive spectatorship expressed in Surrealist film discourse. The film amplified the music's ‘dangerous’ effects, while ridiculing bourgeois musical participation, the ‘painful to contemplate’ concertgoers ‘who simply sit’ as one music journalist described audiences in 1927.

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282 Salvador Dalí to Luis Buñuel, undated, in Buñuel, *L’Âge d'or: correspondance*, p. 54.  
284 Barlow, ‘Surreal Symphonies,’ p. 48.  
285 Paul Nougé, ‘Music is Dangerous.’  
286 Nougé, p. 11.  
287 Nougé, p. 21.  
288 Nougé, p. 18.  
289 Alexander Brent Smith, ‘Concert Audiences,’ *Music & Letters*, vol. 8, no. 3 (July 1927), p. 335.
Affective emphasis is also apparent in the penultimate scene's domination by the near constant, eight-minute accompaniment of the Good Friday drums. They begin as we see Modot run amok, enraged by unfulfilled lust, flinging ridiculous items out of the window, and continue into the de Sade epilogue. The drums were an annual religious ritual from Buñuel's hometown, where hundreds of drummers beat ceaselessly through the streets for twenty-four hours, symbolising Jesus's death. Buñuel regularly participated, recalling the sound's physicality, its power exploding in emotional surges like ‘wild drunkenness,’ writing that ‘it seems to echo some secret rhythm in the outside world, and provokes a real physical shiver that defies the rational mind.’

Its re-contextualisation diverted its original Catholic significance into a fierce parodic expression, hijacking the original ceremonial power. The visuals suggest unchecked, aggressive desires, both comical (throwing a flaming giraffe) and abhorrent (sexual torture), with blatantly blasphemous imagery such as the Christ-like Duc or the film's final image of scalps on a cross. The music is re-contextualised in a way that, as with the Wagner, upended its original associations, while releasing something latent within the pre-existing music.

Rejecting the artistic kudos of a unique score, L'Âge d'or wore its readymade, compilation score status on its sleeve. Choosing pieces familiar to the audience or filmmaker increases the potential for subversion and ambiguity. Recognition of a piece can be twisted to suggest something unexpected when applied to a surprising visual context. As ‘readymade soundtracks,’ each piece comes pre-loaded with meaning, which can be played with, denied or released, by juxtaposition with an image. The knowledge that Tristan und Isolde was part of L'Âge d'or's original, pre-production concept strengthens the claim that pre-existing music was a powerful strategy at the heart of this film.

**Pasticcio and Bricolage**

The ‘readymade soundtracks’ of Dada/Surrealism-related films, stringing together a

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291 Dada drumming performances at the Cabaret Voltaire may have been inspired by Basle's annual Drumming Day, another Christian festival, which Hugo Ball witnessed as a student, observing ‘the craziest convulsions as all that was buried and uncommunicated was suddenly let out, and drummed out’; Melzer, *Latest Rage the Big Drum*, p. 42.
variety of pre-existing music, could be considered as a form of pasticcio or bricolage. Pasticcio, an Italian term anticipatory of pastiche, describes combinatory works formed from separate, largely intact, elements. Musical pasticcio involved assembling together several pieces of music, from different composers and styles, and was popular during the 18th century. Richard Dyer suggests that pasticcio was important in an enormous range of artistic endeavours, including central Dada and Surrealist methods such as assemblage, collage, and photomontage. A close relation is the French term bricolage (literally do-it-yourself), associated with an assemblage approach, explored within Dada and Surrealism and celebrated in Brunius's documentary *Violons d'Ingres*. The case studies in this chapter took a bricolage approach to their soundtracks, using music that was familiar or lying to hand, using the modest instruments of gramophones and record collections.

Man Ray's films frequently used music in a pasticcio like structure, foregrounding differences between the pieces rather than integrating them. Kurt London described successful compilation scoring as ‘more than a mere juxtaposition of single pieces... the essential thing was a kind of metamorphosis, a transformation of the given material into a single whole,’ dismissing it as ‘potpourri’ when insufficiently integrated. The different audio versions of *L’Étoile de mer*, however, blatantly juxtaposed different languages and musical styles and languages, ignoring consistency or cultural authenticity, in favour of jukebox-like variety.

Uses of pre-existing music in the films of Man Ray or Joseph Cornell were less parodic than in *L’Âge d’or*, where the score mimicked and mocked a borrowed form. Pastiche, according to Dyer, is less critical than parody, with a less judgemental relationship to its sources. The pasticcio-like stringing together of different kinds of records, often popular or kitsch, and the pastiche-like relationship to silent film accompaniment, affects how we perceive the structure and impact of these films. They anticipate later, better known audio-visual experiments, such as Kenneth Anger's influential jukebox pasticcio in films like *Scorpio Rising* (Anger, 1963), where images of eroticised biker machismo are paired with contemporary hits such as Bobby Vinton's ‘Blue Velvet’ or ‘My Boyfriend's Back’ by The Angels. These musical representations of heterosexual desire and surfing tales are shifted by

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293 London, *Film Music*, p. 53.
re-contextualisation into overtly queer expressions. Pier Paolo Pasolini's films from the 1960s and 1970s offer further examples of audio-visual pasticcio as a bold method of resistance against the seamlessness of commercial film. Audio edits were foregrounded in works such as *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1964) and pre-existing recordings of different, anachronistic, styles defiantly placed into the film fabric, creating audio-visual juxtaposition. ‘Wagner and rock 'n' roll, Vivaldi and the Twist... Pasolini's soundtracks bring together the high and the low, the sublime and the kitsch’ according to Patrick Rumble.295 Pasolini referred to his cinematic mixing of styles as pastiche, but also as ‘contamination,’ suggesting its provocative value, not dissimilar to Wolpe's juxtaposition of Bach with ‘a gutter tune.’296 Although Anger and Pasolini's films are unconnected to Dada and Surrealism, their imaginative uses of pre-existing music, foregrounding variety and dramatic re-contextualisation, demonstrate similar strategies to those found in earlier Dada/Surrealism-related films. The next case study looks at the implications of Man Ray's pasticcio style, the structural and denotative effects of the records used, and the misapprehensions that persist concerning these soundtracks.

**Man Ray Plays Sambas, Swinga-Dillas and Celery Stalks**

Man Ray consistently championed film sound, believing it helped blur distinctions between cinema and life.297 ‘I was not a purist concerning black and white photography,’ he recalled, adding ‘I liked the idea of a sound accompaniment, imagined a future with color and even relief.’298 The three short films he made in France between 1926 and 1929, *Emak Bakia, L'Étoile de mer*, and *Les Mystères du château du dè*, although shot silently, were all intended to have musical accompaniment. Whilst in America during the 1940s, he sonorised them with gramophone recordings, repeating the process in the 1960s with different discs.299

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296 Clarkson, ‘Lecture on Dada by Stefan Wolpe,’ p. 208.
297 Man Ray, ‘Cinemage,’ p. 133.
299 Bouhours mentions that the 1960s updates used more contemporary music, but no further information appears to exist regarding these; Bouhours and de Haas, *Man Ray*, p.42. The 1960s sonorisation was for US distribution of new prints purchased by film collector Raymond Rohauer.
Man Ray's audio-visual interests, however, have not always been reflected in their exhibition history, as mentioned.

Regarding these films' earliest accompaniments we have only Man Ray's fallible memoirs for information, which I discuss further below, casting doubt on whether any of the soundtracks can be identified as an 'original.' 300 The audio versions available today are a restoration led by Jean-Michel Bouhours at the Pompidou Centre, taken from the same box of records with handwritten instructions on their sleeves that Man Ray used for the 1940s sonorisation (for example, 'play no. 5 with collars' is written on the 'Merry Widow Waltz' disc). 301 These restorations are only authentic in terms of being one particular version, an issue applicable to all silent works that used pre-existing music. Although these sonorisations date from beyond the early sound period, I have chosen to study them here based on indications that pre-existing music was important within Man Ray's original conception and presentation of them. The 1940s selections, via restoration, provide the only opportunity to evaluate the filmmaker's audio-visual ideas, albeit anachronistically.

Through the early 1920s Man Ray produced a string of iconic readymades, alongside his painting and photography. By the time he started making films, re-contextualising and juxtaposing items, shifting meaning by adjustments, was part of his methodology. His most famous readymades, *Cadeau* (*Gift*, 1921), a flatiron with a line of tacks fastened to it, and *Object To Be Destroyed* (1923), a metronome with a photo of a woman's eye attached to the pendulum, modified manufactured items with a simple, but distinct, aggression. 302 While his first film, *Le Retour à la raison*, was made in just twenty-four hours for the final Paris Dada soirée, ‘Le Coeur à

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301 Bouhours and de Haas, *Man Ray*, p. 42. All specific references to the Man Ray films in this thesis refer to these restored versions, featured on *Man Ray Films* (Centre Georges Pompidou, 1998), VHS.

302 Erik Satie helped Man Ray choose the flatiron for *Cadeau*; Man Ray, *Self Portrait*, p. 96. As well as the famous modified metronome, re-contextualised musical images occur elsewhere in Man Ray's work, including the scroll-like f-holes on a woman's back in the photograph *Le Violon d'Ingres* (*Ingres's Violin*, 1924).
barbe’ (‘The Bearded Heart’), precluding soundtrack arrangements, he was able to plan accompaniment for his next, *Emak Bakia*.\(^{303}\)

*Emak Bakia* mixed abstract and semi-abstract footage of objects, movement and light, with quasi-narrative scenes of a motorcar journey to a party, with dancing and musicians, and a beautiful woman at a seaside villa, like a prototype pop video.\(^{304}\) The climax is a comical, disconnected, epilogue of dancing shirt collars, devised as ‘a satire on the movies... so that the spectators would not think I was being too arty.’\(^{305}\) Man Ray described organising the music for *Emak Bakia's* premiere at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier:

[I instructed] the musicians what numbers to play at which parts of the film. There was also a phonograph for which I provided some jazz pieces of the day, which were beyond the house musicians’ repertory... The phonograph began a popular jazz tune by the Django Reinhardt guitarists while the screen lit up with sparkling effects of revolving crystals and mirrors... when the collars began to gyrate into distorted forms, the orchestra broke out into a lilting rendering of Strauss’s ‘Merry Widow Waltz.’\(^{306}\)

Although this 1963 description is extensively cited, it is too consistent with the 1940s sonorisation. My own investigation has uncovered several previously unnoticed inconsistencies in this account. The screening occurred in 1926, whereas Reinhardt did not begin recording until 1928, and even then it was as a banjo player, not yet a guitarist, on recordings that were definitely not hot jazz.\(^{307}\) Reinhardt's guitar group, The Quintet of the Hot Club of France, wasn't formed until 1934. Having used the group's mid-1930s recordings on the 1940s sonorised version, Man Ray must have made an error of recall, as he also did in describing Strauss as the composer of the ‘Merry Widow Waltz,’ actually composed by Franz Lehár.\(^{308}\) Contemporary press suggests gramophone records originally accompanied *Les...*
Mystères du château du dé during its premiere alongside Un Chien andalou at the Studio des Ursulines, but no further details remain.  

More traces exist of L'Étoile de mer's soundtrack, with scholarly attention focused on musical annotations of its different scenario manuscripts by Man Ray and Robert Desnos (author of the poem the film was based on). These 1920s suggestions differ greatly from the later sonorisations, are more conceptual, reflecting themes in the film more clearly than Man Ray's later choices, indicative of the extent to which changing accompaniment can shift the tone. For example, on the 1927 manuscript, the 18th century song ‘Plaisir d'amour’ (‘The Pleasure of Love’) was chosen to frame the film's beginning and end. Its lyrics highlight the film's depiction of romantic love, and manuscript notes indicate to repeat particular lines, and to alter the volume to stress particular points, and perhaps also create surprise. Another note suggests ‘L'Internationale’ to accompany the image of a woman in a revolutionary Phrygian cap, clearer semantic connections than Man Ray's later choices would make.

Man Ray's 1940s selections were less concerned with thematic resonance, and Bouhours describes them as a 'strictly musical accompaniment, less directly articulated with the images.' For L'Étoile de mer's sonorisation, Man Ray used songs by female performers, in differing styles and languages, several themselves lifted from 1930s film musicals. This time Josephine Baker's 'C'est lui,' from Zouzou (Allégret, 1934) frames the film, and in between we hear, in order, ‘Los Picaneros’ from Carmen, la de Triana (Rey, 1938), a traditional Spanish ‘Saeta’ by Andalusian singer La Niña de los Peines, French star Mistinguett singing ‘Au fond de tes yeux’ from Rigolboche (Christian-Jaque, 1936), and Greek singer Sofia Vembo's ‘Signomi sou zito.’ Despite extremely varied contexts, together these songs broadly connote love or longing, matching the film's oblique narrative of an

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309 Bouhours and de Haas, Man Ray, p. 123.
311 The other pieces suggested are ‘O Sole mio,’ ‘The Blue Danube,’ an unspecified Bach aria, the popular song ‘Dernier tango,’ socialism anthem ‘La Carmagnole,’ ‘Hallelujah’ (presumably Handel's), Rameau's ‘Tambourin,’ and the traditional song ‘Y avait dix filles dans un prê.’
312 ‘Un accompagnement strictement musical, moins directement articulé aux images’; Bouhours and de Haas, Man Ray, p. 63.
313 I have been unable to find more information for this Sofia Vembo track.
unsuccessful love affair, while the internationalism of different languages loosely aligns with the film's images of train and sea travel. 314

All the 1940s sonorisations took a pasticcio approach, foregrounding the music rather than blending it into the background, keeping the compilation nature prominent. The pre-existing music contributed movement, pace, and humour, and lively, populist notes that counterbalanced the risk of seeming too 'arty.' The eclectic music choices and the relatively short lengths of the individual tracks structure the films helpfully into segments. The records add structure to non-standard narratives that could otherwise feel shapeless. They divide Les Mystères du château du dé into distinct sections: two travellers decide to go on a voyage (Erik Satie's Gymnopédie no. 3, ‘Lent et triste’), the journey to the castle and exploration of an empty house (‘Samba Tembo,’ a percussion solo by Thurston Knudson), discovery and activity of the mysterious figures there (José Morand's 'Batacuda de Don Alfonso,' Fats Waller's 'Swinga-Dilla Street,' and ‘Shu-Shu,’ the other side of the Morand disc), and the travellers' decision to remain (Satie's Gymnopédie no. 1, ‘Lent et douloureux’). 315 The contrasting pieces provide shape, easing our acceptance of non-traditional visual narrative, as in modern pop videos.

In Emak Bakia, records not only add structure, but also control pace, building momentum in what could otherwise be a slow, repetitive film when shown silently. Jazz instrumentals, cued in order of increasing pace, affect our perception of speed and rhythm within the film. The first two tracks, ‘St. Louis Blues’ (performed by Stéphane Grappelli and his Hot Four with Django Reinhardt) and ‘Celery Stalks at Midnight’ (Will Bradley and his Orchestra) gently swing with a relaxed feel in a syncopated 4/4 time signature, at approximately 109 and 145 beats per minute respectively. They filter a laid-back pace to the visuals, preventing the rotating and flashing images from seeming frantic. ‘You’re Driving Me Crazy’ (The Quintet of the Hot Club of France, basically the same Reinhardt band) increases intensity for the dance party scene, its hot jazz pace feeling a lot faster as a result of

314 The shift from ‘Los Picaneros’ to the ‘Saeta’ is less random when considered in the context of its original film, performed by Imperio Argentina in full flamenco costume, making the shift to traditional Andalusian music less of a non sequitur.

315 The Satie recordings used were Claude Debussy's 1897 orchestral arrangements, performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra and conducted by Leopold Stokowski in 1937. Debussy's arrangements reverse the numbering of the Gymnopédies, so while the titles I use above are correct by Satie's original designations, they do not match those on the recording. José Morand was a popular Latin bandleader of the 1940s and 1950s.
the rhythm section's prominent syncopation and a time signature based on quarter notes. This tune continues over images of water and sunbathers until ‘Limehouse Blues’ (Reinhardt and Grappelli again) accompanies further scrolling signs and swirling lights, plus animated blocks, dice, and silhouettes.316 With ‘The Merry Widow’ section, pace slows. Starting at a much slower, stately waltz tempo, collars slowly revolve like ballroom dancers, becoming faster and increasingly abstract as the music accelerates. The dancing association is partly related to the tune's recognisability. The Merry Widow, Lehár's 1905 operetta from which the piece comes, ‘swept the Western World, becoming a legend in its own time,’ largely due to this ‘irrepressible waltz.’

The use of pre-existing music to enhance momentum is showcased in an astonishing seven and a half minute sequence in Les Mystères du château du dé. Mainly point-of-view footage of a car journey is paired with the intense, pulsing rhythms of Thurston Knudson's ‘Samba Tembo’.318 Compared to contemporary uses of Knudson's music, such as the puppet short Hoola Boola (Pal, 1941) or Call of the South Seas (English, 1944), this percussion functions less stereotypically, although one could still argue Man Ray's use still connotes ‘otherness.’319 Leaving the city, a dull, insistent thump begins, and as the car speeds up a second, deeper drum joins in. A counter-rhythm, perhaps maraca, enters as the drive continues, a syncopated chica-boom, and finally an ambiguous plucking sound finalises a polyrhythm that has developed from straight pulse to syncopated samba, before a discreet audio edit restarts the whole musical sequence.320 The scene's rhythmic intensity is comparable to L’Âge d'or's equally dramatic Calanda drums in L’Âge d'or, as well as Len Lye's

316 On the restored VHS version the combination of playing the recording at a slower speed and using audio edits to repeat it extends ‘Limehouse Blues’ from its original, frenetic length of two minutes and forty-eight seconds to cover nearly seven minutes of film. The change in the track's speed is only apparent to those familiar with the original recording, and prevents the long silence before the epilogue originally mentioned by the filmmaker. Man Ray, Self Portrait, p. 222.
318 On the original recording this track credited to Knudson, but listed as an African samba. Knudson, also an occasional film composer, recorded percussion albums, in the exotica genre, such as Primitive Percussion – African Jungle Drums (1961) and The Rhythm of Tropic Drums (1949). The exotica genre, popular during the 1950s and early 1960s, was pioneered by artists such as Les Baxter and Martin Denny.
319 Drumming prevailed as an easy audio signifier for ‘natives’ or ‘primitivism’ throughout and beyond the early sound period, for example Max Steiner’s use in King Kong, near-constant drums in White Zombie (Halperin, 1932), and even East of Borneo (Melford, 1931), Cornell's source material for Rose Hobart.
320 The audio edit is on the 1998 restoration supervised by Jean-Michel Bouhours.
later films *Rhythm* (1956), *Free Radicals* (1958) and *Particles in Space* (1967-71), themselves constructed around tribal percussion. Man Ray was himself an enthusiastic, if humorous, amateur drummer, and photographs document his homemade one-man-band construction of phonograph, suitcase, cymbal and bass drum pedal, a fine example of musical bricolage.\(^3^{21}\)

Excepting ‘The Merry Widow’ in *Emak Bakia*, the discs used for sonorisation were all recorded between 1934 and 1945, and could not have originally accompanied the films in the 1920s, despite Man Ray's claim otherwise. The pre-existing music is an adjustment or update, rather than a recreation of an original performance. Consequently, this element of anachronism within the films should be acknowledged, where images and music are not necessarily in historical synch. This relates to the impermanence and ambiguity associated with ‘readymade soundtracks.’ All audio-visual pairings in the 1940s sonorisations were anachronistic, a detail often unnoticed due to musical unfamiliarity, an issue that also affects Cornell's *Rose Hobart*, as discussed later. We see mid-1920s images, but hear music from the late 1930s and 1940s, (or in the case of Lehár, from the 1900s) and our own historical distance elides this difference. These sonorisations reinvent the films through deliberate anachronism, rather than attempting to recreate an original exhibition situation. *Emak Bakia's* dance scene, for example, where ‘You're Driving Me Crazy’ accompanies images of a strummed banjo and legs dancing a Charleston is often cited as an example of complementary audio and visual rhythms.\(^3^{22}\) I argue, however, that this correspondence is only approximate. The Hot Quintet recording heard has no banjo, only guitars, and is not a Charleston. We see the quintessential 1920s dance performed to an instrument typical of jazz bands of the period, but the soundtrack plays guitar-based jazz from the mid-1930s.

The eclecticism and often lightness of these 1940s ‘readymade soundtracks’ contrasts with the aforementioned serious music, or even silence, sometimes associated with screening avant-garde films. Man Ray's mixes of pre-existing music blur, or contaminate, the boundaries between high and low art that Adorno and Eisler defend in *Composing for the Films*. Scoring an art film with a miscellany of jazz, popular, and classical music, both famous and obscure, ‘readymade

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soundtracks’ function as bricolage or pasticcio. By embracing mass culture, such audio-visuals distanced themselves from avant-garde cinema pretensions, in common with the anti-art attitudes expressed elsewhere within Dada and Surrealism.\textsuperscript{323} The audio-visuals frequently conveyed unapologetic pleasure, as in the use of José Morand and Fats Waller's infectious instrumentals in \textit{Les Mystères du château du dé}, resembling the audio-visual vitality of Lye's work, or anticipate Kyrou's documentary short \textit{Le Palais idéal} (Kyrou, 1958) which used a mismatched jazz score by André Hodeir, performed by the Jazz Groupe de Paris. Outside of Dada/Surrealism they relate to influential animators who worked with jazz, in particular an early John Whitney ‘visual music’ film, \textit{Celery Stalks at Midnight} (Whitney, 1951), based on the same Will Bradley record used in \textit{Emak Bakia}, as well as 1930s and 1940s works by Oskar Fischinger and Norman McLaren.\textsuperscript{324}

While deliberately unusual pieces, like the ‘Saeta’ or Knudson's percussion, can generate ambiguous interpretation, elsewhere well-known tunes connote via their previous associations and lyrics, even in instrumental versions. Godsall calls this concept ‘unheard lyrics,’ common since silent films, when audiences recognise the song and make mental associations with the remembered lyrics.\textsuperscript{325} Although expanding the interpretative field, this allows misidentification, as not all listeners will recall the lyrics correctly. For example, when ‘You're Driving Me Crazy’ accompanies female legs dancing the Charleston in \textit{Emak Bakia}, the implication of someone being driven crazy by the dancer depends upon successful lyrical recognition.\textsuperscript{326} Juxtaposing this tune with an image of shapely legs conveys, via ‘unheard lyrics,’ a gentle touch of sauce.

The pasticcio effect of a ‘readymade soundtrack’ can steer a film in different directions. Rather than directing interpretation via predictable matches of mood music, Man Ray's 1940s sonorisations, working within the parameters of 1920s accompaniment traditions, sequenced readymade musical fragments into plundered soundtracks of contrasts and surprises. In each case, the juxtaposition of the pieces remained prominent, creating a successful pasticcio rather than a smoothly integrated score. Their emphasis on difference, on humour, and on contrast, position

\textsuperscript{323} Desnos, ‘Cinéma d'Avant-Garde.’
\textsuperscript{324} See \textit{Allegretto}, scored by Ralph Rainger (Fischinger, 1936); \textit{Five for Four} (McLaren, 1942); \textit{Begone Dull Care} (McLaren, 1949).
\textsuperscript{325} Godsall, ‘Pre-existing Music in Fiction Sound Film,’ pp. 107-12.
\textsuperscript{326} This popular tune turned up elsewhere for comically risqué effect, for example in the Betty Boop cartoon \textit{Silly Scandals} (Fleischer, 1931).
these soundtracks as being as much gramophone-based bricolage as they are traditional silent film accompaniments.

Rethinking Chance in *Las Hurdes*

This next section considers the role of random chance in films accompanied with gramophone records. I evaluate its importance as a concept within Dada and Surrealism, before taking a closer look at another ‘readymade soundtrack,’ the use of Brahms's Fourth Symphony in E minor in *Las Hurdes*.

I challenge the long-held view of this accompaniment as being entirely arbitrary and mismatched, suggesting it was important that it gave an impression of audio-visual randomness, even if that was not strictly true.

Chance played a considerable, conspicuous part in Dada/Surrealism-related thought and activity. To Breton it was ‘objective chance, centre of conciliation for natural necessity and human necessity – point of revelation, pivot of liberty.’ It was applied in a plethora of creative activities, including automatic writing, the drawing game ‘cadavre exquis’ (exquisite corpse), art techniques such as ‘frottage,’ and urban wanderings. Chance encounters between all kinds of unrelated things were exalted as a way to access ‘the marvellous.’ Two of Surrealism's most celebrated (and readable) texts, Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* and Breton's *Nadja*, celebrated coincidence as an ultimate experience. Breton vividly described what his chance urban wanderings revealed:

> an almost forbidden world of sudden parallels, petrifying coincidences, and reflexes peculiar to each individual, of harmonies struck as though on the piano, flashes of light that would make you see, really see, if only they were not so much quicker than all the rest.

Using unsynchronised pre-existing music theoretically allowed opportunities for sudden unexpected ‘harmonies’ or audio-visual coincidences to occur, and may

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327 All specific references to the film in this thesis refer to the version available on *Las Hurdes* (Umbrella World Cinema, 2009), DVD.
329 Exquisite corpse is a game in which each person in turn draws or writes on a piece of paper, then folds it over before handing it to the next player; see David Lomas, *The Haunted Self* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 68. Frottage creates images by rubbing surfaces through paper; see René Passeron, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Surrealism* (London: Omega Books, 1984), p. 44.
be an explanation, beyond the purely pragmatic, why pre-existing soundtracks were so popular with some Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers. Elements of chance were often incorporated into the filmmaking process, in the automatic writing involved in writing *Un Chien andalou* or *L’Âge d’or*, for example, or in Man Ray's overt referencing of Stéphane Mallarmé's 1897 symbolist poem ‘Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard’ (‘A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance’) in *Les Mystères du château du dê.*  

Concerning cinema, Buñuel later claimed ‘chance governs all things... necessity, which is far from having the same purity, comes only later.’

Cocteau made great play of chance audio-visuals in a process he called ‘accidental synchronism.’ In certain films, including *Le Sang d'un poète*, he took Georges Auric's score, specifically written for particular scenes, and deliberately repositioned them over different sequences. Despite radical appearances, however, the results were never particularly noticeable. When film music is only loosely synched, rather than closely scored to the images, it implies a relinquishing of directorial control, suggesting audio-visual juxtapositions emerge as if independently. However, one should be careful of overestimating the impact of chance in these readymade soundtracks. In each case, music was carefully selected, not randomly chosen. The method of starting a gramophone record at a particular point in a film and playing it through still involved decisions.

Regarding readymade soundtracks, Breton's later formulation, ‘magic-circumstantial chance,’ elaborated in his 1937 text *Mad Love*, is perhaps more apt than the more quoted ‘objective chance.’ It described situations in which seemingly random coincidences and correspondences, ‘placed under the sign of the spontaneous, the indeterminate, the unforeseeable, or even the unlikely,’ were actually secretly linked by hidden chains of circumstances. In such an ‘intoxicating atmosphere’ chance becomes a guiding principle, while contradictorily also considered as predetermined. The randomness of such chance encounters is

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333 Cocteau, *Cocteau on the Film*, p. 72.
therefore superficial, an issue we can explore further in the fortuitous encounter between gramophone records and film images in Las Hurdes. 

Las Hurdes was Buñuel's first film after L'Âge d'or, a twenty-seven minute documentary produced in Spain during either 1932 or 1933, after his gradual retreat from the Surrealist group.335 Inspired by Maurice Legendre's 1927 study of the Hurdes people in a remote part of Extremadura, the film took an unflinching look, in travelogue style, at an impoverished community isolated from the wealth and opportunities of the rest of Spain. Long considered an early documentary classic, it is often presented as a ‘Surrealist documentary,’ despite its differences from other Surrealist films, and its close stylistic resemblance to the contemporary travelogue format.336 It is arguably in terms of positioning, such as possible irony, pastiche, or indifference, that a relationship with Surrealism may be apparent. But in audio-visual terms it maintains continuity with Buñuel's prior films, by once again using gramophone recordings of classical music.

Originally filmed and screened silently, Buñuel provided a gramophone accompaniment and live narration himself at the film's 1933 premiere in Madrid.337 Sound was added a couple of years later, funded by the Spanish Embassy—a voice-over and a constant musical soundtrack. Narration was written by Buñuel with assistant director Pierre Unik, a Surrealist writer, and delivered by actor Abel Jacquin on the French version.338 Buñuel chose Brahms’s Fourth Symphony in E

335 Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 139. There is a lack of consensus on the film’s official title and date. Ibarz points out that Tierra sin pan (Land Without Bread) was used on the original release and manuscript drafts at the Buñuel Archive, Filmoteca Española. The title Las Hurdes was only informally used by Buñuel. Umbrella's 2009 DVD release, used for my own analysis, calls it Las Hurdes, despite the opening titles reading Terre sans pain. Based on Buñuel's correspondence, Ibarz suggests that although filmed and edited in 1933, the release date was changed to 1932 so as to critique of that year's government. Las Hurdes received significant censorship, and the original negatives were lost during the war. Buñuel restored the film in 1965, but this history complicates its study; Ibarz, ‘A Serious Experiment,’ pp. 27-36.

336 With an agenda of Surrealist continuity, Aranda insists ‘it is in no way different from L’Âge d’or’; Aranda, Luis Buñuel, p. 97. See also William Rothman, Documentary Film Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Graham Roberts, ‘Soluble Fish: How Surrealism Saved Documentary from John Grierson,’ in Harper and Stone, The Unsilvered Screen.

337 Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 140.

338 Other versions circulate online, including one in Spanish supposedly narrated by Francisco Rabal, and an unidentified English version, but with no indications of provenance; see Nicholas Thomas, ‘Colonial Surrealism: Luis Buñuel's Land Without Bread,’ Third Text, vol. 8, no. 26 (1994). Concerning the version I have used, although presumably it is the 1965 restoration, I have been unable to obtain any evidence from the current distributor. It is also impossible to pinpoint the sonorisation date; Buñuel loosely suggests 1935, Aranda claims 1937; Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p.141; Aranda, Luis Buñuel, p. 94. To the best of my knowledge, all versions use the same music, and the synchronisation difference between the UK version (which runs one minute shorter) and others is due to censorship of an early scene.
minor, later describing ‘that the general feeling of the film corresponded to the Brahms music... everyone is startled by something so simple that it's almost idiotic.’\(^{339}\) At one point, the voiceover disingenuously shares the ‘curious detail’ that ‘in all the villages of Las Hurdes, we never heard a song,’ highlighting a gap between the subject's alleged cultural impoverishment and the sophisticated symphony, possibly familiar to educated filmgoers.\(^{340}\) Irony, in its various forms, is based on a sense of inconsistency, ambiguity even, between statements and evidence, and here the statement of a lack of music culture is inconsistent with the audible German concert music.\(^{341}\) This re-contextualisation of Brahms is sometimes noted as on a par with L'Âge d'or's use of the Hebrides Overture, neither appropriate nor fully anempathetic, while also mimicking music's constant presence within contemporary documentaries and newsreels.

It is tempting to label the film's audio-visual relationship as entirely random. The impression of gramophone records left to play through conveys indifference and chance coincidence. Many critics have assumed this to be the case. E. Rubinstein has described it as ‘blithely aleatory,’ Barry Mauer stressed an ‘asynchronous quality’ inherited from live sound practices, while Ibarz has emphasised the music's enhancement of contradiction and indifference.\(^{342}\) William Rothman's close visual analysis has already questioned the film's narrative veracity, revealing a goat's accidental death to have been a deception created by editing and voiceover, the animal actually having been shot.\(^{343}\) My own close examination has revealed evidence of audio-manipulation that suggests this effect of audio-visual randomness is also a partly false construction, and actually enables specific effects within the film.

Brahms's symphony underscores the entire twenty-seven minutes and fifty-nine seconds of the film. We hear its first notes over the opening image, continuing in apparent asynchronicity until its dramatic closing chord sounds over the end title. Critics have highlighted the music's relentlessness, but have never questioned the enormous coincidence of this close fit. Brahms's Fourth Symphony is around forty

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\(^{339}\) Aranda, Luis Buñuel, p. 91.

\(^{340}\) All translated references in the text to the film's voiceover are taken from the DVD subtitles.


\(^{343}\) Rothman, *Documentary Film Classics*, pp. 33-35.
minutes long, and recordings all average roughly this length, even with tempo differences. If the recording had simply played through unheeded the film would have ended at some point during the symphony's third movement. Yet somehow they both finish simultaneously, while giving an impression of careless separateness.

Close listening reveals an audio manipulation approximately halfway through the film. Seeing the image of a male peasant with an infected wound (at nineteen minutes, twenty seconds) we hear part of the second movement (approximately bar eighty-eight). The music then skips, almost imperceptibly if one is unfamiliar with the piece, to the fourth movement (bar forty-one), and continues from this point to the symphony's end. The entire third movement, and significant parts of the second and fourth movements, have actually been omitted to make the music ‘fit’ the film, while mimicking accidental synchronicity. This slight alteration not only alters the music to match the film, but also effects dramatic emphasis. It enhances one of the film’s most shocking moments, the image of a dead baby, by making it coincide with an existing pause in the score (fourth movement, end of bar one hundred and twenty-eight), a three second silence in the recording used. This pause forms a dramatic break between the gentler previous section and the music's resumption of its initial E minor key and three-quarter time signature for its dramatic finale. This crucial positioning enables the key image of a dead child and its mother, registering the pathos of a pietà, to be framed in silence, followed by dramatic ascending brass notes and rolling timpani. Yet the casual impression of asynchronicity suggests this correspondence was pure chance.

Beyond Buñuel’s memory of using Brunswick discs we have no further indications of the recordings used. A Brunswick catalogue of the period lists a 1930 recording of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony, with Max Fiedler conducting the State Opera Orchestra of Berlin. Although we cannot assume this to have definitely been the version used (several other recordings were released before 1937), we may still consider it a reasonable guide to the symphony's distribution over 78 rpm discs. It comprised eleven sides of music, rendering Buñuel’s

344 Johannes Brahms, Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, op. 98 (Berlin: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1992).
345 This musical phrase occurs around one minute earlier in the censored English version.
346 Aranda, Luis Buñuel, p. 91.
348 Although the 33 1/3 rpm LP format was first developed in 1931, it was commercially unsuccessful, and remained in very limited use until 1948.
recollection of having used four discs either incorrect or indicative of omissions. Each movement covered three sides, except the shorter third movement, which covered two. Where the music ‘jumps’ ahead in *Las Hurdes* roughly corresponds to estimated side divisions on discs of that length. It skips forward from a place theoretically corresponding with side five (on the Fiedler recording), missing out the entire third movement, to resume at a place theoretically correspondent with side nine. Skipping three sides would approximate to ten or twelve minutes of music (at that version's fast tempo), which is also the difference between the length of the film and the full symphony.

What difference does identifying this make? Firstly, it challenges the assumption that the audio-visuals were ruled by pure coincidence, which is significant if we believe chance synchronicity to have been an important part of Dada/Surrealism-related practice. It calls attention to pragmatic decisions, such as the length of a record, which may have been more significant in avant-garde filmmaking than previously credited. It also suggests that Buñuel's audio-visual decisions were not always careless and lacking directorial control, but were perhaps dissimulated as such. Omitting the entire third movement in the ‘happier’ key of C major, performed *allegro giocoso* (fast and joyful), impacts our interpretation of the film, removing opportunity for light relief in an otherwise intense audio-visual experience. However carelessly ironic a ‘readymade soundtrack’ may appear, it still plays a critical role in directing emotion and meaning. In the case of *Las Hurdes* it is more a case of organised chance than of objective chance.

**Listening and Possessing**

This final section discusses the different relationship with chance asynchrony found in the work of Joseph Cornell, located in his interest in audio-visual correspondences, and his intense personal relationship with music. My research uncovers the extent to which Cornell experimented with different musical accompaniments for *Rose Hobart*, challenging the current perception of his film as a
definitive artwork, and revealing the extent to which recorded music was a central part of his creative practice.

Before examining Cornell in more detail, a few words on the changing relationship between music and listening during this period, driven by mechanised reproduction, and its repercussions on the use of ‘readymade soundtracks.’ The films studied here were produced, and sonorised, during a period of dramatic change in the accessibility of recorded music via gramophones and phonographs, which radically altered a consumer's relationship with music. All the filmmakers I discuss in this chapter were intimately associated with their soundtracks, often sourced from their own personal record collections. Upon arriving in Paris, Buñuel had a collection that ‘reached the impressive number of sixty discs, which was not inconsiderable for the period,’ while the restoration of Man Ray's films was based upon a box of his own records. 349 Cornell's archive contains a reduced, but still considerable, portion of his record collection, as well as numerous notes and cuttings regarding particular recordings.

Walter Benjamin's seminal 1936 essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ addressed the impact of recorded music, as did Adorno through several works including ‘The Curves of the Needle’ in 1927, and 1934’s ‘The Form of the Phonograph Record.’ 350 Both authors noted the changeover from artisanal to industrial production, and analysed the transformation of an original performance into a duplicate able to ‘meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation.’ A gramophone reproduction of a performance, say, loses its own special uniqueness, its ‘aura,’ but allows the listener or owner a greater intimacy than before. A loss of power held by the work itself is compensated for by the owner's satisfaction of the desire to ‘get hold of’ the music and control its use. Benjamin pronounced mechanical reproduction as intrinsic to any kind of film, and

349 Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 84. A postcard sent to Man Ray by photographer Carl Van Vechten suggests the former's record collecting habits: 'Dear M.R. I am sending you some more records. Let me know if you get them. On the record called: “Go Harlem” if you listen attentively you will hear: “Like Van Vechten / Start inspectin!”' Van Vechten to Man Ray, 16 June 1931, in Man Ray archive, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

one can argue that using mass-produced, pre-existing recordings increased this integral lack of uniqueness.\textsuperscript{351}

To Adorno, gramophone technology suggested two states of intimacy (which he derided) – the psychological substitution of being able to hear and preserve one's own voice, and the capability of possessing the music as a desired object.\textsuperscript{352} He suggested that a vocal recording offered the listener a substitute ‘sounding image of his own person, which he would like to safeguard as a possession,’ describing this as ‘a mirror function,’ predating Lacan's important psychoanalytic concept of the mirror stage in formulating identity.\textsuperscript{353} Adorno concluded that the greatest significance of gramophones and phonographs was not found in being a ‘surrogate’ for live music, but in musical recordings becoming a thing to be ‘possessed like photographs.’\textsuperscript{354} As with Benjamin, fetishistic ownership implied an illusory mastery over a work of art (in this case a recording), particularly through repeated playing and re-contextualisation.

In disc form, music becomes an object, not a unique artwork but a reproduction, capable of being re-contextualised. Detached from the domain of tradition (to paraphrase Benjamin), records substitute uniqueness with plurality, while repeatedly reactivating an original performance now in the past.\textsuperscript{355} Benjamin called this ‘a tremendous shattering of tradition,’ while Adorno noted the formulation of a new relationship between music and time, one which promoted evanescence and recollection via mechanical reproduction.\textsuperscript{356}

These ideas are stimulating when considered alongside the use of ‘readymade soundtracks’ in Dada/Surrealism-related cinema. In Buñuel and Man Ray's films, music can evoke associations from outside the film, while the records themselves suggest mass production and a lack of uniqueness. It is, though, in Cornell's work recorded music's special conditions of intimacy and psychological experience shine through the strongest.

\textsuperscript{352} Adorno, ‘The Form of the Phonograph Record,’ p. 58.
\textsuperscript{354} Adorno, ‘The Form of the Phonograph,’ p. 58.
\textsuperscript{356} Adorno, ‘The Form of the Phonograph,’ p. 58.
Joseph Cornell – ‘a little magic and music in the wintry city air’

At some unspecified point in the early 1930s, New York artist Joseph Cornell transitioned from being a movie fan to a filmmaker. Basing his art, especially his celebrated assemblage boxes, on found objects, he also collected films and memorabilia. By the mid 1930s he had acquired a projector, screening films and cartoons to family and friends.

Some claim Cornell invented found-footage filmmaking, or was at least its first major practitioner. Rose Hobart (circa 1936), his first and most famous film, was a nineteen-minute re-edit of East of Borneo (1931), an obscure early talkie starring actress Rose Hobart. Finding a discarded print by chance, Cornell cut and re-structured it, editing in other found footage fragments, producing a film that focused almost exclusively on Hobart in defiance of narrative continuity. Rose Hobart premiered in December 1936 at New York's Surrealism-promoting Levy Gallery, alongside Anémic cinema and L’Étoile de mer, to an audience that included Dali. Over the years it has acquired the status of avant-garde classic, championed by influential figures of American experimental cinema, including Sitney, Jonas Mekas, and Stan Brakhage.

Although East of Borneo was a sound film, Cornell's reworking was silent, and was usually accompanied by his selection of gramophone music. Unlike the other films discussed in this chapter, here pre-existing music was used to reconfigure a modern talkie into a (recently outmoded) silent film. Preservation copies held at The Anthology Film Archives and the Museum of Modern Art are silent, to be projected at the slower silent speed of sixteen frames per second, with a

357 Joseph Cornell, diary entry, 18 January 1946, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 3, item 3, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/joseph-cornell-papers> [accessed 11 October 2013]. All spelling and grammar inconsistencies from Cornell's original diary entries have been maintained. All specific references to Rose Hobart in this thesis refer to the version available on The Magical Worlds of Joseph Cornell (The Voyager Foundation, 2004), DVD.

358 ‘No amount of archaeology’ will unearth the date of Cornell’s first film; Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, Joseph Cornell: Navigating the Imagination (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 70.

359 Larry Jordan, later his assistant, claimed Cornell ‘invented the whole sub-genre of found footage films single-handedly.’ Stan Brakhage, another assistant, stated ‘he wasn’t the first to use the tactic of film as found object. But the difference, it seems to me, that’s so crucial, is that Joseph was very directly trying to enliven and recharge them.’ Interviews from The Magical Worlds of Joseph Cornell (The Voyager Foundation, 2004), DVD-ROM.


separate musical accompaniment, supplied initially on reel-to-reel tape, now on CD. This soundtrack, chosen by Cornell, consists of two tracks from Holiday in Brazil, a 1957 LP by Nestor Amaral and his Orchestra, now widely regarded as the film's original and definitive accompaniment. Both tracks, ‘Porte Alegre’ and ‘Belem Bayonee,’ are instrumental, and are played alternately, in full, three times.

Much has been made of Rose Hobart's slower projection speed (sound film runs at twenty-four frames per second) which, combined with a tinted image, creates an old-fashioned impression. Some scholars have implied that the film's soundtrack erasure was conceptual and aesthetic, but this can ignore potential issues underlying the process. Almost certainly, Cornell's home cinema equipment would not have been wired for sound, so he may never have heard East of Borneo's soundtrack unless he had previously seen it at the cinema. And whilst silent projectors were either hand-cranked or had variable speed motors, without further details about the exact model used we cannot make assumptions about his decision.

Cornell's filmmaking method – ‘almost comically primitive’ according to Deborah Solomon – consisted of cutting with scissors and restructuring with tape. Such basic equipment would have precluded soundtrack editing or reproduction, even if wanted. This method would also have cut right through the optical soundtrack (printed at the side of the filmstrip, alongside the image), resulting in a re-ordered soundtrack that would have been harder to follow than re-ordered images, and which would have been comparable to later cut-up audio experiments, such as William Burroughs' 1960s tape recorder pieces. Rose Hobart's audio-visuals may

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362 Personal email correspondence with John Klacsmann, archivist at Anthology Film Archives, 21 August 2017. In 1968 Cornell gave his only print of Rose Hobart to Anthology, who made preservation copies in both black and white and purple tinted versions, following his instructions. The purple tinted copy used for my study was taken from this.

363 According to Sitney, Cornell occasionally screened the film at a faster speed, and Anthology Film Archives confirm that optical twenty-four frames-per-second sound prints were once distributed, but were not the Archive's preferred version. Sitney, 'The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell,' p. 75; personal email correspondence with John Klacsmann, Anthology Film Archives, 21 August 2017.


365 Deborah Solomon, Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), p. 86. Hartigan mentions Cornell used a splicer, but this may be conjecture; Hartigan, Joseph Cornell, p. 70.

therefore be considered a response to the limitations of the artist's own working methods, as well as his preference for silent cinema.\textsuperscript{368}

Music was central to Cornell's life, and he preferred the intimacy of recorded music to live performance, collecting records `sometimes with a compulsive abandon.'\textsuperscript{369} His archive provides us with fresh insight into his intentionally ephemeral uses of pre-existing music for film, revealing the previously unacknowledged extent to which he experimented with audio-visual combinations. In his diaries, music appears as a catalyst to trigger chance correspondences and emotional resonances in both life and film. It is suggestive that while his archive indicates sophisticated classical music tastes, Cornell chose such an unabashedly frivolous exotica record for \textit{Rose Hobart}.\textsuperscript{370} However, the catalogue of his record collection, although predominantly classical, also reveals delightful egalitarianism in its miscellany of jazz, folk, show tunes, and unclassifiable oddities, plus several Latin records in a similar vein to Nestor Amaral.\textsuperscript{371} Amaral was a Brazilian bandleader, singer and composer who had performed with Carmen Miranda in the 1940s before solo success and Hollywood.\textsuperscript{372} \textit{Holiday in Brazil} was one of several travel-themed LPs he made that used recognisable stereotypes in mainstream easy listening packages.

The fake, armchair exoticism suggested by such music complements the portrayal of fantasy in \textit{East of Borneo}, Cornell's source film. Cornell's combination of images of a Hollywood-imagined Indonesian kingdom with easy listening Brazilian music produced for a US market enhances the fantastical reimagining of place generated by each. The blatant inauthenticity of this audio-visual combination positions it as a purely `Orientalist' fantasy, the Western cultural invention identified by Edward Said as `a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.'\textsuperscript{373} In 1929, a Surrealist map of the world was published in \textit{Variétés}, portraying countries in proportion to their surreal

\textsuperscript{368} See Cornell, `Enchanted Wanderer.'

\textsuperscript{369} Hartigan, \textit{Joseph Cornell}, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{370} Cornell's record collection included Debussy, Poulenc, Bartók, Mendelssohn, and Messiaen, among many others. Joseph Cornell papers, box 19, folder 29, items 16-23; box 22, folder 41.

\textsuperscript{371} Artists include Carmen Miranda, Xavier Cugat, and Ethel Smith, known for her unique organ version of `Tico Tico.'

\textsuperscript{372} Amongst other film work, Amaral worked on the Disney Latin musical, \textit{The Three Caballeros} (Ferguson, 1944). Cornell was particularly fond of Carmen Miranda, calling Garbo and Dietrich `somnambulists' in comparison; Deborah Solomon, \textit{Utopia Parkway}, p. 100.

resonance, showing places such as Indonesia or Easter Island swollen to continent size. Similarly, Rose Hobart evoked a fantasy view of the tropics by an artist who never left the country of his birth.

Official lore has it that Holiday in Brazil originally accompanied Rose Hobart at its 1936 premiere, and has remained its soundtrack since. The proliferation of this unfounded assumption is astonishing, and pinpointing any originating source is difficult. Julien Levy, who organised the screening, never mentioned musical accompaniment, but instead wrote that the programme was designed around 'speechless imagery or imaginary speech.' Solomon, an otherwise impeccable biographer, notes that Cornell 'suppressed' the original soundtrack at the premiere in favour of a 'reject-bin record called Holiday in Brazil,' a claim reiterated by Lynda Roscoe Hartigan who identifies it as Nestor Amaral. Catherine Corman writes 'he removed the sound, slowed the film down to silent speed, and played a record of Brazilian music while projecting it,' while even Sitney agrees that 'he repeated, almost hypnotically, a passage of Brazilian music on a record player.' But the fact that Holiday in Brazil was only released in 1957 renders this impossible. What accompaniment Cornell may have used in 1936, or at any of Rose Hobart's rare subsequent screenings, remains unknown and highly debatable. Only Michael Pigott has recently called out this pervasive misidentification, identifying a collective tendency to ascribe popular music of previous eras to a generic past, much like the generic exotic. He describes this misnomer as 'a retrospective refitting of history.'

Contrary to this erroneous belief in a single, consistent audio-visual version of Rose Hobart from the beginning, Cornell's diaries reveal that he experimented

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375 Another of Cornell's found- footage films, Bookstalls (circa late 1930s), depicts this travelling-without-moving theme.
377 Solomon, Utopia Parkway, p. 87; Hartigan, Joseph Cornell, p. 72.
378 Corman also misidentifies the record as Brazilian Holiday; Corman, ‘Theater of the Spirits,’ p. 378; Sitney, ‘The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell,’ p. 76.
381 Pigott, Joseph Cornell Versus Cinema, p. 31.
with a number of different pre-existing soundtracks. An entry from 21st May, 1949, the ‘day following movie showing’ (probably the 1949 ‘Subjects of the Artist’ screening) reads ‘earlier in week fresh reactions each morning to “tropical” music for Rose Hobart film, etc. purchasing player locally one morning on bike, recalling former feelings of a transcendent happiness common to so many different periods that time of year.’\(^{382}\) That same July shows further experimentation: ‘earlier in week playing of MADRUGADO (Daybreak) Bolero for monkey episode in Rose Hobart film not yet used but giving a ‘creative’ and satisfying similar feeling.’\(^{383}\) Three years on, he's still tinkering with it: ‘yesterday good clearing upon awakening after Saturday session with dissembling Rose Hobart for new variations.’\(^{384}\)

This evidence opposes the established view that Rose Hobart's soundtrack replicates a historical prototype, revealing instead Cornell's definite interest in variations over time, a working method he also applied to his boxes. Pigott warns that digital proliferation can inscribe one particular version as ‘primary,’ despite evidence to the contrary.\(^{385}\) Rose Hobart is actually a paradigm of audio-visual impermanence, a harbinger of the video remix culture or the live-mix screening.\(^{386}\)

Such playing with music and image combinations directly relates to Cornell's preoccupation with what he called audio-visual ‘correspondences.’ These appear to have been an emotional frisson created through the juxtaposition of the music heard and the scene viewed, similar to the fleeting transcendence of the Surrealist ‘marvellous.’ Music acts as a catalyst in these reactions, which can then be reactivated by memory:

Nearing train time wandered through Penn Arcade (big one) and into Doubleday Doran where away from the glare and heat the strains of broadcast of Beethoven’s Pastoral Symph. brought that heavenly kind of peace encountered evry [sic] so often and in its unexpectedness an inexpressively beautiful joy and satisfaction. Ownership of records must always be accompanied by some such “setting” for this kind of satisfaction.\(^{387}\)

\(^{382}\) Cornell, diary entry, 21 May 1949, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 6. At Robert Motherwell’s invitation, Cornell held two screenings at ‘Subjects of the Artist,’ a series of lectures and concerts held in an upstairs room in New York; Solomon, Utopia Parkway, p. 200.

\(^{383}\) Cornell, diary entry, 2 July 1949, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 6, item 52.

\(^{384}\) Cornell, diary entry, 1 September 1952, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 15, item 2. Below it are fragmentary notes on ‘ROSE HOBART #2,’ to potentially re-use the same material.

\(^{385}\) Pigott, Joseph Cornell Versus Cinema, p. 23.

\(^{386}\) See for example, Timecode (Figgis, 2000), which Figgis mixes live onstage, embracing serendipity by combining recorded elements with music CDs, an approach he claims avoids filmmaking that ‘arrives dead on delivery.’ Mike Figgis (lecture, School of Sound, London, 18 April 2009).

\(^{387}\) Cornell, diary entry, 2 September 1952, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 15, item 2.
Cornell’s use of the term ‘correspondences’ to describe audio-visual experiences was borrowed from Symbolist artist and Surrealist ‘precursor,’ Odilon Redon. Symbolist concepts were admired and reimagined within Surrealism, and there are observable similarities between the Symbolist idea of mingled sense experiences epitomised in Charles Baudelaire’s poem ‘Correspondances’ (published 1857) and Cornell’s term.\(^{388}\) He describes such a moment below:

> what a ‘correspondence’ (Redon’s word) in the playing of the Chausson ‘Concerto’ just inside the cabin looking out through ‘doors’ and ‘windows’ and with cooling breezes relieving the intense sun...\(^{389}\)

This desire to create, or stumble upon, audio-visual ‘correspondences’ or juxtapositions is apparent in \textit{Rose Hobart}, as well as in Cornell’s other film work.\(^{390}\) His 1933 scenario ‘Monsieur Phot (Seen Through the Stereoscope)’ carefully indicated pre-existing music at every stage. The implication was that a reader could imagine hearing them, or even listen to recordings, whilst reading. The suggested eight classical pieces are worlds away from \textit{Holiday in Brazil}. Examples include ‘tender and poignant’ passages from Johann Strauss’s \textit{Tales From the Vienna Woods}, and Debussy’s ‘La Plus que lente’ and Scherzo from his String Quartet.\(^{391}\) The care of these selections contrasts with the superficially careless application of Amaral’s music on \textit{Rose Hobart}. This close attention to musical accompaniment demonstrates Cornell’s commitment to the superseded silent film methods, and Sitney situates this work at the ‘difficult’ sound transition point, suggesting it was necessary for Cornell to use his memory of silent film to mediate with ‘realms of wonder.’\(^{392}\) Recorded music was a vital part of this mediation, providing a

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\(^{389}\) Cornell, diary entry 9 September 1952, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 15.

\(^{390}\) Cornell’s accompaniment recommendations for his later films included ‘“Winters Past”’ by H. Barlow (probably ‘The Winter’s Passed,’ a 1940 composition by American composer Wayne Barlow) for \textit{The Aviary} (1954), Satie’s ‘Trois Gymnopédies’ and Ukrainian composer Reinhold Glière’s Symphony No. 3 (Ylia Murametz) for his two versions of \textit{A Legend for Fountains} (1957/1965), and Debussy’s ‘Cloches à travers les feuilles’ for a version of \textit{Nymphlight} (1957) which Cornell specially re-cut to fit the music; Sitney, ‘The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell,’ p. 88.


\(^{392}\) Sitney, ‘The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell,’ p. 73.
subjective, even ‘marvellous,’ experience. Adding, or even just imagining, music with film images could provide sensory plenitude: ‘Glinka ‘Waltz Fantasy’ in coolness of cellar and experienced that warm and beautiful feeling to complete harmony about everything—actentuated [sic] by visualising children’s films & own fantasies to the music—a complete experience in itself.’

The concept of musical triggers is pertinent when considering ‘readymade soundtracks’ pre-loaded with associations. *Holiday in Brazil*, for example, evokes generic exoticism in addition to potential subjective associations. Cornell’s fixation with audio-visual ‘correspondences’ also bears comparison with Marcel Proust's more famous ideas of ‘involuntary memory,’ both of which describe the sudden emotional flooding caused by the recollection of sense memory, transcending conscious intellectual recall. In Benjamin's interpretation, past time is ‘present in some material object (or in the sensation which such an object arouses in us),’ which crucially we can only discover purely by chance, and arguably Cornell's chance audio-visual encounters attempt to arouse such sensations.

One of Cornell's dossiers contains the following transcription from a radio discussion on Proust: ‘art, because it gives the past a form, saves it from change and disintegration.’ The asynchronous, almost mindless, repetition of the same two Amaral tracks, juxtaposed with circling, anti-narrative imagery, conspires to preserve an audio-visual moment of ‘correspondence.’ Synchronisation is extremely loose, and music repetitively washes over, enhancing the temporal alteration already achieved by the re-cut. Chion states that ‘loose synth gives a less naturalistic, more readily poetic effect,’ and in *Rose Hobart* we can recognise the loose, repetitive structures of dream or fantasy. The two tracks, ‘Porto Alegre’ (three minutes thirty-four seconds) and ‘Belém Bayonee’ (two minutes fifty-nine seconds) sound rather similar, and without any visual shifts when they swap, the effect is circular.

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393 Cornell, diary entry, 1 July 1954, Joseph Cornell papers, box 6, folder 30, item 13.
398 These are the only instrumental tracks on *Holiday in Brazil*, perhaps the reason behind their selection (although the original final track, ‘Harlem Samba’ is missing from the digital re-release I used for reference).
Even the beginning and end aren't clearly demarcated — the music begins somewhat clumsily mid-note over the image of a group staring skywards. It ends abruptly too. As ‘Belém Bayonee’ finishes for the third time we cut from the (repeated) image of ripples in water to Hobart looking downcast (another repeated image) then a crude edit to suddenly end. Synchronisation (especially in the original unsynched version) is more random than in Las Hurdes or Man Ray's films, and music forms an atmospheric background, an aural wallpaper behind the oneiric, repeated images.

Musical repetition is in keeping with frequent visual repetitions –Rose gazes from her balcony, a splash in water, characters look skywards. Hartigan sees repetition and variation as fundamental themes in Cornell's work; repetition ‘represents the challenge of reaching toward resolution and even perfection,’ while ‘variation as an experimental process challenges the harmonic concept of finish.’

Hal Foster argues the importance of ‘compulsive repetition’ within Surrealism, relating it to Freud's theories outlined in ‘The Uncanny’ and ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle.’ The Freudian repetition compulsion is a universal instinctive desire to return to a prior state, but exists in constant tension with the equally universal death drive. The repetition compulsion is additionally identified as a psychological method of mastering past trauma. Foster proposes that Surrealist works routinely attempted to transform anxiety into aesthetics, changing the ‘uncanny’ into ‘the marvellous.’

David Lomas interprets Surrealist repetition compulsion as an attempt to strengthen subjective identity in response to the ‘unrepresentable, unassimilable real’ of a traumatic event. The relentless repetition of Amaral's music, suggesting endless grooves in a revolving record like rings in a tree, links to Cornell's stubborn attempt to return to the ‘prior state’ of silent film.

Many critics have eulogised Rose Hobart, even alluding to actress Hobart's ‘rescue’ from a talkie setting. It is, however, also possible to see her as imprisoned inside a filmic representation of Cornell’s (or the viewer’s) fantasy, an

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401 Foster, Compulsive Beauty p. 48.
issue I return to in chapter four. In this case, the deeply repetitive music contributes in several ways. It maintains the timeless, looped continuity of the fantasy. It creates an impression of mentally returning over and over to the original point of obsession. And it tries to preserve the particular sensation aroused by Cornell's specific audio-visual ‘correspondence.’ In this sense, it is comparable to Bernard Herrmann's use of circling ostinati in his score for Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958), complementing that film's representation of an obsessive, erotic compulsion to repeat.404

Chance audio-visual correspondences and silent film accompaniment methods, are tightly bound together in Cornell's film. Rose Hobart re-contextualised both pre-existing music and footage in what Mariën might have termed a cinematic intervention, but also using musical chance encounters to access emotional experience rather than provoke shock.405 Ultimately, whether this can trigger the fluctuating experience of the Surrealist ‘marvellous’ depends upon individual response. But by using audio-visual repetition, serendipity, and memory-steeped associations, it set itself up in readiness.

This chapter proposed that Dada/Surrealism-related films used pre-existing music in ways that, while partly related to common exhibition practices, were also distinctive and thought provoking. Taking an underexplored and undervalued area, I have demonstrated that pre-existing music was an important element in Dada/Surrealism-related filmmaking, sometimes even a central concept, as observed in L’Âge d’or. Until now, these soundtracks have been taken for granted, allowing inaccuracies and assumptions to proliferate, as has been the case with Las Hurdes, Rose Hobart, and Man Ray's films. My findings urge not only that we should pay more attention to these ‘readymade soundtracks,’ but also acknowledge anachronism and variability as integral to their audio-visual approaches.

Labelling them as ‘readymade soundtracks,’ based on shared methods of selecting, borrowing, and re-contextualising, allows us to think about these audio-visuals in wider Dada/Surrealist terms, such as bricolage or assemblage. In some cases, the use of mass-produced records related to an intimate relationship with mechanical music. Their approach to compilation scoring, foregrounding difference, and sometimes irony, used juxtaposition principles fundamental to Dada and

Surrealism, but also to gramophone art. ‘Readymade soundtracks’ helped to structure unconventional narratives, opening up interpretation rather than guiding it, to subvert the conventions of mood music, and create less ‘fixed’ artworks which give the impression of using random chance. Music's emotional, even physical, power was referenced or parodied in the musical ‘correspondences’ of Cornell and the love scenes of *L'Âge d'or*. And while these accompaniment methods were standard mainstream practices of the silent and early sound periods, their idiosyncratic applications placed them halfway between mass culture and art, anticipating pre-existing music strategies used by future filmmakers.
Chapter Three
Cut and Paste Cinema

This chapter explores the different ways that Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers cut, altered, or arranged their soundtracks, and proposes that this was a form of audio-visual collage. Although the topic of collage (and related methods photomontage and assemblage) is prominent within Dada and Surrealist scholarship, it is rarely used in reference to film. Collage usually applies to two-dimensional images, assemblage to three-dimensional, while montage relates to sequential arrangements over time, hence its association with cinema. When collage is applied to film it is mostly in reference to later twentieth century cinema, for example Louis Aragon's discussion of Jean-Luc Godard's work as ‘cinematic collage,’ based around his extensive use of mainly literary citation, or Robert Robertson's more recent proposition of audio-visual collage to describe the films of Sergei Parajanov or Pasolini.406 Marcel Mariën described his own cut-and-paste Surrealist cinema methods as ‘assemblage,’ while to Elsa Adamowicz, Dada film was ‘a product of bricolage, a collage of fragments that refuse to stick together.’407

Apart from Francisco Aranda's claim that L'Âge d'or was directly inspired by Surrealist collage, Dada/Surrealism-related films are usually described in terms of montage.408 During the early sound period, montage regularly described an approach to film sound – the ‘new montage element’ of the ‘Statement on Sound,’ or Rudolf Arnheim's concept of a ‘montage of sound.’ 409 Separate treatment of sound and image was central to such ideas, which emerged repeatedly in discussions of asynchrony and counterpoint throughout the period, as discussed in chapter one. I suggest that Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers used audio-visual methods comparable to these collage strategies recognised in visual art and literature. As in the previous case studies, I emphasise the ways in which these works selected,

408 Aranda, Luis Buñuel, p. 83. See for example, Robert Short, The Age of Gold, p. 72; Brunius, En marge du cinéma français, p. 75.
409 Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, ‘Statement on Sound,’ p. 84; Arnheim, Film, p. 222.
assembled and re-contextualised source material into new audio-visual constructions, but in these next examples the sounds were not transferred intact, but altered or juxtaposed with other sounds and images to build composite structures. Most of the examples chosen are uses of sound effects, but in some the musical soundtrack itself was the main focus for cutting and alteration.

To demonstrate this argument of audio-visual collage requires understanding both the Dada and Surrealist interests in collage, and the early sound film interest in non-synchronous sound. I begin the chapter by considering collage as a concept beyond pictorial practice, discussing how an idea of audio-visual collage fits in with the early sound film asynchrony context. The filmmakers I study shared interests in asynchrony, post-synchronised sound effects, audio-visual counterpoint or dissonance, and audio editing in common with many of their European contemporaries. Yet the audio-visuals of films such as Le Sang d'un poète or L'Âge d'or achieved strikingly different results, more akin to the startling juxtapositions of visual collage or photomontage. Moments such as L'Âge d'or's celebrated mirror scene, or Cocteau's use of an engine noise, a cock crow, and whistles to accompany his protagonist waking up, are novel combinations of diegetically, and sometimes logically, unrelated sounds and images, and differ radically from other early sound film uses. Sound effects were assembled as part of an audio-visual composition, not linearly as in montage, but creating simultaneous audio-visual impressions, comparable to the imaginary scenes constructed in visual collage.

Following this, my observations divide into two broad categories: audio-visual combination and audio-visual manipulation. In the first category I analyse Le Sang d'un poète and L'Âge d'or from a sound effects perspective, reflecting their importance as two of France's earliest sound films. Despite representing a rare moment of feature length avant-garde sound filmmaking, these two works have not previously been discussed together in an audio-visual context. My doing so encourages a new perspective on two seminal films that assesses their uses of audio-visual combination. Some of the identified audio-visual combinations were relatively simple, applying one particular sound to an image, forming a surprise substitution. Others were slightly more complex, and mixed several sounds together to form ‘composite’ audio effects, an unusual audio-visual collage effect comparable to the audio superimposition suggested by Benjamin Fondane. This second variant can be considered an early version of what we now call sound design, the practice of
creatively assembling different sounds during a film's post-production. While it was fairly common in early sound cinema for early sound films to foreground sound effects, my case studies differed by using sound to complicate, rather than clarify, audio-visual relationships. The sounds ‘added value’ to the images while also subverting predictable audio-visual matching. I assess how these films juxtaposed and layered post-synched sound effects in order to enhance surprise or disorientation, and to render illogical moments in fuller sensory detail.

The second half of this chapter discusses audio-visual manipulation, investigating Dada/Surrealism-related films that treated the soundtrack as a flexible material, open to radical readjustment and amenable to editing. The increased use of optical sound-on-film recording techniques, where sound was transferred visually onto the filmstrip alongside the images, provided filmmakers with opportunities to edit and play with synchronised sound. As Chion describes, with optical sound ‘one could edit sounds, select fragments, move them around, and reassemble them in any order.’ My case studies examine two pioneering approaches to this – Hans Richter's short films produced in Germany during the transition era, and the animated films of Len Lye, assisted by sound editor Jack Ellit, produced in the UK in the mid to late 1930s.

Richter's lesser-known films, made between 1927 and 1929, combined characteristically rapid visual montage with conspicuously constructed soundtracks. The three-minute *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich* (1929) was commissioned by sound film company Tobis as one of Germany's first sound films. Mostly commissioned by film companies or newspapers, Richter's films from this period showed significant audio-visual skill. It is extremely difficult, however, to obtain reliable information about their soundtracks, several of which were lost or confiscated during the years of the Nazi regime and Richter's subsequent departure from Germany. Consequently, although some films are later sonorisations, they cannot be reliably dated or attributed, and only *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich*

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410 By 1931 it was possible to record more than one track of sound and produce a composite mix of music, sound effects and dialogue, with multi-track recording widespread in Hollywood by late 1932, although slower to reach France; Thompson and Bordwell, *Film History*, pp. 216-41.
411 ‘Added value’ refers to the enrichment of any given image by an unrelated sound which gives the impression of emanating from it; Chion, *Audio-Vision*, p. 5.
413 Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 51.
414 Hofacker, ‘Richter's Films and the Role of the Radical Artist,’ p. 139.
can be pinpointed to the transition period. However, some of the later sonorisations relate so closely to the audio-visual ideas of the period that I have included them (as with Man Ray's films in the previous chapter) as silent films made within the historical Dada/Surrealism period, whose later sonorisations directly connect to the audio-visual approaches identified in my research.

Analysis of Lye's films draws new conclusions about their soundtracks, proposing that Lye and his talented sound editors were unsung pioneers of the musical dance remix, a creative form usually associated with 1970s disco and hip-hop cultures. Several of Lye's films painstakingly edited and re-arranged pre-existing music compositions, reforming them into bespoke instrumentals, a major achievement that has been largely ignored until now. This confident cut-and-paste manipulation, produced only with gramophone records and optical film-stock, predated more celebrated, but esoteric, magnetic tape manipulations by celebrated musique concrète composers, of the 1940s onwards, such as Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry. My research recognises Lye and Ellit's significant innovation, and highlights their unusual approach that treated the soundtrack as the primary editable component while images were often hand-painted directly across frame divides, requiring little to no editing.

Collage

Collage was not the invention of Dada or Surrealism, nor even Cubism as Aragon suggested.415 Already commercially and artistically widespread, Eddie Wolfram reminds us that ‘there is nothing very new about the essential idea of collage, of bringing into association unrelated images and objects to form a different expressive identity.’416 In Dada and Surrealism, however, collage became an important and distinctive creative expression, challenging dominant modes of painterly technique. Particularly in German Dada, where artists such as Hannah Höch and Raoul Haussmann produced politically and stylistically bold scenes from clipped and pasted photographs and text. Frequently both playful and savage, such works left visible signs of their construction, flaunting their artifice and mismatching.

415 Louis Aragon, Les Collages.
Enthusiasm for collage continued into Surrealism, most notably in the work of Max Ernst, whose disturbing combinations peaked in ‘collage-novels’ such as *Une Semaine de bonté (A Week of Kindness, 1934).*

In Adamowicz's view, ‘the collage principle,’ often considered the fundamental modernist structural model, had a privileged role within Surrealism, encompassing a wide range of activities that incorporated juxtaposition, well beyond the purely pictorial. Underlying these various uses was the core definition of ‘collage as a combinatory technique.’ Amidst the variety of materials used, and different approaches of visibility or mimicry, aggression or discretion, Adamowicz distils Surrealist collage practice as being:

essentially, a creative act of *détournement,* through the subversive manipulation and creative transformation of ready-made elements, forging the surreal out of fragments of the real, suggesting the merveilleux through the combination of banal and defunct images, clichés and rewritten texts. It is essentially a semiotic practice of transforming pre-formed iconic or verbal messages.

To consider this description with audio-visuality in mind, we can recognise similarities with Dada/Surrealism-related film soundtracks, in terms of re-contextualised pre-existing music, and in the strategies of manipulating and repositioning individual sounds, or fragmenting and re-ordering ‘pre-formed’ music. Adamowicz's reference to semiotics indicates the manner in which collage processes divert predictable connections between signs and referents, something that Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visual collage was adept at. Her use of the terms *détournement* and the *merveilleux* (marvellous) to describe this process complements my own interpretation of a shift or surprise in the use of a particular sound, diverting it from a standardised cinematic sound-image combination into something unexpected, provoking the subjective experience of ‘the marvellous.’

A suggestive connection between audio collage and Dada and Surrealism was proposed by *musique concrète* pioneer Pierre Schaeffer in a 1959 article entitled ‘Musique concrète et connaissance de l'objet musical,’ (‘Musique Concrète and Knowledge of the Musical Object’), published midway between his principal

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419 Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* p. 17. ‘Détournement,’ literally meaning to divert or hijack, was a term occasionally used within Surrealism to indicate a subversive change in something’s meaning or use, and was appropriated by the Lettrists and Situationists during the 1950s-1960s.
theoretical works on music. Here, Schaeffer suggested that the removal and re-contextualisation of individual sounds was a process equivalent to Surrealist collage, capable of producing the same impressions of surprise, curiosity and admiration. Stating that sound montage or juxtaposition was directly inspired by Surrealism, he outlined the additional related method of altering noises via modulation, namely manipulating sound with mechanical devices.

Cutting or editing were central to all these different collage approaches. Critics tend to agree that editing, essentially visual montage, was fundamental within Dada/Surrealism-related film. The visual cut has frequently been identified as an important method of creating irrational temporal and spatial juxtapositions. Thomas Elsaesser argues that in Dada films, ‘contradictions and frictions’ of montage made ‘the energy in the system visible and active.’ While to Adamowicz, editing was a fundamental method of decentring, doubling and fragmentation in both Dada and Surrealist cinema.

This attitude also came across in historical Surrealist film writing. Around the time of Un Chien andalou, Buñuel wrote ‘“Découpage” ou Segmentation Cinégraphique’ (‘“Découpage” or Cinematographic Segmentation’), an article that stated that the cut was the essence of cinema. His use of the collage-like concept of ‘découpage’ intended to encapsulate the nature of film: ‘Segmentation. Creation. Splitting something to transform it into something else. That which previously did not exist, now does.’ Buñuel and contemporaries, Surrealist or otherwise, revered cinematic montage, especially the Soviet example. To Jacques Brunius, adept at pictorial collage as well as filmmaking and criticism, cinematic montage and collage both gave concrete expression to the quintessential Surrealist notion of distant realities brought together into one plane. He was, like Mariën after him, in support

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421 Schaeffer, p. 63.
422 Elsaesser, ‘Dada/Cinema?,’ p. 25.
423 Adamowicz, ‘Bodies Cut and Dissolved,’ p. 23.
424 Luis Buñuel, ‘“Découpage” ou Segmentation Cinégraphique,’ Cahiers du cinéma, no. 223 (Aug-Sep 1970). As part of the subject of the article itself is how to define ‘découpage’ in cinema, I have left this word untranslated. Although literally meaning ‘cutting,’ there is no English equivalent for ‘découpage,’ which also refers to a final shooting script. It is also used, in French and English, to describe a form of paper collage.
of found footage filmmaking, assembled collage-like from ‘readymade’ newsreel and library audio effects. Juxtaposition, via film editing, he considered equivalent to simile and metaphor, and he claimed that ‘in cinema, a simple splice can replace the word like.’ 427

Dawn Ades has noted essential differences between Dada and Surrealist collage approaches; the former used abrupt disruptions of scale, foregrounding visual discontinuity and fragmentation, while successful Surrealist collage did not draw so much attention to its own processes of making. It attempted instead to create a convincing representation capable of deepening the viewer's perception into a heightened ‘sur-reality.’ 428 Such a distinction invites comparison with similar observations made about Dada and Surrealist film. For example, Elsaesser claims Dada film was characteristically ‘intentionally anti-psychological,’ foregrounding cinematic manipulation and self-awareness to prevent audience identification. 429 On the other hand, according to Linda Williams, Surrealist films intentionally exploited this audience identification in order to manipulate it. 430 Extended to audio-visuals, we see both patterns at work in the use of sound as an obviously artificial or separate element, aided by asynchrony techniques, and in the use of sound effects as a way of deepening the verisimilitude of irrational or surprising situations.

**Audio-visual Combination**

Paradoxically, we begin our exploration of audio-visual collage in silent film. In *Un Chien andalou*, a small sequence jokes with the conventions of representing sound in silent and early sound film. A man approaches an apartment door. In close up, his hand presses the doorbell. The succeeding shot – its response – shows two arms poking out from holes in a wall, vigorously rattling a cocktail shaker. The juxtaposition, via editing, of a bell button and a cocktail shaker, uses the artifice of montage, a logic entirely derived from the sequencing of the shots, as demonstrated

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427 ‘Au cinéma, une simple collure peut remplacer le mot comme.’ Note that ‘comme’ can have several related meanings, including ‘such as’ or ‘as’. Brunius, *En marge du cinéma français*, p. 77.
429 Thomas Elsaesser, ‘Dada/Cinema?’, p. 25. This was not a uniquely Dada strategy, for example *Chelovek s Kino-apparatom* (*Man With A Movie Camera*, Vertov, 1929) was extensively self-reflexive.
430 Williams, *Figures of Desire*, p. xvi.
by Lev Kuleshov's famous editing experiments. It associates two differing images, but by doing so it intercepts the expected visual representation of a bell. The doorbell's visual representation creates the mental suggestion of a bell sound, a common convention in silent cinema.

The idea of silent films provoking imaginary sound was a frequent refrain in French film criticism, described by one author in 1912 as a 'particular form of psychism, through an auditory allusion,' and vigorously defended throughout the 1920s by Germaine Dulac, who insisted that silent images should only evoke 'the feeling of noise.' Buñuel and Dalí's substitution of a cocktail shaker interrupts the expectation of an imaginary bell sound, subverting cause and effect between what we see and what we hear as implied by the film grammar. The resulting effect is reminiscent of Eisenstein's concept of dialectical montage, in which meaning is sparked by the ‘collision’ between two independent shots rather than unrolled in predictable associations.

Kristin Thompson's analysis of Soviet early sound film expands montage theory to audio-visual mismatches, which she suggests stimulated the spectator to a more intense, active participation. Although few Soviet early sound films actively practised this, Thompson identifies mismatches in Dezertir (Deserter, Pudovkin, 1933) and Odna (Alone, Kozintsev and Trauberg, 1931), but such effects were mainly used for purposes of narrative expansion or humour, rather than the confusion of Dada/Surrealism-related use. Ian Christie's study of the same period, 'Making Sense of Early Soviet Sound,' identifies a number of strategies which exploited the novelty of sound in various strategies of 'parapraxis, delay, and miscueing,' all based on concepts of difference between sound and image. The absurd connection between the doorbell and the cocktail shaker is more illogical than a typical montage juxtaposition however. It jolts audience perception, as do the

visual and temporal shifts throughout the film. Expectations are drawn towards the familiar, and then undercut. The implied sounds of a cocktail shaker (ice rattling against metal, liquid sloshing) are so different to an electric bell (buzzing or sonorous ringing) that they collide and create a new imaginary audio-visual pairing.

In the original scenario manuscript, this moment was clearly planned. It specified that the woman be shown listening as if hearing the bell, and the image repeated. In the French translation, published in *La Révolution surréaliste*, an extra phrase added that the acts of pressing the button and shaking the cocktail shaking should be represented as if instantaneous, as a doorbell would ‘in ordinary films.’ This addition, (possibly not the authors' own) made clear the extent to which the scene parodied film sound conventions. It was a proto-sound gag, drawing attention to cinematic disjunction between sound and image, something frequently exploited for comic effect in early sound cinema, in French films such as *L’Atalante* (Vigo, 1934) or *À nous la liberté*, or in Hollywood comedies such as Laurel and Hardy’s *Berth Marks* (Foster, 1929). What distinguishes the gag in *Un Chien andalou* is the seemingly unrelated nature of the two objects and their implied sounds, the bell and the cocktail. The encounter is unexpected, fortuitous, like a sewing machine and an umbrella, combining the collision of montage methods with the illogicality of Surrealist collage.

Audio-visual substitutions are also found in Surrealist sound film scenarios from the transition period. In ‘Un Peu moins de bruit’ (‘A Little Less Noise,’ 1929), written by Jacques Brunius and Paul Gilson, a dream sequence shows a man playing the piano, but from the instrument comes the sound of a saxophone instead. Even such a small swap, from one instrument to another, indicates the potential absurdity of audio-visual juxtaposition, feasible with asynchronous soundtracks. Incongruous mismatching is also evident in Dali’s floric, unfilmed sound film scenarios such as *La Chèvre sanitaire* (‘The Hygienic Goat,’ 1930-1), which undermined

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‘grandiloquent sound’ with ‘anodyne images,’ or the misrecognition of the sound of the sea for monstrous breathing in ‘Babaouo’ (1932).\textsuperscript{439}

In the examples that follow, incongruity was valued in itself, and the juxtaposition of sounds and images enriched disorientation. I explore in further detail how post-synchronisation sound and image combinations produced distinctive forms of audio-visual collage.

\textit{Le Sang d'un poète: Trick of the Ear} \textsuperscript{440}

Jean Cocteau was given complete artistic freedom with \textit{Le Sang d'un poète}, effectively his first film.\textsuperscript{441} Commissioned by the Vicomte de Noailles in the same year as \textit{L'Âge d'or}, it is one of the richest examples of early avant-garde sound film, and worth understanding within the context of Dada/Surrealism-related cinema. Matthew Gale points out that, while openly despised by many Surrealists (sometimes with blatant homophobia), Cocteau ‘nevertheless managed to sustain a trajectory that remained disturbingly parallel to theirs,’ something that de Noailles' commission brought into focus.\textsuperscript{442}

As explained in the introduction, this thesis identifies and discusses Dada/Surrealism-related films based on recognition of common techniques and aims, and extends beyond the narrow scope of the official Surrealist group. Despite the animosity of partisan Surrealists, \textit{Le Sang d'une poète's} personalised imagery and oneiric themes had much in common with the movement, and the film was often (mis)labelled as Surrealist by a public uninterested in internal politics, a misappropriation that undoubtedly enraged Breton further. As Cocteau recalled:

the surrealists and I admired the same values and fought on the same level, whilst the present confusion of levels would render all these battles quite incomprehensible... in South America young people ascribe my films to Luis Buñuel and his to me, under the surrealist label.\textsuperscript{443}


\textsuperscript{440} All specific references in this thesis refer to the version on \textit{Jean Cocteau Collection: The Blood of a Poet / Testament of Orpheus} (Optimum World and Studio Canal, 2007), DVD.


\textsuperscript{442} Matthew Gale, ‘In Darkened Rooms,’ in Gale, \textit{Dali and Film}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{443} Cocteau, \textit{Cocteau on the Film}, pp. 59-60.
Cocteau called *Le Sang d'une poète* ‘a realistic documentary of unreal events.’ It comprises four loosely connected episodes, narrated by Cocteau, bookended by the image of a factory chimney collapsing. In the first, an unnamed Poet (Enrique Rivero) is troubled by a drawn mouth that comes to life on his hand. He transfers it to a statue (Lee Miller), which also comes alive. The second episode follows his journey through a mirror into a strange hotel, where he spies on bizarre scenes through keyholes, the sequence ending with his suicide attempt and return to the Statue, which he destroys. The third episode relates a snowball fight that results in the death of a boy, left alone on the ground. The final episode reveals Miller and Rivero, now an elegant couple playing cards next to the body, the surrounding balconies now theatre boxes. A semi-naked ‘angel’ spreads a cloak and his own body over the dead figure that vanishes. Rivero loses at cards and shoots himself again, to applause. Miller reverts to a statue, and returns leading a bull with strange markings and a lyre for horns. The chimney finally collapses.

Mismatches, audio-visual composites, sound manipulations, and unexpected asynchronies – all these abound in the film, albeit without the parody and scathing intent found in Buñuel and Dalí’s film. Integrating a wide range of sounds with dialogue, his own voiceover, and Georges Auric’s score, Cocteau layered sounds and images together via post-production tricks, constructing a personalised collage of dream-like situations, self-consciously and unapologetically poetic and erotic.

Sound played a major part in the film, contributing to what James S. Williams calls a ‘cinema of the senses,’ the image loaded ‘with movements, sounds and sensations in one dense, composite frame.’

Cocteau already had strong sonic links, through his involvements with Les Six, the 1920s nightclub Le Boeuf sur le toit, his poetry and jazz collaborations ‘La Toison d’or’ (‘The Golden Fleece’) and ‘Les Voleurs d’enfants’ (‘The Child Thieves,’) and his stage and ballet productions. The latter included an attempt to incorporate noise into *Parade* (1917) in the form of typewriters, aeroplanes and...
sirens. This approach was indebted to the ‘noise-sound’ of Luigi Russolo and Futurism in general, also an inspiration to Richter, and which will be returned to later on in this chapter.\textsuperscript{447}

Whilst technical knowledge of the film's soundtrack, under the direction of Henri Labrél\^e using the R.C.A. Photophone system, is severely limited by a lack of historical evidence, its audio-visuals were evidently well-received by audiences and critics, the majority of reviewers calling it a film poem, even ‘a visual song.’\textsuperscript{448} In contrast to the criticism of L'Âge d'or's technical standard, the soundtrack of Cocteau's film was picked out for praise, but mostly focused on the music and narration. However, filmmaker and critic Paul Gilson, Brunius's co-author on ‘Un peu moins de bruit,’ distinguished its innovative soundtrack from the ‘chatterings’ of talkies, highlighting its interesting use of noises, including cock crows, intermission bells, drum rolls, and heartbeats. Gilson also praised its ‘trucages’ (tricks) that provided even the most fantastical scenes with a heightened realism.\textsuperscript{449}

We now take a closer listen and look at the audio-visuals of one such trick scene.

We see the Poet (Rivero) in a stark room. Via a trick edit, a mirror suddenly substitutes for a door. The Statue (Miller) instructs him to enter this mirror, and he stands half-naked before it. Another trick edit causes a chair to materialise. Gentle flutes on the score reduce to a tense trill as Rivero tentatively stands on the chair. Touching the mirror to test its solidity, we hear the sound of tapping on the glass, loosely synched with his hand. We surmise this sound is his ring, though none is visible.\textsuperscript{450} As in a conjuring trick, sound and image verify the solidity of the prop. While Rivero climbs onto the frame and prepares to jump the soundtrack empties into silence. Cutting to a full-length shot, we see the Poet leap into the mirror, which splashes like water out of the frame. The visual trick was made by substituting the mirror for a visually identical tank of water, filmed from above, with the chair nailed to the side. The actor plunges and a cut returns us to the room shot as before.


\textsuperscript{448} ‘Le Sang d'une poète est, à la vérité, un marquable chant visuel’; author unknown, ‘Le Sang d'une poète’, Européen, 13 January 1931.

\textsuperscript{449} Paul Gilson, review of \textit{Le Sang d'un poète}, source and date unknown, in documents concerning the film \textit{Le sang d'un poète}, 1930, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

\textsuperscript{450} ‘His ring strikes it three times, but the sound is heard later than the contact’; Cocteau, \textit{Two Screenplays}, p. 21. However, this screenplay was first published in 1948, and is more of a descriptive text than an authentic pre-production document.
At the moment of impact we hear a sound of crying out, as if in surprise. Several voices exclaim ‘ah’ in unison, for one second's duration. The published screenplays reads ‘his disappearance is accompanied by the sound of a crowd at a firecracker display,’ providing a more precise interpretation of what is actually a less identifiable sound, simultaneously causing and expressing surprise. But the sound doesn't so much match the image (which is imaginary, so unknowable) as it does the spectator's surprise at the trick. The cry is an ejaculation, both in the sense of a vocal exclamation, but also, associatively, in a sexual sense by its juxtaposition with visual signs of liquid and penetration, and the prolonged camera gaze on Rivero's muscular body. This audio-visual mismatch is like a joyful shock, an assemblage of image and sound in poetic alignment, whose combination of trickery and (homo)erotic sensuality distinguishes it from contemporary uses of asynchrony.

Later, when Rivero is ejected back from the mirror, we hear a strange, stretched choral sound instead. What Cocteau described as a ‘religious choir of childish voices’ is less clearly so to the listener. It sounds like the manipulated sound of a choir, perhaps the earlier sound stretched by slowing it down, quickly brought back up to correct speed as Rivero lands. We don't know how this sound was made (perhaps a recording on disc was played at different speeds) and it is only partially identifiable, maintaining ambiguity. A short letter Cocteau wrote to composer Auric during sound recording hints at the effort he and sound engineer Labrèly put into creating the soundtrack, writing ‘this evening I will record my lungs, my bronchi, my heart... one must save this work, immerse oneself with it to the point where listening becomes painful.’

Preoccupation with sensory manipulation is also found in Cocteau's autobiographical Opium, published that same year, in which he related the perceptual sensitivities of opium addiction, imagining for example the possibility of using technology to hear plants.

The sound effects of these mirror scenes are not straight sound substitutions, for the fantastical visuals have no familiar sound to displace. Neither are the sounds

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451 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, p. 21. It is possible, after Cocteau’s admission of providing most of the voices in the film, that the cries might have been made by himself and friends.
452 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, p. 36.
453 ‘J'enregistre ce soir mes poumons, mes bronches, mon coeur... il faut sauver ce travail, s'y mêler jusqu'à ce que l'audition devienne pénible'; Jean Cocteau, Georges Auric - correspondance - Jean Cocteau (Montpellier: Centre d'étude du XXe siècle, Université Paul-Valéry, 1999), p. 120, my translation.
used simply acousmatic, and something we can easily match mentally to a source. Instead, a newly imagined image has been matched with an original, ambiguous sound, a different strategy from substitutions outlined in *Un Chien andalou* or ‘Un peu moins de bruit.’ The audio-visual components are partly recognisable, as mirror or voices, but are treated in surprising ways, manipulated in trick methods that change their qualities and make the combination feel entirely new rather than a substitution.

Cocteau's use of audio tricks expanded his use of visual illusions, themselves continuing the legacy of Georges Méliès, whose early trick cinema was being rediscovered and celebrated among the avant-garde during this period. At the time, Cocteau told audiences ‘I won’t conceal the fact that I have used tricks in order to make poetry visible and audible.’ ‘Trucage,’ or trickery, was central to Cocteau's cinematic method, an audio-visual counterpart to the *trompe l’oeil* imagery popular in Surrealist collage or painting, with effects comparable to the ‘strange transposition’ of the familiar into the unfamiliar that Rosalind Krauss considers fundamental to Surrealist photography. James S. Williams recognises Cocteau's ‘use of trucage to uncover the truc, or the materiality of the thing,’ producing a stronger, more convincing presence. The mirror scenes above juxtapose familiarity with strangeness, and the coupling of unrelated sounds and images provides a fuller sensory presence.

Sound relates to the image expressively rather than intellectually. The combination exceeds Pudovkin's asynchrony guidelines ‘to augment the potential expressiveness of the film's content’ with recognisable sounds from naturalistic settings. Cocteau's ambiguous audio-visual combinations also extend beyond John Grierson's tame suggestion of an ‘irrational crossing of sound’ illustrated by an example of an aeroplane heard over the image of a high mast. Despite the lack of any direct connections between the sound of a choir and a fall into a mirror, the

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455 Between 1929 and 1930 there were several gala evenings of Méliès' work, including a screening of twelve films rediscovered by the director of Studio 28; Paul Hammond, *Marvellous Méliès* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1974), p. 83. A 1929 edition of *La Revue du cinéma*, a Surrealist leaning magazine, gave special focus to Méliès, including an article by Paul Gilson; *La Revue du cinéma* vol. 1, no. 4 (15 October 1929).
459 Pudovkin, ‘Asynchronism as a Principle of Sound Film,’ p. 86.
460 Grierson, ‘The Creative Use of Sound,’ p. 95.
images do not resist the sound, but absorb it thirstily. At the same time, the sound is foregrounded by sudden surprise.

The success of this audio-visual collage, based on illogical juxtaposition, is in its use of synchresis. In Chion's theory, synchresis is the involuntary, and inevitable, perception of separate audio and visual events as a single phenomenon when they occur simultaneously. Abundantly used in cinema, synchresis is what makes post-synchronisation and foley possible, joining together unrelated sounds and visuals to create a fantasy impression that an onscreen item produces the sound. Chion notes that synchresis is so hard-wired into our perception that even when sound and image are completely unrelated it still occurs easily. Cocteau's audio-visual combinations collide sound with image, so that we receive the impression that the voices are no longer a crowd of people but have become the sound of a mirror being entered.

Such re-structuring is reminiscent of the substitutions and re-orderings found in dreams that underpin the film's narrative construction, methods Freud described in his analysis of ‘the dream work’ by which the unconscious mind converts relatively clear ‘dream-thoughts’ into the mixed-up ‘picture-puzzle’ of the ‘dream-content’ via processes of condensation and displacement. Cocteau combined superficially unrelated audio and visual into one new, condensed, ambiguous audio-visual moment. It evokes Fondane's concept of superimposition, of non-visualised sound ‘thickening’ the image, making it harder to read. We can find a similar effect of inserting sounds with loose, poetic connotations into a narrative in Alejo Carpentier's remarks concerning the Surrealism-related radio shows he produced for French radio with Robert Desnos and Paul Deharme during the 1930s. He suggested that sound effects should not be chosen for ease of identification, nor to match the depicted events, but for their artificial, dramatic effect, a harp glissando, for example, could represent a gunshot. Such approaches encourage a more poetic, and less proscribed, interpretation. Synchresis in audio-visual collage is a blatant trick that works.

At other moments, Cocteau layered multiple sounds, carefully putting each one into place, collage-like. In a short scene showing the Poet waking up, different

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461 Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 492.
463 Birkenmaier, ‘From Surrealism to Popular Art,’ p. 370.
sounds and images are combined in a way that is loosely symbolic, and capable of being partially deciphered like heraldry or a puzzle, reminiscent of the film's opening intertitle that ‘every poem is a coat of arms, it must be deciphered.’ We see Rivero asleep, false eyes painted on his lids. An abrupt sound and image edit takes us to a mask revolving on a black background, while engine noise, perhaps a car, is heard, shortly joined by some whistles. Cocteau's voiceover declaims ‘the next morning’ and a cockerel crows.

The sound effects chosen are broadly identifiable yet non-specific. The cock and the whistles connote daybreak. The engine suggests a machine, but not a specific one, and is only loosely related to the motion of the mask. The whistles are recognisable as such, but we cannot identify them as, say, factory, train or toy whistles. In the descriptive screenplay, published later, Cocteau described this sound collage as ‘swallows, a train hurtling past, cocks crowing’; when viewing the film, however, only the cock crow is unequivocally identifiable. This sound also tangentially connotes Cocteau's name, one of several similar puns in this film and across his work. While each element is partially decipherable, connoting different sources and ideas, the whole composite still remains ambiguous, ‘thickened’ by the superimposition of sounds and images not placed together. Rather than asynchronous counterpoint, which draws attention to the difference between sound and image, even ironic distance, these combinations create hybrid audio-visual moments, new composites via synchresis and layering, rather than familiar representations or comedic substitution. We are back in the terms of Chion's ‘true free counterpoint,’ poetically expanding the scene's potential meaning, rather than contradicting it with contrast or dissonance.

The audio-visuals of Le Sang d'un poète exemplify the combinatory techniques underlying collage, approaching sight and sound as elements that can be reconfigured into new, convincing representations of imaginary experiences. The leaps in and out of the mirror particularly illustrate the ways in which Cocteau's methods exploited audio-visual synchresis to produce moments of genuine surprise, jolting us out of our bearings, bringing the disruption and contradiction associated

464 Translation taken from DVD subtitles.
465 Man Ray previously used this motif in Emak Bakia.
466 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, p. 17.
467 For instance, schoolboy Dargelos is called the ‘coq de la classe.’
468 Chion, Audio-Vision, p. 38.
with the Surrealist ‘marvellous’. In Cocteau's film, sound and image fragments do stick together, however different their sources, in tricks that enhance a heightened sur-realism. Arbitrary, or poetically associated, sounds and images form composites in the manner proposed by Fondane, stimulating the intense spectatorship Thompson identified in experimental asynchrony, and expressing the ‘free counterpoint’ of Chion. In my next case study I return to L'Âge d'or, the other sound film funded by de Noailles in 1930, to investigate a slightly different take on audio-visual collage and asynchrony.

**L’Âge d'or: the Bird, the Bark, and the Bell**

*L’Âge d'or* has been praised for its impressive use of asynchronous sound effects that accentuate its surreal effect. Paul Hammond however, plays devil's advocate, asking if its audio-visuals are as innovative as is often suggested. This scepticism is important, asking us to wonder if we are too keen to label attributes as surreal just because the filmmakers were Surrealists? Although authors including Jean-Michel Bouhours and Rashna Wadia Richards laud the film's asynchronous soundtrack, in practice off-screen effects were rather frequent in early sound films, varying from overheard music in *Der blaue Engel* to the off-screen donkey brays of *In Old Arizona* (Cummings, 1928). Hammond's opinion is that only an exhaustive review of every French sound film from 1930 would tell us, an impossible task, not least due to the number of lost films. My own more modest surveying of early sound cinema, from France and beyond, leads me to conclude that at certain times the sound effects in *L'Âge d'or* differentiate themselves from contemporary uses of asynchrony, whether that be the lightly naturalistic asynchrony of characters talking with their back to camera in early Jean Renoir talkies such as *On purge bébé* (*Baby's Laxative*, Renoir, 1931), or asynchronous overlays of machine noise, as heard in *La Petite Lise* (*Little Lise*, Grémillon, 1930) or the finale of *Vampyr* (Dreyer, 1932).

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469 Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53; Thompson, ‘Early Sound Counterpoint.’ p. 120; Chion, *Audio-Vision*, p. 38.
470 Hammond, *L’Âge d’or*, p. 35.
472 Hammond, *L’Âge d’or*, p. 35.
During the garden scenes in *L'Âge d'or*, in between the orchestral Wagner and the blasts of the Calanda drums, before and after the strange dialogue delivered in voiceover, we hear commonplace sound effects signifying 'garden,' such as birdsong or gravel crunching underfoot. These moments, in which the film does not function like a silent movie with musical accompaniment, step into a more believable mode of representation, within a film that constantly toys with narrative codes. Apparently simplistic, the introduction of birdsong complicates an already bizarre situation. An orchestra tunes up, the audience murmurs, while we hear bird chirrups accompanying Lys and Modot's peculiar embraces. In an arbour, they suck and chew each other's fingers, with alternating close ups revealing their eye-rolling grimaces of delight.\(^{473}\) Although the sound is undeniably a birdcall, there is a sideways connotation of whistling with fingers. A close up shows Modot's hand stroking Lys's face, but with his fingers now missing, only the thumb remaining. This image, suggestive of castration, seems characteristic of Dalí, who had considerable input in planning this scene and was keen to represent sensation, including tactility. The final sound effects are tamer, less bodily focused, than his recommendations were, such as that we should hear pissing in this scene, followed by audible kissing. To Dalí it was important that audio-visual combinations in this scene composed what he called a 'terribly sensual poetry.'\(^{474}\)

A popular Movietone short sound film from 1928 showed George Bernard Shaw in a garden, talking to camera. According to Alexander Walker, much was made at the time of its natural sounds, with critics picking out ‘the very crunch of his feet on the gravel path in his garden’ and ‘the English birdsong.’\(^{475}\) Coincidentally, similar sounds are heard in *L'Âge d'or's* garden, perhaps (though we can't be certain) added during the post-production sonorisation at the Tobis Studios in June 1930, either recorded live, or just possibly using an early pre-recorded sound effects library.\(^{476}\) Although Shaw's address was completely unrelated to *L'Âge d'or*,

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473 Hammond suggests this scene glosses the disturbing scene of finger biting in *Greed* (von Stroheim, 1924); Hammond, *L'Âge d'or*, p. 46.
474 ‘Dans la scène d'amour avant d'éteindre la lumière on doit entendre pisser (un bruit de bidet, eau) dans l'urinoir; pendant longtemps et 2 ou 3 plus brefs, puis on entend le bruit du baisé, etc.; tout cela avec la femme belle, excitante, le jardin, etc., sera d'une poésie terriblement sensuelle.’ Salvador Dalí to Luis Buñuel, undated, in Buñuel, *L’Âge d’or: correspondance*, p. 54, my translation.
(despite Shaw's physical similarity to the stout conductor who arrives up the garden path in the latter film) the detail shows how both films shared a common language of popular early sound references, something that Buñuel and Dalí's approach exploited, efficiently constructing an acceptable audio-visual 'realism' for their own purposes.

Using birdsong as an atmospheric background was not unusual, and its asynchronous use also reflects its everyday presence as an acousmatic sound. But in *L'Âge d'or*, during a night-time scene, it feels like a slightly incongruous shorthand signifier for 'outside.' It dominates the auditory field, a ‘territory sound’ in Chion's term, giving definition to the space.\(^\text{477}\) It intensifies our experience of the images, augmenting the potential expressiveness, as Pudovkin would say, or enriching the images with ‘added value’ in Chion's terms.\(^\text{478}\) The incongruity of the juxtaposition ‘thickens’ the image, in Fondane's terminology, or ‘roughens’ perception in Kristin Thompson's, both ways of saying it complicates meaning.\(^\text{479}\)

Elisabeth H. Lyon identified in Buñuel's films a systematic use of *faux-raccords* (false matches) to achieve dissociative visual effects.\(^\text{480}\) She described edits that violated continuity while still using conventional devices that imply the opposite, such as eye line matches. I propose that Buñuel and Dalí used audio-visual *faux-raccords*, which Lyon's phrase ‘sound-image dissociation’ hinted at without elaboration. *Un Chien andalou*'s doorbell and cocktail shaker sequence, and *L'Âge d'or*'s combination of birdsong over finger biting are both examples of audio-visual false matches. Falseness between sound and image, or the impossibility of a perfect match, was central to this audio-visual approach, distinct from much contemporary asynchronism.

The birdsong is certainly acousmatic, Chion's influential neologism for off-screen sound. With no synch point or visual anchor the sound stays adrift, tangentially associated with the lovers. Christian Metz prefigured Chion's acousmatic theory when he discussed the separateness of sounds and images in his 1975 essay ‘Aural Objects.’ Here he observed that ‘the aural source is an object, the sound itself a “characteristic”’.\(^\text{481}\) As soon as a source is attributed, a sound's


\(^{478}\) Pudovkin, ‘Asynchronism as a Principle of Sound Film,’ p. 86; Chion, *Audio-Vision*, p. 221.

\(^{479}\) Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53; Thompson, ‘Early Sound Counterpoint,’ p. 120.

\(^{480}\) Lyon, ‘Luis Buñuel,’ p. 48.

\(^{481}\) Metz, ‘Aural Objects,’ p. 156.
qualities are no longer independent but become descriptive of an originating object. Metz adds that conscious recognition of a sound without subsequent connection to a source object produces a vague ‘feeling of a first identification, of a still incomplete recognition.’ Without successful allocation of the aural object ‘mystery or suspense’ remains.\(^{482}\) Both Chion and Metz perceived that successful sound-image matching provides satisfaction, closing a (sometimes uncomfortable) suspense in a process Chion calls ‘de-acousmatization.’\(^{483}\) But the effect in \textit{L'Âge d'or} is different to comparable period uses of acousmatic birdsong, for instance in \textit{Odna}, in which birdsong forms part of an audio-visual collage with music and street sounds drifting through an open window as a woman wakes. In \textit{L'Âge d'or} we don't get such clues, and the boundaries between objective and imaginary diegesis are hazy. It is ambiguous because, although easy to identify, it seems arbitrarily related to the screen. Do we situate the birdcall in the dark garden or in the thoughts of the lovers? Or is it a non-diegetic sound? Without visual pointers, all and none are correct, and the sound occupies what Robynn J. Stilwell calls ‘the fantastical gap’ between diegetic and non-diegetic sound.\(^{484}\) This liminal effect can have a disorientating effect, shifting spectatorship between objective and subjective.\(^{485}\)

\textit{L'Âge d'or}'s mirror scene is one of the most celebrated moments in Surrealist cinema. Many critics have eulogised it, referring to its poetry while attacking other avant-garde films for being too poetic.\(^{486}\) For Aranda, ‘natural sounds take on poetic qualities,’ while to Kyrou it was ‘the most perfect example of the meeting of cinema and surrealism... the most magnificently poetic sequence in the history of film.’\(^{487}\) But how does this scene, whose soundtrack Richards describes as unreasonable, destabilizing, and portraying ‘a world that is fragmented and unsynched,’ actually differ from the ‘non-fidelity’ audio Thompson has observed in early Soviet sound film?\(^{488}\) The rare instances of experimental ‘intellectual montage’ Thompson identifies, such as gunshots accompanying falling church spires in \textit{Entuziazm}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{482}{Metz, ‘Aural Objects,’ p. 155.}
\footnote{483}{Chion, \textit{The Voice in Cinema}, p. 27.}
\footnote{485}{Stilwell, ‘The Fantastical Gap,’ p. 192.}
\footnote{486}{For Surrealist attacks on avant-garde cinema, see Georges Hugnet, ‘La Perle,’ in Virmaux and Virmaux, \textit{Les Surréalistes et le cinéma}, p. 191; Desnos, ‘ Cinéma d'avant-garde.’}
\footnote{487}{Aranda, \textit{Luis Buñuel}, p. 83; Kyrou, \textit{Luis Buñuel}, p. 27.}
\footnote{488}{Richards, ‘Unsynched,’ pp. 31-32; Thompson, ‘Early Sound Counterpoint,’ p. 122.}
\end{footnotes}
(Enthusiasm, Vertov, 1931), or inconsistently alternating sounds during a telephone call in Odna, used asynchrony to enhance narrative interpretation. They used off-screen sound that would still have been possible to hear in the space surrounding the frame. In L’Âge d’or’s mirror scene, the sounds heard are also (mostly) related to visible sources, but they do not co-exist in the same onscreen space. Each sound ‘originates’ in a separate location, and they are combined via audio-visual collage: a dog bark from a far away street, wind from within the mirror, a bell from a cow that has left the room, all mixed in with a non-diegetic orchestra. Acutely, and concretely, several film spaces combine into one audio-visual composite, reflective of the film's deliberate spatial and temporal transgressions.

The entire scene lasts less than three minutes, and is entirely without dialogue, using only layered post-synchronised sounds. Lys enters her lavish bedroom to finds a cow upon her bed. Annoyed, she silently mouths to the cow to scram. As in silent films, we see lips move but hear no words. Instead, we hear the cow's bell clanging (with loose synchronisation). Focus on this isolated sound anchors our attention to the cow's presence throughout. It foregrounds the cow's presence, which is an eruption of ‘the marvellous’ into normality, more firmly than that of the other people or objects. Lys urges the cow again, and it stands on the bed, the jangling bell emphasising its precarious position. The sound stretches across alternate shots of the cow and Lys's reaction. When the cow jumps we hear a thump, and sense the heavy presence of the animal more than the soundless woman. She pushes the cow out of the room, bell continually ringing, but the heavy door shuts noiselessly.

Lys crosses the room to her dressing table, the bell still as audible. Bell sounds are associated with sexuality in several of Buñuel's later films, including Belle de jour (Buñuel, 1967) and Tristana (Buñuel, 1970). His Catholic upbringing in small town Spain was punctuated by the rhythms of church bells, and the use of bells in this scene has a similarly pervasive background quality, forming the first audio layer in a daydream.489 Lys sits and buffs her nails. The original shooting script described a face of great serenity, as if lost in a vague dream, also specifying

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489 Buñuel, My Last Sigh, p. 8.
slowness.490 This resembles *Un chien andalou*'s scenario, which described the female character smiling angelically, oblivious to surroundings, as if hearing distant religious music.491

We cut to Modot walking down a street, flanked by two policemen, past tall railings. The bells continue over this image too, blurring spatial distinctions, making it unclear whether or not this image is in Lys's imagination. Cut back to Lys looking towards camera (at an off-screen mirror) clasping her hands and bandaged finger. A dog bark is heard. Added to the continuing bells it opens out the cinematic space beyond the shot. Comments made by Cavalcanti towards the end of the decade indicate just how commonplace, yet suggestive, this particular sound effect was:

I have a bit of dog-barking in my sound library which I sometimes stick into the track when I wish to suggest the open air, and a pleasant, gay atmosphere. It is almost essential that there should be no dog on the screen, or the effect is lost, because then suggestion becomes statement.492

As the script suggests, Lys is visibly emotional when she ‘hears’ the barking. Almost immediately, violin tremolos begin, quietly playing a fragment of Wagner, *Siegfried's Waldweben* (‘Forest Murmurs’). Wagner's music, as previously discussed, suggests the lovers' desire, but also connotes its operatic context of a hero contemplating the sounds of nature. The music helps glue the intermittent, separate sounds of the bell and the bark into an aural composite. Rather than the ‘discordant union’ Richards suggests, the sounds combine in an unusual arrangement of music and sound with harmonious, not clashing, results.

Then (to paraphrase Cavalcanti) suggestion does become statement, as we cut to the street to see two dogs barking beyond the railings. The unattributed sound has been grounded, or de-acousmatized, to specific dogs. But the whole audio-visual collage of bells, barks and violins still remains highly suggestive, because none of these sounds share diegetic screen space. The men stop to look at the dogs, and we cut to a close-up of a dog through railings and wire mesh, followed by a corresponding shot of Modot. We then see Lys biting her lip with ardour. Returning to the men we hear a new sound in the mix, a loud wind not visibly indicated.

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492 Cavalcanti, ‘Sound in Films,’ p. 36.
Cutting back to Lys in semi-profile close-up we see her with windblown hair and clothes. Wind was used in the background of various early sound films, such as The Old Dark House (Whale, 1932), or indeed Rapt (aka The Kidnapping, Kirsanoff, 1934), scripted by Fondane, in which, despite the latter's preference for distorted and arbitrary sound, a diegetic storm is imitated by orchestral instruments.

All four sounds are now in place, and the camera pulls back to reveal Lys's point of view: a dressing-table mirror, surrounded by perfume bottles and a vase of flowers. The mirror's surface shows clouds moving slowly across the sky, nothing else except the bottles' reflections. The flowers move, suggesting a breeze blows from within the mirror. The audio track is a composite, constructed slowly in layers, with sounds from different diegetic spaces assembled into a single audio-visual collage. In close-up, Lys slowly turns towards the mirror, and then comes the climactic image shot from behind her, clouds visible in the mirror, slowly moving across in the wind. This moment, Hammond suggests, ‘explicitly evokes Breton's definition of le merveilleux as a zephyr at the temples.' In a final close up, Lys rests her forehead on the mirror, the camera panning with her, the edge of her reflection visible, her hair windswept as she gazes into the distance.

It is unusual to find such a carefully composed audio-visual collage of both musical and non-musical elements within the early sound period, especially in blatant disregard of spatial rules, carrying sound across geographic distances. This scene carefully showcases the audio-visual effect of layering different recognisable sounds with images, bound together with a musical layer, to convey a heightened effect. Each additional sonic layer expands the scene beyond the confines of the shot, not juxtaposed sequentially as with visual montage, but in simultaneity, similar to Fondane's concept of auditory superimpositions. Potential connotations increase with each layer, encouraging less guided interpretation. Matthews claims that the essential role of Surrealist collage was to present unexpected encounters and ‘dispose of apparent contradictions and discrepancies,’ which I would argue this audio-visual combination achieves. This short scene registers impurity and confusion, the extraordinary disorientation Louis Aragon attributed to collage and to

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493 Hammond, L’Âge d'or, p. 35.
494 Chion, Audio-Vision, p. 66; Fondane, ‘From Silent to Talkie,’ p. 53.
‘the marvellous,’ through strategies of audio-visual superimpositions and juxtaposition.496

L’Âge d’or’s use of sound effects may not in fact be the most radical example in Dada/Surrealism-related film, and its reputation for audio-visual uniqueness may occasionally be exaggerated in comparison to other related films from the period. It is, however, demonstrable that at moments in the film, sound effects are placed into unusual, stimulating combination with the visuals. Sound effects throughout the film are always recognisable, even banal, but are not always combined with their expected visual or narrative counterpart, but instead placed into fresh encounters, believable yet strange. They are juxtaposed with images to create new scenes that convey unconventional extra-narrative information. In the case of the mirror scene, sound and image have been carefully combined in a characteristically collage-like composition, all the while undermining rational cinematic conventions of space and logic. As has been already demonstrated with the musical elements of its soundtrack, L’Âge d’or’s real audio-visual innovation was not the noises themselves, but their applications.

**Audio-Visual Manipulation**

The following section explores my second proposed category, audio-visual manipulation. It discusses films whose sound underwent significant restructuring, alteration or editing before combination with the visual images. If the concept of audio-visual combination pushes against a received idea of collage as purely visual juxtaposition, then audio-visual manipulation pushes further still, to notice collage techniques within the soundtrack material itself. It challenges the frequent, and erroneous, claims of major film theorists, including Béla Balázs, and Metz, who considered sound on film to be a perfect copy of an original sound, or even regarded it as still being the actual unchanged sound itself.497 A statement such as Balázs’s ‘there is no difference in dimension and reality between the original sound and the recorded and reproduced sound’ confuses the listening experience with the

496 Aragon, *Les Collages*, p. 41.
497 Béla Balázs, ‘Theory of the Film: Sound’; Metz, ‘Aural Objects,’ both in Weis and Belton, *Film Sound*. 
mechanical processes of sound recording and reproduction. When it comes to films with overtly, even purposefully, modified sound, such assertions seem inadequate.

Cut and paste audio-visual approaches as found in Dada/Surrealism-related cinema reject fidelity and realism as cinema's primary goals, concepts which came to dominate late 1930s and 1940s film criticism, especially in France. Treating sound and image as separate and pliable not only holds on to 1920s, montage-based, principles of cinematic flexibility, but it can also express fragmented experience, changeability and surprise, and the potential irruption of disorder into everyday experience. Audio can be edited and manipulated as adeptly as visuals.

Walter Benjamin encapsulated Dada's brazen challenge to spectatorship in ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,’ observing that:

from an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. It promoted a demand for the film, the distracting element of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator.

Benjamin's interpretation of Dada, cited more recently by Elsaesser, remains highly relevant in understanding Surrealism/Dada-related cinema. Both authors agree that Dada film has an essential vitality, which assails the spectator while self-reflexively drawing attention to its own created status. The films I discuss below prioritise sensation over narrative or believability, by means of audio-visual modification. Recorded sound is treated as a material for play, able to be cut and pasted as in a collage, but also altered and reconfigured in surprising ways.

I begin my discussion with the short films Hans Richter made during the early sound era, critiquing their innovative, flexible audio-visual approach, which I argue should be considered as more important in Richter's work overall. My second case study is Len Lye, and the extraordinary, energetic films he made in the mid 1930s with the help of his sound editor, Jack Ellit. While Lye's work has achieved some degree of recognition, the ground-breaking audio-visual approach of these films has been underestimated. My analysis provides a new perspective, revealing

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498 This approach to cinematic realism was apparent in the influence of André Bazin, from the 1940s onwards. See André Bazin, What is Cinema? Vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1967).


several of their soundtracks to be very early examples of musical remixing, a process whose origins are commonly assumed as much later than the 1930s.

**Hans Richter – ‘The Sound Film Starts...Everything Turns, Everything Revolves’**

So reads the opening title of *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich*, Hans Richter's first sound film, and one of Germany's first. It announces its audio status boldly, heralding a showcase of audio-visual playfulness. Richter was one of avant-garde cinema's most prominent figures in both pre-war Europe and post-war USA. An important Dada practitioner and chronicler, he was also a film teacher and essayist, as well as graphic artist and collagist.

His films include the abstract *Rhythmus* animations, begun in 1921, *Filmsstudie* (1926), which Richter called 'rather more Surrealist' for its inclusion of non-abstract imagery, and the magical absurd comedy *Vormittagsspuk* (1928), all of which Elsaesser calls 'uncontested Dada films’ while at the same time admitting no Dada chronology stretches that far. Richter's other films include *Every Day* (originally *The Daily Round*, 1929, completed 1969), produced for a London Film Society workshop in collaboration with Len Lye, Basil Wright and Eisenstein; introductory shorts for mainstream features, including *Inflation* (1928) and *Rennsymphonie* (*Race Symphony*, 1928); advertising films including *Zweigroschenzauber* (*Two-Pence Magic*, 1930) made for the Cologne Illustrated News; three films made for Philips Radio in the 1930s, and design exhibition commissions such as *Das neues Leben* (*New Living*, 1930). These works do not neatly fit art and film history chronologies, and are often, unfairly, overlooked.

Richter's films bridge Dada and Surrealism in style and chronology, exemplified in *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1947), a portmanteau feature that involved luminaries from both movements, including Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Fernand Léger and Man Ray, and justifies my looser attribution of Dada/Surrealism-related film.

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501 This is the intertitle at the start of the film. All specific references to Richter's films in this thesis refer to versions available on *Hans Richter: Early Works* (Re:Voir, 2008), DVD.
The films made over the transition period reveal Richter's unorthodox and sophisticated, approach to asynchronism, which treated the audio track as flexibly as the rapid visual montage. As mentioned earlier, some of these sound versions are later sonorisations, often undated, and cannot be accurately historically placed in relation to either the early sound era or Richter's oeuvre. But the techniques demonstrated in *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich*, a verified transition era film, are suggestive of his early interest in audio-visual experimentation, and connect with similar audio-visual collage techniques demonstrated in the (possibly later) sonorisations.

As mentioned in chapter two, Richter was very interested in sound film, and considered music essential to avant-garde film. Filmmaker Cecile Starr, a close colleague of Richter's and sole custodian of his films since 1972, confirmed this in a personal interview, in which she stressed Richter's commitment to sound, telling me that he asked her to recall circulating silent copies of his films in order to replace them with sound versions. Starr also recalled Richter's habit of making use of whatever audio material was accessible and convenient, including pre-recorded sound effects and music. Claiming that Richter insisted that silent cinema was a fallacy, Starr insisted that he attempted to use sound whenever possible, and she estimated that his films were sonorised sometime after his emigration to the USA in the 1940s.

Along with *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich*, these sonorised works (originally dating from the transition era) provide bold examples of soundtrack innovation, showcasing overt audio manipulations equal to their visual counterparts. At turns both anti-psychological and realistic, magical and factual, they demonstrate a malleable approach to audio-visuals, and the playfulness of Dada/Surrealism-related film. In all cases, sound has been post-synchronised, a method Richter continued using throughout his filmmaking career, even as late as *Dreams That Money Can Buy*.

*Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich* was commissioned by Tobis-Klangfilm, the major German sound film company created by merger the previous year, to showcase their new technology, the only preconditions being that the firm's name be

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504 Velguth, ‘Notes on the Musical Accompaniment to the Silent Films,’ p. 91.
shown onscreen, and the audio quality be the best possible.\footnote{Hofacker, ‘Richter's Films and the Role of the Radical Artist,’ p. 140.} The existing three minute version is possibly not the entire film, as is the case with much of Richter's other Weimar era work. It has been suggested that its original length ran to fifteen minutes, and that some eight minute fragments, 16 mm copies of the original 35mm, have survived Nazi confiscation.\footnote{According to European film portal Lost Films, the fragments are held in the Frankfurt's Deutsches Filminstitut and Berlin's Deutsche Kinemathek; <https://www.lost-films.eu/films/show/id/1407> [accessed 28 January 2017].}

After the film's opening intertitle announcement that “the sound film starts,” another follows with the film's theme: ‘the country fair seen as a valse of the amusement machines.’ The film contains no further intertitles, and no dialogue, apart from one barely audible ‘bravo.’ Walter Gronostay's musical score plays three ascending chords over these intertitles, then turns and revolves itself – it plays in reverse for the remainder of the opening credits. A similar effect was used by Maurice Jaubert in his acclaimed score for Zéro de conduite (Vigo, 1933), where reversed music accompanies a breath-taking slow-motion scene of a dormitory parade.\footnote{Jaubert apparently achieved this strange effect by recording the melody, then rerecording it backwards, and then transcribing this backwards version for the musicians to play; Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, pp. 138-39.} Both Inflation and Every Day used the strategy of altering the music, this time its speed, to convey absurd acceleration in parallel with the visuals. In the former, the theme of currency devaluation, shown onscreen in numerical terms, is enhanced by increasingly rapid visual edits and speeded up footage, while a jolly waltz soundtrack increases over the course of three minutes from an artificially slowed pace to an increasingly faster and higher pitch, until its ridiculous speed makes it sound like a merry-go-round as out-of-control as the economy.

Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich's opening makes it apparent that the amusement machine is now capable of turning both sound and vision upside down. It is a film about a fairground show, a carnival of illusions inside a tent, with magic transmitted via audible and visual tricks. We are invited back to the world of early cinema, to the forebears of fantastic film as stated by Richter in his book The Struggle for the Film: ‘the fairground, the waxworks museum, the conjuring display and the circus,’ a theme also explored in Zweigroschenzauber.\footnote{Hans Richter, The Struggle for the Film, trans. Ben Brewster (Aldershot: Wildwood Press, 1986), p. 53.} Tom Gunning's much-cited phrase the ‘cinema of attractions,’ referring to cinema's sideshow and
amusement park origins, describes films that solicited spectator attention, incited curiosity, and supplied pleasure via frequent spectacle, often by use of cinematic tricks or manipulations such as slow motion, reverse motion, substitution or multiple exposure. As noted earlier in relation to Cocteau's work, there had been a contemporary resurgence of interest among the avant-garde in trucage or trick films, specifically the work of Méliès. Later critics of Surrealist cinema, including Kyrö and Hammond, would praise Méliès's tricks as successful representations of the ‘marvellous’ through the 'spectacular irruption' of the irrational. Richter was a keen admirer, devoting several pages of The Struggle for the Film to Méliès and the fantastic film, with his plans to collaborate with him on a version of Baron Munchausen only halted by Méliès's death in 1938. Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich presents cinema as an ‘amusement machine’ through the frame of the ‘country fair,’ fulfilling the role of the cinema of attractions, complete with the ‘constant bowing and gesturing of conjurors.’

After the opening intertitle the image itself swirls round, and we hear a sustained, ambiguously sourced high-pitched noise, perhaps orchestral, immediately followed by another ambiguous sound, without contextual clues. It sounds possibly mechanical, perhaps amplified or manipulated ground noise from the filmstrip or the gramophone needle, or even a frequency-altered environmental sound. Panning over a man's face, we see footage of people passing by, speeded up and in multiple exposures. It cuts to a man dressed like a magician or ringmaster. He raises his arms, and suddenly silence interrupts. We return to the speeded up crowd, and the image abruptly freezes. The costumed man points his baton off-screen, and the silence is broken by music. From the beginning, sounds and images are constantly toyed with, shown as conjuring tricks. It sets a scene of the magician as representative of the filmmaker, with ourselves like the audience depicted onscreen.

From this point Gronostay's score takes priority, and is entertaining but unexceptional. Following the audience into the tent we see a fantastical circus show, with Méliès-like trick effects generating ‘staged’ illusions, such as a man splitting in

511 Hammond, Marvellous Méliès, p. 8.
half and a lady appearing inside him, or a man walking up the wall and across the ceiling, enhanced throughout by standard avant-garde devices such as slow-motion and superimposition. Gronostay's brass and flute led carnivalesque music closely follows the visuals, its tempo scurrying up and down, or punctuating the visual tricks, enhancing tension and pace. At the end of the show we hear applause, and then a fight breaks out, accompanied by rapid brass, xylophone and high woodwind. We watch people thrown out of the tent and vanishing, before seeing the end title revolving again, and hearing the three note brass motif repeating.

Richter's subsequent sonorised films continued to develop the use of edited, manipulated and deliberately obscure sound. In Zweigroschenzauber sounds start and stop with conspicuous punctuating edges similar to the visible edges in Dada photomontage. We hear noises that can leave us uneasy due to both incomplete identification and loose synchresis. We hear a crowd murmur when we see a man with a magical telescope, but the sound is not like the stock sound effect of a crowd as heard in the Majorcan sequences of L'Âge d'or or even in Richter's own Rennsymphonie. This murmuring is odd, unsettling. It has been manipulated in some way, either slowed down or reversed. Sound effects are foregrounded rather than integrated into the film, and characteristics of the noises themselves are valued over the possible signification of any ‘aural objects.’ Sound's ability to unsettle through unfamiliarity takes precedence over clarity of information.

Zweigroschenzauber's audio-visual approach is extraordinarily ambitious, and uses a variety of sounds including drums, bells, music, and vocals, but also noises and howls that are hard to identify, and draw attention to their own presence, exemplified in a sequence that begins fifty-nine seconds in. After a series of shots showing sinister shadow figures, accompanied by rhythmic music, we hear a quick noise, like a fast train, and after one second the sound changes to something similar but still unidentifiable—perhaps treated applause, or banging objects—while onscreen a shot of a woman diving dissolves to an aeroplane in flight. Then a short, grating blast of machine or white noise precedes the image of two well-to-do gentlemen meeting in the street. A close-up of them shaking hands dissolves to boxing gloved hands shaking, cutting to images of boxing, themselves intercut with shots of a kissing couple. At the instant the gentlemen shake hands we suddenly hear

514 Some of these visual effects are similar to those in Le Sang d'un poète, such as the little girl taking ‘flying lessons.’
an animal roar (perhaps a lion), suggestively bestial and aggressive, reminiscent of Marcel Janco's claim that Dada made ‘good citizens roar like lions.’ A second later we hear echo-laden monkey calls as the visuals turn to boxing. The kissing is accompanied by a punctuating, attacking, mechanical noise. In this dense sequence both the visual and audio montage is complex, following unpredictable or associative leaps that subvert expectations, ‘picture rhymes’ as the opening credits calls them – woman in flight to aircraft, business to fighting to sex.

Although there is no discovered documentation to identify these sounds and their treatments, one can speculate on the apparent extensive use of audio effects such as pitch alteration, reverb (echo), frequency modification, reverse playback, as well as the underlying cut and paste methods underlying their use. Sonic malleability is exposed as much as visual manipulation, expressing the fundamentals of Dada cinema identified by Elsaesser: fascination with the mechanisms of cinema, self-reflexivity, and a tendency to ‘always manipulate the materials of technical reproduction.’

The complex, manipulated sounds do not cohere with the images, but bring in further diverse and diffuse connotations of animals and machines. The audio-visual collage effect is not like that of the sound-image compositions we have already observed in the work of Cocteau or Buñuel and Dalí, nor those in the most inventive mainstream combinations of the time, such as the audio-collage of high-pitched continuous sonorous tones, heartbeats, grunts and gasps, and fragments of remembered speech during the striking transformation scene of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Mamoulian, 1931). Richter attempts to edit and structure sound on a par with his visual montage, and perhaps in this way is one of the most developed examples of the ‘hammer-and-tongs’ audio-visual montage proposed in the 1928 ‘Statement on Sound,’ certainly more overt here than in Eisenstein and Alexandrov's own *Romance Sentimentale* (*Sentimental Romance*, Alexandrov and Eisenstein, 1930).

From his early experimentations with visual counterpoint in the *Rhythmus* films, right up until his late sonorisation of *Every Day*, Richter was committed to audio-

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visual counterpoint and asynchrony, asserting that ‘the principle of counterpoint is not limited to music.’

In Richter's hands, while on occasion part of a film's ‘essay’ message as in *Every Day* or *Inflation*, sound is frequently used to confuse rather than clarify a point, to produce sensations and vague associations rather than define conclusions.

It is in this that the Dada/Surrealism approach comes through the strongest, in the use of audio as a method of sensational ‘ballistics,’ to challenge or unsettle. The rapid, unassimilated use of sound as another layer of montage relates more to the less integrated display methods of Dada collage and photomontage, which Richter also practised, rather than the subversive illusions of Surrealist collage.

While lacking the information to accurately date the soundtracks for all of Richter's films, the nascent presence of audio trickery in *Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich* suggests an early interest in using found and manipulated sounds, possibly in advance of the more well-known developments in *musique concrète*. Richter's manipulations of sound fragments and ‘objects’ resemble Pierre Schaeffer's aforementioned comparison of his own methods to Surrealist collage, as well as evoking Stefan Wolpe's Dada experiments with musical playback speed, discussed in chapter one. Chion, himself a former student and colleague of Schaeffer, is unusual among film critics in noticing the proliferation of noise-type sounds within early sound cinema, mentioning the rhythmic, machine-like noises in a wide range of films, including *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* (*The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, Lang, 1933), *Scarface* (Hawks, 1932) and *Kameradschaft* (*Comradeship*, Pabst, 1931). He labels these noises as ‘X’ from Schaeffer's sound classification system, meaning ‘complex iterative sounds... essentially a succession of brief rhythmic beats with no specific pitch’, calling this period ‘the X’ era’.

However, Richter's precocious foregrounding and refusal to visually implicate such

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519 *Every Day* was originally produced by the London Film Society in 1929, with input from Eisenstein, Lye, and Basil Wright. Its extraordinary soundtrack, added later, combined train sounds, tribal chanting, (anachronistic) modern jazz, stock exchange reports, and other noises, with a rhythmic visual montage of the repetitive routines of urban life. Soundtrack information is conflicting; the credits on the version available at the BFI Mediatheque state the sound was completed in 1969 by Hans Richter, with an original score by Robert Naughton (a typographical error for jazz vibraphone player and composer Robert Naughton). However, Jamie Sexton's BFI Screen Online entry claims that although Richter began restoring the film in 1975, its soundtrack was completed after his death the following year, without indicating by whom; *[http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/442332/index.html](http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/442332/index.html)* [accessed 12 November, 2017].
520 Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 42.
sounds went beyond Chion's cited examples, using noise explicitly for disorientation not explanation.

Richter's distinctive use of noise was in part a result of the influence of Italian Futurism upon Dada and the avant-garde. In March 1913 Luigi Russolo's 'The Art of Noises Futurist Manifesto' was published, and over the following years Russolo developed his theories of what the French would call *bruitism* through further writings and the creation of new ‘intonarumori’ or ‘noise instruments,’ which he regularly demonstrated in Paris throughout the 1920s. 521 Richter recalled the presence of one of Russolo's 'noise-organs' in the foyer of Studio 28 alongside pictures by Man Ray, Francis Picabia and Picasso, while Barclay Brown writes that this organ was in great demand at the avant-garde cinema to accompany silent films during the late 1920s and early 1930s. 522

Russolo and his fellow Futurists' embrace of noise for its own sake, as a modern kind of music, had a significant impact on the European avant-garde, especially Dada which found an affinity with its ideas of aural simultaneity and noise music. Richter was upfront about this influence, admitting ‘we had swallowed Futurism – bones, feather and all. It is true that in the process of digestion all sorts of bones and feather had been regurgitated.’ According to Richter, Futurism's ‘distracting sounds of everyday existence’ became screams, sobs, whistles, bells, drums, cowbells, blows on tables, and musical clashes at the Cabaret Voltaire. 523 ‘The Art of Noises’ manifesto contained statements that chime with the later criticisms of imitative sound found in the ‘Statement on Sound.’ However, the Futurist work valued surprise and the unexpected, and its commitment to ambiguity was more in line with Dada/Surrealism-related film:

Noise, however, reaching us in a confused and irregular way from the irregular confusion of our life, never entirely reveals itself to us, and keeps innumerable surprises in reserve... THE ART OF NOISE MUST NOT LIMIT ITSELF TO IMITATIVE REPRODUCTION. 524

Futurist *bruitist* ideas, by way of Dada, resonated in Richter's sound films, which featured noises reminiscent of Russolo's names for his noise instruments, such as ‘howlers,’ ‘low hummers,’ or ‘roarers,’ and his extraordinary descriptions of

‘the rhythmic richness of machines,’ or the ‘low, human howl’ of a storm.⁵²⁵

Existing recordings, and more numerous reconstructions, of Russolo's instruments sound acoustically similar to the unidentified noises in Richter's films described above. In the background of the 1924 recording of ‘Corale’ (‘Chorale,’ 1921), composed by his brother Antonio, Russolo's instrument sounds like animal noises or monster roars, echoing and indistinct. In ‘Risveglio di una città’ (‘Awakening of a City,’ 1977 recording), low-frequency moans and machine-like, train sounds merge with rising pitches halfway between siren, aeroplane take-off and hunting horn.⁵²⁶

Although Brown claims that Russolo's instruments were briefly in cinematic demand during the late 1920s, it is rare to hear these kinds of sounds in films from that time or the years following.⁵²⁷ Richter's confident use of similar quality ‘noise-sounds,’ whenever he may finally have sonorised them, harks back to Dada's noisy experimental streak, and precedes later combinations of ambiguous noises and howls with bizarre imagery in experimental films such as Harry Smith's animation Heaven and Earth Magic (Smith, 1962) or David Lynch's early short The Grandmother (Lynch, 1970).

Richter's fragmented approach to the soundtrack was possibly also affected by the contemporary influence of German experimental radio, called Hörspiel (literally ‘hear play’).⁵²⁸ Pieces like Walter Ruttmann's acclaimed Wochenende (Weekend, 1930), Bertolt Brecht's Der Lindberghflug (The Lindbergh Flight, 1929), or Hans Flesch's Zauberer auf dem Sender: Versuch einer Rundfunkgroteske (Radio Magic or Wizardry on the Air: Attempt at a Radio-Grotesque, 1924) took advantage of sound editing and montage technologies, plundering existing recordings and film stock in the process, in order to create sophisticated medium-specific works that were sometimes referred to as ‘acoustical film.’⁵²⁹ This stylised, anti-theatrical approach, produced some of the most experimental ‘acoustical art’ of the period.⁵³⁰ Accounts of Flesch's broadcast evoke an impression of something not worlds away from Dada, describing ‘a cacophony of arguing voices, urgent whisperings and

⁵²⁵ Russolo, The Art of Noises, pp. 41-47, 75.
⁵²⁶ See Futurism and Dada Reviewed (LTM Recordings, LTMCD 2301, 2000), CD; Musica Futurista: The Art of Noises (LTM Recordings, LTMCD 2401, 2004), CD.
⁵²⁹ Gilfallan, Pieces of Sound, p. 3.
commanding shouts, which quickly devolved into a range of odd noises, ghastly sounds, out of synch instruments, and unsourced music. Richter was aware of Hörspiel works, describing Wochenende as:

a symphony of sound, speech fragments and silence woven into a poem. If I had to choose between all of Ruttmann's works, I would give this one the prize as the most inspired. It re-created with perfect ease in sound the principles of picture poetry which was the characteristic of the absolute film.

Walter Gronostay, Richter's composer for Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich, was also deeply involved in radio, being department chief at Berliner Funkstunde, as well as working on music commissions for Hörspiel. Experimental radio made smaller, but short-lived, inroads within French Surrealism, mainly via Paul Deharme's broadcasting company Phoniric which had involved Alejo Carpentier, Desnos, and Artaud. Deharme's 1928 essay ‘Proposition for a Radiophonic Art’ was unusual in declaring Surrealism to be best suited to an aural medium. The most intact trace remaining of this direction is Desnos's 1938 broadcast, ‘Relation d'un rêve,’ a dream recitative in the style of the earlier Surrealist journals, enhanced by an audio-montage of illustrative sound effects.

The audio-visual tricks of Alles dreht sich, alles bewegt sich and subsequent sound films, especially Zweigroschenzauber, present examples of experimentation with the soundtrack as a separate, alterable element, an approach which reflected not only early sound cinema's concerns with counterpoint and asynchrony, but also Dada and Surrealist collage techniques, treating visuals and sounds as so many fragments open to modification. It is also arguable that the network of influences was even more complex, taking in sonic ideas from Futurism by way of Dada, as well as from experimental radio. Despite evidence of his own

531 Cory, ‘Soundplay,’ p. 71.
536 During the 1930s Desnos and Carpentier produced both standard and Surrealism-inclined radio, most of which is lost, but written evidence remains of shows such as ‘La Clé des songes,’ (‘The Key to Dreams’) which analysed listeners' dreams, or ‘Du coq à l'âne’ (‘From Cock to Donkey,’ meaning to jump from one thing to another) where Desnos and Jacques Prévert would improvise nonsense poems; Birkenmaier, ‘ “Proposition for a Radiophonic Art”: Introduction,’ p. 362.
committed interest in his soundtracks, Richter's use of audio-visuals has thus far been a neglected area of study. His commission from Tobis placed him at the forefront of the technological changes during the transition era, indicative of a potentially reciprocal relationship between the mainstream and avant-garde film at that particular point in time. All his films from the transition period and after used post-synchronised sound, and treated audio as flexibility as images, producing an exemplary form of audio-visual collage. Sound was rearranged and modified, turned backwards, chopped up, stretched through reverb, or simply made unrecognisable or hard to match to a source. More than the other filmmakers discussed in this thesis, Richter used sound for its sensational qualities, not its denotational, producing effects of humour, but also confusion and disorientation. His interest in trick films was adapted to embrace sonic trickery, as also seen in Cocteau's work, but here with the hallmarks of Dada filmmaking as identified by Elsaesser – self-reflexivity, interest in the cinematic mechanism, and manipulation of the film materials – working at auditory, as well as visual and narrative, levels.

Len Lye – Remixing the Rainbow

New Zealand artist Len Lye lit up 1930s British cinema like a firework display in a kaleidoscope factory. His most vibrant works, hand-painted films set to lively dance music, commissioned by the GPO or private advertisers, remain some of the most innovative films produced in the UK. A Colour Box (Lye, 1935), Kaleidoscope (Lye, 1935), Rainbow Dance (1936), Trade Tattoo (1937), Colour Flight (Lye, 1938), and Swinging the Lambeth Walk (Lye, 1939) all combined dazzling direct-film animation with infectiously rhythmic soundtracks. These films were developed integrally around contemporary dance music by Cuban bands, including Don Barreto and his Cuban Orchestra, Rico’s Creole Band, and The Lecuona Band

537 All specific references to Lye's films in this thesis refer to versions on Len Lye: Rhythms (Re:Voir Video, 2009), DVD.
538 The GPO Film Unit, originally headed by John Grierson, was established in 1933 to produce General Post Office and communication themed films, albeit loosely. It became the Crown Film Unit in 1939, producing mostly wartime information films.
539 Lye's early films also include Tusalava (Lye, 1929), The Birth of the Robot (Lye, 1936), a puppet animation produced by Humphrey Jennings for Shell Oil, set to Holst’s The Planets, and Nor NW (Lye, 1938), a stylised live-action GPO film whose soundtrack featured Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, Benny Goodman, and Fats Waller.
(also called The Lecuona Cuban Boys), and jazz artists such as Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, and Django Reinhardt.

My case study reappraises how Lye, in close collaboration with his sound editor Jack Ellit (who was succeeded by Ernst Meyer in 1938), created pioneering audio-visuals, extraordinary manipulations of sound and image. It is my belief that certain of these constitute some of the earliest—perhaps even the earliest—examples of audio re-mixing and prototype sampling, which have remained unrecognised as such until now. This flexible approach to the soundtrack, cutting and pasting it into new configurations, is a strong and highly original example of audio-visual collage in the framework of Dada/Surrealism-related film.

Lye’s relationship with Surrealism, indeed any groups, was ambivalent, despite his representation in Surrealism film screenings, exhibitions, and magazines throughout the 1930s. While admiring individual Surrealist artists, such as Joan Miró, who had similar interests in spontaneous, automatic, imagery, in Lye's opinion the constraints of dream representation and psychoanalysis hindered Surrealist engagement with any ‘direct and immediate impulse-feeling’ of colour or sound sensation. Disinterested in exploring a subconscious mediated by language and recognisable forms, he steered clear of what he referred to as the ‘D.W. Griffith technique’ plaguing realist cinema.

An emphasis on physical motion, rhythm and abstraction set Lye apart from any ‘literary’ Surrealist tendencies he criticised. In form and technique, his direct films were perhaps more compatible with Dada cinema than Surrealist films, even though unconnected to that period and movement. Were it not for Lye’s insistence on a Surrealism beyond the literary and representational, it could be argued that his abstract-oriented films have no place in Surrealist film history, that they are the ‘pure cinema’ berated by Robert Desnos. But unlike the mannered formality of Rhythmus or Symphonie diagonale, Lye's jittering films combined spontaneity with

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540 For example, in January 1937 the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, included A Colour Box and Rainbow Dance in their ‘season of surrealist and avant-garde films’; Horrocks, Len Lye, p. 162.
543 Desnos, ‘Cinéma d’avant-garde.’
sensory participation, both valued within Surrealism and Dada, with lashings of the ballistic physicality suggested by Benjamin and Elsaesser.\textsuperscript{544}

Lye's films achieved a rare level of audio-visual synthesis for their time, even compared to animation heavyweights such as Oskar Fischinger, Norman McLaren, or Walt Disney. They have an astonishing audio-visual complexity, faster and tighter than that of most contemporaries, but often using fewer resources. A 1934 \textit{Sight and Sound} article, ‘Sound Rhythm and the Film,’ conducted experiments in ‘constructing films according to the rules of music,’ but admitted it ‘could only be perfect, however, if the composer of the music was also a co-worker on the scenario and, secondly, if the music could be so perfectly synchronised that the time of cutting and time of music corresponded exactly.’\textsuperscript{545} Its author reported the best results when using pre-existing music, discovering ‘an African negro gramophone record of which the rhythm seemed strong enough for a visual rhythmic montage to be fitted to it.’\textsuperscript{546} Lye and Ellit came to similar conclusions by searching through available records—music with strong and constant beats was best suited for close musical-visual synchronisation. They chose Cuban and jazz rhythms for their 1930s works, but later Lye films would be based around African drum recordings, including \textit{Rhythm} (Lye, 1957), \textit{Free Radicals} (Lye, 1958), and \textit{Particles in Space} (Lye, 1967-1971/1979).

It is vital to stress the invaluable contribution Lye's sound editors made to his films, particularly Ellit, credited as in charge of ‘synchronisation’ or ‘music editor,’ and in whose style Meyer followed. Lye's biographer Roger Horrocks points out that while Lye is a rare almost-true auteur among filmmakers, he still needed help with audio-visual synchronisation, which is where Ellit’s ‘exceptionally clear grasp of the way music could be analysed and edited for film purposes’ entered. According to Ellit, a gifted composer and bassoon soloist, Lye was ‘rather tone deaf,’ precluding appreciation of classical music as equals. But Lye adored jazz and other rhythmic styles, and his tastes were directed by rhythm rather than melody—apparently he

\textsuperscript{544} These are identified as Dada characteristics in Inez Hedges, \textit{Languages of Revolt: Dada and Surrealist Literature and Film} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), pp. xiii-xv.
\textsuperscript{545} Ernest J. Borneman, ‘Sound Rhythm and the Film,’ \textit{Sight and Sound}, vol. 3, no. 10 (Summer 1934), p. 66. This presented extracts from research done in conjunction with the German Film Research Institute and Edmund Meisel, composer for \textit{Bronenosets Potemkin} (\textit{Battleship Potemkin}, Eisenstein, 1925) and \textit{Oktyabr} (\textit{October}, Alexandrov and Eisenstein, 1928).
\textsuperscript{546} Borneman, ‘Sound Rhythm and the Film,’ p. 66.
couldn't whistle the simplest tune without mangling it.\textsuperscript{547} Lye and Ellit formed their collaboration around a shared understanding of complex rhythmic music and unconventional attitudes towards audio-visuals.

Ellit was no ordinary sound editor or composer. First meeting Lye in Sydney, later joining him in London, their partnership began with the black and white animation \textit{Tusalava}.\textsuperscript{548} Ellit's score was originally planned for two pianos, but budget constraints limited it to a live score for single piano. He subsequently refused to perform at the premiere, leaving one of London Film Society’s regular pianists to struggle with music described as ‘all rhythms... not a scrap of melody and difficult to follow.’\textsuperscript{549} Significantly, Ellit also held the position at this time as organiser of ‘non-synchronous’ music arrangements (i.e. live gramophone accompaniment) at the Film Society.\textsuperscript{550} During the early 1930s he launched a freelance film and radio audio business, Synchronised Sound Continuity.\textsuperscript{551} Over this decade, Ellit’s compositional interests expanded to found-sound recording using a portable disc recorder, terming ‘Sound Construction’ what would later be called \textit{musique concrète} by more famous composers.\textsuperscript{552} He also explored producing music via hand-drawn images on the optical soundtrack of a filmstrip and it is unclear which came first – Ellit’s hand-made soundtracks or Lye’s hand-painted films.\textsuperscript{553}

After \textit{Tusalava}, the musical soundtrack pre-existed the images, influencing its rhythm. For each film, Lye and Ellit would listen to hundreds of records together before making selections. Lye could not afford his own record player, so was known to spend hours perusing friends’ record collections, even visiting the Decca factory

\begin{footnotesize}
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    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{547} Horrocks, pp. 134, 70.}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{548} Two years in completion, \textit{Tusalava} was part-financed by London Film Society, where it premiered 1 December, 1929; Horrocks, \textit{Len Lye}, p. 93. See also \textit{The Film Society Programmes}, pp. 132-34. Ellit later destroyed his score; Camille Robinson, ‘Light and Rhythm: The Life and Music of Jack Ellit,’ (BA dissertation, University of Melbourne, 2010), p. 4.}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{549} Horrocks, \textit{Len Lye}, p. 93. A later review of \textit{Tusalava} by Oswell Blakeston, whose own experimental film \textit{Light Rhythms} (Blakeston and Bruguière, 1931) Ellit scored, described music which was undoubtedly innovative, but hard to identify as the same score: ‘pianos provide sound for the first section; wire brushes, tap drums, rushing water, crackle of high-frequency current, for the second section’; Oswell Blakeston, ‘Len Lye’s Visuals,’ \textit{Architectural Review}, no. 72 (July 1932).}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{550} \textit{The Film Society Programmes}, p. 303.}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{551} Robinson, \textit{Light and Rhythm}, pp. 26-28.}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{552} ‘In the field of \textit{musique concrète}... he was an important pioneer. Yet he was never to gain much recognition for his work except from a few fellow composers and filmmakers—another example of the selective vision of history which allows so many artists to slip through its net.’ Ellit’s successor, Ernst Meyer, was also an early \textit{musique concrète} practitioner. Horrocks, \textit{Len Lye}, pp. 168-70.}
    \item \footnotesize{\textsuperscript{553} Robinson, ‘Light and Rhythm,’ pp. 13-16. During this period, hand-drawn soundtracks were being created in Germany by Rudolf Pfenninger and Oskar Fischinger, and in the Soviet Union by Nikolai Voinov, Arseny Avraamov, Evgeny Sholpo, but with few known practitioners in Britain.}
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to hear recent releases.\textsuperscript{554} Ellit would make a detailed analysis chart of the recording, working by ear, rather than from score as most film composers would do. The music track was then optically transferred directly to blank film stock, using the British-made Visatone-Marconi sound system, and Lye would add visual cue marks alongside, before painting directly onto the filmstrip.\textsuperscript{555} Lye would respond to the visual translation of the music on the optical soundtrack with all manner of luminous splashes, lines and dots using a medley of tools, including a hairbrush and comb. He worked along the filmstrip itself, crossing frame boundaries, rather than by more typical cel-by-cel and frame-by-frame methods.\textsuperscript{556} This optical transfer of the soundtrack before the visuals is a major difference in their methods, causing the entire film to be structured around music.

For their first GPO commission, \textit{A Colour Box}, they used ‘La Belle créole’ by Don Barreto and his Cuban Orchestra, a popular biguine of the day. \textit{Kaleidoscope}, an advertising film for Churchman’s cigarettes, featured Don Barreto’s ‘Biguine d’amour’, while \textit{Rainbow Dance} (another GPO film) used ‘Tony’s Wife’ by Rico’s Creole Band, who were increasingly popular in Europe. Lye’s last collaboration with Ellit, \textit{Trade Tattoo} (also GPO) was also their most ambitious, featuring five tracks by The Lecuona Band: ‘Pour toi Madona,’ ‘Adieu mon amour,’ ‘La Havane à Paris,’ ‘Anacaona,’ and ‘Conga dans la nuit’ (in order of use).\textsuperscript{557}

A significant aspect of these soundtracks was their deliberate omission of all vocal elements. In many cases, the original recordings had prominent vocal sections, following the standardised jazz structure of instrumental followed by a vocal before an instrumental reprise.\textsuperscript{558} Yet the music on almost all of Lye’s soundtracks is exclusively instrumental, thanks to skilful audio manipulations of his editors. Unlike the pre-existing music uses discussed in chapter two, these recordings aren’t played through linearly, but cut and reconfigured into complex, unique versions. By the

\textsuperscript{554} Horrocks, \textit{Len Lye}, pp. 154-170.
\textsuperscript{555} Horrocks, p. 137.
\textsuperscript{556} Filmstrips as observed at ‘Len Lye: The Body Electric,’ Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, November 2010.
\textsuperscript{557} The Lecuona Band was established by the ‘king of Cuban popular music,’ Ernesto Lecuona, and combined traditional instrumentation with fashionable piano; Western States Folklore Society, ‘Cuban Rhythm,’ \textit{Western Folklore}, vol. 7, no. 2 (April 1948), p. 195. The Lecuona Band were also used for \textit{Colour Flight}.
\textsuperscript{558} The Don Baretto tracks were already instrumental and so received less editing. I have been unable to track down a copy of The Lecuona Band’s ‘Adieu mon amour’ for comparison.
time of *Rainbow Dance* in 1936, and especially *Trade Tattoo* the following year, the soundtracks had become completely cut and paste. Yet the skilful audio editing, presumably done at the stage of the initial optical transfer, left the joins relatively unnoticeable, maintaining full rhythmic continuity. Pragmatically, removing the lyrics freed up interpretative possibilities. It also allowed for easier stretching and truncating of the music in order to fit the film's requirements. Rather than slavishly following the structure set by the vocal, the filmmakers created their own. Cutting up words would have created choppiness, unintelligibility, whereas cutting the music around its metrical structure created a new piece based around rhythm, an early dance remix, extending the best bits to make sure the beat goes on.

This identification is important in several ways. It champions a position for Ellit, Lye, and Meyer as unsung pioneers of audio re-mixing, using strategies decades ahead of their time. Additionally, it is an important example of audio-visual manipulation of early sound film, treating the soundtrack as collage material, which supports my argument that collage was a distinctive audio strategy within Dada/Surrealist-related film. And it challenges presumptions about Lye's films specifically, and Dada/Surrealism-related film more broadly, by suggesting that music and sound played a critical role in both, and brings due attention to the importance of collaboration in an academic avant-garde film culture often disproportionately focused on individual artists.

Upon close examination, the soundtrack of *Rainbow Dance* turns out to be more sophisticated than it first seems. After the opening credits we see a man's silhouette (dancer Rupert Doone) in a stylised London of murky colours. This is all scored with music sympathetic to the visuals. We hear delicate glissando harp, and a pretty flute melody ascends and descends while multi-coloured rainbow arches tumble up and down the screen. A melancholy oboe joins in, with occasional timpani, and a trumpet playing an intermittent major key melody. No indication has been found as to whether this is Ellit’s own music, his interpretation of someone else's composition, or a pre-existing recording by someone else. Only after one minute and ten seconds, when we see the rain stopping, the umbrella put away, and the rainbow appearing, do we hear ‘Tony’s Wife,’ by Rico's Creole Band, starting up.
Mixed in, subtly overlapping the orchestral instruments, we hear a faint Cuban rhythm on the claves and maracas, whose shake suggests steady rainfall.\textsuperscript{559} We hear a completely re-mixed version of ‘Tony's Wife,’ using basic sampling techniques well ahead of their time. The six opening notes of the song are played twice through in immediate succession, unlike the single rendition on the original recording, indicating the phrase has been repeated—looped—during the sound editing procedure. \textit{Rainbow Dance}'s version then skips right ahead into a loop featuring piano, not consecutive in the original recording but in fact taken from later bars immediately preceding the vocals. Ellit cuts on the beat just before singing would start, returning once again to the tune's intro, this time allowing it to continue into the rest of the song.\textsuperscript{560} Through these thirty seconds \textit{Rainbow Dance} has leapt back and forth through the structure of ‘Tony’s Wife,’ cutting and looping, making a re-mix that highlights different rhythmic elements at specific moments. This continues for the whole film, for example during the tennis images that start with another loop of the aforementioned piano phrase. Next Doone jauntily swivels his tennis racquet in time with the music, and when the ball flies across and at the screen, exploding with colour, we hear a muted trumpet melody that actually \textit{precedes} that piano phrase on the original recording.

Lye and Ellit used this technique even more extensively in their next film, \textit{Trade Tattoo}, another GPO commission, whose central concept was the underlying ‘rhythm of trade.’ \textit{Trade Tattoo}’s composite soundtrack was more ambitious than that of \textit{Rainbow Dance}, although its editing was more ‘audible’ on account of its complex synthesis of five separate records. Some degree of continuity existed in all five tracks being by the Lecuona Band, but each with its own distinctive rhythm. The imagery comprised tinted and hand-painted found documentary footage depicting manual work, quickly intercut with direct film images (stencilled and hand-painted) and agile onscreen text.

Once again, music was edited and re-mixed, matching the imagery's urgent pace. Take, for instance, the opening section of the film. We hear the opening bars


\textsuperscript{560} Unfortunately it has been impossible to give accurate time indications of these musical edits, as the audio speed of the only commercially available versions differs from the available digital transfers of the various music tracks. The film's audio is consistently faster and in a slightly higher key, suggesting a change of speed at some stage of the process.
of ‘Pour toi Madona’ at the start, a descending brass chord and rumbling timpani, like a pastiche of conventional opening credits music. But immediately the music skips ahead, entirely missing out the original recording’s slow early section, fast-tracking to where it becomes a frenetic rumba with prominent shakers, a fast bongo solo, and abrupt changes in tempo. Rows of ‘dancing’ stencilled dots, stars, lozenges, and other shapes flow more frequently as the music speeds up; colours change and images of recognisable filmstrip scroll by with the words ‘the rhythm’ written on, faster and faster as the bongo tempo increases. A background of scratched lines wriggles in time to the scratchy beat of some sort of rattling shaker, before swiftly becoming fast-flickering hand-painted flames complementing the visible text ‘furnaces are fired.’ A very short guitar riff is cut and placed with this moment of text, bridging ‘Pour toi madona’ into the full-blown carnival conga of ‘La Havane à Paris.’ The screen becomes a riot of brightly coloured stencilled dots on contrasting backgrounds, hand-painted yellow flames, rhythmic inserts of manipulated footage showing iron processing. Another audio manipulation marks the end of this section – three repeated notes, signalling the vocals on the original recording, play twice over here with an additional silence inserted (like a rest beat) where a cry of ‘hey’ featured on the original track. The audio-visuals then progress into comparatively calmer rhythms, led by the slow rumba of ‘Anacaona.’ And all this happens in just one minute and nineteen seconds.

Deciphering these soundtrack modifications, particularly the small inserts and loops used to bridge certain sections, reveals audio-visual experimentation well ahead of its time, and previously unacknowledged, even in the detailed Lye scholarship by Roger Horrocks, or in the comprehensive studies accompanying the Pompidou Centre exhibition of his work in 2000. Remarkably, they were early ‘dance remixes’ achieved with basic means, long in advance of the magnetic tape or turntable techniques associated with such a practice. Critics of music sampling and remix culture have generally considered remixing as an exclusively late twentieth century phenomenon. Sampling and remixing is considered to have been virtually non-existent before the wider availability of magnetic tape in the 1940s, and considered to have been invented by DJs of the 1970s disco and early hip-hop
scenes. Typical of the accepted wisdom is Murray Forman's statement that sampling ‘developed into a full-fledged DJ art form through the late 1970s and into the 1980s.’ Martin Russ briefly mentions the possibility of earlier analogue sampling, including the use of optical soundtrack, prior to the widespread availability of magnetic tape, but gives no examples or dates for this complex ‘and very time-consuming’ method. And while Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner's comprehensive anthology Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music elaborates on the composers and artists who used phonographs and gramophones as instruments during the 1920s and 1930s, none of these uses quite compares to Lye and Ellit's approach, which was a clear antecedent of what was to become standard in DJ culture, the creation of dub versions (vocal-less remixes) and mixing more than one track seamlessly into another.

History acknowledges the roles of significant figures, from different areas of musical, in remixing and recorded music manipulation. From the 1940s onwards, musique concrète composers such as Schaeffer and Henry became justly celebrated for their cut and paste methods. Re-organising sound, initially through the splicing and manipulation of tape recordings, followed by turntable and eventually digital techniques, became a fundamental music-making process across all genres from the 1960s onwards, in countless boundary pushing works, including John Culshaw's pioneering recordings of Wagner's complete Ring Cycle (begun in 1958), George Martin's trailblazing 1960s production of The Beatles, or the influential hip hop of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in the 1980s.

But Lye and Ellit's much earlier audio-visual collage approach places them as precursors of sampling culture and the extended dance remix, as well as pioneers of pop video techniques. The films restructure one or more pieces of originally vocal music into almost seamless instrumental soundtracks, accentuating their dance rhythms over any semantic content that the lyrics might have conveyed. In late twentieth-century dance music, sampling originally involved selecting (cutting) the

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564 For the suggestion that Dada/Surrealism-related films by Lye and Man Ray were pop video prototypes, see Aust, 'The Return of the Dinosaur.'
essential parts of a song which, when joined (pasted) with others, extended the music's rhythmic feel in order to stimulate dancing as long as possible. In David Toop's words, club DJs were concerned with a 'smooth transition which, at its best, continually alters the mood on the dancefloor without breaking the flow.' Dance music dominated Lye's 1930s films, reflecting his and his wife's passion for dancing, and works like *Rainbow Dance, Trade Tattoo*, and *Swinging the Lambeth Walk* arguably stoved to create a similar effect of altering mood without breaking the flow. As Christie observes, almost all of Lye's films relate to dance in some way, being '“dance films” without dancers, where the image itself dances,’ creating an impact of strong physical presence and vitality. They celebrate the language of movement that obsessed Lye, who called it ‘body English,’ or sometimes ‘aesthetic kinaesthesia,’ ‘empathetic tension,’ or ‘the image of energy.’

Sampling creates a shift from passive musical consumption to creative production from that same music, whether via hip-hop's use of recorded music loops, or the earlier established jazz precedent of musical quotation. These creative re-mixing strategies bring us back once more to the fundamental concepts of collage, and the importance of juxtaposing and re-configuring found material into new experiences. David Toop’s observation, regarding sampling and remix culture, that ‘the beauty of dismembering hits lies in displacing familiarity’ could also ring true for Dada and Surrealism. ‘Regardless of the gear,’ Mark Katz writes, ‘on the simplest level sampling works like a jigsaw puzzle: a sound is cut up into pieces and then put back together to form a digitized “picture” of that sound.' Lye and Ellit's innovative audio-visuals certainly seem like an analogue version of such a ‘puzzle,’ an awareness of which could revise our understanding of popular music history, as well the role of music in Dada/Surrealism-related film. Perhaps we might now consider Lye, Ellit, and later Meyer, as among the first, possibly the first, to remix and rewind, way back in the 1930s. The painstaking work of films such as *Rainbow*

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Dance and Trade Tattoo still awaits due recognition as the missing link between Dada and the dance floor.

This chapter has demonstrated the variety of ways in which Dada/Surrealism-related films created distinctive audio-visuals using collage-like techniques. In the case studies chosen, the soundtrack never merely replicated or recorded the action, but was always treated as itself changeable and a legitimate medium for creative construction. In L’Âge d’or and Le Sang d’un poète, both early hybrid sound films, images and sounds were juxtaposed in surprising combinations that expanded contemporary ideas of asynchrony, disregarding cinematic rules of space and logic. Their audio-visuals increased the sensory credibility of the incredible events depicted, while also complicating any possibility of clear interpretation. The films of Richter and Lye revealed different audio-visual approaches, equally based on the soundtrack's fundamental malleability, but treated as something that can be radically cut up, moved, altered, and played with as much as the visual images. In both cases, the extent of these innovations has been underrated or overlooked, and I contend that the sophisticated audio-visual collage underpinning, even driving, these works should be recognised. Returning to my opening proposal to judge these films as audio-visual collage, I recall Schaeffer's notion of collage as the removal and re-contextualisation of sounds, closely inspired by Surrealism, and find that this sonic approach exists in all of my case study examples. In each film, sounds were moved and placed in deliberate attempts to foreground novel experiences, bolder and less related to logical narrative than in contemporary film use. Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers grabbed the new opportunities to manipulate sound and image separately, of interest to many filmmakers at the time, in order to create audio-visual works that still stand out as original, ingenious, even ground breaking. In the final chapter that follows, I leave noise behind, and listen instead to the talking, or lack of it, in Dada/Surrealism-related talkies.
Chapter Four

Spoken Words, Silent Mouths

My final chapter considers the use of speech within Dada/Surrealism-related cinema. Vocal issues ran deep through Dada/Surrealism-related discourse, particularly in connection with automatism, the supposed transmission and recording of subconscious thoughts and dreams via automatic speech, writing or drawing. André Breton had witnessed psychoanalytic talking treatments during his time as a medical student, and these duly influenced his conception of automatism, established within the definition of Surrealism in its first manifesto in 1924:

‘SURREALISM, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought.’

Breton went on to stress a key concept he called ‘the surrealist voice,’ and most of his references to it conflated silence with sound, attempting to describe the process of listening to internal thoughts. It was an aural conceptualisation of Surrealism where bodies acted as recording instruments for mental transmissions.

Breton's editorship of *La Rédouvolution surréaliste* reflected this, with a substantial focus on automatic texts and dream accounts, as well as in his own texts, including the experimental automatism of ‘The Magnetic Fields’ (1919), and discussions of the ‘inner voice’ in *Surrealism and Painting* (1929) and *The Automatic Message* (1933). During what Breton called Surrealism's early ‘intuitive years,’ the Paris group regularly practiced automatic speech ‘experiments,’ with Robert Desnos picked out for his outstanding ability to ‘speak Surrealist at will.’

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573 ‘La voix surréaliste’; Breton, *Manifestes du surréalisme*, p. 41.
In the context of cinema, however, what could it mean to speak Surrealist? This chapter investigates what was distinctive about Dada/Surrealism-related uses of speech or dialogue, relating them to the Surrealist ideas of inner voices, dialogue, and general anxieties around orality. Dialogue legibility and fidelity were major concerns of the early sound era, but Dada/Surrealism-related films tended to resist these, and instead concentrated on undermining conventions and expectations of cinematic speech. Speech, when it was used, could be illogical or confusing, compromising the function of dialogue to convey clear information. Audio-visual unity between voice and body was frequently disturbed, and methods such as conspicuous overdubbing purposefully unsettled any illusion of film sound. In other instances, sound film characters were rendered mute, reliant on physical methods of expression. All such procedures rejected, or actively antagonised, the conventions of theatrical, dialogue-driven sound film.

Since comparatively few Dada/Surrealism-related films from the period used spoken language, I focus on the major sound features, L’Âge d’or and Le Sang d’une poète, whose financial backing allowed them to access a fuller range of sound techniques. The discussion also references unfilmed scenarios that indicated spoken dialogue. Attitudes within Dada/Surrealism-related film were frequently oppositional to speech, and reflecting this, I also cover occasions where speech is deliberately absent, where characters are mute, with other sounds substituted for their voice. In this category I consider Cocteau's film, and also return to Cornell's Rose Hobart, to discuss their mute representations of objects of desire. Although quite a few Dada/Surrealism-related films from the period used voiceover narration, including Le Sang d’une poète, and the documentaries of Buñuel, Brunius, and Painlevé, I do not cover that issue here. Voiceover narration, particularly in documentary, is a significant area of study in its own right, and for the purposes of my argument my priority is to look at the distinctive uses, and indeed refusals, of dialogue, and how this related to Dada/Surrealism-related effects and concepts.

In some ways, Dada/Surrealism-related approaches were aided by the inherent awkwardness of transition-era film structures, which were often part-talkies with ‘intermittent dialogue’ and ‘holes’ in the film where characters don't speak, which Chion claims ‘made moviegoers uncomfortable.\(^{576}\) ‘Verbocentric’ cinema,

\(^{576}\) Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 78.
where the entire film orientated around intelligible and abundant dialogue, with its correspondent masking of audio-visual artifice, became ‘the standard formula in classical sound film.’ There was the significant potential to unsettle this balance by exploiting film speech's initial awkwardness or artificiality, and in his article ‘The Uncanny Body of Early Sound Film,’ Robert Spadoni has drawn attention to the emphasis on early sound film's ghostly or uncanny qualities within criticism of the time. When it did occur in Surrealist scenarios and finished films, speech was used selectively, dropped in part-talkie style at particular moments, as in L'Âge d'or, or in Salvador Dalí's 1932 scenario, ‘Babaouo,’ where spoken phrases were intermittent and obviously secondary to the rapid flow of bizarre images. Used in isolated phrases, such as in Antonin Artaud's scenario ‘The Butcher's Revolt,’ speech was used in a manner reminiscent of the way intertitles interrupted films with brief lines of speech.

This chapter looks at three areas related to speech in Dada/Surrealism-related films and scenarios, supported by film sound theory, particularly Chion's work on the cinematic voice. My first section explores L'Âge d'or's dialogue in relation to ideas of speech or dialogue located elsewhere in Surrealism, suggesting that it sabotages conventional logical narrative approaches. The next section looks at ways in which filmed bodies and recorded voices were separated, connecting to ideas around inner voices, ventriloquism, and the uncanny. The final section deals with representations of mute characters. This is done by critiquing Rose Hobart's silence in Cornell's film of the same name, an issue often romantically glossed by existing literature, before examining the highly sexualised representation of Senegalese dancer Feral Benga in Le Sang d'un poète, where his voiceless body is paired with intense noise.

‘The Surrealist Diction Has Been Found’

Dream descriptions regularly filled the pages of La Révolution surréaliste,

577 Chion, Film, A Sound Art, p. 497.
578 Robert Spadoni, ‘The Uncanny Body of Early Sound Film,’ The Velvet Light Trap, no. 51 (Spring 2003).
characteristically disjointed and illogical texts that contained both direct and
reported speech, usually in the form of isolated phrases, enigmatic and sparse, or
rhetorical questions and statements answered by non-sequiturs. A dream account
written by Michel Leiris, for example, contained the following dialogue between
Breton and Desnos:

A.B., to R.D. – The seismoteric tradition..
R.D. (transforms into a stack of plates).  

In the same publication, ‘Surrealist dialogues’ provided further examples of
resistance against rational, transactional conversation. In pairs, one participant posed
a question, to which the other would provide an unrelated, illogical response.
Printed, these appear as strange ‘dialogues,’ utterances juxtaposed in unexpected
pairings. The article's short (anonymous) introduction explained that the
interlocutors' thoughts continued separately, colliding only briefly in coincidental
moments, in spite of apparent contradiction. In these ‘conversations,’ language did
not function logically, providing expected responses, but opened up poetic
possibilities. For instance, the answer to the question ‘what is suicide?’ reads
‘several deafening alarm bells.’ The dialogue's irrational juxtapositions were
reminiscent of the composite texts of ‘exquisite corpse’ games. The description in
terms of ‘collision’ once again suggests montage principles, and an idea of speech
that doesn't flow or inform, but conflicts.

Dialogue functions similarly in L'Âge d'or. At times, language's
informational role is jammed or diverted by absurdity, as in the incomprehensible
liturgical babble of the bishops on the rocks, or the excessively rolling Spanish-
accented French spoken by the Governor (Josep Llorens Artigas) during the
founding of Rome. This approach was also taken in much of the American comedy
admired by the Surrealists, such as the ‘total breakdown of reality’ found in Harpo's
car-horn vocabulary and Groucho's pun-driven speech in any Marx Brothers film
from the period, or found in the opening scene of City Lights (Chaplin, 1931),

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581 A.B., à R.D. – La tradition sismotérique... / R.D. (se transforme en pile d’assiettes); Michel
Leiris, ‘Rêves,’ La Révolution surréaliste, vol. 1, no. 5 (15 October 1925), my translation.
’Sismotérique’ is a made-up word, which my translation tries to reflect.
582 ‘Qu’est-ce que le suicide?’ “Plusieurs sonneries assourdissantes”; ‘Le dialogue en 1928,’ La
Révolution surréaliste, vol. 4, no. 11 (15 March 1928), my translation.
another speech-resistant movie, where town dignitaries have their voices overdubbed by kazooos, in a scene that strongly resembles *L'Âge d'or*.583

A letter from Buñuel to Charles de Noailles, his patron, written immediately prior to filming *L'Âge d'or's* sound sequences at the Studios de Billancourt, suggests the former may have been ambivalent about using speech. Buñuel suggested making two negatives of the film, one `sonore-parlant` (sound and talking) and the other `muetsorore` (silent and sound), to aid distribution where wired-for-sound theatres were a rarity.584 He offered several pragmatic solutions for silent versions, which de Noailles rejected, replying that it would be a mistake to be driven by purely financial considerations.585 Buñuel's hesitation is perhaps discernible within the film's chosen part-talkie structure, a curate's egg of intertitles, silent scenes, dialogue and sound montage, neither a talkie nor a silent film, despite its billing as a `film parlant surréaliste`.586 Although almost all the dialogue was indicated in the film's original shooting script, it is worth keeping in mind that even at such a late stage Buñuel was considering a speech-free version.

In one dialogue scene, conversation seems brazenly stilted and resists narrative conventions, although it still connotes information about the speakers' relationship, and the use of sound. In Lya Lys's first, and longest, speech, she discusses music arrangements for a party with her mother (Germaine Noizet):

> We went out together this morning and engaged four of them. The little moustached one sang like the rest. Only a pianist is lacking, but our priest is a fine violinist. I think the musicians we have will be enough. Six of them placed near the microphone... will make more noise than sixty ten kilometres away. I know sound gets lost in the open air, but we could bring the guests in close. What do you think? 587

On the page it reads like a memo about the sound arrangements for the film's recording (perhaps even was), rather than professionally written dialogue. It draws conspicuous attention to audio issues and although sound gags were quite common

584 Buñuel to de Noailles, 26 February 1930, in Buñuel, *L'Âge d'or: correspondance*, p. 57. This was not uncommon during the transition period; for example, sound and silent versions were simultaneously produced of Hitchcock's *Blackmail*.
585 de Noailles to Buñuel, 28 February 1930, in Buñuel, *L'Âge d'or: correspondance*, p. 58.
586 Original *L'Âge d'or* programme, Cinemathèque Française, Paris.
587 Translation taken from the DVD subtitles.
during the transition period, this speech blatantly pokes fun at the whole principle of sound recording. After waiting for the leading lady to speak, when we finally do hear her she ponders the technicalities of microphone placement, a joke at our expense for expecting more, reminding us that film sound is just a mechanical trick. The speech feels disengaged from any sense of narrative progression, and the Mother's reply is impatient – ‘get a move on, the Majorcans will be arriving at nine.’ As Hammond observes, Lys delivers her lines in a strange monotone that suggests she is reading, as if responding to a question we never hear.588 The dialogue conveys neither the drama nor the narrative direction we might hope from a conventional talkie scene, and encourages the spectator to find their own meaning if they can, perhaps along the lines of French wordplay, as pointed out by several critics.589

Michel Chion classifies film speech into three modes – ‘textual speech, theatrical speech, and emanation speech.’590 Broadly speaking, textual speech is voiceover, controlling our interpretation. Theatrical speech is delivered, intelligibly, by characters within the drama and has a ‘dramatic, psychological, informative, and affective function’ around which action is constructed. Chion nominates emanation speech, however, as being the most cinematic. Defined as speech neither fully heard nor understood, other film elements collude in keeping it somewhat unintelligible, in contrast to typical cinematic prioritisation of legibility. Describing emanation speech as ‘antiliterary and antitheatrical,’ Chion highlights its deviation from what he calls the ‘linear verbal continuum’ of conventional cinema narrative.591 Dialogue is not prioritised in any Dada/Surrealism-related films of the early sound period. When it does occur, primarily in L'Âge d'or, it is not conventional theatrical speech as described above, as its intelligibility in relation to the narrative is ambiguous. Conversations seem tangential to plot and characterisation, as in the speech about microphone positioning, or the semi-delirious random replies of the sick bandit, played by Pierre Prévèrt. The dialogue resembles Chion's definition of emanation speech in its deviation from narrative norms, even if its manner of emanating character is psychologically unconventional.

588 Hammond, L'Âge d'or, p. 33.
589 Hammond, L'Âge d'or, p. 35. See also Stuart Liebman, ‘Un Chien andalou: The Talking Cure,’ in Kuenzli, Dada and Surrealist Film.
590 Chion, Audio-Vision, p. 171.
591 Chion, Audio-Vision, p. 171.
Dialogue in *L’Âge d'or* frequently undermines the dramatic conventions of providing important narrative information or relevant character psychology. At times, spoken language springs like a stream of consciousness, as in this example, during the film's first dialogue scene, an exchange between two bandits played by Max Ernst and Pierre Prévert:

Bandit A: I'm done for.
Bandit B: So are we, but we're going.
A: Yes, but you've got accordions... hippopotamuses, wrenches... mountain goats, and...
B: Bollocks! Let's go.
A: ... and paintbrushes. 592

As Hammond rightly points out, this 'isn't dialogue in the usual sense, but rather two monologues delivered at cross-purposes,' with similarities to the 'dysfunctional interlocution' of the 1928 ‘Surrealist dialogues,’ themselves supposedly inspired by echolalia and forms of ‘verbal hysteria.’ 593 This conversation, with its irrational replies, and distinct humour, strongly resembles those Surrealist exchanges, such as ‘“what is fraternity?” “perhaps it's an onion”.' 594

The film dialogue also resembles instances of speech within Surrealist dream retellings. In one dream account by Raymond Queaneau, figures speak in emblematic ‘dropped in’ lines rather than reciprocal conversations, in random phrases like ‘there is no tertiary period’ or ‘it is the priests who clutter the streets.’ 595 In another, from Paul Éluard, a figure shouts ‘your son has shot himself seven times in the head, but he's not dead.’ 596 Such phrasing is consistent with the extensive dream accounts found in Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where he claimed that direct speech in dreams is always derived from phrases already spoken or heard, as the dreaming mind cannot create speeches, only reassemble them. 597

Words are condensed into enigmatic exchanges that may seem meaningless in narrative terms, but which may be dense with latent association. Freud describes this linguistic structure as ‘breccia,’ a material formed from small stones cemented together, suggestive also of the collage-like structuring underlying many

592 Translation taken from the DVD subtitles.
593 Hammond, *L’Âge d'or*, p. 17.
594 ‘Le Dialogue en 1928.’
595 ‘Il n'y a pas d'époque tertiaire’ and ‘ce sont les curés qui encombrent les rues’; Raymond Queaneau, ‘Rêves,’ *La Révolution surréaliste*, vol. 1, no. 3 (15 April 1925), my translation.
596 ‘Ton fils s'est tiré sept balles dans la tête, mais il n'est pas mort’; Paul Éluard, ‘Rêves,’ *La Révolution surréaliste*, vol. 5, no. 12 (15 December 1929), my translation.
Dada/Surrealism-related practices, including audio-visual.  

Freud gives one example of a patient's dreamed conversation between herself and her husband, formed from a previously held conversation. Ignoring the dialogue's banal manifest content concerning tuning a piano, Freud trawls through linguistic associations and the patient's own analysis history to interpret this dream conversation as really about the patient's feelings regarding her own body.

While Stuart Liebman has discussed the ‘latent babble’ in Un Chien andalou's visual imagery, generating ricochets of linguistic associations, attention has rarely focused on actual speech within Dada/Surrealism-related film. In the case of L'Âge d'or, conventional dialogue was side-lined in favour of spoken lines that are closer to recorded dream or automatic speech. In Artaud's scenario ‘The Butcher's Revolt,’ or Cocteau's declarations in Le Sang d'un poète, spoken language was not used to create conversations and enlighten us regarding plot and psychology, but to produce ambiguous, poetic expression. Artaud wrote of avoiding ‘psychological situations’ suited to stage or literature by using words and sounds as embedded elements of film, rather basing the work around scripted language. The next section examines examples of this resistance in uses of overdubbing, ventriloquism, and interior voices.

**Strange Ventriloquism**

Surrealism had an oral fixation. Mouths represented a multitude of symbolic associations and anxieties, often with sexual connotations at blatant, not even latent, level. A dramatic photograph of a mouth, by Jacques-André Boiffard, was published in *Documents*, with an accompanying text by Georges Bataille. It showed a mouth in confrontational, blurred close-up. The tongue lolls out under the teeth, saliva glistening in monochrome. The skin surrounding the stretched-open mouth appears grainy, and the close framing cuts off at the chin and the underside of the nose, two

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600 Liebman, ‘Un Chien andalou,’ p. 149.
dark holes leading off-frame. The image is simultaneously repulsive and seductive, transforming something so fundamentally familiar. Bataille's accompanying text was characteristically visceral, calling the mouth the most ‘living part’ of animals, and therefore the most terrifying. He posited that although the human mouth is restrained by civilisation, animalistic impulses still find their way through. ‘The violent meaning of the mouth is conserved in a latent state,’ he wrote, and ‘explosive impulses’ burst through the mouth in screams of fury. Unconcerned with its communicative role, for Bataille a mouth was either liberated in an open, screaming gesture, as illustrated, or repressed in ‘the narrow constipation of a strictly human attitude, the magisterial look of the face with a closed mouth, as beautiful as a safe.’

This potent combination of oral seductiveness and monstrousness recurs across visual Surrealism, in works such as Man Ray's painting Observatory Time: The Lovers (1936), which showed an enormous, closed mouth hovering in the sky or Dali's famous furniture-sculpture Mae West Lips Sofa (1937). It emerged too in Dada/Surrealism-related theatre and cinema, in Roger Vitrac's play Poison (1922), where a ‘silent voice’ was represented onstage by a giant mouth, in Artaud's revulsion of dubbed mouths in his essay ‘The Liabilities of Dubbing,’ and in Le Sang d'un poète when a mouth migrates from a painting to the palm of Rivero's hand, who responds with alarm then arousal. For Leiris, talkies were sensuous because of their use of voices with corresponding images of mouths, lips and throats, providing cinema with an invigorating injection of sensory engulfment. Elsa Adamowicz identifies a ‘generalised eroticism’ within Surrealist film, particularly Un Chien andalou, within which bodies repeatedly transgressed or exceeded their anatomical limits. Within Surrealist-related film and photography, the (primarily female) human body formed raw material for transformation into fragment, fetish or fantasy.

603 Translation taken from Georges Bataille, ‘Mouth,’ in Georges Bataille et al., Encyclopaedia Acephalica, pp. 62-64.
605 Leiris, ‘Talkie.’
606 Adamowicz, ‘Bodies Cut and Dissolved,’ p. 27.
607 Krauss, ‘Corpus Delicti.’
Mouths are especially startling in *Un Chien andalou*. At one point, the man (Pierre Batcheff) gropes (or imagines groping) the naked breasts of the woman (Simone Mareuil), which transform into buttocks, and we see blood-coloured drool leak from Batcheff's mouth. The scenario specified that his previously wide-open mouth now narrows 'like a sphincter.' Towards the end of the film Batcheff places his hand over his mouth. When he pulls it away, his mouth has vanished. There is only an unpleasant smoothness in its place. Annoyed, Mareuil defiantly puts lipstick on her own mouth. Then hairs grow over where the man's mouth used to be. This startles her, and checking her armpit she finds her own hair has now vanished. She sticks out her tongue and leaves. Linda Williams interprets this scene in relation to the numerous ‘slicings, dismemberments and holes’ preceding it, explaining the scene as a complicated representation of castration anxiety focused around the mouth. The underarm hair on Batcheff's face suddenly looks like misplaced pubic hair, but obscuring a sealed orifice, rather than genitalia, it 'represents the decidedly neutral absence of any sexual signifiers.' The displaced hair sets up expectation of a sexual signifier, which the sealed mouth then denies, in a pattern of anticipation and substitution structurally similar to that noted with the doorbell and cocktail shaker.

Dali tried to take things further in *L'Âge d'or*, writing excitedly to Buñuel with detailed plans to achieve his ‘dream’ of showing a vagina without actually filming one, avoiding censorship. He claimed they could do this by filming a woman's mouth sideways on, superimposed with an image of her décolletage surrounded by a fringed shawl, which would resemble hairs. Although this idea did not make the finished film, Dali’s preliminary drawings suggested an extremely graphic image, a sexual metamorphosis correspondent with his interest in *trompe l'oeil*, which explicitly presented a mouth as sexualised and mutable.

Such a recurrent oral anxiety and instability extended into the uses of speech in Dada/Surrealism-related films, in which body and voice are frequently treated as separate, taking advantage of the inherent tension in sound film's attempts to unify

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608 Buñuel and Dali, ‘*Un Chien andalou*,’ p. 35.
609 Several of these oral motifs seem reworked in Cocteau's film – blood welling from between lips, a migratory mouth, a girl sticking her tongue out at the camera.
610 Williams, *Figures of Desire*, p. 97. Williams points out the image's similarity to René Magritte's painting *Le Viol (The Rape, 1945)*, in depicts a female torso as a face, with pubic hair for the mouth.
separate sounds and images. The relationship between voice and image is a major area within film sound studies, in particular Chion's *The Voice in Cinema* and Kaja Silverman's *The Acoustic Mirror*, as well as in important essays by Mary Ann Doane and Rick Altman. These agree in principle that a convincing relationship between an onscreen body and an audible voice is critical to successful character representation and subsequent spectator identification. A convincing fusion of voice and actor is important for realistic character portrayal, and conversely, their deliberate separation can be unsettling, and be used to ‘disassemble’ cinematic constructions of character, as later propositions by Marcel Mariën would suggest.

Mikhail Yampolsky observes that ‘for Artaud, the mistrust of the audible word...is central.’ This is evident in a transition-era essay Artaud wrote called ‘The Liabilities of Dubbing,’ in which he berated what was becoming the most popular solution to the language barriers in sound film distribution. Artaud, who was an actor himself, called it ‘one of those hybrid activities which good taste abhors, which satisfies neither the eye nor the ear.’ The most ‘diabolical’ part was the effect upon ‘the real actors,’ when acting ought to involve the whole self, body and voice together. There is a suggestion of physical violation in his comment that ‘they put their French voices into Marlene Dietrich's heavy mouth, Joan Crawford's pulpy mouth, Greta Garbo's equine mouth.’ There was a certain amount of French resistance to the ‘ventriloquism’ of dubbing, and Artaud's opinion was not unique, his implication of devilry comparable to Jean Renoir's comment that if those doing the ‘crime’ of dubbing had lived in the Middle Ages they would have been burned for witchcraft. Artaud, however, developed this uneasy connection between ventriloquism and devilry into a film scenario, now lost, called ‘The Dibbouk,’ based on the Jewish legend of a spirit who possesses the living by speaking through their mouth, forcing them to blaspheme.

Rick Altman has explored the idea of soundtrack and image as ventriloquist and dummy. He suggests that ‘cinema's ventriloquism is the product of an effort to

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615 Artaud, ‘The Liabilities of Dubbing,’ pp. 80-82.
617 Yampolsky, ‘Voice Devoured,’ p. 169. A Yiddish-Polish film version (unrelated to Artaud) was eventually filmed as *Der Dibuk (The Dybbuk)*, Waszynski, 1937.)
overcome the sound-image gap, to mask the sound's technological origin, and to permit the film's production personnel to speak their sub-conscious mind – their belly – without fear of discovery.’ Several of his observations are relevant to my discussion here. Firstly, that cinema masks the sound-image gap with an illusion, from which we may surmise that the gap is potentially uncomfortable, or uncanny, an effect which can also be exploited. Secondly, his idea of ventriloquism suggests a sub-conscious or repressed voice, potentially capable of rupturing the illusion. Altman reinforces this with reference to ventriloquism's ancient Greek origins, stating ‘the head-voice may produce apparent truths, but the body-voice reveals hidden truth.’618

According to Chion, exploitation of dubbing is a relatively modern phenomenon, famous for creating dramatic or shock effect in films such as Star Wars (Lucas, 1977) or The Exorcist (Friedkin, 1973).619 However, it was also exploited during the early sound period, but usually for comedy purposes, as happens in the films of Laurel and Hardy, such as a chimp that speaks with Olly's voice in Dirty Work (French, 1933), or their justly famous ‘Trail of the Lonesome Pine’ performance in Way Out West (Horne, 1937). The theme recurs in and around Surrealism-related film, turning up in Artaud's horror of dubbing, in the non-lip synched speech indicated in ‘The Butcher's Revolt’ and the premise of ‘The Dybbuk,’ in L'Âge d'or's love scene, as well as in Desnos's notes for filmed opera.620

Brunius and Gilman's scenario ‘Un Peu moins de bruit’ (1929) provides an intriguing audio-visual example related to ventriloquism. In the printed text certain phrases are highlighted in boxes, presumably suggesting intertitles, typical of part-talkies. The denouement shows Subtilitas, a Fantomas-like villain, apprehended by the other characters before dramatically vanishing. The (presumed) intertitle reads ‘BUT SUBTITILAS WAS A VENTRILOQUIST,’ followed immediately by:

He cries without moving his lips: Fire! Fire!  
The parrot repeats: Fire! Fire!621

This moment seems designed to draw attention to sound film's illusion of voice-body unity, the parrot's repetition creating an impression of a voice passing from

618 Altman, ‘Moving Lips,’ pp. 78-79.  
619 Chion, Film, A Sound Art, pp. 141-45.  
620 Desnos, ‘Projet de réalisation d'opéras-films.’  
body to body, but it also displays slapstick audio humour similar to that found in comedies such as Laurel and Hardy's films.

Artaud's 1930 scenario, ‘The Butcher's Revolt,’ took a less light-hearted approach to breaking the voice-body illusion. Originally hostile to sound film, one can trace Artaud's change of position through transition period scenarios such as this and ‘The Master of Ballantrae’ and ‘Flights,’ all of which tentatively explored using audio. 622 ‘The Butcher's Revolt’ was concerned with a lunatic whose obsession with butchery and slaughter overlaps into his (real or imaginary) relationship with a woman. A succession of images of butchery and male heterosexual frustration are generated, without making any attempt to distinguish fact from fantasy. This approach accords with Artaud's commitment to representing thought, for film to resemble the ‘mechanics of a dream without really being a dream itself,’ and takes the same fluid approach to characterisation evident in the written scenarios, ‘The Seashell and the Clergyman’ and ‘Eighteen Seconds.’ 623 The preface states:

as for the talking picture, 'this film will be talking in so far as the words spoken are only inserted to emphasise the images. The voices are in space, like objects. And it is on the visual level that they should be accepted.' 624

‘The Butcher's Revolt’ contains only four short lines of dramatic speech, given as isolated phrases with no consecutive dialogue, spoken by three separate characters, with carefully differentiated dynamics and deliveries. Each line has specific, idiosyncratic indications for its delivery, consistent with the vocal uses of Artaud's ambitious later theatrical work. The first line is spoken by the lunatic who says ‘watch out, off with your head to the butcher’ ‘without raising his voice.’ This contrasts with his next phrase, a shout of: ‘to the slaughterhouse.’ The third utterance, ‘there you are again,’ comes from a policeman, indicated ‘as though he were saying’ and delivered in a whisper, perhaps implying a mentally heard voice. The final line is delivered by the butcher, spoken over a dead woman spread before him, as if ready for carving. He opens his mouth, and ‘a voice amplified by a loud

speaker’ says ‘I’m sick of carving meat up and not eating it.’ These phrases remain separate ‘in space,’ while the effects of the loudspeaker delivery and the ambiguous delivery of the policeman's line rupture illusions of audio-visual verisimilitude. In the preface, Artaud insisted that prior to his own La Coquille et le clergymen, cinema only used ‘logical rupture’ for humorous effect. ‘The Butcher's Revolt’ used disruptive methods for purposes of shock or disorientation rather than amusement.

J.H. Matthews notes that in The Butcher's Revolt, speech interrupts far more often than it provides continuity, and appeals to the senses rather than our rational understanding. Overall, Artaud was highly critical of psychological and textual conventions in cinema, and intended to develop films that were not only faithful to the structures of thought, but also capable of acting ‘almost intuitively on the brain.’ He stated his intention for separateness between the voices and the action, writing ‘in this film there is a system of voices and sounds taken for themselves and not as the physical result of a movement or an action.’ Again, disconnected phrases suggest speech within dreams, implying confusion between what is spoken word and what is thought.

Confusion between spoken words and inner speech is even more apparent in L'Âge d'or. A dialogue takes place between Lys and Modot in the garden, while the orchestra still plays the ‘Liebestod,’ but after they have abandoned their clumsy attempts to couple. A trick dissolve suddenly shows Lys looking like an older woman. The conversation has an intimate, closely miked sound, delivered (as indicated in the original script) as if in a ‘voice that comes from far away.’ The banal bedtime talk, part of which is transcribed below, is ‘strictly Darby and Joan’ yet also ‘dreamy,’ according to Hammond:

Modot: Are you sleepy?
Lys: I was just falling asleep.
M: Where's the light switch?

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625 Artaud, ‘The Butcher’s Revolt,’ pp. 39-42. I have maintained the bold type used in this edition. Matthews mentions this dialogue was originally printed in text boxes; Matthews, Surrealism and Film, p. 66.
627 Matthews, Surrealism and Film, p. 66.
628 Artaud, ‘Cinema and Reality,’ p. 20.
630 ‘Elle répond avec une voix qui vient de très loin’; Buñuel and Dali, La Bête andalouse, my translation.
631 Hammond, L’Âge d'or, p. 49.
L: At the foot of the bed. Your elbow's hurting me.
M: Move your head closer, the pillow is closer on this side.
L: Where's your hand? That feels so good, let's just sit here and not move.
M: Are you cold?
L: No, I was falling.
M: Sleep... 
L: I've been waiting so long for him - what joy! What joy in having killed our children!
M: My love, my love...

There is an abrupt change at the point after the word ‘sleep’– the violins become tremulous, and Lys becomes visibly excited during the lines starting ‘I've been waiting so long...’ When the camera cuts to Modot for his reply his face is inexplicably covered in blood, his eye seemingly gouged out, part Oedipus, part Potemkin, and certainly part Un Chien andalou.

But most strikingly of all, this dialogue is entirely delivered in voice-over. Not a single line comes directly from the actors' own mouths. For most of the conversation the actor’s mouths are shut, and they gesture through glance alone, implying a telepathic communication rather than the soundless talking typical of silent films. Very occasionally their lips move, as Modot's do during the repeated ‘mon amour, mon amour’ (‘my love, my love’), but not in synch. Modot's voice was dubbed by Surrealist poet Paul Éluard, according to Hammond, who also conjectures that Éluard's future wife Nusch dubbed Lys. The substitution was unusual, partly because this is the only dialogue between the two leads, who were experienced actors. The original shooting script gave no indication whether this scene was planned with such unusual overdubbing, yet it has a profound impact.

Jean-Michel Bouhours suggests that this vocal use was totally new, while Ado Kyrou, perhaps a little carelessly, claims it was cinema's first use of interior monologue. Hitchcock's Murder!, produced and released the same year, features a famous early example of an internal monologue, coincidentally also delivered over a diegetic background of Tristan und Isolde, coming from a radio. Once more, it is

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632 Translation taken from the DVD subtitles.
633 Hammond, L'Âge d'or, p. 49.
634 One cannot rule out the possibility that Lys and Modot may simply have been unavailable for the overdubs, necessitating alternative arrangements.
635 Bouhours, ‘Introduction,’ in Buñuel, L'Âge d'or: correspondance, p. 6; Kyrou, Luis Buñuel, p. 27.
636 L'Âge d'or's sound scenes were filmed during March-April 1930, and post-production sonorisation took place in June, before a first screening at the de Noailles' residence in July 1930; Buñuel, L'Âge d'or: correspondance, pp. 177-78. Murder! was initially released in the UK in July 1930, before distribution in Europe. It seems unlikely that either director saw the other's work during production.
notably not the audio-visual technique itself that is unique to Dada/Surrealism-related film, but its application. Hitchcock's stylish use of the technique is also characteristically functional, although lacking the subtlety it would have when used in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960). In *Murder!* we hear the internal voice of Sir John Menier (Herbert Marshall) reflecting on the murder case he is involved with. Access to his thoughts provides the audience with narrative and character information that enhances understanding of the film. It allows us a more understandable access to a character's thoughts, as in a novel or a soliloquy.

The approach taken in *L'Âge d'or* was dramatically different, as the internal voices speak to one another. The internal voices provide less obvious plot information to us, indicating instead the gentle, lust-free intimacy of a couple at bedtime. The boundaries are more indistinct than in Hitchcock's film, and are dissolved at multiple levels: between the characters (who can speak without talking), between the audience and the characters (we can hear their thoughts), between the integrity of each actor's body and voice (they are being dubbed by strange voices), and between audience and film (the close-miked transmission style possibly suggestive of our own ‘inner ear’ or voice). It is hard to interpret this scene decisively as a result.

As implied in the earlier mirror scene, the suggestion of a mental connection between these lovers is represented sonically, in defiance of spatial logic. Linda Williams observes that these voices originate from ‘an imagined place’ that is not their mouths, and the characters ‘simultaneously appear to speak and listen to their own imagined conversation.’\(^{637}\) Williams' insight into this strange dialogue hints at a parallel between the cinematic interior voice (what Chion calls the ‘I-voice’) and the inner ‘Surrealist voice.’\(^{638}\) Doane also perceives this duality in her interpretation of interior voices in films:

> the voice and the body are represented simultaneously, but the voice, far from being an extension of that body, manifests its inner lining. The voice displays what is inaccessible to the image, what exceeds the visible: the ‘inner life’ of the character. The voice here is the privileged mark of interiority, turning the body ‘inside-out.’\(^{639}\)

\(^{637}\) Williams, *Figures of Desire*, p. 150.
\(^{639}\) Doane, ‘The Voice in the Cinema,’ p. 168.
The voices heard in this scene in *L'Âge d'or* seem both private and interior, public and audible, belonging and not belonging to the characters. They are comparable to the voices heard in ‘the interior ear’ that Breton described in ‘The Automatic Message,’ his most detailed discussion of automatism. The words heard in his mind, Breton noted, seemed not his own but distinctly ‘spoken as if by an actor offstage.’

In silent film, speech and sound were implied by visual means, through an established concept of ‘silent sound.’ Isabelle Raynauld explains that silent film assumed the spectator's ability to ‘hear the mind,’ encouraging something analogous to what the deaf community calls ‘eye music.’ Sound was represented by:

a chorus of strategies to make sound be heard inside the story and be seen on the screen... when we watch a film from the retrospectively called silent era, we are asked to look at sound and to see voices.

An affinity existed between the imaginary ‘hearing’ involved in silent film spectatorship and Surrealism's emphasis on listening to the inner voice. Breton's oft-repeated lines from the first manifesto, of ‘hearing’ an insistent mental phrase, suggest this: ‘one evening, therefore, before I fell asleep, I perceived, so clearly articulated that it was impossible to change a word, but nonetheless removed from the sound of any voice, a rather strange phrase which came to me.’ The similarities between these modes of listening may have contributed to the strong affinity Surrealism-related figures felt towards silent cinema, evidenced in texts such as Jean Goudal's ‘Surrealism and Cinema,’ or Cornell's ‘Enchanted Wanderer,’ which expressed silent cinema's superiority with its ‘poetic and evocative language’.

In his discussion of internal voices in cinema, what he calls the ‘I-voice’, Chion mentions ‘corporeal implication’ which, like Doane's term of ‘inside-out,’ blurs the distinctions between audience and character. A successful ‘I-voice’ should be close miked and recorded dry (no reverb), which was the case with *L'Âge d'or*. This gives the effect of the speech ‘resonating in us as if it were our own voice, like

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641 The extent of this was so great that Chion calls silent cinema ‘deaf cinema’ instead Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 5.
643 Raynauld, ‘Dialogues in Early Silent Screenplays,’ pp. 70, 75.
a voice in the first person. This aligns with Silverman's concept of the ‘acoustic mirror’ to refer to voices that are simultaneously internal and external. Silverman describes a voice that is both emitted and heard by a subject, mentioning the difficulty of situating any particular voice as ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ when the speaker is also the listener. Internal voices in films are considered to broach diegetic and subjective boundaries.

Dali’s original intention had been for the scene to convey ‘sensual poetry’ via intimate sounds such as audible pissing or the creak of a bed. In his notes for this ‘love dialogue’ he wrote that it was essential the characters spoke as if talking to each other about something ‘already known.’ Although Dali's meaning of things ‘already known’ was unclear, the dialogue gives an impression (to a certain point) of familiarity, banality even. Certainly this sense of intimacy was enhanced by the use of close-miked softly spoken voices that sound as if spoken in our own ear, or even our own thoughts or ‘inner ear.’ Then this comfort is suddenly ruptured by the ‘what joy!’ lines and the sudden intrusion of violence.

The unstable status of these voices, neither inside nor outside, relates to the fluctuation underpinning the concept of the Surrealist ‘marvellous,’ as discussed in chapter one. Located in the simultaneity of opposing states, here it is found in the uneasy borderlines between speaking and not speaking. Dali’s idea of speech about things ‘already known’ is potent within the Surrealist context, suggestive of Freud's theory of the unheimlich, or uncanny, identified by Hal Foster as a central force within Surrealism, and another concept based, like ‘the marvellous,’ on experiences of unstable, fluctuating perception. Defined as the return of the repressed to disrupt ‘unitary identity, aesthetic norms, and social order,’ Foster claims that Surrealism redirected the uncanny towards their own artistic aims. To Foster, it was not simply a style, but something that resonated deeply within Surrealism.

Freud's influential 1919 essay enquired into the overlapping terms heimlich and unheimlich, meaning homely and unhomely, used to describe a distinct

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647 Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, pp. 79-80. While Silverman's theory occasionally resonates with Chion's, it is also highly critical of the dominant masculine psychoanalytic position she considers his work assumes.
648 ‘Il faut mettre à tout prix dans le dialogue d'amour comme s'ils se parlent de quelque chose déjà connu'; Salvador Dalí to Luis Buñuel, undated, in Buñuel, *L'Âge d'or: correspondance*, p. 54, my translation.
649 Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. xvii.
experience of unease covered in English by the term ‘uncanny.’ The feeling is caused by the return of something which has been repressed, and Freud stated that ‘the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.’ Opposing forces of familiarity and strangeness are bound up together, their combination producing a powerful, fluctuating effect.

The scene from L’Âge d’or described above can be considered in terms of both the uncanny and ‘the marvellous.’ In addition to Dalí’s suggestion of the ‘already known,’ its representation of comfortable intimacy is punctured by an ecstatic outburst of violence, with further overtly Oedipal connotations transmitted via the maternal ageing of Lys, Modot's gouged eyes, and the reference to infanticide. The audio-visuals are particularly uncanny. Free-floating, unsynchronised to the mouths, they are in fact un-housed, not homely. Chion describes acousmatic voices, voices without a visible source, as fluctuating, ‘at once inside and outside, seeking a place to settle.’ An acousmatic voice is not properly housed, and (in Gorbman's translation) Chion's description of ‘de-acousmatization,’ attaching the voice to its appropriate visible body, makes such a body sound like both home and symbolic burial place, where the voice will be ‘lodged’ and prevented from wandering. In the case of L’Âge d'or, the voices are not fully offscreen and acousmatic, ready to be assigned to mouths when they are shown, but openly detached from the already visible bodies.

Such flagrant overdubbing undermines the primary illusion of the talkies. In ‘The Uncanny,’ Freud quoted nineteenth century philosopher E.W.J. Schelling's statement that ‘everything is unheimlich that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light.’ One could argue that in this scene, the use of dubbing knowingly brings ‘to light’ what ‘ought to have remained hidden and secret’ – the sound-cinema illusion, the ventriloquism Altman marks as essential to sound film, the ‘structural operation’ of grafting voices to bodies that begins in early childhood and which, Chion suggests is symbolically replayed through sound film.

In his analysis of the reception of early talkies as uncanny or ghostly, Robert Spadoni also references the Freudian uncanny, and suggests that the repressed

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element returning to unsettle audiences was ‘the uncanny of early film,’ the original sensation of being disturbed by moving pictures. His article indicates that qualities of uncanniness were quite commonly attributed to early sound films, and that, certainly in the mainstream, the presence of such a disturbing feeling posed a major problem, or at least a distraction. I would argue, however, that in the case of a Dada/Surrealism-related film like L’Âge d’or, purposefully undermining voice-body synchronicity, uncanniness was a desirable result, an audio-visual achievement rather than a problem. The examples above persistently undermined the expectation of unity between voices and onscreen bodies, with its associated perception of naturalism. Their deliberately confusing approaches to speech can be linked to conceptions of an inner ‘Surrealist voice,’ but also to an oral anxiety, and a deep-rooted connection to the uncanny.

‘Not a cry shall fly from our lips’

The remainder of this chapter explores a third method of speech resistance – silence. It discusses characters purposefully presented as mute, and speculates on the implications of this. Denying, or replacing, an actor or character's voice offered another alternative to theatrical dialogue during the early sound years, and I am particularly interested here in the connection between these silent figures and their erotic or romantic objectification. Although these portrayals were partly attempting to preserve silent cinema methods, I suggest there was more than simple nostalgia at stake.

In the case studies chosen, Rose Hobart and Le Sang d'un poète, the camera focused visually, often erotically, on the figures whose voices we never hear. Before analysing more closely, I briefly evaluate Chion's work on mute film characters, and which he associates with mystery and sexuality. Following on from that, I critique Rose Hobart, suggesting that the actress's silencing reduced her to a visual fetish, an idealised representation of what Kyrou called ‘la femme cinématographique’ (‘cinematographic woman’), indicative of attitudes towards women in both

654 Spadoni, ‘The Uncanny Body of Early Sound Film,’ pp. 11-12.
Surrealist film and the wider Surrealist context. My final study is an analysis of Feral Benga's role as an angel in *Le Sang d'un poète*, in a powerful scene of affective noise and overtly queer eroticism, but which is also problematic in terms of fetishism and representation. I explore connections between power and erotic spectatorship in both these silent representations, and consider them against heteronormative, male-dominated perspectives that dominated Surrealism.656

Chion devoted a whole section of *The Voice in Cinema* to the phenomenon of mute characters in sound films. With the introduction of sound, he argued, silence paradoxically became a motif, and could create conspicuously mute characters, different from the deafness we experience when watching silent film characters. To Chion, the mute is the corollary of the acousmêtre, with an equally complex relationship to power and desire. Not knowing if, or when, a character may speak generates anticipation, and suggests a withholding of power. The Dada/Surrealism-related films discussed below provide no narrative explanations for the muteness, the characters are simply presented as such. In Chion's opinion, cinematic mutism is often associated with secrecy, often related to sexuality, and ‘to encounter the mute is to encounter questions of identity, origin, desire.’ The ‘secrets’ implied by cinematic mutism are either dangerous, as in *The Most Dangerous Game* (Pichel and Schoedsack, 1932), or sexual, such as ‘the mute male characters of decades past who in the protagonist's shadow suggested the shame of homosexuality.’ Chion particularly notes that a mute character usually only remains the object of desire ‘as long as no one ever succeeds in having her’ (or him).657 A mute character appears to enable speculative fantasy on account of their inaccessibility. The inaccessibility of their voice, and by association their individual thoughts, parallels their physical inaccessibility.

These observations are interesting in relation to the film examples considered below. *Rose Hobart* (probably by necessity) removed the talking from a talkie, while in *Le Sang d'un poète* Cocteau was extremely selective about whose voice could be heard (mostly his own). Chion distinguishes three major issues of cinematic mutism: one, a body without a voice refers back to silent cinema, two, withholding speech poses a challenge to narrative unity, and three, we become

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656 See for example, the misogyny, hypocrisy, and homophobia in the exclusively male discussion of ‘Recherches sur la sexualité,’ *La Résolution surréaliste*, vol. 4, no. 11 (1928), p.38.
acutely aware of speech through its absence.\textsuperscript{658} These points echo within the Dada/Surrealist-related audio-visual-y I have already observed – its persistent relationship with silent film, constant challenging of narrative convention and unity, and subversion of dominant cinema speech conventions.

**Silent Rose**

For nineteen minutes, the actress Rose Hobart doesn't say a word. In remoulding *East of Borneo* as a silent film, Joseph Cornell sent her back from the modernity of sound films to the only just outmoded silent era.\textsuperscript{659} His 1941 essay ‘“Enchanted Wanderer”: excerpt from a journey album for Hedy Lamarr’ was a paean to the superiority of silent cinema and its (female) stars like Maria Falconetti and Lillian Gish. It suggested Cornell's desire to rediscover this magic despite the coming of sound:

among the barren wastes of the talking films there occasionally occur passages to remind one again of the profound and suggestive power of the silent film to evoke an ideal world of beauty, to release unsuspected floods of music from the gaze of a human countenance in its prison of silver light.\textsuperscript{660}

Certain terms are suggestive amidst this romanticism – talkies are unfertile, ‘barren,’ and cannot generate the right emotions. Cornell's experience of silent film is 'profound,’ tied to the recognition of an ‘ideal’ beauty, and the silent ‘gaze’ of the actress towards the spectator. Silence appears to release something that needs unlocking, which Cornell described as unheard music, the more powerful for being ‘unsuspected’ and encountered by chance. Most suggestive of all is the phrase ‘prison of silver light,’ evoking a cinematic gilded cage. Cornell is best known for his intricate assemblage ‘boxes’ which, with an exquisite blend of melancholy and nostalgia, displayed fantastical scenes of charmed travel or stargazing, but especially homages to his beloved stars of stage and screen. Works such as *Penny Arcade*

\textsuperscript{658} Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{659} Walter Benjamin first identified the important concept of the ‘outmoded’ in Surrealism in 1929, praising the ‘extraordinary discovery’ of perceiving the ‘revolutionary energies that appear in the “outmoded”, in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct...They bring the immense forces of “atmosphere” concealed in these things to the point of explosion’; Walter Benjamin, ‘Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,’ in *One-Way Street*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London and New York: Verso, 1997), p. 229.

\textsuperscript{660} Cornell, ‘Enchanted Wanderer,’ p. 206.
*Portrait of Lauren Bacall* (circa 1945), or *A Swan Lake for Tamara Toumanova: Homage to the Romantic Ballet* (1946), captured in domesticated miniature the ‘ideal world of beauty’ he admired in these women, and I would argue that Cornell's cinematic treatment of Rose Hobart was in a similar vein.

A conviction that Cornell perfected Hobart into an idealised silent-screen goddess pervades almost all existing criticism. Any issues around the representation of Hobart tend to be glossed over in favour of appreciating the aesthetic beauty of his work. A fairy-tale like haze, on a par with the pink and blue filters tinting versions of the film, obscures critical engagement with the film's use of silence, its relation to Cornell's three-dimensional boxes, and issues of female representation and the male gaze. Scholars have consistently been dismissive of its source film, *East of Borneo*. Sitney called it ‘an undistinguished period piece’ while Catherine Corman described it as jungle melodrama ‘banality,’ and these were not alone in eulogising Cornell's ‘restoration’ of silent cinema's poetry by ‘erasing’ or ‘suppressing’ the soundtrack. Stan Brakhage described it as ‘one of the greatest poems of being a woman that’s ever been made in film, or maybe anywhere,’ a naive and arrogantly masculine interpretation, implying that the strength of Cornell’s (one-sided) ‘love’ for Hobart was able to release some deep expression of her own inner womanliness, that she herself could not access.

Corman's essay is similar in tone, surprisingly avoiding engagement with the critical implications of female silence. Corman classes it as a method of encountering the sublime, suggesting the film's use of silence conveys solitude and contemplation, offering ‘an unlimited space of devotion.’ Perhaps most troubling in this reading is the unquestioned assimilation of Cornell's perspective. Corman subscribes to the romance that Hobart was rescued from a sound film in which she was misplaced, and the (male) filmmaker has restored her to her true self – ‘no longer speaking in dense, clumsy language, Rose is rescued from the mundane jungle drama and restored to the realms of poetry.’ This certainly corresponds with the dominant attitude towards women within Surrealism, a situation first

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661 Sitney, ‘The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell’, pp. 74-75; Corman, ‘Theater of the Spirits,’ p. 379. See also Hartigan, *Joseph Cornell*, p. 72; Solomon, *Utopia Parkway*, p. 87. Viewing *East of Borneo* for myself, I was surprised to discover it an enjoyably atmospheric ‘exotic’ drama of the era, with slight horror touches, in a similar vein to early talkies such as *White Zombie* or *Tarzan the Apeman* (Van Dyke, 1932).

662 Stan Brakhage, interview on *The Magical Worlds of Joseph Cornell*.

critiqued in 1971 by Xavière Gauthier's *Surréalisme et sexualité*, and subsequently explored by feminist academics such as Mary Ann Caws and Susan Rubin Suleiman.\(^{664}\) The latter observed that Surrealist visual art had an ‘obsessive preoccupation with the female body,’ also idealised in its literature, but always from an ‘overwhelmingly male subject position’ that marginalised any individual female voices.\(^{665}\) Ramifications of this perspective are not only traceable in *Rose Hobart*, but also surprisingly in the film's critical interpretations to date. Most disturbing in Corman's interpretation is the implication that Cornell's directorial gaze actually collaborated with Hobart herself to improve on her own screen identity, making her complicit in her own silencing:

He is not painting a portrait of Rose; he is collaborating with her to create her self-portrait. He helps her do this by editing out what is not Rose, by removing the sounds of the outside world, even by removing her own voice — her communication with other people, external reality. All we have left is interior experience, a patiently sketched watercolor of inner life.\(^{666}\)

This suggestion that devotion justifies removal of verbal communication and self-expression is uncomfortable. Cornell's body of work was heavily inspired by fairy-tales and romanticism, itself containing a similar balance of innocence and darker emotions. Surface sweetness can cover uncomfortable or repressed feelings, and there is a slight sadism, unintentional perhaps, to Cornell's homage that passes largely unnoticed. Around the early 1930s (according to Sitney) Cornell produced an illustrated ballet scenario titled ‘Theatre of Hans Christian Anderson,’ containing different episodes based around different Anderson stories.\(^{667}\) The voiceless beauty of Hobart is reminiscent of Anderson's ‘The Little Mermaid,’ the bleakness of which is sometimes forgotten.\(^{668}\) This quintessential fairy-tale about a lost voice, undoubtedly familiar to Cornell, resonates obliquely in *Rose Hobart*. The story's heroine gives her voice away in order to acquire human shape. Admired by all for her silent beauty, she actually suffers acute physical pain and mental anguish, but is

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\(^{666}\) Corman, ‘Theater of the Spirits,’ p. 381.

\(^{667}\) This was published in *Dance Index* in 1945, though may have been written earlier, around the early 1930s; Sitney, ‘The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell,’ p. 72.

unable to express this to anyone else. Her voicelessness is assumed to be contentment, rather than the powerlessness it actually is.

Without the distraction of speech, Cornell's film maintains almost continual visual focus on Hobart. It as if we are mesmerised, and cannot take our eyes off her face. The absence of speech increases attention to Hobart's physical expressions, particularly her face, as if in emulation of Cornell's beloved Falconetti in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*, Dreyer, 1928). Michael Pigott's detailed analysis recalls Chion's words concerning mute characters:

> she speaks through a smiling mouth, plainly a forced amiability. We do not hear her words, of course – all the better to witness and analyze the emotional contours of her physical performance. When she has said her piece her eyes look down once more, in thought, impenetrable because we do not know what she has said, nor who she is talking to or why she might be coy or deceptive with them... the mystery becomes magnetic, drawing our attention to the body-shell of Rose that contains sentience, emotion, and intent.\(^{669}\)

Pigott emphasises that not hearing Hobart's voice increases her mystery, makes her the inscrutable, silent object of desire similar to that described by Chion. The actress is conflated with the character she plays, and considered impenetrable because we cannot hear her. Pigott rightly identifies that this draws attention to her body as an assumed container of unheard expression. I would make the further assertion, however, that as a muted character Hobart becomes a space for projected desires. Chion's outlook associates film mutism with secrecy and mystery, aspects easily implicated with eroticism. Cornell redesigned Hobart into ‘the body without a voice,’ evoker of the ‘great secret’ of silent film, reigniting our desire to hear what we can't know.\(^{670}\) Silverman argues that the cinematic female voice, bound to notions of feminine sexuality, is often a ‘stress point’ of classical narrative. The mouth as orifice symbolises the ‘starting point’ of entry to the female body, as well as to identity. Usually, Silverman claims, in films where a woman cannot speak, her body must somehow reveal her secrets.\(^{671}\) Some readings of *Rose Hobart* suggest that if we could only decode Hobart's gestures we might understand some latent communication that spoken language masks. On the other hand, perhaps the only secret message to find out is that she once had a voice of her own.


\(^{670}\) Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, p. 100.

Visual focus on the movie star, to the exclusion of their vocal identity, is compatible with Kyrou's ideal of ‘la femme cinématographique,’ proposed in Le Surréalisme au cinéma.672 This described a completely subjective, exclusively heterosexual male-gaze concept of spectatorship, which, to paraphrase Suleiman, was seemingly unaware of the possibility of any other subject position.673 It involved the adoration of beautiful female actresses, particularly screen sirens such as Marlene Dietrich or Louise Brooks. Kyrou recalled his own rhapsodic response, unheeding of the female image as anything other than a receptacle for his own desires. Like Cornell's re-construction of Hobart, Kyrou's ‘femme cinématographique’ was based on ideas of love and eroticism fuelled by what he perceives as qualities of dream, mystery, magic, magnetism, producing desire, admiration, even anguish in the spectator. It was a Surrealist confection of the cliché of an idealised, mysteriously feminine object of desire: ‘the women of the cinema are the erotic dream, the premonition, the beginning of an unbreakable connection.’ According to Kyrou, the cinema could transform a woman into a powerful erotic expression that was lacking in ‘the woman of ordinary life.’674 Adamowicz notes similar attitudes were prevalent throughout Dada/Surrealism-related film discourse and practice, where familiar tropes of femininity (subjugation, instability, dissimulation) appear to be reactivated through the topos of magic and dream. So the cliché of woman subjugated is euphemized—that is, poeticed—as magical transformation, informed by desire.675

Kyrou recalled his ‘first contact’ with ‘la femme cinématographique’ as when he suddenly felt transported beyond the screen by the image of Marlene Dietrich in Shanghai Express (von Sternberg, 1932).676 Perhaps somewhat ironically, the same image was later chosen by Laura Mulvey to illustrate the functioning of the male gaze and cinematic fetishism in her influential essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,’ first published in 1975. Here, Mulvey decoded the pleasure of looking (scopophilia) in film spectatorship, outlining the conventional classical film structure with ‘woman as image, man as bearer of the look.’ In theory,

673 Suleiman, Subversive Intent, p. 21.
674 ‘Les femmes du cinéma sont le rêve érotique, la prémonition, le début d'un lien indissoluble’; ‘la femme de la vie quotidienne’; Kyrou, Le Surréalisme au cinéma, p. 110, my translation.
675 Adamowicz, ‘Bodies Cut and Dissolved,’ p. 23.
the onscreen presence of beautiful female film stars is indispensable to the
production of visual pleasure, but it simultaneously works against the narrative,
freezing 'the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation.' When it comes
to Dietrich, Mulvey took a more detached position than Kyrou:

Sternberg produces the ultimate fetish, taking it to the point where the powerful
look of the male protagonist (characteristic of traditional narrative film) is broken
in favour of the image in direct erotic rapport with the spectator. The beauty of
the woman as object and the screen space coalesce; she is no longer the bearer of
guilt but a perfect product, whose body, stylised and fragmented by close-ups, is
the content of the film, and the direct recipient of the spectator's look.

This process is recognisable in Rose Hobart. Minus any dialogue, Hobart's
performance is fragmented into a cyclical series of close-ups, not just undermining,
but dispensing with the original narrative. Hobart's lack of voice contributes to her
becoming what Mulvey might call 'the ultimate fetish' whose inarticulate body,
'stylised and fragmented by close-ups, is the content of the film.' An 'erotic
rapport' between image and spectator, indicated in both Mulvey and Kyrou's ideas,
is cultivated (however innocently) by Hobart's mutism. Considered alongside the
oral anxiety frequently present within Surrealism-related film and imagery, then
Hobart's lack of speech seems like less of a happy romance after all.

Freud's original 1927 essay 'Fetishism,' like Mulvey's later article, argued
that the transposition of desire towards a fetish was a method of changing something
initially threatening into something manageable, performing a disavowal of the
original threat. Sexual fetishism, in this explanation, is a psychological
construction set up as a mental defence from the apparent shock of first noticing
sexual difference, which shifts the subject into the more reassuring position of
disavowal, a sort of self-willed suspension of disbelief. These concepts have been
adapted as ways of explaining the psychological processes that enable enjoyable
spectatorship, in spite of our constant awareness of the cinema's illusory falseness.
In Rose Hobart, the presence of the talkies is disavowed, covered over by the
repetitive musical accompaniment (as discussed in chapter two), allowing

677 Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,’ in Braudy and Cohen, Film Theory and
Criticism, p. 837.
prolonged, fetishistic visual pleasure, with a silent female image ready to absorb projected emotions.

While not denying Rose Hobart's innovative charm, and the brilliance of Cornell's work overall, his discarding of speech in favour of visual focus on a beautiful woman is like a cinematic version of one of his own boxes, with Rose silently turning and replaying inside, like a clockwork ballerina. The film created a dreamlike, repetitive setting for admiring her, but also took away her voice, stripping back the professional actress to (supposedly) expose the ‘true’ woman underneath. Cornell, a committed Christian Scientist, expressed moral concern with Surrealism's darker, libertine side, saying 'I believe that Surrealism has healthier possibilities than have been developed.' His homage to a starlet was accordingly decorous and reverential. Surrealist work is frequently ‘erotic or at least psychosexual, some is frankly sadistic, and almost all of it exhibits a profane black humour,’ and Cornell's practice stands out with an apparent fairy-tale innocence.

Cornell's conscious response to the art movement that inspired him was naively wholesome, a claim that ‘my Science and healthy thoughts about the unconscious in Surrealism (about which I know nothing) combined to give me extraordinary emotions.’ Analysed less reverentially, those ‘extraordinary emotions’ driving his work produced complicated audio-visual representations. In a wider context of Dada/Surrealism-related art and film, Rose Hobart's lack of words can be associated with mouths wiped away, with fetishism, and with uncomfortable relationships between screen voices and bodies. We can interpret it as Hobart's transformation, via silence, into ‘la femme cinématographique.’

Feral Benga – Mute Angel

Le Sang d'un poète contains very little speech that is not voiceover. The film was mostly filmed silently, with music and sounds added later. Cocteau later claimed that all the voices heard in the film were his own ‘disguised’ voice added in post production, with the exception of the voice of the Statue played by Lee Miller,

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683 Anderson, p. 436.
overdubbed by French actress Rachel Berendt. Whether or not this is true is difficult to establish, but certainly lines delivered by onscreen characters are sparse – a few words spoken between the Statue and the Poet before he enters the mirror, a dying murmur from the schoolboy, and some incomprehensible lines of speech that Cocteau's screenplay describes as Chinese, delivered by a man in the hotel corridor and then overheard in the 'Mysteries of China' room.

Cocteau's narration dominates the film, his declamatory delivery staking authority over the images. Chion calls Cocteau's voiceover 'a strange phenomenon,' a 'false cinematic I-voice' that carries the narrative but also weighs it down with a 'corpulent presence.' Cocteau's use of voiceover placed him in a position of power over his voiceless characters, who were able to express themselves only visually through their bodies. This sense of ownership carried through to the film's characters, particularly the young males dramatizing Cocteau's alter ego (the Poet), memories (the schoolboys), and desires (the Angel). Although most of the characters are predominantly mute, both the Poet (Enrique Rivero) and the Angel (Feral Benga) were filmed in ways that emphasise their looks and physique, eroticising them with a cinematic gaze. For much of the film Rivero was shirtless, the camera often lingering on his body, while Benga wore nothing more than a loincloth and a pair of stylised insect wings, his skin oiled like a bodybuilder. My interest is in the fact that Cocteau did not just portray Benga as a silent beauty, but combined his image with unusual sound effects. We can recognise once again the strategy of surprising audio-visual combination, here substituting noise for speech. Audio amplifies sensory and erotic elements already implicit in the mute angel's representation.

Such frank homoeroticism contrasts sharply with the heterosexual imagery in films by Buñuel and Dali or Man Ray, and also the general homophobia within Breton-influenced Surrealism. As James Williams observes, the depiction of the male body is central to Le Sang d'un poète's primary sexual and erotic core. For him, the film's remarkable audio-visual representation of the body raises the question 'whether the real homosexual element of Cocteau's cinema surfaces more at the

685 Cocteau, *Two Screenplays*, pp. 22-29. The actual language is hard to identify, and although the sound itself is strange, it does not appear to be a backwards recording.
most immediate level of sound and image."™ Understanding the audio-visual representation of Benga, however, brings up considerations of racial fetishism, and the manner in which Benga's identity as a black African performer is made to conform to sexualised European stereotypes, becoming ‘a modern African “acting savage”’.™ Cocteau's depiction capitalised on the image Benga had already established in his career as dancer, model, and artistic muse in interwar Paris.

The scene is a snowy square, overlooked by balconies that have become occupied theatre boxes. Two figures in evening dress play cards at a table. One is Rivero, the other is Miller, no longer a statue. On the snow by their table lies the dead schoolboy. Behind them a grand staircase sweeps upwards, a young dandy, dressed in eighteenth-century costume, standing at its foot. Cocteau's voiceover says ‘know that the child's guardian angel appeared. He was leaving an empty house. He was black in colour and had a slight limp on his left leg.’™ A door opens at the top of the stairs, and Benga slowly steps out. He is naked apart from a tight undergarment and a set of wire wings attached to his back, which Cocteau described as ‘like the nervous system of a bee.’ His muscles gleam with oil; in Cocteau's terms ‘he is shining.’™ He walks right up to camera, as if for the spectator.

A single sound accompanies his walk— a throbbing, continuous high-pitched tone. It sounds perhaps like glass resonating, and dominates the scene, for thirty seconds in total. Cocteau later recalled it as ‘the sound of the edge of a crystal bowl being rubbed by a wet finger,’ a description almost opulent and quasi-sexual, while the sound itself seems more ethereal, especially when paired with the image of an angel.™ Benga approaches the dead boy, and the noise stops, replaced by a gentle, major key melodic section of George Auric’s score. Benga carefully covers the body with a cloak, and the camera cuts away to pan over the visibly disinterested people in their theatre boxes. But underneath the peaceful music another sound starts to overlap, at first a buzzing noise, a kind of mechanical drone. After fifteen seconds of overlapping, the music stops and the buzzing suddenly leaps up in volume to

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687 Williams, Jean Cocteau (2006), pp. 12, 27.
689 Translation taken from the DVD subtitles.
690 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, pp. 49-50.
691 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, p. 49. Cocteau used an almost identical sound to accompany Jean Marais stepping into a mirror in Orphée (Cocteau, 1950).
become the dominant sound. The camera reveals Benga lying on top of the boy, completely covering him. Cocteau's voiceover proclaims: ‘the cloak sprawled like an ink stain, and disappeared under the labour of the supernatural character, who grew paler as he absorbed his prey.’

The leap in dynamics changes how we perceive the sound, turning a distant buzz into a swelling engine roar that overwhelms the soundtrack for a whole minute longer. Cocteau's verbal description in the published screenplay connotes power and sex: ‘the sound of an airplane engine that gets louder and louder, splutters and roars, devastating the silence... the noise of the engine reaches its climax.’ The image changes to negative, Benga's body and the dark cloak suddenly pale, and then the entire screen fades to black. The noise continues while the camera pans across the theatre boxes again, the inhabitants soundlessly chattering amongst themselves under the roar.

We cut back to where the Angel and boy were lying, now empty except for an indent and stain on the snow. The roaring stops, and the music resumes with a clarinet-led melody. The Angel takes the ace of hearts from the Poet’s hand, the music stops, and the glass sound returns. The Dandy looks surprised, followed by a close-up of Miller. Then the glass sound continues by itself for almost an entire minute while we watch Benga climb back up the steps and into the house, at which point the noise abruptly stops.

The two sound effects enhance Benga's eroticised presentation, already created through his muteness and the visual focus on his body. Synchresis suggests the illusion that Benga's body is producing these sounds. Both noises are diegetically unrelated to the scene, with no obvious implied source, but metonymically suggestive. The glass sound suggests touching, a trance-like state, and the liminal associations of glass already established in the previous mirror scenes. The buzzing connotes insect and creature-like associations, a high pitch like a droning bee, a buzzing roar as if flying close to your ear. It also evokes what it probably is, the sound of aeroplanes and engines, and via that power, strength, movement, and modernity. Both are constant noises, without gaps or space, filling the soundtrack. The low roar of an engine and the high drone of glass are overpowering and force a

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692 Translation taken from DVD subtitles.
693 Cocteau, Two Screenplays, p. 50. The original French conveys a clearer sense of climax: ‘ce moteur monte, monte, roufle, tonne, éclate, ravage le silence’; Quoted in Williams, Jean Cocteau (2006), p. 46.
sensory response. The engine sound eventually overwhelms the scene and the spectator, mirroring the Angel's 'absorption' of the boy. Aggressively insistent in comparison to the musical score, these drones create an intense audio-visual experience through their continuous notes, with an absence of a clear beginning or end.

Following an earlier interest in modern machine noise, demonstrated in his attempts to use aeroplanes, trains and torpedo sounds in *Parade* (1917), Cocteau's choice of engine sound here was characteristic of the Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visual strategies identified in this thesis. A common transition-era sound effect was placed into an idiosyncratic, even irrational, audio-visual context.⁶⁹⁴ All kinds of early sound films were full of the sounds of aviation, an ubiquitous signifier of modernity as well as a good demonstration of sound film capabilities. Composer Darius Milhaud, one of 'Les Six,' writing about film sound in *La Revue du cinéma* in 1929, mentioned the 'whirr of aeroplane engines' that proliferated in early sound cinema.⁶⁹⁵ Charles Lindbergh's monumental transatlantic flight of 1927 was a popular Fox Movietone sound newsreel, while otherwise silent films including *L'Argent* (L'Herbier, 1928), and *Wings* (Wellman, 1927) were released with accompanying phonograph discs of aircraft sounds.⁶⁹⁶ Fox's first feature-length part-talkie was *The Air Circus* (Hawks and Seiler, 1928), about a flying school, while *The Lost Zeppelin* (Sloman, 1929) apparently featured prominent engine sounds.⁶⁹⁷ The sound of a plane was used creatively in *Applause* (Mamoulian, 1929) to obscure romantic dialogue on the roof of a New York skyscraper, while *King Kong* (1933) used the sound in one of the era's most iconic scenes – Kong atop the Empire State Building, attacked by aeroplanes. Even the well-known logo of Universal Pictures was a noisy plane flying around the world.⁶⁹⁸

Alberto Cavalcanti, looking back from 1939, provides us with some insight into the popularity of this sound effect, even when simulated. Describing a live

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⁶⁹⁸ This logo was in use until 1937, after which the aeroplane disappeared.
sound effect used for a silent film he wrote: ‘an airplane was flying toward us. The music director “cut” the orchestra, and a strange frightsome sound began, and got louder and louder. It was nothing like an aeroplane, but very frightening.’ His article suggested that engine noises, authentic or not, had a recognised emotional and physical impact, with specific aural qualities capable of overwhelming a spectator. He claimed this noise ‘speaks directly to the emotions,’ bypassing rationality, and to interact directly with the body and subconscious mind.

The intensity of Benga’s scene is comparable to the effect identified by Mulvey in visual close-ups, where narrative momentum is suspended in order to focus on the screened body, but here this is enhanced audio-visually by the soundtrack’s engulfing qualities. Deborah Levitt has written about ‘the tactile properties of sound’ (in relation to Artaud’s theatrical writings) and the physical impact of audio vibrations during a live performance, while Nicholas Ridout suggests that such vibrations connect performer and spectator in a reciprocal exchange of energy. In a film sound context, however, the performance is pre-recorded and (mostly) non-reciprocal. Laura Marks draws a distinction between cinematic voyeurism, that maintains distance between viewer and subject, and cinematic eroticism that attempts to close this distance. We can note this in Le Sang d’un poète, where the spectator position fluctuates between participation in blatant voyeurism (for example watching a semi-clad Rivero peep through keyholes) to eroticised audio-visual engulfment in the scene with Benga’s Angel.

Film’s tactile potential — its ability to imply touch — has been explored by many critics, most notably Marks. Starting from a phenomenological perspective, these scholars explain film spectatorship as a mediatory experience, and a dynamic, shifting exchange between viewer and film. In The Skin of the Film, Marks tentatively extended her theory of haptic film (relating to the sense of touch) to

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700 Cavalcanti, p. 109.
include haptic sound.\textsuperscript{704} Not only can a haptic image be enhanced by sound, but sound itself is inherently haptic, never quite separated from our body as a visual image is, but able to enter our ears and be felt as vibrations. Immersive film sound therefore creates closeness between audience and film, and \textquote{aural boundaries between body and world may feel indistinct.}\textsuperscript{705} In Vivian Sobchack's terms, one experiences film rather than merely watching—\textquote{the film experience is meaningful not to the side of our bodies but because of our bodies.}\textsuperscript{706} More recently, Laura Wilson, exploring this phenomenon in reference to contemporary horror cinema, has noted that the use of diegetically unrelated sound can enhance a spectator's visceral experience when viewing images. She proposes that sounds generate a certain physical response in the viewer, with very high and low frequencies especially able to produce sensations of anxiety.\textsuperscript{707}

Benga's character doesn't vocalise in any way, and the sound effects take priority. His character is functional and silent, rather than able to express himself through language. This silent portrayal is problematized by the context of the actors' own identity as a black African gay man within the European avant-garde, and his appearance in \textit{Le Sang d'un poète} as a rare non-white, non-heterosexual figure in Dada/Surrealism-related cinema. Feral (the same meaning as in English) was the adopted stage name of François Benga, who left a wealthy Senegalese background to move to Paris in 1925, where he won acclaim as cabaret dancer. Like Josephine Baker, with whom he appeared, Benga's performances were based on \textquote{jungle} stereotypes, and he was celebrated for his allegedly \textquote{exotic} beauty. James Smalls' incisive research reveals Benga's importance within the avant-garde of the time, pointing out that Cocteau \textquote{made subversive use of gender fluidity, racial difference and homoerotic desire through surrealist visual language} via the use of Benga's silent, sensualised \textquote{glistening black presence}.\textsuperscript{708}

\textsuperscript{704} In summary, an increased visual focus on the tactile presence of an image potentially increases sensory response in the viewer; Marks, \textit{The Skin of the Film}, pp. 172-82.
\textsuperscript{705} Marks, \textit{The Skin of the Film}, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{706} Sobchack, \textit{Carnal Thoughts}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{707} Laura Wilson, \textquote{Physical Spectatorship and the Mutilation Film} (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2013), p. 146.
As well as being a stage and screen performer, Benga was a muse and model to many other important gay artists during the 1930s, including African-American sculptor James Richmond Barthé, and photographers Carl Van Vechten and George Platt Lynes. Cocteau's casting of him as a ‘black angel’ capitalised on his reputation as a performer of ‘eroticised sauvage’ dances, for which he also appeared oiled and clad in a loincloth, and was similarly labelled ‘the Black Mercury’ or ‘the Beautiful Negro Adonis.’ Margaret Rose Vendryes argues that Benga used cultural stereotypes and his own sexuality as currency for his public persona, as Josephine Baker did, ‘acting savage’ and becoming a powerful presence in the gay art of the period. His role in Cocteau's film is intimately tied to the ‘negrophilia’ that was rampant in 1920s Paris, especially the avant-garde, which associated all things African-tinged (including jazz) with a somehow simultaneous modernity and supposedly ‘primitive’ sensuality. Michel Leiris contributed a short piece about Benga to Documents in 1930, which conveyed this combination of enthusiasm for both jazz and ‘primitivism,’ and also suggests the homoerotic attraction Benga's performances could provoke, away from Breton's strident homophobia and antimusical attitude. Leiris's praise was also, however unintentionally, racially biased, in suggesting black superiority in the domain of show business, and burdening Benga with the dubious responsibility of representing his ‘race’ (without clarifying what this might mean).

Smalls points out that Benga's angel is a presence ‘to be seen, not heard,’ whose body symbolises the filmmaker's own poetic and erotic concerns, rather than expressing its own individuality. From today's perspective, this raises concerns that the portrayal was fetishistic, drawing on stereotypes of black male virility, and that in his silent presentation Benga was racially objectified (even if in admiration), particularly by the use of a solarising effect that turns his image to negative, drawing attention to his skin colour as a mark of difference. While the film foregrounded Benga's pre-existing persona of 'blackness' and ‘gayness’, posing an alternative

712 Michel Leiris, ‘BENGA (Feral),’ Documents, no. 4, vol. 2 (1930).
713 Smalls, ‘Creating Homoutopia,’ p. 85.
714 Smalls suggests Cocteau pays homage to Man Ray's photograph of a white woman's face next to an African mask, Noire et blanche, in a ‘homoeroticising riff'; Smalls, ‘Creating Homoutopia,’ p. 86.
to the sexuality expressed in most Surrealism-related art, from an audio-visual perspective there are problems similar to those already identified in Rose Hobart. Making characters mute may enhance their erotic cinematic presence, but it can also involve questions of repression and fetishism, particularly pertinent in terms of presumed representation of ‘race,’ and Benga’s silent role as muse for other (male) artists to admire and represent. While Cocteau’s startlingly original use of sound effects enhanced his impact, it also denied him the opportunity to be heard as an articulate man in his own right. The scene contains a certain intensity, discernible in Rose Hobart, but also in L’Âge d’or, when the focus of sexual attention is presented in silence, and also anticipates a speech-free queer eroticism that would be developed more explicitly by Jean Genet in Un Chant d’amour (Genet, 1950), or Andy Warhol across numerous films, such as Blow Job (Warhol, 1963) or Sleep (Warhol, 1964). Silence is connected with eroticism, bliss, and fantasy, something apparent in L’Âge d’or when twenty-three seconds of intense quiet blankets the image of Lya Lys lying still in ecstasy, or the silence that cuts in when Modot stares at the image of a hand moving in an onanistic gesture

Linda Williams, reading in Lacanian terms, understands Surrealist cinema to have an overall concern with representing unstable identities. Surrealist filmmakers frequently used recognisable cinematic methods to create recognisable representations that could subsequently be undermined. Surrealist films, she suggests, expressed nostalgia for a stage of identity formation called the pre-linguistic Imaginary, ‘a moment when the separation of subject and world was not yet felt.’ Yet such films purposefully disrupt this feeling of cinematic immersion by confrontational jolts that produce an awareness of difference, of misrecognition. Kaja Silverman also refers to the dominance of this idea of pre-linguistic plenitude within theories of cinema spectatorship, criticising it as a cultural, gender-biased fantasy based on psychoanalytic ideas of auditory pleasure and the mother’s voice. Nevertheless, in both Rose Hobart and Le Sang d’un poète, speech is side-lined in attempts to create a blissful, non-linguistic audio-visual representation, bypassing the logic of conventional scripted narrative.

715 Smalls, p. 64.
716 Williams, Figures of Desire, p. 41.
In this chapter, different speech strategies of Dada/Surrealism-related films and texts of the early sound era were considered comparatively for the first time. The answer to my initial question of what it might mean to ‘speak Surrealist’ is that different approaches were taken, reflecting these movements' heterogeneity, but all resisting the cinematic aims of dialogue's visibility and legibility, and the prioritisation of speech-driven narrative, common to early talkies. Instead, they featured illogical or dreamlike speech, disruption of voice-body unity, and mute characters, all distinctive methods of bypassing logical, theatrical filmmaking.

The uses of dialogue in L'Âge d'or resemble the spoken language found in Surrealist dialogues and dream accounts, reminding us of the movement's emphasis on the inner ‘Surrealist voice’ throughout the 1920s. That same film, as well as Artaud's scenario ‘The Butcher's Revolt’ and Brunius and Gilman's ‘Un Peu moins de bruit,’ all revealed a provocative approach towards the voice and body unity considered fundamental to sound film's believability. This interest in the fundamental instability of this audio-visual relationship has been related here to the importance of the uncanny within Surrealism, and the movement's ambivalent representations of mouths and bodies.

Mutism was demonstrated as another method of undermining onscreen voice-body unity, that correspondingly increased focus upon the silent body, encouraging erotic or fetishistic contemplation. I examined how Cocteau enhanced this effect in Le Sang d'un poète by the addition of overwhelming, non-diegetic sound effects, while my reappraisal of Rose Hobart confronted the gender-related implications of Rose's silence. In all these cases, audio-visuals have been proven fundamental to the kind of cinematic experience valued within Dada and Surrealism, a spectatorship built upon confusion, disorientation, and eroticism, to which I also add audio-visual uncanniness and sensory plenitude.
Concluding Notes and Future Directions

This thesis set out to demonstrate the extent of audio-visual creativity in early sound films related to Dada and Surrealism. Michel Chion has said that the most striking feature of the transition period ‘is the variety of experimentation,’ a heterogeneity explained by the gradual dissolve from one method to another.\(^{718}\) Surveying and analysing both movements, I have looked and listened for examples of audio-visual experimentation at risk of being forgotten as footnotes in the history of sound film, as so many dead ends. In a cinematic context of widespread audio-visual experimentation, I have found that the particular methods and approaches these films used were comparable to those found elsewhere within historical Dada and Surrealism, including the fundamental roles played by collage and re-contextualisation, and the importance of expressing ‘the marvellous,’ eroticism, and random chance.

As discussed in chapter one, any prior attention to the soundtracks of Dada/Surrealism-related film has been piecemeal. My research was initially inspired by, and remains indebted to, Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead's revisionary history of sound in the avant-garde in their 1992 book *Wireless Imagination*, in particular Christopher Schiff's essay on sound in early Surrealism, which first revealed to me the tantalising connection between Breton's 'modest recording instruments' and modernism's aural technologies and concepts.\(^{719}\) But since then, a large knowledge gap has remained around aurality related to Dada or Surrealism, although there is now an emergent academic interest in audio-visual use in non-mainstream cinema, evidenced for example in Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham's forthcoming edited collection *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*.\(^{720}\) And whilst some relatively recent texts, such as Michael Pigott’s *Joseph Cornell Versus Cinema* or Rashna Wadia Richards' *Cinematic Flashes*, suggest a sea change by

\(^{718}\) Chion, *Film, A Sound Art*, p. 36.
their fuller engagement with the audio of Dada/Surrealist-related film, this thesis is the first larger-scale contribution to this specific area.\textsuperscript{721} In so doing, my intention has been to bring recognition to the undervalued audio-visual elements of these works, acknowledging them as equal to the visual, literary and performance achievements long admired within Dada and Surrealism.

My findings have been grouped into areas roughly correspondent to the traditional soundtrack areas of music, sound effects and speech, at times necessitating returning to the same films in different chapters. But my purpose was always to consider these soundtracks overall, in relation to their visuals, and in relation to one another, and also to the films and ideas contemporary with them, rather than as isolated studies. The research uncovered a wealth of early audio-visual approaches and strategies, many of which ran counter to expectations of how artistic film should sound and be presented, using music and sound boldly and creatively. Ideas proposed by writers associated with Surrealism such as Benjamin Fondane and Marcel Mariën all revealed interest in separating sound from visuals, aural modification and manipulation, and stepping beyond conservative asynchrony methods in order to stimulate ambiguity and disorientation. From Michel Leiris and Man Ray came testimonials of sound's potential enhancement of cinematic immersion or sensory engulfment. Artaud's writings showed possibilities of film sound being used to disturb and unsettle, something that also emerged in the films of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, in which sound became a fluctuating, ambiguous source of irony, humour and surprise.

Pre-existing music was explored as an overarching audio-visual strategy within Dada/Surrealism-related film, rather than on just an individual film basis. Cinematic pre-existing music use is still a rather novel topic, as Jonathan Godsall highlights, and its study within Dada/Surrealism-related film is even more novel.\textsuperscript{722} By underlining the familiarity of this practice during the transition period, while demonstrating the different uses certain filmmakers made of it, I hope to have made a new contribution to how historical avant-garde film exhibition is understood. Using ‘readymade soundtracks’ allowed Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers opportunities to not only work with popular music and accompaniment methods, but


\textsuperscript{722} Godsall, ‘Pre-existing Music in Fiction Sound Film,’ p. 204.
to participate at an audio-visual level in processes of selection and re-contextualisation associated with ideas of the readymade or found object, juxtaposition and pasticcio, and to incorporate ideas of personal association and supposedly random chance into their work.

The distinctiveness of Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuals is found in the degree of its commitment to the separateness of image and audio, at the expense of narrative rationality. The collage approaches identified in chapter three, and the disconnected representations of onscreen bodies and voices explored in chapter four, pivot upon this separate treatment of sound and vision. I argue that these methods go further than the contemporary interests in asynchrony and counterpoint proposed by the ‘Statement on Sound’ and related documents, or seen in the audio-visual montages of films such as Romance sentimentale or Entuziazm, where the soundtrack clarifies and expands the visual message, increasing the impression of a storm or a radio transmission, or in comedies like Le Million where asynchrony produces a humorous contrast. Such films used asynchronous sound to convey a more powerful, yet readable, film message, or a clearer expression of character psychology, or even just comical representations of everyday audio-visual juxtaposition.

But Dada/Surrealism-related films, on the other hand, routinely added sound to confuse, to ‘thicken’ rather than clarify, or at least avoid any easy narrative interpretation. Sound effects were used to enhance bizarre situations, forming synchresis when juxtaposed with visuals, and condensing different spatial and temporal locations. Audio was used to shock or surprise, and create new audio-visual encounters in ‘true free counterpoint’ capable of triggering ‘the marvellous,’ rather than producing audio-visual reiteration. Sound was frequently treated as a malleable or changeable element, and filmmakers who were also visual artists, such as Lye and Richter, brought an unconventional approach to sound editing, cutting and pasting the soundtrack, even altering the sounds, to make rhythmic and dynamic works. These films act on the senses rather than prioritising narrative, exuding a vitality identifiable with the ‘ballistics’ approach Walter Benjamin defined as characteristic of Dada.723

The use of speech was just as open to challenge. Dada/Surrealism-related early sound films frequently rejected or lampooned the theatrical, dialogue-heavy approach of many early talkies, where clarity of diction and meaning were prioritised. This attitude was consistent with contemporary artistic resistance to photographed theatre or ‘the “filmed” play,’ but the results were a little more extreme. 724 When it was used, speech rarely carried information amenable to building conventional narrative, but made poetic statements, disconnected responses, or even exposed the fallacy of the film sound process itself. In L'Âge d'or, spoken dialogue resembled automatist methods, non-sequitur ‘Surrealist dialogues,’ and statements from dream accounts, and evoked Breton's call to hear and transcribe the Surrealist interior voice as ‘recording instruments’ channelling the subconscious. 725 The uncanniness of early sound film voices, observed by Robert Spadoni and discussed at length by Chion, was used to surreal advantage. Vocal overdubbing in L'Âge d'or, while potentially also a technical consideration, was an overt stylistic choice that portrayed interior voices and resisted easy identification of boundaries between subject, film, and audience. In the works studied, the representations of mouths, voices, and bodies don't always unite, or if they do, they risk coming apart again. A particularly Surrealist anxiety regarding mouths, orality and sexuality surfaces through encounters with mute characters, where music or sound effects cover for the absent voice. The Dada/Surrealist-related interplay between film, voice, and body is one of the richest areas encountered in the course of my research, and would certainly benefit from further, more complex, excavation.

In some ways, this thesis has tried to cover both too little and too much, and many more areas would merit future research. Hans Richter's films could be investigated further, access to information regarding their soundtracks permitting. The full extent of Artaud's intense engagement with sound, in film, theatre, and radio, has barely been touched upon here, and invites closer study. Documentary works such as Jacques Brunius's Violons d'Ingres and Records 37, Humphrey Jennings' Listen to Britain and Spare Time, and Ado Kyrou's Le Palais ideal, or Marcel Mariën's L'Imitation du cinéma, excluded here for reasons of chronology and pragmatism, would reward an informed enquiry into Dada/Surrealism-related audio-visuality in non-fiction film. The work of natural history filmmaker Jean Painlevé is

725 Breton, Manifestes du Surréalisme, p. 41.
of particular audio-visual importance, with a large catalogue and archive deserving of in-depth study. His films combined scientifically accurate footage about the relative strangeness of non-human life with a highly original approach to music, an extraordinary example of which is *Oursins* (*Sea Urchins*, Painlevé, 1954) containing Painlevé's own striking score of ‘organised noise’ in homage to his friend composer Edgard Varèse. Another research direction could be the perpetuation and evolution of some of the audio-visual strategies identified in this thesis, looking beyond the movements and period, perhaps into Alejandro Jodorowsky's surprising soundtracks, Harry Smith's extraordinary animated visual and sound collages, or Jean-Luc Godard's idiosyncratic audio-visual techniques.

Research possibilities stretch out in many directions – towards the development of particular individual audio-visual approaches, the evolution of Dada/Surrealism-related audio practices, or the longer-term histories of experimental audio-visuals. But this project has striven to demonstrate what Dada/Surrealism-related filmmakers accomplished at a particular moment in time when sound film was new, to identify and understand the marvellous noise it made. I have tried to mark a place for Dada/Surrealism-related sound film distinct from its contemporaries. I have tried to encourage listening where previously one mostly looked.

Interest in aural culture, including film sound, is a growing phenomenon, indicated in the increased prominence of sound artists, such as Christian Marclay or Susan Philipz, winner of the 2010 Turner Prize, or the popularity of feature films showcasing audio concepts, including *The Artist* (Haznavicius, 2011) or *Notes on Blindness* (Middleton and Spinney, 2016). Festivals and initiatives, such as London's School of Sound, Manchester-based curators of film and live music Video Jam, or Bonn Hœren, an annual event of urban sound installation throughout the German city of Bonn, all suggest a booming interest in audio and audio-visual culture. I do not consider my own thesis in isolation from this artistic ‘sonic turn,’ this cross-disciplinary upsurge of twenty-first century academic and artistic interest in the acoustic, embedded within its ‘cultural, political, and physical contexts.’ By recognising the importance of sound in Dada/Surrealism-related filmmaking, and

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726 Sleeve notes to *Science is Fiction: The Films of Jean Painlevé* (British Film Institute, 2007), DVD, p. 27.
arguing for its acknowledgment within film sound history, I am both a product and
upholder of this sonic turn. By asking what Dada/Surrealism-related films sound
like, and how this influences how they films work and are perceived, I encourage a
new way to encounter works that, for ninety years or so, have largely been
considered in terms of their visual content.

Man Ray ‘insisted from the start on sound accompaniment’ for his films, but
he also longed for other sensory additions, ‘so that the spectator, coming out into the
fresh air at last, could be totally in enjoyment of all his senses.’ Similarly perhaps,
newly heightened soundtrack awareness can continue its impact outside of an
auditorium or living room. We may notice that obscure Dada/Surrealism-related
audio-visual experiments of the early sound era were forerunners of countless later
films and videos that joke, jolt or stimulate by their adroitly, often blatantly,
manipulated audio tracks. We might recall Surrealist dialogue in the stilted and
ambiguous dialogues in much of David Lynch's work, such as the web series
Rabbits (2002), or notice readymade soundtracks in the juke-box shuffles of
Kenneth Anger's films, or Cocteau's silent men in the voiceless voyeurism of Un
Chant d'Amour. We might even start noticing it in mainstream TV, when a
mismatched voice and body creates an uncanny effect in Dr Who. In cartoons or
adverts when sound and image are noticeably different from one another. In the
online explosion of cut and paste video remixing and audio-visual mashups.

Unconventional audio-visuality has evolved from modest beginnings to become a
significant, if sometimes sporadic, part of cinema, television, and, increasingly,
internet and installation based media culture. Coming out into the fresh air at last,
let's enjoy the marvellous noise.

728 Man Ray, ‘Cinemage,’ p. 133.
729 See John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman, and Carol Vernallis, eds., The Oxford Handbook of New
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Symphonie diagonale (Viking Eggeling, 1924)
Tarzan the Apeman (W.S. Van Dyke, 1932)
Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse (Fritz Lang, 1933)
The Three Caballeros (Norman Ferguson, 1944)
Timecode (Mike Figgis, 2000)
Trade Tattoo (Len Lye, 1937)
Les Trois Masques (André Hugon, 1929)
Tristana (Luis Buñuel, 1970)
Tusalava (Len Lye, 1929)
Vampyr (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1932)
Il Vangelo secondo Matteo (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964)
Vertigo (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)
Victoria and Vancouver: Gateways to Canada (Benjamin D. Sharpe, 1936)
Violons d'Ingres (Jacques Brunius, 1937)
Viridiana (Luis Buñuel, 1961)
Vormittagsspuk (Hans Richter, 1928)
Way Out West (James W. Horne, 1937)
White Shadows in the South Seas (W.S. Van Dyke and Robert Flaherty, 1928)
White Zombie (Victor Halperin, 1932)
Wings (William A. Wellman, 1927)
Zéro de conduite (Jean Vigo, 1933)
Zouzou (Marc Allégret, 1934)
Zweigroschenzauber (Hans Richter, 1930)