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Emotions By Sound within *When Cthulhu Calls* and *Such as the Way to the Stars*

The producers of “When Cthulhu Calls” and “Such is the Way to the Stars” seemed to have the same objective of instilling fear, wonder and an eerie settlement within the audience at certain points through each podcast. While both podcasts were able to achieve these feelings within me they used different approaches. In “When Cthulhu calls” fear and eeriness set within me by use of music pacing like the beat of a heart, warping of voices and futuristic twinkling. Similar feelings were brought up while listening to “Such as the Way to the Stars” through the sounds of a gate slowly creaking, church bells ringing and the crumbling of earth. Through out listening to these two podcasts using semiotics I found the relationship between a signifier and the signified, for example a signifier of a creek for me creates the signified thought of something old, withered and possibly a spooky scenario. The signified and signifier together become a sign and the producer’s seemed to have purposely added sound signs into their podcasts to intently spark certain thoughts and emotions.

Within “When Cthulhu Calls” some of the first signifiers were those that make you wonder about the world beyond. They create a eerie stagnation in the air as well as fright of the unknown. One sound that created these feelings for me were the warping of voices and because of the context surrounding these unhumanly distorted voices I imagined a something futuristic and other worldly. Secondly the sound of a music box playing its horrifyingly beautiful

tune brought me to another level imagining something dark and evil may be involved. I have associated this beautiful music with the scary movies I've watched where a not so happy and nice entity somehow starts this music and frightens a vulnerable person into thinking they are not alone as they thought they were. Now within "Such as the Way to the Stars" there were distorted voices used as signifiers also creating wonder of what we do not know or understand. Hearing a human voice twisted and stretched to sound out of order grabs your attention and makes you lean in and listen closely but also makes you think about why the strange change is occurring.

One of the main similarities between the two podcasts is the way they used environmental signifiers to provoke similar feelings. In "When Cthulhu Calls" the environmental sounds created curiosity about what is to come next. Waves of water rushed in and out of my ears and anticipation was built. I was waiting for what was to appear next, but then suddenly the water had struck silence and wonder crossed my mind. The sweeping of wind enclosed everything with constant movement, I felt the wind was protecting by distraction but was the wind protecting us or another entity? While in "Such as the way to the Stars" environmental sounds like the crackling of a fire were used to make you feel the power of immense damage and the possibility of death. When the crackling of the fire seized I thought about what is left and how will the ruins be repaired? I appreciate these feelings being drawn within the podcasts because without questioning something I'm not sure I would have interest in what happens next.

Through the use of provocative sounds in "Sound as Touch" and "When Cthulhu Calls" created like curiosity and anticipation where sparked. Starting to feel these emotions, thinking "I need to know where this is going and how we will get there" began when the fluctuating high and low pitched, pulsation music lead me to believe this was a journey and I was riding along. Through the approaching pulse of a heart beats both producer's used they were able to draw me

into the story because I felt as if this was my own pulse. Through my life having watching many horror and action movies I remember hearing the pulse of a heart beat in those moment when someone was in the middle of a life or death moment and was forced to make a quick decision to attempt saving their own life. Through my own life I have heard and felt my racing heart when in an intense situation like being pulled over by the police, hearing tragic news about a loved one and during the adrenaline rush of having just nearly escaped a deathly fate. With my own experience of the pulse of my heart I can easily be brought back to those memories by hearing the recorded beat within these two podcasts.

On the other hand, there were times within both podcasts where I was able to feel calmed and at ease with the nurturing sounds used during a still moment within each listening. I do believe that the overall feelings raised within me were not related to feeling content but here and there this feeling was shortly surfaced. In “When Cthulhu calls” the slow and low waves of euphoric music drifted through into my ear’s creating peace. Soft music was introduced to me at a very young age in fact I assume while still in utero my mother sang so I could hear her voice. But I’m sure we can all relate to having been sang to at one time or another whether in person, through a movie or theatrical play and the soft and warming voice cant make you feel nothing but warm as if all will be ok. Then during “Such as the Way to the Stars” the chirping of crickets legs in the night brought a feeling of a quiet, still moment. Here as if time stood still and I didn’t have to worry about anything else I had heard but I should just pause and rest while listening to the story.

Additionally, the emotion of fear was created in both podcasts. I had feared for the those within the story and I had feared for myself. Through both essays I had drawn connections from the signifiers to my own personal experience and memories of tragic events, horror movies and

death. Now because of the content that surrounded sounds I heard I feared what would happen next. In “When Cthulhu Calls” the scene on a boat where the wind is angering and intensifying electronic static takes over the ears and slowly the speeds faster and faster, I then feared for life before I even knew the state of safety. Similarly created fear was struck in “Such as the Way to the Stars” during the collapse of the tunnel when you hear the crumbling of rocks and earth, spitting steam of the engine, echoes of yelling men and the song of prayer. The fear I felt for those in the tunnel was strong because of the signs throughout the tunnel struggle brought me to feel the shortness of breath and the caving in of the walls. Both podcasts used sounds well to create emotion and though each signifier individually caused a different idea to be signified together they created the emotion of fear.

Through a deep analysis of the podcasts “When Cthulhu Calls” and “Such as the Way to the Stars” I have seen the producers go about creating similar emotions with different types of signs. One way through intentional signs like music, distortion of voices and the beat of a heart. The other through environmental sounds like rain, the creek of a door and rumbling of rocks. Using semiotic analysis while listening to these podcasts I was able to understand my own emotions through each scene and I have come to the conclusion that both producers intentionally were pushing for emotions to cause you to keep listening. This was accomplished through signs used creating fear, curiosity and uneasy feeling; each had their own story to tell and created similar emotions but took slightly different approaches to achieve this.