

# UNCANNY PHONOSPHERE. NOTES ON THE SOUNDSCAPES OF *DRACULA* AND *FRANKENSTEIN*<sup>1</sup>

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A tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.  
W. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 5

## Introduction

Sound can be regarded as a fundamental element in the rise of the horror genre<sup>2</sup>. Some fundamental aspects of horror becomes apparent when the technological paradigm reached a first full development. Indeed, the most intriguing case is provided by a quite compact corpus of films, those produced by Universal in the early Thirties, that defined a set of pivotal features for the future of the genre.

The first supernatural horror talkie produced by Universal is *Dracula*<sup>3</sup> (T. Browning, 1931). Its production dates to a year when the sound film, meant as *all talkie*, is an almost established reality<sup>4</sup>. The following year, *Frankenstein* (J. Whale, 1932) leads to a higher degree of complexity the new genre by further developing the aesthetic and linguistic instances already presented in *Dracula*, in a way that would provide a long-enduring definition of the genre itself. Then, films like *The Mummy* (K. Freund, 1932), *The Black Cat* (E.G. Ulmer, 1934) and other Universal titles from the Thirties would refine further the very notion of horror from then on<sup>5</sup>.

The aesthetic foundation of audible at cinema started in the Thirties through the complete overcoming of a first experimental phase (1927-1929)<sup>6</sup> and the outline of a sound style that

1 Some preliminary notes that have been expanded in this article are contained in L. Canova and A. Valle, *Esordio dell'orrore. Sull'udibile in alcuni horror talkies della Universal*, in I. Meandri, A. Valle (eds.) *Suono/immagine/genere*, Kaplan, Torino 2011, pp. 65-80.

2 Spadoni has provided a brilliant study on the transition to sound in relation to horror films in terms of reception theory, that is, from the perspective of how «the introduction of sound resensitized viewers to the artificial nature of cinema», R. Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies. The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2007, p. 120. In this study, I will rather focus on the textual aspects, that is, in terms of Eco's theory, on the *intentio operis* rather than the *intentio lectoris*, see U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Indiana UP, Bloomington 1979.

3 In fact, the first Universal horror sound film could be considered *The Cat's Creeps* (R. Julian, 1930), remake of *The Cat and the Canary* (P. Leni, 1927), but it is a completely post-synchronized film.

4 H.M. Geduld, *The birth of the talkies*, Indiana UP, Bloomington 1975.

5 Peirse has observed that *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (R. Mamoulian, 1931) represent a pivotal trio not only in term of contemporary production and reception, but also in relation to academic discussion. This situation has shifted the critical interest away from various other films that in the Thirties have provided a much varied set of realizations of the horror genre (A. Peirse, *After Dracula: The 1930s Horror Film*, Tauris, London 2013, *Introduction*).

6 A. Boschi, *Dal muto al sonoro*, in G.P. Brunetta (a cura di), *Storia del cinema mondiale. II. 1 Gli Stati Uniti*, Einaudi, Torino 1999.

would pave the way for the classic dominance of speech at cinema. The subsequent consolidation of a certain musical-vocal proliferation would lead to an impoverishment of the acoustic dimension, relegating non-verbal sound elements to a position of absolute marginality, at least in the classic Hollywood cinema. However, in the early '30s the role of "sound" (here meant as what is neither speech nor music) appears to be a fundamental element of the new audiovisual medium: a first true exaltation of the "off" as an excluded but pivotally active space, that therefore raises questions in the audience, and exerts a 'pressure' on the image.

While discussing the relations between magic and the birth of silent film, Solomon observes that «the cinematic medium perfected the dematerialization of the body that had been one of the magician's specialties»<sup>7</sup>. In this sense, there is a sort of historical deep continuity between cinema and supernatural that seems to be further exploited by the introduction of sound. For Spadoni the uncanny (the Freudian *Unheimlich*) in the first sound horror films is more generally related to the medium itself, rather than to its content, as the presence of sound triggered «the major return of medium-sensitivity to ordinary viewing in thirty years»<sup>8</sup>. In sound film the viewers are provided with two sensitive organizations, rather than one as in silent film, and they are thus forced to integrate them. It is this newly required effort that is at the origin of the uncanny. Interestingly, it has been observed that the mute horror films from the '20s, while providing a source of inspiration for the genre to come, cannot be properly defined as horror<sup>9</sup>. *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are the «two horror films that by virtue of their massive influence, further transmitted the shock waves of the sound transition deep into matures sound era»<sup>10</sup>.

### *Dracula and the pervasiveness of the howl*

In *Dracula*, the first introduction to the demonic and inexplicable inside the narration happens underground, where Dracula (Bela Lugosi) and his brides wake up in the crypt that hosts them during their sleep. After the camera has shown – with some close shots – rats and insects alternated to coffins, together with their synchronous sounds, a howl can be heard. Following the slow movements of the vampire, this new animal emission aurally appears, probably for the first time in the history of cinema. The howl opens to another space, outside the vast crypt, and aptly demonstrates that "unifying enrichment", often mentioned as the primary function of sound in the cinema<sup>11</sup>. Through Dracula's gaze, the space of the crypt regains its wideness (via a long shot, with the sound off provided by the

7 M. Solomon, *Disappearing tricks. Silent Film, Houdini and the New Magic of the Twentieth Century*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago 2010, p. 3.

8 Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*, cit., p. 14.

9 See W.K. Everson, *Classics of the horror film: from the days of the silent film to the Exorcist*, The Citadel Press, Secaucus 1974, and K. Newman, *L'Horror*, in G.P. Brunetta (a cura di), *Storia del cinema mondiale II*. 1, cit.

10 Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*, cit., p. 3.

11 M. Chion, *L'audiovision. Son et image au cinéma*, Nathan, Paris 1990.

invisible wolf, that further expands the space) and the perceptual unity of sound and image. Interestingly, another element of continuity connects this final shot to the following one. While we hear again the howling of the wolf, we see the mute, wide-eyed face of Dracula's coachman, as a sort of emanation of the vampire that mimics his owner's face.

The howl emerges again when the doctors question Renfield (Dwight Frye, the first victim of Dracula that becomes his servant). The howl is a complex element from the point of view of enunciation. Schaeffer has noted that it is possible to recognize at least three modes of listening, that could be called, in relation to Peirce's semiotics, as indexical, symbolic and iconic<sup>12</sup>. In short, the iconic listening implies a return to the "purity" of perception, the indexical listening relates a sound to its source, and the symbolic one associates a sound with its established cultural meaning. In our case, the howl still bears an indexical quality, as not only Renfield but also the doctors can hear it. But it also activates a symbolic listening, pointing to the presence of the vampire at the semantic level, evoking and then immediately materializing it. In other words, the sound event goes beyond its causality, without negating it, to guide us to a symbolic meaning, the imminent appearance of the demonic. The sound object breaks from the outside by interrupting the dialogue of the characters, but above all exemplifies the connective powers of the sound, incorporating and unifying two distant, figuratively unrelated spaces, the madhouse and Dracula's dwelling. Here, as the cover of a coffin rises, the incongruous sound of the howling (as heard by the doctors in the studio) reappears according to its characteristic melodic profile. The camera pans to the left, pointing its gaze to the building window, then it proceeds along the inverse trajectory and detects the disturbing figure of the vampire already standing while he raises his head. The howl bursts again while Renfield is confined in his room, a sound object of such a hypnotic attraction that provokes Renfield's total enslavement. Again, the uncanny results from a sound event aurally rising from an excluded and indefinite space, a sound that shares indexical and symbolic qualities<sup>13</sup>.

The situation can be schematically represented in relation to space in Figure 1.

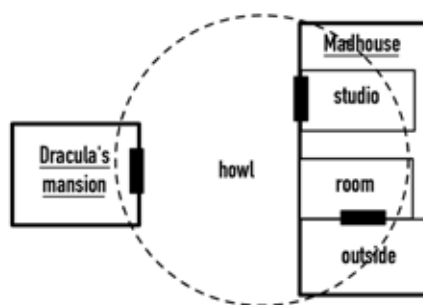


Figure 1. *Dracula*: spaces and subspaces in relation to the howl.

12 P. Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux*, Seuil, Paris 1966. For a semiotic discussion see: A. Valle, *Towards a Semiotics of the Audible*, "Signata", 6, 2015, pp. 65-89; A. Valle, *Tableaux et Gravures. A Graph Model for Schaeffer's Theory of Listening*, "Proceedings of EMS08," INA-GRM-Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008.

13 As observed, Spadoni (*Uncanny Bodies*, cit.) traces back the uncanny quality of the first horror films to the new perceptual quality of the medium, now including sound. In this sense, the medium itself is the source of the uncanny. Without opposing this perspective, in my analysis I will take into account content aspects.

The sequence organizes two main spaces, Dracula's mansion and the madhouse. The latter is internally fragmented into three subspaces, the doctor's studio, Renfield's room, and its outside, that still belongs to the madhouse, where Dracula appears to mentally instruct Renfield. The howl is actually presented as an indexical sound as it can be always heard through three windows (represented in Figure 1 by three black rectangles). In fact, we always see the characters looking at the windows while hearing the wolf. But indeed, this indexicality is supernatural: it addresses the nature of the vampire as it allows the "impossible" communication between distant spaces. The space where the howl is located is properly everywhere and nowhere, a vast indefinite space symbolized by the long shot of the sunset that is intertwined between the studio and Dracula's mansion, and that can be thought as a sort of invisible, untouchable atmospheric space (in Figure 1, the dashed circle).

In the narration, the vampire has repeatedly shown the mingling of humanity with animality. But in this case this peculiarity goes beyond the metamorphic capacities of the non-dead, as it invests his own voice. The audible dominance is one of the means of psychological capture that Dracula can put in place (in addition to the gaze, formerly exercised for the same purposes). This aspect can be observed in the treatment of the voice, as in the film the linguistic and non-linguistic voice-qualities are rather peculiar. First of all, there is a specific phonological qualification triggered by voice prosody, due to the foreign inflection that characterizes both Dracula and Van Helsing (the vampire hunter scientist)<sup>14</sup>. This linguistic issue allows for a strategy of «re-estranging synchronized speech»<sup>15</sup>. A second marked element is again related to the voice, when Van Helsing's assistant reads a supposed text of demonology in Latin: the use of the unknown language obviously participates in the audible structuring of the *Unheimlich*. The essence of Dracula – with respect to the materialization of his breath – is twofold: on the one hand, he is equipped with a pure *phoné*, shared by men and animals, but on the other he is also capable of what Greek philosophers called «*phoné semantiké*, the signifying voice»<sup>16</sup>, thus distinguishing him from the animal. The "empty" voice of the animal does not imply for the vampire the denial of consciousness. Dracula's own voice, with its «weird textures»<sup>17</sup>, can appear under another sonic quality in a different corporeality. These issues can be usefully addressed while comparing *Dracula* to its follower and companion, *Frankenstein*.

14 As a side note, while discussing the relations between magic and cinema until the Twenties, Solomon (*Disappearing tricks*, cit., p. 69) has stressed the cosmopolitan internationalism of magicians. The foreign accent may thus also be considered as a link to the supernatural by reference to contemporary magic.

15 Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*, cit., p. 70. Even if they both present a strong foreign accent, Van Helsing and Dracula's voices are nevertheless clearly typologically opposite (*Ibid.*, p. 65).

16 A. Cavarero, *A più voci. Filosofia dell'espressione vocale*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2003, p. 41.

17 Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*, cit., p. 66.

Produced with a budget of \$275,000, *Frankenstein* wound up grossing \$12 million (up to 1962)<sup>18</sup>, and it was even more successful than the previous *Dracula*, thus convincing Universal patron Carl Laemmle that he had literally invented a new economically promising genre, still to be abundantly exploited.

In the well-known monster resuscitation sequence, the establishing shot shows the ancient watchtower where Dr. Frankenstein has his laboratory. Above all, it is the thunder that embodies the soundscape, becoming almost its «keynote sound», that is, its fundamental, characterizing element<sup>19</sup>. In fact, the sound of *Frankenstein*'s thunder establishes a cinematic cliché not only in semiotic terms (as a sound type, like the wolf howl that would accompany almost all full moons on the screen) but literally as a quotation in film production<sup>20</sup>.

Some shots later, the camera focuses on the electrical component. As noted by Spadoni<sup>21</sup>, electricity was a crucial element in the marketing of the film, as in the Twenties it acted as a sort of technological double of the introduction of sound in films. Thus, we see the scientist wearing headphones to amplify acoustic perception and evaluating the magnitude of lightning (by appreciating its acoustic counterparts, the thunder). Soon a kind of electric score begins that, through three shots, shows the scientific instrumentation of the lab. Each shot opens a new portion of space that is indissolubly tied to a single sound object. The introduction of both the sound objects and the material objects that make up the operational headquarters of the experiment has a twofold aim: on the one hand it spectacularizes the scientific aspirations of the mad doctor, on the other hand the whole configuration becomes a sort of audiovisual training for the audience, aimed at the eye but above all to the ear and introducing the sound events that will be shown later on. Machine testing is interrupted by an unexpected visit to the lab tower. Elizabeth (Mae Clark, Dr. Frankenstein's girlfriend), Dr. Waldman (Edward Van Sloan) and Victor (John Boles, the couple's interested friend) will be the viewers of the creation of life. Here, thunders constantly punctuate the dialogues by marking salient narrative passages. In a tense crescendo, the various machines, all made visible by the shot, are again activated almost in unison. This is one of the first examples in the history of cinema of the exploitation of a crucial property of sound, that is, its constitutive transparency. In fact, the various «electrical voices» (including the thunders) are progressively added, but like transparent layers they still can be appreciated as individual

18 T. Mora, *Storia del cinema dell'orrore vol. 1. Dalle origini al 1957*, Fanucci, Roma 1977.

19 See R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart - Knopf, New York 1977. «Soundscape» is to be intended here as the overall sound organization that can be referred to the figurative world represented in the text.

20 «Castle Thunder could easily be called the thunderclap heard around the world. Originally recorded for *Frankenstein* in 1931, it has been featured in countless films and TV shows since becoming the definitive movie thunderclap. Until around the late '80s, whenever you heard a thunderclap in a movie, it was probably Castle Thunder», <http://www.hollywoodlostandfound.net/sound/castlethunder.html>, last access on March 2023.

21 Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies*, cit., p. 90.

components of a dense auditory scene<sup>22</sup>. It is interesting to point out how the temporality of vision (and the intrigue of action) is structured here not by the assembly of images but rather by the apparitions and disappearances of these sound objects. They participate in a sort of electro-physiological orchestration, sustained visually by the flashes of lightning outside the laboratory. Together with the pulsating life of sounds, they define the rhythm of the audiovisual expression with an extraordinary dramatic impact. The overlapping population of the auditory scene is even more apparent when the sound flow is punctuated by more or less intelligible voices, giving the chance to the audience to appreciate even more the electrical soundscape. Such voices are phonologically present but semantically inaccessible, a feature that contrast with the so-called “vococentrism” prevalent in the later economy of film production<sup>23</sup>. In this sense, *Frankenstein*, as a whole film, stages two conflicting approaches to sound that coexist in the early talkies. On one side, there is an appreciation of the non-verbal sound that will find substantially no space in later, mature sound films; on the other one, it begins to affirm a new perspective that will subordinate sound to a minor role in classic Hollywood.

The complex spatial configuration of the sequence can be schematized as in Figure 2.

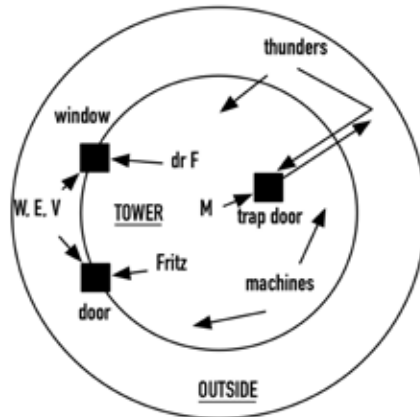


Figure 2. *Frankenstein*: the watchtower space.

The whole space is organized around the constant communication between two subspaces (in Figure 4, Outside, where the storm takes place, and Tower). These two spaces can influence each other by means of three contact points (black squares) that mostly act like audible membranes. These are: the door, at which Waldman, Elizabeth and Victor (W, E, V) knock and wait; the window, through which the former and Frankenstein (dr F) communicate; the trap door on the ceiling, first explored by the Frankenstein’s assistant Fritz and then used to expose the monster (M) to the storm. In Figure 4, the arrows indicate communication/access processes. Among the three membranes, the door and the window do

22 As proposed by A. Bregman, *Auditory Scene Analysis. The Perceptual Organization of Sound*, MIT Press, Cambridge-London 1990.

23 M. Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, Editions de l’Etoile, Paris 1982, p. 16.

not substantially allow a visual communication. In fact, the door is opaque, and through the peephole, opened internally by Fritz, it is not possible to see the outside. The window allows Waldman, Elizabeth and Victor to see an unfocused shape of Frankenstein from outside, without providing a clear picture of his laboratory. Only the trap door allows seeing the sky and the lightning. But the unification of the space is provided by sound. Voices traverse the door and the window, and the thunder is heard both outside and inside the tower. It is exactly the trap door that acts as a membrane both in the audible and visible domain, as through it we both see the lightning and hear the thunder. In this sense, the movement of the still dead body of the monster towards the trap door, in order to reach the sky, acts as a connection between culture (the laboratory) and nature (the outside). This vertical, superhuman, movement is opposed to the horizontal door crossing, still related to the purely human side, that is, to the anthropic space that connects the entrance to the inside of the tower. The monster is thus something that is incongruously related to the human and the natural. Or better, it is doubly inhuman, if we consider that it is the result of a perverse and mysterious electro-physiological technology catalyzed by the storm. As noted before, in the whole sequence the sound is always electric, as it results from technology (machine buzzing and creaking) or from the furious storm. The machines cannot escape the tower (while the thunder can penetrate into it), but they are joined to the sky (the place of thunder) by means of the vertical movement of the monster that crosses the trap door.

Carotenuto has observed that «the opening of the cinema to the fantastic coincides with the breaking of the *Unheimlich*»<sup>24</sup>, while Everson has noted that the emergence of a “fearful” fiction can be fully attributed to the rise of the narrative “phonosphere”<sup>25</sup>. It turns out that acoustic determinations have become the audible *proprium* of the disturbing strangeness. This emotional revelation is strongly apparent since *Frankenstein's* inception, but finds its greatest achievement in the sequence in which the monster is presented: here, the acousmatic steps become the trace of the transgression pursued by Dr Frankenstein's (pro)creative efforts.

«Here it comes ...», Dr. Frankenstein exclaims: *Das Unheimlich* rises out of the field as a noise of footsteps, according to a directionality of the source defined by the movements of the listening bodies, until a first appearance in which the whole monster' shape enters the room. The indexicality becomes the emotional origin around which the force of vision is structured, the revealing impact culminating with Boris Karloff's very first close-up. This is the first foundational example of one of the main discursive strategy of horror cinema, in which the uncanny is mostly an acousmatic being, a set of audible activities. The acousmatic steps tie together four shots in which the almost unacceptable optical truth of the monster's close up causes a voiding of the acoustic space. This final “sound apnea” is the representation of the impossibility of interpreting something that contradicts natural laws: the face of the monster is offered in silence, almost as an expressionist *rêverie*.

24 A. Carotenuto, *Il fascino discreto dell'orrore. Psicologia dell'arte e della letteratura fantastica*, Bompiani, Milano 1997, p. 44.

25 Everson, *Classics of the horror film*, cit.

In the creature, the functional movement deficiency is symbolically connected to the difficulty in the articulation of language. This aphasia becomes apparent in its reaction to the fire: the latter provokes a vocal gesture that is not able to reach the language and therefore cannot carry any linguistic meaning. Indeed, the fear of fire seems to indicate a prelinguistic state of the creature. Interestingly then, if we take into account the two films as a textual microcorpus, Frankenstein is clearly opposed to Dracula with respect to the linguistic dimension, and the monstrosity is defined as a double possibility in term of linguistic and vocal features. If Dracula shows an exorbitant linguistic ability, capable of including in its spectrum the animality of the howl and the seductive dialogue, in Frankenstein the monstrosity takes the form of unarticulated sound.

Finally, at Dr. Frankenstein's house, while preparing the feast for the imminent marriage between the scientist and his girlfriend Elizabeth, Victor brings the news of the death of Dr. Waldman, claiming that the monster was seen wandering around in the surrounding countryside. Frankenstein closes Elizabeth in a room, and suddenly the monster's voice is heard. The men try to locate Frankenstein's moan by sipping the house, but in the meantime the creature enters the woman's room and tries to attack her: her cry of terror resounds throughout the building. The announcement of Waldman's murder leads Dr. Frankenstein to name the being he reassembled and re-animated: «The monster!». The exclamation of the scientist literally evokes the uncanny. The monster then establishes its presence: the moaning, its pervasive phonetic sign, emerges from off the screen, an acoustic marker that surrounds and envelops all that falls within the portion of visible space<sup>26</sup>.

Again, it is worth trying to schematize the relationships between sound and space (Figure 3).

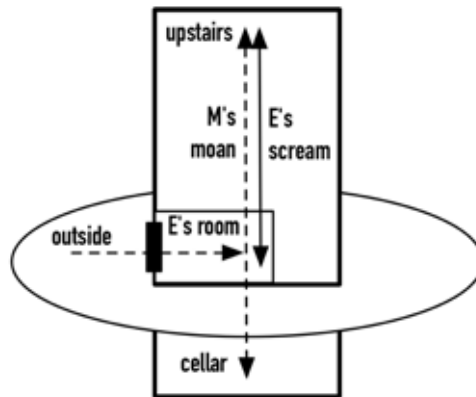


Figure 3. *Frankenstein*: space and sound in the monster's attack to Elizabeth.

In a way not dissimilar to what happens in *Dracula* in the case of the howl (see Figure 1), the sound of the monstrosity has the capability of spreading anywhere while at the same

<sup>26</sup> For Spadoni, the linguistically mute figure of Frankenstein's uncanny creation projects its monstrosity on the silent movies that in 1932 are violently receding into the past (2007:113-18).



time hiding itself. Frankenstein's moan (dashed arrows) enters (like in *Dracula's* wolf howl) from outside, through the window of Elizabeth's room (E's room, where the black rectangle stands for the window, like in Figure 1). But this figurative disambiguation is proposed only after it is heard as a sound with no traceable origin. The archetypal power of sound plays a prime role on this occasion, as a phantasmatic emission unbound to the monster's body and freely floating as an acousmatic threat with no place of origin. The radiant qualities of the monster's sound operates a kind of enchantment that confuses the pursuers, so that they locate it first «upstairs» and then at its exact opposite, «the cellar» (dashed vertical arrow). Finally, the camera ends up intercepting the monster outside the house through the transparency of a window, thus giving its moaning a supernatural quality. Again, we find a clear opposition between movements in the space that are related to sound (like in the case of the resuscitation scene, Figure 2). The monster moves horizontally this time, and from outside to inside (entering the room by the window), while the confused men move exclusively vertically and inside the house.

Thus, sound propagation, as an enveloping fluctuation impossible to locate in its place of origin, literally invests the narrative level, and even for the attendees the identification of the source is inadmissible. The monster is now silent, while it becomes clear that the window is in Elizabeth's room. The tension around the movement of the voice then converges into the woman's room, it is finally entangled to the image of the threatening and unseen monster, which scans and then defies the protected space where Elizabeth has been locked in. Here we can see the appearance of a crucial sound type of the horror genre, «the articulation of language in face of death»<sup>27</sup>: the scream of the woman (solid arrow) is a sound laceration of incontrovertible violence that bursts several times into different pitches according to various modulations, until it separates from the image. It proceeds almost outside the screen to incorporate the audience, thus opening a visible and recognizable gap that leaves the audience to rely entirely on listening. A complex relation can be established between the monster's moaning and the woman's screaming. The two sound objects are organized initially as a dialogue, as the monster replies to the first scream by Elizabeth. Then, the scream can be heard (off) in the entire house, like the moaning before. But the crucial difference is that Elizabeth's scream is purely human, and thus Dr. Frankenstein and the other men can immediately locate it. The female cry establishes a codification that will become standard, a real *topos* of the horror genre, that is, the inseparable union between the woman's voice and the "voice terror"<sup>28</sup>.

27 Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, cit., p. 97.

28 Brian De Palma has paid homage to the female scream in his *Blow Out* (1981, MGM), in which the plot starts with the main character, a sound editor, in the need to record a "good" female scream for horror B-movies.

## Conclusions

In the early '30s, *all talkies* are a reality, but at the same time they are still offering a limited and incomplete sound product due to the fact that the mix is not yet available, limiting the options to direct recording and/or post-synchronization. In this period, we assist, on the one hand, to a complete overcoming of the experimental phase involving sound presence that will lead to the imposition of a sort of standard style in the treatment of the audible domain, and on the other hand, to the birth of various genres, including the horror. In this regard, we have observed how horror film is deeply bound to the audible dynamics, as the uncanny emerges mostly as an acousmatic threat, giving almost a tactile concreteness to the unrepresentable and configuring it as a sound event. The audible presence is then offered as an energetic mechanics that expands on the black screen, nourishing the spectator's inferences, suggesting and pointing, or addressing her/him as an aural attraction.

In *Dracula*, sounds like the howl become vehicles of a predetermined sense. They connect different spaces, incorporating and unifying them. If *Dracula* is the pervasive and metamorphic threat that controls the becoming of sound, the reassembled creature in *Frankenstein* is a prominent sounding body, a producer and a significant source. The sequence of the resuscitation is marked by the natural threat of the thunder, a phenomenon that becomes a sound seal of the horrors to come. Created in the loud stratification of the electrical phenomena of the laboratory, the monster is first revealed as a burst with no face, and it finally shows itself in the total cessation of audible activities.

In the woman's aggression scene, the monster emits non-linguistic vocalizations that propagate through the space and redefine it. The disturbing extraneousness cannot be traced back to its source, it is shaped like an omnidirectional propagation that scares and confuses the bodies on the scene. Finally, the presence of the female scream becomes the core sound object that, similarly, crosses the space; it emerges from the symbolic place of the mouth and operates a convergence of the various narrative lines.

To sum up, the audible spatial perception conjures with the cinematic ability to assemble otherness, a dimension of imaginary and indefinite extension: a new way of telling, indeed full of sound and fury, rapidly establishing clichés, yet signifying something to the audience.