## What wind in what trees? Listening to *Blow-Up* (1966)

Paul Newland


In the last interview he gave before his death in 1948, the American filmmaking pioneer D.W. Griffith said 'What the modern movie lacks is beauty – the beauty of moving wind in the trees, the little movement in a beautiful blowing on the blossoms in the trees'.[1] Moving images of natural phenomena such as wind moving tree branches enthralled early cinema audiences. Siegfried Kracauer described such examples of the magic of cinema thus: 'undulating waves, moving clouds, and changing facial expressions […] conveyed the longing for an instrument which could capture the slightest incidents of the world about us […] whose incalculable movements resemble, somehow, those of waves or leaves.'[2] In the work of Kracauer, wind in the trees 'is taken to reveal cinema's ability to show the autonomy of the world unfold independently of authorial control.'[3] Perhaps Griffith would have appreciated the memorable sequences of trees blowing in the wind in Michelangelo Antonioni's film *Blow-Up* (1966), one of three films that the Italian director was contracted to make in English for MGM. Produced by Carlo Ponti, *Blow-Up* won the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes in 1967.[4] The film stars David Hemmings as a London-based photographer who, after taking a series of photographs in a suburban park, subsequently prints and blows up these images to discover what he believes to be evidence of a murder.

Sequences in *Blow-Up* shot in Maryon Park, south-east London, and a linked sequence in which the photographer (Hemmings) prints and blows up photographs he takes in this park, have received several critical interpretations. None of this criticism has focused primarily on Antonioni's use of sound. That is what I aim to address here. Iain Sinclair

describes Maryon Park as an 'amphitheatre, a wooded bowl, with tennis courts at the centre.'[5] The art director Assheton Gordon chose this park as a setting for the 'murder', because it was a 'theatre box' and 'it resembled the spatialities of de Chicoro, an artist admired by himself and Antonioni.'[6] In this chapter I will focus specifically on the sonic representation of leaves blowing in trees in this park in order to argue that Antonioni's carefully constructed sound space in *Blow-Up* purposefully avoids depicting quotidian or natural sounds in any straightforwardly realistic or naturalistic way.[7] Rather, I will show through close listening, or through a critical 'blowing up' of the sound space, that sound in *Blow-Up* is constructed alongside the images to develop an aesthetic spatiality which achieves two key things. Firstly, the sound of wind in the trees can be interpreted as an evocation of the uncanny, almost supernatural reaction of nature to the dramatic proceedings of the film. As such, sound becomes suggestive of the trees as a kind of protagonist; as a meta-human, dramatic presence in the narrative. In this way, the sound of wind in the trees effectively operates as a sonic example of pathetic fallacy. Secondly, at the same time, I will show that the sound of the wind in the trees serves to evoke or communicate the psychological world of the key protagonist, the photographer Thomas (Hemmings), primarily to communicate his condition as a profoundly dislocated and alienated modern figure. [8] I will show that the cumulative effect of these potential representational meanings of the sounds in the film construct an existential and uncanny spatial framework which facilitates the communication of the constructed nature of cinematic representation, and through this, the constructed nature of human experience, and, more broadly, of human experience of modern reality itself.[9]

In order to analyse the sound space of *Blow-Up*, I want to draw on and further develop my concept of the 'phonotope' (the prefix 'phono' deriving from the Greek work for

'sound'), which might best be understood as an audio-visual redevelopment of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the literary chronotope.[10] For Bakhtin, a chronotope is a 'time-space'.[11] Bakhtin was concerned with how the literary form of the novel produces chronotopes, writing that 'every literary image is chronotopic'.[12] The phonotope might best be understood as a 'sound-space' which temporally informs and structures the spatial imaginary and, as it does this, transcends material, 'real' places represented by the images in a film. In other words, I conceive of phonotopes as filmic time-spaces in which film sound aesthetics employed in representing real places develop a complex spatial and temporal dialogue with these 'real' places. Just as Thomas blows up a series of images in the film in order to uncover the potential outcome of a series of events, I will 'blow up' these film sounds in order to demonstrate the extraordinary representational complexity of Antonioni's constructed phonotope. In terms of methodology, this sonic 'blowing up', or close listening, echoes aspects of 'reduced listening'. Michel Chion points out that 'reduced listening does not forbid listening otherwise […] reduced listening overlaps with the others and enriches them.'[13] I am however advocating for a 'spatial listening' that might facilitate an awareness of how and why filmic phonotopes are constructed, and how they convey meaning.

Antonioni's films are profoundly spatial. Writing in 1975, the film critic Penelope Houston advocated that Antonioni's greatest gift as a filmmaker was 'his hypersensitive feeling about places, and the part landscape plays in mood.'[14] But landscapes in Antonioni's films are sonic as well as visual. From the 1960s onwards, Antonioni's films often featured environmental sounds to help construct this spatiality.[15] *Blow-Up* develops a complex representational sound space (phonotope) which serves to evoke the quotidian life of not just specific places in London while at the same time rendering these places uncanny through aesthetic gestures towards their representational artifice. The sound for *Blow-Up* was

recorded live on location, but Antonioni resisted simply synchronizing this sound to his images. The director has explained the importance of the process of sound design in his films thus: 'My rule is always the same: for each scene, I record a soundtrack without actors.'[16] He chose to meticulously plan and structure his sound world *after* shooting sequences.[17] Exploring the sequences shot in the park, I will now demonstrate how this structured, constructed sound world operates.

### The first visit to Maryon Park

Thomas's first visit to Maryon Park occurs when he drifts into this place after exploring a nearby antiques shop that he is considering purchasing. As William Arrowsmith puts it, 'Of his own choice, he freely consents to the pull of the park, following his eyes – not his camera – where they lead him, entering slowly, even gravely, into the world opening out before him.'[18] The entry into the park 'marks a point of transition, for Thomas is carrying his old assumptions of power into an environment where they no longer obtain.'[19] But this is also a point of transition in the film's employment of sound; the moment when sound starts to become more obviously artificial, and, as such, representational.

FIGURE 1: BLOW-UP - THOMAS (DAVID HEMMINGS) ENTERS THE 'PARK' SPACE

At the beginning of this sequence, Thomas is pictured photographing the antiques shop, with the entrance to the park behind him; tall trees blowing in the wind. The film then cuts to a shot from a camera within the park, looking back at Thomas and the shop, framed by the trees. The gentle sound of the wind blowing the leaves increases in volume now, while the camera remains static. Peter Brunette advocates that these 'wind in the trees' sounds are invested in a 'foreboding and existential resonance.'[20] At first, this sound of the wind in the

trees appears to be an 'ambient sound'; the type of sound, as Michel Chion explains, 'that

envelops a scene and inhabits its space, without raising the question of the identification of

visual embodiment of its source: birds singing, churchbells ringing. We might also call them

territory sounds, because they serve to identify a particular locale through their pervasive

and continuous presence.'[21] However, the sound of the wind in the trees in this sequence

gradually develops beyond any simple background ambience. Instead, this sound comes to

operate as a hauntingly expressive representational device. It crucially informs the strange

spatiality in the sequence in Maryon Park, which on the one hand facilitates Thomas's

material and psychological removal from the quotidian life of the city, while on the other

hand immersing him in an uncanny space of mystery.

The film cuts to a shot of a woman in a suit and hat (a mysterious, incongruous

Antonionian figure) picking up litter from the lawn and the path in the park. The camera

slowly pans to the left, and she notices Thomas, who walks towards the camera. The film

then cuts to a shot of this area of the park from another angle. The camera slowly pans left to

reveal tennis courts and a circular flower bed. Here the sounds of the leaves and the birdsong

continue at approximately the same ambient volume level. But the movement of the camera,

and its subsequently suddenly static position (moving towards and then holding the image of

the flower bed and tennis court for several seconds in the same shot) invests the landscape

with a sense of mystery. This mystery is heightened by the incongruence of the relationship

between images and sound. In other words, the camera movement helps to invest the sonic

ambience with a strangeness which intensifies as the sequence develops. This sonic

ambience is more noticeable as time unfolds in the sequence, and it becomes increasingly

clear that this sound is not communicating the life of a straightforwardly 'real' place, but that

it is instead serving to communicate and underline the representational aspects of the film

images and film sound we are witnessing, and to articulate the existence of an uncanny agora that exists between recorded images, recorded sound and the 'real' world recorded. With the camera still static, Thomas walks off into the distance, past the tennis courts, towards some birds gathered on the distant park lawn. We hear the sound of a tennis ball being hit. At this moment, the film cuts to a medium close-up of Thomas. The leaves are quieter now, but the sound of the tennis ball being hit remains, at the same volume. The gentle sounds of the wind blowing the leaves, the tennis ball being hit, and the bird singing continue, communicating the construction of a strange ambient space, but also, at the same time, evoking a space of mystery and foreboding. Here, the sound of wind in the trees also starts to communicate the uncanny reaction of features of a 'natural' environment to the dramatic proceedings of the film. This sound becomes increasingly suggestive of the trees as a meta-human presence, while at the same time facilitating the aesthetic communication of Thomas's existential experience.

Thomas raises his camera to his eye and focuses on something. The film now cuts to a long shot of Thomas chasing the birds on the vast lawn with his camera. The sound of the leaves is barely audible here, but we can hear a bird singing again. Another cut sees the camera panning quite rapidly and without smoothness from right to left, very briefly capturing two figures in the corner of the frame (more on these figures in my conclusion), before focusing on the rear elevation of terraced houses beyond the park. Antonioni cuts again to another medium shot of Thomas on the grass. The leaves pick up in volume slightly now. The length of this sequence, without dialogue or any obvious dramatic purpose, also serves to lend it an uncanny quality. It communicates a sense of time unfolding in a specific place, while at the same time problematising the ontological nature of this place. The film now cuts to a couple making their way up a steep bank, towards some bushes. The sound of

the leaves in the wind increases in volume here, again signalling increased tension and mysteriousness. As Thomas playfully runs up some steps towards a higher section of the park, the sonic landscape steadily moves beyond any straightforwardly realistic representation of a place, towards a more obviously discernible representational artifice.

As Thomas enters this elevated park space, the sound of the leaves grows louder still. Tension noticeably increases. Thomas stops at the top of the steps, and peers through a branch; his eyes framed by leaves. He puts his camera to his eye again, and looks around this upper level of the park, clearly intrigued by something. The film now cuts to a panning shot; the camera moving from left to right. The couple can now be seen standing on the grass in the distance, holding hands. In the background, beyond the trees and bushes that mark the boundary of the park, 1960s-style buildings are visible. The sound of the leaves being blown by the wind is now very prominent. We hear the woman laugh. In the next shot, we see Thomas slowly climb over a low fence, and begin to photograph the couple. The sound of the leaves continues. A dog barks in the distance. The shutter on Thomas's camera can be heard rhythmically opening and closing: capturing reality. The volume of the leaves blowing shifts now; growing quieter, then louder again, coming in waves. It is clear that Antonioni wants us to *notice* this sound; for it to shape our experience of this mysterious sequence in this mysterious representational space.

FIG 2: BLOW-UP - MARYON PARK AS THEATRICAL AND SONIC SPACE


FIG 3: BLOW-UP - THE SOUND OF THE SHUTTER? THOMAS (DAVID HEMMINGS) CAPTURING REALITY

Thomas hops over the low fence and runs towards a tree, and crouches and hides. He takes more photographs of the couple. With the new mechanical, rhythmic sounds of the

shutter opening and closing on the camera, the volume of the leaves blowing increases again, also ratcheting up the tension while at the same time foregrounding and emphasising the representational aspects of the sequence, and indicating the potential importance of the photographs being taken to what will unfold. Interestingly, the sound of the leaves swells in volume whenever the couple are pictured clearly in the frame, potentially communicating their importance to future events that will unfold. Michel Chion developed the term 'anempathetic sound', which signifies a sound which appears to exhibit conspicuous indifference to what is going on in a film, while at the same time creating a sense of the tragic.[22] But this sound of the leaves in this sequence might effectively become an empathetic sound; a sound that seems to speak, like a response, or an intervention, to the events unfolding.

Noticing he has been spotted, Thomas turns and walks back towards the steps. The woman runs towards him, and the leaves noticeably swell in volume once more. Throughout the following sequence - during which the woman, Jane (Vanessa Redgrave) confronts Thomas about taking photographs of her and her lover - the leaves swell in volume whenever she is on screen, and quieten down again when she is offscreen. However, this pattern of sound changes after she bites Thomas's hand and he asks, aggressively, 'What's the rush?' From now on the sound of the leaves remains more obviously constant throughout the sequence.

The last words Jane speaks on this initial meeting in the park are: 'No we haven't met. You've never seen me.' This is a key piece of dialogue, foreshadowing the series of disappearances that will occur later in the film. Antonioni gives us a wide shot of the park as she runs off behind a tree into the distance. The leaves swell in volume once more. When the film cuts again to a shot of Thomas walking back towards the antiques shop, the sound of the

leaves suddenly disappears. Music appears instead (a slide guitar), which subsequent shots suggest might be diegetic, coming from a record player in the shop. This lack of a clear sound source, and the concomitant disruption between diegetic and extra-diegetic spaces, once again serves to communicate – or even foreground - the representational aspects of the film.

This first park sequence develops a highly complex representation that might initially be read through what R. Murray Schafer termed 'hi-fi' soundscape: 'one in which discrete sounds can be heard clearly because of the low ambient noise level.'[23] Interestingly, Schafer's ecological perspective on 'real' soundscapes led him to argue that the countryside is 'generally more hi-fi than the city; night more than day; ancient times more than modern. In the hi-fi soundscape, sounds overlap less frequently; there is perspective-foreground and background'.[24] Rather, in this sequence in *Blow-Up* – as in many Antonioni films - the representation of an outdoor place develops a quiet, 'hi-fi' soundscape, which lends this space mysteriously uncanny, almost supernatural status.

The sound of the leaves blowing in the wind in this sequence might also be read as the articulation of the ghostly voice of a nonhuman sound source. Theoretical debates about the nonhuman in recent years have been driven by writers such as Jane Bennett and Eduardo Kohn.[25] Other writers have recently developed theories of sound which begin to engage with such theories of the nonhuman and anthropomorphism germane to my argument. For example, Mark Grimshaw and Tom Garner argue that sound is 'emergent perception'; that sound should not be theorised as 'object', but instead is constituted through plural material and immaterial mediations, as what they call a 'sonic aggregate'.[26] This concept of the sonic aggregate, if considered spatially, might allow us to understand how far the sound space of *Blow-Up* toys with or purposefully disrupts our previous knowledge (conscious or unconscious) of the relationship between sounds and their sources, and problematises what

Grimshaw and Garner term the 'virtual cloud of potentials' from which the sound as perception emerge. Furthermore, working on nonhuman sound, Georgia Born's view is that

> Generally, nonhuman sound is not a focus of human attention. To become aware of it requires an attunement, a shift from perpetual background to foreground, whether it is high-volume environmental sound of the more continuous ebb and flow of low-level hushes, hums, washes, and clusters of sonic events (trees rustling, planes and trains passing, fridge humming, flies buzzing, house creaking, cars revving, birds calling, construction work proceeding, and so on). Nonhuman sound exists as a constant, potentially affect-laden companion to quotidian life.'[27]

Born builds on these ideas, and on the work of Alfred Whitehead,[28] as she seeks to 'open up a conceptual space in which we understand sound, including nonhuman sound, as an inherently relational and "mediational" phenomenon that overcomes dualistic understandings of subject and object and that [...] itself participates in subjectivity.'[29] These ideas allow us to consider how far Antonioni's *Blow-Up* disrupts the 'relational' and 'mediational' aspects of sound in order to explore existential subjectivity.

In *Blow-Up*, this space opened up by the tension between the human and unhuman, reality and its cinematic representation ultimately produces the effect of a haunting, which chimes with the 'murder' narrative of the film. As such, the sound space in the film can be read through Mark Fisher's work on hauntology. Drawing on Jacques Derrida, Fisher argues that there are two directions in hauntology: 'The first refers to that which is (in actuality is) no longer, but which is still effective as a virtuality (the traumatic ''compulsion to repeat,'' a structure that repeats, a fatal pattern). The second refers to that which (in actuality) has not yet happened, but which is already effective in the virtual (an attractor, an anticipation shaping current behavior).'[30] Thus, 'Haunting can be seen as intrinsically resistant to the

contraction and homogenization of time and space. It happens when a place is stained by time, or when a particular place becomes the site for an encounter with broken time.'[31] As such, 'specific (hauntological) landscapes—landscapes stained by time, where time can only be experienced as broken, as a fatal repetition.'[32] *Blow-Up* certainly presents a landscape 'stained by time', which can only be experienced as 'repetition'. David Toop has written about the potentially spectral aspects of sound. For example, he advocates that:

> sound is a haunting, a ghost, a presence whose location in space is ambiguous and whose existence in time is transitory. The intangibility of time is uncanny – a phenomenal presence both in the head, at its point of source and all around – so never entirely distinct from auditory hallucinations. The close listener is like a medium who draws out substance from that which is not entirely there.[33]

Toop's view of the spectral nature of sound chimes with the employment of sound in Michelangelo Antonioni's films, not least in *Blow-Up*.


### Blowing up photographs of Maryon Park

The sequence in which Thomas blows up his photographic 'capturing of the landscape' can also be read through Mark Fisher's work on hauntology and Toop's thoughts on sound as haunting. We see Thomas developing his film exposures, and slowly and systematically examine these images, printing a selection of enlargements which he arranges in a sequence, tacking them up onto the walls of his studio. After developing further magnifications of key portions of two of the exposures, Thomas eventually believes he can see images of a gunman and a corpse. These blown-up up images are grainy; effectively as unreadable as his friend Bill's (John Castle) abstract paintings. As this sequence unfolds, we hear the clear, seemingly diegetic sounds of Thomas's footsteps on the wooden floorboards of the studio as he

displays these images. There is also an ambient sound audible here, which might or might not be the distant hum of city. Thomas puts a vinyl LP on his record player, and sits and looks at the prints. But when he starts to look at an image of the park with a magnifying glass, this 'diegetic' music abruptly fades to silence. This sonic moment signifies a profound breakdown between reality and representation. At this precise moment in the film, any relationship between diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds falls apart. Here Antonioni is evidently foregrounding the fact that the film we are watching is artifice; a *representation* of reality, just like the photographs Thomas is examining. As Thomas places more and more pictures around the room, they being to appear like the frames of a film; like a moving picture. As Antonioni shows us these black and white photographs in close up in the following sequence, the sound of leaves blowing in the wind in the park inexplicably returns. This, like the sudden drop out of the jazz music moments before, also serves to highlight and foreground the constructed nature of the representational aspects of what is being witnessed here. This is a sonic example of Derrida's 'specter'; an aesthetic device evidently resistant to the contraction and homogenization of time and space.

## The third visit to Maryon Park

After discovering what he believes to be images of a corpse and a gunman, Thomas drives back to the park for a second time at night. He parks his Rolls Royce by the antiques shop and walks into the park, once again climbing the steps to the high grassy platform. The sound of the leaves appears once again here, but it is now noticeably louder in volume than during the earlier park sequences. Thomas walks across the lawn towards the spot where he saw the body the night before. But the volume of the leaves in the trees significantly decreases when he arrives at what he believes to be the precise location, and as he looks down at the grass

where the body had previously laid, before increasing in volume again as he crouches down, camera in hand. The film cuts to a shot of Thomas. We are looking down at his back as he crouches on the grass. He looks up, over his shoulder. The sound of the leaves in the wind noticeably increases in volume again here. The film then cuts to an image of leaves blowing in the wind. The wind sounds even louder now. The camera pans back to Thomas, who is now standing, looking bemused; the leaves behind him blowing hard in the wind. He moves forwards slowly, and stops. A mysterious white sign high on scaffolding beyond the perimeter of the park is now visible behind the fence and the bushes, lit up, but out of focus. Antonioni cuts again to an image of the grass, a tree, and bushes behind, where the steps lead away. He then cuts back to Thomas in the same position as before. Thomas turns his head back to where the body once lay, and then back towards the steps. At this precise moment we see the light on the large white sign suddenly go out, and the sign coming into full focus. As Thomas notices the change in light out of the corner of his eye, he turns to look at the sign. This is a typical Antonionian device – an unreadable sign; a sign with no ultimate meaning (intended or otherwise), which nevertheless looms over the events in the park, and is evidently brought to our attention to in this moment. [34] The leaves are quieter again now, as Thomas looks at the white sign, but they subsequently pick up in volume once more, as Antonioni cuts to a shot of Thomas standing, once again looking at the spot where he had found the body. This shot – taken by a static camera – is held for 28 seconds. It allows us to view Thomas looking around this specific place in the park for one last time, as the sound of the leaves blowing in the trees continues, along with the sound of what once again appears to be a dog barking in the distance. This sequence further cements the construction of a haunted sound space that is informed by the tension between the human and unhuman, and between the sounds of natural, nonhuman material objects and their cinematic

representation. Again, during this sequence the sound of the wind in the trees functions as dramatic device, articulating the uncanny reaction of meta-human nature, and evoking a hauntological space, while at the same time articulating the existential experience of Thomas.

What follows is the famous mimed tennis match sequence. By now, Thomas has abandoned the murder mystery.[35] And by now, Antonioni has abandoned any pretence to any straightforwardly realistic representation of reality. The tennis 'match' starts in near silence. Gradually the sound of the leaves blowing fades up from silence, and develops in waves throughout, rising and lowering in volume. As a young woman and man 'play' tennis with an imaginary ball, other sounds can be heard in the sound space (phonotope), which might or might not be their footsteps on the court (it is important to note that not all the footsteps that can we see here have obviously corresponding sounds on the soundtrack), the players making the sound of a tennis ball being hit by rackets, or a tennis ball itself being hit. After Thomas picks up and throws the imaginary ball back to the players on the court, the camera remains on him as his eyes follow the flight of the imaginary ball, moving from left to right as the 'game' recommences. During this sequence, a sound of a tennis ball being hit is clearly audible on the sound track, as Thomas looks on. The sound of the leaves swells once more, before the film cuts to a final image of Thomas, in long shot, on the grass. Here, Hancock's upbeat jazz joins the sound space, before the image of Thomas fades to nothing, with only the patchy grass remaining. The disjunct between sounds and images of sound sources in the final mimed tennis match sequence in *Blow-Up* becomes distinctly hauntological; a representation of Derrida's 'specter'; an example of the visibility of the invisible.

## Conclusion

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Siegfried Kracauer once argued that images of wind in trees 'reveal cinema's ability to show the autonomy of the world unfold independently of authorial control.' [36] But Antonioni once explained that in *Blow-up* he was really 'questioning the nature of reality.'[37] Instead, in this film, the sound of wind in the trees does not in any simple way unfold independently of authorial control, or capture natural events unfolding, but instead serves – through authorial control - to evoke the uncanny reaction of nature to dramatic proceedings. As such, sound becomes suggestive of the trees in the park as a meta-human presence, while at the same time facilitating an aesthetic evocation of the existential experience of Thomas.

I want to end with a very short auto-ethnographic intervention. Before researching this chapter, I had already viewed (and listened to) *Blow-Up* dozens of times. Despite the fact I had taught the film to masters students over a number of years, re-watching (and re-listening to) the film again in 2022 I noticed several things for the first time. For example, it occurred to me that the couple in the first sequence in the park can be seen (before we see the shot of the climbing the bank) for a very brief moment, as the camera pans from right to left, away from the tennis court and towards the white terraced houses. It also occurred to me that if I ever get the opportunity to view the film on a big screen, and will thus be able to 'blow-up' the image, so to speak, I might be able to see a corpse lying on the grass when Jane (Redgrave) runs away from Thomas (Hemmings) at the end of the first park sequence. There was also much on the soundtrack I noticed for the first time, only recently, by listening very carefully multiple times – critically 'blowing up' the sound. It was only after re-viewing and re-listening to the film that I came to the conclusion that I can hear no sound of a gunshot in the first key sequence in Maryon Park, despite the relative quietness and emptiness of the park

during these moments. On considering these surprising new discoveries, it occurred to me that the shot in the film of Thomas with a large magnifying glass, looking at the film negatives in his studio, was effectively the same activity I was currently engaged in – trying to make sense of a text critically; to *find* something in it. This made me ask myself the following question: what am *I* viewing and listening to, what am *I* seeking in the film?

I came to the conclusion that Antonioni's *Blow-Up* is showing us that recorded sound is always open to interpretation, as all images are, and that *all* sound is uncanny, not only because of the space (and indeed time) between the source of a sound and our awareness and consciousness of it, but also because of the fact that we are only ever hearing and interpreting sound waves formed at a sound's source. The film articulates the ultimate impossibility of an artist to accurately capture or depict objective truth or reality. As Iain Foreman points out, 'If we acknowledge that soundscapes estrange, dislocate, render uncanny – they absent community – what is the role of sound as a medium of communication?'[38] Chatman and Duncan argue that by the end of *Blow-Up*, Thomas 'is no more real than the imaginary tennis ball that he threw back into the tennis court.'[39] Antonioni effectively shows us that *any* film - its story, its characters, its location and its sounds - are no more real than Thomas's imaginary tennis ball.

[1] Ezra Goodman, *The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 19. See also Daniel Fairfax, 'The Beauty of Moving Wind in the Trees: Cinematic Presence and the Films of D.W Griffith', in Charlie Keil (ed.), *A Companion to D.W. Griffith* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 74-105.
[2] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 27-28.
[3] Jordan Schonig, 'Contingent Motion: Rethinking the "Wind in the Trees" in Early Cinema and CGI', *Discourse*, 40: 1 (2018): 30-61; 31.
[4] Robin Gregory was the sound recordist on *Blow-Up*, while Mike Le Mare was the sound editor, and J.B. Smith the dubbing mixer. Other uncredited individuals worked on the film sound in various capacities, including W.

Carr (sound assistant), Fernando Caso (sound effects editor), Arkadi De Rakoff (assistant sound), Alvaro Gramigna (Foley artist), Ray Palmer (sound assistant) and Michael Sale (sound assistant).

[5] Iain Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory* (London: Granta, 1998), 347.

[6] David Alan Mellor, 'Fragments of an Unknowable Whole: Michelangelo Antonioni's Incorporation of Contemporary Visualities in London, 1966', *Visual Culture in Britain* 8: 2 (2007), 45-61; 56.

[7] Seymour Chatman, *The Surface of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 134.

[8] Peter Brunette, *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 131-2.

[9] David Forgacs, 'In the Details', *Blow-Up* Blu-Ray, Criterion (2017), 12-25; 21.

[10] I have previously developed the concept of the 'phonotope' in 'Folksploitation: Charting the horrors of the British folk music tradition in The Wicker Man (Robin Hardy, 1973)', in *British Cinema in the 1970s*, ed. Robert Shail, (London: British Film Institute, 2008), 119-128, and in 'The Spatial Politics of the Voice in Patrick Keiller's Robinson in Ruins', in *The New Soundtrack*, 6: 2 (2016), 129-142.

[11] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays', in Michael Holquist (ed.), tr. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84

[12] Bakhtin, 'The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays', 251.

[13] Michel Chion, 'Reflections on the Sound Object and Reduced Listening', James A. Steintrager and Rey Chow (eds), *Sound Objects (*Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019), 23-32; 31.

[14] Penelope Houston, 'Keeping Up with the Antonionis', *Sight and Sound*, 33:4 (1964), 163-168; 166.

[15] Andy Birtwistle, 'Heavy weather: Michelangelo Antonioni, Tsai Ming-liang, and the poetics of environmental sound', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 32:1 (2014), 72-90; 74.

[16] Betty Jeffries Demby and Larry Sturhahn, 'Antonioni discusses The Passenger', in *Michelangelo Antonioni Interviews* (ed. Bert Cardullo) (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 104-114; 111.

[17] Antonella C. Sisto, *Film Sound in Italy: Listening to the Screen* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 137.

[18] William Arrowsmith, *Antonioni: The Poet of Images*, edited by Ted Perry (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press,1995), 115-6.

[19] Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, 'The Emblematic Texture of Antonioni's Blow-Up', *Film Criticism*, 3: 1 (Fall 2011), 68-84; 82.

[20] Peter Brunette, *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116.

[21] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, ed. and trans. by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 75.

[22] Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, 221-222.

[23] R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1994), 43.

[24] Schafer, *The Soundscape,* 43.

[25] See Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[26] Mark Grimshaw and Tom Garner, *Sonic Virtuality: Sounds as Emergent Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 166-78.

[27] Georgia Born,' On Nonhuman Sound – Sound as Relation', James A. Steintrager and Rey Chow (eds), *Sound Objects* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019), 185-207; 188.

[28] See for example Alfred Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[29] Born,' On Nonhuman Sound – Sound as Relation', 198.

[30] Mark Fisher, 'What is Hauntology?', *Film Quarterly*, 66: 1 (2012), 16-24; 19.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.; 21.

[33] David Toop, *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), xv.

[34] Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, 'The Emblematic Texture of Antonioni's Blow-Up', *Film Criticism* 3: 1 (Fall 2011), 68-84; 74.

[35] Sam Rohdie, *Antonioni* (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 46.

[36] Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 27-28.

[37] Michelangelo Antonioni, 'Antonioni – English Style', in *Blow-up, a film by Michelangelo Antonioni* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 4.

[38] Iain Foreman, 'Uncanny Soundscapes: Towards an inoperative acoustic community', *Organised Sound*, 16: 3 (2011), 264-271; 265.

[39] Seymour Chatman and Paul Duncan (eds), *Michelangelo Antonioni: The Complete Films* (Taschen, 2008), 53.