

Musical aspects and the Soundscape in *The Lost Link & Other Tales*, by Charles Kiefer /

Aspectos musicais e da paisagem sonora em ‘O Elo Perdido & Outros Contos’, de Charles Kiefer

Gérson Luís Werlang *

Gérson Werlang is Professor of Music and Literature at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria-RS, Brazil. He has Doctorate Degree in Literature and is Master of Music.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7449-0706>

Viviane Aparecida Pandolfo Debortoli **

Holds a Master Degree in Literature from Universidade Federal de Santa Maria-RS, Brazil. She is a regular teacher in Rio Grande do Sul state's network.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2805-0224>

Received: July, 21th, 2020. **Approved:** July, 30th, 2020.

How to cite this article:

DEBORTOLLI, Viviane Aparecida Pandolfo; WERLANG, Gérson Luís. Musical aspects and the Soundscape in *The Lost Link & Other Tales*, by Charles Kiefer. *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 9, n. 3, p. 91-107, ago. 2020.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the soundscape in the tales of the book *O Elo Perdido & Outros Contos*, by Brazilian writer Charles Kiefer. The soundscape may be defined as the sonic elements found in a given environment: a city, a room, the sounds of nature, or any other place. Considering the different possibilities of analysis that the literary text allows, we intend to highlight the soundscape as an element of the narrative through the presence of the sounds in the selected work, and through this to demonstrate the way they are relevant in the construction of the plots. The approach on the sound landscape in literature is a relatively new subject from which one seeks to understand the relation between sonority and the actions of the characters. David Lodge (2017), Eni Pucinelli Orlandi (2007), Gérson Werlang (2011), and Murray Schafer (2011) give the theoretical basis for this analysis, which takes into consideration also the relations between different arts in the fictional text.

KEYWORDS: soundscape; Literature; Silence; Music

*

 gerwer@rocketmail.com

**

 viviane.debortoli@hotmail.com

 <http://dx.doi.org/10.35572/rlr.v9i3.1749>

RESUMO

Este estudo pretende analisar a paisagem sonora nos contos que compõem o livro *O Elo Perdido & Outros Contos*, do escritor brasileiro Charles Kiefer. Considera-se a paisagem sonora como os elementos sônicos presentes num determinado ambiente, sejam eles naturais ou produzidos. Levando-se em consideração as diferentes possibilidades de eixos de análise que o texto literário permite, pretende-se evidenciar a paisagem sonora como um elemento da narrativa por meio da presença dos sons na obra selecionada, e através disso demonstrar de que forma eles são relevantes na construção dos enredos. A abordagem sobre a paisagem sonora na literatura é um assunto relativamente novo a partir do qual se busca compreender a relação entre a sonoridade e as ações dos personagens. David Lodge (2017), Eni Pucinelli Orlandi (2007), Gérson Werlang (2011) e Murray Schafer (2011) dão as bases teóricas a esta análise, a qual leva em consideração também as relações interartes no texto ficcional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Paisagem sonora; Literatura; Silêncio; Música.

1 Introduction

David Lodge, English writer and literary critic, born in London in 1935, has published a vast work, both fictional and critical, among which stands out *The Art of Fiction*, published in 1992. In this work there is a series of articles about elements of the fictional text. Throughout the book, Lodge discusses important issues related to literary analysis, such as points of view, flow of consciousness, inner monologue, climate, unreliable narrator, among others.

From this perspective, it is understood that there are several thematic units that can be analyzed in fiction. It turns out that there is an aspect neglected for a long time in literary studies, which concerns the presence of the soundscape in literature. Although much progress has been made in this direction and studies in the area are no longer as rare, new contributions can be considered of paramount importance, especially in authors who are not silent, that is, those in whose plots sonority is as present as a factor as climate, space and characters, for example.

The evolutionary path of literary studies shows that new elements to be analyzed are revealed over time; this is directly related to the texts, since in some periods of the history of literature it was not common to have certain descriptions, as it usually happens nowadays.

Setting, for example, according to Lodge (2017)

it developed quite late in the history of fictional prose. As Mikhail Bakhtin observed, the cities of the classic novel are interchangeable backgrounds for the plot: for us, Ephesus, it could very well be Corinth or Syracuse. The first English novelists were not much more specific about places. The London of Defoe's or Fielding's novels, for example, does not have the same visual detail as Dickens's London (2017, p. 66).

In a similar relation, soundscape is also part of the group of elements that have been silenced for a long time, not necessarily as a production, since it is present in relatively old texts, but as an object of analysis. Although it is known that music and literature are inextricably intertwined, it is a recent fact that scholars of literature have pored over texts in order to hear their sounds, whether the sounds of music, wind, natural noise or those produced by man.

Lodge (2017) also says that setting is related to the emergence of romanticism, which considered “the effects of the environment on man, opened people’s eyes to the sublime beauty of natural landscapes and, later, also to the tetrical symbolism of urban panoramas in the Industrial Age ”(2017, p. 66). Similar is what happens in relation to the soundscape: unveiling its presence in texts favors the hearing of sounds, that is, studies related to the soundscape in literature can open the ears of readers to listen to the sounds that emanate from the narratives.

Some research on acoustics is important when studying the soundscape, since the analysis of acoustic elements in literary supports demands a mental / auditory effort in order to understand the transfiguration of sound in the field of literature, since “formulating an exact impression of a soundscape is more difficult than that of a visual landscape. There is nothing in sonography that corresponds to the instant impression that photography can create” (SCHAFER, 2011, p. 23).

According to Werlang (2011),

The term soundscape was defined by Schafer (2001), related to the existing sounds in the world, including noise and music, as well as the sounds of nature, the sonic environment of large cities, as well as towns and other small communities (2011, p. 29).

Considering that literature somehow transfigures the surrounding reality, nothing more natural than to suppose that in some degree there will be references to the soundscape in the texts, although they are not always perceived. Especially the contributions of Schafer (2011), associated with those of Werlang (2011), who transposed the study of acoustics to literature, form the theoretical framework that supports the proposed analysis. In addition to them, Lodge (2017) and Orlandi (2007) are used here in questions about the functioning of fiction and silence, respectively.

2 Charles Kiefer and the Soundscape

When literary texts are used for critical analysis, there are several ways of approach to which they can be submitted. The same text can have an extensive critical fortune and yet the study of the work is not exhausted, so vast is the field of studies based on literature. Although the range of possibilities is really wide, there is a lack of reflections on the soundscape in literary texts. The aim of this study is to show how it reveals itself in literature and that sometimes it is not just the background of a narrative, when it is directly linked to the main actions in the plot.

Among the writings whose work, at times, transfigures the sonorous character of everyday life in the literary context is Brazilian author Charles Kiefer, from the city of Três de Maio, located in Brazil's southern state, Rio Grande do Sul. Kiefer had some of his books translated abroad and won important national literary awards. His work developed especially in the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century, when he was tasked with addressing fictional issues especially concerning the small farmer of German origin in the Upper Uruguay region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In his novels, Kiefer highlights issues such as agrarian reform, the obsolescence of rural people due to land development, the formation of small cities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and the effect of the introduction of television on society; the tales have a varied theme, although they maintain a certain homogeneity in terms of space, developing mostly in his state's background, or making reference to it.

It is important to highlight the recurrence of the place where many of the stories happen, because the sounds of these places are repeatedly described; that is, when the stories unfold on properties in the interior of small towns in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, there are common sounds, such as cow moaning, dog barking, rooster crowing, birds, horse throwing, etc., as seen in Kiefer's novel *The Pendulum of the Clock (O Pêndulo do Relógio)*: "A rooster crows, oxen roar in the pasture a short distance away. The cockalorum puts the chickens in an uproar. The Landrace pig grunts, claiming its food portion" (KIEFER, 1994, p. 7), or even in another of his novels, *Waltz for Bruno Stein*: "Suddenly, mixing with musical notes, dogs barked fiercely in the yard" (KIEFER, 1995, p 98), two of Kiefer's works.

In addition to natural and animal sounds, the presence of music is also verified in many tales and novels, which makes a specific soundscape possible, and introduces art into the narratives. In this context, the purpose of this essay is to analyze the presence of soundscape

and music (in extension to dance and the arts in general) in the five short stories presented in the book *The Missing Link & Other Stories*, published by Charles Kiefer in 1997.

2.1 Fireflies

“Fireflies” is the short story that opens the book, and narrates the moment of separation of a couple after years of living together, due to the extramarital relationship of the man, a university professor, with one of his former students. Narrated in first person from the wife's perspective, the text presents the account of the woman's thoughts and impressions and introduces in the opening paragraph a metaphorical reference to dance as a mechanism of seduction, by approaching the husband's attitude to that of the bird: “I felt what feel the glaciers as the drought approaches. We women know when our men rehearse the steps of the peacock dance, but we pretend to ignore it” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 5). Peacocks, as we know, open and pry their tail feathers, which is a kind of conquest dance, to captivate and seduce the female for mating. The movements performed instinctively by this type of bird refer to dance because it occurs in a more or less similar way, like the steps of a dance. Thus, an artistic reference is established for the first time, and there is a visible approximation between animals and human beings.

The text's sequence subtly reveals women's perceptions and intentions also through artistic references. By saying “And because we are absolutely sure of our power over them, disdainful and cynical, we postpone the beginning of the contradiction” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 6), the character-narrator enters the metaphorical game that she herself created and establishes the link action / reaction in the same order dance / counterdance. The husband's action (peacock dance) triggers a reaction in the female character (counterdance).

Although it is a relatively short tale, dance is soon introduced in the story again, this time showing that it was something that was actually present in the couple's life, because on wedding anniversaries

After the third or fourth cup, which he drank by clicking his tongue against his teeth, we danced for an hour, tight, and the desire returned, first an oboe solo, distant and sad; growing strings and metals, then *allegro ma non troppo* (KIEFER, 1999, p. 7).

Symbolically, dance is presented as a mechanism of approximation between the couple, as it reignites a flame that no longer burns. The three musical references listed gradually in the fragment are in line with the moment lived by both and subtly refer to the sexual act that follows, since the music is sad (as both were while they were distant); growing, musically speaking, indicates the sound intensity in the execution of the movements, and can be associated, according to the context, both to the phallus and to the sexual desire that resurfaces, especially if the two words that accompany it are taken into account (strings, metals), since one retains some feminine characteristics, and the other is masculine; one malleable, the other rigid; in turn, *allegro ma non troppo*, that means “fast, but not too much”, which in music also indicates the intensity of the movement's execution, referring to lightness and joy and can be understood as the result triggered by the couple's rapprochement; that is, the cycle closes, the couple left sadness and arrived at joy, this path passes through music and is metaphorized through it. In this sense, Werlang (2011) states that

The inter-influence between music and literature occurs in multiple ways. In the same way, writers and poets of the period used music to write their works. Musicians, songs and musical instruments appeared as characters, as a topic of discussion, as a soundtrack, as a backdrop in novels, short stories and poems (2011, p. 25).

Thus, music appears as the soundtrack moments of ecstasy, it is associated with moments of joy. Music is absent at the time of the separation, but was present while the two were still a couple, sometimes forming a link between the two.

The narrative continues with the wife remembering some facts experienced by the couple while they were still engaged. Natural from Rio de Janeiro, and resident of this city located in the center of Brazil, the woman heads to the south with her future husband on a train trip in which she ends up confusing a cloud of fireflies with the lights of a city, which she supposed to be Uruguiana. During the journey she hears the sounds produced by the train tracks. In the present of the narrative, what triggers the memories is precisely a sound element, the noise produced by the husband, “his teeth produced dry clicks, as if of fireflies” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 9), which she associates with the sounds produced by the train on that past trip; in extension, she recalls the scene of the fireflies, which occurs in the sequence.

It is impossible to not notice the influence of the soundscape to which the character is exposed, and which is the propellant of memories. That is, the narrator's sound perception is

activated by the memory; something that happened years ago is updated through a purely sonic element.

In addition, the character-narrator not only remembers past events due to the sounds produced by her husband with his teeth, but also recalls the sounds she had heard in that episode of yore. Sound is the link that links the past to the present; both mix in an analogy clearly imbued with sonority.

The image of the fireflies, produced by the nervous chattering of their teeth in the arcades, had already taken over my spirit. It was a hot night, the train was cutting through an old December and the pampa, I could hear the clicks of the wheels on the tracks, rough and stubborn, like green wood in the fire (KIEFER, 1999, p. 10).

The sonic presence of trains has a unique place in literature. For Schafer (2011),

In comparison to the sounds of modern transport, those on trains were rich and characteristic: the whistle, the bell, the slow snorting of the machines at the start, suddenly accelerating as the wheels slid and then, slowing down again, the sudden explosions of steam to the escaping, the squealing of the wheels, the clashing of the wagons, the clatter, the clatter of the tracks, the banging against the window when another train passed in the opposite direction, were all memorable noises.

Travel-related sounds have a profound mystery. In the same way that the post horn carried the imagination across the horizon, so did its replacement, the train whistle (2011, p. 120).

Although more than twenty years have passed between the present of the narrative and the train journey remembered by the character, the sound produced by the locomotive has not been forgotten, which reveals the lasting character of the sounds in the memory of the characters, and is sometimes a factor determinant in the development of a plot, as is the case of this story, since it is precisely the sound that activates the memories that guide the outcome of the narrative.

2.2 The Other Apocryphal Gospel (O Outro Evangelho Apócrifo)

The second story in the book is entitled “The Other Apocryphal Gospel” and makes explicit reference to the story *The Gospel According to Mark*, by Jorge Luís Borges and the *New Testament of the Christian Bible*. In both, as in the biblical reference, a man is taken to the crucifixion. The title of this story is unique and corroborates what Lodge (2017) says about the

subject. According to him "the title of a novel is part of the text - in fact the first part we find - and therefore has considerable power to attract and condition the reader's attention" (2017, p. 200). It is common knowledge that in the *Holy Bible*, sacred book of Christianity, there is a passage that reports the judgment and crucifixion of Jesus, and this episode is revealed in the *Gospel of Mark*, one of the four books of the *New Testament*, whose authorship is unknown, although attributed to Mark. In this sense, in semantic terms, it would be considered an apocryphal text, that is, of dubious authorship. When doing an analysis about the title of this story, it is noticed that the meaning of the word *other* exists related to something, so it is understood that there are more apocryphal Gospels, that is, whose authorship is unknown. When analyzing the storyline, it is known that someone practices torture against the character and sends him to crucifixion; however, the authorship of this decision is not clear, because the other characters are not named. Thus, the title of the story alone reveals its intentions and summarizes the subject to which it will refer

The most evident element in this Kiefer's tale is intertextuality, whose allusions to Borges and the *Bible* are direct. According to Lodge (2017) "some theorists believe that intertextuality is the very condition of literature - that all texts are woven with the threads of other texts, regardless of whether or not their authors are aware" (2017, p. 106) . Some texts highlight intertextual traces more than others. In this case, the established intertextuality is in line with the theoretical perspective according to which "if any text refers implicitly to the texts, it is primarily from a genetic point of view that the literary work has a collusion with intertextuality" (JENNY, 1979, p. 5). That is, literary genesis is intrinsically linked to the plurality of previous authorial voices, whose traces are identifiable within the textual structure. In line with this assumption is Perrone-Moises' idea, according to which

At all times, the literary text appeared related to other previous or contemporary texts, literature was always born of and in literature. Just remember the thematic and formal relationships of countless great works of the past with the Bible, with the Greek-Latin texts, with the literary works immediately previous, which served as a structural model and as a source of "quotes", characters and situations (1978 , p. 59).

The intertext is, by its nature, intermediatic. Intermediality proposes a broader concept for relationships that encompass intertextuality. According to Irina Rajewsky:

In general terms, and according to common sense, “intermediality” refers to the relationships between media, interactions and interference of a media nature. Hence, they say that “intermediality” is, in the first place, a flexible and generic term, “capable of designating any phenomenon involving more than one media” (WOLF, 1999, p. 40-41), that is, any phenomenon that - according to the prefix *inter* indicates - it occurs in the space between one media and another (s) (RAJEWSKY, 2012, p. 52).

In this article, where Rajewsky discusses media frontiers in the debate on intermediality, the author asserts that

any reference to intermediality presumes that it is possible to set the limits of individual media, since it would be difficult to discuss intermediality if we were unable to discern and apprehend the distinct entities involved in interference, interaction and reciprocity (RAJEWSKY, 2012, p. 53).

The relationships established in Charles Kiefer's short story encompass what is proposed here: the sounds, defined as a soundscape by Murray Schafer, which are evident in the literary narrative; sounds in literature, therefore. The central character of the narrative is Baltasar Espinosa, a young man full of ideas who fought for causes dear to the youth of his time, despite his father's conservative ideals. Once, after being arrested for put up posters in public places, he is taken to a place he believes is a ranch or farm, where he is tortured. Because his eyes are blindfolded, he cannot visually identify the name or place to which he was taken. However, his hearing remains intact and it is precisely the hearing aid that he uses to try to identify where he is.

He was taken to a ranch, which the blindfold prevented from knowing his name, but which his sense of direction suspected was in the south. Perhaps he was mistaken and what he thought was a ranch was just a farm on the sides of the sawmill. What never left him, however, even in dreams, was the smell of wet wool, or the memory of the smell, the sad mooing of a cow and the lonely crowing of a rooster, which was repeated three times (KIEFER, 1999, p. 16).

Although the lack of vision did not allow the character to see where he was taken, the sounds of the animals in the field denounce the place. The effect of the sound description presents details that can be significant considering the context in which they appear. The same adjectives that characterize sounds can be attributed to the situation in which Baltasar finds himself. The sad mooing of the cow may refer to a cry for help, a sound interpretation of the character's mood; while the lone sing of the rooster, repeated three times, refers to the symbol of the rooster as haughty, self-sufficient, which suggests the independence of the young man's revolutionary ideals, who even alone did not shy away from fulfilling what seemed right (and that

took him to prison). In this sense, the soundscape subtly reinforces what is narrated. The allegorical layers of the text are produced through sounds.

The dictators and executioners tried for three days to get names of political leaders out of Baltasar through torture, but failed, so they decided to crucify him. Carpenters dedicated themselves to building the cross on which it was to be nailed. Once again, hearing was the only resource he had to suppose what was happening around him, since “Baltasar Espinosa heard the hammering and laughter of soldiers in the courtyard, but was unable to decipher the mystery” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 18). Although he could not guess what was being produced, he knew, paying attention to the soundscape, that something was being built nearby, due to the hammer striking the wood. Baltasar was notably in a situation that he had no control over, he was overwhelmed and prevented from seeing what was happening around him. The structuring of this context refers to Schafer's postulate (2011), according to which “when man was afraid of the dangers of an unexplored environment, his whole body became an ear” (2011, p. 45), and that's what he does, using his hearing to explore what his eyes couldn't see. Once again, the soundscape occupies a punctual place in the narrative.

The tale moves towards the end and presents the character's horror at seeing the cross that was made for him. Assuming what he expected, he ends up denouncing his companions.

2.3 Those days in Marienbad

“Those days in Marienbad” is the third of the five short stories that make up the book that served as the basis for this analysis. This time the character is Franz Kafka, who wages a battle with other Kafkas who live inside him when he goes to the door of his lover's apartment to try to reconcile, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to keep in touch with her, who at the present moment of the scene, is reclusive in what the character calls a “dark and silent crypt” (1999, p. 20), that is, the woman's apartment. Two elements deserve to be highlighted in this passage, since Milena's space of seclusion (the girl Kafka wants to reconnect with) is characterized in a dark way, either by darkness or by silence. Notably, silence is related to something negative, considering the semantic field of the word “crypt”, which refers to the grotto, burial site for the dead, cave, or something like that. By extension, it is understood that in this crypt their love was buried, whose resonance is given by silence. In other words, here silence represents much more than the absence of sound, but Milena's silence in relation to her attempts at reconciliation.

Darkness and silence are in the order of sadness, while joy (the resumption of love for the couple) would be given by light and sound (of conversations, of laughter, for example). In this sense, Orlandi (2007) states that “in structuralism, the idea of ‘meta’ and ‘Ø’ as an opposition leave no room for silence and fill everything with linguistics defined in its entirety. Silence acquires the value that its opposite dictates” (2007, p. 44). It is what is presupposed in the fragment above, silence in opposition to sound, and by extension, sadness in polarization to joy. Silence is full of senses.

In opposition to the silence of the apartment is the sound of the streets, which confuse the character and make him see Milena in other women: look, the perfume” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 21). The presence of sonorities is perceived in the character's sensorial misunderstanding.

Before the door of the woman he was trying to reconcile with, he felt suffocating dread.

The pain was so intense, it sharpened his senses. He could hear Milena's breathing on the other side of the door, the lover's heart thudding, the sound of her tears running down her face and staining her satiny skin, she could hear the lids opening and closing over her greens, mossy (KIEFER, 1999, p. 22).

In this fragment, hearing takes on giant, extraordinary dimensions, reaching contexts in which it is possible to hear the sound of a tear falling, such is the suffering. In real contexts, the sound of breathing and heartbeat is only possible when you are very close to the person. Even though the apartment was extremely quiet, it would be impossible to hear, outside the door, the heartbeat of anyone inside. The symbology created by Kiefer in this passage is significant from a sonic perspective, while the sound is directly related to the character's feelings. Associations between sound and silence, listening to the inaudible, create a dense figurative atmosphere that is intimately in line with the narrated facts.

The moments of despair he lived at Milena's door make him remember the happy moments lived with her in Marienbad, when “... he never get tired of citing his favorite poets” (1999, p. 23); that is, in moments of joy, art was present. Marienbad was a kind of Pasárgada for the character, because “in those days the screams of dread became screams of pleasure” (1999, p. 23). The polysemy of the meanings attributed to the screams reveals the fact that a similar form of sound representation can be associated with opposite things, such as crying, which can be the result of joy or sadness.

The torture machine, with its long tentacles extended through the door, remained in operation, slow, methodical, efficient. The silence of the gears, victory of the maintenance team, was total. Franz Kafka listened only to Milena's gasps in an effort to move the powerful cog wheels (KIEFER, 1999, p. 29).

The torture machine mentioned in the passage above works as a metaphor for consciousness, related to the mind working and trying to process the reasons that led to the couple's departure. The dichotomy sound/silence appears again, structuring the figure of speech, since gears usually emit some noise when they are working; as the gears worked inside the character's head, they were silent, as opposed to Milena's eagerness to keep the machine moving. In other words, there is a kind of wordless duel, represented by the fight waged between the characters who are distanced from each other, to which Milena makes an effort not to give in, while Kafka also suffers trying to recover what they already had. It is a silent battle, devoid of any words, guided only by subtle gestures, sonic perceptions and a dense atmosphere of guilt, regret and nostalgia, whose meaning does not occur at any time through any speech of the characters, but only through sensory activities linked to sound and silence. Notably, the soundscape in this tale is a key element, charged with meaning, not least because in the absence of speech it is the sound that stands out.

2.4 The Missed Link

Fourth short story and homonymous with the title of the book, "The Missed Link" is also the name of the pub where the narrative takes place. It is a metafictional text in which the narrator teaches how to write short stories, and in a way breaks the traditional structure of the genre, although it is not a new resource. For Lodge (2017, p. 213), "metafiction is fiction that deals with itself: novels and tales that call attention to the fictional status and the method used in its writings".

In this story, initially the narrator, who is also a short story writer, goes to a pub in search of the missing link, that is, the motto that could lead to the production of something relevant. Permeated by ramblings ranging from the hypothesis of the fan falling on the narrator's head, to observations about the waitresses and customers, the text is more about the pages of the book than about developing a plot.

Like the other texts in the book, this story also features musical references, the first of which is part of the description of the scene: "The pub was almost empty, a couple were kissing on the sofa in the first room, we couldn't see if they were straight, the waitress talked to a guy at the second counter, a fat woman listened to the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack, with her eyes closed, on the third" (KIEFER, 1999, p. 37). *Pulp Fiction* is an American film from 1994, dubbed in Portuguese and named *Tempos de Violência*, whose soundtrack was highlighted at the time. The narrator stops in the presence of two girls who have just arrived. One of them arouses his interest, which, in his ramblings, he calls Larca. Through their dialogue, he deduces where they come from.

- Oh, what a beautiful drummer - said Larca.
"I prefer the singer," whispered Nefertari.
They came from a party. Or a dreadful pub with live music. Larca then stayed away. I tried to imagine the guy in the checkered shirt, what a horror!, the restless drumsticks. What attracts in a drummer? The ritual tum-tum? (...)
(KIEFER, 1999, p. 39).

The transcription of the two friends' dialogue together with the narrator's comments about their own conceptions about the figure of the musicians favors the composition of the musical atmosphere of the scene. The narrator supposes to know what goes on in Larca's thoughts, whose gaze danced on the walls of the bar, going from one photo to another

When she didn't find nothing new in the room, she would look at me, I was sure. I waited. You could hear the *ran-tan-tan* of the drums. Suddenly, the drummer drowned out the vibration of the snare drum, threw his head back, theatrical. After the memory show, Larca looked at me (KIEFER, 1999, p. 41).

At no point in the text does the reader know if really what the woman was thinking was what the narrator believes she is. The vision he presents is the result of his impressions, and they are steeped in music. The onomatopoeia used in the construction of the passage, as well as the mention of the specific type of musical instrument that the musician played, reveal that the narrator had musical knowledge. If it were really in the final moments of the presentation that Larca was thinking, and if it were possible to hear the description of the scene from it, perhaps his narrative would be completely different, without any reference to the intensity of the vibrations and the name of the instrument.

The tale continues with some more reflections and few actions, until the narrator-character goes to the bathroom. He says: “Piss, a long and loud piss, right in the center of the toilet, I made a great effort so that the two, on the other side of the wall, could hear. David Bowie, however, drowned out my glorious attempt” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 44). This time, not only is the musical soundscape described (which is to be expected, since pubs generally have some kind of music, either live or reproduced by technological mechanisms), but also the sound produced during urination, artfully executed to be heard on the other side of the wall. In the same fragment, the narrator again reveals his knowledge of music, as he identifies the singer who makes himself heard when he is in the bathroom. The last reference to the sound of this story appears in a comment he makes about the above act, in which he states that “sonorized piss is an unforgivable Spanish” (KIEFER, 1999, p. 45).

2.5 Cíntia’s Disease

The last short story in *The Lost Link & Other Stories* is “Cíntia’s Disease”, and is narrated by an old university professor who was in love with one of his students, whom he guided in the writing of her monograph and with whom he remained in love afterwards, idealizing a love not lived and unrequited. Among the characterizations of the girl, are the adjectives “noisy and backward” (1999, p. 50); as can be seen, the first one has a sonic semantic charge, that is, the character finds in words related to sounds the characteristics that define the person he was in love with and for whom he composed poems that she used to disdain, because she didn’t have the habit of reading poetry, nor could understand it properly. The distance from poetry was also reflected in other artistic genres:

I did the best I could, but Cíntia was prone to poetry, chamber music, theater and European cinema. She preferred vulgar prose and crude jokes, the disharmony of Argentine rockers and the absence of mimesis in pornographic films (KIEFER, 1999, p. 52).

Again, there is a narrator who reveals his cultural refinement through comments about another character. The erudite culture is placed in opposition to the popular and vulgar manifestations of music and cinema. Because she enjoyed unsophisticated examples of music and movies, she was unable, according to the professor, to understand the depth of the more elaborate arts. One cannot help noticing also the narrator’s prejudice with certain forms that have

achieved interesting artistic fruits, but which he seems to be unaware of, for example, when making judgments about “the disharmony of Argentine rockers”.

Cynthia, after finishing college, made a career in cinema, where she revealed her sparse artistic sophistication by selling her body image to erotic magazines for male audiences. In fact, this was the culmination of the attitudes already advanced in the afternoons when she was having the monograph guidance and seduced the teacher. He wanted love, she wanted sex; even though he had an unrequited love for her, that did not prevent him from judging his attitudes, which he did not like, although they were absolutely in agreement with what the girl never hid being. Regarding his naked appearances, the narrator declares “if the spectator rises in the contemplation of a beautiful body, the artist, when exposing himself, degrades himself” (1999, p. 54). At the height of his career, Cíntia finds herself with a disease for which there is no cure, and ends up committing suicide by shooting in the roof of the mouth.

The sonic and artistic references in this story are focused on the characterization that the narrator makes of the character based on his musical preferences. In other words, the narrator's vision reveals an ideological stance based on what he considers to be good or not in terms of art, which does not mean to stop admiring a person for knowing that he/she is not very fond of erudite cultural manifestations. In this story, in particular, the soundscape appears in a subtle way, while other artistic manifestations stand out, such as the reference to Venus de Urbino, a famous Italian Renaissance canvas that displays the image of a naked woman, lying down.

Cíntia had picked up a volume of art history in the office and had stopped to look at Urbino's Venus.

- Doesn't it look like a living body? - I asked.

- More than this? - she replied, taking my hand and taking it to the breast (KIEFER, 1999, p. 53).

Final Sonic Considerations

In view of the above, we observed that the five short stories that make up the book *The Missing Link & Other Stories* have, in some way, sonic references in their structure, whether in the composition of figures of speech, either through music, in noise representation or even purely musical aspects.

In the first narrative, the soundscape is associated with both the present moment and memories. In it, the noise produced by the husband activates memories, also associated with the

sounds and good moments remembered, permeated by music and dance, that is, the sonic elements are not only the background of the narrative, but trigger actions, memories and remain in memory even with the passage of time.

The second story reveals the sensitive nature of hearing when other senses are deprived. The purely auditory feature also appears in other narratives when, even though the character can see, he follows the scenes that occur in other spaces through audition; in these cases, the soundscape is the mechanism that allows the character to deduce what happens around him, as in a house in which one hears what happens in the next room.

The purely auditory resource also appears in other narratives when, even though the character can see, he follows the scenes that occur in other spaces through the ear; in these cases, soundscape is the mechanism that allows the character to deduce what happens around him, as in a house in which one hears what happens in the next room.

In turn, the third story reveals the opposite of sound, that is, silence. In fact, as opposed to sound, silence acquires a specific semantic charge. In this narrative, silence starts meaning the end of love, and it causes such a horror that it is as if the central character could hear inaudible sounds, like the sound of a tear drop, the heartbeat of someone on the other side of the door. The poetic significance of constructions like this reaches high figurative levels, and this is due to the relations between sound and silence.

The fourth and fifth narratives are more explicit in urban musical terms. In general, they make direct references to plastic, musical, cinematographic and mass culture arts. In both, the cultural presence has a significant contribution to the structure of the plot, and exposes aspects of time, space and characters in the narrative. This shows the revealing character of social aspects through the culture that circulates in these spaces. For Schafer (2011) "the acoustic environment of a society can be read as an indicator of the social conditions that produce it and tell us a lot about the trends and the evolution of this society" (p. 23). In extension, having access to the sensory perceptions and the musical preferences of the characters and narrator, allows us to draw a panorama of their characteristics. Following the sonic traces perceived by those involved in a narrative makes it possible to perceive the sagacity of the way they absorb the world around them.

That said, it appears that the soundscape has a considerable role in the narratives in the development of the plots, since it is often the changes in sounds that trigger the actions. Furthermore, in general, the world is sonorous, and since literature is a kind of transfiguration of

reality in books, there is nothing more natural than when sounds are also present in the narratives, albeit at different levels, according to the style of each author. More than just listening to the sounds that emanate from books, the analysis of the soundscape in literature presupposes a disposition for intertextual compression, which we could also call intermediatic, both in the real and fictional worlds.

References

JENNY, Laurent. Intertextualidade na poétique: *Revista de teoria e análise literárias*: nº 27. Coimbra: Almedina. 1979.

KIEFER, Charles. *O Elo Perdido & Outras Histórias*. 3ª ed. – Porto Alegre. Mercado Aberto, 1999.

KIEFER, Charles. *O Pêndulo do Relógio*. – 6ª ed. Porto Alegre. Mercado Aberto, (Novelas), 1994.

KIEFER, Charles. *Valsa para Bruno Stein*. 5. Ed. Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, (Novo Romance) 1995.

LODGE, David. *A Arte da Ficção*; Tradução de Guilherme da Silva Braga. - Porto Alegre, RS: L&PM POCKET, 2017.

ORLANDI, Eni Puccinelli. *As formas do silêncio: no movimento dos sentidos* – 6ª ed. Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2007.

PERRONE-MOYSÉS, Leyla. *Texto, crítica, escritura*. 2ª ed. São Paulo. Ática, 1993.

RAJEWSKY, Irina O. A fronteira em discussão: o *status* problemático das fronteiras midiáticas no debate contemporâneo sobre intermedialidade. In: DINIZ, Thaís Flores Nogueira; VIEIRA, André Soares (Orgs.). *Intermedialidade e estudos interartes: desafios da arte contemporânea 2*. Belo Horizonte: Rona Editora: FALE/UFMG, 2012.

SCHAFER, R. Murray. *A afinação do mundo*; tradução Marisa Trench Fonterrada. 382 p. – 2. ed. – São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2011.

WERLANG, Géron. *A música na obra de Erico Verissimo: polifonia, humanismo e crítica social*. – Passo Fundo: Méritos, 2011.