

Place = Space + Time: A creative exploration into the use of
soundscape composition and video imagery for the depiction of
place

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Abstract

This thesis explores soundscape composition and non-fiction filmmaking to represent a sense of place through audiovisual research outputs and a 5.1 multichannel composition. Urban and rural spaces are explored to capture and re-present place artistically. The research is a multi-disciplinary approach taken from areas such as soundscape composition, sound art, Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and documentary film. My interest in Eastern philosophy, in particular, has greatly influenced the theoretical connections concerning environmental experience, and how perception underpins our worldly experience. Recent research into the mind or consciousness has formalised connections and a conceptualisation regarding place, space, and time, aided by Buddhist and eastern philosophy. The unknowable, unrecordable “feeling of a space” is theorised, as I believe it is a contributing factor to the overall experience of the environment. The practical research took place within my hometown of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, and Newcastle. A snapshot of a place is created through a reiterative process of field recording, soundwalking, and video imagery (fixed camera and drone footage). Whilst on location recording audiovisual data it has become apparent that the environment is in a constant state of flux and there is an ephemerality to life. This finding is a framework used creatively in multichannel and audiovisual projects to show the impermanent nature of the environment. Buddhist philosophy influenced creative decisions and conceptual understanding of the environment. Soundscape composition is generally audio based without visuals; this concept has been enhanced by placing soundscape composition within the audio-visual domain. Conversely, by using soundscape composition for the soundtracks of my films, the concept of City Symphony composition and documentary filmmaking has been refined and contrasted. The ubiquitous nature of noise within these environments became an essential part of my theoretical research and creative portfolio. Place, space, and moments in time are captured visually and aurally. Soundscape composition and video imagery artistically represent place through research outputs. Place, space, and time are separate concepts; however, concerning a sense of place, they co-exist. Time is the precursor that defines space and place; it ultimately defines our environmental experience. The *Huddersfield Lockdown 2020* project is of particular interest due to the data collection happening at an unprecedented moment in time: during the Covid pandemic. A time now preserved and artistically re-presented through sound and image. The *Lockdown* project no longer belongs to the time it was recorded; it now belongs to the past, present and future.

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List of works presented for PhD

Audio-Visual projects

1. Huddersfield Lockdown 2020 (Runtime – 27:58) <https://bit.ly/3zcIMl9>

2. Hudds & Woods (Runtime – 14:49) <https://bit.ly/3PSxtL5>

5.1 Multi-Channel

3. Journey to Newcastle and Back (Runtime 13:31)

Chapter 1: Environmental Sound

1.1 Introduction

This practice-based PhD explores past theories and concepts within soundscape composition and in particular the representation of place. City Symphony composers and documentary filmmakers such as Dziga Vertov, Walter Ruttmann, Paul Strand, Geoffrey Cox, and conceptual artist/filmmaker Adreis Echzehn have greatly influenced the visual aspect of the research outputs. Soundscape composition is ultimately sound-based without any visual references. I intend to elevate the concept of soundscape composition by fusing the genre with visuals in a documentary-style format. The main area of focus is the representation of place using field recordings within soundscape-based compositions and audio-visual projects. The thesis contextualises past theories whilst utilising compositional ideas from soundscape composers and sound artists to enable design and theoretical connections within my research outputs. The research guides the methodological approach and final compositional style of the practical work, which brings multiple theories and concepts together as one. Soundscape composition utilises environmental sounds that remain referential; audio is rarely heavily processed and remains sonically attached to the original sound source. A balance between the two extremes of processing is necessary for the work to remain a soundscape composition. To remain representatively committed during the compositional process, minimalistic processing such as equalisation, reverb, delay and panning were utilised. Using field recordings for soundscape composition is by definition an abstraction of place and environment due to being removed from their environmental context. The thesis brings together the

concepts of place, space, and time as a means of soundscape presentation, representation, and documentation of place. The connection of place, space, and time is a theme that runs throughout the audio-visual projects as well as the 5.1 multi-channel soundscape composition; this highlights connections between research and practice-based research. My background is purely in sound and I have never used or worked with video imagery in the past, and from this perspective, the practice-based research was a steep learning curve. The research began with the following questions:

1. How can a sound artist represent a strong sense of place?
2. How can a sound artist represent a sense of space?
3. How can a sound artist in conjunction with video imagery represent a place, space, and time?

Because of my studies, correlating with Covid-19¹ and the corresponding lockdowns placed throughout the environment, my research questions evolved to be specific to the creative portfolio. The final research questions below were more suited to the reflections in the commentary and the opportunity to process the Covid-19 period creatively through research outputs. The awareness of Buddhist philosophy and its relevance to the experience of the environment were findings gained from theoretical research and the experiences of collecting data whilst on location.

Aided by Buddhist philosophy:

1. How can a sound artist represent a strong sense of place?
2. How can a sound artist represent a sense of space?

¹ Coronavirus (Covid-19), respiratory virus, 2020 onwards.

3. How can a sound artist in conjunction with video imagery represent a unique moment in time such as the Covid-19 period?

Buddhist philosophy has had a profound impact on how I relate to and see the world through my own eyes. The originality of my work lies in combining this philosophy with the experience of environment and place. The relationship between Buddhist philosophy and our everyday experience is an original aspect of the written and practical work. Buddhist philosophy is not a theoretical subject related to soundscape composition or audio-visual projects in the way that my work has. The combination of the two is not something I have come across during my research period; it is an ideology unique to my written and creative work. Buddhist philosophy is at the very core of the written work and all of the research outputs, whether that is multichannel or audio-visual research outputs. The influence of Buddhist philosophy on my creative decisions is reflected upon within the thesis. My unique contribution to knowledge is also reflected in the *Huddersfield Lockdown 2020* audio-visual project and the challenge that studying through this period provided. Having the opportunity to capture a unique moment in time and an environment changed by circumstance was an opportunity that I took upon myself to process creatively. As my supervisor correctly stated, “you could have decided to ignore it, but you did not”. Again, Buddhist philosophy aptly describes the nature of our experience, “no experience, no moment, no person, place, or thing is ever quite the same owing to its radically dynamic, non-static alive nature” (Astin, 2022a). Lastly, my work is also original due to the audio-visual work that is soundscape led defining place, space, and time.

The thesis encapsulates my findings through theoretical research and my experiences/realisations gained from recording on location in my place of residency:

Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, as well as a day trip to Newcastle. The writing describes my work from the inception of ideas on projects, and findings gained from recording on location, through to the final composition of my research outputs. Chapter 1 discusses these findings acquired through research and being on location in the environment. The first chapter of the thesis summarises my experiences in the field, from listening and composing in the field to the awareness of speech and site specificity. The reasons why speech became an important aesthetic to my practical work are explained along with environmental subjective perception, which became a realisation through being out in the field. Chapter 2 discusses the relationship between sound and image and the rationale behind my aesthetic decision-making for the audio-visual outputs. My films intentionally disrupt the conventional sound-image relationship and are a result of my studies correlating with Covid-19² and the corresponding lockdowns placed throughout the environment. Chapter 3 encapsulates place, space, and time through theoretical research and findings realised in the field. Place, space, and time are important factors essential to a soundscape composer; they are also prominent aspects of our environmental experience. This chapter argues how space and time are underlying factors that create our sense of place. As the environment is a multi-layered experience, unknown and incomprehensible aspects of a space are also theorised and argued in “the feeling of a space”. This subjective perception of our environmental experience came from theoretical research and the repeated recording of data whilst out on location. To understand our everyday experience, I have found that you can only find the answer through a combination of both. Sense of place is a phrase known very well to soundscape composers, my audio-visual work especially aimed to add a new dimension to this terminology and understanding of a place. Aided

² Coronavirus (Covid-19), respiratory virus, 2020 onwards.

by Buddhist philosophy, the research into place, space, and time aimed to show how these three factors form the basis of our everyday experience of life. These factors of our experience also became the fundamental aspect of my creative work through sound and image. Chapters 4 and 5 explain my research outputs and discuss the many influences both creatively and theoretically. The sound-based multichannel and audio-visual work shows how a sense of place is fleeting, unique and impermanent:

Every experience is unique, we have not experienced this moment before. Experiences appear and feel very familiar to us, but true as that sense of familiarity may be, the reality is that we have never actually felt this particular moment before, at least not in this exact way (Astin, 2022).

1.2 Soundscape Composition

Soundscape does not exist without a subject or a community. People hear and produce their environment not only through their actions, but also by speaking and writing about their experiences. The cultural study of soundscape can be compared to the cultural study of music: both need the teller and her listening experience to accompany the sound (Jarviluoma et al, 2007, p. 89).

The term soundscape can be defined as the auditory environment within which a listener is immersed (Turner, McGregor, Turner & Carroll, 2003, p. 1). Moreover, soundscape “speaks to the physicality of sonic space and like landscape, it suggests spaces and people, and at once implies a sense of audition” (Sterne, 2014, p. 182). Soundscape composition, therefore, is a form of electroacoustic music that is characterised by recognisable environmental sounds and contexts that invoke the listener’s memories, associations, and imagination related to the soundscape. (Truax, n.d.). The main principles for the soundscape composer are to shape the composition based on the environmental and psychological contexts in which the soundscape presents itself. Moreover, as “we perceive the world in a multisensory manner”

(Porteous & Mastin, 1985, pp. 169-170); the soundscape in an urban environment was relevant and appealing due to the cacophony of everyday sound. My aim as a soundscape composer is to capture life as it happens, take the sound out of its environmental context, and digitally enhance the sound to affect the emotions and perceptions of the listener. This also makes people more aware and closer to the world around them through sound-based and audio-visual projects.

The difference between an electroacoustic and a soundscape composition is that the former loses most of its environmental context and original identity due to heavy processing (Truax, 1984, p. 207). It is important therefore concerning soundscape composition that the field recordings keep their connection to the locality in which they were recorded. Katherine Norman stated that whilst there is abstract music utilizing field recordings, compositions that keep a connection to its recorded source are about the real world (Norman, 1996a, p. 4). Hildegard Westerkamp reiterates this by theorising that soundscape composition should never be abstract and remain rooted in themes of the sound environment. In the composer's own words, "the essence of soundscape composition is the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about a place, time, environments and listening perception" (Westerkamp, 1999). Truax also defines soundscape composition as not definable by just using environmental sound pieces, but rather that they exist between "found sound" and abstraction. Any piece using soundscape recordings cannot be defined as a soundscape composition due to the levels of abstraction achieved by processing with few real-world references involved (Truax, 2002, p. 6). Within my work, I aim to stay true to the genre of soundscape composition by remaining referentially committed to real-world sounds.

Soundscape composition is the antithesis of acousmatic music, which focuses on the appreciation of a sound without relation to the cause or source. The sound object is scrutinised with disregard to its source but instead utilised for its unique acoustic properties (Wishart, 1996, p. 129). Acousmatic music not only utilises field recordings but sounds from musical instruments and the voice used as material for music, they are processed and edited for composition from “real-world sounds” (Andean, 2014, p. 1). The precursor to acousmatic music stemmed from Pierre Schaeffer who formed the theoretical basis of “musique concrete”, which is the electroacoustic process of collecting concrete sounds wherever they came from. Whether these sounds are from musical instruments or the environment, their acoustic properties are abstracted without reference to the source (Raydellet, 1996, p. 10). For example, in Schaeffer’s *Etude aux Chemins de Fer* (1948) the sounds of trains are “the raw materials for a non-referential, abstract sound collage and thus not a soundscape composition” (Gluck, 2013, p. 1). Although I like to think of my work as soundscape composition, during the compositional process there were times I sensed that my work sat in either camp and sometimes within both at the same time. Composer Claude Schryer describes this balancing act of soundscape composition as treating “the acoustic environment as both the subject and the content of a composition, teetering ambiguously on the border between representation and abstraction” (Schryer, 1998). The Newcastle piece in particular utilises mechanical train sounds and environmental sound, the piece could be listened to purely for the sound and without regard to environmental references. The difference between Schaeffer’s (1948) composition and my Newcastle piece is that the train sounds that I recorded were not processed or reconfigured in any way, they are presented as they were recorded and without digital processing. Whether any music made from real-

world sounds can be judged as soundscape composition or abstract sonic art is ultimately debatable and down to personal interpretation. The different levels of processing and abstraction of the recorded source contained within the composition would help to place the piece in a certain category. Art is subjective and should always be that way, whether it is paintings or music, one person's perspective or appreciation differs from another's.

Westerkamp's *A Walk Through the City* (2010, track 1) utilises environmental sound, poetry by Norbert Ruebsaat and people's speech captured within an environmental context. Westerkamp herself states that she ruthlessly processed the sound of truck brakes until they were unrecognisable and that she enjoys walking the line between real and processed sound. This enables the listener to recognise the source and establish a sense of place whilst allowing the composer to explore the acoustic depth of sound through heavy processing (Westerkamp, 2010, pp. 19-20). This is a natural evolution of soundscape composition; not all the sounds present within a composition have to be recognisable to the source. There are different ways of representing a soundscape; a mixture of processed and unprocessed is one way, whilst using unprocessed sound throughout the whole composition is another. A total abstraction of sound throughout the whole piece tends to move away from the definition of soundscape composition. Artistic impressionism is an evolutionary force; the definition of a soundscape composition today could well be a different entity in the future. My perception and usage of field recordings within soundscape composition is in a similar vein to that of sound artist Francisco Lopez in that there is a deep connection between the field recording process and the places recorded, but that is only the first level of experience. Some levels do not have a direct connection with

reality, they are abstract, and field recording is a creative way of interacting with reality, not just representing reality (Lopez, 2013, p. 101). Whilst Lopez is more concerned with using field recordings as a “profound listening experience”, my research outputs are a synthesis and representation of place, space and time. Philosophers Jean Baudrillard and Scott Lash believe that representation separates us from the world (Lash, 2002, p. 106) and that “everything escapes representation” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 107). In contrast to Baudrillard and Lash my research outputs create an artistic representation of the world around us; they connect us to the environment and do not separate us from the world.

Norman, Westerkamp, and Truax previously stated that soundscape composition must retain its recognisability to the recorded source material and not be completely abstract. In theory, this could be true, but I theorise that all soundscape compositions or any music pieces utilising environmental sounds are by definition abstract works. Sonically recording the environment for compositional purposes removes the sounds from their environmental context. The recordings usually undergo some form of digital processing in the studio, which creates further abstraction. The term “sense of place” is a phrase used repeatedly within soundscape composition, and whilst it is possible to represent a sense of place, it is just that, a snapshot and only a small sense of what the place represents. The listener does not have any emotional connection to the sound source (unless they are familiar with the exact location). They do not experience the original sound source in its environmental context and it is therefore abstracted. The emotional connection to environmental sound occurs due to the experiences of recording in the environment and constantly listening back to the recordings, through this process you are transported back into that space (Polli, 2013, p. 23). There is also a powerful memory element and

associated memories through sound, this provokes emotional reactions and is, therefore, a powerful combination (Polli, 2013, pp. 22-23). As a field recordist and soundscape composer you are not only listening intently whilst recording out in the field but during the compositional process, you are repeatedly listening to the same sound many times over. This repetition of listening to the sound deepens the awareness of the complex timbres contained within environmental sound, and according to sound artist Annea Lockwood, they are 'happenstance' sounds that are inherently complex within their interior structures (Lockwood, 2013, p. 29). Nevertheless, no matter what the intention of the composer is, the listener will at some level, consciously or subconsciously, try and place the cause and source of the sounds heard.

The level of attentive listening is not only relevant to an individual's appreciation of a soundscape composition but also relevant to the individual perception of the sonic environment. According to Traux, listening is the "primary interface between the individual and the environment", it also "interprets the acoustic environment to the mind" (Traux, as cited in Laske, 1986, p. 75). Soundscape composition is therefore subjective (as is most art) because its appreciation as a musical piece is dependent on many factors such as listening attentiveness, awareness and cognitive abilities of the listener, regardless of what the composer's intention is within the piece. People who have a background in music or any acoustic discipline will interpret compositions differently and have an altogether contrasting experience when compared to individuals who do not. Cultural and philosophical beliefs are not only a factor in the perception and appreciation of sound but can also affect compositional style. In Afghanistan for example, birdsong is regarded as a form of religious singing and is understood to be a language in which the many names of God are sung by birds.

Afghans regard birdsong as another musical culture that they mix within their particular style of music. They also believe birds enjoy listening to and are stimulated by music and that birds sing their unique song, which is not an imitation of man-made music. The sound of birds responding to music constitutes the height of musical enjoyment in Afghan culture (Bailey, 1997, p. 56). Afghan culture also believes that birdsong has a religious connotation within it and promotes a positive value that grants it complete legitimacy (Bailey, 1996, p. 172). Therefore, cultural and religious beliefs can influence both the appreciation and compositional style of musical pieces as well as reverence for a particularly natural sound contained within the environment. Past research has stated a similar idea when theorising that, “the environment is an eventful domain and a presence that exists in parallel and oftentimes in cooperation with human culture” (Koshkin, 2014, p. 44).

1.3 Temporal characteristics of speech

Nothing represents a moment in time more aptly than people’s speech; accents can also define a period in time. During watching *The World at War (1973-1974)*, which is a 26-episode British television documentary series chronicling the events of the Second World War. I immediately noticed the accents of Londoners interviewed as part of the documentary. The accents were defined by a period in time; they are different in pitch and tone than they are in present-time London. Composers such as Cathy Lane, Katherine Norman, Hildegard Westerkamp, John Young, and Pete Stollery have implemented speech within some of their compositions. In *Resound* (2005, track 4), Stollery utilises field recordings and speech which he describes as a sound documentary that utilises speech and present-day sounds (Stollery, 2013, p.

290). Truax describes this compositional theme as a “sound romance”, due to romantic notions being formed from nostalgia for a time and situation that no longer exists (Truax, 2001, p. 29). Trevor Wishart prefers a sonic art approach to composition using environmental sound such as in *Red Bird* (2000, track 1). The composition utilises mainly speech and vocal sounds abstractly, mixing in environmental sounds and sounds of nature such as birds. Wishart describes that speech can distinguish between one person and another, the sound has rhythm, melody, and a sense of a community that is a snapshot of human life diversification (Wishart, 2010, p. 19). I feel that utilising people’s speech is an important compositional tool for representation within soundscape composition, especially in an urban environment as it represents a place, space, and time. Language reflects community through sound and regardless of the sound belonging to an indoor or outdoor space; it will undergo subtle transformation due to the environment that it is produced within. Reflections will inevitably alter the sound of speech so therefore it belongs to place and space; the human voice is a temporal event due to the reverb times and the very nature of speech is a unique acoustic sound event in time. I am not concerned with the timbre of the voice as a signature of a specific person; the implementation of speech within my compositions is more concerned with the “variations and fluctuations of the voice” within a particular environment, a time, a place and a space (Thibaud, 2013, p. 75).

It is easy to distinguish an accent from Tyneside or London due to the different vowel sounds used in several lexical sets. Moreover “the further away two communities are from each other, the more the speech of their inhabitants differs” (Robinson, 2019a). Accents change and dilute over time due to the movement and social interaction of people around the world. Linguists call this “levelling” due to the uniformity of regional expressions and speech patterns (Ledsom, 2017). Languages

change over time and vary from place to place. Social or political pressures, such as invasion, colonisation, and immigration can cause this change (Robinson, 2019b). Increasing age is also a factor as past studies have indicated that there is a slowing down of speech rate (Duchin and Mysak, 1987; Jacewicz et al., 2010). Speech perception is also at the heart of social interaction. It is dependent on “the speaker’s dialect, or the rate at which the speaker talks” and “this means that in two different contexts, different stimuli may result in the same perceptions, and the same stimulus may result in different perceptions” (Butterfill, 2009, pp. 414-415).

As previously discussed, Westerkamp’s *A Walk Through the City* (2010, track 1) combines speech throughout the composition and abstracted sounds mixed with familiar environmental sounds. The composition was recorded in an urban environment (Vancouver B.C.’s Skid Row) and uses speech throughout alongside the poetry of Nobert Ruebsaat. Norman’s *London* album (1996b) uses speech ubiquitously throughout her London compositions. Composer and sound artist Cathy Lane works with the spoken word and field recordings because “I am interested in how sound relates to the past, our histories, our environment and our collective and individual memories” (Lane, 2022). Audio-visual artist Geoffrey Cox uses speech throughout *Nothing but the Hours* (2010) DVD; this includes audio-visual and sound-based work. Regional accents make documentary representations of speech more difficult to recognise than their use in cinema. The latter can have actors change their accents to suit the film as compared with the idiosyncratic syntax of a particular region (Ruoff, 1993, p. 29). All my research outputs have used the sound of the human voice to represent a place, space, and time. Within urban environments, it reflects multi-

cultural dialects of a given time and location. Bergson summed up the temporality of speech most eloquently:

What I call 'my present' has one foot in my past and another in my future. In my past, first, because 'the moment in which I am speaking is already far from me'; in my future, next, because the moment is impending over the future: it is to the future that I am tending, and could I fix this indivisible present, this infinitesimal element of the curve of time, it is the direction of the future that it would indicate (Bergson, 2004, p. 177).

1.4 Composing in and out of the field

Soundscape composition is an edit of the sonic environment in which we live. As a soundscape composer, there are many compositional decisions made before entering the field. Decisions such as which locations to record in, the types of microphones used, and the time and length of the recording all play a part in deciding what that captured audio is. Listening is part of the recording process and recording is part of the listening process. The "captured sounds and spaces are a window to the recordist's personal preoccupations, memories and subjective perceptions"³ (Samartzis, 2015, p.148). Location sound recording changes the characteristics of the original sound as it is dependent on the portable sound recorder; type and quality of microphones combined with the microphone recording technique. As microphones hear differently, they are the first transformational step of environmental sound and it is impossible to avoid having a version of reality (Lopez, 1998). Katherine Spring also argues, "Sound recording is ontologically different from an original sound event because the act of recording necessarily forecloses the heterogeneity of that event" (Spring, 2012, p. 36). Krause reaffirms the abstraction of the environment through

³ Discussed in-depth in chapter 1.5.

sound recording: whatever you record is not the real thing, it is an illusion—a partially transformed representation of what our ears hear, you only capture what the microphones pick up, which is disparate from your hearing. Every recording choice made is a compositional decision or an edit that affects the result (Krause, 2016, pp. 103-104). Artist Jana Winderen describes how she is always processing and composing when recording in the field, “For me, the composition process starts out in the field, and since I choose a particular pair of [microphones], I also choose how to use them, where to place them, and when to push record. That is all processing” (Winderen, 2013, pp. 154-155). However, Steve Feld describes that recording is not just about gathering things:

it is an invitation to a conversation about what was going on in the world as recorded, about what we were listening to, how we knew and questioned the world by listening to it, how we edited and arranged its meanings [compositionally] (Feld, 2013, p. 206).

Location recording is essentially an abstraction of space and place but the recorded sound does “give information about places and events and that listening provides valuable insights different from, yet complimentary to visual images and language” (Cusack, 2013a, p 26). Creating a sense of place is an apt description; soundscape composition and video imagery subtly create a sense of place and not a definitive depiction of place. When recording location sound in Huddersfield town centre, it was the incidental sounds that I found most interesting. Sometimes it is the “accidental recordings which are the best ones, when you record what you have not intended to record” (French, 2013, p. 164). At times, field recording is not always organic and is dependent on the recording setup. As well as using a mid-side combination and windshield, a pair of omnidirectional lapel microphones worked well when I wanted to remain inconspicuous within the environment. As Felicity Ford rightly

stated, “a massive microphone is too much of an announcement; with it, you change things, you instigate” (Ford, 2013, p. 93). Weather also affects this decision-making because wind and rain can either accentuate or ruin the recording process. There are also similarities in these decisions when capturing video footage.

Whilst collecting video and audio data in the field, there were times, I recorded at a specific time of the day or a location. At other times, I followed/recorded events that were unexpectedly unfolding in front of me. These unpredicted events became the most interesting aspects of the environment to work with. Westerkamp composed in the field as well as in the studio for *Beneath the Forest Floor* (2010, track 5) and prefers a moving microphone that guides her and the listener through an environment (Westerkamp, 2013, p. 118). Whilst recording in the field Westerkamp composed by using a “wandering” technique, a process of moving the microphone back and forth horizontally. This resulted in high-frequency sounds of water panning across the stereo field, which created motion whilst recording. Every choice a soundscape composer embarks upon is an edit; every recording contains edits, as the choice of when to record and when to stop is an edit of place, space, and time: “you have framed your audio in space and time” (Krause, 2016, p. 142). This “framing of time” is also relevant when recording visuals because the recording process captures and frames the moment for eternity. Life is seemingly heading towards the future without any cessation of time; video and audio recording freezes time and allows for repetition. At its very core, soundscape composition is a manipulation and synthesis of place, space, and time.

In Huddersfield town centre the recording of sound within various spaces was an opportunity to capture life as it happens but was also a compositional decision. This decision was based on capturing sound in differing acoustic environments and hearing

how the architecture of a place defined and manipulated the acoustic profiles of sounds over a space (this I discuss in more detail in the space section of my thesis). During my data collection, location recordings of various indoor and outdoor acoustic environments became part of the audio-visual and multichannel projects. Whilst specific recording locations were predetermined before entering the field, on other occasions, it was spontaneous depending on what is happening around you at that time. Recording video is also a means of composing in the field as you decide where to record, what angle and how long to record; many variables create the final framed image. As the listener is not present during the recordings process, there remains a difficult aspect of composing with field recordings. Firstly, difficulties lie in creating a piece that communicates your passion and love of location sound and secondly in creating a composition that is of interest to others. Westerkamp aptly raised the same point:

Why would anyone be interested in listening to your recordings? The experience gives the recordist the passion, but is there enough in the recording alone to transfer that passion to the detached listener? To make that leap and draw the listener-who may be far away from the original context of the recordings-into a passionate experience of listening (Westerkamp, 2013, p. 116).

The answer to this question may lie within the processing of that data and the compositional process in the studio. Westerkamp states that it is important to magnify the recording/listening experience when it becomes part of a piece. Sound processing has the function to highlight the “musical quality of a sound or soundscape”, as a means of drawing people into the musicality of the sounds (Westerkamp, 2013, p. 116). Moreover, as the composer often alters and enhances the sense of site-specificity in the studio through post-production editing this can ultimately create a nuanced account of a location (Chattopadhyay, 2017, p. 353).

Whilst recording in Almondbury woods at 5 am, unique sound events such as a woodpecker entering and then leaving the recording space. On his album *New Bamboo: Silo Solos* composer Jeffrey Lependorf discussed a similar point when stating, “birds flew through the silo (the recording location), insects appeared, and a variety of other natural sounds entered the space”. Lependorf also commented on how the reverberation of the silo created a rich acoustic landscape (as cited in Browning, 2016, p. 79). Australian-based shakuhachi player and teacher Riley Lee emphasises this awareness of the environment on sound as he experiments with recording in highly reverberant spaces, “the shakuhachi is playing me as much as I’m playing the shakuhachi, and it does not end there, the environment in which I find myself plays us as much as we play it”. Lee goes on to say that when he is producing sound he is playing the room, playing the environment, and the room is also playing us. During live performances, Lee also highlights the awareness of people’s energy permeating a space because the audience either positively or negatively provides the energy (Lee, 2013). Composing in the studio allows the composer to control and explore the complexity of environmental sound. In addition, as a composer, you are the birthplace of compositional ideas as well as guiding the whole process (Traux, 1994, p. 24).

Feedback sound is used within all my practical work and is an evolution of Russolo’s theory in the *Art of Noise* (1913), discussed in chapter 4.2. Noise is inherent within the environment and is present in some form in all areas of rural, human, and environmental activity. Noise is generally seen as unwanted sound and yet it is part of our daily existence. I use feedback in my work to say something about the environment within my creative work, “noise is culture, noise is communication, noise is music” (Fleisher, 2022). Noise is a part of life created by the sound of people living their life, and as my practical work is created from life, feedback sound adds an extra dimension

to this artistic treatment of the world. I communicate this ubiquitous aspect of our everyday experience by using feedback noise, which is usually deemed as unwanted sound. Feedback noise enriches my soundscape compositions with a sense of ethereality and consistency. The feedback sounds are unique as they are not sampled sounds; they are location recordings created in the studio by digital processing and stem from the very place they were recorded. The feedback sounds used in the multichannel composition are created from location sounds recorded in Newcastle. The same is true of my audio-visual projects, the feedback sounds used in the *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* projects were originally recorded in Huddersfield. Therefore, although the feedback sounds may seem at odds with the visual imagery, they are linked, albeit abstractly to a specific location. Feedback sound is a motif that I have introduced into all my soundscape compositions; essentially, it is a way of separating my work from other composers. I am not declaring that I am the only soundscape composer to use feedback sound in their work. As discussed, the originality of the feedback sound stems from where and how they were created. Within the Newcastle composition, feedback is used aesthetically to create an ethereal representation of a place and space through sound. In contrast, the feedback used in the audio-visual work enhances the visual imagery (discussed in more detail in Chapters 5.2 and 5.3). As noise is a ubiquitous part of life and environment, so it is within my soundscape design.

1.5 Listening in the field

There are several types of listening modes, such as “purposive, attentive, distracted, unconscious, and passive” (Cawley, 2013, p. 143). The mode of listening used is dependent on the intention, attention, and state of mind of the individual at that specific time. Blesser and Salter defined listening as, “active attention or reaction to the meaning, emotions, and symbolism contained within the sound” (Blesser & Salter, 2009, p. 5). Arguably, sound art and experimental music, “confronts this conception of listening with an alternative notion: maybe sound doesn’t have to mean anything. Maybe meaning is as much something we bring to sound as something sound brings to us” (Gallagher, 2013, p. 42). Listening in the field is an important factor when deciding on what and where to record on location. As each recording experience is different, “it means I have a lifetime of listening to do” (French, 2012, p. 169). Location recording is also an extension of your listening perspective and for sound artist Lasse-Marc Riek, “what I imagined I was doing was storing the listening process, recording for me was recording my listening” (Riek, 2013, p. 173). From the moment of listening and recording environmental sound through to the compositional process, the procedure consists of minor levels of abstraction. Moreover, as listening involves a, “highly subjective psychoacoustic process, it is arguable that any audible event can be accurately rendered, yet the relationship between technique, technology, and aesthetics provides a much more sophisticated way [of engaging] with the environment than ideas around faithful documentation” (Samartzis, 2015, p. 140). Angus Carlyle and Cathy Lane describe the practice of listening in a way that resonates with Buddhist philosophy:

The practice of listening can operate to reveal a parallel reality—one that lies below, beyond, behind or inside that which is immediately accessible. While listening may not always capture the ‘objective’ scene in an instant, the

essentially immersive nature of the listening experience over time can lead to a meditative, inward-looking introspection, disappearing as soon as it is grasped. Conversely, that very immersion can place the listener at the centre of things, offering an intimate connection to place and its inhabitants, sacred and profane (Carlyle & Lane, 2013, pp. 9-10).

Carlyle and Lane continue to say that:

listening becomes active [and] creative. As Lopez has it, lying on the wet rain forest floor rather than the temple path, I feel like a creator; not because I am recording or because I might be later composing something with these sounds but simply because I am listening...with dedication and passion (Carlyle & Lane, 2013, p. 16).

Listening to sound in the field is a fundamental skill for the soundscape composer. It is not the sound that is fundamental, but the attitude towards it because “sound does not lead us to listening but listening [leads us] to sound”. Paying attention and listening to the world around us, is a “way of being, regardless of what is heard” (Biswas, 2013, p. 192). In addition, by the very act of attentive listening, your whole body feels the world because when your ears are truly open, you are “situated within sound, it is the place itself which becomes conscious of itself. [Your] body is merely an antenna, a sense organ grown by this place to hear this” (Biswas, 2013, p. 193). Wildlife recordist and sound artist Douglas Quin (as cited in Samartzis, 2015, p. 145) states, “listening is not simply an auditory function but something that embraces different and complimentary modalities of knowing and different senses. The physicality is a reminder of where you are and what you are feeling and sensing”. This physical connection to the place where the recording happened and the sense of being there is the missing aspect from the audience/viewer’s perspective. In my experience, this feeling, this sensing of your surroundings and environment is not reproducible through audio-visual works. You have to be there to feel there. By being in the

environment, and by “being” I mean, being 100% present in the moment you are not separate from your environment, you are identical to it. Whilst we may try to be in the moment, there is no way of permanently grasping the moment because our whole experience is constantly changing, it is always becoming otherwise. Buddhist philosophy aptly describes the fleetingness of the present moment:

Look at your direct experience and see if something called the present moment can actually be found, look at what is appearing, somethings clearly here, but this here is in a constant state of flux. What we call the present, appears and then is gone in a flash. Look and see how experience does not freeze or hold still, whatever instantaneous perception we might locate and say “here is the present moment”, I’ve found the now, that now, that moment has already disappeared and become something else before we can even name or describe it. Notice the way in which reality is in constant motion, never holding still, forever slipping away, no sooner than it appears. There really is no such thing as a discernible moment that is bounded, a now that has an identifiable beginning, middle or end. Therefore, in reality, no past, any present, or future can be found to exist. Notice that in experience there is no time, for the very instant the moment springs forth, it transforms itself, always being, and yet forever becoming something else. Feel this timelessness, the unstoppable ever-changing flow we call reality (Astin, 2022b).

1.6 Environmental Subjective Perception

Mind is the master power that moulds and makes,
And man is mind, and evermore he takes
The tool of thought, and shaping what he wills.
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills.
He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass:
Environment is but his looking-glass (Allen, 2002, p. xi)

“Place is a type of object. Places and objects define space, giving it a geometric personality” (Tuan, 1977, p. 17). This perspective can be directly related to subject-

object perception, place as an object, being perceived by an individual (subject). Each individual's perception of the world is unique. This perception is based entirely on the contents of their consciousness and perpetual attachment to thought. The day-to-day experience of life is a deeply individualistic phenomenon and is subjectively perceived, rather than an objective truth (Turner & Turner, 2003). In addition, "human perception is interpreted as the building of internal representations of the outside world with the help of sense-data accessible via strictly separated modes of perception" (Klien, 2013, p. 134). Because of this, our experience of the world is a subjective individualistic phenomenon. This subjective perception is a combination of the sights and sounds of the external world, experiences of the internalised world of thought and the experiences of emotion ranging from joy, anger, and surprise (Dennett, 1993, p. 45). Filmmaker and sound artist Steven Feld describes this multisensory perceptual experience as leading "to a multisensory conceptualisation of place" (Feld, 1996, p. 94). Composer Michel Chion argued, "listening with the ear is inseparable from that of listening with the mind, just as looking is with seeing", and, "in order to describe perceptual phenomena, we must take into account that conscious and active perception is only one part of a wider perceptual field in operation". Chion goes on to say that, sound impedes and effects our perception, and due to the physical nature of sound, we are unable to select or "take in slices of them" (Chion, 2018, p. 34). Every experience we have undergoes filtration through our consciousness; the mind is a filter to our very experience of existence. All that we have to give, receive, and perceive is an extension of the mind; it is the fundamental factor of experience.

John Cage famously stated, "There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we

may to make a silence, we cannot” (Cage, 1973, p. 8). This insight came after experiencing an anechoic chamber⁴, and due to being isolated from environmental sounds Cage could then perceive sounds originating from the body itself. One theory missing from this statement is the internalised world of thought as Marshall McLuhan once observed, “there are no ear-lids” to shut out our surrounding environment and no “brain-lids to drown out the sounds from within” (Carlyle, 2007, pp. 108-109). Due to perpetual attachment to thoughts, there is no silence due to consciousness and its contents. This incessant identification with thought creates a false sense of the self, a sense of ‘I’. Thoughts are patterns of energy; they arrive and dissipate on their own. How can we be the next thought due to the constant flux and transitory nature of what is deemed ‘I’? (Lewis, 2019). American philosopher, author, and neuroscientist Sam Harris describes the perpetual attachment to thought which is manipulated by online media platforms:

Algorithms rule human attention at this point, many social media platforms have put immense resources into artificial intelligence designed to exploit human attention by appealing to whatever emotions offer the most leverage, desire, fear, and outrage. But your mind has an algorithm too, your patterns of thought and the emotions and behaviours that they produce are largely the product of conditioning. And on some basic level, your mind is similar to what’s happening online, you get more of what you click on (Harris, 2021).

The environment and every item we use in our daily lives materialised from thought and as the world is built on thought, so are we as humans. Philosopher James Allen argued, “the mind is the master-weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance” (Allen, 2002, p. xiii). Thus, our very perception of the environment is an individualistic phenomenon experienced through

⁴ Anechoic chamber is a soundproofed room designed to absorb reflections of either sound or electromagnetic waves. They are also often isolated from waves entering from their surroundings.

consciousness, “the mind”, and we are makers of ourselves through the manifestation of thoughts; thoughts that we are perpetually identified with.

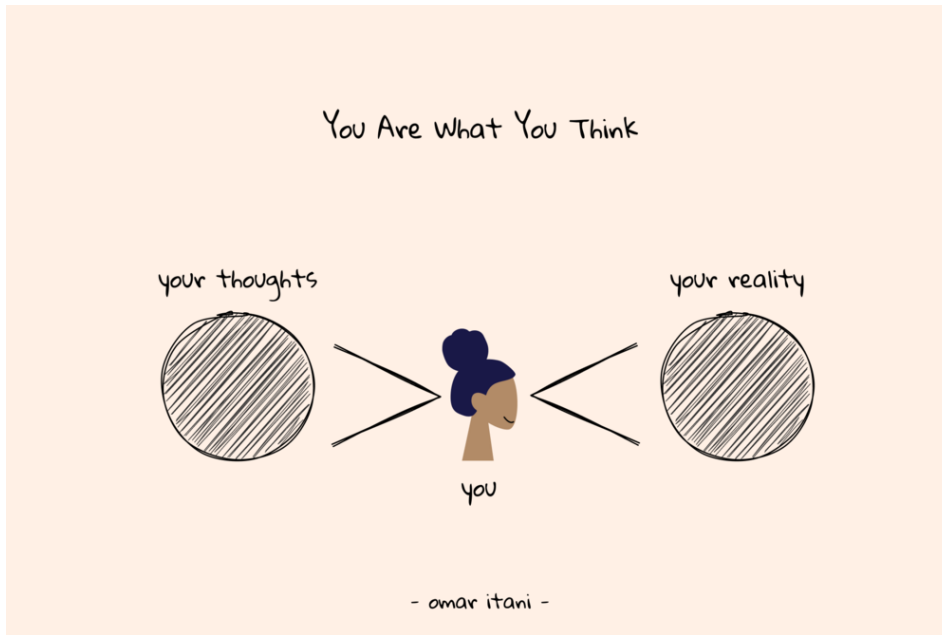


Figure 1.4: You are what you think (Omar, I, 2020)

Rene Descartes's famous quote “I think, therefore I am” (Descartes, n.d.) pertains to the ideology that the realisation of one’s existence and a sense of self is due to thought, that thoughts require a thinker. In Buddhist philosophy it is believed that thought is just energy in the body, a content and a modification of consciousness, therefore Descartes’s quotation could be further extended to; “I think, therefore I ‘think’ I am”. Attachment of thought creates a sense of self, in fact, a false sense of self and the perception of ‘I’. Buddhist philosophy also believes that thoughts subside as quickly as they arise; perpetual attachment and identification with certain thoughts then become character and filter through from the mind (internal) to external experience and circumstance (the environment). Video recording allows us to look

back on the past, it preserves the present moment as it was then. Experientially our moment-to-moment existence undergoes filtration through a layer of thought; it is a scrim over direct experience. Buddhist philosophy also argues that it is very difficult to remain in the present moment as our thoughts fluctuate between past and future scenarios:

We can imagine an apparent past via the miracle of memory, but as an actuality it does not exist, try and put yourself there, it's not possible. The imagined past only ever exists now, in this very instant, this moment of aliveness. What we call the past is an abstraction, an idea; it exists as a thought that is ever only appearing now. There is no then; we peer into what we refer to as the past, but that looking is always occurring now, in the immediacy of what is, never able to experience anything resembling a future. All our envisioning of some impending moment only ever occurs in the immediacy of now. What we call the future is sheer fantasy; it does not exist as an actuality. There is only ever this flash instant in which the thought of what can be, can arise. As with what was, what might be is not an actuality, for there is only what is (Astin, 2021).

Whilst swimming at my local leisure centre I had an epiphany about consciousness. When I first started swimming, the water was clear and my vision unimpeded, the longer I swam the more my goggles started to fog over and my vision became hampered. Consciousness is exactly that, the more the attachment to thoughts, the less clear our mind can focus and see clearly. Consciousness was the water, clear and shapeless but it quickly becomes overgrown with the weeds of thought. Hence, place, space, and environmental perception are an abstraction of consciousness, a perception. In addition, "thought and character are one, and as character can only manifest and discover itself through environment and circumstance, the outer conditions of a person's life will always be harmoniously related to his inner state" (Allen, 2002, p. 7). Where we fail is assuming that changing external factors will give us the peace we desire, whereas true change starts from within (Itani, 2020). This directly relates to our experience of the environment, it is through internal and external factors that our perception of the environment is realised.

Ultimately, our perception of the surrounding world depends on the quality of our attention. This allows us to embrace the environment while tuning out irrelevant details within the mind (Cherry, 2021).

To Summarise, chapter 1 encapsulated my experiences and findings whilst recording in the field and the theoretical frameworks that I drew upon. As a soundscape composer I aim to remain referentially linked to a specific place through sound and imagery. Primarily, I saw myself as a soundscape composer; this has evolved into becoming an audio-visual artist. However, the audio-visual work will always contain concepts from soundscape composition due to firstly being a soundscape composer. Chapter 1 argued the boundaries that a soundscape composition works within and what defines a work as a soundscape composition. Through the internalised world of thought combined with our subjective perception of external factors, the perception of our environment is realised. Sight and sound are the two main modes of perception that determine our environmental experience. As discussed, our experience of the world is an individualistic subjective perception.

As mentioned, nothing represents a moment in time more aptly than people's speech. The human voice is ubiquitous within my creative works because speech is a reciprocal part of our everyday experience. Decisions such as which locations to record in, the types of microphones and video equipment used, the time and length of the recording all play a part in determining what you capture. Watching and listening is part of the recording process as much as recording is part of the watching/listening process. Every recording choice made is a compositional decision or an edit that affects the result. Where to record, when to push record and how long for is a snapshot of reality, an abstraction of what is. That is all processing. Composing in the field is as important as composing in the studio. Whilst recording on location the random and

unexpected events yielded the most fascinating aspects of our environment (discussed in Chapter 4 and 5). I knew that some of the data collected on location was very special and gave me a solid foundation to work with. Composition of the creative portfolio begins in the field and there is an element of chance with what you collect. The edit begins in the field and ends in the studio.

Chapter 2: Sound and Image

The relationship between things
is more important than the things themselves – Jean Mitry
(Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinema)

2.1 Audio-Visual Relationships

Imagery combined with music or sound dates back to before the advent of film. Early examples of this synergy of “visual music” date back to the 18th century. Gas-lamp colour organs projected light controlled by an organ-like keyboard; this provided a visual accompaniment to music (Peacock, 1988, pp. 397-401). Visual music was utilised more recently by German filmmakers Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann, Viking Eggeling and Oskar Fischinger who developed experimental cinema that “articulated abstract shapes moving over time” (Garro, 2020, p. 5). Although this work is non-narrative, it laid the foundations for future sound-image art works that followed due to advancements in technology. City symphony composers materialised due to technological advancements firstly in vision and later through sound that allowed the creation of their artistic vision. Steven Feld describes present-day recording

technology as “equipment for contact with the world, equipment for interchange with the world and equipment for enhancing a way of living with the world” (Feld, 2013, p. 209). Dziga Vertov’s *Enthusiasm: The Symphony of the Donbas* (1931) explores the relationship between sound and image. The film contains location recordings and is a mix of synchronous and asynchronous sounds. Vertov, “took a montage approach to both image and sound, and particular their complex interaction [with each other]” (Cox, 2011, p. 53) and as *Enthusiasm’s* soundtrack playfully balanced music, noise and location sound, the concept filtered through into my films.

The earlier silent films starring Laurel and Hardy, Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin heavily influenced me as a child and due to silent films having no accompanying synchronized recorded sound or dialogue; the visuals ultimately had to tell the story (Filmsite, n.d.). Silent films paradoxically contained sound at live performances, whether that is live musicians or the spoken word (Altman, 2004, p. 193). Lilya Kaganovsky highlighted that silent film before 1927 anticipated the use of sound and sound effects in films, firstly, by using intertitles and then utilising “rapid montage editing that reproduced sound visually”. For example, very quick visual editing in Sergei Eisenstein’s *October* communicated the sound of rapid gunfire (Kaganovsky, 2018, p. 227). This concept of visual storytelling occurs intermittently within the *Huddersfield Lockdown 2020* project due to the absence of sound with image. Sonic silence appeared fleetingly within the *Lockdown* film inspired by the silent *City Symphony* filmmakers of the early 20th century. Peter Gidal’s silent *Room Film* (1973) also inspired this creative decision. Stripping away the aspect of sound not only brings closer awareness of the environment you are currently in, but it also accentuates the awareness of self (Gawthrop, 2006, p. 54).

However, my background is in sound and just like other artists who have then started to work with visual imagery, sound is the foundation of the work. Audio-visual artist Steina Vasulka describes this working transition, “for me, it is the sound that leads me into the image. Every image has its own sound and in it, I attempt to capture something flowing and moving” (Vasulka, n.d.). Filmmaker Sandra Kogut argued that sound is a powerful tool for filmmaking because, “sound immediately takes you to the projection space, to the inner space” (Yue, 2017, p. 342). Chion describes sound as being able to, “interpret the meaning of the image, and makes us see in the image what we would not otherwise see or would see differently” (Chion, 2018, p. 34). Conversely, video technology has allowed composers to visualise their sounds as well as sounding their visual work (Rogers, 2011, p. 417). Audiovisual works have introduced music and sound within gallery environments, which is usually “a space normally occupied by silent works” (Rogers, 2011, p. 426). Indeed, my lockdown film was shown at Huddersfield art gallery (April, 2022) to mark the second anniversary of the lockdown.

All the video footage for the research outputs was recorded M.O.S.⁵ (a shot or sequence of a film recorded without sound, which is added later in post-production). This was a creative and logistical decision due to working alone. When out on location recording sound I was more portable and could use better quality microphones as opposed to using a shotgun mic on a camera. I could then focus on capturing either quality sound or images. Holly Rogers describes images as “visible and silent” whilst music is “temporal, invisible and audible”, and the goal of the artist is to fuse these two sensory inputs into a single experience (Rogers, 2011, pp. 404-405). The relationship

⁵ M.O.S stands for “Mit out sound” and derives from a German director asking for a shot to be filmed “mit out sound”; the camera assistant complied with the request by writing “M.O.S.” on the slate (Filmconnection, 2022).

between sound and image and the juxtaposition of both was an area that I explored creatively within my projects. My audiovisual works are a juxtaposition of perception. There is an interplay between the two modes of perception, a perceptual break between aural and visual data. At times throughout the works, what you see differs from what is heard, and vice versa. The circumstances of the lockdown helped engender my approach to sound/image relationships. Due to the coronavirus⁶ pandemic, a lockdown on a global scale was implemented, and it is described as "the imposition of stringent restrictions on travel, social interaction, and access to public spaces" (BBC, 2020). Due to visually recording scenes of empty streets (in lockdown), the idea quickly arose to juxtapose the imagery with the environmental sound that was captured pre and post-lockdown. Documentary filmmaker Ernest D. Rose realised this opportunity for experimentation, "creative potential for the filmmaker is the kind of synthesis that results from something in-between, where the picture is neither identical with the sound, nor opposite it, nor completely unrelated to it" (Rose, 1966, p. 23). Chion described the importance of sound in relationship to image as "added value", which is "the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given image so as to create the definite impression, in the immediate or remembered experience one has of it" (Chion, 2018, p. 5). "Added value" is essentially the combination of sound and image that creates a greater effect than the sum of its parts. The "two elements together are more powerful and expressive than either could be standing on their own" (Wolfson, 2003). In summation, the relationship between sound and image is a very powerful artistic tool as imagery not only "deepens our emotional response to music/sound", "music also heightens our emotional reaction to images" (Tufts, 2016).

⁶ Coronavirus (Covid-19), respiratory virus, 2020 onwards.

2.1.1 Avant-garde filmmaker John Smith

The constant interplay between sound and image components within my audiovisual works constantly shifts the viewer's perceptions from one viewpoint to another. Similar in style to British avant-garde filmmaker John Smith whose work is "a personal vision which is never finalised or fixed, and opens a narrative space in which the viewer can question the construction of the film as a manipulated spectacle" (Rees, 2013, p. 16). Smith's films "create a world from the simple experiences of living, breathing and being a filmmaker or artist in a particular place and time" (Danks, 2003). This is the very essence of my filmmaking aim, to create an artistic impression from being in the world at that moment, at that space and time. Smith's relationship between sound and image is in a constant state of flux and there are moments when the imagery dominates; conversely there are moments when "sound takes the lead in the creation of meaning" (Birtwistle, 2010, p. 51). In the short film *Blight* (1996), the visual destruction of a home is in direct contrast to the sound of interviews with local residents. The soundtrack is a mixture of environmental and synthesised sounds that creates an eerie atmosphere, a drift between the seen, and the perceived heard.



Figure 2.0 Scene from *Blight* (1996) – John Smith.

In *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976), Smith injects humour and parody by pretending to direct the movements of people filmed in the environment, professing to be at the scene, and directing members of the public. The voiceover was created retrospectively and the “conjunction of word and image transforms everyday documentation into something created and artificial” (Wilson, 2010). Smith’s films illustrate that the audio-visuality of film comprises “of something other than the sum of its constituent parts, differing from, yet constituted by, both sound and image” (Birtwistle, 2010, p. 52).



Figure 2.1 Scene of the girl chewing gum (2:52) – from *The Girl Chewing Gum* by John Smith (1976).

Smith uses asynchronous sound to reframe the images in *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976). The film opens with footage of an everyday East London urban environment. The film includes people going about their everyday lives, crossing roads

and walking across the camera frame. The footage is reframed by Smith's voice-over that apparently directs the on-screen action through instructions such as, "Two pigeons fly across, and everything comes up again until the girl chewing gum walks across from the left" (2:33 – 2:53). Smith's use of asynchronous sound demonstrates how the soundtrack can reframe and recontextualise the moving image.

2.1.2 Out-of-field space and visual silence

Both my films are an example of John Smith's perspective that "the audiovisuality of film comprises of something other than the sum of its constituent parts". In *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods*, either sound or imagery dominates at particular points within the films, at other times there is a meaningful correlation between both sound and image. My audiovisual projects are also concerned with the "out-of-field", the space beyond the visual frame that is both audible and hidden from sight. For Gilles Deleuze, "sound does not invent the out-of-field, but dwells in it, and which fills the visual not-seen with a specific presence" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 241). As the soundscape is a borderless, undefined space, it is naturally in opposition to the visual, which Wissman described as "a definite, ordered, and rationalised visual space" (Wissman & Zimmermann, p. 804). Chion describes film as being in a "given-to-see" (field of vision) which is "contained and limited by the screen". Sound on the other hand is unrestrained by boundaries due to the "omnidirectionality of listening" (Chion, 2018, p. 34). Whilst borders may ultimately define the visual frame, the *Lockdown* visuals highlight the randomness and transient nature of the visual world within that frame.

This creative decision to play with the sound image relationship was inspired further by Guy Debord's *Hurllements en Faveur de Sade* (1952), Vertov's *Enthusiasm*,

and an obscure short Youtube film called *Silence* (2010), directed by Mathew Vicens. In the *Society of the Spectacle*, Debord challenged our absorption of images, “the spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life” (Debord, 2021, p. 37). In *Hurlements en Faveur de Sade*, there are no images other than a black or white screen. The black screen has no sound whilst the white screen contains an audio track. The silence of the former reinforces the visual non-appearance and confronts the audience with its frustrated desires and expectations. Debord intentionally disrupts the conventional sound-image relationship whilst operating in an audio-visual context as the void of the screen confronts the audience (Thoma, 2015, p. 17). In the short Youtube film *Silence* (2010), a black screen containing audio also created sound image juxtaposition. Environmental imagery used within the film does not contain any environmental sound as the soundtrack only contains synthesised sounds. In *Enthusiasm* at (39:43, 43:52 and 51:45 minutes into the film), Vertov also played with the concept of a black screen containing sound. The black screen concept became a part of my audiovisual works and was used to create “visual silence” whilst encouraging increased attention toward the sound. This was a creative decision to break up the viewer’s expectations of what appears next. The first thirty-five seconds of *Hudds & Woods* contains a black screen (apart from the text-based introduction) and includes the sound of a disgruntled woman recorded during the height of panic buying during Covid. The woman recorded inside an Iceland supermarket summed up the difficulties of the time so well that visuals were not necessary. If faced with no visual movement or specific imagery as in Derek Jarman’s *Blue* (1993), what you see is still affected by what you hear (Yue, 2017, p. 345). Although Jarman’s *Blue* consists of a “single shot of a blue frame for seventy-five minutes, it satisfied necessary and sufficient conditions for being defined

as a film” (Spring, 2012, p. 34). Similar to artists working with found footage, what you see is affected by what you hear; new meanings and aesthetics are constructed by changing the original music with a new sonic composition. Rogers argued that changing the original sound to an image creates a “disjointed sonic flow [that] problematises and enhances the collage aesthetic by extending the juxtaposition not only in a linear fashion but also in a vertical, audiovisual direction” (Rogers, 2017, p. 185). The interplay between the relationship of sound to image and vice versa intentionally creates a fluctuation between presence and absence; a creative means of breaking up the linear perception of reality and the viewer's expectations of what comes next. The relationship between the soundtrack and the image can influence our perception of the visual elements. When you change the soundtrack that accompanies the image, our comprehension, perception and interpretation of the image will also change (Mariani, 2020, p. 1), and as the consumption of film is a multimodal experience involving sight and sound; without this synthesis, the emotions of the film are very difficult to be conveyed (Mariani, 2020, p. 10).

The sound and visual imagery contained within the audiovisual research outputs are individual artistic entities in their own right. The works are consumable as separate artistic outputs, but when considered together the sound worlds and moving imagery tell a powerful story of the surrounding world, a world that undergoes enhancement and manipulation through digital technology. The sound and image ultimately complement each other and there is no intention for preference of one over the other, but on a micro level, I use sound to enhance the visuals and create a third space that is conceptual. Contemporary artist Anri Sala whose primary medium is video takes his inspiration from sound and then develops it into an audiovisual context. Sala’s installations, which contain both sound and image, stated that although he

works with both formats “I build with sound and in the process I let sound trigger its visual reality” (Sala, 2017). My creative process was the opposite of this; I created the visuals first and then decided on what sound would enhance and create further meaning to the visual aspect. Sound design for my visual projects is utilised similarly to Geoffrey Cox who insists that “the soundtrack that he provides is not simply an accompaniment to the visual imagery, it shares equal importance” (Yorkshire Live, 2013). To sum up my compositional approach to the audiovisual work, the visual imagery was edited together to create a coherent transition from one scene to the next. The composition of the soundtrack created a hyper-real and at times an abstract experience of the world we live in. The works are representational of the surrounding world but by no means confined to a specific genre or creatively limited by theories and concepts.

2.2 Audiovisual aims

Audio-visual research outputs aim to transport the audience to a moment in time. This is particularly true within *Lockdown*, the capturing of a unique period such as Covid-19 is enhanced through the relationship of sound to image. Nicholas Cook argues:

Music can complement the image by bringing to light certain emotional or narrative aspects; it can operate through conformance by matching or replicating certain aspects of the image or its rhythmic construction; and it can provide a contrast to the image by working against it (Cook, 1998, pp. 98-106).

Street musicians are used throughout *Lockdown* to create an emotional aspect that is absent from imagery alone. As an audiovisual artist, I also provide contrast to the image by using sound asynchronously with the moving image. Rogers describes

this as audiovisual dissonance, “whereby sound and image push and pull at one another - and at the level of reception, in which an audience must navigate the gap that such a rupture engenders” (Rogers, 2017, p. 188). The art of sound and the art of light are time-based media that “engage the viewer/listener in a revisited and augmented experience of chronometric time, accomplished through articulation of their time-varying stimuli; audible and visible respectively” (Garro, 2020, p. 5). Both my films aim to create this push and pull between sound and image to create an enhanced and altered state of reality. As my films contain mainly fixed camera positions, sound is used in this manner as, “the shock of both forms of audio-visual dissonance on an audience attuned to synchronicity can transform an otherwise coherent visual passage” (Rogers, 2017, p. 188). As an evolving audio-visual artist I have embraced sonic juxtaposition, which Rogers describes as, “treating it as a form of musique concrete by dislocating actuality sound from its visual referent and using it creatively to form a soundscape as abstract as the images” (Rogers, 2017, p. 191). My films are a continuation and enhancement of early avant-garde filmmakers where, “audiovisual dissonances and a-synchronicities” were the norm (Rogers, 2022, p. 10). The audio-visual research outputs aim for an uncomfortable viewing for the audience and a fractured representation of reality. This compositional aesthetic is achieved through audio-visual fracture and asynchronicity. Rogers reiterates this perspective:

In films from the historical avant-garde, music and image collided in an antagonistic and forceful counterpoint that forced the audience into an active and sometimes uncomfortable state of reception; as Salvador Dali once said, “always leave the audience wanting less!” (Rogers, 2022, pp. 10-11).

At the beginning of moving image media, montage told a story through juxtaposed fragments, “a process first articulated theoretically by Eisenstein in his co-authored Statement on Sound” (Rogers, 2022, p. 12). My work expands and refines

this creative and theoretical framework through the utilisation of juxtaposed sound to imagery. The soundtrack of my films is predominantly a mix of unprocessed location sound and feedback noise. Sound used in conjunction with imagery intentionally brings the audience closer to their surrounding environment. Randolph Jordan calls this reflective audioviewing, that describes how, “a self-conscious manipulation of sound in film prompts the listener towards an active engagement with the represented soundscape” (Jordan, 2012, p. 248). That is to say, “soundscape is clearly used in order to invite reflection upon the spatial, aesthetic and thematic concerns of a given work in parity with the visual” (Leonard & Strachan, 2014, p. 168).

The audiovisual outputs employ film imagery as a means of non-fiction documentation. They are narrative-based due to telling the story of how life was at that time. There are levels of abstraction within the pieces, but I believe that art is an abstraction due to the unique individual mind of the creator. Experiencing reality comes through the filtration of our consciousness; art is ultimately an extension of our minds.

My audiovisual projects use sound in the same vein as composer Geoffrey Cox and documentary filmmaker Keith Marley, where the role of sound leads our attention to the image (Cox, 2013, p. 89). In *Mill Study* (Cox & Marley, 2017), which is a film set in a working textile mill in West Yorkshire, the sound leads our focus to the image. The film features sounds recorded from the factory floor and the sounds of heavy machinery instantly focus attention onto their visual sources (Mill Study, 2017, 1:33-2:20). The difficulty in synthesising environmental sound with environmental imagery occurs the moment you press record. Sounds arise from beyond the camera frame and audiovisual perception becomes fractured. Holly Rogers calls this fracture “sonic elongation” which arises “when noise from within the film’s world is broadened until it

becomes unfamiliar; source sounds abstract from their visual referents take on musical form and texture” (Rogers, 2021, p. 427). My audiovisual research outputs use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous sound-to-image. There is a constant disruption of sound-image synergy throughout; this tears at the very fibre of our expected experience of the world. Rogers describes this method as, “exposing the mechanisms behind documentary representation, it also creates an interpretative space in which cultural and symbolic signification can manifest” (Rogers, 2020, pp. 90-91). *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* both purposely play on this perspective. Many of the scenes contain sounds directly related to the image; at times, they are not and at times, they are a mixture of both. The picture framed by the camera became an experimental tool in relationship to the sound worlds I have created for them. For instance, the image from outside Huddersfield train station contains train sounds from inside the station:



Figure 2.2 Huddersfield Train Station – Lockdown Still (0.29-1.06)

Further abstraction and sonic elongation are prevalent throughout both audiovisual films due to the soundtrack containing sounds emanating from outside the visual frame of the camera. An example of out-of-frame sounds is used with great effect in *Hudds & Woods* by a drone shot taken above Castle Hill in Huddersfield. The scene contains sounds recorded from Huddersfield town football stadium, which is over 3 miles away from the visual imagery:



Figure 2.3 Drone shot above Castle Hill Huddersfield (*Hudds & Woods*, 7:27 – 8:00)



Figure 2.4 Huddersfield Open Market – Lockdown still image (13.43-14.15)

The Huddersfield market scene contains surrounding environmental sound from Huddersfield town centre that creates a subtle environmental atmosphere and an obvious anchor between sound and image. The scene also contains subtle feedback sounds to accentuate the depressing urban scene and create a darker atmosphere through sound. As the feedback is created from field recordings that are digitally abstracted, they remain relevant to the imagery, and although this is not obvious, it is as intended. Audiovisual collision or dissonance was an area that I experimented with and became an integral process of my work. I became interested in this relationship (or more prominently non-relationship) due to being affected by lockdowns throughout my PhD.

Whittingham describes environmental sound within fiction films as “artificial” due to the construction of a new reality augmented by considerations of psychoacoustics, sound perspective, and localisation (Whittingham, 2013, p. 64). As

a sound artist working with images, I prefer an artistic and not artificial definition of this process. I have described my audiovisual work as non-fiction, but there are also elements of fiction due to the abstracting sound worlds. The resulting project becomes the thing-in-itself whether abstraction between sound and image occurs or not. Both audiovisual projects contain environmental sound captured from the visual frame of the camera and sound from beyond the camera frame. Artistic freedom enhanced these visuals by adding contrasting sounds to the visual image; examples such as Boris Johnson's speech used at the beginning of *Lockdown* and sounds from a Huddersfield football match as previously mentioned in *Hudds & Woods*. It is a way of enhancing the visual through sound as John Corner stated when describing Humphrey Jennings British documentary classic *Listen to Britain* (1942), "through listening to Britain, we are enabled to properly look at it" (Corner, 2002, p. 360). Inspired by Jennings's film, which saturated the images with music, the *Lockdown* project achieves this intermittently with music from street performers in Huddersfield town centre. Corner asserts that this hearing of music and sounds whilst devoid of voice-over commentary intensifies engagement with the images:

Music saturates the images, informing them by fusing its meanings with their own, and at the same time, it bonds the shots together through its own aesthetic continuity. It frees them from the literalism of commentary and underwrites the possibility of delivering surprise and juxtaposition as well as expected connections (Corner, 2002, pp. 359-360).

Due to recording video without sound and sound without image, (see page 34 for explanation). Once all the necessary data was recorded and the audiovisual projects were started, it felt as though I was not only scoring a film soundtrack, the whole film was created in the edit. All these elements were connected, but also unconnected due to recording the video and audio at different times of the month and

year. Great time and effort went into the final creation; at times seeking perfection, which is a blessing and a curse, as any artist would agree. Walter Murch aptly describes this level of attention and obsession for sound-image synergy. Whilst working on the sound design for the ground-braking storming of the beach scene from Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), there were nineteen versions of *Ride of the Valkyries* at that time; Murch explained his reasons for choosing Solti's 1965 recording:

Although Leinsdorf's performance of the 'Valkyrie' was rhythmically in synch with Solti's, at this moment Leinsdorf had emphasized the strings in his orchestral balance, whereas at that same point Solti had chosen to emphasize the brasses, which—I realized now only in retrospect—were responsible for synergising that wonderful acid blue of the ocean. In Leinsdorf's recording, the strings were soft and pillowy, and as a result, the blue looked dead: The chemistry of the image and sound worked against each other to the detriment of both (Murch, 2015).

My obsession for artistic perfection accumulated with months of *Lockdown* filming discarded after noticing a slight camera shake post-production, it was also a necessary decision that the final research outputs will show. This was due to learning how to operate a professional camera whilst recording out on location. There were also restrictions on movement within the environment to overcome. The basics learnt, proficiently came throughout the PhD and *Hudds & Woods* highlighted this proficiency with the camera due to spending less time in video post-production.

In conclusion, the interrelationship between sound and image became the foundation of my audiovisual works. Although at times sound creates a meaningful correlation in conjunction with the visual, asynchronous, and digitally manipulated sound created deeper meanings for the imagery. Out-of-frame sound and feedback noise created a third dimension to the work; a dimension that is open to interpretation, individual perception, and contextualisation.

As discussed, I am a sound artist who has evolved into an audio-visual artist. The transition to working with imagery has reshaped my approach to sound. Previously, I used and manipulated sound to change or enhance the acoustic properties contained within the sound. Working with visual imagery has not only solidified the importance of sound in relation to the visual. Sound is the foundation that I build upon, engendering new meanings and concepts to the imagery. Soundscape composition is a creative use of the music of the world and underpins the visuals to create feeling and emotional response; it is storytelling via audio-visual coalescence. Documentary filmmaker Werner Herzog explains, “Music is an integral element of storytelling, of changing and in guiding our perspectives, our emotional responses, but not only emotional, it gives new perspectives, new insights, a different kind of vision” (Herzog, 2018, 1:16:24). Chion reaffirmed this perspective by arguing sound is able to, “interpret the meaning of the image, and makes us see in the image what we would not otherwise see or would see differently” (Chion, 2018, p. 34). Filmmaker Stan Newmann argues, “Documentary image does not support music that well, and music within the documentary tends to diminish the image” (Newmann, 2018, 1:13:39). I prefer to see music as creating an extra layer of feeling and emotion; it can transport you to places that imagery cannot obtain alone. As mentioned, my films do not contain musical instrumentation, environmental sound is utilised as musical accompaniment. I compose sound with a theoretical framework from Westerkamp who walks a line between processed and unprocessed sound. The soundtracks to my films drive the images forward, adding extra depth, expressing emotion and movement through the oscillation between sight and sound perception. The soundtrack does not tell you what to think, it creates a bed where the imagery is driven forward.

I briefly mentioned British avant-garde filmmaker John Smith due to the humour he injects in the films previously mentioned. The not taking himself too seriously approach to filmmaking also inspired me. Although Covid-19 was serious by any stretch of the imagination, *Lockdown* had moments of irony and humour intermittently throughout the film. One of the most ironical scenes is that of an empty town centre containing audio of Mr Scrooge wishing Huddersfield a happy Christmas.



Figure 2.5 “Merry Christmas Huddersfield” (8:20)

Hudds & Woods was intentionally less ironic and satirical apart from the introduction, which captured the start of Covid-19 with people panic-buying and stockpiling food. The shopper saw my recording equipment and was more than happy to vent her feelings into the microphone. I immediately knew that the recording was precious as it captured an essence of what life was like through Covid-19, and the pressures this created. As in John Smith films, it is about “creating a world from the simple experiences of living, breathing and being a filmmaker or artist in a particular place and time” (Danks, 2003).

2.3 Asynchronous filmmaking

The use of asynchronous sound in relationship to imagery is a predominant theme of the audio-visual projects. This aesthetic approach to sound and image came about by the circumstances surrounding Covid-19. Having recording in an environment before, during, and after Covid-19, these circumstances seeped into my decision-making. Environmental sound was predominantly recorded pre and post Covid-19. Due to capturing visuals of a deserted town centre, the advent of asynchronicity began by recording through these periods. Asynchronicity began in the field and continued into the compositional process within the studio. I quickly became aware how the push and pull of asynchronous sound could manipulate emotional and narrative aspects of the visual imagery. Asynchronism is an artistic way of expressing audio-visual interaction within practice-based works. Sanderson states, “Of all the senses, it is sight and sound that work most in tandem, from moments of simultaneity as seeing and hearing a plate hitting the ground” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 2). This perceptual anchor of aural and visual synchronicity becomes a powerful filmmaking tool when this tether is broken. City symphony composers and filmmakers such as Eisenstein and Pudovkin influenced the use of asynchronism in *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods*. They advocated contrapuntal and asynchronous juxtapositioning and were a theoretical framework that became part of my aesthetic decision-making. Filmmakers Chris Marker and John Smith also used “asynchronous juxtaposition as a way of raising questions around the temporality of sound and image” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 4).

Lockdown and *Hudds & Woods* contain fixed camera positions apart from a couple of drone shots. Sanderson argues, “The use of a fixed or locked-off camera, the minimal use of pans, zooms or editing draws attention to the frame, rendering it

more porous and receptive to asynchronous juxtaposition” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 16). The use of asynchronous sound to image is a way of reframing and re-contextualising the moving image. Eisenstein described sound film as a “two-edged invention”, offering new creative possibilities for the filmmaker, but feared this would follow the “path of least resistance”, that of synchronisation (Eisenstein et al., 1928, p. 1). To counteract this, the authors argued that the sound/image relationship should initially be non-synchronous before “leading to the creation of an orchestral counterpoint of visual and aural images” (Eisenstein et al., 1928, p. 2). As a composer and audio-visual artist, I have drawn inspiration from this theoretical framework and implemented it into my films. Sanderson argued the difference between non-synchronisation and asynchronism:

The two terms are quite distinct however, with non-synchronisation intended as an initial rebuttal, a rejection of sound being used simply to reinforce audio-visual simultaneity, whereas asynchronism carries no suggestion of sound and moving image being wilfully at odds, but rather implies careful and precise juxtaposition (Sanderson, 2016, p. 10).

The definition of asynchronism by Sanderson is correct in my opinion, as the sound to image relationship in my films is not abstract, for abstracts sake. The sound has been meticulously merged/chosen for each scene. This creates deeper meaning through asynchronous sound “to reframe and recontextualise the moving image” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 6). My films also includes moments of what appears to be synchronised audio and video, although these intermittent moments are composed from sound and image recorded at different times of the year. These creative decisions came from the theory of Eisenstein who argued, asynchronism could include moments of absolute synchronism, in which the viewer casually connects sound and image together (Eisenstein et al., 1928, p. 2). Sanderson argued that the temporary adhesion

of sound and image on screen “can play a key part in creating dialectic, by refocusing and reengaging the audience’s attention, in what might be described as a push-pull fashion” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 12). As discussed, John Smith’s *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976) uses voiceover sound to recontextualise the imagery and creates a push-pull between sound and image.

Chapter 3: Relationship between Place, Space, and Time

3.1 Place

A Sense of Place

If things had happened differently,
Maine or upper Michigan
might have given me a sense of place—

a topic that now consumes 87%
of all commentary on American literature.

I might have run naked by a bayou
or been beaten near a shrouded cove on a coastline.

Arizona could have raised me.
Even New York’s Westchester County
with its stone walls scurrying up into the woods
could have been the spot to drop a couple of roots.
But as it is, the only thing that gives me
a sense of place is this upholstered chair
with its dark brown covers,
angled into a room near a corner window.

I am the native son of only this wingback seat
standing dutifully on four squat legs,
its two arms open in welcome,
illuminated by a swan-neck lamp
and accompanied by a dog-like hassock,
the closest thing a chair has to a pet.

This is my landscape—
a tobacco-coloured room,
the ceiling with its river-like crack,
the pond of a mirror on one wall
a pen and ink drawing of a snarling fish on another.

And behind me, a long porch
from which the sky may be viewed,
sometimes stippled with high clouds,
and crossed now and then by a passing bird—
little courier with someplace to go—

other days crowded with thunderheads,
the light turning an alarming green,
the air stirred by the nostrils of apocalyptic horses,
and me slumped in my chair, my back to it all.

(Collins, 2005, p. 304)

According to the poem (p. 49-50) by poet Billy Collins, his armchair gave him a sense of place. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan also argued this point of view stating that places existed at different scales; the whole earth is on one end of the scale and a favourite armchair at the other extreme of place (Tuan, 1977, p. 149). Philosopher Jeff Malpas argued that “place is perhaps the key term for interdisciplinary research in the arts, humanities and social sciences in the twenty-first century” (Malpas, 2010).

Place is a multi-layered experience, and that place is given meaning by an individual based on their subjective perception. A Russian doll or 'Matryoshka doll'⁷ is an analogy that aptly represents the differing sizes of place, a place within a place. Talking specifically about my place of residence (Yorkshire), a large place such as Yorkshire holds smaller aspects of place such as West & North Yorkshire. These definitions of place hold smaller places such as Huddersfield and Halifax. We feel a sense of connection and a sense of self whilst feeling connected to a particular locality, but a place is still a temporal experience because the feel of a place takes years to obtain through day-to-day repetition and experience (Tuan, 1977, pp. 183-84). Human nature demands and strives to establish a home, a place to feel safe and secure whilst creating a sense of identity. Most people are familiar with this concept and even a student will try to make university accommodation "their place" during temporary residence (Cresswell, 2015, p. 135). This unfamiliar space has a history, it meant something to somebody and a familiar approach is to make this space reflect yourself by adding possessions and rearranging furniture. "Thus space is turned into place. Your place" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 7).

Whilst working in a children's care home, a young person with who I was Keyworking for many years had moved out due to turning 18 years old. This particular individual had personality and energy in abundance. The place of work suddenly felt empty and was never the same again after this temporal event; the soul seemed to leave the place. Whilst the place still looked the same, it was not; without the presence of the right people, things and places are quickly devoid of their original meaning (Tuan, 1977, p. 140).

⁷ A set of Russian wooden dolls of decreasing size, placed one inside another.

Place is mostly fixed and structured, places such as geographical locations, boundaries, and commercial and residential buildings. Whereas spaces are a sonic reflection of life happening in-between such places, and if inhabited, space is in a constant state of flux. "Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other" (Tuan, 1977, p. 3). Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argued that definitions of space and place are mutually dependent, and if we think of space allowing movement, then a place is pause; "each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Geographer Edward Relph theorised that it is important to maintain the relationship between space and place and not present them as necessarily separate concepts. This perspective holds truth when differentiating between space and place "when space becomes familiar to us, it has become place, kinaesthetic and perceptual experience, as well as the ability to form concepts, are required" (Tuan, 1977, p. 73).

Relph also stated that the quality of a place has the power to order and to focus human intentions, experiences, and actions spatially (as cited in Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 44). A place is not defined just by sight, it is also an aural experience because "movements are often directed towards, or repulsed by, objects and places" (Tuan, 1977, p.12). The previous statement by Tuan sums up our visual interpretation of a place. If a place looks undesirable or is understood to be "not a nice place", we are most likely to avoid it completely due to sight and sound compounding our sense of place. An overall sense of place is an aural and visual perception garnered from the spaces that people inhabit. Speaking from an urban perspective (notably town centres), a place may be fixed, but it can still be subject to temporal change both visually and sonically, new buildings are erected, whilst others change through refurbishment and being sold to new business ventures. This is where place affects

space; commercial buildings that change hands and reopen fill the space with new and different sounds which are unique to that particular place. Every shop or building has a particularly unique sonic world. Therefore, a place can be subject to temporal change, although the change is passive and much slower when compared to spaces that are subject to perpetual sonic transformation.

Norman employs field recordings for soundscape compositions as on the album *London* (1996b) which forms the composer's sonic representation of her hometown and conjures up a sense of place. The piece *London E17* (1996c, track 2) uses elements of soundwalking whilst manipulation of the sonic material reveals and highlights textures and timbres within the soundscape; the composition is a sonic journey through various scenes (Stevenson, 2002, pp 107 -108). Norman herself describes the album as communicating a sense of place and time with the *London E17* piece travelling through various environments (Norman, n.d). Norman also describes her short computer-processed soundscapes *Five-Minute Wonders* (1997-2001) as celebrating the wonder of a particular time and place; the compositions are midway between music and documentary. This was my aim with the lockdown project, to capture a sense of place transformed and defined by time; it is also a mixture of soundscape composition and documentary filmmaking.

Conversely, Westerkamp moves away from a place and describes her experience of recording in the forest as creating a feeling of inner peace and that the composition "is attempting to provide a space in time for the experience of such peace" (Westerkamp, n.d.). *Beneath the Forest Floor* (2010, track 5) has an element of abstraction contained within a low-pitched texture that is a recurring theme in the piece, the sound is created from a slowed-down ravens call. Does that mean it is not a soundscape composition due to the abstraction of sound and not knowing what the

sound is unless reading the composer's notes? I think not as the overall piece contains recognisable sounds of the environment, although the title of the piece does help to place the composition within a particular environmental context.

Environmental sound can be manipulated and presented in differing layers of abstraction, it is not always necessary to pigeonhole compositional style as this ultimately depends on the artistic style and aims of the composer. Environmental sound-based composition, regardless of levels of abstraction still has connections and resonates towards soundscape composition; it is composed with the soundscape regardless of the differing levels of abstraction. The aim of the work is ultimately in the hands of the composer; heavy processing and abstraction of location sound then pushes the composition into the realms of musique concrete. If the aim is to represent a strong sense of place then ultimately the composition must contain recognisable environmental sounds. This enables the representation of place and allows the listener to place and associate sounds with a given environment. In Traux's own words, "the soundscape composition always keeps a clear degree of recognisability in its sounds, even if some of them are heavily processed, so that the listener's recognition of and associations with these sounds may be invoked" (Traux, 2002, p. 6). Traux goes on to say that if a composer processes environmental sounds to create fictional worlds, and if the final result is heard as a cogent soundscape, it can be connected to soundscape composition (Traux, 2002, p. 6).

All my research outputs have elements of abstraction contained either visually or aurally. Regardless of this, the work never strays too far from representing place, albeit in an artistic manner. The research outputs are an amalgamation of real and unreal soundscape worlds combined with visual imagery of place (Newcastle is a sound-based multichannel project). My approach to audiovisual projects is to keep a

place at the very centre of my work whilst highlighting the effect that space and time have on the place.

3.2 Space

“Recordings are not simply inert objects of social scientific or historical inquiry. They are energetic and conversational creatures, alive to us in time and space. They think us as we think them” (Stokes, 2010, p. 8).

I think of space as not just part of an environment but also as an acoustic space, a space directly related to place and locality. Acoustic space is the profile of a sound over the landscape and the space of any sound audible before it dissipates below the ambient sound level (Schafer, 1994, p. 271). Feld acknowledges the relationship between space, time, and place as sensed:

Acoustic space is temporalized; sounds are heard moving, locating, and placing points in time. The placing of auditory time is the sonic envelope created from the layered attack, sustain, decay, and resonance of sounds. The placing of auditory space is the dispersion of sonic height, depth, and directionality. Space-time inevitably sounds in as figure and ground, as coming-ness and going-ness. Its presence is forward. Backward, side to side, and is heard in trajectories of ascent, descent, arch, level, or undulation. What these rather abstract formulations suggest, in simple terms, is that experiencing and knowing place – the idea of place as sensed, place as sensation – can proceed through a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual, as well as through other inter-sensory perceptual processes (Feld, 1996, p. 98).

Within the lockdown project, space was an essential part of my recording process both visually and sonically. At certain parts of the composition, indoor spaces were captured aurally; these recordings were merged with video footage of outdoor spaces. Musician David Toop describes the difference between the visual and aural senses:

Seeing has a kind of frame, though my frame is determined, to some extent, by a pair of glasses. I can range across the visual field, but the external limits are always there. Sound, on the other hand, is all around, and [exists] in ambiguous locations, articulating time at the same time it describes space (Toop, 2007, p. 114).

As environmental sound cues define our sense of space daily, the world of sound would seem to be spatially structured and “people are subconsciously aware of the source of noise, and from such awareness, they construe auditory space” (Tuan, 1977, p. 14). For this reason, it was a compositional decision to record sound from indoor and outdoor spaces. The spatiality of a place comes from the effect of space on actions and interactions (Oxford Reference, n.d.) and that “space and society do not gaze at each other but rather are mutually embedded” (Ettlinger and Bosco p. 256). Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan stated that “space is given by the ability to move” and that “space can be variously experienced as the relative location of objects or places, as the distances and expanses that separate or link places, and more abstractly as the area defined by a network of places” (Tuan, 1977, p. 12).

Town centres are a synthesis of place, space, and time working in conjunction together; they are the heart of most communities where people gather and socialise. In addition, although town centres may be the heart of a community, the people within these spaces make the heartbeat. Musician David Toop highlighted the significance of people, place and space;

The relationship of person to space is important, how do we listen to sounds never before noticed, sounds long vanished, or sounds that are not sounds, exactly, but more like the fluctuations of light, weather and the peculiar feeling that can arise when there is a strong awareness of place (Toop, 2007, p. 112).

Toop argues that “sound enforces itself in the urban environment with an iron fist” due to the cacophony of everyday sounds such as traffic and digging machines

(Toop, 2007, p. 112). The recent pandemic⁸ had a monumental effect on the soundscape, especially within urban environments such as town centres; they are mainly uninhabited desolate places without people and are devoid of mass sonic information due to the decrease in footfall. This is why I think of space and place as two sides of the same coin; they work harmoniously together to represent a locality. Space relates to the environment as miniature representations of place and is an acoustic footprint of everyday life, a life created from human gatherings and interactions within a space. Creswell argued that space is an entity without meaning, “a fact of life, which, like time, produces the basic coordinates for human life”, and when people imbue meaning into a space creating attachment, it then becomes a place (Creswell, 2014, p. 16).

Space can be seen and perceived as an area or volume; the appreciation of space is also a feeling that expresses itself upon the human body. For example, bus stations or supermarkets are places that contain spaces, acoustic spaces that depending on the size and structure of a building and the reverberant reflections affect how its inhabitants hear environmental sound. Traux aptly described this as “the fundamental acoustic principles of reflection, resonance and absorption, all of which contribute to the sense of acoustic space” they are the variables in which human interaction is promoted or deterred (responsive spaces), “the sound is the space and the space is the sound” (Traux, 2012, p. 2106). Architect Bernard Tschumi remarked, “you enter a space and close your eyes and you know simply through your hearing whether it is a large or a small space, whether it is made of plasterboard or concrete” (Rebelo, 2003, p.35). Environmentally we never hear the original sonic event as it occurs as sound waves propagated from source to listener transform during transport

⁸ Coronavirus (Covid-19), respiratory virus, 2020 onwards.

by the physical acoustics of the environment (Blesser & Salter, 2013, pp. 89-90). James Lastra argues, “there is no pure original sound, if we change the hall, we change the sound in its very essence”. Lastra continues to say that, “there can be no such thing as pure, unmediated original sound, for any sound is transformed by the architecture in which it occurs in the same way that it is transformed by recording technologies” (Lastra, 2000, p. 133). Sound is acoustic energy that fills space whereas visuals framed by the camera “privilege discrete objects” (Harris, 2015, p. 118). Rupert Till argued that because buildings and spaces are long lasting, “they memorialise the relationship between aural architecture and culture” (Till, 2014, p. 295). Brandon Labelle also commented on the way environment affects sound:

sound thus performs with and through space: it navigates geographically, reverberates acoustically, and structures socially, for sound amplifies and silences, contorts, distorts, and pushes against architecture; it escapes rooms, vibrates walls, disrupts conversation; it expands and contracts space by accumulating reverberation, relocating place beyond itself, carrying in its wave, and inhabiting always more than one place. It is boundless on the one hand, and site-specific on the other (Labelle, 2006, p. xi).

Acoustic spaces within town centres could be classed as “responsive spaces” due to encouraging interaction between people (Southworth, 1967, p. 72). Indoor shopping centres for instance dramatically alter the sounds of people going about their everyday lives, but the sound is familiar to people from that locality and hence strengthens recognition of place through various spaces. The sounds of people and life undergo subtle transformation by a building's particular acoustics, everything feels familiar, “there is a perfect fit, you sit, stand or walk in an ambience that is alive” (Griffiths, 2005, p. 62).

People’s recognition and appreciation of place are derived from social reciprocity within such places and spaces; this back-and-forth interaction defines

people's sense of space and place. I believe that a space is undefinable and will become whatever life dictates it to be due to the ephemerality of life. Space is similar to matter, which has mass and takes up space by having volume. Space contains variable amounts of acoustic volume due to the activities of people filling the space; it is the ultimate human expression of life within a place. Place and space were also differentiated by Dhirgham when stating, "the activity that existed there, space is more public and often dynamic, while place is well-connected to the meaning or activities and well-oriented to be static" (Dhirgham, 2019).

Geographical places such as Huddersfield derive from a multitude of individual places and spaces. It is the way people utilise and interact within these places that ultimately creates an acoustic footprint (acoustic space), which defines the sights and sounds of a place; therefore, space and place work harmoniously together to create a sense of place. Relph, (as cited in Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 44), sees space and place as, "dialectically structured in human environmental experience since our understanding of space is related to the places we inhabit, which in turn derive meaning from their spatial context". Soundscape composition is similar in concept; the work stems from a multitude of individual elements of environmental sound that ultimately creates a compositional amalgamation of place, space, and time.

People Underground by Norman (1996d, track 3) is an example of soundscape composition as a representation of place, space, and time. The piece was recorded in foot tunnels underneath the Thames and represents how environmental sound is directly affected by the spaces in which they occur; it captures acoustic space most vividly. A reviewer stated that the composer captures the effect of the acoustic immersion on the people within it as well as the sounds of that environment (Stevenson, 2002, p. 108). Norman herself describes the piece as "a walk below

ground in both the sonic and metaphorical sense, an imaginary journey in which the sounds of the tunnel, and the people, drift in and out of focus, become intensified or surreal or fade inexplicably to silence” (Norman, n.d.). The spatiality of the composition demonstrates how the environment determines our sonic perception of space. Space is also relatable to time as Schafer stated that due to the advancements in portable recording equipment any sound environment can be captured, manipulated, and then presented in a different space and time to where the original sound was recorded. Acoustic space can become transformed, transported, and any given sonic environment can fill the acoustic space of any other sonic environment (Schafer, 1994, p. 91). This is also, without doubt, time manipulation, due to field recording (and visual imagery) framing a period-of-time and allowing re-presentation at will. The act of recording sound within an environment directly captures a place and space whilst preserving the circumstances or events within that present moment. During the recording process, your position within that space is also part of, “how that space is produced” (Tidoni, 2013, p. 83). The soundscape of that present moment is framed and removed from its environmental context. What was once a unique environmental sound event within a space and time is captured and preserved, the moment now belongs to the past, present and future. The sound is free from the passage of time and can be heard by people who were not in the original recorded space or place. Schafer refers to this splitting of an original sound and its electroacoustic transmission or reproduction as “Schizophonia”:

Originally, all sounds were originals, they occurred at one time in one place only. Sounds were then indissolubly tied to the mechanisms that produced them. . . . Every sound was uncounterfeitable, unique. (Since recording and transmission) we have split the sound from the maker of the sound . . . in time as well as in space (Schafer, 1994, p. 90).

According to Truax, space has a fundamental relationship with individuals and communities; it is an environment mediated through sound. The perpetual sounds that we encounter daily both confirm and reflect our sense of physical space and our place within it. Familiar sounds define our sense of space and changes to the acoustic environment are recognised; for example, “it is a bit noisy in here today” or “it seems quiet today”. People are aware and have a defined sense of what noises are intrusive to a familiar space, whilst also being aware of “what belongs” in their acoustic space. The idiosyncratic ambience of a given space adds to the “feel” of it, although Truax stated it would be difficult to explain what contributes to that character (Truax, 2012, p. 2105).

3.3 The feeling of a space

Whilst there are visual indicators that could help manifest a feeling of a space (such as beautiful works of art or architecture), what I am now referring to is the unknown or unseen feeling we encounter within environmental spaces. This feeling can be experienced alone or when populated by other people and is only experienced by the physical presence of being in that space or place. In Eastern philosophy, it is believed that within social settings or any space that includes proximity to other people; we affect and are affected by each other’s “aura”. It is argued that an aura is an energy field that emanates from and surrounds all living things; it is not perceived by ordinary vision but is deemed to be seen by clairvoyance. However, Guiley argues, “no evidence has been found to prove its existence” (Guiley, 1991, pp. 40-42). Eastern philosophy believes that there are seven chakras (energy centres) and seven layers/colours of the aura. The colour of the aura emanated by a person is subject to

change based on moods, emotions and most notably attachment to thoughts, be that good or bad. A positive person is deemed to be emanating high-frequency energy whilst a negative person would be sending out low-frequency vibrations. This could go some way to explain why we do not just hear and see the environment; we also feel the spaces that are encountered. In addition, when in the proximity of other people this experience of the environment can be altered for better or worse (Prescott, 2018). This is relatable to sound in general; we do not only hear sounds, we feel low-frequency sounds in the lower abdomen and high frequencies in the crown area. Singer-songwriter Steve Goodman acknowledges this perspective, “bass is not just heard, but is felt, is tactile” (Goodman, 2007, p. 64). Composer Annea Lockwood describes how she experienced this “physicality of sound” whilst attending a music festival:

it pulled me into a completely physical world in which I became intimately aware of the sound waves moving through my body – collaborating with my body, I felt – and of the power of this involuntary collaboration, reminding me how wide the range of human perception actually is – the whole body hears (Lockwood, 2009, p. 44).

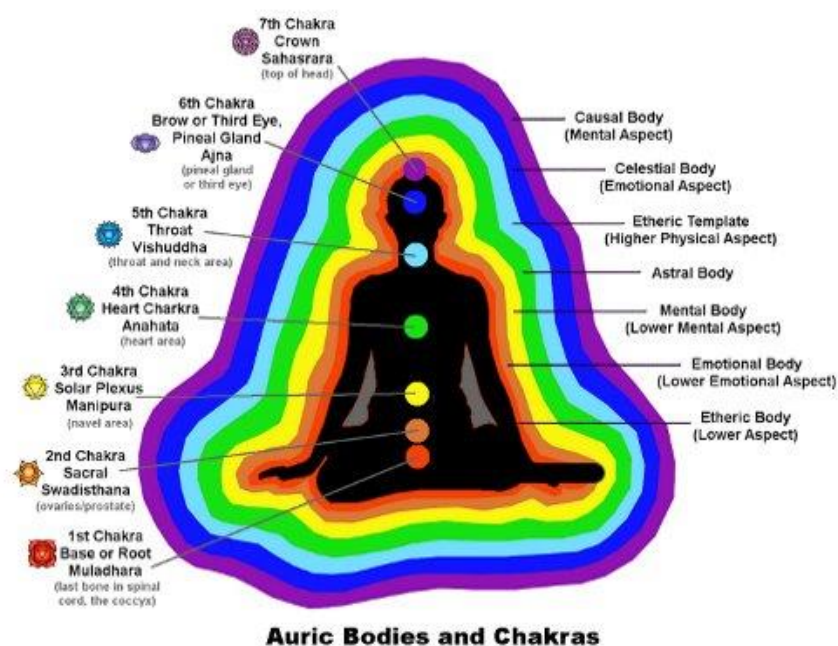


Figure 3.3 Aura Layers and Chakras

Although eastern philosophy believes in the aura, it is very difficult to prove or disprove this conceptualisation due to energy being invisible to the naked human eye. We were unable to see the recent virus strain with our own eyes, but we were able to see and feel its effects. Sullivan (as cited in Nickell, 2001, pp. 144-145) stated that little research on auras and energy has been accepted by science due to the unpredictable nature of the results. "To be proven as concrete, science demands that an action, performed in the same way under the same circumstances, must yield the same results". Whether a person believes in the human aura or not, depends on personal belief, perceptions, and philosophy of life. The internalised world of thought is invisible but we all know it exists, it affects our every decision and daily interaction with other people; it defines how we perceive and are perceived by others. This is important as an explanation of how our experience of space is directly affected by the people within it. For instance, I am positive everybody has experienced once in their life a space that they have entered (whether that be a public house or a social gathering) and you have experienced "I do not like the vibes in here" or the opposite, "this place has a nice atmosphere". This "feeling" could be construed as energy resonating from people, some people can make you on edge, whilst other people make you at ease and you enjoy being in their company. This could be seen as a reaction to the energy emitted by people (Holland, 2018). Consciously or subconsciously, we may not be fully aware of the reasons why or how we can pick this feeling up, energy is unseen and the aura is believed (in eastern philosophy) to contain vibrational frequency that is an extension of your physical, spiritual, emotional and mental health at that given time. This is subject to change throughout life due to personal life experiences, our reaction to them, and our habitual thought patterns, whatever they may be. The experiences and atmosphere of a space change through

time due to the interactions and events of people. Whilst being able to appreciate the area or volume of a particular space you cannot physically reach out and touch it. It is a feeling, and this feeling could be either a negative or a positive experience depending on the events and the energy emanated by people within a space.

Parapsychologist and author Rupert Sheldrake conceptualised this energy as being a “morphic field” and “morphic resonance”. Although Sheldrake’s theory was characterised as paranormal and pseudo-science, (Maddox, 1981, pp. 245-246), it is relevant regarding the feeling of a space. Sheldrake argued that morphic fields are intrinsic to our perceptions and mental activity; they lead to a new theory of vision and that the “existence of these fields is experimentally testable through the sense of being stared at itself” (Sheldrake, 2010). Sheldrake explains this theory by stating:

Most people have had the experience of turning round feeling that someone is looking at them from behind, and finding that this is the case. Most people have also had the converse experience. They can sometimes make people turn around by staring at them (Sheldrake, 2005, p.10)

In *The Sense of Being Stared at*, Sheldrake conducted experiments on blindfolded subjects (behind a one-way window) to gauge if they could sense being stared at. Reports stated subjects exhibited a weak sense of people staring at them, but no sense of not being stared at (Sheldrake, 2004, 2005). According to Sheldrake, morphic resonance is attributed to the results of these tests. Sheldrake hypothesised that memory is inherent within nature and it is a collective memory handed down from previous similar systems. Because of this, it is possible for telepathy between organisms (Sheldrake n.d). Sheldrake argues that telepathy is “normal not paranormal” and is common among people, especially those who know each other well. Members of social groups remain connected by morphic fields, which provide channels of communication even when they are miles apart. Sheldrake conceptualises

this through connection with telephone calls, “more than 80% of the population say they have thought of someone for no apparent reason, who then called; or that they have known who was calling before picking up the phone in a way that seems telepathic” (Sheldrake, 2010). Sheldrake’s theory has similarities with eastern philosophy; morphic fields are auras and morphic resonance is the collective human consciousness. Perhaps it is this accumulation of subtle phenomena; combined with the physical presence of individuals within a space, constitutes to the overall feeling of a space.

Field recordings frame place, space and time (although field recordings cannot capture the personal, human feeling of a space that I have just discussed) it is then captured for prosperity, they are an “experience of a particular location, orienting human perception toward a temporal reach in space” (Koshkin, 2014, p. 43). My experience of place, space and time are what I deem to be an “environmental subjective perception”, my perception of the environment will be different to everybody else’s and vice versa. Perception is formalised by the constant receiving of aural and visual information combined with the internalised, invisible world of thought and mental imagery. “Though we may travel to get away from something, there is no escape from the inner life” (Cox, 2010a). Unfortunately, due to the perpetual transmission and receiving of information, we somehow have to make sense of it all and there is no off switch when experiencing the environment. Whilst eastern philosophy may in some way help to understand the unexplainable feeling of a specific space, this feeling is experienced through the direct environmental presence and is not attainable through sound and image recording alone.

3.4 Time

During a visit to the Huddersfield art gallery in 2018, inspiration came from the paintings of Lawrence Stephen Lowry and Peter Brook. The painting below of a classic industrial landscape in Chapel Hill, Huddersfield captures a moment in time from that period. The painting automatically made me contemplate my projects regarding the representation of place, space, and time. The painting captures place and time but the aspects missing that a painting cannot reproduce are the visual rhythms of life and the transient nature of acoustic space (the sounds of life). Lowry's artistic perspective is also interesting as the point of view is from an elevated position. Artistic creativity through painting was Lowry's medium that allowed him to capture a sense of time and place whilst creating his unique view of the world. This visual representation resonated with my desire to represent a place from an aerial viewpoint and in turn create my artistic vision of the world. Inspiration to use drone footage within audiovisual projects also came from watching David Attenborough's *Planet Earth II* (2017) and *Our Planet* (2019). Innovation in camera and drone technology has made this possible for smaller budgets. Alastair Fothergill the producer of *Our Planet* also highlighted the flexibility this creates "you can launch the drone in a couple of minutes and you get amazing images, like a sequence of gannets diving off Maracas" (Bedingfield, 2019).



Figure 3.4 Lowry, Huddersfield, 1965



Figure 3.5. (Brook, full moon over castle hill, n.d.)

Brook was born in Holmfirth and was a rural landscape painter; the Pennines of Yorkshire was a particular favourite. Brook stated, “all the time there have been places that caught my imagination, places that I feel very strongly about” (Brook, n.d.). My chosen locations used for my research projects are places that I frequent regularly, and places that I also feel strongly about. The two paintings that I have chosen capture place, a snapshot of scene and locality, nothing represents Huddersfield more vividly

than Castle Hill. Due to its elevated position Castle Hill is a unique landmark that represents a place and is noticeable from the surrounding areas of Huddersfield. The tools I use to create my finished compositions are very different when compared to painters, but in some ways, they have similarities. My canvas is the software I use, the colour palette is derived from the captured audio-visual elements, and the audio-visual processing creates the brushstrokes. The research outputs are my artistic impression of the world in which I live, using tools and technology that are presently available.

Whilst field recording in Huddersfield town centre it was hearing people's conversations whilst going about their everyday lives that started to resonant with me. The repeated listening and playback of the recorded sound deepened my connection to the environment. Through recording on location I quickly became aware of "the power of recordings to preserve time" (Bhowmik & Majumdar, 2013, p. 19), and the realisation that what I recorded will never be repeated the same. The listening, recording and playback experiences started to make me ponder philosophically about the nature of speech regarding time and space. Speech is a representational snapshot of the present time, a sonic reflection of a location and community. People's conversations whilst going about their everyday lives will never be repeated the same, they are unique sonic events that disappear as quickly as they appear, philosophically it reminded me of the Buddhist view on the impermanence of life which they aptly represent with sand mandalas.



Figure 3.6a Outline of a mandala (Yoo, 2014a)



Figure 3.6b Sand mandala (Yoo, 2014b)

Each work begins with the drawing of the outline of the mandala; monks spend weeks working up to eight hours a day creating a sand mandala. Multi-coloured grains of sand are poured onto the template from metal funnels named chak-purs. Each monk

uses a chak-pur⁹ whilst running a metal rod against its grated surface. This causes vibrations so that the sand flows like a liquid. A sand-painted mandala is a spiritual symbol and a meditative tool, shortly after creation it is erased which serves as a metaphor for the impermanence of life (Yoo, 2014b). Buddhist philosophy believes that time is an illusion and that only the present moment exists. Time is a man-made concept as it does not physically exist, but only through changes in events and situations can time be conceptually perceived. Buddhist philosophy believes in an eternal life cycle of birth, death and rebirth called “samsara” (Coughlin, 2017). From this perspective, the concept of time has no beginning and no end due to it being eternal (Bunnag, 2017, p. 5). Ken Wilbur an American philosopher and writer on transpersonal psychology also shares the Buddhist view on time, stating that only the present moment exists with no beginning, no end and with nothing in front or behind it (Wilbur, 2001, p. 143). Philosopher Adolf Grunbaum defines time as a “linear continuum of instants” (Grunbaum, 1952, p. 288), this could be construed as meaning there is only what happens now (the present time).

Zen Master Seung Sahn compares the perception of time to a filmstrip on a movie projector, in a film everything appears to be moving fast but it stems from static frames on a filmstrip. Due to our thinking minds (movie projectors) being in a constant state of flux we experience the world as constant movement, and we experience change which is impermanence and the “moment-mind” is lost by conceptual thinking and a belief that the passing of time is real. Sahn states that the present mind is a lens whose shutter speed is divisible by infinite time. Sahn also believes that if you can attain that moment-mind or present-mind, the worlds perceived movement stops

⁹ Chak-pur are the traditional tools used in Tibetan sand painting to produce mandalas. They are conically shaped metal funnels and often have ridges down the sides.

(Sahn & Sunim, 1997, p. 143). Theoretically, time is perceived through consciousness and as Buddhist philosophy believes, it is possible to transcend the aspect of time through heightened meditation. This state empties the perceived reality of time as there is then no consciousness to perceive time; time is ultimately a state of mind. French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) also theorised that time is nothing more than a series of event changes:

My mental state as it advances on the road of time is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates. Still, more is this the case with states more deeply internal, such as feelings, desires, which do not correspond, like a simple visual perception, to an unvarying external object. The truth is that we change without ceasing and that the state itself is nothing but change (Bergson, 2001, p. 2).

Bergson goes on to suggest that time is mind-dependant and proposed that real-time is merely a duration and that it exists solely in our consciousness (Bergson, as cited in Bunnag, 2017, p. 1). In that respect, an event such as going out for a walk or a meal is merely an event with duration and how long that duration exists is measured in man-made time such as seconds, minutes and hours. It is a coherently specific way of “measuring with real numbers [that] determines how long an event lasts”. It is a way of framing the “duration between the events beginning, the instant, and its ending instant” (Bunnag, 2017, p. 2). Without this measuring tool, is the passing of time merely a cognitive perception? Field recordings reflect this duration of events, and “it involves an acceptance of the shifting circumstances of the world, the sudden, the gradual, the dynamic detail that duration reveals” (Lane, 2013, p. 12). Bergson himself described the duration of events as “the flux of time is the reality itself, and the things we study are the things which flow” (Bergson, 2001, p. 332). I believe that human time is a manufactured function that brings structure and meaning to everyday

events. This passing of time uses a mathematical concept for measurements such as seconds, minutes, and hours to measure and frame the perception of time. This could be perceived as a way of measuring the duration of events or the intervals between them and a way of placing “events in a single reference frame” and into a “linear sequence one after the other”, so we can specify with numbers how long an event lasts (Bunnag, 2017, pp. 1-2). It would be difficult to attend work, education and meet friends without measured time and calendars. The perception of time is a cognitive state and an understanding that is conditioned throughout life. As young children, there was no perception of time until cognitively developed enough to understand the concept. The perceived notion of time changes depending on our activities at that moment. For instance, when standing in a long shop queue or being engrossed in a book or film, the perception of time can go by either slowly or fast depending on the activities engaged in. Time is a state of consciousness and without this cerebral perception, seconds, minutes, and hours mean nothing when compared to eternal time. Workers on a factory floor described time running more slowly and that time appeared to pass quickly during breaks; “It is funny, time goes slower at [work] and quicker when you are outside” (Korczynski, 2014, p. 74). Christian Marclay also raises this point when discussing his 24-hour installation *The Clock*: “time shrinks in a natural way, if engaged with it time goes quickly, if were bored time seems endless” (Marclay, 2017, 2:06). Marclay also admits that we would be “much happier when we do not have to think about time” (Marclay, 2017, 0:25).

Bergson described manufactured time as physical time and a part of the natural world, this is objective, and lives exterior to the mind, perceived time is psychological, subjective and has a mind-dependent existence (Dowden, 2012; Weinert, 2013, p. 16). This is my “personal subjective perception” based on personal experiences and

belief systems, and although Buddhism believes that time is non-existent, they recognise the relativity of time to consciousness (Mon, 2002, p. 226).

My experiences recording out on location combined with theoretical research deepened my awareness and sacredness of environmental phenomena. Audio and video recordings essentially frame and pause time; this makes it possible to recreate and relive moments in time whenever the need arises (Barile, 2013, p. 184). Time is also relatable to Schafer's definition of "Schizophonia", which refers to the splitting of an original sound and its electroacoustic reproduction. The sounds were original to a moment in time and place, but once recorded the sounds are reproducible in a uniquely different time (Schafer, 1994, p. 90). Truax also stated that the reproduced electroacoustic sound is from another time and space but can also exist in the present time (Truax, 1992, p. 380). Therefore, environmental sound and soundscape composition is not only a representation of place it is a spatiotemporal continuum. Events and circumstances of the present moment directly affect what sounds are heard within acoustic spaces. This affects people's perception of place through sonic information, especially in urban areas such as town centres. As I have previously alluded to, town centres are the heart of most communities and are alive with the sounds of the people who inhabit them. The recent pandemic is an example of how time and the events or circumstances of the present moment affect both place and space. As discussed, without people town centres are uninhabited, devoid of mass sonic information and desolate places. Time is a precursor to what sound inhabits a specific space and place. Therefore the overall sonic environment of a locality and "a sense of place" is an amalgamation of place, space, and time.

3.5 Relationship between Place, Space and Time

Experiencing the environment and an overall sense of place relates to place, space, and time. What happens in a space and place is a reflection of a moment in time, the present time and is a unique aural and visual event that will never be repeated the same. Place, space, and time are separate theoretical concepts that I believe coexist harmoniously (or not), and they are underlining factors that constitute to an overall sense of place. They are concepts that reflect and contain the sights and sounds of life within an environment. This theory is comparable to the ancient Chinese philosophy of Yin & Yang, it is a concept of dualism and how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may indeed be complimentary toward each other. The concept of Yin & Yang is that all things exist as contradictory and inseparable opposites such as light/dark and good/evil. Neither is loftier than the other is and an increase in one corresponds to a decrease in the other, a balance is necessary to attain harmony (Cartwright, 2018). Place, space and time have been represented visually (figure 3.7) using the Yin & Yang symbol. The outer circle of Yin & Yang (place) consists of two factors, this being space and time. The events or circumstance of a given time directly affects the acoustic environment (space), and this, in turn, affects what the sense of place is at that specific moment in time.

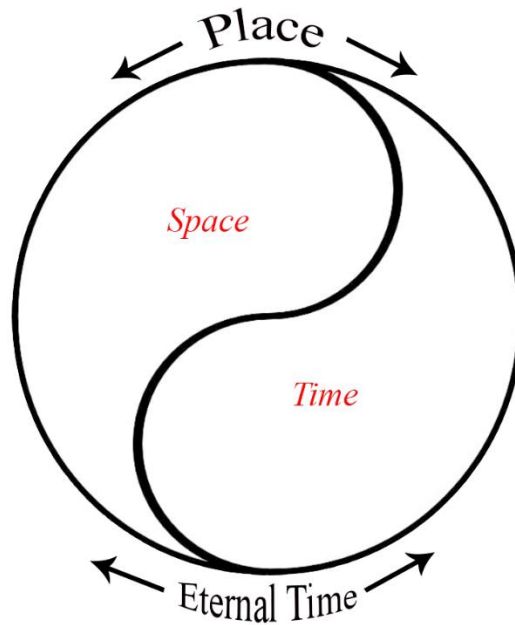


Figure 3.7 Illustration of Place, Space, and Time.

Soundscape composition is undoubtedly an artistic sonic representation of the world in which we live; place, space, and time are the three coexistent factors that create representation and realisation of the environment as a whole. As previously stated, time affects both space and place of a location. Events and circumstances of a given time affect the visual and sonic reality of the environment. The recent pandemic¹⁰ (moment in time) had a major impact on place and space. Town centres, places of work and education were transformed both visually and aurally. The recent virus affected urban places but also affected rural and outdoor spaces such as parks. The lockdown silenced town centres but outdoor spaces such as parks and recreational areas became much more densely populated by people. Natural disasters and armed conflicts are temporal events that transform landscapes and soundscapes. Chernobyl has undergone a major transformation due to temporal events, and wildlife

¹⁰ Coronavirus (Covid-19), respiratory virus, 2020-21.

not seen there for a century has replaced the evacuated people (Cusack, 2007, pp. 82-83). Therefore soundscape composition is not just as straightforward as representing a sense of place, it is much more multifaceted, to represent a place you have to add in factors of space and time to create a true impression of what a place is. Another example of this is a space in New Orleans, which the locals call “under the bridge”, a bridge where jazz funerals and parades pass through. The bridge encloses participants, creating togetherness, and the space underneath the bridge amplifies the acoustics of the bands playing there. The bands play loud to contest with traffic noise above. This is where people, sound, and environment are one, and this orients individuals collectively whilst occupying a shared space (Sakakeeny, 2010, p. 3). The sound of the band is linked to the place and space and Schafer refers to this sound as a “soundmark”. A community sound that is unique and noticed by the people within the said community (Schafer, 1994, p. 10). This is how sound can define what a location is and how space and place are utilised and given meaning by a community; “sound is inseparable from culture” (Dixon, 2007, p. 102). The perpetual sounds that are our daily experience confirm and reflect our sense of physical space as well as our place within it. Communities and individuals have a firm understanding of what belongs in their acoustic space, and what noises are invasive of such space (Truax, 2012, p. 2105). Steven Feld calls this sonic relationship as *acoustemology*¹¹, which Feld defines as “local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination embodied in the culturally particular sense of place”. Proposing that, people within places create soundmarks that grounds culture in specific localities through sound-making activities (Feld, 1996, p. 91).

¹¹ Sound as a way of knowing (Feld, 2013, p. 212).

In conclusion, place, space, and time are separate concepts. In relation to a “sense of place”, they are three parts of the whole. Within soundscape composition and my audio-visual films, the linked concept of place, space, and time is a fundamental factor within these works. Place, space, and time constructs the understanding of our environment, the when, where and how. The unique nature of each passing moment runs throughout the *Lockdown* film, it captures the mood and rhythm of change. The film transitions sonically and visually between three states, lockdown, and pre/post lockdown. The film shows how place and space is representable through sound and imagery, hence answering all three of the research questions. A sense of place and space is composed through the creative use of sound and imagery recorded on location. As previously mentioned, Buddhist philosophy drives most of the aesthetic approach and decision making. An environment transformed by the circumstances of the time, such as Covid-19, is enhanced through using sounds of life before the pandemic struck. The sound alongside lockdown and pre/post lockdown visuals shows in relation to Buddhist philosophy the ephemerality of life. As previously mentioned, “Whatever has the nature to arise, will also pass away” (Goldstein, 2022). This “everything changes” approach to sound and imagery is a theoretical framework garnered from Buddhist philosophy. Sense of place is characterised by circumstance and time; Covid-19 is an example of how the experience and events of life are forever changing moment-to-moment. Circumstances of the present moment dictate our direct experience of place and space; they are also factors out of one’s control. Philosopher Sam Harris explains:

There are things happening in your environment that you have no control over, just like thoughts and mental imagery. They are just happening, and you can notice them or not to a greater or lesser degree depending on what else is competing for you attention. The sound of a construction site across the street

is going to be happening as it happens, and you cannot push on it with your attention and have it do something else (Harris, 2022).

Geospatial information science describes, “Time is independent of space but relates to space by movement and change” (Yuan, 2020). My films in particular show this movement and change through audio-visual juxtaposition. Past/present, static/moving imagery and sound drives this aesthetic approach to highlight the ephemeralness nature of our existence. As previously mentioned by Harris, external and internal factors dictate our experience of the world. Our direct environmental experience is a fusion of place, space, and time. To Einstein, “time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live” (Marianoff & Wayne, 1944, p. 62). My personal experience of the environment is an amalgamation of both theories; place, space, and time are conditions and modes by which we both think and live.

Chapter 4: Soundscape Noise

4.1 Sound Art and Multichannel Sound

Multichannel soundscape composition allows for greater manipulation of spatial aspects of the sound-field. Surround-sound amplification creates a dramatically heightened portrayal of the biodiversity surrounding us (Krause, 2016, p.136). There is more opportunity for diffusion of sound than the stereo mix, which was utilised for the audio-visual projects. A multichannel composition is a way of creating further spatiality from a predefined recorded space. Regarding multichannel composition, Traux stated that the listener experiences an extremely realistic impression of being

inside that space; it is also challenging for the composer to create a spatial concept in the work (Truax, 1998, p. 143). Environmental artist and writer Andrea Polli describes that the usage of the extra audio channels involves making different compositional choices with the recorded material and thus allows more manipulation of the sculptural space. This not only creates a moving shape within the composition it also entails creating a space inside the listener's mind.

Field recordings capture and represent a moment in time that is unique in the context of eternal time. Sound-based compositions without any visual elements represent time without distraction, and that allows us to contemplate time on a much deeper cerebral level. Recording only sound allows the “sonic event to be both temporally and spatially dislocated from its visible counterpart” (Rose, 2013, p. 65). This creates an opportunity to “think through sound” and represent a moment in time without any visual distractions. This helps to focus the mind and deepen the listening experience. According to video and sound artist Lasse-Marc Riek, the interesting aspect of thinking through sound is the question of time; the truth that field recordings reveal. There is a temporal aspect in video and film, “but sound work represents time without a visual component, without that distraction, and that allows us to contemplate time”. Playback allows you to re-present different time-periods and the process of thinking through sound occurs. Field recording technology allows the composer to “synthesise content away from the world and change the sonic event through transformations of space and time” such as in a multichannel setup (Rose, 2013, p. 66). Field recordings also capture the sound that enters and undergoes transformation by space (Riek, 2013, p 179).

With a visual aspect (from a viewer's perspective), this becomes the primary focus; cognitively the sound is a secondary consideration. Moreover, by having nothing visually to contemplate makes possible the experience of a "profound listening experience". Film, video, and our environmental experience are visually directional. Visual elements are directional in the sense that we only see what is in our peripheral vision whereas we can determine the direction of sound without having to turn our heads. "The ear not only hears but also decisively influences our spatio-temporal perceptions. Being inside the multichannel sound is an immersive experience: you are not just listening to it" (Lopez, 2004a, p. 3). This is what influenced the soundscape multichannel project, a way of being inside the sound, instead of in front of it as in my stereo audiovisual projects. When talking about her installation work, sound artist, and vocalist Viv Corringham stated, "I fought against making a visual representation because I know that this will dominate and then the sound will be relegated to a background-position. I want the visuals to support the sonic and not the other way around". Corringham goes on to say that, people's attention span is much longer when there is a visual element and states that this is a problem with sound art as an exhibition. "If people can only devote less than a minute to looking at a painting, it does not bode well for sound art as it depends heavily on time" (Corringham, 2013, pp. 221-222). Whilst this is true of a static image, fortunately, sound and the moving image create a longer attention span due to the experience of passing time. This again relates to time and people's attention to listening/viewing. As a composer this is ultimately out of one's control and is futile to think otherwise. The composer has full control over the work until completion. You cannot control the viewer/listener's level of attention regardless of the artistic desire to retain people's attention.

The multichannel research output creates a sensory experience without visual imagery. The lack of imagery combined with multichannel sound allows for a deeper cerebral contemplation of time. It becomes a multi-sensory experience without it becoming sensory overload. Sound contains cognitive information and memory; on hearing an old song, I can remember where I was and what I was doing by the sound alone. This perception of sound is temporal by experience. Daniel Bender describes how temporal acoustic patterns can be represented by neural activity within our auditory cortex:

A neuron's excitatory and inhibitory inputs can be used to encode the temporal patterns within a sound. Varying the timing and strength of these inputs can produce either a rate or temporal neural code, effectively switching the language used by the brain for describing the temporal patterns within a sound (Bender, 2015, pp. 1-5).

4.2 Francisco Lopez

It is important to mention Lopez here due as his field recording compositions inspired my multichannel composition. Lopez employs field recordings as a non-representational experience of the environment, with an emphasis on immersion inside the “sound-in-itself” (Solomos, 2019, p. 94). Although Lopez’s work does not involve soundscape composition or documentation, his compositions albeit unintentionally originate from a specific place, space and time. Inspired to flip this concept I created a multichannel experience from location sound that is a referential soundscape experience of place, space and time.

Sound Artist Francisco Lopez's works employ field recordings that create an immersive experience inside the “sound-in-itself” (Solomos, 2019, p.94). The live

performances place listeners blindfolded, facing away from the artist, and surrounded by a multichannel sound system (figures 4.1 & 4.2). His main processing technique is compression and the amplification of field recordings. This influenced my usage of compression and amplification of location sound. These processing techniques enable the creation of a hyperreal sound world that places the listener at the centre of the soundscape instead of in front of it. When monitoring sound recordings on location (through amplified headphones) you become very sensitive to everything around you; it is a heightened state of perception. You are often disappointed when listening back to the recordings because it is just the sound and not the experience. To bring back that original sensation you have to alter and re-arrange the material (Kubisch, 2013, p.70). The way I achieved this original sensation is through compression and the layering of sound.



Figure 4.1 Set up space with movable seats (Lopez, 2004b)



Figure 4.2 Audience at a live performance (Lopez, 2007)

Lopez's work does not concern itself with soundscape composition or representation. It is about a profound field listening experience and the experience of sounds as things-by-themselves (Lopez, 2019, P. 2). It is about the manifestations of reality, the concreteness of sounds and their "quiddity" along with other entities (Lopez, 2019, p. 3). I have taken this concept and applied it to soundscape composition. As a soundscape composer, I believe that you can create referential sound worlds whilst maintaining a profound listening experience. Lopez argued that retaining the cause-object relationship within soundscape work is a communicative or documentary piece and never an artistic/musical one (Lopez, 1997). The Newcastle multichannel offers an alternative approach to this concept; my work is both documentary and musical whilst maintaining a referential soundscape.

4.3 Journey to Newcastle and Back

There were many reasons behind my decision to create a multichannel composition. As the multichannel was the first artistic work that I completed as part of my portfolio, it was an experiment in exploring the first two research questions on how a sound artist can represent a sense of place and space. The work became a manifesto of sorts that guided my sound-based work toward working with visual imagery. A way of building a set of artistic practices that would become the foundation of my sound work. My artistic portfolio clearly shows my evolution from a soundscape composer and finally to becoming an audio-visual artist. The Newcastle 5.1 multichannel is “cinema for the ears”, or *Cinéma pour l’oreille* as the phrase coined by French/Canadian composer Francis Dhomont. It is a genre of electroacoustic music composed of concrete (real-world) sounds. The multichannel merges the concrete sounds of trains with environmental sounds from a specific locality like Newcastle. My audio-visual work provides the visuals along with the soundtrack; the function of the multichannel work is for the listener to experience a cognitive journey through different soundscapes that invoke visual imagery within the mind. In essence, the listener creates their visual accompaniment to the soundscape composition and makes the experience unique and personal to them. British filmmaker Nick Cope describes this as, “the listener being taken on a journey through different soundscapes that conjure up aural images, creating a cinematic experience for the ear” (Cope, 2013). Lopez states that the lack of visual imagery, “lights up regions of the mindscape and the spirit that are normally dormant and darkened by visual light”. This lack of visual imagery combined with, “being inside the sound (instead of listening to it) creates a strong feeling of immersion where your own body moves into the perceptive background” (Lopez, 2004a, p. 4). The multichannel composition and “having nothing to

contemplate visually in the traditional sense makes possible the departure from frontal sound. As opposed to the directionality of visual elements, [the] sound is perceived [to be] coming from every direction” (Lopez, 2004a, p. 3).

Newcastle is a stand-alone piece that is a profound listening experience of a specific place, space, and time. It is a practiced based composition that aims to answer research questions 1 and 2. This is achieved by soundwalking around Newcastle whilst recording various spaces within an urban environment. These spaces are creatively utilised in the studio to represent a place through space. As discussed, the recorded sounds in these acoustic spaces are determined by events of that time. The “activity of life” creates specific sounds that are unique to place, space, and time. The aim is to reproduce life through sound and sound alone. The piece also creates an abstract experience of space by mixing sounds from different spaces. An example as such is at 11.06 onwards, the train journey back from Newcastle includes a layer of sound from a street performer in town playing the trumpet. This “creative treatment of actuality” is present throughout all of my works, both visually and sonically. The Newcastle soundscape composition draws heavily from Katherine Norman, Francisco Lopez and Hildegard Westerkamp's creative practices and the theoretical frameworks that they drew from. For instance, Westerkamp's *A Walk Through The City (1981)* takes the listener into a specific urban location with its sounds and languages. Traffic, the throb of trains, and human voices are its musical instruments. The Newcastle composition also takes the listener to a specific place through the sounds that are unique to a locality. The multichannel composition was created from the sounds of life that occurred when I was there, if I went back and collected my data again, the recorded spaces and sense of place would again be unique to that time. I took

aesthetic direction from Westerkamp when composing with location recordings when she stated, “These sounds are used partly as they occur in reality and partly as sound objects altered in the studio. A continuous flux is created between the real and imaginary soundscapes, between recognizable and transformed places, between reality and composition” (Westerkamp, n.d.). This continuous flux of real and imaginary soundscapes is achieved within the Newcastle composition by the layering of feedback noise (transformed place), with the unprocessed, recognisable and referential sound of the environment. Westerkamp goes on to say,

I hear the soundscape as a language with which places and societies express themselves. In the face of rampant noise pollution, I want to be understanding and caring of this ‘language’ and how it is ‘spoken.’ I compose with any sound that the environment offers to the microphone, just as a writer works with all the words that a language provides. It is in the specific ways in which the language is selected, organized and processed that composition occurs (Westerkamp, 2011).

Newcastle was composed with “any sound that the environment offers to the microphone” (Westerkamp, 2011). Moreover, as a writer who works with words that a language provides, I am a soundscape composer that composes with language that people provide. This is an important aesthetic inherent in my creative portfolio. Implementing the spoken word into my sound design was taken from Westerkamp’s theoretical framework used in *A Walk Through The City* because the human voice, “symbolises the human presence in the urban soundscape. Its voice interacts with, comments on, dramatizes, struggles with the sounds and other voices it encounters in the piece” (Westerkamp, n.d.). Within an urban environment, the sounds of people and language define the sense of place at that present moment and are uniquely site-specific. Buddhist philosophy explains, “The present moment is a brief period of time, it’s like the tick-tock of a clock, tick-tock, here-gone. To notice that experience is not

solid and separate, but is changing, arising, and passing moment to moment” (Kelly, 2021).

Further theoretical frameworks were drawn from composers such as Katherine Norman and Francisco Lopez who use field recordings within their compositions. As discussed, Norman’s *E17* composition uses elements of soundwalking and is a sonic journey through various scenes and spaces. Newcastle creates a sense of place through the multitude of spaces I recorded sound. The composition is what Norman describes as “real-world music” which:

can be seen as a move away from the reality, but through the reality, that frames our experience of music.....While not being realistic, real-world music leaves a door ajar on the reality in which we are situated. I contend that real-world music is not concerned with realism and cannot be concerned with realism because it seeks, instead, to initiate a journey which takes us away from our preconceptions, so that we might arrive at a changed, perhaps expanded, appreciation of reality (Norman, 1996a, p. 39).

Soundwalking around Newcastle captured the sounds of life at that moment in time, capturing life as it happens within a space and place. The recordings also captured the effect of the environmental surroundings on the people within it. This creative aesthetic was inspired by Norman’s description of her composition *People Underground*, which she describes as “a walk below ground in both the sonic and metaphorical sense” (Norman, n.d.). Although Newcastle was a walk above ground, the composition shows how environmental sound is transformed by the spaces in which they occur. The cacophony of recorded sounds and space was used creatively within the composition by adding a further spatial dimension to the work through multichannel sequencing. Perception of our environment is also an important factor to Westerkamp and Norman when recording/ composing as it is to my creative practice:

The sounds of our living environments inevitably highlights the world around us and our relationship to it. By riding the edge between real and recorded sounds, original and processed sounds, daily and composed soundscapes it creates a place of balance between inner and outer worlds, reality and imagination. Soundscape listening and composing then are located in the same place as creativity itself: where reality and imagination are in continuous conversation with each other in order to reach beneath the surface of life experience (Westerkamp, 1999).

Norman describes composing with the soundscape and the free play of our creative imagination as a way of deepening our understanding and connection to the world without and the world within us. Norman argues, “real-world music, like poetry, is impelled by a desire to invoke our internal ‘flight’ of imagination so that, through an imaginative listening to what is ‘immanent in the real’, we might discover what is immanent in us” (Norman, 1996a, p. 53). To deepen our connection to the environment, my sound work includes the amplification of location recordings. Westerkamp and Lopez also employ this creative tool as Westerkamp amplifies particular environmental sounds in order “to make them audible to the numbed urban ear” (Westerkamp, 2011). Compression is used with great effect at between 3 - 4.20 of the Newcastle composition. A cyclist riding over the Millennium Bridge is amplified to bring forth sounds of the environment that could potentially be missed within an urban soundscape. The multichannel composition fuses the amplification of sound with unprocessed and also abstract sound containing feedback noise. This is a way of allowing the listener to recognise some of the source sounds and establish a sense of place. This compositional balancing act was drawn from Westerkamp's theoretical framework as a soundscape composer who likes to;

walk the edge between the real sound and the processed sound. On the one hand I want the listener to recognize the source, and thus want to establish a sense of place. But on the other hand I am also fascinated with the processing of sound in the studio and making its source essentially unrecognizable. This

allows me as a composer to explore the sound's musical/acoustic potential in depth (Westerkamp, 2011).

To answer research questions one and two within the multichannel soundscape composition, the balance between referential sounds and processed sounds was an aesthetic considered throughout the compositional process. A sense of place and space was maintained by keeping field recordings unprocessed throughout the whole composition. As discussed, these recordings were interlaced with feedback noise to create an ethereal representation of a locality through sound. The theoretical framework by Westerkamp influenced my aesthetic decisions as a soundscape composer:

In order for it to be heard as a soundscape composition, the abstracted sounds must in some way make audible their relationship to their original source, or to a place, time or situation. Yet other compositions may be created with a combination of unprocessed and processed sounds. But whatever the continuity is or the proportions are between the real (unprocessed) and the abstract (processed) sounds, the essence of soundscape composition lies in the relationship between the two and how this relationship inside the composition informs both composer and listener about place, time and situation. A piece cannot be called a soundscape composition if it uses environmental sound as material for abstract sound explorations only, without any reference to the sonic environment (Westerkamp, 1999).

In the Newcastle piece, this relationship between the real and abstract sounds informs both composer and listener about a place, space, and time. All the original recordings originate from a specific locality in the Northeast. Some of these recordings were then processed to create feedback noise which maintains a relationship between the two compositional aesthetics albeit abstractly. As discussed, feedback sounds underpin the composition to inform the listener that noise is inherent within urban soundscapes. The feedback noise ranges from low, mid-high frequency, layered with unprocessed location recordings. Unprocessed sound maintains its environmental relationship to a specific place, space, and time. As the piece contains sounds

removed from their environmental context, the piece is a creative treatment of the actuality of life.

As mentioned, Lopez's theory was the framework that created my sound-based work evolving from a stereo to a multichannel composition. Newcastle was invaluable in helping me explore research questions one and two. The composition helped to build a set of sonic artistic practices, which I would use in the audio-visual works. Lopez is a sound artist that refuses to let "visuals and any non-sonic element sully the purity of the aural experience" (Lopez, 2009, p. 8). As discussed, there were no visuals in the Newcastle piece to allow engagement with Lopez's theoretical and creative practices. The sound-based work intentionally leaves the visual space open to personal interpretation, the listener adds visual accompaniment within their minds due to "sounds capacity to evoke or invoke" (Lopez, 2009, p. 6). In keeping with Buddhist philosophy, the aural depiction of place, space and time using "absolute music is a phenomenon whose contemplation alone allows one to escape the bounds of mortality in moments of self-forgetting" (Lopez, 2009, p. 7). Like myself, Lopez embraces the aspect of noise that is ubiquitous within urban and some nature environments. I embrace noise sounds as a composer due to it being an inherent part of life. In addition, as all my creative work uses the sights or sounds of life for creative purposes, my work would not be a representation of everyday life without this environmental facet. Lopez states that "noise is just as much a component of nature as it is of the urban environment; that the rain forest is as saturated with audio information as vital intersections in major cities" (Lopez, 2009, p. 11). The world is a very noisy place, and to answer research questions one & two creatively by omitting noise would create a false sense of place. Lopez states:

The world today is very noisy. And indeed it is, but isn't that the way it should be? Is nature better when its quieter? Are machines evil because they make a

lot of noise? Is that noise boring because it's always the same?" (Lopez, 2009, p. 11).

As a soundscape composer noise is a fascinating aspect of our environment that I aim to maintain and enhance through digital processing. The amplification and compression of environmental noise are an aesthetic prevalent in all my creative practices, whether that is sound-based or audio-visual pieces. As a composer who creates using environmental sound, my practical work refines and contrasts with composers such as Lopez, Westerkamp and Norman by adding an extra layer to the creative treatment of life. The layer of feedback noise created from field recordings differentiates my creative practice from these composers. I embrace environmental noise from the very beginning of the process, the act of recording noise on location and not dismissing this aspect of our life reaffirms this intention. Regarding the use of noise, philosopher Jean Baudrillard shares a similar theory to Lopez:

I think creative work with sound should be allowed to have all possible levels of intensity for those who might want to go through them. In a way, this is nothing more than a reflection of what we find in reality, where things have very wide dynamics, in terms of loudness, frequency content, time/pace, etc. If by 'noise' we understand harsh, loud sounds, a lot of people are already convinced of their interest in this (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 44).

The multichannel composition represents a place, space, and time without any visual elements. Within audio-visual projects, the sonic composition always has to have a meaningful correlation to the visual element for it to create meaning and substance. The multichannel project focuses entirely on the sound and thus creates a deeper listening experience without concern for any visual elements. Psychologists have stated that the "greater the absence of visual distraction, the larger the space for contemplation and imagination. In essence, "pictures are better on the radio" (Hendy, 2013, pp. 122-123). Whilst video creates the sensation of movement, soundscapes

engage us at a diverse sensory level that cognitively transports and connects us to the places we have visited (Krause, 2016, p.133).

Sonically documenting a day trip to Newcastle happened organically due to researching Francisco Lopez, Chris Watson, Katharine Norman, and Hildegard Westerkamp. Sound artist Francisco Lopez inspired the work to be represented through a multichannel project. Due to the unique accents in the North East and since I have never been to Newcastle before, it was an opportunity to capture life in an unknown place. The composition is a sonic exploration of an unfamiliar place and space; the work includes the people that I met along the way. When working with sounds from an unfamiliar place, sound artist Christina Kubisch states the composition is about recreating a feeling about the people she has met and the diversity and sensation of being in an unknown soundscape (Kubisch, 2013, p.70). Newcastle was my first project and was an experiment in soundscape composition; it laid the foundations for both of my audiovisual sound design projects. The Newcastle multichannel composition aimed to highlight and enhance the noise of the world that constantly surrounds us. Lopez argued that “these replicated entities cease to be referential or representational reflections of any original but become; each and all of them, simultaneously, the thing itself” (Lopez, 2013a, p. 98).

Newcastle highlights the sounds and music (street performers) of everyday life, sounds that define town centre soundscapes. It has become abundantly clear that street performers affect the subjective environmental perception of public space and break up the mundanity of urban town centres. Previous research (Doughty and Lagerqvist, 2016; Simpson, 2011; Tanenbaum, 1995; Whyte, 1980, 1988) has shown that the perception of public space with street performers is friendly and sociable.

Newcastle was an opportunity to record in an unfamiliar place, a tourist snapshot of sonic space, place, and time, similar in respect to *A Film About Nice* (Cox & Marley, 2010b). The Cox & Marley film is a contemporary re-imagining of Jean Vigo's *A Propos de Nice* (1930). Although Keith Marley had previously visited Nice before and knew some key locations shown in Vigo's film, Cox's experience was from a first-time perspective. I did not research my trip to Newcastle beforehand and did not know of any key locations such as Cox & Marley. This decision was intentional to capture the randomness and uniqueness of an unknown place from a first-time perspective. My "wait and see" approach stripped away any preconceptions of sound that I may or may not record and made the experience even more exciting. Newcastle is not an audiovisual project like the Cox and Marley film but the aim was to capture the rhythm and mood of everyday life through sound. The Multichannel project creates an immersive experience of the environment that merges the concepts of place, space, and time. Newcastle takes the listener into a specific urban location, as does Westerkamp's *A Walk Through the City* (1981). As previously discussed, Westerkamp's piece is an urban environmental composition based in Vancouver B.C.'s Skid Row area. Newcastle uses everyday sounds and human voices as its musical instruments. The Newcastle sounds were utilised in a similar way to Westerkamp, composed as "they occur in reality and partly as sound objects altered in the studio". Newcastle took inspiration from *A Walk Through the City* by composing a continuous irregularity between "reality and composition, between recognisable and transformed places, between the real and imaginary soundscapes" (Westerkamp, 2000). The human voice is also prevalent in both compositions as it symbolises the human presence within the urban soundscape.

Chris Watson's album *El Tren Fantasma* (Watson, 2011) inspired the recording of the train journeys to Newcastle and back. The 2011 album was created using archive location recordings to recreate a rail passenger service that no longer exists. The album is described as "a thrilling acoustic journey across the heart of Mexico from the Pacific to [the] Atlantic coast" (Blunt, 2011). *El Tren Fantasma* was lauded for its tensions between manmade and natural sounds (Raggett, 2011). This inspired my implementation and creation of a composition based on natural and manmade environmental sounds. If ever there is a sound to embody space and time, it is a train. A train has a unique sound world; cocooned from outside noise (other than the train sound itself) whilst moving through a place, space and time. Metal sounds penetrate the external environment whilst merging with sounds from inside. Travelling on a train whilst listening to the symphony of sound is an ethereal experience enhanced by listening through amplified headphones. A train journey is a moving microenvironment of normality and not just moving from place to place; it is a cognitive transfiguration of time and matter (Lopez, 2001, p. 1).

On the Toon in the Toon on the Tyne (Doherty, 1997) also influenced sound recording decisions. The 1997 Newcastle sound art composition fused environmental recordings with the sounds of trains. My project begins and ends with the recorded sound of the train journey to and from Newcastle. After the Newcastle train journey, the composition moves onto a soundwalk¹² (whilst recording). The walk proceeds over the Millennium Bridge, which is across the River Tyne and continues through Newcastle town centre. The interesting aspect of recording whilst walking is that movement through a place reveals it whilst you become part of it (Corringham, 2013, p. 220). I come across Newcastle cathedral accidentally whilst soundwalking and then

¹² A soundwalk is a walk with a focus on listening to the environment.

proceeded to record and capture the bell tolls. This was implemented at (4:24) within the composition as the sound is unique to a place, space and time. The landmark and soundmark highlight the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of a place.

Street musicians became an integral part of the Newcastle sound design. Capturing street performers such as a trumpet player (8:20) and a Geordie drummer/busker (4:25 and 5.45) gave an excellent audio palette to work with. The Geordie drummer (as I like to call him) played on plastic buckets, a broken cymbal and a cowbell placed on the floor. It is very difficult to replicate this experience to someone who was not there at that happenstance event. Whatever the aim of the artistic work or the composer; it cannot truly replicate the original experience of being there at that moment. Lopez stated that location recordings or any duplicated material ceases to become referential and becomes the thing itself. I do agree with the point that any environmentally recorded sound and image used for artistic works is a form of abstraction. The world we see and hear is detached from its environmental context; an altogether altered state of environment then arises from this data. This is not defined by the aim of the composer as this perspective is ultimately subjective; the work's definition arises from the listener/viewer's perception of it. I retain the referential element within my works by light processing of the location sound, sometimes equalisation is the only processing employed. My main processing tools enhance, clean up, and retain recognisable environment sound. Abstraction and heavy processing are utilised when feedback sound is created from location recordings. This transfigured sound then becomes a part of the sound design.

The visual and sonic experiences of a day in Newcastle ignited deep thinking and contemplation regarding the transitory nature of our everyday experience. I have come to realise that you cannot learn this from a book, it is about being there in the

midst of environmental experience; this is where true insight begins. Recordings close up to the drummer captured the unique dialect of the northeast whilst allowing for some isolation from background noise. The voice of the street performer allowed for creative and sporadic use throughout the composition. Repetition of the spoken word highlights the ephemerality and temporal nature of the everyday conversation. This was an important part of the sound design due to the accent belonging to a specific location.

The Newcastle research output aims to highlight and enhance the low-fidelity soundscape of the modern urban environment. Noises from traffic, people, and sounds unique to a locality became part of the soundscape composition. Sounds such as a speedboat and people crossing the Millennium Bridge are unique to a time and place. According to Dyson, duration is an important component of sounds heard in urban areas; noises such as generators permeate the soundscape, “and the time between impulses is so short they are heard as continuous” (Dyson, 2009, p. 73). Luigi Russolo’s futurist manifesto *The Art of Noises* encouraged the usage of everyday noise sounds due to the limitation of timbres within musical instruments (Russolo, 1986, pp. 24-25). Russolo encouraged exploration and composition of noise sounds, and rather than seeing noise as disagreeable to the ear, he encouraged exploration and usage of the diverse rhythms of noise. According to Russolo, noise is nothing but sound rich with harmonics (Russolo, 1986, p. 64). In addition, “although noise should not be a permanent condition, it would not be an urban sound environment, if noises were never heard” (Kreutzfeldt, 2010, p. 16). The Newcastle composition intended to be unashamedly “noisy” fuelled by Russolo inspiring noise timbres to become works of art. In addition, as he correctly stated, “as it comes to us from life, in fact, noise immediately reminds us of life itself” (Russolo, 1986, p. 86). Due to composing with sound and not image for Newcastle, it was an opportunity for creative freedom without

concern for audiovisual synchronisation or meaning. Russolo also called for futurist composers to “enlarge and enrich the field of sound” as a means of attaining the noise-sound. Russolo also theorised that advancements in technology will allow this evolution of composition (Russolo, 1986, p. 28). I have taken Russolo’s theory one stage further by creating noise (feedback) from noise. Present-day technology has also given me the ability to process location recordings and create feedback noise from them. This has become an intrinsic part of my compositional style. Feedback is generally an unwanted noise, but inspired by Russolo and using it in conjunction with the sounds of everyday life; my work creates a multi-layered sound world.

Feedback textures created from location recordings became an integral part of the multichannel sound design. The textures complement the unprocessed field recordings to create movement within the piece without the use of added instrumentation. Newcastle was a soundwalk due to being unfamiliar with the environment; it is difficult to capture specific/predetermined sounds if you are in an unknown place. Whilst researching a place beforehand can help with preparation, the evanescent nature of the experience will still throw up surprises. In Davide Tidoni’s *L’Amicizia Con la Cioca* (2011), it is the movement of the microphone and the world encompassing it that provides perceptible energy. Every act of location recording is a willingness to be open to the field and its exploration; not only does it imply an understanding and questioning of the self (Tidoni, 2013, p.75), it is your position in the space that determines how that space is reproduced (Tidoni, 2013, p.83). Sound is an extension of nature and life, “it can appear to fill spaces, create atmospheres, and have an intense emotive power” (Watson, 2001, p180). The Newcastle project was experimental from start to finish. Temporal events are at the heart of the environmental experience and Newcastle highlights this perspective. I recorded the sound of life as

it was in that moment and honour Russolo as the Newcastle composition metamorphosis into a “lyrical and artistic coordination of the chaos of noise in life” (Russolo, 1986, p. 87).

In conclusion, Newcastle contrasts and refines the works of composers such as Lopez, Norman, and Westerkamp. Lopez who is a sound artist employs field recordings as non-representational experiences of the environment, with an emphasis on immersion “inside the sound-in-itself” through multichannel works. Conversely, Norman and Westerkamp adhere to the concept of soundscape composition by maintaining references to the real world. The Newcastle multichannel composition is an amalgamation of these two theories and creative practices. Newcastle contrasts to Normans and Westerkamp’s compositions by placing soundscape composition within a multichannel piece. The work also supports Lopez’s theoretical framework by emphasising immersion “inside the sound-in-itself”. Newcastle extends on Lopez’s theory and practice through utilising soundscape composition to produce a “profound listening” experience. Lopez does not use processing to abstract and manipulate field recordings; the sound is enhanced through dynamic level changes and amplification. Lopez states:

The complexity of the sound environments, their natural richness, the unusual pace of the flow of sound events, all these features have influenced my way of understanding the creation of soundworks. I use dramatically slow changes, extreme level dynamics (from the limits of perception to the threshold of pain), an intense focus on broadband sounds and their complexity, all the things you find in the sonic reality of nature (Lopez, 2000).

Newcastle refines this theoretical framework through an amplified multichannel soundscape composition. This “sonic reality of nature” detailing a day trip to Newcastle contains the sounds of technology, people, and the sounds of life. Trains, street musicians, the people I met along the way, all represent the sonic reality of life as it

unfolds. As discussed, “noise is culture, noise is communication, noise is music” and is ubiquitous within our experience of the environment (Fleischer, 2022). Due to noise being an inherent part of our environmental experience and very difficult to ignore, I do not disregard noise when it comes to composition. Noise is a reflection of life and soundscape composition is a mirroring of life. The use of noise is an important theme prevalent in my creative works, an environmental aspect enhanced through the amplification of unprocessed sound and the creation of feedback noise from field recordings. “It is not the world that makes our auditory contents but rather our experiential knowledge that creates the world and how we hear noise, nature and music” (Baumann, 1999, p. 97). As previously discussed, this experiential knowledge of the world is an individualistic subjectively experience and relates to the interpretation of sound art or soundscape composition, Schafer argued, “One man’s music may be another man’s noise” (Schafer, 1994, p. 183). Baumann reiterated this argument:

Noise and musical sound exist in a reciprocal relationship with one another. They are mutually conditional in the interpreting listening of human beings. One cannot exist without the other. That which is music for one person’s ears signifies for someone else a considerable disturbance (Baumann, 1999, p. 102).

Soundscape composition is a creative treatment of life, and conceptually is the same as documentary film which, “creates a world from the simple experiences of living, breathing and being a filmmaker or artist in a particular place and time” (Danks, 2003). Newcastle shows how a sound artist can create a sense of space and place through soundscape composition. Through a creative interpretation of research questions one and two, space and place materialised through sound. This sense of place is only relevant to the time that the recording took place. If I returned to

Newcastle and started my data collection again, the results would undoubtedly be different. Buddhist philosophy states that life is constant flowing and changing, Newcastle captures and reflects this minute moment of ever-changing circumstance. “The sound frozen in a moment of time is nothing more than the fleeting moment of the eternal, [the] still flow of a sounding time” (Baumann, 1999, p. 101).

Chapter 5: Soundscape Documentary (Audio-Visual Research Outputs)

5.1 Documentary film

“When you put a frame around something, it’s a picture. Any moment lifted out of time is a photograph” – W.A Mathieu

I do not intend to discuss or argue what defines a documentary film, but rather present viewpoints on the definition. As German filmmaker Werner Herzog correctly stated, “The word documentary should be handled with care because we seem to have a precise definition of what the word means” (Cronin, 2002, pp. 238-239). I am also not going to discuss third-person voiceover in documentary films as it is irrelevant from the inception and conception of the practical work. Although documentary film aims to be a representation of reality, our subjective experience of space and place derives from our consumption of representations and re-representations of the environment. This breaks down the distinctive barrier between a real image and a simulated one (Gentic, 2014, p. 199). American film critic Bill Nichols argues, “every film is a

documentary” and even fiction film gives evidence of the culture that produced it (Nichols, 2001, p. 1). Nichols states that documentary sounds and imagery are captured from the world without undergoing manipulation. However, he recognises the imperfect definition of documentary film as it “adopts no completely known taxonomy of forms, styles, or modes” (Nichols, 1991, p.12). Nichols also states there are three main assumptions about documentary filmmaking. Firstly, documentaries are about something that happened, about reality; “they speak about actual situations or events and honour known facts; they do not introduce new, unverifiable ones”. Secondly, documentaries are about real people “who do not play or perform roles as actors do”, and lastly documentaries tell us stories about happenings in the real world. The films “tell us about changes that take place over time, with a beginning, middle, and end, be they the experiences of an individual or an entire society” (Nichols, 2017, pp. 5-7). Michael Renov argues that documentary film presents countless “moments at which a presumably objective realisation of the world encounters the necessity of creative intervention”, blurring the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction that “inhabit one another” (Renov, 1993, pp. 2-3).

Non-fiction is what we usually call documentaries of social representation; they give a sense of what reality was, of what it is now, or of what it may become. Whilst trying to convey truths we ultimately have to assess their claims, perspectives, and arguments and decide whether they hold merit or not (Nichols, 2001, p. 2). In essence, a documentary film has to tell a story, it has to have a heart. This is the aim of my audiovisual works, to tell a story of a specific place through the interplay of sound and image. The moving picture is powerful especially in documentary films as “it makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience” (Link, 2004, p. 78). Due to the immediacy of video imagery it “creates a

sense of the 'now' that allows it to coexist temporally with sound and music". Sound and imagery recorded simultaneously allow the artist and composer to take "control of both audio and visual tracks, conceptually and concurrently" (Rogers, 2011, pp. 410-411). In a cinematic film where the point-of-view shot shows the scene through the character's eyes (Link, 2004, p. 76), documentary film is observed through the perspective of the filmmaker's eyes. My films were meant to be a direct, observational style of documentary that does not influence or direct events as they are happening. Holly Rogers describes this direct filmmaking style as a drive toward an "impression of authenticity", that produces a "naturalistic chain of events" and "events would have unfolded in this way, with or without the presence of the camera" (Rogers, 2014, p. 1). Observational documentary filmmaking aims to promote, "minimum creative intervention" (Rogers, 2014, p. 1). This is not as straightforward as it seems because when you are accompanied by film or sound recording equipment, "minimum creative intervention" can be difficult to achieve unless you are situated in a remote location. Whilst recording in an urban environment I have realised that people will either try to ignore/shy away from the equipment or start to play up to the camera (as in figure 5.0 below).



Figure 5.0 Vikings performing to the camera

Observational documentary filmmaking gives an impression of lived experience attained by being on location as events occurred (Ruoff, 1993, p. 25). That statement is the essence of my films as I only captured what was happening at the time of recording. Although working as an observational filmmaker¹³ there were organic interactions with the public. These exchanges or active involvement with the subject matter is termed “interactive documentary filmmaking” (Nicholls, 1991, p.33). The spontaneity and uniqueness of each social exchange highlighted the transient nature of experience whilst also capturing the physiognomy¹⁴ of people going about their everyday lives. These unscripted interactions became a part of the final product as they injected natural warmth and social reciprocity within the films. My film recording started with a similar intention to documentary filmmaker Rakesh Sharma. Sharma films people that he has never met before to achieve a truthful and instantaneous view

¹³ Not influencing events for the camera, conducting interviews or interfering with subjects.

¹⁴ A person's facial features or expression, especially when regarded as indicative of character or ethnic origin.

of events (Sharma, 2008, 51:20). Throughout *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods*, observational filmmaking occurred organically, at other times there is unscripted interaction between members of the public and myself. Nichols was aware of this paradox with documentary filmmaking due to people's awareness and change of behaviour when confronted with a camera. Nichols argued, "this can introduce an element of fiction into the documentary process", paradoxically it also "documents the ways in which the act of filmmaking alters the reality it sets out to represent" (Nichols, 2001, p. 6).

Documentary films are modes of representation that want to engage us in affairs that relate to the world we live in. They are a way of turning our attention to the world we already inhabit. This is why I perceive my visual imagery as documentary-style filmmaking. Nichols goes on to say, "those who adopt the documentary as their vehicle of expression turn our attention to the world we already occupy" (Nichols, 2001, xiv). Through a documentary film style, my audiovisual work aims to tell a story of a specific place and time within that world. An observational documentary film attempts to capture and show the world how it is and to present facts about the world. This ideal is subjective as images can be modified during or after the fact, and imagery alone cannot tell the whole story of what happened (Nichols, 2001, p. 3). Ultimately, documentaries are a means of offering a visual and aural depiction or resemblance of the world we inhabit (Nichols, 2001, p. 5). According to Keith Beattie, the role of sound is secondary to the image because "the visual supersedes, but does not displace a work's auditory component, and the auditory register is frequently employed to reinforce visual effects" (Beattie, 2008, p. 13). Rogers states that although music can sit awkwardly with images in documentary films, the creation of music alongside location sound can help to narrow this conceptual gap. When placed back onto the

image these sounds construct a “sonic remodelling of the authentic or real documentary image” (Rogers, 2020, p. 4). My filmic research outputs adhere to this compositional concept as the soundtrack for the films came solely from location recordings. There was no musical instrumentation added in post-production. An important layer of sound in *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* is the usage of feedback noise created from field recordings. As discussed, creating feedback sounds from processed location recordings is a layer that is inherent in my work. I like to think of it as a natural evolution of a soundscape composer; it is also an evolution of Russolo’s theory discussed in chapter 4.3. The only sound utilised in my compositions that does not stem from field recordings is ticking clocks and a speech by the then-prime minister of the United Kingdom: Boris Johnson. As my films are also concerned with sonically portraying the world beyond the camera frame, they are an augmentation of reality whilst preserving the aural and visual connection to the real world. In the 1930s, John Grierson defined documentary as the “creative treatment of actuality”, and whilst this view accepts that documentaries are creative works, it “leaves unresolved the obvious tension between creative freedom and actuality”. From this point of view, documentary film is neither fiction nor non-fiction and “refers to reality while representing it from a distinct perspective” (Nichols, 2017, p. 5). To define my audiovisual work, I would say my films are avant-garde due to pushing the boundaries of documentary filmmaking. However, as a creative artist, I have the same mind-set as artist and composer Jez Riley French who stated, “I am not motivated by fitting [into] some genre-based career or way of working”, and “creates as a person, not as an artist. It is personal rather than a question of creating to a project brief” (French, 2013, pp. 166-167).

5.2 Documentary film and location sound

The audiovisual research outputs are an amalgamation of documentary film, soundscape composition, and sound art. The projects capture and represent a sense of place through sound and image. In Michael Rabiger's *Directing the Documentary*, he stated that music used within documentary production; "should not inject false emotion" and "music can signal the emotional level at which the audience should investigate what is being shown" (Rabiger, 1998, p. 310). My work aims to inject emotion but not false emotion through the processing of field recordings and the fusion with documentary film imagery. *Manufactured Landscapes* (2007) by Jennifer Baichwal also achieved this synthesis of documentary film, location recordings, and music. The film follows photographer and visual artist Edward Burtynsky to China as he takes large-scale photographs that portray the impact of rapid industrialisation on the environment. The music by Dan Driscoll is minimalistic and intentionally plays a secondary role in relation to the visual imagery. The film contains moving imagery and still photographs by Burtynsky of landscapes transformed by human activity. *Manufactured Landscapes* demonstrated how "traditional documentary aesthetics can be at once upheld and yet drastically reconfigured by the manipulation of location sound" (Rogers, 2020, p. 89). Music and sound brought the images to life and created new meaning through symbolic imagery and indirect suggestion through sound-image synergy and asynchronicity, thus creating emotion and new states of mind.



Figure 5.1 Still from *Manufactured Landscapes* opening sequence

The opening sequence features an 8-minute-long tracking shot of a factory floor in China. The scene contains location sound from the shop floor; there is no music in the opening sequence. The lack of music in the opening scene of *Manufactured Landscapes* inspired the sound design aesthetics for the opening 2:50 minutes of *Hudds & Woods*. The opening 2:50 minutes of *Hudds & Woods* contains no added music or sound effects; it is composed solely of field recordings. The utilisation of location sound in my work derives from a certain perspective; if the recorded sound is acoustically interesting and communicates something about life at that moment, it is unnecessary to add or subtract anything during post-production for the sound to have an impact.

The photography in *Manufactured Landscapes* and still imagery from Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* inspired the usage of stills in *Lockdown*.



Figure 5.2 Still images used in *Man with a Movie Camera* (23:22 & 23:40 respectively)

Due to *Lockdown* containing scenes of empty streets, the transition between still and moving imagery is hard to differentiate. This concept of transitioning from a still to a moving image and back again is subtle and not obvious to the naked eye, at times it is almost a hidden edit used within *Lockdown*. This transition was used intentionally to create an augmented visual perception of reality and not a linear experience of the environment. The sound design within *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* is composed to create an interior experience of an environment “which cannot itself be visualised or perhaps even spoken; the inner life” (Corner, 2002, pp. 358-359). Documentary filmmaker Chris Marker also explored how sound and music can be employed to fracture the visual perception in documentary filmmaking. Films such as *Sunday in Peking* (1956), and *La Jetee* (1962), utilise abstract sound in relationship to the visual imagery, which purposely baulks at the perceived objectivity of what defines a documentary film.

Documentary filmmakers such as Geoffrey Cox utilises location sound synchronously and asynchronously with imagery. The implementation of field recordings transitions between these two states. Films such as *The Mill* (2021) and *A*

Film About Nice (2010) demonstrate this transition between sound and image. *The Mill* was recorded in Spa Mill, Slaithwaite, which is a factory that spins yarn. Although orchestral music and poetry exists in the soundtrack for *The Mill*, the use of location sound is at times synchronised to the image. Abstraction does occur at points within the film by using the sound of pulsed drones that are rhythmic in nature, this works well in combination with imagery of heavy machinery. In *A Film About Nice* there is a scene of a train/tram station whilst you are hearing the sound of inside the station.



Figure 5.3 Nice station (8:00 minutes)

The scene resonated with my own use of interior/exterior sound and imagery, as described in figure 2.5 (Page 53). My use of exterior imagery of shops/buildings juxtaposed with sounds from inside was a natural evolution due to the circumstances of recording in an environment transformed by Covid-19. As previously mentioned all the sound and imagery was recorded separately, at different times of the year, during and after lockdowns occurred. This audio-visual disconnection became a theme throughout my films by placing sounds in opposition to the image. This aesthetic

approach is derived from Buddhist philosophy, which states that the perception of our experience is determined by internal and external factors. The juxtaposition of internal sound and external imagery artistically manipulates the perception of these two factors.

5.3 Huddersfield Lockdown 2020

As discussed, City Symphony composers were the main influences behind the visuals for Lockdown. However, due to technological limitations of their time, sound was not a medium they could work with. Noticing the potential of sound in the future, Vertov was resolute about the recording of, “the real source of a sound, rather than its approximation as sound effect or studio recording”. He remained convinced that the resulting sound montage should not provide a simple synchrony, but rather a complex interaction of sound and image” (Birdsall, 2014, p. 25). This is a theoretical framework used within my own films, to fuse the concept of soundscape composition and visual imagery to create, “a complex interaction of sound and image”. The use of recognisable environmental sounds was designed to prompt the viewer/listeners awareness of their own urban environment. My films purposely explore the creative potential and use of sound and image. Composer Edmund Meisel who wrote the score for Ruttmann’s *Berlin*, “stressed that sound film had the ability to stage an interaction between listening and viewing through a process of optical-acoustic counterpoint, by playing visible and audible movements against each other” (as cited in Birdsall, 2014, pp. 33-34). This creative framework runs throughout *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* to a lesser degree. This creative aesthetic and decision making was also born of

circumstances during Covid-19, the consequence of a composer working through an environment transformed by circumstance.

Lockdown, as in Ruttmann's *Dusseldorf* (1935), is a visual and auditory composition that synthesises various aspects of Huddersfield into a rhythmic conceptualisation of reality. Ruttmann himself proclaimed, "*Dusseldorf* would speak for itself via an integrated audiovisual rhythm" (as cited in Birdsall, 2014, p. 35).

At the beginning of my PhD, a lot of time was spent soundwalking around Huddersfield town centre whilst recording sonic events. I have always found urban environments (especially town centres) exhilarating to record sound. Every recording experience is different day-to-day due to the fascinating diversification of the people who inhabit the spaces and the temporal events that occur within them. Barona & Franco describe an urban environment as allowing "us to understand the sono-spatial relations and the social dynamics that take place in a given area at a given moment", and that "sound is a testimony of the events that happen in time and space" (Barona & Franco, 2017, p. 140). This is not unique to sound alone because the visual data collection was as enthralling and transient as the field recording experience was. Although I went out to visually record certain scenes and locations, it was the unexpected (Vikings and Jesters) that gave the film uniqueness and character. These one-off events were visual and aural indicators that encouraged theoretical research into the experience of the environment on a deeper level. As Quin points out, location recording sometimes requires an "element of spontaneity and improvisation [for] the recordist to successfully adapt to the conditions of a location. This can yield surprising results, in which fleeting and ephemeral sounds appear and vanish in front of the microphone" (Quin as cited in Samartzis, 2015, p. 145). These spontaneous moments happened visually as well as sonically (Vikings, Jesters, and Mr Scrooge). Whilst

recording within Huddersfield town centre, these unique and transient moments of everyday experience remain a highlight of being there at that moment. The virus and lockdown then came along; this temporal event shaped the rest of my research outputs. I immediately decided to capture the town centre during the lockdown period. Recording an environment in an unprecedented moment in time was an opportunity to grasp. After visually capturing the town centre during a time that I had never experienced before, the idea came to juxtapose pre-lockdown audio with visuals of mainly empty streets during the lockdown.

Lockdown is an artistic representation of place, space, and time; it captures an environment transformed by time and circumstance. The whole project is a temporal experience, a synthesis of lockdown and pre and post-lockdown. Different fragments of time are mixed together to create an audio-visual experience of a unique moment in history. Post-lockdown imagery transitioning to lockdown footage highlights the difference between the periods and allows visual movement between moments in time. Buddhist philosophy states that life is in a constant flow of change, analogous to a flowing waterfall of the passing of clouds in the sky. This philosophical perspective has shaped many of the visual editing decisions in *Lockdown*. The repetition of scenes, slow motion, fast editing, transitioning from lockdown to post lockdown intentionally highlight the fleetingness nature of our everyday experience. The repetition of scenes and slow/fast motion editing brings attention to these one off events through artistic intervention. The scene below interrupts the ephemeral nature of life and stops time, by freezing the video and stripping all sound away from the imagery. "The deliberate use of silence, especially in experimental film has been used as a distancing device, for example Peter Gidal's *Room Film 1973*" (Gawthrop, 2006,

pp. 53-54). It is impossible to escape from environmental sound, and by creating sonic silence in the scene below, it distances itself from this phenomenon.



Figure 5.4 Scene frozen in time (5:20)

These compositional decisions were to show the visually fixed nature of place and the unfixed nature of space. Temporal events underpin, shape, and dictate the experience of an environment. Therefore, a sense of place is capricious and impermanent due to temporal events and circumstances of the present moment. The effect that people have on the environment visually and aurally dictates the sense of place.

Bible preachers and street performers such as buskers are a major part of the soundscape of Huddersfield town centre. The recording and playback of street performers is a multi-layered experience, “first there is the performance, the moment of making the music, which is also the moment of recording, as well as the moment of experiencing the music live; then follows the ritual of listening [back] to the recording”

(Bhowmik & Majumdar, 2013, p. 20). Temporal events such as the Vikings, Jesters and Mr Scrooge (Christmas 2020), transformed the landscape and soundscape of that moment. I was essentially “recording music that comes out of people’s lives; in [the] sound [and] image[ry]” (Bhowmik & Majumdar, 2013, p. 18). Sense of place is a constant flow of experience, and although there could be regular and familiar sights and sounds of a place, the experience of place is subject to random events that flow with impermanence. Showing this in my lockdown project was important as it relates to the Buddhist mandalas that show whatever has the nature to arise, also has the nature to pass away (Goldstein, n.d.). Mandalas, auras, and especially Buddhist philosophy have all conceptually influenced my use of sound and video to evoke a sense of place, space, and time. One-off events such as the bus driver waving to the camera whilst exiting Huddersfield bus station. This repetition of shots plays with the aspect of one-off events, of time and impermanence. This theme runs intermittently (visually and aurally) throughout the lockdown project. It is an abstraction of time and circumstance; the only permanent aspect of life is impermanence (Daily Stoic, 2022).

Lockdown was composed with a narrative in mind; its purpose was to tell a story through sound and vision. A story of time and circumstance, a time that is now slowly fading into the past, the same as any other event or circumstance. The work is a form of documentary that visually does not have a specific chronological narrative due to constantly changing any developing situations through editing. I was fortunate to record the sights and sounds of street performers because you cannot dictate your data collection whilst on location. The sound recordings of buskers became an important aesthetic in *Lockdown* as the songs/lyrics combined with specific imagery created a poignant atmosphere and a sense of place. As previously mentioned, video and sound were recorded separately whilst on location; this allowed creative freedom

when working in the studio with sound and image. It was not enough to record spaces and say, “there you go that is the way it looks and sounds”. I became increasingly interested in working with the in-between synthesis of sound and image. Synchronised sound mainly reinforces the image or underlies what is in the frame whereas audiovisual dissonance rhymes with the image (Clark, 2017, p. 343). Audiovisual artist Aura Satz is also concerned with “testing the sound against the image, and seeing what can happen by working with them in some kind of friction” (Satz, 2017, p. 345). The interplay between sound and image was an area that I increasingly explored within my films fuelled by theoretical research.

The audiovisual film *Al Niente—a Dissolution* (2015) by conceptual artist and filmmaker Adreis Echzehn features two side-by-side images within the video frame. Visual juxtaposition occurs due to the combination of still and moving images shown at the same time.



Figure 5.5 Scene from *Al Niente-a Dissolution* (1:52)

As well as *Manufactured Landscapes* and Vertov’s *Man With a Movie Camera*, the work by Echzehn reaffirmed the usage of still and moving imagery in *Huddersfield Lockdown*. This aesthetic implementation occurs transitionally, one scene at a time as

opposed to side-by-side in the same visual frame. Conceptual artist and filmmaker Adreis Echzehn described his audio-visual production *Al Niente—a Dissolution* (2015) as:

Experiencing the atmosphere of a place through the senses, through seeing and hearing. It was a search for correspondences between exterior spatial experiences, on the one hand, and sound spaces and interior experience spaces, on the other hand. Finally, we wanted to show these experiences, make them visible, audible, and reflectable (Echzehn & Miklautz, 2017, p. 386).

This was the starting point as I began work on the *Lockdown* project, which is a non-fiction film that encourages cognitive engagement through sound and image. *Lockdown* aimed to create “an integrated sensory experience that was neither audio nor visual, but distinctly audiovisual” and the “ratio between the senses – between hearing and seeing – was open to vigorous debate and competing models” (Lastra, 2000, pp. 93-94). *Al Niente—a Dissolution* and *Man With a Movie Camera* uses a combination of still and moving images. *Man with a Movie Camera* was the main influence on the visual edits in *Lockdown*. Vertov’s film contained slow and fast motion edits as well as reversed imagery and influenced most of the visual editing in *Lockdown*. For example, the scene in (figure 5.4) is in slow motion and this accentuates the temporal nature of the environment whilst encouraging attention to the moving image. The transient experience of the scene endures elongation by slowing the shot down. The scene below intentionally creates sonic silence by stripping the sound away and is just one of many audiovisual scenarios explored by varying the sound in relationship to the visual (*Lockdown* project 3:38 - 3:45 minutes).



Figure 5.6 Huddersfield New Street – Post Lockdown May 2021

Fast motion editing appeared once in *Lockdown* at the scene of the Huddersfield open market and is not immediately obvious due to a 50% increase in speed. Inspired by the fast motion edits of City Symphony composers, this visual aesthetic is a one-time occurrence due to not wanting to overdo the fast visual editing.



Figure 5.7 Fast edit in *Lockdown* (14:44 -14:53)

Due to capturing empty streets in *Lockdown*, the concept of still imagery worked well because it is very hard to differentiate visually between the cuts. Although infrequently used, the still image became another creative tool used within my audiovisual compositions. Vertov's *Enthusiasm* influenced not only visual aesthetics in *Lockdown* but also sonic compositional decisions. *Enthusiasm* contains a short sequence of visual clips that change in synchrony with the sound of a church bell (11:00-11:21). The bell is essentially a sound cue that represents visual changes. A sound cue first appeared in *Lockdown* at 1:41 minutes and happens sporadically throughout the film. At times, the sound is synchronised with scene changes, at other times, the indiscriminate use of the sound shows the random nature of environmental sound. The sound is that of a council worker dropping a metal bin on the floor. The sound was accidentally captured whilst recording the sounds of street performers. I was able to isolate the sound further by equalisation in the studio and this became a soundmark within *Lockdown*.

The end goal was to create a work that thinks through sound and image instead of thinking in concepts (Echzehn & Miklautz, 2017, p. 386). I am the latest in a long line of composers inspired by place and the research outputs demonstrate this deep connection and fascination with geographical locations. *Lockdown* attempts to capture the transient nature of place in an urban environment. Influenced and connected to our surrounding environment, the lockdown project is my interpretation of life through art, a synthesis of external and internal factors that forms our perception of place. Professor Monty Adkins discussed a similar objective when describing his audiovisual works *Drift Trilogy*. The artistic intention is to expand the psychogeographical drift from the environment "to our inner world in which multiple instances of experiencing a place converge to form a palimpsest of that place" (Adkins & Santamas, 2014, p. 404). On

a much deeper level, artistic creations are not a reproduction of natural phenomena; they are an expression and extension of the artist's soul (Kandinsky, 1977, p. 19).

In Summary, *Lockdown* uses a montage of field recordings and visual representation to tell the story of a specific time and location that will be consigned to history. As discussed, the sound seems to match the images, but at other times, there is a disjuncture caused by the usage of unrelated sounds superimposed on imagery; this intentionally creates a fracture between sound and image synergy. This compositional style preserves a space for the viewer to experience the subjectivity of a place through sound-image synthesis and abstraction (Gentic, 2014, p.205). French philosopher Gilles Deleuze argued that sounds and moving images are ways of thinking. This is a similar concept to Lopez's thinking through sound and whenever one is confronted with sound or words without imagery, the mind ultimately creates its own internalised mental image that accompanies them. Deleuze also believed that there is a resemblance between philosophy and film; both produce images, one produces thought images, the other movement and time images (Deleuze, 1986, p. xi). Deleuze described this fluctuation between imagined and seen images, "we go from a thinking of the whole which is presupposed and obscure to the agitated, mixed-up image which express[es] it" (Deleuze, 2013, p.164).

As discussed, external and internal factors form our experience and perception of our environment. Our direct environmental experience is a fusion of place, space, and time. As place, space and time are modes by which we think and conditions in which we live. *Lockdown* captured the present moment of that time and I argue that it answers all of my research questions through the creative treatment of sound and image. A sense of place is revealed through capturing sonic and visual spaces of a unique moment in time. The period of Covid-19 has passed, resigned to history and

memory. Through the freezing of time, that recording provides, the place, the space, and time of Covid is preserved through art.

5.3.1 Lockdown project aims

In reference to the research questions:

Aided by Buddhist philosophy,

- How can a sound artist represent a strong sense of place?
- How can a sound artist represent a sense of space?
- How can a sound artist in conjunction with video imagery represent a unique moment in time such as the Covid-19 period?

The *Lockdown* project aimed to answer all of the above research questions using practice-based research. Representing a strong sense of place and highlighting how a sound artist in conjunction with video imagery can represent a place, space and time was the end goal. This was achieved by using static camera shots to show the fixed nature of place whilst also capturing the space and time of the environment sonically and visually. Given that landscape paintings can aptly create a sense of place and a time past, they do not capture and preserve the moment in the way that audio and video can. Video captures whatever is in the frame; it neither adds nor subtracts and captures the present moment as the scene becomes frozen in time. The shot becomes a stable space, fixed in time that one can revisit and dwell in should one wish to do so; it becomes an interruption in the perceived linear flow of time. Paintings on the other hand are created over a longer period and do not capture the ephemerality of that moment; it is ultimately framed by the artist's mind (Tuan, 2004, pp. 26-27).

There are parallels, however, and due to the videographer framing the shot, it is a conscious decision as to what is contained inside the frame. City Symphony composers relied on the camera as a means of, “developing a visual language able to comment on the modern city and its inhabitants” (Birdsall, 2014, p. 20). *Lockdown* enhances and elevates this concept by using a combination of processed and unprocessed location sound from the same location.

Audiovisual artist Dennis McNulty was also aware that working with recorded material for future performances folds time and space back in on itself (McNulty, 2006, p. 51). The present moment according to C.S. Lewis is “the point [at] which time touches eternity” (Lewis, n.d.). The audio-visual data from Huddersfield town centre felt very sacred. I became aware over time that I was ultimately working with the sights and sounds of people going about their everyday lives. The film captures the living breathing reality of that present moment, a perception that came into consciousness whilst composing in the studio. Ultimately, I aim to interact, manipulate, and re-present reality artistically. As already mentioned, sound artist, Francisco Lopez is less concerned with representation and sees field recordings as a non-representational creative way of interacting with reality (Lopez, 2013b, p. 101). Although Lopez inspired the multichannel work, I did not follow Lopez’s views on non-representational location sound for my research outputs. *Lockdown* and *Hudds & Woods* have a representational aim, but at times, the sound design is non-representation due to digital processing techniques that created the feedback noises within my compositions. From a historical perspective and due to the unique nature and circumstances that Covid-19 created, the *Lockdown project* aimed to “create an experience of connection with the past and to evoke the question what happened here?” (Benschop, 2009, pp. 185). Ankersmit (as cited in Benschop, 2009, p. 186)

describes this contact with the past as “always accompanied by a truth, by an outright conviction of reality and truth, and can be brought about by a print, a line from a document, or some sounds from an old song”. My truth, my reality from the past, is a story told through sound and image.

5.3.2 City Symphonies

Lockdown was heavily inspired by the city symphony filmmakers of the early 20th century. Filming the lockdown project took place in a town, not a city; it represents life in an urban environment (town centre). The work captures a place transformed by circumstance and is a unique moment in time. Urban cartographer and explorer Eric Brightwell defines city symphonies as a “poetic, experimental documentary that presents a portrait of daily life within a city while attempting to capture something of the city’s spirit” (Brightwell, 2015). Artists such as Walter Ruttmann, Paul Strand, Dziga Vertov, and Jean Vigo transformed the raw materials of city life into something artistic and modern. Camera perspectives and edits emphasised and energised the life of a big city; the films are a balance between abstraction and filmmaking. Ruttmann’s *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927), Dziga Vertov’s *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) and Paul Strands *Manhatta* (1921) are silent films due to the limitations of technology at that time. Structured as a series of vignettes rather than a linear narrative, Strand's avant-garde film *Manhatta* leads viewers through a day in the life of Manhattan. The film contains imagery of New York Harbour, Brooklyn Bridge and towering skyscrapers that render people insignificant against the modernist backdrop.



Figure 5.8 Scene from *Manhatta* (5:36)

We currently find ourselves in a wonderful technological position where the only limitations are our imagination. Without the presence of sound, my visual representations of place would lose their meaning and impact. Rupert Till highlighted the relationship of sound to the environment; “sound has an important role to play, to animate, to bring alive what could otherwise be a rather static and lifeless space” (Till, 2014, p. 294). I would say that this statement is more relevant to urban spaces as opposed to rural spaces, which are visually and sonically more appealing.

Ruttman’s *Symphony of a Great City* uses montage to connect different aspects of life in Berlin. Montage is described as a “series of separate images, moving or still, that are edited together to create a continuous sequence” (Deguzman, 2020).

In *Berlin* at (45:00 – 46:30), Ruttmann used quick edits between different scenes to create a feeling of intensity and mania prevalent in everyday life within a city. The creative treatment of life through montage editing techniques was used with dazzling effect in Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929). The film contained off-kilter framing, fast and slow motion imagery, fast edits and dissolves [and mirroring] (Huddleston, 2015). Vertov's rapid editing in *Man With a Movie Camera* is most prominent near the end of the film (1:06:00) which builds to a crescendo of fast cuts. I aimed to apply a similar approach to the visuals in *Lockdown* in combination with soundscape composition. Utilising soundscape composition with visual imagery is an evolution of the city symphony films and an extra layer in the representation of place; it enables you, "to show how one can hear, as well as see a place" (Cox, 2013, p. 90). Ruttmann & Vertov's use of rapid editing inspired the fast editing montage within the *Lockdown* project (21:38 – 22:10). It is a series of quick edits using still and moving images that highlights the monotony and randomness of life in a town centre. The sequence ends with a prolonged shot of a homeless person as a means of highlighting the social inequality prevalent in most towns and cities. The fast edits allow communication of a large amount of information over a shorter period and compress time through editing.

City symphony composers also utilise visual juxtaposition to create comparisons between images and scenes. In *Berlin*, Ruttmann, for example, cuts from a mannequin in a shop window to a theatre where girls are preparing to go on stage (53:36 – 54:10). Ruttmann emphasises his motivation was art, not politics, "I had the idea of making something out of life, of creating a symphonic film out of the millions of energies that comprise the life of a big city" (Hutchinson, 2017). In comparison to

Lockdown, Berlin was filmed over a year and compressed into an hour whereas filming in Huddersfield took over two years and was condensed down into less than thirty minutes. In this respect, filmmaker Andy Birtwistle argued, “as a time-based medium, film occupies duration, but if we choose to think of film only as a signifying text, translating its audio-visuality into chunks of meaning, the experience of duration is left out or left over” (Birtwistle, 2010, p. 33). It is therefore the filmmaker/composer’s choice and responsibility to make meaning from this fragmented experience of duration. Filmed 100 years apart and in different countries, Huddersfield and Berlin contain interesting similarities between some of the scenes:



Figure 5.9 Berlin Empty Streets



Figure 6.0 Huddersfield Empty Streets



Figure 6.1 Berlin Clock Tower



Figure 6.2 Huddersfield Clock Tower



Figure 6.3 Berlin Pigeons



Figure 6.4 Huddersfield Pigeons



Figure 6.5 Berlin Police



Figure 6.6 Huddersfield Police

I did not film on location to capture specific similarities between the two films and was not consciously aware of the visual similarities between *Lockdown & Berlin* until I was editing the film together. The comparisons highlight iconic representations that seem universal within an urban town centre or city. There is a lifeless urbanity in the imagery, which paradoxically implies a lot about life in an urban setting. The sights include pigeons and police walking the beat, imagery that could be prevalent in every city. City symphonies use camera angles, perspectives, and edits to emphasise a place and I explored this area within my filmmaking. There are occasions where I purposely used a deep depth of field to capture a sense of space within the frame.



Figure 6.7 View toward Piazza (Deep depth of field).



Figure 6.8 Tunnel toward Huddersfield town centre (Deep depth of field).

On other occasions, close-up shots of shop windows suffocated the viewer with the absence of visual space. The signage relates to the circumstances of that time and I felt it was an important part of the environment to implement visually. To create a film that highlighted the environmental impact of covid, shop window signage referring to Covid-19 became an important aesthetic alongside the scenes of empty streets. My aesthetic compositional decisions both sonically and visually aimed to represent my responsibility as a composer to make meaning from the collected data.



Figure 6.9 Empty shop with covid signage



Figure 7.0 Covid signage shop window

In summary, technology available to the composer at the time of recording and composition creates artistic boundaries to what is achievable. For instance, it was only through advancements in sound recording technology that Vertov was able to explore

relationships between image and sound in *Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbas* (1930):

This film is particularly famous for its location recordings of whistles, horns, hammers, trains, radios etc., and its mix of asynchronous and synchronous sound (or in contemporary terms, acousmatic and diegetic sound). *Enthusiasm* also blurred the divisions between location (natural) sound, noise, and music (Gawthrop, 2006, p. 55).

Vertov's visual editing in *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and the use of asynchronous sound in *Enthusiasm* (1930) were creative practices that I drew from; these aesthetic decisions influenced my own creative practice in relation to sound and image asynchronicity.

5.3.3 Lockdown cinematography and visual aesthetics

Although lockdown was not inspired by *I, Daniel Blake* (Loach, 2016), the film set in Newcastle uses a very flat colour palette that helps create a sense of bleakness and a depressing scene of urban life. Ken Loach's 2016 film is a fiction film, but it resonates towards a pseudo-documentary style due to the film's perspective being that of an observational documentary filmmaker. Within my films as in *I, Daniel Blake*, there is great attention to the cinematography, especially the visual framing of the scenes and the overall lighting. Fixed camera positions in the *Lockdown* project helped to reinforce the static nature of the place. Most of the work on location went into deciding where to record, the specific angle of the shot, and the scene framed by the camera. To maintain the desolate, depressing effects of lockdown due to the pandemic, I filmed Huddersfield town centre on days that had similar lighting: i.e. dull, overcast and without sun. This was a conscious decision to capture the essence of

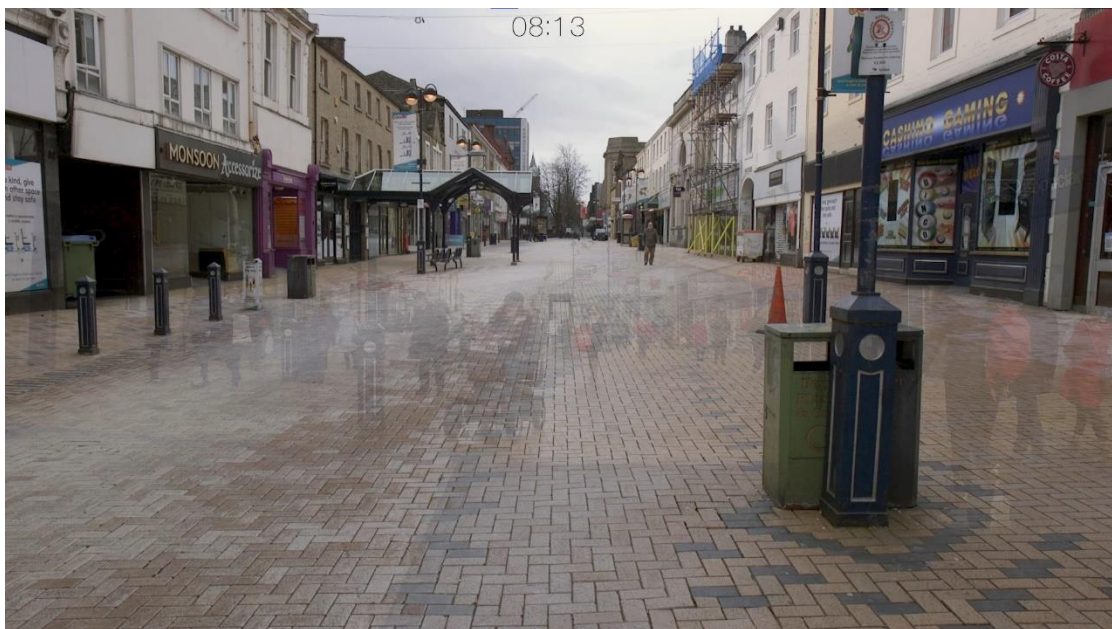
the time; it would not have the same meaning or visual impact if the footage shows bright sunny environments. This was a very time-consuming decision due to the restrictions on movements within the environment during a lockdown. I retained the depressing atmosphere in post-production by not over-brightening the footage. The only time sunny scenes appeared was towards the end of the lockdown project. This was a visual way of saying that there are better times ahead due to lockdowns ceasing, and ironically, mask wearing is still in place, which tells a story in itself.



Figure 7.1 Sunnier skies in Huddersfield (26:21).

All the visual aesthetic decision-making in *Lockdown* became driven by the impact of lockdowns on the environment. The landscape and soundscape in all towns and cities were dramatically transformed by circumstances of that time. I not only captured these changes but also implemented the visual differences between lockdown and normal life throughout the *Lockdown* film. The environmental changes that occurred in Huddersfield due to lockdown drove my aesthetic decision making visually and sonically. *Lockdown* imagery transitions between lockdown and scenes of life before and after this event. To accentuate the changes in circumstance and

show these creatively, ghosted images of normal life were superimposed with lockdown imagery within the same scene. Scenes such as in figures 7.2 and 7.3:



Figures 7.2 and 7.3 – Lockdown superimposed with post lockdown imagery.

Lockdown shows how a sound artist can represent place and space through sound and imagery. A multitude of spaces were recorded visually and sonically to create an artistic impression of the world at that time. The main emphasis was

answering the final research question due to working with visual imagery and sound. Buddhist philosophy became the foundation upon which I built my creative portfolio. *Lockdown* captures life as it happens, life that is forever flowing and becoming otherwise. As mentioned, Buddhist philosophy states that, “whatever has the nature to arise, will also pass away” (Goldstein, 2022). Within the *Lockdown* film, imagery transitions between lockdown and scenes of life before and after this event. This creative decision-making highlights the ephemerality of our everyday existence through imagery. The scenes below cut from lockdown to post lockdown imagery and show this constant state of flux. The recorded footage is from the same space but at a completely different time and circumstance.



Figure 7.4 New Street, Huddersfield, during lockdown



Figure 7.5 New Street, Huddersfield, post lockdown



Figure 7.6 King Street, Huddersfield, during lockdown



Figure 7.7 King Street, Huddersfield, post lockdown

These fleeting moments of time were accentuated in figure 7.6 of *Lockdown* with visual imagery that disappeared as soon as it arrived (3.09 minutes). The edited scene highlighted the ephemerality of life in relation to Buddhist philosophy. As discussed, “this here is in a constant state of flux. What we call the present appears and then is gone in a flash” (Astin, 2022b).



Figure 7.8 Fragment of time (1 second)

The circumstances of Covid-19 and the lockdowns that followed show us that, “we are completely vulnerable to events and anything can happen at any time” (Shukman, 2022).

5.3.4 Lockdown sound-image aesthetics

Sevindzh Idrisova describes sound in an urban environment as abstract and pure material as it, “represents cultural frames we overlay on it, depending on our perception” (Idrisova, 2019, p. 202). According to Arquette, “sound especially within the urban environment, is never a neutral phenomenon: each sound is imbued with its own lexical code” (Arquette, 2004, p. 160). In other words, urban sound is a reflection of the people and place that is unique to a specific locality. Idrisova argues, “The uniqueness and dissimilarity of soundscapes of different cities is transformed into the ‘phonic’ (Rehan, 2015, p. 339) or ‘the sonic identity of the city’ (Amphoux, 2003, p. 2),

representing a set of sound characteristics being auditory symbols of urban space. Moreover, not only does the sound mark individual or collective identity, but also creates a sound aura of the city - its auditory identity” (Idrisova, 2029, pp. 202-203).

As previously mentioned by Sam Harris, external and internal factors dictate our perceptual experience of the world, this theory drove the aesthetic approach of adding interior sound to exterior imagery. As sight and sound are the two most dominant modes of perception, *Lockdown* manipulates this perspective by oscillating between these two modes through using synchronous and asynchronous sound to imagery. Although this drove the aesthetic approach for using sound and image in this way, Covid-19, time restraints and ethics also played a role in the decision-making. The imagery below was recorded during lockdowns and it was unnecessary to visually record inside the retail outlets. Firstly, you would need permission to record, and secondly I stayed ethically correct by not attempting to visually record indoors. Environmental lockdowns provided the perfect opportunity for the abstraction of sound and image relationships. The use of internal soundscapes superimposed with shots of external imagery intentionally highlighted the aural and visual differences that people make on their environment. The audio-visual juxtaposition is relevant to Buddhist philosophy, as it not only displays the transitory nature of our existence; the juxtaposition highlights the effect of time/circumstance on place and space. This use of sound and imagery ties in with the previous discussion on the relationship between place, space, and time.

The images below (figures 7.9 a, b, c and d) from the *Lockdown* film contain a few examples of interior sound used in conjunction with external visuals.



The scene above contains sound of announcements from an Argos store, acoustic signatures that no longer exist due to most of the stores relocating inside supermarkets. Occasionally, Interior and exterior environmental sounds are mixed to

play with our visual and aural perception of the environment. Thompson argued, “A soundscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment” (Thompson, 2002, p. 2). The interior/exterior, past/present usage of sound and imagery contained in my films is an aesthetic framework derived from Buddhist philosophy, displaying that the present moment is not static and constantly changing.

There are differing sound-image relationships throughout the lockdown project; empty streets (visually) - busy sound, busy streets (visually) - minimal sound and so on. This is a practice-based representation of my research and shows how town centre spaces are nothing without people and the sounds they create. The lockdown project could be perceived as an audio-visual mandala, which highlights that all experience is part of an endlessly passing show of experience (Parfy, 2015, p.234). As discussed, a sense of place is impermanent in the same vein as Buddhist mandalas that disappear as soon as they arrive. Sense of place is not static and as soon as you gain a sense of the place, it transforms, it is forever flowing due to temporal events, and time is the precursor to the experience of experience. *Lockdown* is composed to show the flowing, passing nature of our experience as mentioned in Buddhist philosophy. As discussed, the visual editing within *Lockdown* is an aesthetic approach taken from City Symphony filmmakers of the early 20th century, films such as Vertovs *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and Ruttmann’s *Berlin* (1927). “Their aim was not to present facts about a specific place, rather they aimed to capture everyday life and use the expressive capabilities of the editing process to invigorate and bring alive the footage they had captured” (Cox, 2010).

The visual editing in *A Film About Nice* (Marley & Cox, 2010) also inspired my own creative practice and visual edits within *Lockdown*, especially the use of ghosted

imagery (outside Huddersfield train station). The sound design in *Lockdown* is intentionally not a direct sonic representation of the factual imagery. The sound is (at times) intentionally non-diegetic and counterpoint in relationship to the frame of the camera. However, due to the power of memory that sound and music have, for example, Ennio Morricone's scores for Sergio Leone's "Dollars Trilogy", it is the music that I remember and not necessarily the film itself. Due to this, recognisable environmental sound underwent minor processing to protect its reference to a specific space, place, and time. This was an aesthetic decision that protected the memory of a place through sound. Sound also emanates from outside of the camera frame to expand the visual boundary beyond our normal perceptions. Stillwell described this interplay between sound-image synergy as:

The crossing [between diegetic and non-diegetic sound] is not so much an event as a process, not simply a crossing, or even passing through distinct intermediary states, but a trajectory, a vector, a gesture. It unfolds through time, like film, like music (Stillwell, 2007, pp. 184-185).

The soundtrack overall is a form of hyper-soundscape due to the compression and amplification of the more nuanced sounds of the environment. The composition utilises sounds that generally go unnoticed in the movement of everyday life, they are sounds that affect, create, and define a place sonically. Toop describes ambient sound as, "a murmur of a quiet pub, wind rippling through grass, a dry leaf caught in the breeze" (Toop, 2007, pp. 112-113). Toop argues ambient sound as, "grounding us in the sense of being in the moment, open us to a form of concentrated attention, all of which is a lesson in becoming aware of how strong feelings emerge to barely noticeable elements within an environment" (Toop, 2007, p. 113). An example of these subtle nuances in (figure 7.7) uses amplified sounds of leaves that were blowing across the paving stones in front of the hotel; a sound not easily recognisable within

the soundscape of a town centre. As discussed, the sound we hear naturally in the environment is different to the sound captured by a microphone. I then use compression and amplification in post-production to enhance certain sounds at the micro level; sounds such as the movement of leaves within an urban environment. The difference between heavy processing and amplification is that the latter “leaves the sound intact, it does not remove any element of the sound [and] we can listen to all the detail of the recorded sound” (Sasajima, 2013, p.129). In addition, by “focusing down at the micro level, the texture of the sound is revealed in greater clarity (Sasajima, 2013, p.125). Holly Rogers stated that a hyper-soundscape is achieved when a:

found sound or sound-effect is stretched beyond its practical application, even at its most aesthetically, or affectively heightened, and is not absorbed into an existing musical texture, but rather forms it via a creative stretching of its own original materials (Rogers, 2021, p. 438).



Figure 8.0 The George Hotel Huddersfield (Lockdown 12:02)

Similar to the example above, Rogers describes such moments as stretching, “the connection between source sound and image to its limit while staying within the diegesis” (Rogers, 2021, p. 438).

The concept and manipulation of time are highlighted at the very beginning of the project with a repeated scene of a cyclist riding past the “Welcome to Huddersfield” sign. The project then moves onto a scene outside Huddersfield train station (37-49 seconds) which contains a visual edit of a ghosted-out woman with a cane.



Figure 8.1 Woman with a cane

The edit shows present and future moments in one frame as the woman catches up with her future self and then merges into one. This scene is a manipulation of time that fractures the linear experience of environmental perception. Inspiration for this scene came from an edit of a female jogger in *A Film about Nice* (Cox, 2010b, 14:18). The scene of a jogger (figure 8.2) shows a ghosted-out edit of her present and future self, a scene that influenced my edit of the woman in front of Huddersfield train station (figure 8.1 above).



Figure 8.2 Female jogger edit – *A Film About Nice*

The *Lockdown* project then moves onto the main street through Huddersfield town centre which was captured during a lockdown. The idea to reverse the video footage occurred organically through the sound recording of *Yesterday* by a busker in Huddersfield town centre. The lyrics matched the scene as it is about longing to go back in time; from the perspective of the lockdown film, to go back in time before the pandemic happened (figure 8.4). A scene of devastation in Jon Snow's *Tsunami Diary* from Japan (Snow, 2011, 17.48 – 18.45) inspired the image and sound synthesis for this scene. Amid the Tsunami wreckage, a loudspeaker marking the end of the school day plays a bland but recognisable instrumental of *Yesterday*. Peter Cusack described the scene as a “quite surreal, and moving, comment on the destruction we see before us, sound art, as well as sonic-journalism, can learn from this clip” (Cusack, 2013a, p.27).



Figure 8.3 Jon Snow Tsunami Scene (Snow, 2011, 18:27).

Although the lockdown scene is not comparable to the devastating impact of a Tsunami, it is poignant due to the relationship between the images and sound. It is, after all, an environment transformed by circumstance. The recording of a street performer singing *Yesterday* aptly matched the scene below (figure 8.4). The imagery is one of the most depressing scenes of the whole film as it captures the dark and depressing nature of Huddersfield town centre during a lockdown. The imagery is strikingly poignant due to the street usually being one of the busiest throughout Huddersfield town centre.



Figure 8.4 New Street Huddersfield Town Centre during lockdown 2020 (1:07 – 2:23).

As discussed, no location sound was recorded with the visual recording. The field recordings used in *Lockdown* were recorded pre and post lockdowns. As the film was then created in the studio, I creatively made use of this juxtaposition of sound in relation to imagery. Having recorded sound in various spaces around Huddersfield town centre, and luckily before the pandemic stuck. After lockdown, I then proceeded to visual record the places where the sound was captured. One of the most striking examples of this synergy is the “Meat Steve” section of *Lockdown* (7.21 – 8.19). The visuals were recorded one year after the sound recording; albeit from the same space. It is very difficult to explain the sound recording of “Mr Scrooge” without the experience of being there. Mr Scrooge was essentially a street performer pushed around Huddersfield town centre in a cart. Armed with a microphone and speaker, this one-off event temporarily transformed the soundscape of the town and luckily, I just happened to be there on location recording sound. Although the audio is unrelated to the visual, I created synchronicity by matching the words of, “get meat Steve in”, with a clip of him entering the frame from the rear of the shop (figure 8.5).



Figure 8.5 Meat Steve

This practice of creating meaning from different fragments of time happened throughout *Lockdown*. A sound recording of bible preachers taken months before the visuals, created a synchronous/asynchronous perception of a place, space, and time. The sound recording used with the imagery below pertains from the same space, but it is an entirely different person in a different time.



Figure 8.6 Bible Preacher in Huddersfield square

This creative framework within my audio-visual work was born of circumstance, an aesthetic that evolved due the opportunity and special challenge of recording and researching through Covid-19. In the scene below, sound recording from an unrelated space and time was used in conjunction with the imagery to create meaning and ultimately became synchronised through the purposeful use of two unrelated fragments of the environment. The sound recording of a street performer singing, “here comes the sun”, created a completely new meaning to an image of person who was pointing upwards to show me an interesting statue on top of a building.



Figure 8.7 Meaningful correlation between unrelated sound and image

5.3.5 Clocks and Time

Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010) influenced aesthetic decisions concerning the aspect of time. Marclay's 24-hour video installation influenced creative aspects of the visuals, but surprisingly *The Clock* also influenced sonic compositional decisions. Visually I became aware and recorded the abundance of clocks scattered around Huddersfield town centre. Ticking clocks became part of the sound and video editing process. Intermittently placed timecodes became part of the visual aesthetics; the lockdown project became built around the aspect of time. Throughout *Lockdown*, the sound design was in a constant interplay with the visual, at times there are recognisable sources in the image to anchor the sound. On other occasions, the sound is free of its associations with objects and without this anchor, "they resurface in their phenomenological materiality" (Ruoff, 1993, p. 27). Throughout the film, the visuals

switch from lockdown scenes to post-lockdown and then back again. These are intermingled with slow/fast motion video, stills and reversed footage influenced by Vertov as previously discussed. Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein also championed the use of juxtaposed imagery, which leads the viewer to make cognitive connections between the imagery. A similar concept was subsequently applied to sound as montage protagonists looked to disrupt the audiovisual synthesis (Gentic, 2014, p. 202).

The repetition of one-off scenes was also a visual aesthetic in *Lockdown*, scenes such as the bus driver exiting Huddersfield bus station. Again, Vertov influenced this visual retelling through his usage of repeated scenes in *Enthusiasm* (47:13).



Figure 8.8 Repeated scene of a bus driver (Lockdown - 25:50)

The decision to end the project (outside Huddersfield train station) with reverse video footage whilst the busker sang *Yesterday* seemed apt. As discussed, it was an

audio-visual representation of a wish to go back in time before the pandemic had started (people were arriving and leaving Huddersfield at the same time, thus creating a sense of confusion). Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* contains reversed footage intermittently from 1:05:00 onwards; this influenced my decision to use reversed editing within *Lockdown*.



Figure 8.9 Man with a Movie Camera – the first scene of reversed footage (1:05:09)

The reversed scenarios in *Lockdown* help create further meaning through editing. Coldplay's *The Scientist* music video was another inspiration behind the use of reversed footage. *The Scientist* imagery is in reverse as director Jamie Thraves wanted the visual narrative told in reverse whilst the sound travelled in its familiar direction (Kaufman, 2003). I went one-step further by also reversing the audio recording of *Yesterday* to create an ethereal atmosphere and a poignant ending for

the film. As discussed, the aspect of time is a theme that runs throughout *Lockdown* and it was a fitting finale for the film.

5.4 Hudds & Woods

Where lies the spirit of this place? Surely, it is rooted within its history, in the shape of these trees, and in stories passed on from people to people. It also lies in the flora and the fauna, in the weather, and in the seasons. In a specific season, at a specific time, the spirit of this place unveils to me, as I hear and uncover nuances in its sounds, and dig into its stories and into the words inscribed in it (Cascella, 2013, pp. 85-86).

5.4.1 Hudds & Woods influences

Documentary films set in non-urban locations inspired the *Hudds & Woods* film. As documentary film is underpinned by a realist aesthetic, minimal visual editing was used in the film. With that being said, “As soon as an aesthetic decision is made, the line[s] between the real and the fiction begins to flex” (Rogers, 2014, p. 4). This is similar to John Grierson’s definition of documentary as “the creative treatment of actuality”. Grierson also asserted the creative potential of using location sound with documentary film:

The microphone, like the camera, can do better things than merely reproduce. The documentary film will do pioneer work for cinema if it emancipates the microphone from the studio and demonstrates at the cutting and re-recording benches how many more dramatic uses can be made of sound than the studios realise (Grierson, 1971, p. 158).

With merging soundscape composition and documentary style visuals for *Hudds & Woods*, the film becomes impressionistic as the boundaries of documentary film begin to blur. Moreover, “by the very act of documenting actuality, the director

alters the truth” (Richards, 2018). Due to using soundscape composition as the soundtrack, *Hudds & Woods* does not intend to be confined or restricted by the definition of documentary film. As previously mentioned, Werner Herzog warned that the “word documentary should be handled with care” as non-intervention filmmaking is always compromised. “The choice of shot, angle, focus, point-of-view [and] the ways which those being filmed change their behaviour when confronted with a camera” (Rogers, 2014, p. 5). *Hudds & Woods* is a reimaging of reality through sound and vision for the purposes of artistic expression. The film merges the concept of observational documentary filmmaking with soundscape composition, and fusing the two concepts together creates an alternate concept and reality, one of audio-visual art. As Nichols reminds us of the importance of the soundtrack in documentary, “most documentaries still turn to the sound track to carry much of the general import of their abstract argument” (Nichols, 1992, p. 21). This theoretical framework has driven the aesthetic approach and decision making in my audio-visual work. Whilst pertaining to present facts about the world, sound enhances and abstracts the imagery by pushing and pulling at the modes of seeing and hearing. This push and pull between sound/image and seeing/hearing is created through the abstraction of sound in relation to image: sound is the prominent factor of this equation. Filmmaker Kim Longinotto speaks in a similar way about audio-visual harmony: “I think that sound is like the heartbeat of the film, the sound is where you get the emotion of the film” (as cited in Rogers, 2014, p. 8). I use sound in my films to hold things together and tell the story, Rogers states that, “it can help to turn each visual representation into a highly personal vision” (Rogers, 2014, p. 9). Birdsall argued, “One of the most important documentary codes consist of authentication through sound and music” (Birdsall, 2014, p. 21). *Hudds & Woods* aesthetic approach was driven by visuals and sound from the same

place and locality, in order to maintain its authenticity. My films remain unconstrained by concepts or boundaries and resonate with Rogers's perspective: "films that explore the fragile and mobile boundaries between music, sound-effects, and voice, which are so important to the construction of a nonfiction, audio-visual aesthetic" (Rogers, 2014, p. 15).

Sleep Furiously (2009) influenced filming in non-urban environments for *Hudds and Woods*. The filming of non-urban environments was an intentional contrast to the urban *Lockdown* setting. Gideon Koppel's *Sleep Furiously* is a documentary film set in Trefeurig, a farming community in mid-Wales where Koppel grew up. *Sleep Furiously* uses ambient location sound, which accentuated through volume increase, creates an aesthetic listening experience. This usage of ambient real-world sounds becomes a "signifier of emotional and thematic intent", similar to a non-diegetic score (Rogers, 2014, p. 17). I explored this creative usage of ambient location sound in *Hudds & Woods*. In Koppel's film, the soundtrack contains mainly piano, but on occasion, the soundtrack includes music by Aphex Twin. Electronic music used in the soundtrack is antithetical to the visual rural setting. A striking example of this synergy occurs when the sound of fireworks transitions effortlessly into an ambient electronic piece of music by Aphex Twin (figure 9.0 at 1:09:41 of *Sleep Furiously*).



Figure 9.0 Sleep Furiously scene (transition of sound from fireworks to Aphex Twin)

Koppel's film also contains fixed camera shots held for longer than would be expected. The scene below of the library van disappearing up the hill lasts for nearly one-minute (figure 9.1a). The use of protracted imagery Koppel's film inspired holding fixed scenes for longer than I necessarily would of in *Hudds & Woods*. For instance, the scene of Castle Hill below lasted just under one minute. Within the everyday experience of an environment, you can pay as little or as much attention to a scene or situation. In a film, you are forced to look at a scene for as long as the filmmaker decides, but whether you do or not is ultimately the viewer's prerogative.



Figure 9.1a *Sleep Furiously* Scenery (shot held from 56:41 – 57:38)



Figure 9.1b Fixed camera position of Castle Hill from 6:30 – 7:23

Chapter 13 of *Sleep Furiously* (1:14:32 – 1:17:16) contains a short section of landscapes covered in snow (figures 9.2 a & b). I was fortunate to record and implement the environment transformed by snow within *Hudds & Woods*, a temporal event that you have no control over was featured intermittently in *Hudds & Woods* (figures, 9.4, 9.5, and 9.6b).



Figures 9.2 a & b Snow scenes from *Sleep Furiously* (1:14:32 – 1:17:16)

Hudds & Woods contains non-urban environments and locations very popular with residents of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. The film complements *Lockdown* by being a complete opposite in terms of chosen locations. Ambient sounds of nature and mostly “man-made” spaces became a part of *Hudds & Woods*. The final composition

aimed to be less abstract both visually and sonically than the lockdown film. I have previously alluded to the visual influence of *Manufactured Landscapes* that inspired visual aesthetic choices in *Lockdown*. The soundtrack of *Manufactured Landscapes* by Dan Driscoll is described as “minimalist music [that] is a perfectly discordant match for the images in the film” (McComb, 2010). This was the aim of the *Hudds & Woods* soundtrack, to be minimalist in places whilst enhancing the corresponding images in the film. The sound design is again at odds with the image, it moves back and forth between the different spaces of the camera frame. Michael Chanan argues that “no sound is every quite fixed when picture and sound collide” as the sound moves between “on-screen and just off-screen” (Chanan, 2013, p. 128). Birdsong was a direct contrast to the sounds of an urban soundscape used for *Lockdown*. *Hudds & Woods* was an opportunity to compose with the ambient sights and sounds of nature. Composer and sound artist Bill Fontana commented, “The richness and beauty of ambient sounds come from their interaction with a living situation” (Fontana, 2008, p. 154). *Hudds & Woods* aimed to display this aesthetic beauty of ambient sound in combination with its visual environment. Recording ambient environmental sounds were my focus for this project especially after recording in a noisy urban environment for *Lockdown*.

5.4.2 Hudds & Woods sound image aesthetics

The first scene of the film (Iceland supermarket) intentionally continues the urban scenery of *Lockdown* and then moves into “greener spaces”. Inspiration for the opening scene came from Andy Warhol’s film *Empire* (1964) which consists of a single static shot of the Empire State building. A sense of stillness pervades Warhol’s usage

of static imagery and the unmoving subject matter contained within the frame (Rogers, 2011, p. 406). The scene of Iceland in Huddersfield (figure 9.3) ran for over a minute and perpetuates the sense of time standing still; compounded by the static camera and motionless subject matter, time appears to stand still. This is in direct contrast to *Empire's* purpose, which was “to see time go by” (Bourbon, 1989, p. 188). The first 1:50 minutes of *Hudds & Woods* contain nothing but sound recorded inside an Iceland supermarket. I did not add or take away anything from the recording due to it being interesting as the “sound-in-itself”. Peter Cusack, who came across the interesting sonic experience unexpectedly, inspired my decision to record sound from inside a supermarket:

One of the employees was straightening the lines of wine bottles as he put them on the shelf, and the ‘clinking’ and ‘clonking’ of the wine bottles made a beautiful sound. I recorded this, and that was definitely a case of being attracted primarily by the sound (Cusack, 2013, p. 192).



Figure 9.3 Iceland supermarket, Huddersfield.

I spoke to the Iceland manager after I had completed the sound recordings and thanked him for allowing me access. I commented on how interesting the soundscape is inside the supermarket, the manager replied, “after a while, you don’t even hear the sounds, they become white noise”. I found this a particularly interesting comment, as it highlighted how familiar and dismissive you become of sounds within a repetitive working environment. Being in the same setting day-to-day eventually leads to desensitisation and a detachment from our surroundings, and when “we don’t listen to it it’s because we have gotten used to hearing it” (Barona & Franco, 2017, p. 135). A point that was reaffirmed by Wainwright and Wynne; “well, I guess as with whatever environment you become familiar with, you gradually lose the acute sensation that you first get” (Wainwright & Wynne, 2007, p. 14). Another interesting aspect of the sound inside the supermarket is the sound of the tills scanning food products. A woman working on the till mentioned that depending on the level of background noise, the sound level of the “beeps” are increased; she also stated that the sound is used as a way of monitoring how fast you are working/scanning. These are fascinating facts that I never knew until recording on location at the supermarket.

Lockdown scenarios influenced the compositional style of the *Hudds & Woods* film. The juxtaposition of perception and audiovisual dissonance continued throughout the film. A conscious decision whilst filming *Hudds & Woods* was to film people much further away from the camera. Composing this way in the field allowed instant abstraction of sound in proportion to the distance of the sound object within the film frame. Amplification of field recordings allowed for a hyper-real experience of the environment in relationship to imagery, people, and source sounds. Sonic elongation created the “sound on/sound off” compositional style, sound-on is sound, “emitted from within the frame”, whilst sound-off comes from outside the camera frame (Percheron

& Butzel, 1980, p. 16). Recording the sound of birds in their natural habitat creates a natural disparity between sound and image as the source is difficult to pinpoint (Percheron & Butzel, 1980, p. 17). The type of microphones used can accentuate this perspective as the sounds are emanating from inside and outside the visual frame.

Almondbury woods¹⁵ (figure 9.5, p. 178) closely borders an urban environment and the inspiration to sonically record there came from Bernie Krause, Lopez, and Russolo. I was very fortunate to capture the sound of a woodpecker in Almondbury woods. Enhancement of the sound was achieved through compression; equalisation was used to further isolate the sound from background noise. Raising the volume of the woodpecker to levels beyond the normal hearing of the sound in the environment created dissonance in relationship to the visual imagery. The birdsong we hear in a forest or woods is as much a result of the bird, the trees, or the forest floor. Topography acoustically shapes the sound-producing animals that inhabit certain spaces (Lopez, 1998a) and “as soon as the call is in the air, it no longer belongs to the frog that produced it” (Lopez, 2004c, p.83). Nature-sound environments such as woods are often characterised as tranquil places. The sound of leaves orchestrated by the wind contains subtle nuances that are enharmonic in their diverse passage of tones (Russolo, 1986, p.43). Conversely, Lopez’s composition *La Selva* (1998b) highlights that some natural environments can be very noisy and contain a complex broadband soundscape (Lopez, 2004b, p.86).

The woodpecker sound reverberated above all others and I was able to isolate the sound further in post-production. David Dunn challenged the decision to eliminate human-made sounds from nature recordings, arguing that editing them out creates a

¹⁵ 9:23-13.33 of Hudds & Woods Film

“false representation of reality” (Dunn, 2001, p.104). It is ultimately a compositional decision necessary for creating the desired result. Equalisation cut out unwanted background noise so that I was able to enhance the woodpecker sound further (9.47 – 12.45 minutes). Panning, delay, and compression were techniques used on the isolated sound. Reversed sounds of the woodpecker created sporadic changes in the sound structure. My compositions never process location sound solely for abstraction purposes. The goal is to preserve the sound world whilst synthesis with feedback textures creates further movement within the soundtrack. We do not always need to transform or complement location sound; the goal of the audiovisual work is to enhance images through sound. The world is a living breathing orchestra, so why drastically alter that. Soundscape composition is a perception; an artistic conceptualisation of the world we live in at that moment. My aim as a soundscape composer is to remain representationally oriented whilst immersing listeners within the sound matter. The landscape imagery that was part of *Hudds & Woods* is not entirely concerned with visual perception alone, rather it is concerned with the interplay of environmental sound and imagery that creates a deeper bond between aural and visual perception. Utilising field recordings for creative musical composition is an “exploration of place identity created through characteristic sound worlds” (Revill, 2018, p.270). George Revill argued, “music is often thought to invoke particular landscapes, their moods, textures, beauty, grandeur and tranquillity” (Revill, 2018, p. 264). The sound design for *Hudds & Woods* was composed with this consideration. The soundtrack creates added depth and meaning to the imagery through sound. The dissonant sound-image relationship within the project purposely challenges that which Revill considers are traditional ways of comprehending relationships between music, sound, and landscape (Revill, 2018, p. 264). Due to its exposed and elevated position,

the sound of the wind is the prevalent soundmark at Castle Hill, Huddersfield. Of course, this is not the sound of the wind; it is the sound effect of the wind on objects and the environment. There are other variables in capturing the sound of the wind as Chris Watson explains:

The wind does not make any sound until it hits something and then that sound is created by that great force of air in motion and how you capture that depends upon place and equipment. It [is] not so much the sound of the wind that I like but rather the feelings that it generates, its suggestiveness, its character and associations (Watson, 2007, pp. 87-88).

In addition, “whenever wind touches an object it creates a sound – a sound which is unique for this specific acoustic event” (Westerkamp, 2007, p. 53). English novelist Thomas Hardy perceived these nuances very well:

To dwellers in a wood, almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of a breeze the fir tree sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; and beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leave, does not destroy its individuality (Hardy, 1873, p.3).

Sounds such as birdsong and the sound of wind sweeping over Castle Hill were a direct contrast to the urban soundscape of the *Lockdown project*. The recorded sound of wind and birdsong became a creative compositional tool in this scene from *Hudds & Woods* (figure 9.4):



Figure 9.4 Castle Hill Tower in the distance (*Hudds & Woods* 8:00)

The woods scene below (figure 9.5), featured birdsong captured on an early spring morning. These layered sounds of birdsong created a hyper-real soundscape and a juxtaposition of perception when perceived together with the visual imagery. Jana Winderen describes sound as a “very physical medium [that] surrounds and affects you all the time, it can come in very close. With visual media, you can always close your eyes or turn away; with sound, it brings you right there” (Winderen, 2013, p. 150). As discussed, I acknowledge the importance of sound concerning environmental experience, but in creating audiovisual works, sound and imagery share equal significance. Recording sound in a natural environment presented an opportunity to layer field recordings, an aesthetic not possible in *Lockdown* due to the broadband soundscape of an urban setting. The layered sound recording in springtime was a direct and intentional contrast to the visual scene of snow in winter. The scene contained no birdsong at the time of visual recording due to the season (figure 9.5).

Moreover, as “sounds exist in the changing of the seasons and in a delicate natural environment” (Sasajima, 2013, p. 131), this became an integral aspect of the compositional process and overall aesthetic of *Hudds & Woods*.



Figure 9.5 Woods in winter features layered birdsong from springtime (9:47).

One of the most interesting aspects of this scene was the social interaction that I had with the woman dog walker. Amid heavy snow in deep midwinter, an unexpected event occurred that reiterated the circumstance and randomness of being a filmmaker at a particular time and place. As discussed, the viewer’s experience of the film will be different to mine as I have a direct emotional memory of being there when these events happened. I captured what was happening at that specific moment and time. The changing seasons inevitably alter the landscape and soundscape of an environment and as such, these changes became a theme within *Hudds & Woods*. For instance, Castle Hill and Greenhead Park were recorded in different seasons. This was

intentional to highlight the aural and visual changes that occur from season to season within the environment. These season changes became an important aesthetic within *Hudds & Woods*.



Figure 9.6a Castle Hill, autumn 2021 (6:30).



Figure 9.6b Castle Hill, winter 2021 (8:50).

As mentioned, seasonal changes are not only restricted to visual changes, the soundscape moves with the seasons and creates an ever-changing atmosphere

unique to a location, time, and topography. This atmosphere is described as, “an indefinable quality that marks each location with a particular aural presence derived from the interplay of acoustics, sound and space”. Changing of the seasons contributes to the way that sound “propagates, and the attendant psychoacoustic effects that emerge to define the aural experience”. In a common outdoor environment such as a park, “these types of interactions produce a familiar ambience often comprised of birdsong, insects, wind and water” (Samartzis, 2015, p. 142). These environmental factors featured heavily within the data collected from Greenhead Park, Huddersfield and were implemented in the scenes below. As discussed, the scenes showcase the aural and visual changes that happen between differing seasons (figures 9.7 a & b).



Figure 9.7a Greenhead Park pond (Autumn 2021, *Hudds & Woods 2:56*)



Figure 9.7b Greenhead Park pond (Winter 2021, *Hudds & Woods* 3:17)

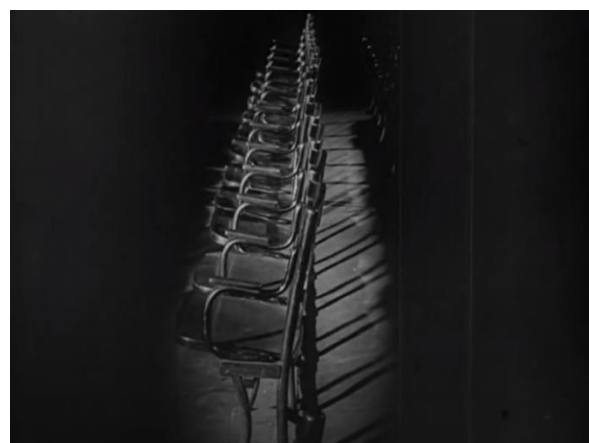
Greenhead Park was a place where I manipulated the visual scenario and this was the only time I intentionally set the scene. I created scenes such as the swings moving by themselves just before shooting the footage. These scenes from *Hudds & Woods* include the location sound of the busy park before there were any signs of a pandemic. This is further evidence of how lockdowns during Covid-19 have influenced my work now and in the future.





Figures 9.8 (a, b) Greenhead Park, manipulation of the scene

Interestingly, a scene from *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) accomplishes a similar effect whereby movie theatre seating folds down by itself. Given that nobody is visible within the frame, the edit resonates with my swing sequence from Greenhead Park.



Figures 9.9 (a, b) – *Man With a Movie Camera* Theatre Seating (2:35)

A location recording for *Hudds & Woods* that interested me the most was the recording of two children with their parents. The transient nature of environmental experience became apparent whether I was recording in an urban or non-urban environment. Figure 10.1 (page 184) shows the recording location that captured this

unique aural event. I was recording the sound of the wind just to the right of the well; a position that I chose as natural cover against the direct wind. The wind can get extremely strong at Castle Hill due to its exposed and elevated position, a strength that could ruin most location recordings. The circled image contains a thirty-foot well covered by metal grid panelling for obvious safety reasons and allows visibility to the bottom of the well. A family unexpectedly came to the well whilst I was recording there. A young child called “Charlie” began to shout down the well through the gaps in the panelling. What amazed me was the fact that a five or six-year-old child was aware of the effect of the environment on his voice. I once again knew that the sound I had recorded was special and unique. The sound recording appeared in *Hudds & Woods* (6:09) together with an unrelated image of a young boy and his dog at Castle Hill.



Figure 10.0 Sound recording of “hello Charlie” at Castle Hill

Charlie continued until the conclusion of the drone shot over Castle Hill. Reverb and a delay were introduced to the “Charlie” sound recording when the drone shot first appeared; this added a further layer of space and height to the sound in correspondence with the shot above the landscape. Field recordings from a

Huddersfield town football match were added to the composition as a means of direct representation of space and place. The chants of “Huddersfield” strengthened the sense of place and site specificity. The sound from a Huddersfield football match signified that the drone was picking up sound waves from miles away.



Figure 10.1 Castle Hill Well (Sound recording location of “Charlie”)

The Great Mountain Sheep Gather (2020) inspired experimentation with a drone. Set on Scafell Pike in the Lake District, the film captures a shepherd gathering his sheep down to the farm for shearing. The film cleverly makes use of fixed camera, drone, and Go Pro footage. Presently, most films or documentaries contain drone footage that is usually fast sweeping movements. *The Great Mountain Sheep Gather* is unique in its use of a drone. Instead of fast-moving drone shots, the drone footage contains micro-movements that are so slow there are times you are unaware of the drone’s manoeuvres.



Figures 10.2.(a, b) Sheep gather Go Pro footage (attached to fell dogs and sheep)



Figure 10.3a Sheep gather drone footage (micro-movements 43:50 – 51:20)



Figures 10.3b Sheep gather drone footage (slow gimbal pan-up 51:16)

Inspired by *The Great Mountain Sheep Gather* I experimented with slower movements of the drone and camera gimbal. The final drone shot of *Hudds & Woods* is an example of these perspectives. The scene is a fitting finale to the project; the drone footage recorded above Almondbury Woods shows Huddersfield town centre and the University of Huddersfield (top left).



Figure 10.4 Final drone footage of *Hudds & Woods* (12:48 – 13:33)

In summary, *Hudds & Woods* was an intentional contrast to *Lockdown* in terms of location. *Lockdown*, set in an urban environment enhances the concept of City Symphony composition by merging it with soundscape composition. Conversely, *Hudds & Woods* set in a non-urban location, merges the concept of observational documentary filmmaking with soundscape composition. Buddhist philosophy drove the aesthetic approach and decision-making for both of the films. This was a constant driving force with creative decisions such as highlighting the aspect of time, impermanence, and modes of perception. These are just a few of the factors that determine and define our everyday experience of life, and of environment. Both of my

films are an audio-visual extension of the fleeting modes of our internal and external perceptions and environmental experience. The transient modes of perception and our environmental experience is a theme that underpins both films by using sound recorded separately from the visual imagery. As mentioned, Buddhist philosophy and my experiences of living through an environment transformed by circumstance shaped by aesthetic approach to the films. The abstraction of sound to image materialised from living through Covid-19. *Hudds & Woods* displays the transient nature of our experience through sound and image. The film highlights the constant flow of our experience through seasonal changes, and the effect that these changes have on the landscape and soundscape. Living through Covid-19 and the many environmental lockdowns that ensued has ultimately defined my audio-visual compositions and decision-making as a composer. Both films are opposites in terms of location; however, they are similar in their aesthetic approach to sound and image. *Hudds & Woods* displays the impermanent nature of our experience through seasonal changes, transformations that are slower when compared to the rapid flux of an urban environment. Recording sound and image in the environment is an abstraction of what is, compositional decisions further abstract this reality. As a composer, I have not been afraid to push this abstraction further by using asynchronous audio-visual synthesis. Place, space, time, and the impermanent nature of our experience are eternal, boundless without cessation. All my creative outputs are a snapshot of fleeting time that exists within eternal time. Because our experiences on this planet are defined by human finitude, what we leave behind for the benefit of humanity is perhaps the most important aspect of our lives.

Chapter 6: Summary

“If a composer could say what he had to say in words, he would not bother trying to say it in music” - Gustav Mahler

Sanderson argued, “The separation of sound and image during the first thirty years of cinema arguably created an artifice, that of two distinct media, film and the phonogram”. This period of perceptual sensory dissociation created a “hierarchy in which sound was ever to be the secondary or subsidiary partner, paradoxically also did much to allow the space for the development of the two separate media” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 59). The creative freedom to use sound and image asynchronously, may not have materialised had they been synchronised from the very beginning. My aim as a soundscape composer, who has evolved into an audio-visual artist, is to highlight the importance and function of sound in relation to the moving image. This has involved challenging the assumption of visual privileging, but not as a means of replacing “one hierarchy with another, but rather to proceed to identify new ways in which to create dialectic tension between the audio-visual and the audience” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 59).

Art is subjective and the research outputs are open to interpretation regardless of my aims as a composer. My films are not didactic, they are open to interpretation, and I hope they remain that way. The viewer/listener will eventually decide how to interpret the work. Individual subjective perception of the work allows it to evolve and engender new meaning.

Although City Symphony composers were not concerned with presenting facts about a specific place, *Lockdown* refines this perspective by presenting facts about the impact of Covid-19 within an urban environment. The film brings soundscape

composition into the realms of audio-visual art. My use of asynchronism is a creative tool for an interplay that encompasses sound, moving image, and audience.

Sanderson argues:

The same adhesion that facilitates synchronised dialogue can also be used to underpin asynchronism, if once adhesion is established; the casual link is then questioned or broken. This dynamic, described as a push-pull effect, reflexively reveals the mechanism, and hence can act as an audio-visual anti-illusionist tool (Sanderson, 2016, p. 28).

Asynchronous sound is an effective filmmaking tool when there are moments of audio-visual synchronicity. This is apparent in my films as it draws the viewer's attention to the specific parts of where adhesion takes place. Conversely, when this momentary link of synchronicity is broken, the asynchronous push-pull dynamic is more prominent. Through momentary synchronous and asynchronous events, "there is an ongoing revelation of the audio-visual mechanism at work" (Sanderson, 2016, p. 42). As this continues throughout my films, the viewer's perception oscillates in and out of the visual frame through this push-pull dynamic. Sanderson argues, "This repeated adhesion, and then separation, makes the audience aware of the mechanism and workings of the audio-visual relationship, and their active participation in creating meaning" (Sanderson, 2016, p. 44). As discussed, the meat Steve section of *Lockdown* is a continual audio-visual push-pull. It questions the viewer perceptually, insofar as what they hearing pertains from the visual scenario or not. The intention of the meat Steve scene is to create a false adhesion, which slowly reveals itself to be from outside the frame, and from a completely different time. Sanderson describes the asynchronous melding as, "inviting the viewer to make a combined reading of sound and image, but leaving the two distinct" (Sanderson, 2016, p. 49).

The originality of my audio-visual work is that it is soundscape based in order to define place, space, and time through sound and imagery. Soundscape composition does not usually contain visual imagery. The soundtracks for my films do not include any added musical instrumentation or spoken word/poetry added later in post-production. *Lockdown* features music, but it is music made by people, in that space, at that time. Filmmaker Stan Neumann argues, “The documentary image doesn’t support music that well. Music within a documentary tends to diminish the image” (Neuman, 2008). As a soundscape composer, I adhered to this theoretical framework and only composed with the “music of the world”. I wanted to create my soundtracks from sound recorded on location, sounds that are unique and specific to a place and time. My work again refines and contrasts to soundscape composers such as Katherine Norman and Hildegard Westerkamp by bringing soundscape composition into a multichannel and audio-visual realm. Not only does my practical work differ to Francisco Lopez who abstains from any visual references. It again contrasts with the likes of Geoffrey Cox and Westerkamp because all my work was created alone, without any collaboration or help. Cox frequently collaborates with documentary filmmaker Keith Marley on his audio-visual compositions. Westerkamp has also collaborated on *A Walk Through the City* (1981), which includes readings and poetry by Norbert Ruebsaat. Westerkamp’s *At the Edge of Wilderness* (2000b) does include audio-visual elements, but once again, this contrasts to my work as the composition only includes static photography by Florence Debeugny. The work is a collaboration as well as containing no moving imagery. I am all for collaborating with other artists; the point is relevant as it highlights the extra workload I embarked upon as a solo artist.

Lockdown merges video imagery and visual editing techniques from City Symphony composers. *Lockdown* not only enhances and extends upon the creative

practices of City Symphony composers; it also extends and refines the concept of soundscape composition by bringing it into an audio-visual domain. *Hudds & Woods* by contrast merges documentary imagery with soundscape composition. The recording of both films came from an observational stance as a filmmaker. *Lockdown* was edited with creative practices derived from City Symphony composers; as such, there was intentionally a lot of visual editing in the film, whereas *Hudds & Woods* remained purposely in the documentary realm of filmmaking by utilising minimal visual edits. Another layer of my works originality, both practically and theoretically comes from Buddhist philosophy that explains the ephemerality of our experience, “what has the nature to arise, will also pass away” (Goldstein, 2023). This conceptualisation is simple to understand when you look at the impact of Covid-19 on life, and on the environment. Whilst this actuality has passed, it is no longer just a thought; it has become frozen in time through art. This impermanent nature of our everyday experience is a sonic and visual theme throughout both films, whilst Newcastle highlights this flow of change through sound only.

The synchronous/asynchronous, interior/exterior, past/present usage of sound and imagery contained in my films is an aesthetic framework derived mainly from Buddhist philosophy and my personal experiences whilst recording on location. The *Statement of Sound* by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov and Vertov have also had a profound effect on my aesthetic decision-making and implementation of asynchronous sound. A finding during theoretical research and audio-visual composition is that asynchronism is a way of, “articulating audio-visual interplay in a contemporary setting, and specifically in the practice-based works” (Sanderson, 2016, p. 1).

The audio-visual research outputs highlight that the present moment is not static and is constantly changing; the fleeting nature of our experience highlighted

through using sound and image to represent place, space, and time. The audiovisual soundtracks intend to stir the listener's imagination and, "the aural input subconsciously constructs places and links these images to the everyday world" (Wissmann & Zimmerman, 2015, p. 803). Visual imagery in my audiovisual works directly represents a place, space, and time. In the films, the role of place-bound sound implements "generate sensory and semantic processing of audio-evoked mental imagery" (Wissmann & Zimmerman, 2015, p. 805). Soundscape components help to tell the story and "evoke the world in which the narration takes place" (Wissmann & Zimmerman, 2015, p. 809). My created works are in the same essence of interdisciplinary performer and artist Manuela Barile:

Something that I feel is unique and which allows me the possibility of transmitting something of my perception about the world, something that feels coherent and faithful to what I want to represent. My work takes into account the specificity of places, places that I do not choose by chance (Barile, 2013, p. 183).

I have written about my many influences on my practical work, and whilst this remains true, during the compositional process, ideas came through organically. Many times during composition ideas flowed and I listened to my gut feeling; at times, these feelings were strong positive emotions to the work coming together naturally. When you have strong positive emotions about the connection of sound and visual imagery, these are the times when you do not doubt yourself or your decision-making. This is the time to act on your ideas without the concern of "how this will be interpreted by somebody else". The combination of audiovisual elements within my films creates an ethereal representation and non-representation of the world we inhabit, "make of it what you will". In the words of Philip Glass when asked about *Einstein on the Beach*,

what does it mean? He said, “it doesn’t mean anything, it is what it is: images, sounds” (Lucier, 2007, p. 120).

Recording the sights and sounds of life before, during, and after lockdowns has had a huge impact on my creative practices. Although the impact of Covid-19 is slowly fading into the past, the influence of living through this moment has affected my artistic work and influenced my creative decision-making. The *Lockdown* film is especially close to my heart, it is a reimagining and re-imagining of that time as seen through my eyes. My thoughts and feelings about what it felt like to live through Covid-19 were expressed through artistic outputs. The impact of that time preserved for prosperity, documented through the only means I know how: through art, because, “time represents one of the most taken for granted dimensions of the human experience” (Astin, 2021). Buddhist philosophy aptly explains the paradox of time:

Do we actually experience something called time or is it possible that the notion of time and its passage depends upon a kind of abstraction, a conceptual interpretation for which there is not in fact any supporting experiential evidence. It seems that we have evidence of a past that has been and a future that has yet to become, however to create the impression of time we must literally imagine past and future into existence via the mechanism of memory and thought. However, experientially we have never encountered anything resembling a past or future. All we have ever actually experienced is this flash instant, this ever changing, ever fluctuating now (Astin, 2021).

Through theoretical research and recording on location, I have learnt that composing with the sights and sounds of life is an abstraction of place; I embraced this abstraction and pushed it to its limits. My aim as a composer is ultimately to inspire “future composers” to do the same. Through living and composing through Covid-19, I have also realised how important it is to capture these transient moments of our life, recording not only freezes time; it transcends time. My creative projects are an

expression of the present moment that was. Buddhist philosophy describes the present moment as:

Everything that is occurring is simply an expression of life, an expression of reality. Every flickering of perception, every feeling, every sight, and every sound, all of it is simply the expression of now. Every experience, no matter how it is being described is the display of now. Every instant is the unpredictable, uncontrollable flowering of life, all of it is reality's display, and all of it is the emanation of now. What we call the moment is already here, every experience, every perception, the ceaseless, effortless flow of now (Astin, 2023a).

These fleeting moments of life are expressed throughout my artistic outputs. Although the multichannel project contains unique moments in time, audio-visual elements present the greatest opportunity to reflect life as it happens. Sound and image also allows for the experiencing of moments that have arrived and disappeared due to the non-static nature of life. If it were not for recording technology these events would only be experienced through thought and by people who were there, Buddhist philosophy explains:

There are two ways of perceiving reality; one is conceptually, the other experientially. In terms of time conceptually, we certainly have a strong sense of this thing we call the flow of time. The experience of being able to look back and reflect upon what was, experience what we call the present moment and also imagine what might be; the future. However, experientially we never actually encounter a past or a future, that we can certainly conceive of them, we are never able to experience what was or what might be (Astin, 2023b).

In conclusion, my films have answered all of my research questions whilst being backed up through theoretical research, with Buddhist philosophy instilling explanation of our ever-changing experience. The aim at the beginning of the journey was to represent a sense of place through sound and image. As discussed, my research outputs contrasts and refines other creative works mentioned throughout this thesis.

Through the implementation of Buddhist philosophy, multi-channel, audio-visual compositions, and the written thesis, my work explains and highlights the ceaseless flow of our environmental experience. As mentioned, a sense of place is ephemeral and I have created a sense of place as it was in that moment, in that time. The fleeting moments of time experienced throughout my films come from the ever-flowing transitions between aural and visual data. As life is full of unique transitory events, so are my artistic outputs. Place may be static, but through the concepts of space and time, a sense of place is non-static and forever morphing into a new sense of place. The research outputs highlight life as it was then, the now that was has transformed and dissolved into the flow of time.

As discussed, the *Lockdown* film is unique due to the events and circumstances of the time. It would be very hard to duplicate this film unless there are extraordinary events in the future. Due to my studies coinciding with an unprecedented moment in time, it once again highlights the fleeting experience of being an audio-visual artist at a specific time and place. The implementation and influence of Buddhist philosophy on my written and practical work is also a unique and original contribution to this area of specialism. *Lockdown* and the *Hudds & Woods* film complement each other, in the respect that they show the impermanence of our existence that occur within an urban and non-urban environment. Buddhist philosophy believes in a constant flow of experience and change, like a flowing waterfall or the passing of clouds in the sky. All my creative work is an audio-visual extension of this transitory nature. Philosopher John Astin states, “Every instant is entirely new, unique, everything is a surprise, each moment fresh, life never repeating itself” (Astin, 2023c). Through the repetition of visual imagery, unique and one-off events within *Lockdown* highlight this concept of “life never repeating itself” by intentionally reusing these unique, one-off events.

Lockdown is in a constant state of flux, both visually and aurally from past/present toward static and moving imagery. The visual and aural silence used intermittently in *Lockdown* artistically interrupts the flow of time; this highlights the transient nature of life through interrupting this ever-changing flow of experience. The audio-visual films aim to create a juxtaposition of perception through the abstraction of sound in relation to images. In essence, what you see is abstracted by what you hear and what you hear is abstracted by what you see. The perception/experience of place is a multi-layered phenomenon. I represent this multi-layered experience of place through a multi-layered composition of sound and imagery. The sound worlds that accompany my films utilise processed/unprocessed field recordings and feedback noise to create a multi-layered experience of place through sound and imagery. The research outputs are an artistic expression of the multi-layered world we experience on a daily basis. The creative projects display the now that was, the now that transforms into something else, never static and forever changing. Buddhist philosophy explains the ever-changing nature of now:

The most obvious thing about what we call the present moment is its radical instability. What was here an instant ago is no longer here; see how the moment keeps slipping away. We may try to hold onto the moments of our lives, try to manage them, control them, sustain them, but it is simply not possible to hold any of it in place, for the nature of what is here, is not remaining. This is not some abstract philosophy, this is precisely what is being experienced right now, and the dynamism of what is here, the obvious impermanence of everything. It is as if the moment is in a constant state of liquefying, dissolving, vanishing, feel the reality of this, the constant slipping away of what we call now (Astin, 2023c).

I have used sound and imagery to conceptualise our day-to-day experience of the world through art. Throughout my creative work, the power of music, sound, noise, and visuals has represented place and demarcated space. Within my soundscape compositions, the use of noise combined with the sounds of life, and the related

theoretical writings, “has at last started to critically develop our thinking and listening” (Gawthrop, 2006, p. 60). The temporal rhythms of daily life are reflected within the writing and artistic outputs. The experience of being an artist working through Covid-19 has had a profound effect on my compositional decision-making and the perception of place. Buddhist philosophy has helped explain my experiences of life in the field, and compositional decision-making in the studio. My conclusions are based from living through Covid-19, by theoretical research, experiencing and recording life as it happens, by composing with the sights, and sounds of life. All of these factors have helped to form the conclusion that environmental experience and the objects of perception are all transitory. Thoughts, sensations, sights and sounds, the bodily sensation of being in an environment, amalgamate within our individual consciousness to create our individual subjective perception of a place, space, and time. In addition, as a wise Buddhist philosopher once said, “Don’t take my word for it, relate it to your own experience” (Goldstein, 2023). Since noise is a major part of my written and practical work, it is fitting to close on a quote from Jacques Attali’s seminal book on noise:

More than colours and forms, it is sounds and their arrangement that fashion societies. With noise is born disorder and its opposite: the world. With music is born power and its opposite: subversion. In noise can be read the code of life, the relations among man (Attali, 1985, p. 6).

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