

# **Sonic Diaspora: Exploring Migration Through Interdisciplinary Soundscape Composition**

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I, Carter Joseph Weleminsky, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in the accompanying portfolio is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Carter Joseph Weleminsky, February 2021

## **Dedication**

In memory of my grandmothers,  
Kayley and Audrey,  
whose diaspora histories inspired this thesis.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude for the generosity of the refugees and migrants who shared their narratives so freely, without which none of this would have been possible.

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## **Abstract**

A qualitative inquiry into contemporary experiences of human migration and fragmentation into various twenty-first century diasporic identities, that uses interdisciplinary soundscape composition as its primary method. In addition to conducting explorations of contemporary socio-cultural experience, this thesis challenges the domination of written texts within current forms of human inquiry. The majority of past social research employing sound has been written by social scientists, not composers (see: Sterne, 2003; Back, 2007; Pink, 2009; Rhys-Taylor, 2013).

This study includes both compositional and written elements, not as illustrations of each other, but as different, overlapping streams of scholarship; each with their own distinct, coexisting ideas, practices and functions. The project is opportune, given current global preoccupations with migration, and it is argued that the use of innovative research methods, such as soundscape composition, has produced valid and original contributions to scholarship in this field. This inquiry is underpinned by sonic explorations of diasporic identities, specifically those of Middle Eastern refugees (in the UK) and Anglo olim (diaspora immigrants to Israel). The complex subject matter of this study: migration and its fragmentation into ‘diaspora’, has been selected specifically to question and explore the efficacy of integrated, interdisciplinary soundscape methods.

The thesis is situated at the intersection between the ‘art’ of soundscape composition, bringing its own distinctly aesthetic deliberations into play, and the ‘science’ of social inquiry, bringing pertinent, ethical human considerations to the forefront of the work. This study slowly meandered along a practice-based path, plugging into metaphors from the composer’s everyday life, making excursions into issues of empathy, audience and accessibility. The thesis explores flexible arts-informed methodologies, such as a/r/tography (see: Springgay et al., 2008) before ultimately concluding that these soundscape compositions are a creative process rather than an alternative form of methodology (see: Manning, 2016). This thesis is, therefore, practice-based and process-driven.

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## List of Portfolio of Works

All three pieces are mixed binaurally specifically for headphones. However, if headphones are not available, the pieces may be played through a stereo speaker set up.

All audio files are presented in their original high-resolution format (as a stereo mix in 16 bit, 44.1 kHz) on a USB for reference purposes. The pieces are also available online (see: [www.carterweleminsky.com](http://www.carterweleminsky.com)).

- 1) *Hearing Home* (2016). A composition that explores the lives and journeys of young Middle Eastern refugees in London. This comprises the first project for the thesis. (Duration: 32'28).
- 2) *Bridge* (2017). This piece sits between the two compositional projects, revealing their differences and similarities and allowing listeners contemplative inquiry space. (Duration: 10'33).
- 3) *Sounds of Aliyah* (2018). A composition that explores the narratives of English-speaking immigrants to Israel. This was produced during a year's scholarship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This piece constitutes the main practice project of the thesis. (Duration: 57'52).

## List of Selected Hebrew and Yiddish Terms

All terms have been transliterated into *Ashkenazi* pronunciation for consistency.

*Aliyah* – Diaspora Jews moving to Israel. Literally, the Hebrew word means ‘ascent’.

*Ashkenazim* – Jews with origins in Central or Eastern Europe.

*Charedim* – Hebrew for God fearing. Strictly religious Jews.

*Chasidism* – An Orthodox branch of Judaism born in 18<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Europe, characterised by its emphasis on mysticism, strictness and joy.

*Chavrusa* – Partner for traditional Jewish study, seen as preferable to studying alone.

*Grogger* – Yiddish name for the noisemakers used during the festival of Purim.

*Haggadah* – The book, which traverses the *Seder*, the order of the festive Passover meal.

*Halocho* – Jewish law as traditionally derived from the Torah and rabbinical teachings.

*Koppel* (Yiddish) / *Kippah* (Hebrew) – a Jewish head covering.

*Megilla* – The Scroll of Esther used during the Festival of Purim.

*Minhagim* – Jewish customs connected to religious rituals. Many are based on different backgrounds, for example Ashkenazi and Sephardi Passover dietary customs differ.

*Mitzvah* – A commandment from the Torah or a good deed.

*Niggun* – A form of Jewish song which has no words, but often has repetitive sounds.

*Olim* – Diaspora Jews who have moved to Israel.

*Pesach* – (Passover) festival celebrating the liberation from slavery in ancient Egypt.

*Purim* – Festival celebrating the saving of Jews from Haman in ancient Persia.

*Rosh Hashanah* – Jewish New Year.

*Sephardim* – Jews with origins in Spain, Portugal and North Africa.

*Shofar* – Ram’s horn blown during some Jewish festivals.

*Shuckling* – Yiddish to ‘shake’, the ritual swaying of worshippers during prayer.

*Shulchon Oruch* – A famous code of traditional Jewish Law.

*Tallis* – A prayer shawl worn for morning services.

*Tefillin* – Small black boxes worn during weekday morning prayers, with leather straps wrapped around the arm and placed on the head.

*Tzedakah* – Charity or justice.

*Tzitzis* – Ritual fringes, found on prayer shawls and undergarments.

*Yeshiva* – Religious educational institution that focuses on the study of traditional texts.

*Yom Kippur* – Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish religious year.

## List of Frequently Used Sonic Terms

All terms are dispersed throughout the thesis with citations from relevant scholars. The following definitions are inspired by others but represent my own use in this study.

*Acousmatic* – A description of a sound with invisible or unknown sources (a term emanating from Pythagoras who was believed to have taught behind a screen so that he was present but invisible to his students).

*Binaural* – A technique of panoramic mixing that renders sounds in 360° spatial audio via stereo headphone listening.

*Electroacoustic* – A genre of music founded in the mid twentieth century, which includes electronically generated sounds, or sounds that have been electronically processed.

*Interdisciplinary Soundscape Composition* – see the definition of soundscape composition, with additions of borrowed research practices from the humanities and social sciences.

*Listening Walk* – Sometimes distinguished from a soundwalk (see below). During a listening walk participants are asked to be as silent as possible.

*Panning* – Sending sound signals to the left or right of a stereo channel, which can be used to give the appearance to listeners that the sound is moving.

*Sonic Art* – An art form that uses sound as the principal modality.

*Sound Composition* – A broadly defined term which describes any composition using audio recordings as a core element of the piece.

*Soundmark* – A sound that is representative of a particular place, paralleling the term ‘landmark’.

*Soundscape* – The acoustics of our environments.

*Soundscape Composition* – Audio recordings of acoustic environments, creatively enhanced or manipulated into a composition.

*Soundwalk* – A walk that concentrates on listening to the surrounding environment.

*Spatial Point of Audition* – When sound is heard from the perspective of a ‘non-presence’.

*Subjective Point of Audition* – When sound is heard from the perspective of a participating (but not necessarily audible) recordist.

*Tourist Soundscape* – A term describing a sound composition in which the composer, who is not familiar with the place or culture, creates a shallow audio-interpretation thereof.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Setting the Scene (and Soundscape)

Soundscape composers listen to the relations of people and other inhabitants of places, producing pieces which are sonic expressions of not only landscape formations and lived environments but also daily social histories and political organisations of the space. (McCartney, 2002: 1)

This research is situated in an arts-based practice and uses soundscape composition<sup>1</sup> to investigate a new a/r/tographic methodology for migration and diaspora studies. This arts-informed practice includes oral history, ethnography and urban sociology. The thesis argues that the use of soundscape composition provides a different platform for migration studies, which extends interdisciplinary scholarship and bridges the arts and social sciences. A/r/tography (see: Springgay et al., 2008), an arts-based methodology borrowed primarily from education research, is integrated, together with ethnographic methods, as the construction platform for this bridge between disciplines. The investigation comes at a time when there is a paucity of sound research in migration studies, as well as scant integration of soundscape composition with social research methods. This is especially the case where soundscape composers are the principal researchers who are using soundscape composition to both critique and extend research methodologies. Despite the paucity, there are clear interconnections between soundscape composition and migration studies since both areas engage in embodied open-air research and both focus on fieldwork, primarily through sensory experience (see: Drever, 2002, Pink, 2009). Similarly, migration studies and soundscape composition both give prominence to human environmental experience (see: Truax, 2008).

This project arrives opportunely: soundscape composers are now beginning to acknowledge the need for ethical and methodological guidelines in the development of their work (Rennie, 2014; Lyonblum, 2017). Although these connections have been made, scholars are only just beginning to heavily scrutinise and integrate their compositional process with social science methods (Andean, 2014b; McCartney, 2016a). I shall position myself very differently from arts-based researchers who claim their arts practice as a research method (McNiff, 1998), but I shall also differentiate myself from

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<sup>1</sup> A soundscape composition is a form of electroacoustic music, characterised by the presence of recognisable environmental sounds and contexts (Truax, 2002).

researchers who are calling for sonic methodologies (Gershon, 2018) and require rigid sound methods to enable accurate analysis. I sit somewhere in between these two groups. I discuss my placement between them in depth later in chapter three of this inquiry. The soundscape compositions included as part of this thesis, form a progressive journey from works of art, towards inquiring works of art, combined with methodological elements and insights.

This inquiry explores the integration and interdisciplinary synthesis of four disciplines: soundscape composition, oral history, ethnography and urban sociology. These fields are contiguous, collaborative approaches: one a symphony of sounds; others collections of words and stories. All of these fields were established during the twentieth century (ethnography emerging from nineteenth century anthropology) with soundscape composition and oral history contingent upon the development of sound recording technologies. All of these disciplines make an important contribution to the history and study of everyday lives. As Smith (2004: 365) comments, ‘...historical soundscape studies should bridge the gap between physical, measurable sound and the perception of what is heard’.

In my study soundscape compositions will be critically explored as the aesthetic lexicon of a research language that can express thoughts, feelings and atmospheres in different ways from written works. The sonic representation of participants in their locations, using creative sound arts practice approaches will create different research outcomes: outcomes that are able to more authentically illustrate the simultaneities and multiplicities involved in peopled spaces (see: Massey, 2013). To quote fellow arts-based social researcher, Sameshima (2007: xi): ‘Form determines possibilities for content and function thus the use of an alternative format can significantly open new spaces for inquiry’.

As well as explorations of complementarities between soundscape compositions and human/humanities research methods; this inquiry also intends to examine the accessibility of soundscape compositions to wider audiences and the possibilities of soundscapes producing alternative research impacts. Thus emboldened, this study questions the everyday accessibility of traditional written studies:

...we both began to realize that storytelling itself – bearing witness, in vivid and clear language, to things personally seen and incidents encountered- has the power to engage the attention of people, who like us, have long since given up paying attention, or have simply given up. (Chabon et al., 2017: ix)

Showcasing practice-based elements of studies such as this to wider audiences may lead to greater public engagement with academic scholarship. Public engagement with soundscape compositions in non-academic spaces evokes a different sense of connection with research findings than that produced by written texts. Indeed, such engagement alters those findings. Sound artists have already achieved considerable success in this respect with a range of audiences, as Phillipsz (2015) says, ‘Sound is materially invisible but very visceral and emotive. It can define a space at the same time as it triggers a memory’. The accessible nature of this form of scholarship comes from an evocation of empathy in listeners, bringing together different communities, thus: ‘Soundscapes can be used...as a stimulus for discussion and debate’ (Rennie, 2014: 14).

The academic legitimacy of sound as a means of inquiry has been contested within many disciplines over the last decade. Sound, is seen as ‘non-traditional’ and the demand for different ‘judgement calls’ (Sparkes, 2002) for sound-based research has not primarily come from composers, but rather from historians (Brady, 1999; Hoffer, 2003; Johnson, 1995; Picker, 2003; Rath, 2003; Smith, 2001); from technology studies (Sterne, 2003; Thompson, 2002); from visual and cultural studies (Chion, 2002; Erlmann, 2004; Kruth and Stobart, 2000; Bull and Back, 2003) and from sociology (Back, 2007; Pink, 2009; Bates and Rhys-Taylor, 2017).

As will become clear as this work progresses, I am principally a composer, based in soundscape practice, who utilises and borrows both methods and methodologies from other disciplines throughout the planning, recording and compositional processes. This would inevitably have become a very different dissertation had I been, first and foremost, a social scientist.<sup>2</sup> I believe, for instance, that my desire to produce an engaging; aesthetically pleasing and accessible thesis stems from my background as a composer. I explore these questions in more depth later in this study (see: chapter three), examining how, as a composer, I generate models of practice-based research that offer both a creative

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<sup>2</sup> For comparison see Gallagher (2014; 2015; 2017), for an interdisciplinary sound researcher who came from a social scientist background.

and scholarly outlook. Thus, this project wrestles not only with the nature of the ideas that academically legitimise soundscape but also with exactly what undertaking sonic migration research (through, listening, recording, editing and representing people) might entail and promise. This interdisciplinary project examines the world *primarily* from the position of a soundscape composer and *secondarily* from the perspective of a social researcher.

Thus, I do not come ‘cap in hand’ towards social science and bury my own discipline beneath social research methods, but rather, I come as an arts practitioner who believes that arts-based methods of inquiry; aesthetic concerns and ethical know-how (an active, engaged practice of ethics, see: Varela, 1999) create different opportunities for human inquiry.<sup>3</sup> I come towards social science, not solely by ‘borrowing’ from methods such as ethnography, but rather, like an a/r/tographer: as a sound composer who brings alternative, sound arts-based means of knowing about human beings and the spaces they occupy. I come bringing a soundscape composer’s aesthetics, and, indeed, poetics of experience and practice to diaspora and migration studies. I borrow from the established methods of oral history, ethnography and urban sociology. This thesis emerges rhizomatically within a series of linked projects and places, rather than through a previously defined structure:

A/r/tography is a research methodology that entangles and performs what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome. A rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum. The rhizome operates by variation, perverse mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate meaning, [...] It is an interstitial space, open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured. Building on the concept of the rhizome, a/r/tography radically transforms the idea of theory as an abstract system. (Springgay et al., 2008: xx)

Therefore, this work sits in-between arts-practice research<sup>4</sup> and social science research, ‘that moves and flows in dynamic momentum’ (ibid.), not privileging one or the other.

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<sup>3</sup> Ethics and aesthetics have co-existed as contested spaces for centuries (see: Gardner, 2011), the intellectual tensions and connections between them emanating from Aristotle’s aesthetics (see: Scarry, 2001) right through to the discussions of the Frankfurt School (see: Marcuse, 1979) to the modern day. This history is beyond the scope of my thesis, which focuses on the dilemmas in my own present work. I acknowledge, however, that my difficulties were informed by these previous debates.

<sup>4</sup> Art, and, indeed, composition as research is a contested, well-debated topic, see: Nelson, 2013; Leavy, 2015. Croft, 2015, specifically puts the argument against eliding composition with research.

I am claiming that my compositions sit in a grey area in-between ‘an interstitial space, open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured’ (ibid.).

This inquiry starts with oral history conversations; speech in composition, and looks at the ways that soundscape composers can balance musical/aesthetic with representational/social concerns. Then the relationship between ethnography and soundscape composition is discussed and the connections between soundscape composition and ethnographic practice are explored. Composing techniques and ethnographic methodologies are compared and considered. Finally, soundscape composition and urban sociology are combined and problematised and sonic arts ‘versions’ of urban sociology, such as soundwalks, are used to creatively inquire into the politics of city spaces and city noise pollution.

Before I state my main research questions, I need to offer the caveat that I did not intend to pressure this project to answer them, but rather to inquire into them. I intended not to investigate; but to explore, not to examine but to ask partial, contingent questions, to remain with uncertainty and ‘not knowing’ (Fisher and Fortnum, 2013). I anticipated continuing the journey but not necessarily reaching conclusions. I offer this thesis as a final document, not in conclusion, but rather, as a means of highlighting my findings, thus far.

The main research questions that this thesis asks and discusses are:

- 1) What different knowledge emerges in diaspora/migration studies, when we use soundscape composition as a research platform? Does a sonic form of inquiry produce different thinking, in understanding journeys; communities and diaspora identities to those emanating from written scholarship?
  
- 2) How do these four fields (soundscape composition, ethnography, oral history and urban sociology) combine to develop and provide frameworks for sound research? How are decisions made around the balance and on-going dialogue between aesthetics and ethics in an interdisciplinary inquiry?

3) Does soundscape composition, as research, widen access to scholarship with non-academic audiences? Can sonic platforms that reveal the lived experiences of others produce more empathic responses in listeners?

### **What This Thesis Is, and What This Thesis Is Not**

This investigation's principal concern is methodological. The compositional projects in this thesis are exploring issues in diaspora and migration studies, yet the content that emerges is of less scholarly significance than the development of the research process. This thesis sheds light on diaspora identity, but as a composer and a researcher my interest in the methodological journey of the thesis was far greater than any concern with an end result and conclusion. The outcomes of the compositional projects do not need written reflections, but rather, stand in final form, aurally. Any written reflections would become, at best, a negotiation (see: Eco, 2003) and at worst a mistranslation. However, since the primary concern of this thesis was the research journey, this written text can act as a commentary on that process and the acquisition of that knowledge, which is an equally valuable dimension.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, this project does not aim to create new compositional techniques,<sup>6</sup> but rather, to position soundscape composition not as the object of study but as the means of inquiry: the means to acquire accessible, new and different knowledge. Any claims towards an original contribution to knowledge made in the course of this study are within the arena of inquiry; of a/r/tographic (see: Springgay et al., 2008) explorations and methodological innovations within the ways that these disciplines, combined, can contribute to each other's development and provide future research frameworks.

This has involved me in a continuous process of inquiry which has been, and continues to be, an iterative, accumulative and reflective cycle of actions and practices (see: Kolb, 1984, Emmerson, 2009) that have formed and informed my ideas and methods of inquiring (some borrowed from ethnography/oral history/urban sociology, some from my own soundscape composition practice). In chapter two I demonstrate the process of reflection-in-action that I undertook as a soundscape composer when my arts-informed thinking and practice collided with the ethics, values and methods of social research. In

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<sup>5</sup> The soundscape compositions and these written commentaries demand equal status as far as the contribution of this thesis towards the generation of original knowledge is concerned.

<sup>6</sup> Sound composition inclusive of voiced elements is not an innovation. Many sound artists/composers are already extensively utilising spoken elements (see: Lane, 2006).

chapter three, I discuss how I dealt with these collisions between aesthetics and social science theory, and critique this process of ongoing methodological decision-making. In chapter four I describe the further cycles of inquiry that emerged as I undertook another project and produced an additional soundscape/inquiry informed by the first. Thus, the two soundscapes form a portfolio of compositions, but, in terms of this thesis, also comprise a progressive, chronological cycle of inquiry, created by a composer/inquirer in development, rather than a portfolio of finished works. The second piece would not have come into being in the way that it did, without the aesthetic discussions and methodological interplay with the first. The thesis is not only iterative, involving these several cycles of reflection and reflection-in-action, but also cumulative in that the inquiry has been constantly and progressively informing itself from the beginning. Indeed it still is.

There is no substantive, discrete literature review within this text, but rather, in a parallel, cyclical and chronological style, the relevant sources from the various fields informing this thesis are cited as and when they occur. This inquiry came to an end, but somewhere at the back of my mind these cycles of inquiry are still whirring. The main contribution of this project has been methodological. It has not produced a methodological template or a list of generalisable structures and procedures for other arts-based or practitioner inquirers to follow, because this study was specific and contingent. I do offer, however, the most useful insights gleaned from undertaking these studies to future scholars and readers in the concluding paragraphs of this thesis in the format of open guidelines. This study can offer suggestions about ways of thinking with everyday metaphors and with an inquiring mind; about collaborative ways of being with other people, about where and when to borrow and bring together ideas and practices and explore how they might best 'fit'.

This thesis emerged from a cyclical, developmental process of experimentation as illustrated below. As stated above, the literatures of contributing fields and disciplines are referred to throughout the ongoing process of the thesis.<sup>7</sup> This study is written in a mixture of tenses throughout, since most sections were written alongside the inquiry process (whereas others referred to preceding or forthcoming moments along the inquiry journey). The following chart illustrates the cyclical process of inquiry and the table

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<sup>7</sup> Chapter three contains some insights into the methodological ideas, emanating both from academic sources and from the composer/researcher's everyday life that the thesis plugs into, but there is no formal literature review.

below sets out the positions in the text of the major literatures of contributing fields. These diagrams are included as signposts to enable readers to navigate an unfamiliar thesis structure.

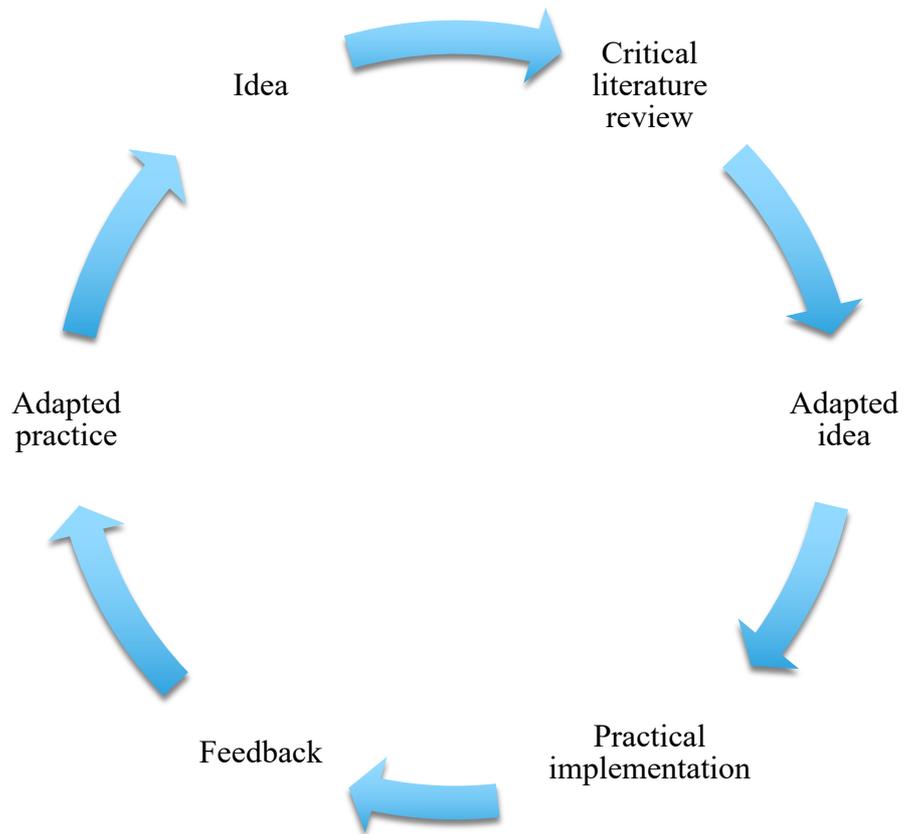


Figure 1: Exemplar of the developmental cycle of inquiry (repeated throughout the thesis).

The table below signposts the literatures and fields informing this thesis for the reader, chapter by chapter.

	<b>Literatures reviewed and themes discussed</b>	<b>Pertinent scholars cited</b>
<b>Chapter One</b>	Background of disciplines: soundscape composition; urban sociology; ethnography; oral history and diaspora and migration Studies. Methodological overviews: sensory sociology; cyclical, action research; personal reflexivity; a/r/tography.	Schafer; McCartney; Drever; Rennie; Lyonblum; Truax; Landy; Simmel; Schwarz; Orshansky; Erlmann; Feld; Stoller; Fisch; Perks and Thomson; Portelli; Thompson; Knott and McLoughlin; Brah; Kuah-Pearce and Davidson; Stock; Pink; Sameshima; Bull and Back; Rhys-Taylor; Heron and Reason; Springgay, et al.
<b>Chapter Two</b>	Pilot project testing; transferability/flexibility of research; tacit knowledge; oral history interviewing; memory; translation; soundwalking; cities; narrative inquiry; listening; docu-music; language; flow; perspective; participation; borderlands.	De Vaus; Haseman; Polanyi; Sedorkin; Abrams; Eco; Westerkamp; Norman; Bell and de-Shalit; Mishler; Finnegan; Augoyard and LaBelle; Lane; Pavlenko and Blackledge; Beswick; Csikszentmihalyi; Chion; Reason and Rowan; Anzaldua.
<b>Chapter Three</b>	Decipherings; compositional narratives; composer presence; ethics versus aesthetics; process; multi-layered narratives; thinking-in-action; ethical know-how; theology; plugging in; comparative continua; sonic methodologies; everyday life narratives; ways of knowing.	Mazzei; Andean; Ferrari; Carlyle; Rogoff and Bal; Gould; Manning and Massumi; Varela; Dorff; Jackson and Mazzei; Amelides; Panopoulos; Gershon; Andrews; Ellsworth; Eisner; Babbage.
<b>Chapter Four</b>	Aliyah; migration; autoethnography; the language of interviews; gatekeepers; memory; unconventional storytelling; transcriptions; accessibility; empathy; sonic trauma; binaural; post-qualitative inquiry; Jewish music; ethnographic presence.	Gottschalk; Milevsky; Waxman; Denzin; Andrews; Lummis; Grobel; Bryson; Kuhn; Glass; Bates; Becker; Venuti; Perks; Wilson Vasquez; Bosley; Oppenheimer; Willinsky; Wolf; Boyd and Larson; Krznaric; Berendt; Levinas; Rosenberg; Foreman; Birdsall; Wood; Smalley; Barnard; Simpson; Hertz; St Pierre; Rubin; Frith; Attali; Waligorska; Myerhoff.
<b>Chapter Five</b>	Listeners' responses; collaborative soundscapes; maps; researcher power; process not method.	Hill; Andean; Smalley; Adkins; Pryor; Frisch; Iscen; Massey; Ingold; Osgood; Davies and Gannon; Manning and Massumi; Rogoff; Bal; Law; Truman and Springgay; Gale; Gardner.
<b>Chapter Six</b>	Film soundscapes; everyday knowledge; refugee arts research; place and knowledge; sensescape; open manifesto; sonic auto ethnography; sonic migration patterns; sonic experiences; ethical guidelines; diversity in sound studies; sonic thinking.	Martin; Highmore; Glassner and Hertz; Clayton; McKay and Bradley; Casey; Meireles; Degan; Manalansan; Wills and Trondman; Findlay-Walsh; Cixous; Sanchez; Marks; Wilson; Lopez; Herzogenrath.

Figure 2: Table of the developmental literature review that informed this inquiry.

## How to Read This Thesis (Exegesis)

In the arts, an *exegesis* contains and documents all that relates to the work (see: Sullivan, 2005) and helps to give direction to theoretical ideas. The significant theme throughout this thesis is the cumulative and constant development of research methodological questions. ‘Most research is designed for a thesis to advance through an argument. In a/r/tography and other arts-based or arts informed types of research, an exegesis is more suitable’ (Springgay et al., 2008: xxix). Therefore, perhaps this paper is more of an *exegesis* than a (traditional) *thesis* as it is a critical explanation of the methodological journey within the research. The inquiry will be in two parts: a) a portfolio of practice-based projects and b) this written thesis, which acts as a reflective commentary. There are two practice-based projects:<sup>8</sup>

First project: An initial exploration of the integration of soundscape composition; oral history; ethnography and urban sociology. This comprises the initial test space for practices, ideas and methods before making decisions about the main elements that constitute the second project. My personal reflections on this initial project were combined with re-imagined research models: a/r/tography emerging from arts practice, combined with others borrowed from the social sciences, to produce new creative methods and protocols to be used in the final project. The first project inquires into the lives of refugees who had moved into urban London life. This composition explored the everyday lives of Syrian and Yemeni refugees in the UK as they created new diasporas, communities and soundscapes.

Second project: This constituted the greater part of a yearlong inquiry into the sonic construction of collective memory in Israel. I was curious about the transferability of these ideas and practices across migration studies, hence the exploration of several diverse migratory groupings in the study. This study explores the identity of English-speaking diaspora Jews after moving to Israel. The composition asks questions and explores themes about *home* and *belonging*. This final project explores the main arguments for integrating soundscape composition, oral history, ethnography and urban sociology.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The bridge piece, discussed in chapter three, is not one of the two compositional research projects in this thesis. References to the ‘second project’ throughout the thesis refer to the Jerusalem based project and not the bridge.

<sup>9</sup> In between these two practical projects sits a further composition: the bridge piece, which explores the compositional journey(s) and gives listeners a contemplative space between projects.

The written thesis acts as a discursive commentary on the compositions; gives an account of my research trajectory and introduces readers to the methodological challenges presented by this inquiry. I begin with a discussion of the interconnected fields included. The first chapters include an overview of soundscape composition and the uses of spoken language and environmental sounds within the confines and parameters of music composition. I then provide outlines of oral history, ethnography and urban sociology as research methods, before making comparisons and considering the spaces between, and barriers to, the integration of these genres.

Every space and barrier I came across challenged the ways in which I engaged with my compositional work. The purpose of this written thesis, therefore, is to show the unfolding narrative of my process as a composer. This includes discussion of the difficulties of methodological practice thrown up within interdisciplinary research. The on-going questions that arose throughout the project and their impact on the compositional process are highlighted, for example: the importance of spoken narratives and everyday sounds and silences to human meaning-making.

A/r/tography is a non-traditional arts-based research methodology emanating from (mostly) visual arts educators in Canada. The first three letters stand for: art, research and teaching, symbolising the integration of visual arts practice with theory and research. A/r/tography was chosen by me as a guiding force, since it also fell in-between the space of arts and research and their methodologies. Although emanating from a visual arts background, this felt like a similar journey to my own. I discuss how a/r/tography influenced these projects since: ‘The journey to becoming an artist, researcher and teacher is not without its struggles, but these struggles are both necessary and of critical importance’ (Irwin et al., 2017: 475), which reflects my own journey as an artist, researcher and composer.

The thesis initially interrogates the first compositional project (completed in 2016) about sonic explorations of diaspora identity, from my fieldwork with Syrian and Yemeni refugees. Afterwards the focus moves towards my second compositional project (completed in 2018), which explores English-speaking diaspora Jewish identity after emigration to Israel. This section discusses the ideas that emerged as the thesis developed, during the planning; interviewing; sound recording and creative processes. Here we look at how creative work, which was primarily an arts-based endeavour, was also inspired

and shaped by the integration of key social science theories with soundscape composition techniques. This creative practice offers social inquiry a completely different platform, as Gershon (2018: 133) commented:

In light of the hundreds of qualitative research methods currently employed and being created, there are seemingly endless possibilities for the use of sound-as-method, limiting how sound can be expressed or the ways in which it could be the focus of research methods undermines a move to the sonic.

In chapter five feedback from listeners is considered and critiqued. It was ethically important to include a chapter dedicated to audience and participant feedback, demonstrating the tenet of ‘shared authority’, as advocated by oral historian Frisch (1990) that informs all my work. Thus, this is partially a collaboratively constructed inquiry (Heron and Reason, 1997) that undertakes a cycle of cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996) and considers participant ideas and feedback at each stage. This thesis is a collaboration between its writer/composer, its participants and its readers/audiences. In order to answer Benjamin’s (1998: 101) question: ‘for whom do you write?’, feedback will be sought from diverse UK Jewish, Muslim and refugee communities as well as from outsiders to those communities attending music festivals and community centres. All of this feedback will inform the final configuration of both compositions.

The thesis is methodological at its core. The object of inquiry comprises the two practice-based projects. It is for this reason that this final thesis document develops as a cycle of compositional process over time, place and space;<sup>10</sup> acknowledging the interview process and engaging readers with the creative decisions and issues that I struggled with as a composer. As with other non-traditional research practices (such as sensory ethnography and oral history), traditional research evaluation criteria do not contribute towards an understanding of the work. These approaches call for different ‘judgement calls’ (Sparkes, 2002), such as ‘transparency, trustworthiness, reflexivity, accountability, contribution and transformation’. A more thorough conversation between these traditional and non-traditional ‘judgement calls’ (ibid.) can be found in Appendix A.

My findings are not universal or generalisable. I re-iterate my claim (above) that they are partial and contingent. As Cixous (1991: 35) noted: ‘...what I have learned cannot be

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<sup>10</sup> I refer throughout this thesis to space not only in the ‘storied’ sense (see: Massey, 2013) but also in the metaphorical/imagined sense (see: Bachelard, 1964).

generalised but it can be shared'. This study is uniquely embedded in *my* journey through these specific projects; *my* own background, life space and trajectory as a soundscape composer. This inquiry, however, can offer more general recommendations about the relationship between soundscape compositions and research methodologies.<sup>11</sup> All creative projects are non-reproducible and evoke intentionally different outcomes. Such a study can, however, offer insights into the in-between spaces of art and research as well as the borrowing and merging of different ideas and disciplines.

Soundscape composition is *my* discipline. This constitutes my home as a composer. This is where I belong in the field of sound composition. It is a discipline that I fell into (see below). I am inspired by and often borrow techniques from other genres (such as acousmatic<sup>12</sup> composition) and I discuss this throughout the thesis. I have, however, remained a soundscape composer for nearly a decade. It is my intention in this more extensive inquiry, to integrate all the ideas and combinations of practices that I have used previously in smaller projects. Many other sound composition or sound art genres have recently entered the research world, but soundscape composition is *my* practice and is where I feel at home in this work.

A tension runs through the thesis, like an undercurrent, between the practices of creative composition and sociological explanations. I have inquired, through soundscapes, into that which traditional investigative techniques cannot grasp. I have borrowed from traditional social research theory and practice, to help disentangle and understand this process. All of these projects have drawn on the ethics of fictionalisation from the social research field, as they have made it possible to portray what would otherwise remain silenced (Banks & Banks, 1998; Clough, 2002; Sparkes, 2002).

Throughout this dissertation, I refer to several composers and compositions that I admire or have been influenced by. The majority of these discussions commence in chapters two and four where I explore, in-depth, my own composing practice. I have taken inspiration from many composers, sound documentarists, field recordists and sound artists. A non-exhaustive list, in no particular order, would include: Drever, Westerkamp, Truax,

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<sup>11</sup> The absence of generalisability may appear to undermine traditional research constructs such as rigour, but what this study lacks in precise models to follow, it makes up for, I would argue, in its fluidity and processes that can be paralleled.

<sup>12</sup> Acousmatic meaning that the original source of sound is unrecognisable to the listener (see: Peignot, 1960; Schaeffer, 1966).

Rennie, Schwartz, Lane and Carlyle, Feld, Gould, McCartney, Machover, Broomfield, Davis, Huse, Teibel, Watson, Adkins, Harrison, Harvey, Hostetler, Parry, Norman, Schaeffer, Ferrari, Cardiff and Heuson. Although I touch on some of their compositions in this chapter, I interrogate these influences in greater depth later in the thesis, whilst reflecting on my own work.

## **The Personal Story Behind This Research**

It seems fitting in this first chapter to reveal some of my personal stories. I was born to one middle class parent and one working class parent. I grew up surrounded by, to quote Woody Allen in *Annie Hall* (Allen, 1977): ‘Jewish, left-wing, liberal, intellectual’ types. These aspects of my biography have a bearing on my research, shaping both the things I am interested in; am sensitive to; how I perceive them and ultimately, leading me to the particular mode of creative research behind this thesis.

It was never my ambition growing up to undertake a PhD. I can see some patterns forming over my last seven years in education. I enjoyed music technology at school and decided that I wanted to continue to study it. I had no idea what a ‘sound composer’ was at that time, or a ‘soundscape’. I began my studies at Falmouth University in Cornwall. Many of my lecturers were exciting electro-acoustic music composers (such as Prior, Reeder and Saario). These tutors all influenced my development as a composer. My first soundscape (Weleminsky, 2012) was created during the second year of my undergraduate study.<sup>13</sup>

One of the first sound compositions I heard was a track from Heuson’s (2009) *Soundscapes of the Black Hills*, recorded at various locations in the Black Hills, South Dakota. With each recording, Heuson included her own narrative as an accompaniment, confidently distinguishing her presence within her recordings: ‘You can hear the two top bulls growling at each other and the snaps of tourists’ cameras’ (Heuson, 2009). For me, as a young musician at this point, I was intrigued by the ways her work showcased sound recording as not merely a process of gathering sound, but also a personal practice of artistic expression. Heuson (ibid.) asks us to participate with her soundscapes as ‘experience, as tale, as hearing’.

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<sup>13</sup> Previous soundscape work also includes: Weleminsky, 2014a; 2014b and 2015.

A major influencing factor that drew me towards soundscape composition was my dyslexia. Being dyslexic, thriving in an educational environment was not straightforward.<sup>14</sup> Whilst at school I struggled enormously with written exams. Creative and innovative sound practices re-oriented my focus towards different forms of knowledge. This new way of knowing and inquiring felt accessible to me in a form which seemed infinitely creative in its endeavours. The struggle for academic legitimacy that has been undergone by sensory research methods (see: Pink, 2009), such as oral history (despite its role in giving voice to so many people ignored by traditional history), is still contested in the academy today (Thompson, 2000). In some ways this echoes the struggles of people like me within contemporary education.

During the construction of the written thesis soundscapes were paramount. I find it very hard to concentrate on written work for long periods of time, which is not useful whilst writing a PhD thesis. I found some solace in listening to a soundscape I created, entitled *PhD Library*. It was a sonic mixture of a clock ticking; paper shuffling; pens scribbling and the occasional ‘ssssh-ing’ of a librarian. The rhythmic work environment sounds were very calming, evoking momentum and aiding concentration. I must have listened to this soundscape almost every day during the last two years of completing this study. I created this soundscape online on *ambient mixer*,<sup>15</sup> whose aim is to encourage self-created audio atmospheres. Thus, even in the most literature-based moments of this study, sound was of the utmost importance.

Throughout the last two years I have completed several soundscape projects, each focusing on slightly different concepts: *Sounding out Stratford* (Weleminsky, 2014b) looking at the urban sociology of new residents in Stratford and *British with Bagels* (Weleminsky, 2015), which followed the migration narratives of British-Jewish families from the East End to North London. As these studies progressed, I introduced different elements of oral history, ethnography and urban sociology. My current PhD inquiry gives me an opportunity to integrate all the ideas and practices that I have begun to become familiar with over the last seven years.

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<sup>14</sup> See: Davis (2010) for an exposition of the ways in which dyslexia leads people towards creative, rather than traditionally academic, modes of thought.

<sup>15</sup> See: [www.ambient-mixer.com](http://www.ambient-mixer.com) to experience user created soundscapes.

All my projects thus far have involved interrogations of identity, and are, to some extent, about reconnecting with my own identity. With the benefit of hindsight,<sup>16</sup> I can recognise the on-going theme of sonic explorations of Jewish community and identity. Appropriately, Judaism and oral traditions have a strong and longstanding historical connection. Many Jewish laws and customs were transmitted orally. This tradition was maintained until the 2nd century C.E. when the oral law was written down in the Mishnah: '[The Oral Law] was handed down by word of mouth during a long period...The first attempts to write down the traditional matter, there is reason to believe, date from the first half of the second post-Christian century' (Strack, 1945: 11). Based on this strongly oral tradition, it could be argued that sound research is in some ways more suitable than written research for exploring Jewish community and identity.

It is possible that because of the social and cultural issues that oral history provokes, some sound composers, including myself, have created autobiographical pieces, or concentrated on themes or places that are linked to their own identities. Westerkamp's *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (1989) is a good example. This piece combines soundscape composition with self-reflective narrative to create an autobiographical soundscape concerning Westerkamp's relationship with Kits Beach, Vancouver. The composition is also 'autotopographic', a term coined by González (1995) to denote an integration of autobiography and place. As Chasalow (2006: 64) commented: '...where many [composers] become involved in documenting their own communities, [composers] will build a more complete record than could a centralised project team, even a well-funded one'. Also, possibly, composers who have a personal connection with their material may evoke more intimacy and explore greater depths, by sustaining an interest in projects over a longer time.

### **Why Interdisciplinary Soundscapes?**

In the late 1960s the notion of the soundscape as an 'aural experience as a symphony' was pioneered by Schafer, who later commented: 'The blurring of edges between music and environmental sounds may eventually prove to be the most striking feature of all twentieth-century music' (Schafer, 1994: 111). Soundscapes were pioneered for the purpose of highlighting global noise pollution and documenting environments (see:

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<sup>16</sup> A period of narrative reflection, at times a '*profound source of insight, understanding and self-knowledge*' (Freeman, 2009:15).

Westerkamp, 2002). Composers started to apply creative processing to their recordings using electroacoustic techniques (see: Truax, 1995). This genre moved gradually from subtle to radical transformations of sounds (ibid.). Definitions of soundscape composition remain contested<sup>17</sup> (see: Deng and Kang, 2015). Truax (2008: 105) maintains that: ‘original sounds must stay recognizable and the listener’s contextual and symbolic associations should be invoked’, although this is not a universal understanding.<sup>18</sup> It is my contention that attempts to rigidly define soundscape compositions are too restricting. Such restrictions would further impede the growth of ‘borrowed’ methodologies and compositional techniques. This view is similar to that of field recordist, Lyonblum (2017: 11), who comments: ‘My observation as a researcher and practitioner has been that the more one investigates the matter, the more challenging it is to define clear boundaries as to what field recording really is’.

Many contemporary composers (especially those who like to use acousmatic compositional techniques, such as Harrison’s (2012) *Klang* and Smalley’s (1974) *Pentes*) leave only glimpses of the original sounds in their pieces and add large sections of processed sounds that are completely unrecognisable. I require listeners to hear raw and untreated sounds during a significant portion of my work. Each composer finds their own balance between an awareness of real world sounds and the creative technologies of processing. In my case, I am attempting to compose without subjugating one element to another. There are some composers who deliberately choose to privilege one element. I will return to this creative decision-making process more specifically in chapter four.

Each soundscape composition emanates from its own perspective in place and time; culturally, politically, collectively, environmentally; and is often presented in different frameworks brought from the composer’s own standpoint (their unique cultural, social and political, etc. views). As Landy (2007: 27) states: ‘One of the key revolutions in the birth of sound-based music was that virtually every parameter of sound traditionally used in a musical context is thrown open’. Landy’s reflections mirror the openness of the genre, albeit this openness is filtered through the context and lifespace of the composer.

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<sup>17</sup> For instance in this thesis, the term interdisciplinary soundscape composition is used to describe soundscape compositions that have become entangled with social inquiry. For an extended definition, see: Drever, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of context-based composition is closely connected to those soundscape compositions which reveal, and are inspired by, the ‘real’ world they were recorded in. See: Truax, 2017.

This thesis has been a continuing exploration of the integration of ethics, aesthetics and methods of soundscape composition with social research methods. As mentioned previously, most uses of sound as a means of social research emanate from ethnographers, oral historians and cultural studies scholars. The minority of composers who have discussed incorporating sound into social sciences and vice versa, seem to be reflecting back on their work, after having already undertaken the compositional process. Alternatively, they are making overarching claims for their art practice as research, without considering their work in relation to inquiry methods.<sup>19</sup> I intend, in this study, to take on the methodological stance of a social inquirer from the outset of the creative project. As with a/r/tography, the social inquiry and the soundscape are ‘not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create relational and/or enhanced meanings’ (Irwin and Sinner, 2013: ii).

Several sound composers and researchers have discussed interdisciplinary soundscapes, particularly with regards to ethnography. Rennie (2014:12) for example, asks: ‘What then, about composing with these sounds? Could interpreting the holistic experience of fieldwork by composing, rather than simply presenting the notes (field recording) in their raw form, be a sonic write up?’ Rennie (ibid.) discusses ethnographic approaches to field recordings in his paper *Socio-Sonic: An ethnographic methodology for electroacoustic composition*. This paper, however, does not indicate the ways in which a composer can use diverse research methodologies and does not include social science methods, other than ethnography. He acknowledges that further steps are needed, saying:

Although my artistic conscience is clear, there is little or no academic evidence to show my choices throughout. This must be the next step – after acknowledging that what we do is (inter)subjective, we should render transparent to the reader/listener the process of how we gathered the data, how it was analysed and composed with, for it to be viable academic research. (Rennie, 2014: 123)

Drever (2002: 26) also concludes his paper *Soundscape composition: the convergence of ethnography and acousmatic music* with a similar call:

A lot of what has been proposed in the paper vis-à-vis soundscape composition and ethnography is theoretical. It is only through praxis (the marriage of theory and practice) that we will realise pertinent means of addressing such propositions as framing ‘the framer as he or she frames the other’.

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<sup>19</sup> Examples of both of these styles are examined in comparison to my own work in chapter three.

In reflecting on these two composer's perspectives, I definitely concur with the difficulty of the 'marriage of theory and practice' (Drever, 2002) and in having 'no academic evidence to show my choices throughout' (Rennie, 2014) – this is the ground that this thesis ultimately lies on as an experiment in evidencing my choices and demonstrating how my particular balancing act of 'the marriage of theory and practice' (Drever, 2002) works, as a composer and researcher. This will be different for each composer and each researcher. My hope is that this thesis will inspire future composers to consider how they theorise and develop the story of their own work. As Gershon (2018: 128) stated, 'What was often missing... was talk about sound in or as methodology'.

Contemporary human inquiry within social science has relied almost exclusively on the written word:

'Sonic culture' has not developed to the extent that 'visual culture' has in the arts, humanities and social sciences: in many ways, the latter has overshadowed the former. The camera is privileged over the microphone, the television over the radio, and the webcam over the telephone. (Lyonblum, 2017: 22)

It is my further contention that soundscape composition challenges the hegemony of the written text. Berendt (1985: 236) argues against the privileging of visual sources<sup>20</sup> and says, 'Not only is the eye the most likely sense organ to mis-perceive, but it has the most limited range of perception – ten times less than that of the ear'. Film director, McQueen (cited in Hanson, 2009), comments: 'Sound, for me...fills the spaces where the camera just can't go... In some ways sound can travel itself into other areas of our senses, other areas of our psyche that unfortunately cannot be just viewed'. Thus, soundscape composition challenges both written and visual textual forms. It is not a superior method, but rather, it is different, demanding to be held to different criteria and, perhaps, working in different ways to produce different research outcomes. Indeed: '...music has always been an effective language for externalizing precisely this domain, for expressing it symbolically where words fail' (Truax, 1994: 188).

Bull (2015) used the example of 9/11, where photos of falling people were merely described as 'haunting' but the voice messages of people calling from the planes and twin towers produced more emotional responses. He used these findings as evidence to

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<sup>20</sup> In a study of culture around the world demonstrating the dominance of the ear as the primary sense organ for processing information in reference, primarily, to compassion (see: Berendt, 1985).

illustrate his idea that spoken narrative enables more empathic human responses. Nussbaum (2003: 236) commented: ‘The understanding of any single emotion is incomplete unless its narrative history is grasped and studied for the light it sheds on the present response’. She suggests a central role for art in human self-understanding. Narrative artworks of various kinds (including soundscape composition) ‘give us information about these emotion-histories that we could not easily get otherwise’ (ibid.).

Hearing is an important sense that links us to certain times and places. Sound can evoke memories from the past and is integral to human methods of organising experience (see: Labelle, 2006). Oral history and soundscape composition both communicate this power of listening. Oral history<sup>21</sup> became a mass practice in the 1960s to uncover, as Abrams (2010: 4) comments: ‘...the hidden histories of individuals or groups which had gone unremarked upon in mainstream accounts’. Oral sources such as the North American slave narratives (see: Fisch, 2007) produce different kinds of knowledge from the traditional histories of literate people (affect oriented, rather than cognition oriented, see: Clough and Halley, 2007). Unlike the traditional study of history, oral history has emerged as a post-second world war grass roots, community-based movement, linked to minority group political activism (Perks & Thomson, 2006: 1-14). Contemporary oral history contributes immensely to Holocaust studies through the recording of survivor stories (see: USHMM, 2007) and is an on-going community research method.

The oral historian Portelli (cited in Abrams 2010: 1), describes oral history as: ‘...floating as it does in time between the present and an ever-changing past, oscillating in the dialogue between the narrator and the interviewer and melting and coalescing in the no-mans land from orality to writing and back’. This description is reminiscent of soundscapes, all of which are environmentally contingent and particular in time, space and place. Every composer’s interpretation will influence their composition and create a distinctive ‘take’ on each situation. The particular combination of environmental sounds and the composer’s personal perspective adds to, or perhaps even changes, our understanding of those times, spaces and places. My research, therefore, needs an inner arc (looking inwards at myself) as well as an outer arc (looking outwards towards and influencing the inquiry) of attention, as the composer and researcher (see: Marshall, 1999: 168-70). This becomes an important field of play later on in this thesis (see: chapter three)

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<sup>21</sup> Oral history has been criticised for its reliance on the vagaries of fallible human memories (King, 2000). I, however, am interested in how sound evokes and relates to memories (Lane and Parry, 2005), so this did not deter me from borrowing extensively from oral history methods.

with regard to decision-making when my ‘composer self’ (the self which prioritises compositional aesthetics) and my ‘researcher self’ (the self which prioritises social science theory) are in disagreement with each other.

Oral history was developed as a means of giving voice to the minorities that were left out of traditional research (see: Thompson, 2000), or in some cases the illiterate majorities that were left out of traditional written histories of the world. The initial idea of the soundscape emerged as a way of drawing our attention to the everyday sounds we take for granted in our lives and to move from a discourse of noise towards a more positive agenda (see: Westerkamp, 2002). Thus, both these genres provided a platform and a voice for stories and phenomena that were routinely overlooked and not usually told. This similarity is, perhaps, why I am advocating the integration of the two, and why it seems fitting. This also may account for my own predilection for oral history, over and above other ethnographic and social research forms, although urban sociology, a somewhat broader field, is also integral to this study.

Urban sociological theory is described by Butler (1976: 5) as:

...one of the broadest and more eclectic of all sociological fields. It tends to overlap geography with its emphasis on spatial distributions; political science with its emphasis on political behaviour, power and decision making; economics with its perspective on public policy, taxation and public expenditures; and anthropology with respect to the culture of groups.

Simmel (1997: 110) encouraged sociologists to engage in sensory work: ‘every sense delivers contributions characteristic of its individual nature to the construction of sociated existence’. Through our senses we evaluate and socially interact with each other, therefore, Simmel believed, all our senses deserved sociological attention. Everybody experiences the sound produced from their activities and daily lives in different ways, yet sociologists rarely listen to most of these different sounds. Simmel’s call has hardly been followed: urban sociology has directed its attention towards visual channels (Schwarz, 2015), whilst neglecting sonic streams. Smith (2000); Sterne (2003); and Pinch and Bijsterveld (2012), furthermore, comprise a few current urban sociologists and oral historians who have decried the dominance of visual methods. Some very contemporary sensory sociologists (such as Rhys-Taylor, 2017) have begun to theorise urban sociology including sound and smell, but these elements of their work tend to have been presented only in written form. This thesis attempts to explore the largely ignored significance of

sounds as markers of social identity and difference, and the ways that soundscape composition provides the perfect platform for this kind of exploration, especially as a non-written output.

Sound can contribute to the urban sociological study of area; social class and diversity. Schwarz (2015) demonstrated how sonic differences matter socially by studying the low-status Israeli neighbourhood adjacent to a university campus. He explored how perceived differences in the sonic environments were used by students in order to draw symbolic boundaries against local residents and undertook extensive research into which sounds were laden with social meaning. ‘Alongside visual cues such as broken windows, “bad neighborhoods” are characterized by sonic cues, such as shouts from windows’ (Schwarz, 2015: 205). These ‘bad sounds’ in neighbourhoods, can be linked and compared to the visual cues identified in the literatures of urban sociology, and investigated in order to determine which sounds are stigmatised to such a degree that they may stain a neighbourhood.

Mindful listening through soundscapes is a vital element of acoustic ecology. This connects to the ethics of work as sound composers and to the ways that soundscapes explore the relationship we have to our acoustic environment. Westerkamp (2002: 52) asks ‘...How can we convince other ecologists that the pollution of our soundscape is as much of an environmental issue as the pollution of water and air?’ Indeed, soundscape compositions offer an innovative approach to issues such as: the management of shared space; conservation; environmental stress; citizen engagement in the design of environments and attitudes; and values and perceptions relating to environments. Thus, creating a sonic urban sociology discussion. Furthermore, as Westerkamp (ibid.) concludes, future sound works that incorporate urban sociology could be used to extend understanding of human relationships with environments.

From a more activist/political perspective (see: Rennie, 2014), soundscape compositions (especially those including oral history and urban sociology elements) can awaken curiosity and create a desire for deeper knowledge and information about place, culture and society. Soundscapes are a forum for composers to highlight problems in urban society, not only in an acoustic ecology sense, but as a way to deepen our relationship to our surroundings and to comment on aspects of society that are often ignored, such as the lives of minority groups and new immigrants. ‘Rather than disorienting us, such work potentially creates a clearer sense of place and belonging for both composer and listener’ (Westerkamp, 2002: 52).

Globalisation and the economic success of cities attract both capital and labour migration. Bounds (2004: 334) claims: ‘In global cities the casualties of global conflicts are drawn by opportunity like moths to a flame. For the majority the city, as it has for 1000 years, offers citizenship, sanctuary, and a future’. Marginal groups, however, lack the power to resist. In a city divided by gender, class, age, mobility and ethnicity people seek out places that enhance their ontological security – places where they can develop social networks of support and relations of trust. The aggregation of spaces familiar to each of us is our city. Everyone has their own city. It is the city that relates to our self and corresponds to our habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) in urban society. As Orshansky (cited in Butler, 1976: 366) has pointed out: ‘the poor have been counted many times. It remains now to count the ways by which to help them gain a new identity’.

Since the 2000s, sound composers have been able to use digital technology to map their field recordings. These online digital sound maps<sup>22</sup> can be used to organise recordings geographically. They often allow multiple users to upload their own recordings and consequentially these maps are full of thousands of sound clips. ‘...geospatially locating recordings and sonic cartography - or mapping sounds to demarcate sonic space-time relations - might further our capacity for listening critically to place’ (Lyonblum, 2017: 138). A good example of such a sound map is the London Sound Survey (Rawes, 2019), which offers sound recordings and comprises a series of maps of London, each map illustrating the city in a different manner. Multiple resources of this nature could, perhaps, be used to chart sound sociology. The sounds of gentrification, over time in particular areas, for example, could form a chart indicative of sonic/social change. Since the development of sound mapping, sound composers have begun to use sound maps for their own artistic projects. Cardiff’s soundwalk compositions, which have developed since the early 1990s, are a good example of such work.<sup>23</sup> Cardiff’s soundwalks always interrelate with a particular path or route, bringing it alive for listeners.

During my own master’s degree, I completed a soundscape project exploring the urban sociology of new residents in Stratford. Whilst recording in the Olympic park, I was approached by an elderly lady. “Hullo, what you up to then?” She asked, staring at my microphone. I told her about my project and without further ado, she produced a twenty-

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<sup>22</sup> Online sound maps are discussed in more depth in Appendix K: *An Alternative Epilogue*.

<sup>23</sup> These include works such as *Her Long Black Hair* (2004), *A Large Slow River* (2000) and *The Missing Voice* (1999). Cardiff’s (See: Schaub, 2005) *The Walk Book* is a guided travel book accompanied by a CD, which combines soundwalks and sound maps.

minute monologue about the changes in the area since she was born, saying: “The Olympics brought only noise to this place. The building works were noise, the games were noise.... The only thing it brought was noise”. This chance meeting, more than anything I had read, confirmed my thinking about the deep connections between sound and urban sociology. This encounter exemplifies the kind of ‘thinking in the act’ articulated by choreographers/process philosophers, Manning and Massumi (2014).

As Thompson (in Sterne, 2012: 125) says: ‘Most sounds of the past are gone for good, they have nonetheless left behind a rich record of their existence in the artefacts, the people, and the cultures that once brought them forth’. Nowadays we have the technology to record whenever and wherever we like. I would suggest that it is our duty to record everyday life and our perceptions of it. This process gives us a chance to understand our own past, and as Smith (2004: xxi) says: ‘To begin to contextualise the past within the larger rubric of all the senses and thus free mainstream historical writing from the powerful but blinding focus on vision alone’. Listening provides a pathway towards a new aesthetic of social and historical inquiry by inspiring us to be receptive, especially if the sounds are fresh to us, as Truax (2008: 103) states: ‘...one can hope there is some analogy between what we may call listening from inside and listening from outside’.

As this thesis will demonstrate, the senses, and in particular *sound*, inform many decisions of sociological significance. As Rhys-Taylor (2017:1) comments:

Much of the work of the sense... happens at a relatively microscopic, interpersonal level, invisible at the scale of the whole city. So microscopic, in fact, that such experiences are often felt to be of barely any sociological significance for the individual let alone the broad mass of cities or societies. Yet...when aggregated, these experiences, and the sensibilities they are part of, often have significant consequences for the city and society of which they are part.

Throughout this thesis I will argue that to understand the social relations between everyday life, identity and environment, scholars need to develop interdisciplinary methodological research tools that are receptive to the sonic textures of modern society. Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions will be explored and advocated as an appropriate means of achieving this end. My compositions demonstrate these ways of inquiring into human relations with, and between, homes and environments. I will show how place and identity merge and how our self becomes entangled with place and space (see: Antonsich, 2010).

Stoller argued for the importance of all the senses in ethnographic practice. In *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997), he makes the case against the idea of the body as a text to be read. Instead, Stoller suggests the ways in which meaning is embodied, and therefore more complex than descriptions or analyses in journal articles can convey. Contemporary ethnographers have begun to observe the multisensory nature of the ethnographic process (Pink, 2004; Atkinson et al., 2007). This interdisciplinary ethnography has emphasised explorations of the senses in relation to different aspects of social and cultural experience across the social sciences and humanities. Sensory ethnography responds to new directions in interdisciplinary scholarship. Sensory approaches to ethnography remain marginal, however, despite Feld's (2012) pre-eminence as a pioneer of the cultural study of sound.

In *Sound and Sentiment*, Feld (2012: 62) discussed in depth how audition could be used as a skill '...adaptation to life in a forest environment develops acute spatial skills for audition, and the Kaluli use these to advantage over vision'. Later he goes even further calling sound a source of knowledge: 'The potential of acoustic knowing, of sounding as a condition of and for knowing, of sonic presence and awareness as potent shaping forces in how people make sense of experiences' (in: Feld & Basso, 1996: 97). I initially saw soundscape as a creative skill that I was learning in order to produce more interesting compositions, but I gradually came to see soundscapes as source of knowledge and soundscape composition as a means of imparting knowledge to listeners. I began to consider my work as a means of creating sound knowledge that I could impart. As Lyonblum (2017: 29) says: '...no matter how a recording is made and by whom, recordings are cultural documents that contribute to forms of knowledge production and may drastically affect those people and places that have been recorded'.

The compositional process of these projects began by collecting recordings in a variety of settings. I have conducted recordings at cultural and social events. I recorded buskers and music concerts. In creating these recordings, I affect and am affected by my sonic environment, including the cultural context of the sounds. Erlmann (2004) wrote framework modes of ethnographic listening and later wrote about how the ears of the microphone allow us to listen through the ears of another, exposing us to forms of undiscovered knowledge (Erlmann, 2010). This was particularly pertinent, since I was recording most of my soundscapes with binaural microphones, which transformed the compositional structures later on in this thesis (see: chapter four).

Sound recording has steadily become a practice used routinely by academics and artists, since the inception of the twenty-first century, in what Sterne (2003) has called the ‘auditory turn’. Sonic ethnography is just one of the practices that has blossomed since this turn. Sonic ethnography aims to capture unique acoustics that, have semantic and semiotic meanings and must be made in a location that represents a socio-cultural performance specific to a group, community or culture (Lyonblum, 2017). Compositional techniques are used to condense the community and historical narratives that have been collected. This is similar to the process of field notes becoming a journal article (Emerson, 2011). Bearing in mind that ‘ethnographic truths are always partial’ (Dunbar-Hester 2012: 153), the editing of these recordings, in partnership with the communities they are about, has a *different* but no less significant impact than that of written ethnographic materials. Seeger (2002: 6), an ethnomusicologist, says:

Recordings are not simply commodities... They acquire some of their meanings through the social contexts in which they are played. Recordings can also be pathways from the past to the future... Recording has become a standard part of cultural transmission in many places.

Seeger also identifies recordings as a way of promoting awareness, conceiving that the circulation of recordings from particular regions helps to illuminate cultural diversity (1986).

Panopoulos (2003) used ethnographic analysis to discuss the cultural meanings and symbolism of animal bells in a village on the Island of Naxos. He wrote about the cultural construction of sound in the mountain village: ‘Bell’s sounds constitute a powerful symbol in the process of creating and solidifying moral order and social community identities; they resonate with local identity and history’ (2003: 17). He explored the community’s social relations using the bell as an aural, cultural artefact to help unravel local meanings (2003: 3). In conclusion, he called for more ethnographic exploration of sound, as he believed it offered rich insights. I have found, in past projects, that sound was a very important element in connecting to community identity. I look forward to exploring these issues in more depth in this thesis, which concerns people moving into new sonic environments.

Drever (2002) argued that soundscape composition is the convergence of ethnography and acousmatic music. My thesis wants to further explore these convergences and inquire into the socialisation of the sonic environments in my practical projects. Chattopadhyay (2012: 226) writes, that a soundscape is ‘a juxtaposition of field-based ethnography and artistic practice incorporating environmental sound as basic ingredients’. My thesis, however, wants to go further, and explore the methodological process that I have entered. As a composer, I do not intend that the creative compositional manipulation is the end of this process. I intend to use it as a means of inquiry into, and understanding of communities and cultures in a similar way to sonic ethnography.

In addition to ethnography, this dissertation draws from multiple streams of inquiry. I predict that some key disciplines will take more of an active role than others. I think this will be due to the nature of the projects themselves: projects including interviews will give prominence to oral history methods; projects taking place in densely urban areas, will privilege urban sociology-inspired soundwalks. Oral history will take a prominent role because of the preponderance of interviews. In other words, in methodological terms, this thesis is a pragmatic bricolage of relevant methods, borrowed where necessary (Yardley, 2008). I envisage that the ideas and practices from urban sociology will be crucial elements in the London-based project, and foresee that in Jerusalem, full of religious and cultural sounds, the ideas and practices of ethnography will take over from urban sociology. All streams of inquiry will be present in both projects, elements will form greater or smaller threads on the rope that holds the projects together. Part of the value of interdisciplinary work is surely the entwining of elements from different disciplines around shared, central, foundational tenets. Some threads will be thicker than others.

The rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) thread underlying and interconnecting all the multidisciplinary elements of this thesis is that it is being written/composed in the early twenty-first century in what has become known as a post-human era (Braidotti, 2013). Thus, the ideas lurking beneath the surface, integrating all the concepts and practices from oral history, soundscape composition, migration studies, ethnography and urban sociology into an innovative sonic arts-based social inquiry, are the ideas emanating from the contemporary academy in an era when human beings have begun to question the anthropocentric concepts of human domination (see: Barad, 2003; Braidotti, 2013; Braidotti and Hlavajova, 2018). Thus, this thesis privileges inquiry practices that,

perhaps, could only have emerged in an era of human history when portable sound recording was available to researchers and when the spoken sounds made by human beings are not over-privileged in relation to the environmental and non-human sounds that surround them. Thus, human narratives from oral history interviews are included in the soundscapes that comprise this thesis, but are included amongst the many other sounds and silences that surround them.

Soundscapes are connected to acoustic ecology (Westerkamp, 2002), which historically privileges 'natural' sounds over those that are 'man-made' (Schafer, 1994; Truax, 2008). However, Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa and Porcello (2010) made convincing arguments for an expanded definition of soundscapes that included human voices when defending sounded anthropology.<sup>24</sup> Human stories are presented and theorised as sonically and materially entangled within a world where other agencies, networks and energies exist. Thus, oral histories become entangled within soundscapes, as part of an inquiry that borrows from a living, moving, post-human ethnography (see: Hodder, 2012) that brings with it the study of movement, culture, geographical urban landscape and twenty-first century urban growth: 'After listening to people talk, the sounds that surrounded and contextualized their talk, and the tone and tenor of conversations, my written transcriptions felt somehow empty' (Gershon, 2018: 128).

### **Why Diaspora / Migration Studies?**

Diaspora is one of the most contested issues of identity (Knott et al., 2010). As Baumann (cited in Knott et al., 2010: 45) said: 'Since there is no nation without a diaspora... we are all diasporics now'. In contemporary scholarship the term diaspora refers to many national, cultural and religious groups. The origins of the term diaspora are solely in identifying the Jewish experience outside ancient Palestine, wherein Jews attempted to live their lives according to their cultural and religious, oral and written halachos (laws) despite strong assimilative pressures from societies (Rozen, 2008). The Greek noun 'diaspora' originally derives from the meaning to scatter or to disperse. It therefore expresses a sense of the movement of people and their dispersal from a beginning place into new territories:

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<sup>24</sup> Feld, one of the forerunners of sound anthropology and ethnography, coined the term 'acoustemology' (in: Feld & Basso, 1996) as a way to describe a sonic way of knowing and being in the world.

A crucial aspect of diaspora identity is the memory of that first home: It may have been left recently or generations ago, it may not exist any more or be the destination of regular ‘home trips’; it may be a locus of nostalgia and nightmares; it may feel welcoming or strange upon return visits or it may never have been that homey in the first place. (Stock, 2010: 24)

That first home is re-imagined and remembered in the present through a diasporic narrative, for example, during *Pesach* (Passover), when Jews are called to remember their ancestors who were slaves in Egypt: only by remembering their ancestors would these persecuted people be able to find a future.

Each compositional project in this thesis is a sonic exploration of some form of diasporic identity: from contemporary refugees narrating their journeys to discussions of belonging and the meaning of ‘home’ (see: Clandinin, 2019). In specifically using the exemplar of diaspora identity I consider the political effectiveness and aesthetic merits of soundscape compositions as arts-informed encounters in a post-human era, that include oral history, ethnography and urban sociological material. The study of diaspora is particularly related to space:

The intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes... diaspora space as a conceptual category is inhabited not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. (Brah, 1996: 181)

Immigrant/refugee journeys, old and new, are continuously creating new diaspora, new spaces and new soundscapes. Individually and collectively, these projects raise important questions about how people imagine themselves and what it means to be connected to a diaspora community.

These complex explorations have been selected in order to demonstrate the efficacy of soundscape composition and also partly because migration studies is uniquely situated as ‘a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes’ (Brah, 1996: 181). Diaspora/migration studies and soundscape composition share an emphasis on human environmental experience. Migration exists as a somewhat rhizomatic (see: Amorim and Ryan, 2005) process, thus embracing a methodological stance that emulates this journey. As noted above, soundscapes were first recorded in order to study the effect of pollution on the environment. Diaspora and migration studies also have a focus on space and place.

As soundscapes are a memory of a sonic past, so too does diaspora identity use memories to understand and interpret past experiences, which in turn helps people find bearings in the present and look towards the future. ‘The act of remembering is always contextual, a continuous process of recalling, interpreting and reconstructing the past...’ (Stock, 2010: 24). Multiple listeners to my composition will repeatedly re-renew and filter these narratives and dialogues through their own histories and socio-political identities. This process in itself mimics diasporic community narratives, which retell and re-construct memories of a remembered home (see: Stock, 2010).

Sound is a sense that links human beings to certain times, places and spaces. As Labelle (2006: 19) writes:

The dynamic of sound, as ephemeral and potent, finds radical parallel in the dynamic of memory, as fluid, complex, and deeply ingrained, for both seem to uncover difficult and engaging relations to the archive, the collectibles, and the concrete.

Bohlman (cited in Frith, 1996: 109) comments in his study of music by German-speaking Jews: ‘Suppose the group is really the product of its musical activities and the cultural values bound to them?’ The effectiveness of soundscape composition to creatively evoke environments from any recorded material, enables the creation of layers of history in dialogue with one another, as well as with contexts and environments. This layering, again, impersonates the telling and retelling of narratives in diasporic community memory. Throughout my study the interviewee’s memories in the composition are intended as triggers for listener’s memories. This evokes sonic artist Lane’s (2015) work, conceptualising ‘group memory’ as ‘collective memory’ through sound.

To quote Ritchie (2011: 8): ‘...history should include both the facts about events and occurrences as well as the personal experiences of individuals who lived through these events, who reacted to them, and whose attitudes helped shape their pace and direction’. The initial idea of the soundscape, developed by the World Soundscape Project (Schafer, 1994), appeared as a way of drawing our attention to the everyday sounds we take for granted in our lives. Thus, both these genres provide a platform and a voice for stories that are normally overlooked and are not usually told. The biggest humanitarian crisis of our time involves Syrian refugees (UNFPA, 2017). The first 4,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Britain in 2016 (Goodwill et al., 2017). These people are creating new diaspora; communities and soundscapes through the largest surge of migration in Europe since

World War Two (UNHCR, 2015). Multiple comparisons between Jewish and Syrian refugees have been made: the UN formally warned that the current media/political rhetoric, such as ‘swarms of refugees’, echoes that of the 1938 pre-Holocaust summit (Jones, 2015). Soundscapes can help highlight these untold stories. Sound can, perhaps, create more empathy and bypass some of ‘seeing’s judgement’ (Berendt, 1985). ‘We achieved harmony. If we had been able to see, we would have been much less considerate’ commented Berendt (1985: 181) as he discussed how he experienced three days of wearing a blindfold within a group:

It was marvellous to experience how considerately and carefully we treated one another. We listened intensively for one another. We really experienced... How much more lovingly we treat one another when we do not precipitately judge by way of visual appraisal. (Ibid.)

He noted that during the experiment he constantly encountered social moments which he never experienced when he selected by appearance and judged accordingly. He called this ‘narrative empathy’. If vision is the sense in which we are more predisposed to pass judgement than any other, can soundscapes be used as a platform to enable narrative empathy? The saying goes ‘walking in another man’s shoes’, but perhaps narrative empathy affords us the experience of listening through another person’s ears? I expand on the concept of narrative empathy at greater length in chapter four.

The sound narratives in my compositions represent personal experiences. ‘Unlike depersonalised narrative, (auto)ethnography asks its readers to feel the truth of their stories and to become co-participants, engaging the storyline morally; emotionally; aesthetically and intellectually’ (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 745). Sound narratives offer a human portrait. In the case of my projects, these human portraits depict immigrants. I intend listeners to experience the composition like a journey that mirrors immigrants’ journeys. When they reach the journey’s end, it is my intention, as a composer, that they will be left with unanswered questions and curiosity. Much of my compositional output for the soundscapes will focus on developing a sonic language that seeks to integrate ethnographic sound recordings and oral interviews. This work reflects the meaning of diaspora ‘homes’ and extends this to include both a remembered ‘original’ home as well as the current home environment.

This movement between various places (and sonic environments) and the experience of belonging both here and there, can open up new avenues to discuss and reflect on nation, ethnicity or origin (Bauman, 1998; Brah, 1996; Hall et al., 1999). This movement can produce fluid, hybrid identities. My two composition projects are *very* different. They both epitomise contemporary diasporic identities and include interesting relationships with space. Indeed, these relationships with geographical space are almost the opposite of each other. Syrian and Yemeni refugees are leaving and fleeing their homes, longing for it to be safe to return. English-speaking Jews making *aliyah* (moving to Israel), however, are actively wanting to move or ‘return’.<sup>25</sup> In the latter case, migration is seen as a positive endeavour, with no desire to return to the UK, USA or Canada.<sup>26</sup> Both of these projects show the movement of people. The Syrian and Yemeni refugees are creating new diaspora identities, whereas the English-speaking Jews moving to Israel are ‘returning home’ and voiding their diaspora identity.

Another distinction between these two studies is that, in contrast to Syrian and Yemeni refugees who are first generation diaspora, Jews moving to Israel come from many generations of diasporic identity. Many generations of Anglo Jews, have not personally experienced migration. Throughout their lives they have constructed their own diasporic identity, out of community narratives, their ‘migration routes and migration roots’ (Kuah-Pearce and Davidson, 2008: 2). Though many Anglo Jews have connections to vanished European communities, the places their grandparents left behind are far from forgotten (Levitt and Waters, 2002: 2). Moving to Israel they are returning beyond that journey to a wider Jewish narrative of statelessness and belonging. The projects present an interesting comparison: between first generation refugees starting a diaspora journey; and another group exploring the end of a diaspora journey in becoming first generation Israelis.

A survivor’s *Haggadah* (the book which traverses the *Seder*, the order of the Passover meal), written by a Holocaust survivor in Germany in 1945/6 (Touster, 2000) uses the language of the traditional exodus story to talk about the Holocaust and the revival of

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<sup>25</sup> At the time of my project, some Jews were moving to Israel for safety reasons due to higher levels of antisemitism in certain countries, however, this referred primarily to France, Russia and the Ukraine, which were not part of my project (see: WZO, 2015). For some Anglo Jews, and increasingly since the end of my project, antisemitism may also be a contributing reason for moving (Boffey, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> However, many immigrants to Israel do return back to their country of origin, which is discussed in chapter five.

Jewish life in displaced persons camps after the Second World War. One of the most moving parts of the *Haggadah* comes from one of Touster's (2000: 39) commentaries. He notes that a survivor who attended a Munich *Seder* recalled that when it came time to ask the 'four questions', traditionally asked by the youngest participant at the table, the *Seder* participants began to weep because there were no children present. We can, therefore, see that diasporic identity can include hurt and trauma from a particular environment/place. Benjamin, a stateless Jew escaping Nazi Germany, declared that 'remembering the catastrophes, defeats and victims of the past is necessary in order to struggle against oppression' (Yerushalmi, 2005: 48).

There are sonic implications for these 'catastrophes'. Yiddish was the major language spoken by European *Ashkenazi* Jews: Yiddish poetry, music and theatre was one of the peaks of Jewish cultural creativity during the last thousand years. As Harshav (1990: Xiii) comments:

...Yiddish preserved the quintessence of the memories and perceptions of a people aware of its history, its "chosen" extra-historical status and its diaspora predicament; a people remembering its Hebrew heritage and sensitive to the moods and moves of its dominant neighbours.

The success, however, of modern Jewish life developed by Yiddishism in Eastern Europe came to an early end via the Holocaust, together with the lives of two thirds of its population. Out of the six million Jewish victims, five million spoke Yiddish as their native tongue (Birnbaum, 1984: 3). Even though Yiddish is still very much alive, since Yiddish speaking *Chasidic*<sup>27</sup> Jews have a high birth rate: 'The future millions of Yiddish speakers, and the Yiddish literature of a hundred and two hundred years hence, will come from the rapidly expanding Chasidic communities around the world...' (Katz, 2004: 396). The trauma of the Holocaust sonically changed Yiddish-speaking culture forever, most especially for the secular Yiddish community, which has never recovered.

All diasporic identities, ancient and modern, whether formed by exile or the search for employment; whether dispersed through many locations or after settling in one place, have their distinctive sounds informed by actual journeys past and present. These identities are informed by geography/nature of location and by the social, cultural,

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<sup>27</sup> An Orthodox branch of Judaism born in 18<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Europe characterised by its emphasis on mysticism, strictness and joy.

linguistic and religious lives of their members. When the concept of home refers to multiple places and spaces in past, present and future, how can we explore that complex relationship? If the idea of home is constantly shifting and changing, can the concept of belonging be directed towards multiple, remembered or imagined, places? (Stock, 2010: 34).

Recordings of environments and of speech exploring these journeys can be structured into composition pieces to produce creative interpretations of our pasts in dialogue with multiple presents. Layers of environmental sound integrated with spoken word can extend our understanding and experience of these complex multi-layered identities. As Chasalow (2006: 65) suggests: ‘Once one steps out of the realm of archivist and into the creative role of composer, the distortion of meaning for expressive purposes becomes, not only appropriate, but essential’.

The following pages are filled with the difficulties and tensions of the accounts of this work as a written thesis, and the particular complexities of creative practice *as* research. I have wrestled throughout with the ironies of a written justification for sonic forms of knowledge that attempt to bypass the shortcomings of writing. I have done so by raising more questions than I have answered and by telling more stories than I have come up with explanations:

Stories go in circles. They don’t go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen. (Tafoya in Wilson, 2008: 6)

## Chapter Two: Sounding out the Project

### Prologue

This is a practice-based thesis and therefore starts in the midst of practice-based decision-making, rather than with foundational ideas and theories or abstract conceptual frameworks. This chapter comprises a detailed exploration of the aesthetic and ethical decision-making that went into the construction of the first London-based project that constitutes this thesis. This chapter involves a layered account (Rambo-Ronai, 1995) of the compositional practice that mirrored the research process: each layer, each minute, each nuanced decision taken made a difference to the methodological practices established.

I have included here all the decisions and turns that were knowingly taken and some tacit ‘composer’ decisions and actions that came to light on further reflection. Each discipline or field has its taken for granted assumptions and it is only by shedding the light of social research methodologies on soundscape composition and vice-versa that I have been able to make the familiar (my compositional practice) unfamiliar, to paraphrase Geertz (1973: 3-33).

At times what follows reads like a list of blindingly obvious sonic actions and decisions to soundscape composers, but it is only in setting it down here and subjecting this practice to a degree of reflective scrutiny that it can be shown as a parallel methodological process, albeit, like a/r/tography, a rhizomatic process, rooting its way underneath conversational narratives with environmental sounds and then rupturing textual surfaces. It is through these sonic ruptures and aesthetic, artistic means that ‘the distinctions between researcher and researched become complicated, responsive, and undone’ (La Jevic and Springgay, 2008: 67). Thus, the sounds made by the composer become part of the composition, and the borders between listener; participant and reflective researcher become blurred and temporary.

## Introduction

Amira<sup>28</sup> approaches the busy front of the building where we have arranged to meet. This is the place in which she has chosen to share her story with me about claiming asylum. She is confident as she greets me and we make our way through the crowds of people and get comfortable in our quiet interview space. We began our reflection about the country she has physically, but not mentally, left behind. Sometimes, when giving me a long answer to a question, she stares out of the window as she speaks and I imagine her envisaging home in Syria. She was happy to share her story and she was glad that a composition would create a public presentation of it, enabling an impact on a wider audience. Another participant, Reema, originally from Yemen, would also take part in this first project, which followed the migration narratives of middle eastern refugees in their move to the urban life of London after claiming asylum.<sup>29</sup> My interviews with Amira and Reema shaped my understanding of interviewing, interviewer/interviewee relationships and working with sensitive stories in relation to sound composition, all of which I will discuss in this chapter.

The interviewees had both gone through the arduous process of developing an ‘official’ refugee narrative to remain in the country. They were very interested in a creatively presented account where they could be more themselves. After I had described the platform of soundscape compositions, they individually agreed that it sounded like an ideal means to explore the significance of identity; place and memory in their lives, all of which had been dramatically impacted by physical displacement. As a researcher working with difficult stories, it was especially important to understand each participant’s motivations for being involved in the project: they both wanted their experience to be part of an historical record.

In the words of De Vaus (1993: 54) ‘do not take the risk: pilot test first’. This project was always intended as the precursor to my main investigation. The term *pilot project* is used in two ways in social science. It can portray ‘small scale version[s]... done in preparation for the major study’ (Polit et al., 2001: 467). It can also be used for the ‘trying out’ of a

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<sup>28</sup> This thesis contains interviews with refugees who are currently seeking asylum in the UK. Confidentiality is paramount whilst they are still waiting to be granted permanent residence. For this reason, their names have been changed throughout this thesis.

<sup>29</sup> Participants in this study were acquired through friendship networks and my involvement with refugee support work.

specific research instrument (Baker, 1994: 182-3). My first project includes both: firstly, it is a much smaller project (in length, number of interviews, composition) than the final project and secondly, although I have undertaken interdisciplinary soundscape projects before, it was helpful to complete a project with my thesis themes and questions in mind. I was also experimenting with integrating soundscape practices with methodological frameworks from social research.

This first project was a shorter composition, which I made sonically simpler in order to determine where and how I would construct a more compositionally complex second project. This project was easier to manage than the final one, but, nonetheless, inspired the rest of the thesis towards its final form. All of the themes I investigate and dissect in my final project emanated from this first composition. Conducting the first project gave advanced warning about potential practical problems. I could, therefore, prepare in advance for sections of the main project, which I anticipated would prove complicated. Additionally, conducting the first project enabled the re-wording of questions; the fixing of recording equipment issues; the identification of risks and the devising of safety nets for them. On reflection, it was important during the course of undertaking this thesis, to witness the comparisons between two very contextually diverse projects, all of which impacted the composition process. The principal finding from undertaking these two projects was the ability to demonstrate *transferability and flexibility* across migration studies. Perhaps it is such an adaptable practice because as, Haseman (2007: 3) suggests:

...there is evidence enough to recognise that we stand at a pivotal moment in the history and development of research. Practice-led researchers are formulating a third species of research, one that stands in alignment with, but not separate to, the established quantitative and qualitative research traditions.

The documentation for the first project is not as comprehensive as it is for the second. This chapter's task was to raise more questions than to answer them, and to simply tell the compositional story rather than to explain it. This written account of my first project was descriptive of my process, whereas the account of the second project articulates more of the exchange between my tacit knowledge (see: Polanyi, 1958; 1966) as a soundscape composer and my newer role as a social inquirer.

## **Interviewing Refugees**

For Amira and Reema these interviews were the first time they would be sharing their personal stories with a wider public, and as a result, I grappled with complex questions around revising and representing traumatic events. Sheftel et al., (2013: 267) notes: ‘Our interviewees are human beings after all, and we would do well to discuss the complicated nature of our research more often’. When is someone ready to make a personal story public? How would I decide as a composer and interviewer how much of this story to share? Is there a joint message to both of these stories? Who should hear it? This chapter starts to explore the collaborative journey of my interdisciplinary soundscape projects and the rich and deeply textured stories behind them. I begin to address ethical questions surrounding interdisciplinary soundscape composition by excavating oral history theory and soundwalking methodologies.

Oral history is an intimate form of interviewing (also sometimes called personal testimony or life story research), which, for the interviewee, should not feel like an interview but a relaxed conversation. Sedorkin (2011: 18) describes the perfect interview: ‘It’s like falling in love a little bit at an intellectual level. And you know it happens when there is a sudden falling away of barriers, and they decide to trust you with their information’. These interviews spanned a 7-month period, and consequently the contextualising subject matter slightly changed due to external events (refugee legislation in parliament, for example).

My open questions (see: Appendix H) were focused directly on environment, home, sound and identity. I pre-planned some of these questions, and otherwise let the conversation flow naturally. The pre-planned questions had been designed in an attempt that the participants might gain some personal reflection out of their interview, rather than any preconceived ideas about the project. The questions created were not just chosen to facilitate the composition, but rather as part of a more mutual and collaborative exchange. This conversational style encouraged participants to regard the project as an opportunity to gain insights into their own experiences by gaining confidence from exploring their stories in the presence of others:

It is difficult to isolate hardship to any individual psyche; it spills, so to speak, onto the fabric of the diaspora. A child, being at once removed and part of what his or her family has endured, may be in a unique position to make new sense out of what has happened. The passage of silence to voice may be achieved through intergenerational storytelling. (Campano, 2007: 56)

After the Second World War, oral history struggled to find academic legitimacy, as many historians were sceptical about its reliance on memory (see: Abrams, 2010). Those informed by narrative inquiry methods argue that both memories of, and meanings given to the same events, change over time according to personal, cultural and social discourse (Josselson & Lieblich, 1999). They also postulate that the stories we tell about ourselves and others actually construct the lives we live (Andrews, 2014: 7-9). This battle that oral history had to become 'genuine' research reminds me of the current battle practice-based research (in which interdisciplinary soundscape composition resides) is currently fighting. As a research practice, oral history is currently popular in a wide range of disciplines including ethnography, anthropology, sociology and psychology as well as educational and community projects: 'Oral history has become a crossover methodology, an octopus with tentacles reaching into a wide range of disciplinary, practice led and community enterprises' (Abrams, 2010: 2). It, therefore, seemed fitting to integrate oral history with a practice-based research approach.

Oral history research has developed particular ethical considerations. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum oral history interview guidelines (USHMM, 2007: Viii) state on interviewer/interviewee relations: '... we share an intimacy with the interviewee. [But] it is important to balance our ability to listen empathetically with our ability to listen carefully and critically'. With questions around identity:

If you are trying to just get your questions answered, you may not be hearing what someone is saying. And sometimes a person can go off on a tangent that is more interesting than the direction you were steering them in. (Grobel, 2004: 144)

This demonstrates how quickly we become deeply invested in our projects and the complicated boundary between researcher professionalism and empathic listening that is essential to good oral history practice. Often the most interesting and relevant stories that were shared during the interviews were not answers to my specific questions, but part of other conversations.

During the interviews, an opportunity was provided for the interviewees to tell their stories to an outsider. In doing so I had to be sensitive to the risks involved.<sup>30</sup> I explained that sharing personal stories might mean revisiting past events and as a result, could trigger difficult emotions. I had previously been trained in trauma awareness and had undergone sensitive interviewing training. A counsellor was on standby just in case support was needed. Before the interview, it was essential for participants to consider any potential privacy or security risks incurred by going public with their stories. I made it clear to the interviewees that it was important to consider any personal details which might make them feel vulnerable at a later date, especially those that could compromise their safety or asylum application. This is especially important, I noted, for soundscape composers to remember, since final compositions might be more accessible online, and/or contain recognisable voices, thus putting the interviewees at greater risk. A soundscape composition is an artwork/music, but in this case is not fiction but is representing real people in the real world.

Typically, ‘refugee stories’ are tales of tragedy and victimisation (see: Judge, 2010). I wanted to ensure that audiences would have access to more rounded versions and therefore asked diverse questions about developments and life stages that also gave voice to joys, talents, strengths and achievements. One interviewee became upset after an interview and wanted to ensure that the written thesis would not be made public until after her asylum process had finished.<sup>31</sup> This incident illustrated the ways in which sharing a vulnerable story can jolt interviewees into experiences of both being in and out of control. This can happen at any stage of the project.

Oral history collection is a key method for understanding not only cultures but also individuals through their speech and sound narratives. As Bull and Back (2003: 5) state:

...by listening we may be able to perceive the relationship between subject and object, inside and outside, and the public and private altogether differently. In its engulfing multi-directionality sound blurs the above distinctions and enables us to re-think our relationship to them.

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<sup>30</sup> The project requirements were approved by my university’s ethics committee. They approved of both of these compositional projects discussed in this thesis.

<sup>31</sup> I initially applied for a University of London thesis embargo for 36 months to ensure this. I will review this decision after the completion of this thesis, as it will be several years after the project was completed.

I realised that I would not be able to translate the full force of the interviewee's stories into written form: How could I communicate those sonic retellings of the experiences of violence, longing, and feeling homeless? What about the other information given during our conversations like the changing of tone and volume in the voice; the sharpness of emotion; the careful use of certain words; the avoidance of others; the use of dark humour when some awful experiences were cited. These were all experiences and features of our exchanges that it would have been impossible to convey using only written forms. This is not a claim for greater truth emerging from oral history interviews, but rather for a closer sense of how these stories were conveyed.

If we construct ourselves within a historical context, perhaps people's narratives can reveal more about the implications and consequences of this process. As Rusen (in Straub 2005: 53) comments: 'History is here conceived quite simply as interpreted time... What is important is the past that is somehow still present or can still be made present'. These narratives are historical acts that accomplish something unique. Voices, compared to written accounts, also include the specific way something was said: violently, softly or dully, for example. As Butler (in Labelle 2010: 113) said: 'A statement may be made that, on the basis of a grammatical analysis alone, appears to be no threat. But the threat emerges precisely through the act that the body performs in the speaking act'.

Oral history, apart from problems with the use of transcripts, seemed an effective method of maintaining the integrity of the original spoken sources. All interviews are subjective, both in conversational structure and in the mind and manner of the listener (akin to soundscapes). Recordings, however, if un-edited, will remain unchanged, and people will not find themselves mis-quoted, as can happen when words are written down. The subjective element in aural formats rests with the listeners, as Ritchie (2011: 62) points out: 'One of the gifts we get when we work in cross-cultural settings is that things may seem so different that they force us to question what is "between the lines" and to try to determine what people really mean'. Though I was committed to keeping the interviews as connected to their original sonic meaning as possible, I knew that this had ethical implications for the compositional process. I would have to think very carefully about how I edited the recordings, as this process could alter the meanings of things said. I was very aware, in this process, or rather, in my later reflections on this process, of how much translation in this way, can be regarded as a process of cultural negotiation (Eco, 2003: 1-65).

Thus, the oral history interview is not merely a means of obtaining information, but also an encounter with the implications, interpretations and significance of that information. As with soundscape composition, there are different stages to the documentation of oral history: the recording process and the construction of narratives. Both these methods, soundscapes and oral histories, comprise an act of recording and the ‘constructed’ or ‘composed’ record that is produced:

But in the process of eliciting and analyzing the material, one is confronted by the oral history interview as an event of communication which demands that we find ways of comprehending not just what is said, but also how it is said, why it is said and what it means. (Abrams, 2010: 1)

These similarities of different stages in oral history and soundscape compositions, led to my comparative reflections on both practices, inspiring and developing new frameworks, exploring new, combined ways of researching, finding new forms of knowledge. For instance, when approaching the next stage of the project, soundwalking, I kept the oral history ethics from the interviews in mind. Each cyclical stage and aspect of this thesis influenced, and became integrated, with the others.

### **Soundwalking**

For this first project I decided to record the environmental soundscape using soundwalking, as Westerkamp (1974: 18-19) posits:

A soundwalk is any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment... Soundwalks can take place in the mall, at the doctor’s office, down a neighbourhood street or at the bus stop... For the sake of intensity it may be wise to limit the walk initially to a small area... In each case it depends on how long it takes to remove the initial hearing barriers, how deep the involvement is and how much fascination can be found in such an exploration.

Walking account practices have been used for orientation techniques and creating local narratives for centuries (see: Drever, 2009; 2013). Aboriginal tribes use oral walking narratives to direct themselves through different paths both physically and spiritually, passing them on through song (Chatwin, 1987: 2). Members of the World Soundscape Project first used the term soundwalking in the 1970s (Schafer, 1978). It is a creative research practice that involves listening and often recording, while walking through a space. Similarly to soundscapes, it is concerned with the relationship between the walkers

and their surrounding sonic environment (see: Westerkamp, 2002; Norman, 2012; Martin, 2018).

The invention of sound recording technologies at the end of the nineteenth century (see: Eisenberg, 2005) made it possible to make audio recordings during walks. Before the portable technology of the 1970s, however, the act of recording a soundwalk was quite difficult for composers and there was no clear practice of soundwalking (see: McCartney, 2014). Before the 1970s, similar practitioners came from fields such as audio documentary, including, Schwartz, a sound archivist who documented the sounds of New York<sup>32</sup> in 1955. Others came from film, such as Ruttman, who had an interest in exploring city life. In 1930, Ruttman used a film camera to make urban environment field recordings for his piece *Weekend*.<sup>33</sup>

More than half of the world's population now lives in a city, and this number keeps on rising (UN, 2018). Surely most walks taken by the world's population are urban walks? Most of the movement across the world is on foot: 'In cities today, despite modern digital technology, us urban residents still walk to see each other' (Bates and Rhys-Taylor, 2017). As anyone who has lived in a city knows, the act of moving through cities is not always easy (especially if you are carrying a microphone or two). London is a very stimulating city to record. In *The Spirit of Cities*, Bell and de-Shalit (2011: 6) discuss the importance of city ethos: '...an ethos contributes to the diversity that makes human social life so valuable and interesting... and sometimes cities can accomplish morally desirable aims more difficult to achieve at the level of the state'.

I recorded the areas and journeys my interviewees took on a regular basis.<sup>34</sup> By sonically recording their London environments I hoped I could highlight the specific challenges humans face when navigating new cities for the first time. As Tilley (2015: 25) writes, 'The biography of a person, or a group, can be found in the sum of the paths that are walked... Changes in the character of these paths are part and parcel of the transformation of social relations'. By recording the social/local areas of the interviewees, I staged an

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<sup>32</sup> Entitled, *Nueva York*, the audio-documentary explored Puerto Rican immigrants to New York City in the 1950s.

<sup>33</sup> *Weekend* was a 12 minute German radio programme, described as a 'sound montage'.

<sup>34</sup> My set up consisted of: zoom stereo field recorder, zoom shotgun microphone, and soundman binaural microphones.

audio enactment of walking in their footsteps, immersing the audience in the lived realities of their journeys. The routes I created for these soundwalks were based on ideas of cultural mapping, borrowed from urban sociology. ‘We all construct such images of our own turf, or grasp these perceptions of particular areas, through expressions, which are often stigmatizing, such as “bed-sit land” or “nappy valley”’ (Bounds, 2004: 120).

Finnegan (1998) and Mishler (2004) argue that we all understand our world and our lives through stories. Indeed, from this perspective, social theory is itself a story (see: Clegg, 1993). Through the accumulation of local tales we are able to comprehend the formation and meanings of places. These theories have been deployed in urban planning through the process of cultural mapping, community documentation of local cultural resources, such as galleries, landmarks, and industries, offering memories, and describing local attitudes (see: Powell, 2010). Powell (ibid.: 540) describes the ‘map as research method’: ‘...maps cross disciplinary boundaries of art, creative writing, geography and cartography as they link with larger social, cultural, and political issues’. Urban sociology has prominent methodological connections with soundwalking. In Canada, the *Journées Sonores: Canal de Lachine* project used soundwalks followed by reflective discussions, and the creation of an interactive installation, as a way to study the changing sonic environment in urban areas over time, inquiring into a disused industrial canal that was re-opened for use (McCartney, 2005; 2007).

I realised that, as the composer, a soundwalk begins as soon as I press record. From the beginning I am listening, experiencing and moving through the space; recording pedestrian encounters and my journey across pavements and footpaths, opening up to a range of sonic possibilities (ethnographers seem often to privilege, or only to take human interactions into account (see: Pink, 2009: 44-61)). Soundwalks facilitate an ethnographic ‘being there’ (Geertz, 1973), through which we can listen to, and record, our city streets. Sound recording also leads researchers to new places, offering different perspectives and asking different questions by interrogating sonic memories, and bringing them to life. Instead of thinking about migration studies from the vantage point of the academy, going out for a soundwalk is an active means of engaging with the social world and allowing it to ask the questions. Wright Mills (1959: 5) defined the sociological imagination as ‘the awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the wider society’. I viewed these soundwalks as the listening exercise of sonic sociological imagination.

Different decisions surrounding the soundwalk affect its outcomes: the location (urban or rural); technique (binaural or shotgun mic); content (individual or in a group) and the processing (field recording or edited). The intention of the composer greatly influences this in terms of ecology; politics; sound aesthetics, or a combination thereof. The constant, however, is that the environmental sound is the main focus on the walks. When recording a soundwalk, I often considered my place (cultural/political/social) in that particular sonic context, therefore these soundwalks made me start to think about myself, in terms of power, gender and race, as the composer/researcher.<sup>35</sup> I was experiencing these environments differently to my interviewees. I had begun to worry about my study becoming the classic ‘...dominance of European-American, male and heterosexist perspectives in the social sciences’ (LeCompte, 2002: 285). I touch on these issues and imbalances again (see: Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012) in the conclusion to this chapter. These considerations proved helpful when making decisions surrounding and reflecting on both projects.

Augoyard and Torgue (2006) developed an approach that they describe as ‘qualified listening in motion’. In this method, participants in urban settings are recorded walking through an area that they know well while commenting on the sounds that they hear. Tixier (2003) notes that this research method encourages a particularly fluid and open relationship between soundscape researcher and participant. I considered this option but decided against it as I wanted full flexibility during the composing process. Interview conversations during recordings would restrict this adaptability. Additionally, I did not want to be guided, but to walk around areas (which I had never been to before) freely experiencing them, as the research participants had done when they had first arrived.

Being silent whilst recording the sounds of the environment is a very relaxing experience. A personal recording choice for me was to record without talking as much as possible. The ear hears the frequency range of the human voice very clearly, and will focus on voices to the exclusion of other sounds (Berendt, 1985). This means that interesting sounds can very easily be missed if the sound recordist is engaged with a companion’s voice. It should be noted that Wagstaff (2002), an acoustic ecologist, distinguishes between the terms *soundwalk* (when participants are encouraged to make sounds during

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<sup>35</sup> The power dynamics of walking and space have been extensively researched elsewhere (see: Gabriele and McCartney, 2001; Munson, 2002; Truman and Ben Shannon, 2018). This is beyond the scope of this thesis, although referred to briefly, again, in chapters four and six.

the walk), and *listeningwalk* (in which participants are asked to be as silent as possible). Commonly, however, participants are asked to be silent on soundwalks (Schafer, 1974).

Currently soundwalks are very popular at music festivals (McCartney, 2014). Following the walks, participants are encouraged to discuss and express responses to the environmental sounds, musical elements and the associations they have of that distinct sonic environment. McCartney (2008) discusses how this can shift the power balance between artists and audiences: by acknowledging the varied listening experiences. Those who may have felt that they normally are not entitled to speak about what they hear, since they lack musical training, often seemed more engaged in such discussions. This resonates with one of my project's aims – that of greater academic accessibility, by enabling more people to hear refugee narratives in an approachable and engaging way. The narratives will hopefully make people feel more at ease about having the difficult discussions surrounding immigration.

We, as a society, react very emotionally to people's stories when given the access and opportunity. In 2015 photos of Alan Kurdi, for example, taken by Turkish journalist Nilüfer Demir, a three-year-old Kurdish Syrian boy who drowned in the Mediterranean, made global headlines (Miller Pensiero, 2015; Parkinson & George-Cosh, 2015). Photographs of his body quickly spread around the world, prompting media coverage of his family's story of trying to reach Canada. The picture has been credited with causing a surge in donations to charities helping migrants and refugees with one charity, recording a 15-fold increase in donations within 24 hours of its publication (Henley et al., 2015). The international response to his story, particularly in Canada and Europe, was enormous. Politicians around the world, including the British, Irish, French and Turkish Prime Ministers, made statements about the photo. The photo had an immediate impact on domestic Canadian politics and in the 2015 Canadian federal election, the refugee crisis was a main issue (CBC, 2015). Perhaps, similarly to Bull's (2015) comparisons between the impact of photographic and voice messages from victims of 9/11, this example shows that people react to strong narrative forms in many modalities.

## The Compositional Process: Inspiration

Composers have often used speech in diverse ways in sound composition (see: Lane, 2006). Some have used multi-voices overlapping, for example, Hostetler's (1986) work *Happily Ever After* or Norman's (1996) interview-based work *In Her Own Time*. Other composers have mixed up the voices, as in Lane and Parry's (2005) piece *The Memory Machine*, wherein fragmented speech is used. The strength of all of these pieces lies with the spoken narratives. In these pieces the spoken narratives lead and sound manipulation is given a minimal background role. When, in compositions like these, one of the interlinked elements is missing or privileged in some way, a very important aspect of place, space, atmosphere and history is lessened. I had already decided that in my composition I wanted the piece to focus on *both* sounds and spoken narratives and their *interrelationship*. Sounds and speech are both linked to, and emerge from, cultures and environments. A thoughtful combination of soundscapes and human narratives enables us to explore identity within the context of a person's environment and create a richer account. I intended to create a balanced sonic investigation, including both speech and sound in the composition, evoking networks of landscape memories, including past narratives: 'Hidden just under the surface, these memories are a tapestry of individual experience threaded through with sonic intensity' (Labelle, 2006: 22).

Spoken poetry is thought to be one of the earliest forms of expression in history (Eisenberg, 2005). Sound art, spoken word and phonography have all incorporated the manipulation of speech in the twentieth century (Brady, 1999). 'The use of speech or the spoken word as the primary material for sonic composition far predates the advent of recorded sound' (Lane, 2006:3). The tape-recorder heralded a new era for composition (before this, composition was principally performance-oriented). This started a process of dismantling the borders between music and sound (Schaeffer, 2012). Since then, various artists have used speech in their musical work: John Cage, Trevor Wishart and Steve Reich, to name a few. Reich frequently used archive and interview material in his work, (as in *The Cave* in 1993 and *Three Tales* in 2002). Most of the work referred to above could be seen as belonging to the sub-genre of 'docu-music'. Lane (2006: 9) writes: 'The main function of these pieces [docu-music] was to use spoken voice material as a signifier to historical authenticity. It signifies a witness and is a carrier of the past'. Sounds and speech in docu-music are kept relatively unprocessed, so that words and meanings can be understood. Bringing in techniques used from soundscape composition

to create an environmental parallel for the listener, to coincide with the docu-music narrative, resonates with my way of working.

Parry's *Boomtown* (1998) is an excellent example of the docu-music genre. Parry himself does not describe his piece as soundscape composition but rather, as 'oral history and spoken word in sonic art', but I would suggest it also falls into the soundscape genre. He describes *Boomtown* as:

A multichannel installation designed to accompany an exhibition about the 19th century radical movement and ran at the old Oldham art gallery for six months. Archive interviews are used alongside industrial sounds to examine the personal and social histories of some of the town's inhabitants. (Parry, 1998)

Processing is used extensively in the piece, especially the soundscape of the textile mill and the spoken narratives. The sounds support the different speakers and highlight the acoustic past environment of industrial northern England. *Boomtown* engaged my interest in the use of industrial sounds in my work.

Audio walks are another method used by artists that are similar to soundwalks. Audio walks share with soundwalks their emphasis on sonic experiences of particular places, but there are some significant differences in practice. The artists Janet Cardiff and George Miller, for example, describe audio walks as being situated in relation to museums and tourist tours rather than to sound composition or sound art (Schaub, 2005). The importance in audio walks lies in the created narrative using real world sound, similar to a film's sound design, and differs from an acoustic ecologist's desires for listeners to pay attention to the sounds of the environment for their own sonic qualities and social meanings. Cardiff's work (for example *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, which takes place in New York Central Park), often features prominent environmental sounds, but the main focus of attention is the narrative voice. Ultimately the listener is brought into an imaginary world.

What I hoped to achieve during the recording and composition process of this project was somewhere in between a soundwalk and an audio walk. I wanted to focus on the environment from the soundwalk, 'with all its distinct sonic qualities and cultural meanings' (McCartney, 2014: 234) but also incorporate 'an entwined narrative' (Cardiff, 2004) element, from the interviews to share the focus. This would mirror an audio walk in a re-imagined story of our conversations.

When preparing to start composing I listen back to all recorded sounds and interviews in full. This process rekindles sonic memory and familiarity with the sounds and narratives. Throughout this listening exercise, I start to gather initial ideas on the suppression and magnification of sounds. I chose thought-provoking sounds with which to possibly start or end a composition in order to capture interest and set the scene. I also made a note of elements of the interviews that I knew I wanted to prioritise in the composition aesthetically, sonically or ethically.

The interviewees were asked the same questions as each other, but I noticed during this listening back process that our conversations went in very different directions. Reema talks mostly about the experience of claiming asylum and her future of staying in Britain, whilst Amira talks about communicating with family and friends back in Syria and connecting to politics back home. These conversations were entwined, and could flow together, but would also be separate and juxtaposed.

During previous compositions I would revisit these conversations in order to decide on a thematic (sounds and narratives) structure to the composition, working in a similar, (albeit less structured) way to thematic analysts using qualitative research techniques (see: Denzin and Lincoln, 2017). I would group sounds and interviewee moments into themes, and create a timeline sketch of the composition. This is a time consuming process, as narratives and sounds have to be clearly and perfectly cut between usable sections in order to avoid pops and cracks in the composition.

Going through every audio file meticulously took a long time. Disastrously, my computer froze during this process and re-saved other material over my file of freshly cut audio clips (with no hope of file recovery!). Reflecting on my options at the time I considered the methodological issues involved in the editing process and the structural order of the work. Perhaps making structural changes would cut listeners out of the cumulative sense of interpersonal warmth in the interviews? Initially the interviewees were anxious and nervous, but this slowly diminished as they engaged in conversation. I concluded that if I removed the 'real time' structure of the piece, this 'real time' cumulative sense of relaxing into the interviews would remain invisible to the audience. I, therefore, decided not to edit the piece thematically, but to keep the interviews in their original chronological order throughout.

The result of this decision was that each interviewee was talking about different subjects throughout the composition. They were different people engaged in conversations. This rendered my presence as interviewer more obvious. I had edited myself out of previous compositions: removing my voice as much as was digitally possible, with just my presence revealed briefly, often at the end. Continuing the creative experiment, however, I decided that since I would be fading in and out of the conversations in real life. I would sometimes leave my voice in the soundscape too, alerting listeners to the process of the project. For instance, at the very beginning of the piece, it was made very sonically obvious that the narrative recordings were from interviews. My first question is heard preceding any interviewee's answers.

The technological disaster (above) transpired to be a major creative turning point in the project and provided opportunities to engage in experimentation with voice and reflect on and think, as a composer in process, with guidelines of qualitative inquiry. I was unable to use all the interview material because of the length of the piece, but this is quite legitimate within the ethics of traditional qualitative inquiry, wherein scholars are selecting and thematically analysing transcripts (see: Atkinson, Delamont and Hammersley, 1988).

Listening back to the soundscape recordings around London, I began to digitally process certain sounds: cutting out pitches; bands of frequencies; slices of time and ranges of loudness. I emphasised certain frequencies and not others. Similarly, other material was duplicated or slowed in some way: stretching time; slowing or repeating events; adding doubled or halved pitches and exaggerating dynamics. These were all aesthetic, compositional decisions. I could subtract certain sounds and at the same time refine others that I wanted to emphasise. This process allowed the repetitive urban sounds of traffic and the tube to hold the attention of the listener for longer. It also brought the interesting sounds in the background of the recording to the fore. All sounds processed for use in the composition would be paralleled with their original, non-processed versions. Often the non-processed sound was included first, or panned to another ear, to play simultaneously. The original sounds are always available to the listener, but the piece was rendered more sonically accessible through the production process, whilst maintaining its integrity. As Weidenaar (2002: 66) commented: 'Just like the camera, the tape recorder never lies. But it tells only the truth permitted to it. By selecting the right equipment and location, some truths can be enhanced and others evaded'.

The composition moved quite slowly. I was drawn to a relaxed tempo, similar to a walking pace (circa 75 beats per minute). This is slow in musical terms, but encourages reflective listening. The soundwalks moved at an even slower pace at times (about 60 bpm). This is very slow walking where movement is only occasionally audible. This allowed moments when the recordist was invisible to listeners. At other moments traces of breath or the sound of footsteps can be heard. I left these traces in the soundscape to reference my presence in the interviews. The listeners were presented with an unencumbered perspective from which to observe proceedings, with no reference to the presence of the recordist; apart from deliberate, selected, moments when the composer was audible: the recordist's presence was revealed; a peek behind the composer's curtain. As McCartney (2014: 214) comments:

...emphasis on human movement and a focus on particular places brings attention to the presence of the soundwalkers and their ways of interaction in that place; if someone plans walks in their own neighborhood, this can facilitate a focus on local concerns and politics.

The interviewee narratives often revealed their experience of the British asylum-seeking legal process, together with the integration of environmental sounds into a layered soundtrack. This seems at first to be quite dense, but most of the composition is extremely thinly layered, with a calm pace almost directed by the vocal interviewee narratives. This style of composition allows the audience to become very aware of the refugee's stories, whilst changing the pace and not becoming too repetitive.

### **Editing the Sounds**

I eradicated duplicate or spoiled recordings that I did not wish to keep. I organised segments alphabetically, according to environmental sound. This allowed me to quickly identify and locate files and helped to structure the piece. When listening to these recordings, I selected the segments that had transformational and developmental potential, mixing low and high-pitched sounds, including short sounds (about 45 seconds) for 'textual additions' as well as long sounds (up to 40 minutes) for the main soundscape. Listening to the footage of speech, birds, walking, busy shops and transport; I started to juxtapose compatible sounds. With so many different urban sounds to include in this composition, I could present multiple scenes in the soundscape, with many conflicting and overlapping sounds, creating an intricate interplay between them.

I digitally altered some of the sounds instantly. I knew I wanted some deep sounds to be underneath the soundscape, to bring out the environment more clearly. Unfortunately, apart from traffic rumble, I had not collected many low sounds. As an alternative, I recorded myself playing traditional Yemini and Syrian songs recommended by an interviewee on a piano, which ensured that the composition reflected the musical diversity of Middle Eastern folk and prayer songs. These songs were stretched out to create background drones<sup>36</sup> for the soundscape composition (to which I would add different textures). This element created a bass, which drew out the natural and often more delicate sounds. The entire composition was created from soundscape recordings inspired by urban sociology ‘research mapping methods’<sup>37</sup> (see: Powell, 2010), even the added reverb was recorded from natural sources in community centres and mosques. For example, the space I used for my interview with Amira had terrible acoustics, and I had to alter these in the compositional process.

There are no strict clean breaks between spoken narrative and sound sections. The sounds parallel the interviews, although there are clear narrative moments. Different listeners will listen to different elements and hence ‘compose’ their own piece, concentrating on the sounds they prefer. In the knowledge that the second project would be longer, I made this first project thirty minutes in total. The first draft was double the length, which forced me to choose only my preferred sections and make drastic trims. Aesthetically, I wanted the whole piece organised symmetrically, almost in sonata form, so that the soundscape ended with the same sounds as it began with (there were slight variations).

In this ethnographically layered account (see: Rambo-Ronai, 1995) one of the multiple layers that make up the ‘text’ is that of the space occupied by the listener. Thus, the moment within the work which allows listeners to be aware of their current environment is dependent upon how, and where, the composition is performed. Experiencing this composition in London, in the same places that the soundscape was recorded, would constitute an interesting layering of recorded and actual sounds from the same environment. This piece was going to be predominantly heard in the UK. I therefore

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<sup>36</sup> I was worried this would create too much of a ‘fantasy feel’, but the urban sounds counteracted this.

<sup>37</sup> See: chapter four of this thesis for a more detailed account of research mapping methods.

included moments of lone narrative, without soundscape, to enable listeners to hear and include their own environment in their experience.

My soundwalks were originally long and therefore became condensed and merged with the ensuing sonic environment. This technique is called asyndeton and synecdoche. Asyndeton is ‘the deletion from the perception or memory of one or many sound elements in an audible whole’ (Augoyard and Torgue, 2006: 26). It is a matter of removing and therefore discarding parts of an audio file, and thence discarding them from the soundscape. This forms a complementary process to synecdoche, in which one specific part of a soundscape is attached to another. The processes are harmonious. In order to incorporate or discard these sonic layers, listeners have to pay less attention to those sounds in that particular moment, or it has to be mixed flawlessly, so that it is unnoticeable to the ear.

In this work, for example, the sounds of the London underground gradually cross fade, whilst bird song becomes bolder in the listener’s other ear. Many techniques can be used to change environments and this change-over forms an integral part of the piece. Creative compositional techniques such as pitch-shifting, frequency filtering, panning and amplitude changes were also used to create more abstract sections of the sound work. The aesthetic decisions discussed above were inspired by Piper’s (1969) early sound composition *Streetwork/Streettracks I-II*. This work begins with a recording of a New York soundwalk. Then a second recording is played, made a week later along the same street, during a festival (therefore very sonically different). Meanwhile the first track plays again at double speed as a juxtaposition. This composition inspired the process of my project, bringing attention to both technological and creative processes and at the same time inviting dialogue into the new recording.

## **Language**

Language has formed an important focus of this composition. The interviews were recorded in both Arabic and English. These decisions were both aesthetic (using the speech sounds of both languages) and ethical (issues of culture and accessibility). This composition had to be accessible to people in Britain (the majority of whom do not speak Arabic), but it was also important (not least for the participants) to hear people speaking

their mother tongue.<sup>38</sup> This discussion is parallel to those of ethnomusicologists and ethnographers with regards to subtitling issues in filmmaking:

...whether you translate one language into another language, where you narrate in your own words what you have understood from the other person, or whether you use this person directly on screen as a piece of ‘oral testimony’ to serve the direction of your film, you are dealing with cultural translation. (Minh-ha cited in Barbash & Taylor, 1997: 421)

The languages of diaspora groups play an important sociocultural and even socio-political role (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). During the 18th century, linguistics was the marker of identification aimed at minimising cultural differences between groups (Beswick, 2008) and these ‘one nation, one state, one language’ ideologies continued to resonate throughout the twentieth century (Beswick, 2007: 51). Antisemitism in Britain led to the Jewish diaspora’s embarrassment and even repression of the Yiddish language (Keiner, 1991). This is in contrast to the linguistic multiculturalism of contemporary Canada or the recent resurgence of the Welsh language (Harley, 2017). Kurdish refugees in Sweden have established strong transnational online networks linked to the Kurdish movement in the Middle East (Faist, 2004), which, amongst other connections, creates a space where the heritage language can be used digitally.

Diaspora identities, as with the cultures and societies they represent, are hybrid (Brah and Coombs, 2000; Burke, 2009). Particularly amongst later generations, diaspora identities comprise a layering of traits, some from their own communities, some from the society they dwell in (Papastergiadis, 2000). This means that generations usually have different relationships with languages. Initially, both for economic reasons and to counteract prejudices, immigrants may use the most prominent language in society, in order to more easily blend in. Later generations, however, may revert to their own language as a sign of solidarity and non-integration.<sup>39</sup> Some groups use all of these tactics at once: the New York *Chasidic* Jewish diaspora still use Hebrew for prayer and Yiddish for daily in-group communications, as well as English for out-group business activities (Schiff, 2002).

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<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that the interviewees spoke distinct dialects of Arabic, which is mentioned in the composition.

<sup>39</sup> This is additionally true with regards to cultural dressing. Many British Sikhs stopped wearing the Turban to ‘fit in’ more with British society, but today young Sikhs are reclaiming their identities by wearing them with increased popularity (Pain, 2018).

Language combinations are also possible, for example, the Hispanic diaspora in Los Angeles often use ‘Spanglish’, which is regarded as a hybrid language by some linguists, as the structures of both languages are present (Clyne, 2003).

My interviewees engaged in cross-cultural communication with various groups in London, some in English and some in Arabic. I wanted these multiple layers of language use reflected in the piece. For reasons of British audience accessibility the central narratives were structured in English, with layers of Arabic floating in and through the soundscape, to reflect the interviewee’s linguistic entanglements. These layers also speak to London’s language diversity and the recent identification of Multicultural London English (MLE). Half the population of London speaks English as a second language: thus MLE has audible traces of Caribbean dialect and Arabic intonation (Cheshire et al., 2011). MLE provides a medium for communication between individuals and groups with distinct, yet tangled, cultural histories.

Whilst these narratives were unfolding I had to ensure that sounds did not mask voices (with the exception of fade outs or voices building up and overlapping). I had to construct pre-arranged sections of soundscape and integrate them as an ‘accompaniment’ to spoken words. The rest of the piece emerged from the ways that certain sound excerpts resonated with spoken texts, both directly and indirectly. Sound collages were inserted between spoken elements. These sound sections created a space, in which to digest the spoken words. The pace of the piece is predominantly fluid. Occasionally, sound sections leave this flow, but always return: ‘The concept of flow – the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter...’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002: 4).

It is this flow and entanglement between spoken narratives and environmental sounds that makes soundscape composition such a rich and responsive method in an era of posthuman/theoretical understandings of human inquiry. Soundscape composition seems, and even seeks, to encapsulate and speak to human entanglements with other agencies, entities and materialities. Soundscape composition as methodology, elegantly embodies Barad’s (2007: ix) position that:

To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating.

## Mixing

Whilst writing this thesis I was listening to the BBC cricket commentary on the test match between England and New Zealand. Presenter Ken Bruce talked about his thoughts on radio use: ‘I’ve been warned with every new technology that’s appeared, that it’s going to be the end of radio...But it’s never happened...Its just you and your radio... It’s a very warm and close medium’ (Bruce, 2015). This intimacy of sound also happens with headphones. Headphones are a more intimate way of listening to music than speakers. This intimacy stems from the increased sensation of proximity in the sounds. In *Sounding Out The City*, Bull (2006: 8) asks ‘Is it perhaps the snugness of the headphones around the head of the user, which makes some kind of auditory intimacy?’ I decided to mix my piece for headphones as I wanted the listener to experience an intimate aural space of the interviewee’s life story. I also wanted to give room to concentrate on the sounds, to not be distracted by the outside world as much as possible when listening.<sup>40</sup>

Mixing this piece as a binaural headphone experience for the listener was bold. This technique for soundscape or acousmatic composition is rare.<sup>41</sup> The majority of composers want to use large speaker set ups, to give the perspective of surround sound. Binaural techniques, however, simulate the way the recordist heard the original sounds, creating a relationship between listener and composer. Sterne (2012: 3) described sound studies as ‘the hearing of the hearing of others’. I wanted to echo the relationship that I, the interviewer, had with the interviewees. When discussing perspective in film, Chion (1994) identifies two models: spatial point and subjective point. Aveyard (cited in Barnard, 2010) has linked this to binaural practice with soundscapes. In the binaural method, spatial point-of-audition is a soundscape heard from the perspective of a non-presence, whereas subjective point-of-audition is heard from the perspective of a participating, but not necessarily audible, recordist. I used these points of audition as a prospective framework for my composition and discovered that they could be used interchangeably.

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<sup>40</sup> Except in moments when it is the composer’s intention that listeners attune to their own soundscape.

<sup>41</sup> Binaural recording and mixing is rare for soundscape compositions and acousmatic music, but it is a popular choice for soundwalks and other sound art subgenres, for example: binaural sound artist, Dallas Simpson, 2019.

Using binaural headphones to connect to listeners reminded me of techniques used in memorial soundwalks. These walks are designed to be listened to on headphones, which create a sonic bubble around the listener, giving them the privilege of privacy and anonymity (McCartney, 2014). This is meant to increase the concentration of the walker, as in the Ground Zero Sonic Memorial Project (Nelson and Silva, 2004) in New York. Many memorial walks include moments in which the audience can intermingle with their real-life sound environments. This allows for participants to blend into the environment they are led through, whilst at the same time their headphones transport them into the narratives of the memorial walk. It was this combination of isolation and listening openness that I was looking for in my piece.

From these reflections upon my compositional journey, I was able to notice which recording practices and social science research methods had been informed by each other (drawn up in a table below). Significantly, it is the environment that is the essential and common thread of the investigation. On later reflection, it seems that the spoken narratives have played a slightly too predominant role in this project.

Methodology	Compositional Element
Oral History	Narrative interviews, Environment sounds
Urban Sociology	Soundwalks, Environment sounds
Ethnography	Language, Music, Environment sounds of interviewees' communities

Figure 3: Table showing the composition's methodological elements.

I called the piece *Hearing Home*: a word play on the use of sound composition and a reflection on participants talking about their original homes, whilst we listen to the sounds of their new dwellings in London.

## Impact/Feedback

I was nervous playing this composition to its first listeners. Nine locations were chosen around the UK,<sup>42</sup> including community centres, retirement homes and music festivals. I also presented the composition at a variety of other locations around the country including university campuses, shopping centres, popular walks and parks. People were mostly curious and liked the idea of taking a break from their day and stepping into the world of the headphones. To enable full anonymity for listeners and communities, I have kept geographical information unspecified. This anonymity allowed people to take part comfortably. The communities were from London, Manchester, Birmingham and the South West. In some instances, the piece was played to the community from stereo speakers; whilst others played the work in a room as an installation on loop for a day, to allow people to listen as they wished. Two further communities had a private space where their members could listen to the piece with headphones.<sup>43</sup> I created a listener response form to help gather feedback about the piece. All listener's names have been changed in this discussion of their comments.

Examining the survey results - a diverse spectrum of thoughts and reflections emerged from listening to my composition. Many people engaged with the concept of space, whether it was the space that the interview was taking place in, or the wider environment. People seemed to really like the occasional inclusion of the composer's voice in the piece. Overall, I am happy with the way people received the composition. I am pleased that people responded with predominantly positive feedback. (For exemplars and discussion of audience response forms see Appendix I).

Whilst I was presenting the project, I realised that I had an opportunity, after collecting up response forms, to connect this work specifically to the larger context of immigration rights and to openly address this with listeners. I talked with people about their own thoughts on refugees in the UK. Most people responded by saying that my composition had shed light on the broader context of immigration policy. Many listeners also commented that the composition reinforced an important message that decisions need to

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<sup>42</sup> These venues were chosen in order to gain feedback from a spectrum of people from different age groups within the UK.

<sup>43</sup> The soundscapes were composed for a binaural listening experience, and communities were advised of this. Nonetheless, some venues did not have the facilities for headphone listening. However, it still seemed adequate and productive to gain feedback from these audiences.

be based on an individual's story, regardless of where they are from (the refugee council and many refugee support networks and advocates in the UK also reinforce this message).

Several people said the composition reminded them of visits that they had previously made to London. Some other listeners wrote about the composition as futuristic. Anna described it as portraying 'a normal and serene setting in a particularly futuristic manner ... you can experience what it feels like to be in a place without really being there'. She continued by adding '...this idea bothered me a little'. Although Anna did not elaborate about why this idea bothered her, perhaps I can extrapolate that she was concerned about virtual worlds seeming to act as a replacement for physical travel.

At the same time, Muhammad suggested that this kind of work could be enabling and could aid learning: He commented: '...someone who isn't able to travel could view the sights and listen to the sounds on the computer'. Sara said that the composition: 'made you feel as if you had really visited and had chatted with the refugees'. David's comment was thought-provoking. He said that he would like to visit London again some day: 'to see how my perceptions of the second visit differ from the first'. Here, he is explicitly referring to his engagement with the composition as an *actual* visit to London. Another listener noted that: '...what was shared was the desire to create a deeper understanding of the refugee experience - of exile, of home, of finding home. We wanted to build compassion around a human experience that is many times marginalised, forgotten, judged or avoided'.

Listener responses to this work voiced some important questions, such as:

- How are soundscape compositions related to the environments that inspired them?
- How does the hearing of narratives that are often ignored lead to reflections on their significance?
- How does technology facilitate the creative representation of life stories?

## Second Draft Alterations

I am grateful for these listener responses to the first draft of my first compositional project. It becomes harder to listen attentively to your own work over time whilst also composing. Every bar of music is heard many times, whether during the initial structuring or the final mixing. By engaging with listener's feedback I was able to ensure that my second draft was as strong and unambiguous as possible, whilst at the same time trying to adhere to the relational and ethical principles of a collaborative, a/r/tographic inquiry (see: Bickel, et al., 2011; Reason and Rowan, 1981).

The interviewees (as well as other refugees that I connected with through the project) gave detailed, useful and (mostly) positive feedback on the first draft.<sup>44</sup> One of them noticed, for instance, an error with the placement of an Arabic language section (one inevitable consequence of a composer working in an unfamiliar language). Sending feedback from the listeners to the interviewees was a vital and validating aspect of the work. This offered a chance for individuals to experience the collective impact of their narratives. It also offered an opportunity to gain an outside perspective on personal stories, and for interviewees to see themselves as educators and regard their stories as educational tools.

I allowed a month in the project timeline to weave alterations into the composition. People's feedback enabled me to ascertain which sections were unclear to listeners. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to include much detailed analysis of this process. There were, however, a few moments in the composition where the mixing had led to voices being drowned out unintentionally by the soundscape. Interestingly, there were no requests for the creative compositional elements to be changed or deleted, although these sometimes played over the voices. There were requests for more of an age range of interviewees, and variety of narratives, which I took into account for my next and second project.

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<sup>44</sup> Due to time and length constraints this feedback is not extensively discussed here. These changes were useful but minimal.

## Conclusion

I learnt much from undertaking this first project, the most important aspect being that the interviewees' stories, for one reason or another, linger with us. We, as researchers, become emotionally invested in our projects. Perhaps this is why Yow (1997) asks us to make a conceptual shift toward the subjective - to acknowledge the 'complex web' of interpersonal relations that develop during an interview. All of our projects are contingent upon the kinds of relationships we form with our interviewees: can we both be researchers and friends in these spaces? Indeed, Tillmann-Healy (2003) has argued for close (but not too close) friendship as method. Campano (2007) states '...stories may be personal but the emotions they convey have social import, reflecting readings of the world that are embedded in collective history and group experience'.

As researcher and participant, people spend time with each other and have conversations outside the recording interview process: on arrival, when you arrange the next meeting, all of which adds up to a relationship. Although at first I did not consider this social-time part of the process, this time spent outside the formal interview setting became a key element of the inquiry. The work was enriched by 'engaged listening', a phrase coined by Forsey (2010) which advocates the need to expand ethnographic tools from observation towards an engaged listening. During the non-interview time spent with participants, interesting questions or themes emerged and became part of the research process. This time made us feel more at ease with each other during the interviews. I think that you can hear during the composition that we are warmer with each other nearer the end. Not only was this because people had become familiar with my interviewing style, but also because they had spent more time with me. I have since understood that this process is connected to Rosaldo's ethnographic idea of 'deep hanging out' (quoted in Clifford, 1997: 188) and also to Geertz (1988a) who described 'immersing oneself... on an informal level'. There is a parallel here between soundscape composition's encouragement of mindful listening (Westerkamp, 2006) and the warmth created in these interviews: mindful listening increased listeners' sonic perception in the environment, warming (as with the interviewees to the interviewers) their ears to the soundscape.

The composing process was made less problematic because of the informal time spent together. As with learning a language, interpreting the sensory order of other people's lives required engagement with them, to create 'a space of sensory translation' (Stoller,

2008). If we are to understand the memories that emerge within our interview spaces, then we must acknowledge the process through which they are co-created, that the stories we hear ‘on the record’ depend on everything that happens ‘off the record’ (Sheftel and Zembrzycki, 2013: 130). These elements of informality, intimacy, friendship and relatedness in listening can best be described as a compositional form of the ‘radical relatedness’, regarded as crucial to collaborative a/r/tographic studies (Bickel et al., 2011). That is to say: a ‘relational practice that co-revises itself in/with community experiences’ (ibid., 288) over time spent together.

Listening back to the composition after the process was finished, I was left with several personal reflections. Structurally, even though I was trying to keep close to my interview schedule, the conversation conveys the randomness of actual conversation with topics dashing off here and there. On later reflection, this randomness makes it harder than needed for a listener to settle into the piece, especially through headphones. Contemporary society does not teach us much patience. Our smart phones give us new information all the time, which studies have shown are reducing our concentration (Ward and Duke, 2017). I did not want listeners to have to work too hard to immerse themselves into this piece because of the lack of structure. I wanted listeners to gently fall into the piece, and at the end wonder where the time had flown. Reflections on the narrative order of the piece caused me to re-consider the placement of some segments in order to improve accessibility. Ultimately, I left this piece in its existing structure, but went on to experiment with narrative order within the second project. Leaving the original structure in the first project enables comparisons to be made with the second compositional project.

One further consideration was the length of this piece. A longer work could have included more sound sections and more creative composing within the binaural mixing of the soundscape. The narratives play with the space within the listener’s headphones very well, but the sounds lack dynamic movement. One positive aspect of my critique of draft one was my appreciation of the ear clicks<sup>45</sup> in the piece. I took a risk and kept these clicks in the composition. Listeners noticed them occasionally.<sup>46</sup> The clicks created moments where people could re-awaken their listening and begin to concentrate again. This was

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<sup>45</sup> Ear clicks are moments whilst recording the soundscape that I clicked my fingers near my left and right ear to check the levels of the binaural microphones.

<sup>46</sup> Informal conversations with listeners suggested that they appreciated the inclusion of ear clicks in the final composition.

also a good compositional element to play with since people have difficulty staying ‘in the present’ in modern society (Roberts and David, 2016). The balance of my own voice alongside the voices of the interviewees alluded to the conversational exchange that took place. I shall discuss the composer’s ‘presence’ in the soundscape with reference to methodological theory in the following chapter. Portelli (1991) identifies six elements that make oral history sources ‘intrinsically different’ from other historical sources. These are: orality, narrative, subjectivity, credibility, objectivity and authorship. These terms could equally be applied to themes and questions within my interdisciplinary soundscape compositions. I shall consider them more fully within the production of the main project/composition of this thesis.

In summary, my learning from undertaking the first project, both as a composition and as a means of social inquiry, was:

- In further research projects I would prefer to explore the narrative structure of the compositions more creatively, particularly since it would be preferable to include more (and more diverse) interviewees in the second project.
- The principal composition would ideally prove longer in length, and would exhibit a more creative structure, which would enable greater listener engagement.
- I anticipate creating longer and more diverse sound sections. Aesthetically, this longer work would remain equally divided between spoken and sound sections.
- Further revelations of the composer’s presence in the composition and more discernible indications of digital alterations would be explored.

All of these additions arose at some point out of questions raised by the first compositional project. I added these practices and ideas to the criteria I had already gathered for the second compositional project. These criteria included a desire to embark on a study outside the UK. As the composer, I thought it would be more beneficial if my ears were new to the sounds that I was recording. Being new to the unfamiliar sounds would allow me to engage with an experience closer to that of people emigrating. This would bring me, as a composer, into a different relationship with the sounds around me, similar to that of migrants new to a space. As Carson and Sumara (1997: xvii) state:

As all artists know, the greatest challenge to producing works that interrupt normalized ways of perceiving and understanding is to learn to perceive freshly... learning to perceive differently, then, requires that one engage in practices that, in some way, remove one from the comfortable habits of the familiar.

For the second project I sought to record a new soundscape with a fresh perspective; to use the microphone as an access tool, bridging cultures in sound; to enter into situations that I may not otherwise have entered, allowing myself to learn about a new culture through listening. For my next project I also wanted to interview more people. Having worked with only two interviewees at first, their stories could be thoroughly analysed by listeners, but I was also anxious to engage with diverse voices (in terms of age, gender and life story) and see how this would change and challenge a composition aesthetically and sonically, as well as relationally and ethically. I also intended to construct a longer composition to enable extra narratives to be told.

I felt uneasy at several points as I reflected upon the representation of my identity as the researcher. Many academic disciplines have a history of unequal power balances in research relationships (LeCompte, 2002). I could attempt to even out this balance by using collaborative methods and theories. I could utilise, for instance, reflective and cyclical research practices. The tensions and power dynamics these issues contain, however, run deep in all research practices. As Malinowski (1922: 19) asks ‘What is this ethnographer’s magic, by which he is able to evoke the real spirits of the natives, the true picture of tribal life?’ This imbalance of power between researched and researcher would always exist in such a project, despite attempts to give an account of myself; my presence; my position and reflections upon it (Butler, 2005). Some of these imbalances would be alleviated if I belonged to the community that became part of my study. This stream of thought also led to similar linguistic conclusions, in that I would restrict interviews to native English-speaking immigrants in Jerusalem, in order to understand all the symbolism in the language sonically used.<sup>47</sup>

The first project had evoked many issues to be explored later. Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions include multiple translations: from real-time oral to recorded audio, thence to edited audio, and finally to soundscape composition; bringing sound

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<sup>47</sup> See: chapter four, as snippets of other languages would be recorded in the environmental soundscape.

from lived experience to academic research. The composing process produced concerns about ‘unfaithfulness’ to the original recording: ‘That is to say that real events may well undergo transformation, at the researchers will, in order to tell a (particular) story - a version of the truth as the researcher sees it’ (Clough, 2002: 18). This, however, does not differ greatly from the use of written transcripts in conventional academic interview research, transposing material from oral to written texts: translation always includes interpretation (Andrews, 1995). Indeed, as Eco (2003) intimated, translation is predominantly a process of *negotiation* between cultures. In this thesis I am negotiating between the research cultures of the academy; the artistic/aesthetic cultures of soundscape composition practice and the lived experience of contemporary refugees and migrants. This thesis might be seen not so much as a vehicle for *representing* worlds as for *negotiating* between them.

Ultimately, because of my experience undertaking this first compositional project, my ways of working changed in the second compositional project. Inevitably the second project in this thesis included reflections on the questions and themes that arose during the preceding project. Instead of focusing on what was lost in those initial negotiations (and trying to devise more procedures to capture or reduce what could be lost), I turned my attention to what was being created in the negotiating process, embracing the creative possibilities for further exploration. I was not choosing to use an ‘off the shelf’ social research methodology to undertake this inquiry and bolt that method onto my existing practice as a soundscape composer. Nor was I making the claim, so prevalent amongst practitioner-researchers (see: Kossak in McNiff, 2013), that my artistic practice *was* a research method. Instead, I was engaged in mapping and recording this inquiry and the ideas methods and practices I made or borrowed as I constructed it, somewhere along the borders of soundscape composition and social inquiry.

I would like to conclude this commentary upon my compositional first project with the metaphor of ‘borderlands’, as elaborated by Anzaldúa (1987). Borderlands are creative, inhabited spaces where tensions are productive and repression carries transformational possibilities (ibid.). Instead of conceptualising borders as artificial lines that divide spaces, Anzaldúa promulgates an image of the territories in-between. Borderlands are, indeed, spaces of translation and negotiation (see: paragraph above). In this thesis, the principal translation/negotiation space is between soundscape composition and social inquiry. As I began the main project I was thinking with these ideas of borderlands in

both process and form, as well as the content of this thesis. As composer/researcher I inhabited a space somewhere in-between (as well as within) both the categories of composition and interview; real accounts and creative memories as well as practice and research. The collaborative and creative work that these projects encompass inhabits the midpoints of all of these territories. I am researching both content and process of inquiry, by both doing and producing. Grosz (2001: 91-105) notes:

...the space of the in-between is the locus for social, cultural and natural transformations: it is not simply a convenient space for movements and realignments but in fact is the only place – the place around identities, between identities – where becoming, openness to futurity, outstrips the conservational impetus to retain cohesion and unity.

This is a good description of the territories that my compositional projects are exploring: the linked space of art making and researching and the ways this space resonates with diaspora identity.

Perhaps I too have a diaspora identity, as a composer, travelling into the territory of more conventional academic research arenas. Research (see: Kraus et al., 2010; Tierney et al., 2015) shows that people with musical training have enhanced cognitive and sensory abilities that enable them to hear speech in challenging environments better than those without musical training. Kraus et al. (2010: 604) states that, ‘...music training results in structural and functional biological changes throughout our lifetime...’. This study found that ‘...music training seems to strengthen the same neural processes that are often impaired in individuals with developmental dyslexia’ (ibid., 603). I was curious about these ideas, as a dyslexic composer. I wondered whether my creative composer side had actually helped and developed my traditional written researcher side, thus inspiring and informing my current commitment to accessible forms of academic scholarship.

I could claim, as a composer, that I am more likely to immerse myself in inquiries outside the academy undertaken in community and personal settings. For the second compositional project of this thesis I will continue to grapple with the ethics, aesthetics, loopholes and safety nets of the spaces I have come to inhabit between social inquiry and sound composition; leaving traditional research behind: ‘...that crumbling roof over education that often separated us from life and rarely protected us anyway – and to enter an open field, ears and wings bristling’ (Nielsen cited in Springgay et al., 2008: xvi).

I came to realise as I concluded work on *Hearing Home* that listeners should be encouraged to slow down, savour, and approach a soundscape composition in the same curious way they read a novel, or view a painting. They should treat the sound piece as something that might perplex them at first, but that draws them back to listen again. As Hardy (cited in Boyd and Larson, 2014: 56) comments: ‘I dislike the radio news format of information immediately comprehensible in a single listening’. As Hardy said (ibid., 64) ‘History is not simple or linear or easy to understand. It is complex and mysterious, contradictory and multifocal’. It was this multifaceted, interwoven, contradictory texture that I hoped to convey with my future work, specifically the second compositional project of this thesis (see: chapter four). People’s lives, stories and histories require scholars to grapple with, and convey those complexities, rather than providing listeners with pre-digested, oversimplified forms, that afford us the illusion of understanding something on the borderlands of our known world. Consequently in the next chapter of this thesis, the bridge chapter, this paper becomes messier and more complex: like history.

## Chapter Three: Bridge

### Introduction: The (Reluctant) Presence of the Sound Composer

More often than not, the methods have not changed. While the object – what you study – has changed, the method – how you do it – has not. But without the admittedly rigid methodologies of the disciplines, how do you keep analysis from floundering into sheer partisanship, or from being perceived as floundering? This is the major problem of content and practice that faces us today. (Bal, 2002: 7)

This chapter is situated side-by-side with the bridge composition of this thesis.<sup>48</sup> The bridge piece sits between the two larger compositional projects, allowing listeners contemplative space for reflection.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, this section sits between the two main project chapters of the written text, as a discussion of my core inquiry questions, particularly the balancing act between composer and researcher. This chapter is not based directly on a particular project, therefore I can discuss these questions from wider thoughts generated by my practice. Throughout this bridge, I borrow from previous theoretical discussions; examine my own practice, and offer accounts of my thoughts and reflections –in-action as a composer/inquirer.

This bridge frames the important questions of the thesis and the accompanying composition embraces the most aesthetically experimental moments. My thesis does not offer a template for future scholars to follow, but rather, offers an insight into possible ways of writing/thinking/composing into the problems that I encountered. I hope that my experiences of methodological dilemmas lead other composers and researchers into finding their own ways of developing and demonstrating: '[their] choices throughout [as]... this must be the next step' (Rennie, 2014: 123). Perhaps this chapter echoes the position of a methodology section in a more traditionally structured thesis.

The sub-heading to this introduction was borrowed from Marino's (2018) *The Reluctant Anthropologist* blog: 'Despite the problems inherent in a Western discipline that mostly investigates non-Westerners, I like the idea of taking people's differences (and

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<sup>48</sup> Unlike chapter two and chapter four that act as written commentaries on the compositional projects, this chapter is placed as an intermission, in juxtaposition with, but not as a written commentary upon, the bridge composition.

<sup>49</sup> This bridge composition, although placed between the two main projects that comprise this thesis, is not a primary research exploration, but rather, forms a secondary, sonic commentary in the space between the two primary projects.

similarities) seriously. Thus reluctant, and yet convinced'. I start this chapter with a critical discussion of the presence (and conventions of absence) of the composer, which fed into an ongoing 'composer aesthetics versus researcher ethics' debate that carried across the entire thesis. Right from the initial recordings through to the compositional process, the composer's (absent/present) narrative is the biggest 'elephant in the room', pertaining to my methods of integrating interdisciplinary soundscape and social science research. Ignoring the elephant would have made this thesis more conventional and easier to write. I 'reluctantly admit' (ibid.), however, that this was the most rewarding, complex and exciting aspect of my methodological investigations. These reluctant aesthetics/ethics reflections have become part of the glue that holds the whole thesis together. Similarly, St. Pierre (2018; 2019) was forced to admit that it was the 'asides' she wrote to herself, rather than the main essay, that formed her thesis. I reluctantly concede that it is these reflections on and considerations of the composer's (absent/present) narrative that form the substantive contribution of this text. Just as St. Pierre (ibid.) was taken by surprise with the 'asides' she wrote to herself in her thesis, this unexpectedly substantive methodological contribution became apparent within the space in between my main texts/compositions. It seems important to leave these findings here, where they arose, amidst the context in which they happened.

Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions comprise a combination of three elements: 1) the original interview and environments visited by the composer/researcher; 2) the recorded version of the interview and environments; and 3) the final interpretation/composition created by the composer/researcher.<sup>50</sup> These three elements are different from one another - the recording and subsequent composition becoming edited and interpreted versions of the 'real life' interview and environment. These varied formats are a sequence of interpretations, emanating one from the other, over time. At each stage several practical issues emerge which have implications for the interpreting undertaken. It is, however, important to remember that these 'decipherings' (see: Mazzei, 2007: 113-116) happen in all research: written or oral, quantitative or qualitative.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The composition is constructed by the composer/researcher. Later on, the listener's individual sense of identity then affects how this is all perceived when listening to the final composition, an added fourth stage to the process.

<sup>51</sup> See Mazzei (2007) for a critical exploration of this process in conventional social research.

These decisions to be made by the researcher unavoidably influence the recordings gathered, and in turn will make an impact on the interpretive stages ahead:

What makes field recordings so interesting is the mode of creation, that is, composition. One produces or composes a field recording and is required to make consequential decisions that greatly affect the perception of the subject material. (Lyonblum, 2017: 23)

In this study the literatures of researcher (composer) presence are continuously reviewed. In chapters two and four I discuss the practical elements of composing with perceived composer presence and absence. These aural traces (or lack thereof) act as a reminder to audiences that the composition they are hearing has been filtered through a composer's imagination. The role and responsibility of the composer is contentious: with less intervention, participant's voices have a higher profile; but in order to create a coherent work, creative interventions are required to bring multiple narratives together. No hard and fast rules exist for composers to manage these issues, but it is my contention that a) composer presence should always be revealed at some juncture; b) this presence should not dominate<sup>52</sup> or interfere with the narratives of individuals and communities that the work is about and c) creative compositional interventions should be focused on improving the accessibility of the work.

I critically reflect in this chapter on the ethical decision-making at the heart of the process of my inquiry. There is minimal written reference to ethical issues within the fields of sound composition (see: Andean, 2014b; McCartney, 2016a), which does not give much guidance and security to new composer/researchers, particularly with regard to interdisciplinary projects wherein ethical issues are more complex. I was aware such ethical considerations could easily be overlooked or disregarded in a project that was not following a traditional social research procedure. All universities have procedures for PhD students to gain ethical clearance, but these clearance systems tend to privilege traditional social science models rather than negotiations between different disciplinary codes of practice. I, however, wanted to grapple with, and reconcile, these interdisciplinary issues, thus making an original contribution towards soundscape research.

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<sup>52</sup> This contention does not apply to pieces concerned primarily with the composer's journey in a place.

One example of composer/researcher decision-making affecting a project would be the compositional structure of the piece. This element is an integral and important part of compositions, creating the sonic narrative journey for the listener, which Andean (2014a; 2016) confirms in his papers discussing narrative modes in acousmatic music. As a composer/researcher, I wanted to ensure I had a clearly delineated decision-making trajectory to follow and reflect upon, when making compositional/methodological decisions. It is evident that these compositions would be different if another composer had used the exact same recordings, or indeed, if they had been made by the same composer at a different time in their life. The composer's own practice, ideas for re-interpretation of the sonic space, overall vision for the piece, personal background, ethnicity and gender, (the list goes on and on...) will all affect the composer's vision for the compositional narrative. Nevertheless, I did not believe that my methodological decision-making was simply reducible to a list of personal singularities and particularities. In this bridge, I will discuss the process of making these decisions and the accompanying thinking/theorising. The compositional narratives and structures *per se* have been and will be critically examined in chapters two and four respectively.

This discussion places the composer/researcher presence in the recordings under scrutiny (e.g. use of their voice or footsteps) and considers how this presence affects the composition (see: Barrett, 2011). Scholarly discussion concerning the history of the 'narrative turn' in sound composition has only recently taken place (see: Rennie and Anderson, 2016), despite composers, since the 1960s, having frequently and purposefully used their presence in recordings (see: Ferrari, 1967; Westerkamp, 1989). This 'narrative turn' and concomitant 'crisis of representation' (Goodson and Gill, 2011) will be discussed below, alongside a critical reflection upon composers who have utilised their 'selves' in recordings. In addition, discussion of influences from diverse field recordists' work and presence will be undertaken:

There are many fields, from the relatively stable notion of a field announced by, for example, the ornithologist's field guide; through to the more porous and ambiguous field accounted for in anthropology's idea of fieldwork; and then to the idea of a field nourished by artists who have learned an appreciation of place, locality and their representation from the legacy of land art and the site-specific. (Lane and Carlyle, 2011: 9)

As a final introductory sentence to this chapter, I feel that I should issue a warning that much of this writing, like this thesis, is uncertain and messy and asks more questions than it answers. This warning comes with no apology, however, as during the process of conducting my research one principal discovery has been that scholarship itself is a messy and uncertain process (see: Law, 2004).

### **Searching for Soundscape Ethics**

The methods that I have used over the years for my interdisciplinary soundscape projects have grown out of a fluid and constantly evolving practice, and the discussions set down here are evidence of the various thoughts, ideas, practices and incumbent ethics inherent in this evolving methodology. I need to emphasise once more that this chapter is not meant to provide a linear or rigid structure, through which one could categorise all interdisciplinary soundscape methodologies. I intend to show here how one researcher developed their own partial, contingent methodological navigation between creative practice and theory. It becomes apparent during discussions in this chapter that some aspects of my work have come into tension/contradiction with each other: ‘this tension, we argue, is important to the evolution of the methodology and to the substantive features of the inquiry itself’ (Springgay et al., 2008: xix).

A/r/tography and its guidelines for (primarily visual) arts practitioners have encouraged me to embrace methodologies as fluid entities:

We draw our scholarship from philosophy, phenomenology, education action research, feminist theories and contemporary art criticism to theorise the methodology of a/r/tography, with an attention to the in-between where meanings reside in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time. (Ibid.)

Indeed, (my) interdisciplinary soundscape methods are not subject to standardised criteria, but rather, remain dynamic, fluid, and in constant motion – much like a soundscape itself. My interdisciplinary soundscapes sit entwined in the space in-between, art and social research. I have, again, borrowed from a/r/tography’s methods in situating interdisciplinary soundscapes as a practice-based research method in ‘the in-between’

(ibid., xx), where theory-as-practice creates knowing through living inquiry.<sup>53</sup> Soundscape compositions are insightful works, created through ongoing reflective inquiry. In practice-based research:

...theorizing through inquiry seeks understanding by way of an evolution of questions within the living inquiry processes of the practitioner. In other words, practitioners are interested in a knowledge creation through questioning that informs their practices, making their inquiries timely, emergent, generative and responsive to all those involved. (Springgay et al., 2008: xxiv)

Rogoff's (2000) discussions of interdisciplinarity have informed my own. Rogoff suggests that an emphasis upon process rather than method allows space for forms of scholarship that sit between existing disciplines and their accompanying methodologies, whilst resisting the formation of new methodological criteria (see: ibid.). Thus, my reluctance to propose structures and protocols that other sound researchers might follow is validated by Rogoff's critique of the proliferation of alternative methodological criteria. Bal (2002: 5) has also informed my work through her understandings of interdisciplinary inquiry: '[interdisciplinary research] must seek its heuristic and methodological basis in concepts rather than methods'. Bal (ibid., 22) starts her chapter on concepts with the dictionary definition: '[concept]: something conceived in the mind; a thought; a notion. Synonyms: see Idea'. She investigates the ways that concepts, like all representations, are neither simple nor adequate in themselves and concludes that they are neither fixed nor unambiguous (ibid., 23). Her idea of 'concepts' and notions 'sitting in-between existing disciplines' has guided my methodological thought process: 'They travel – between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities' (ibid., 24).

One purpose, which I kept closely in mind during the soundscape compositional process, was that I wanted my piece to encourage the opening up of conversations and questions with its listeners. These 'openings', are often utilised in a/r/tography:

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<sup>53</sup> Living inquiry is often defined as 'an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual understandings and experiences rather than mere visual and textual representations' (Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005: 902). Classification privileges the visual here, but, I would suggest that any modality could be utilised, such as sound.

Openings are not necessarily passive holes through which one can see easily. Openings are often like cuts, tears, ruptures or cracks that resist predictability, comfort and safety. It is here that knowledge is often created as contradictions and resistances are faced, even interfaced with other knowledge. Meanings are negotiated by, with, and among a/r/tographers as well as with their audiences. It is in these conversations that multiple exchanges co-exist and reverberate together. (Springgay et al., 2008: xxx)

I had been instructed in interview techniques, undergone sensitive interview training, and my project had successfully traversed the university ethics committee procedures. I found myself asking – what happens after the interviews have taken place? As Lyonblum (2017: 22) comments: ‘And while there are more ways to record than ever, the ethics surrounding the practice remain as ambiguous as ever’.

I was particularly concerned with the lack of ethical guidelines about interactions with interviewees, subsequent to the recording process. What about communications during the compositional process of sound editing, for instance, or whilst collecting feedback on the first draft of the composition? Academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and archaeology have behaved with post-colonial irresponsibility, on several occasions during their established existence (see: Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). I did not want to be accused of overgeneralisation concerning the representation of interviewees. I wanted to ensure that I was making informed decisions when representing specific groups, especially since I was using diverse sound locations. I did not want to produce a ‘tourist’ soundscape: ‘...we may be so unfamiliar with cultural, social and political undercurrents and subtleties of a place or a situation that we cannot help but create a superficial, touristic sonic impression of a place’ (Westerkamp, 2002: 55).

I could not find an equivalent code of ethics concerning the exploitation of individuals within sound studies and considered adapting those created within visual studies (see: Mannay, 2015; Warr et al., 2016). Perhaps visual studies pushed towards these ethics more readily because of the social convention that photography is an invasion of privacy? (see: Drever, 1999). Sound recording, however, can also be very intrusive. As Young comments (in Hockings, 1975: 112): ‘The microphone takes away a man’s words, but the camera takes away his soul’. Lyonblum (2017: 125) comments:

At present, research ethics frameworks in North American universities do not require approval for recording ‘open air’ environments, rendering individuals and musicians who are performing in public places vulnerable. The issue is further complicated when sound documentaries or sound pieces are treated as works of art as if such a label eschews criticism of ethical practices concerning recording.

Can I record in ‘open air’ environments without any restriction?<sup>54</sup> Is it possible to ‘own’ a sound? (see: Silva, 2000; Intellectual Property Office, 2018; 2019) We acknowledge that music can be owned, but what about sound? I ensured that if I recorded a busker,<sup>55</sup> or a street artist’s music for any longer than 30 seconds, I asked for oral acceptance for the use and processing of their material in my compositions.

At the outset, I believed soundscape recordings might help solve some thorny problems around subjectivity, when compared to written accounts. I have since, however, discovered that recordings are equally complex. Recordings are highly subjective in terms of editing, where they are made, and even the microphone placement. These considerations emphasised the importance of having clear sonic moments in my compositions where my presence as the recordist was evident to listeners. These moments acted as reminders of human subjectivity and that this was a human-made project.

Rennie and Anderson (2016); Lyonblum (2017); Drever (2002) and McCartney (2016a) have all drawn our attention to the scant existing contemporary discussion of ethical issues for sound composition. Cohesive ethical frameworks, furthermore, are still absent. Andean (2014b: 176), however, has started to build these frameworks, calling for ‘being informed, being sensitive and taking responsibility’. He outlines how each composer’s intentions are the fulcrum of ethical concerns:

Are we primarily concerned about the inappropriate use of sound, or more about the ignorance this may imply? What was the artist’s intention in employing this sound – were they unaware of the potential offence, or did they use it despite, or even deliberately because of, such offence? Is either of these ethically better or worse than the other – is it worse for an artist to be ignorant of the cultural implications of their work, or to have gone ahead despite and in full knowledge of these implications? (Ibid.)

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<sup>54</sup> Public recording frameworks have a wider reach than academic ethics procedures. Legal privacy issues include UK by-laws, such as the banning of recording in Royal Parks (see: Rawes, 2019).

<sup>55</sup> If I was just walking down a road and I happened to record a few seconds as I passed the busker by, I would not stop to ask for oral acceptance, as I saw this as part of the open soundscape.

For every situation and composition there will always be different, contingent answers, as Andean (2014b: 177) comments: ‘The more culturally charged a symbol may be, the greater the responsibility the artist must be willing to take in using it; the greater the imperative that the use of this symbol be artistically or culturally validated’. These words of Andean’s began to haunt me whilst composing my final project in Jerusalem, a city heavily laden with sensitive sounds linked to multiple histories, religions and conflicts (see: Wood, 2006). These sensitive sounds and meanings change radically depending on the global/geographical position and cultural web of the listener, hence the responsibility resting with the sound recordist for developing local knowledge wherever s/he is recording.

The way particular sound/symbols are included in a composition will also impact upon listener interpretations: ‘To involve the listener is an essential part of the composition, namely to complete its network of meanings’ (Truax, 1996: 55). The interpretation of the symbol lies in the relationship between the composer and listener. This is yet another borderline space ‘in-between’. Every step of sequencing the sounds and interview recordings required careful decision-making. Should the spoken narrative somehow correspond to the soundscape noises, (e.g. a Rabbi talking simultaneously to synagogue sounds)? In Cage and Tudor’s (1959) collaboration, *Indeterminacy*, there are only two elements: sound design and spoken word. The sound is abstract- it has no reference (see: Emmerson, 1986). Thus, sound can be placed without reference to words.<sup>56</sup>

In my compositions, the sounds, together with the narratives, evoke images. Concerns about representation were paramount within the soundscapes as well as the written thesis. As Andean (2014b: 174) writes ‘...“sound” is a primarily acoustic phenomenon, while “a sound” is a cultural construct: a symbol. The vast majority of ethical considerations relating to sound concern primarily, or only, this second concept: sound as symbol’. I was very aware of the placement of sounds in my pieces, and of the sonic symbols evoked in listeners. At the juncture, for example, of one of my interviewees talking about learning Hebrew, I purposefully did not place any Arabic speakers in this section of the background soundscape.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Although the sound does punctuate in unusual ways.

<sup>57</sup> This was to avoid confusion for listeners who might not be able to tell the difference between Hebrew and Arabic.

Questions surrounding ethical decisions did not stop after finishing the compositional process. Having completed the two compositions, presenting the pieces to listeners to gather feedback also required consideration in terms of location and nature of audience<sup>58</sup> (inside or outside the practitioner field or the academy for example): ‘Though these endeavours are not separate, there are times when particular aspects may be highlighted for unique audiences’ (Springgay et al., 2008: xxix).

The discussion and examples above attempt to show some of the ethical dilemmas and uses of ethical know-how in my thinking. Each decision (or lack of one) carries its own implications for the project. This kind of human inquiry seems to be a constant ethical maze, entered into by each scholar. I noticed that this constant, contingent, messy maze, was an important element of my research process. I would urge future soundscape composers to consider and problematise the difficult dilemmas they rubbed up against during their research. They need to openly discuss the ‘ethical cultural web’ (Andean, 2014b) that they went through.

Later in this chapter I return to similar themes. I will show how I dealt with contradictory responses from my ‘composer side’ and ‘researcher side’. As Andean (2014b: 176) says:

This seems to leave us with a choice: we can either ignore ethical considerations entirely, using sound and symbol in whatever way we wish, or we can choose to engage with the incredibly complex ethical cultural web. However, this is only the illusion of choice: although the first of these may claim to be a position somehow ‘beyond’ ethics, it in fact simply takes an extreme and consistent position on any ethical questions that might arise. We are therefore hopelessly bound to the ethical web, whether we like it or not.

### **Field Recordings and Composer’s Footsteps**

Field recordings have always questioned society’s visual bias. In Lane and Carlyle’s *In The Field* (2011), artists, composers and scholars are interviewed about the current world of field recording practice, which is discussed in relation to approaches to composition, sound art, documentaries, and music production:

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<sup>58</sup> See chapter five for detailed discussion of audience/location issues.

What today is understood as field recording is located at the confluence of a number of historical practices...Field recording practices were further broadened and deepened through strategies associated with experimental music's incorporation of both environmental sound and the sound worlds that those early field recording practices opened up...Technical advances in microphones, cables, recording equipment and batteries have extended the horizons of possibility. (Lane and Carlyle, 2011: 9)

An exploration of the history of field recordings is beyond the scope (and word limit) of this study, however during this bridge I wanted to demonstrate the widespread influence of people outside the fields of contemporary soundscape composition on my practice and ideas.

Human cultures have a visual bias to which sound has been an 'add-on' (see: chapter one). Stoever-Ackerman (2010) observes that historically, academic research has favoured visual studies. This can be shown by the current development of visual culture departments around the UK and Ireland compared to the very small number of existent sound studies research centres.<sup>59</sup> Field recordists have come from many differently disciplined backgrounds however, which perhaps challenges this hegemony. Recordist Schwartz (cited in Stoever-Ackerman, 2010: 61) told a journalist that 'History up to now has been writing and pictures... I should like to start a public archive of the sounds of our times.'

Field recording has been used to explore sound in many different ways. Teibel, a psychoacoustics scholar, was a field recordist. Teibel privileged the recording of his natural environment over and above the science of sound (see: Walker, 1975). He believed that listeners would benefit from the therapeutic effects of listening to nature sounds (cited in Lyonblum, 2017: 118). His work inspired me to incorporate sections of nature sounds in my compositions, such as bird song, thence giving listeners aural therapeutic breaks between compositional sections. Schwartz was a documentary filmmaker who used sonic elements, often urban environmental sounds, and his *Nueva York* (1955) project has been a major influence on my work. In this piece he recorded urban environmental sounds and interviewed new immigrants from Puerto Rico. Schwartz used his own technique to mix the interviews and sound together. The low

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<sup>59</sup> Namely the Sonic Arts Research Centre (Queen's University Belfast), The Sonic Art Research Unit (Oxford Brookes), Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (University of the Arts London) and the Unit for Sound Practice Research (Goldsmiths, University of London) at present to my knowledge.

academic profile of this project within migration studies possibly indicates an academic bias against sound-based research.

Gould (also an accomplished pianist) is another field recordist who influenced my work. My second project concludes with a section containing multi-layered narratives, produced using mixing in order to capture various participant conversations. In mixing this piece (with panning in particular) the chaos was controlled, despite multiple voices playing. Listeners could choose which voice to focus on at any given moment. This idea emerged from my own listening to *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* (Girard, 1993).<sup>60</sup> In the truck stop scene in this film, Gould is shown pulling into the car park of a Canadian roadside diner. As the scene develops the diner becomes an echo chamber of chitchat. After ordering, Gould eavesdrops on the other customers' conversations and begins to organise their combined voices. With turns of his head, he mentally conducts the dialogue. This scene displays a musician's attentiveness to surrounding sounds. I found this a fascinating way to present sound and was keen to borrow from these ideas.

The background voices in the multilayered narrative sections of my composition might be seen as acousmatic. You can only understand snippets of words, the rest is unrecognisable. This treatment borrows from Andean's (2013: 4) discussion on the connection between acousmatic and narrative:

I would argue that emotional response to an acousmatic phrase is almost entirely determined by narrative aspects, whether this is fairly literal imagery - a pastoral soundscape is calming, the sound of gunfire is frightening - or more general: impacts may be startling, rapid movement may be exhilarating, and so on.

Listeners to my composition will be repeatedly renewing these narratives through their own perceptions.

This presence and contribution of listeners, moves our discussion on towards the presence (explicit or implicit) and contribution of the composer. Some composers try and remove the sound of their presence in recordings. Using slow soundwalking techniques, for example, that avoid movement noise as much as possible (McCartney, 2014). It became both methodologically and sonically important for me to remind listeners that this composition was human-made. At the beginning of my inquiry, I assumed that I would

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<sup>60</sup> This work draws on concepts from Gould's *The Idea of North*, 1967.

reveal the recordist's presence every now and then in my compositions, through the sound of my footsteps or, perhaps, an occasional cough. In my second project's composition, however, I started to include recordings of myself talking with interviewees as well as leaving moments of shared humour. The notion of hiding my presence felt similar to conventional ethnographers who presented their notes in the third person in a (misguided) attempt at greater objectivity (see: Myerhoff, 1978).

Some composers also utilise their presence. The use of 'self-reflexive narrative'<sup>61</sup> within sound composition can be traced back to Ferrari. His series *Presque Rien* (1967 onwards) presented distinctive narrative approaches within sound composition. Often his compositions were themed around a walk. Ferrari, sometimes accompanied by his wife, Brunhild, discussed his journey along the way (see: Grubbs and Ferrari, 2019). Westerkamp (*Kits Beach Soundwalk*, 1989), Cardiff (*A Large Slow River*, 2000) and Heuson (*Soundscapes of the Black Hills*, 2009) have all included their own composer narratives in compositions. I experimented with these ideas but found that the inclusion of my own narratives within compositions that included participants voices gave too much 'spoken word' emphasis and tipped the balance away from the soundscape elements. I preferred the soundscape moments that did not feature a main storyteller. The interviewees became my narrators. There is enough of my 'voice' in this written commentary on the pieces, and occasionally in the interviews, without including it in the soundscapes too.

Within the field of ethnography, field notes are normally thought of as private documents, to be referred to when 'writing up' (see: Emerson, 2011). Browne (2013: 432) however, argues that researchers should '[make] visible the invisible processes of fieldwork' to show the researcher reflections and uncertainties over methodology. He also claims that they 'become useful repositories for critical reflection on the research process as it is unfolding' (ibid.). Rennie and Anderson (2016: 230), in *The Sound Diaries*, discuss creating their own oral research notes as part of their composition:

Although it is apparent from the soundscapes and surroundings we describe that we are in two very different places, similar themes begin to emerge. While Anderson is walking amongst abandoned coastal houses, Rennie is lost on a country lane, attempting to find the path back to his small hometown. Rennie reflects on his disassociation from this location, questioning whether he can therefore call it home.

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<sup>61</sup> From the research term, reflexivity (see: Hertz, 1997).

I can appreciate that for some composers, it might be important to be reminded of certain moments of reflection through the recording process. The ability to almost put yourself back in the frame of mind you were in when you chose to record in a certain way, or what fork in the road you decided to take.

I was, however, trying to maintain a balance between acknowledging my presence and privileging the participants' experiences. This balancing act led to a decision not to include my reflexive narrative in the compositions. My compositions were not autobiographical in the manner of the sound diaries (above) and I was trying to emphasise the interviewees' experiences. I did, nonetheless, include self-reflexive notes in the bridge composition. This gave listeners a chance to hear my spontaneous 'in the field' decisions, whilst not distracting from the interviewees in the actual compositions. This has meant that the bridge composition not only shows the connection between the two projects, but also the connection between the scholar/composer and the evolving project process, almost like a 'methodological chapter' composition.

Next in this chapter, I reflect on the ways of thinking-with-theory and thinking-in-action that enabled me to make difficult decisions about these creative challenges. One way of reflecting on these ideas was to conduct imaginary dialogues in my mind's eye with various critics of my research process and form. One such dramatised conversation with a traditional social scientist, of earlier times, forms Appendix A of this thesis.

### **Metaphors and Their Practical Implications**

Having re-read and re-written the first part of this chapter several times, I realise that I have described the ideas that made up my methodological literature review for this thesis. I have not, however, adequately explained the process of thinking-in-action (or 'thought in the act', see: Manning and Massumi, 2014) that has become the practice of making recordings (deliberating microphone placement, for instance) and compositions (deciding on which sounds to use, for example). These decisions inform my everyday process of doing research. I did not have method and theory books on standby in the field and as previously noted, there is little written about the ethics and process of sound composition as inquiry. Nonetheless, I am going to attempt to illustrate my thinking-in-action as a composer *and* inquirer, coming daily across methodological uncertainties. This self-reflexive section illustrates the ideas I am thinking with more acutely than anything else

I have written. These are the concepts and metaphors that orient my thinking in everyday life outside the confines of ‘researcher’ and ‘composer’. These metaphors also come into play when I am taking an academic or methodological position. I offer this moment of reflection on my everyday life decision-making, by way of exemplar, rather than as a template for future scholars.

Reflecting on my thinking-in-action as a composer/researcher dealing with dilemmas during these projects, I have come to realise that I have been translating them into metaphorical theological puzzles. I do not see this as coincidence, as with my work linking to diaspora, and the second project focusing on aspects of Jewish identity, my brain seems to have drawn these tacit connections. Again, other composers (and other projects) will need to find their own life metaphors. In thinking about my research projects with the ideas at the forefront of my life, I have in some senses been following the advice of post-qualitative researchers who urge new scholars to: ‘...break the habit of rushing to preexisting research methodologies and, instead, to follow the provocations that come from everywhere in the inquiry that is living and writing’ (St. Pierre, 2018: 1). In my own case, I would adapt this last phrase to ‘everywhere in the inquiry that is living and composing’. The ideas and metaphors that I have been thinking with in these projects are the ideas and metaphors that inform the rest of my life, not only as a composer/researcher, but also as a human being and, therefore, in my case, as a modern *halochic* Jew.<sup>62</sup>

Judaism is a religion of debate (take, for example, the well-known saying ‘two Jews, three opinions’). This slips easily across flimsily constructed borders in my mind into a methodological metaphor to assist with conflicts between my composer and researcher sides. Whilst composing (a practice that constitutes my primary means of inquiring and thinking), I am also researching. These activities are not separate. During these discussions on methodology, however, I am using the term ‘composer’ to encapsulate the side of me most focused on aesthetic concerns (aesthetic thinking and know-how), whilst the researcher side is focused more on social science concerns (relational/ethical thinking and know-how). These two elements are entwined (and cyclical, see: Heron, 1996) and in many ways they have become part of the same thread, like *tzitzis* (religious ritual

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<sup>62</sup> A Jew who is observant of Jewish law (*halocha*) whilst engaging in the modern secular world.

fringes), several threads, though separate at first, become tied together (relational/human know-how).



Figure 4: *Tzitzis* tied in the *Ashkenazi* tradition.

The metaphors to help my methodological problems were always based on balance. For the most part, engaging with my projects, my composer side and researcher side were not in conflict. For the rare occasions when they were, I had created this metaphorical thought process to assist my decision-making process. This, on reflection, was what Varela (1999) would call the ‘ethical know-how’ (the habits of thought, in their immediacy, that inform, construct and constrain my decision-making) that I drew on in this study from my life: my habitual go-to nexus of action, wisdom and cognition: ‘Ethics is closer to wisdom than to reason, closer to understanding what is good than to correctly adjudicating particular situations’ (ibid., 3). Thus, everyday life metaphors borrowed from modern *halochic* Judaism represent these composer/researcher struggles.

Contemporary religious Jews can often feel conflicted. Sometimes they might feel that the modern-day world sits on one side of them, and their Judaism sits on the other side. Many Jews (spanning a variety of denominations)<sup>63</sup>, have to achieve the balance between *halocho* (Jewish law) with modern life. And to find the perfect balance, it requires many complex decisions to be made. As Dorff (2005: 3) comments:

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<sup>63</sup> This discussion will primarily be through the lens of Masorti (Conservative), Open Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Judaism as these are the denominations which mostly grapple with these issues. *Charedi* Jews not being as involved with the modern world and progressive Jews not placing such an emphasis on *halocho*.

It is always easiest to understand, explain, and have passion for one or the other of the ends of a spectrum, for then one embraces that endpoint consistently, without requiring much thought. It is harder to affirm a middle point on any spectrum, for then one must have the maturity and intelligence, psychological security, and wisdom to exercise judgment and to live with inconsistencies. On the other hand, the great advantage of affirming most middle positions is that most of life's issues fall neither at one extreme nor the other, but somewhere in the middle. So the neatness, clarity, and physiological security that one sacrifices in taking a middle position is often more than made up for by the fact that it reflects the real world and offers insights as to how to live in it. It may be easier and more comfortable to pretend that the world we experience operates in clear categories and then to live our lives that way, with everything either black or white; but ultimately that requires shutting oneself off from the real world, with all its grays, with considerable prices to pay for doing so.

This statement reflects my thinking around the dilemmas within my projects, balancing concerns of compositional aesthetics and social science ethics. As Weiss (2019: 256) says: 'Halakha [Jewish law] therefore, is not an unyielding system, but one in which there may be more than one answer to a question – and given the situation, both may be correct'. This connects with my reflections about how my choices as an individual composer should be balanced with the interests of the communities connected to the projects. Some decisions, such as which type of microphone to use, are unlikely to affect the community; but decisions about how to chop up recordings of an interview, as discussed below, can have wide ranging affects. You have to find an answer specific to the question and situation at hand, as Lamm (2010: 200) notes:

There is no model of Torah Umadda [Torah and secular knowledge] that is exclusively valid for all people at all times. There is a plurality of versions or paradigms to choose from... the academic Judaic scholar who finds [the] encounter most sharply... in his own discipline as he experiences the most direct interaction between the two. Each has his own 'way', as Rabbi Akiva Eger taught, and in the fullness of time each of them will be vindicated in one aspect or another, for we are arrayed in a circle about the Truth.

In most cases, modern Jews' personal autonomy (based on their modern-day ethics) will come to the same conclusion as Jewish law. For example, *tzedakah* (charity): in Jewish law you must give tithe (10 percent) of what you earn to charity (Davis, 2006: 335). In modern day ethics, we are also taught that charity is important, for in society it is important for us as individuals to look after one another (MacAskill, 2015; Singer, 2019). Either way, you reach the same answer. What happens, however, if an observant Jew is faced with an issue where their Jewish law and personal autonomy (based on their modern-day ethics) do not reach the same conclusion? For example, a doctor, who

focuses on medical ethics, might feel ambivalent about circumcising their son at eight days old, which is when Jewish law says it must occur:

The individual Jew, however, is not simply an isolated person who happens to choose to affirm his or her Jewishness; rather, from the moment of birth or conversion, each Jew must see himself or herself as an ‘autonomous Jewish self’. That is, we modern Jews, as an integral part of who we are as people, are Jews just as much as we are individuals. (Dorff, 2005: 476)

Modern *halochic* Judaism, and its theological debates, sit in parallel and inform the dialogue in this thesis. Standing as I do in the middle, at the borders in this liminal space between composer and researcher positions, for the most part, both these ‘selves’ come to overlapping conclusions (similar to the *tzedakah* example above). For instance, when recording it is both aesthetically and ethically important to be mindful of the dynamics in the interview space. Ethically, it is essential for interviewees to feel that they are in a safe space where they are respected and can be open about their thoughts and experiences (see: Gubrium and Holstein, 2001). Aesthetically, free-flowing, open conversations are much better material for compositions than jilted back-and-forth interviews that can happen when interviewees feel uncomfortable.

At times there have been conflicts when composer aesthetics and researcher ethics have not concurred. At such moments I have used the same metaphor of the balanced, entwined *tzitzis* (see: figure 4 above) and the dialogic thinking I connect with the balancing act of modern *halochic* Judaism. This dialogic thinking (through intercommunication with self and others, see: Innes, 2007) helped clarify several problems I encountered along the way. One such conflict concerned the structure of the compositions. My composer side wished to render the structure as aesthetically pleasing as possible: chopping up the interviews and grouping them according to themes, thus placing them in a different order to the original conversations that took place. Researcher considerations sought to leave the structure in its original recording state: as close a reflection as possible of the original interviews, thus keeping the natural themed progression of the interviews. In the first compositional project, I followed the researcher considerations, which I regretted as a composer and was, I felt, to the aesthetic detriment of the piece. The piece was very slow and the content of the interviews was out of sync, allowing participants to speak about

similar topics at different times, leaving listeners, rather than the composer, the work of reflecting comparatively on the spoken words.<sup>64</sup>

Engaging in inner dialogical thinking (as outlined above) I decided that since the length of the interviews had already been changed for reasons of accessibility, it seemed important for the listeners to hear connections, shared themes and disagreements between interviewees. This thinking was also influenced by oral history interview texts that placed spoken words under themes, side by side on the page for the reader to compare (see: Smith, 2001: 711). For the second compositional project I resolved on a better (or ‘wiser’, see: Varela, 1999) balance between composer and researcher thinking. I chose one interview, which provided the ‘organic’ structure of the piece and moved the rest of the material around this template. Thus, comparison between the narratives could be made, yet the piece formed around a complete original interview.

I have shown, above, the kinds of thinking I was engaged with as an interdisciplinary scholar. The content and form of the compositions is evidenced by the practice element of this thesis. I am setting out in this chapter the ideas that informed my thinking and decision-making. What I am trying to show is how new ideas I have come across have affected my habits of thought, action and reflection in my own practice. Reflections on my own habitual nexus of thought (such as dialogical thinking from my Jewish observance) have informed how to entwine these ideas into my practice, in the manner of ‘plugging one text into another’ that post qualitative inquirers such as Jackson and Mazzei have borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari (see: Jackson & Mazzei, 2013).

This process of ‘plugging in’ different forms of thinking, informed the scholarly work, opening up new spaces to explore when dealing with difficult ethical and compositional dilemmas. ‘Plugging in’ the ways of thinking that I borrow from my everyday life: ways of thinking as a modern Jew; ways of visualising the entangled, but sometimes separate nature of composing and researching through the visual symbol of the *tzitzis*; was paramount when dealing with these challenging decisions. As Jackson and Mazzei (2013: 262) have asserted:

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<sup>64</sup> Some informal conversations with listeners who heard both pieces acknowledged that listeners preferred the more aesthetically pleasing structure of the second project. This would have made a useful contribution to my formal listener feedback work (see chapter five). In future projects listener feedback would prove a useful mediating factor to researcher/composer dilemmas.

Plugging in to produce something new is a constant, continuous process of making and unmaking... It is the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together. So to see it at work, we have to ask not only how things are connected but also what territory is claimed in that connection.

Indeed, it is this arranging, organising and fitting together into new forms in the space between disciplines that I have attempted to demonstrate, in this reflective bridge. A new form opens up the possibility of discovering new knowledge (see: Sameshima, 2007) and space between disciplines (see: Rogoff, 2000). Smudging the boundaries of disciplines is the space that has been opened up in twenty-first century interdisciplinary research (see: Bal, 2002; Rogoff, 2000). Practitioners can use all sorts of thinking processes, (my modern *halochic* Judaism metaphor, as exemplar), to help them come up with a way to move forward.

### **Where I Sit: In-between Art and Social Research**

I have discussed (above) ideas, practices and ways of thinking (old and new) that have informed this work. I find myself between the arts and social sciences. I have a foot on either side of this border and perhaps another way of thinking about these things, is in relation to what I am not. I have presented the space that I have intended my research to sit and flourish in: sitting between disciplines and navigating that territory. Reflecting on and explaining my research through demonstrating what it is *not* could be helpful. In fact, the word 'define' (similar to *lehagdir* in Hebrew) means to draw borders around (Soanes and Hawker, 2008). Mapping out what is beyond the borders of my practice can help it to be more specifically defined. In this short section I will compare the theories and practices that I consider to exist, either side of my own work. As I write this, I am acutely aware of the spatial, almost geographical language I am using: positioning, mapping and borders. This last habit of thought is to place my work as composer/scholar visually and spatially along continua with the work of other scholars and composers.

In the act of thinking spatially in this way and (literally) placing my practice alongside those that are closest to my own, I arrive at a much sharper delineation of the borders of my own body of work. These lines between different artist's, composer's and researcher's practices are a fluid and personal spectrum of methods, theories and ideas. Constraints of both space and time have not allowed for an exhaustive analysis of the work of all of the scholars within the diverse fields this thesis touches upon. This section is an insight into my own ways of thinking about 'position' in interdisciplinary work within academia.

These ways of thinking about positioning in interdisciplinary practice (and what my work *is* in relation to what it is *not*) have enabled me to clarify the boundaries between my own work and that of others. In this process it seems more efficient and useful to look at the work of scholars alongside the borders of my own work, rather than those I would position more distantly.

In the diagram (below), I have placed my body of work sitting along the imaginary line at the centre.<sup>65</sup> This imaginary line also shapes my work, creating an envisaged home for what I am doing in relation to that of others in the field(s). The furthest away from me on the left of this virtual continuum is Amelides. Amelides (2016) coined the term ‘acousmatic storytelling’ which evolved within his work. Coming from an acousmatic background, he became less and less interested in using sounds purely for their own sake, and became: ‘more urgently aware of a need to engage with issues and themes of the world around me’ (ibid., 214). The methodologies that he uses are similar to mine, including oral history. He sees his compositions as ‘researching and “writing” stories as accounts of the past’ (ibid., 220). Reading the language he uses when discussing his work, however, there are clear differences with mine. In his pieces there is a narrator and the interviewees are described as ‘characters’. To imagine yourself as the central storyteller within your compositions changes the narrative and interpersonal dynamics of not only composer style, but also the compositional outcome. By way of contrast, in my compositions I do not see myself as the ‘plot creator’ but as the researcher or inquirer in collaboration with participants and, to a certain extent, audience.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This diagram could be seen as having an oppositional element, placing the narrative storytelling compositional approaches of Amelides in conflict with the spatial compositional approaches of Panopoulos. In this thesis they are regarded as different ways of thinking (narrative or spatial) and composing.

<sup>66</sup> The end product of any composer’s work, including my own, has always been filtered through the composer’s imagination, but ultimately, my work positions my participants as collaborators, rather than as characters in my drama.

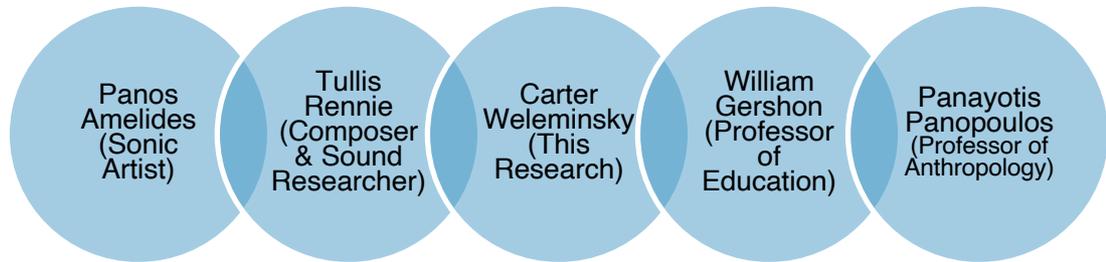


Figure 5: Diagram to show continuum of my work in relation to others.

In addition, Amelides uses historical archives to inform and construct unfolding events creating dramatisations and embellishments. It would not fit with the collaborative ethics of my work to filter the piece solely through the composer's imagination. Collaborative and participatory research ethics impose limits on the influence of my imagination on my work. Amelides (2016: 216) builds his compositions in ways 'similar to an extent to the sequences in a film' in that he creates sonic worlds, merging different historical archives with new material. My recordings only include material which I have witnessed, borrowing from Geertz's (1988b: 1-25) ethnographic criterion of 'being there' as a hallmark of researcher integrity. A key difference between Amelides' work and my own work is the role of the audience/listener. In my work, listeners are actively immersed in the narratives of the interviewees (see: Babbage, 2016). I do not want my listeners to experience my compositions, 'pre-shaped and ultimately controlled by others (artists)' (Babbage, 2016: 3). But more like Sullivan's (2005: 7) reflexive practitioner, I want my listeners to constantly change between 'action and reflection, immersion and detachment, emotion and analysis and always in the interest of deepening understanding and promoting dialogue'. Amelides' work is compelling and also has much in common with my own. Although our work has differences in methodological construction, his textual description of his work, could, equally, describe mine:

The resulting works can then serve as a trigger of memory for people familiar with the stories told, or to ‘create’ memory for those who are not familiar with the particular stories, utilising the unique capabilities of the recording medium to represent, recreate, mirror and stimulate human memory by evoking a collection of incidents and experiences through listening. This extends to audiences both inside and outside the culture from which the stories are drawn. (2016: 215)

Returning to my continuum, to my immediate left is Rennie, who is often cited in this thesis. Rennie (2014: 121) writes extensively of the connections between soundscapes and ethnography, stating: ‘What then, about composing with these sounds? Could interpreting the holistic experience of fieldwork by composing, rather than simply presenting the notes (field recording) in their raw form, be a sonic write up?’ This ethnographic overlay that Rennie brings to his work, comes very close to my methods. He differs, perhaps, only in his use of ‘self-reflexive narrative’.<sup>67</sup> Rennie (2016)<sup>68</sup> integrates his own narratives ‘into the act of recording itself’. This is not an element that I would have included in my practice and it differs greatly from the ways that I, for ethical reasons, occasionally reveal my presence as the recordist to audiences. Rennie (2016: 229) includes his verbal reactions in the field, stating: ‘On these recordings we freely externalise our internal thinking while recording, forming autoethnographic self reflexive narratives’. Rennie’s pieces are focused around the recordist’s experience, whilst mine are focused around the experiences of the interviewees (with obvious considerations of researcher influence on the project). I would argue that having my voice present for a majority of the recordings, as Rennie’s is, would reduce the possibilities for listeners to become imaginatively immersed in the experiences that the interviewees describe.

Rennie’s use of layering of multiple narratives, is similar, yet differs, from my practice. He states that: ‘the first “original voice” is heard in the original field recording, the headnote represented by reflexive listening to the recording at another place and time (in this case together in the studio), and the third distanced, experienced, objective voice is the completed compositional narrative’ (2016: 230). My use of layered, multiple narratives seeks to show connections or disconnections to the interviews included in my compositions, whilst highlighting the diversity and collaborative process of my

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<sup>67</sup> Rennie is using the term self-reflexive here, taken from the research term reflexivity (see: Hertz, 1997), which uses the person of the researcher as a filter, to differentiate his work from the term self-reflective, used in everyday parlance.

<sup>68</sup> Note to reader: Rennie collaborated with Anderson for this article, but my discussion here is only about Rennie’s work and process.

interviewees. Rennie (ibid.) seeks to reflect on his own voice. Ultimately, I am less concerned with the emotional responses of the field recordist. Rennie (2014) has advocated ethnographic approaches to field recordings, but does not include other social research methods in his work, such as urban sociology or participatory inquiry. An overview of Rennie's past projects, *Rio: An Outsider Inside* (2013b) and *Manifest* (2013a) could be viewed with Rennie as the classic 'observer' evoking 'sonic tourism' (Drever, 2002), a stance I have already tried to reject from my own work. It is my contention that my compositions combine certain aspects of Amelides' creative approaches with some of Rennie's ethics, transparency and concern over artistic conscience.

Continuing along the continuum, Gershon sits just to my right. Gershon (2018) writes about the possibilities of sonic methodologies. This work emerged from an educationalist's interest in collaborative ethnography (Gershon, 2011). Gershon regards sound as a means of capturing multiple perspectives on a specific site and sometimes presents his work as sound installations. He posits: 'In an effort to push this possibility to an almost fully sonic representation, I put together a piece of sound art that consisted of four pairs of speakers through which I route the sounds of each classroom' (2018: 130). His theory of sonic methodologies focuses on how 'literal and metaphorical applications of sound' might be useful for qualitative researchers (ibid.). I concur with his view that there is no one method of inquiry that fits all circumstances. He argues: 'Instead of a set of hard and fast rules... it is my hope that outlining the kinds of ideas and ideals I have employed to these ends might provide a general set of understandings about the types of considerations central to sounded methodologies' (ibid.).

Gershon holds method and representation, as opposed to creative processes or aesthetic outcomes, at the centre of his work. He views sonic methodologies as being 'flexible' and 'organic and advocates a governing set of procedures for deciding on how to 'conduct research that helps to avoid bias' (2018: 135). This again concurs with my work. I have always relied on my 'researcher side' to hold my 'aesthetic side' accountable with regards to ethics and representational issues and that this does need to be in place before a project starts. Gershon, however, seems not to seek a balance, as I do, between aesthetic and ethical considerations, but seems primarily to be concerned with the preoccupations of conventional qualitative inquiry. Gershon (2018) advocates a data analysis process, subsequent to the recording process, similar to that of qualitative analysis. He seems to be coming to this work in order to include, or legitimise, the principles of qualitative

research for sound, using installations only as an illustration of ‘data collection’, not as a creative process or as a means of disseminating research results. Despite this differently held position and intention, some of his perspectives on creative installation work match my own. He comments: ‘After listening to people talk, the sounds that surrounded and contextualized their talk, and the tone and tenor of conversations, my written transcriptions felt somehow empty’ (2018: 128).

Lastly, to complete the continuum, moving to the right of Gershon, is Panopoulos. Panopoulos is a social anthropologist. He has interests in music, sound and hearing: ‘[He] focuses on the indigenous conceptualisations of sound and noise and the metaphoric language concerning the sense of hearing...’ (Panopoulos, 2003: 639). Panopoulos’ work (2003) lacks collaboration with participants/audience and follows more conventional qualitative research traditions. Data is observed, collected and thence ‘written up’. This research values the knowledge that sound can help us uncover. The focus surrounds the cultural meanings and symbolism of sounds and thenceforward becomes a written document: ‘...By analysing the role of bells and their sounds in the community’s social relations... I also explore bells and their symbolic significance’ (2003: 640). Sound symbolism has also been taken into account in my own compositions. It is my contention, however, that the sonic expressions of sounds become more accessible through sound recordings than through written transcriptions. This writing represents a companion to, and commentary on, the accompanying compositions. I am presenting this written documentation alongside my compositions, not as a transcription or translation thereof. Panopoulos (2003: 652) has ‘...suggested that the analysis of sound should start from a discussion of the cultural construction of the sense and, more specifically, the symbolism and the metaphorical language concerning the sense of hearing’. Thus Panopoulos, even more than Gershon, views sound through the lens of the academy and its traditions of social research. My arguments for creative sound research reaching audiences outside the academy are almost held in a different arena, addressing different audiences and issues.

On re-reading this section and looking back at the continuum, I notice that my work seems closer to Amelides on the far left than to Panopoulos on the far right. Perhaps this is because of my sense of identity as primarily a composer? Reflecting on the diagram I created I wondered whether to re-position myself more to the left, but then realised that this was, equally, a visual representation of the work and the thinking which had closely influenced my own.

## Conclusion: Thoughts on Being the Composer / Researcher

What would have become of oral history if it had kept its data in sonic form? I suspect it would have taken even longer to be accepted as a legitimate discipline. One significant way that oral history gained academic credibility was by transferring data into written accounts. Contemporary oral history is only now accepting more creative approaches, such as the relatively recent inclusion of performance: ‘Oral history performance is strung between reference to real events and real listener/witnesses, between recollection and anticipation of historical change’ (Pollock, 2005: 7). This break from traditional written histories will, hopefully, be supported by other creative disciplines. Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions will inevitably encounter similar suspicions and scepticisms to those encountered by oral historians, or more widely and recently, narrative inquirers, within the academy:

...the qualities of accuracy, validity and objectivity have, in many circumstances, historically been favoured over expression, interpretation and subjectivity. In other words, scientific knowledge has been favoured over narrative, for scientific knowledge is seen as holding within it an unshakable truth. (Rennie and Anderson, 2016: 223)

Soundscape composition, indeed, does not produce data, which can be verified, tested or counted. But I would argue that a written ethnographic account of (for example) the sounds of children, who speak different languages, playing in a park that bridges two communities, cannot do *sonic* justice to that environment. Can the written word, faithfully represent the spoken voice trembling or laughing in all emotion? All research is flawed and all inquiries sit in the space ‘in-between’. How can any inquiry be deemed ‘not reliable’, if the researchers are aware of their purposes, methodologies, theories, ethics and skilled in their chosen practices and are equally prepared to scrutinise themselves? (Czarniawska, 2004: 7). Lyotard (1979: 19) states that, ‘narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge, in more ways than one’. He claims that narratives provide knowledge, which interlaces time, space, communication and language, and therefore is a vital part of understanding the world (see: Lyotard, 1979). I would then argue that soundscape compositions are a very suitable research platform for narrative inquiry as they can embrace and reflect on all of those elements. Andrews (2014: 1) claims that narratives are inseparably connected to human imagination, and that these two elements are combined, ‘not only in our most elevated thoughts about the world as it might be, but

also the minutiae of our daily lives'. The aesthetic qualities of composition seem to mirror and reflect this sense of imagination.

I am primarily a composer who is very enthusiastic about sound research, but I would not suggest it could be transferable to all forms or contexts of human inquiry. Rather, just as Ellsworth argues (2005: 156) that 'some knowing cannot be conveyed through language', perhaps, equally, some knowing cannot be conveyed through a soundscape? Eisner (2001: 138) states: 'Form matters, that content and form cannot be separated, how one says something is part and parcel of what is said'. Some knowledge, perhaps, will only be accessible through the form of sound composition? Although my methods of inquiry have to be understood as arts-informed practices, executed by a composer, I would equally not advocate that all sound research projects should be conducted by sound composers. I offer the continuum above in order to place, inquire into, and give an account of my own position within this small, but rapidly expanding field of contemporary research.

This bridge has tried to show something of my convoluted journey of theoretical and methodological excursions within, and between, a range of disciplines. I have, I hope, given some account of my ways of thinking about, and doing, inquiry. This account has included: the ways of thinking with theories, ideas and practices that I have encountered; my ways of incorporating my habitual nexus of ideas and practices from everyday life; my work as a composer; and my ideas and practices in relation to others in the field. It has become apparent during the course of this scrutiny that the central dialogue that has informed and influenced this study has been that between *aesthetic* composer endeavours and *ethical* inquirer concerns. I have come to the tentative conclusion at the end of this chapter that the space between these two interdependent positions has been the primary territory in which my inquiry has taken place.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> As readers will note I later come to a different conclusion about this 'space' (see: chapter five).

The bridge composition is not the main focus of this inquiry and therefore I have not included any detailed commentary on its production.<sup>70</sup> The sounds included in the composition are taken from both of the practice-based projects, in London and Jerusalem. There are moments when the sounds are slow and calm and there are moments of sonic chaos. The chaos was an attempt to represent aeroplane sounds; I was trying to creatively represent my journey to Jerusalem. The chaos also contrasts quite profoundly with the other two compositions, wherein sounds are mainly heard very clearly. The calm building up to, and back down from, the chaos also provides a cleansing and reflective space between the two projects. I also included self-reflexive narratives representing decisions made during the recording process (for example: which direction to move in or where to place my microphone). Informal moments with the interviewees are similarly shown, highlighting the friendships built between the researcher and participants. Some of these audio clips fall just before, or just after, moments used in the final composition. Here, I am trying to reveal the process of ‘data’ selection to the listener. The piece is not required listening in order to engage with either of the main compositions, but it can be used as a bridge between them and allows a moment of reflection for listeners that parallels, in sonic form, my reflections during this chapter. The bridge represents a fictional, abstract sound world into which listeners can project their own interpretations. This piece was not filtered through the same collaborative, ethical decision-making processes as the two other compositions in this thesis and, as such, does not warrant the kind of detailed written commentaries offered in chapters two and four. The piece stands here, in its own right, as a composition. It is intended as a contemplative reflective, breathing space for listeners.

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<sup>70</sup> The constraints of time and word limit on this project prevented a more extensive commentary on the process of producing the bridge piece as a composition, in tandem with the commentaries on other compositions in chapters two and four. In congruence with the journey structure of this thesis (which itself reflects my compositional practice), this written text presents insights into my ongoing methodological process.

## Chapter Four: Sounds of Aliyah

### Prologue

People who are into urban fun don't find Jerusalem very appealing. People who are into spirituality do. One of our interviewees said, 'in Tel Aviv they know how to live; in Jerusalem we know why we live'. (Bell and De-Shalit, 2011: 21)

This chapter is the companion commentary to chapter two. Chapters two and four are both commentaries on the compositions that comprise this thesis. These commentaries are constructed very differently from each other, having emerged at different times, in different contexts, during my developmental progression as scholar/ composer. The commentary in chapter two focused on the practices and techniques of soundscape composition. This chapter, building on the knowledge gained in the first project, concentrates on the spillage between the person and thinking of the composer and the context he found himself in. A key theme throughout this thesis has been a critique of self-reflexive and auto-ethnographic works in this field. During the creation of my second composition I was far away from home. I was, nonetheless, researching people with whom I felt more at home, more equal and more familiar. This different power dynamic unleashed a freer sense of creativity as a composer.

### Introduction

When I first arrived (September 2016) in Israel at Ben Gurion Airport it was the middle of the night. In the welcome hall after passport control and baggage reclaim, only the other passengers from my flight were around. Half asleep, they met with family, friends or got taxis very quickly. A large group of *Charedi*<sup>71</sup> Jews going to study in *yeshiva* (religious educational institution) rushed to meet their pre-arranged coach to their halls of residence. As I tried to work out where to go, the hall completely emptied around me. I noticed a woman dressed in a cleaner's uniform carrying nothing but a single balloon. I watched, mesmerised as she gently let the balloon rise up on its string. The string attached to the balloon seemed never to end. The balloon went all the way up to the high ceiling. My head now right back, I could see the ceiling full of a vast number of orphaned balloons

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<sup>71</sup> Hebrew for God fearing. Often called Ultra-Orthodox, though this term is not generally accepted by this community.

floating above. I could make out the words ‘*Mazel tov*’ and ‘Welcome home’ on some of the balloons, whilst others were shaped like hearts, or had Israel’s flag on them.

I pictured excited family and friends letting go of the helium balloons by accident when reunited with loved ones - with the ceiling so high, there was no hope of a rescue plan for those lost. The cleaner made sure her balloon touched one of the orphaned balloons above, which then stuck to her balloon. (Although I never asked, I assumed some kind of sticky tape had been added to her balloon to enable this magic). She then very carefully pulled down both, before popping the lost balloon. She re-positioned herself, walking a few metres forward, before repeating the whole process, a process she seemed very accustomed to. I watched for a few minutes as she continued her balloon popping rhythm, almost entering into a trance. Fast forward two years: back in London, as I sit down to write this chapter I recall this first memory, and how I remember imagining all those balloons representing the life stories I would collect over the year ahead. Most modern *aliyah* stories begin at Ben Gurion airport.



Figure 6: Lost balloons in Ben Gurion airport arrivals hall.

Diaspora Jewish identity has always been complex, especially in the context of links to Israel. As previously stated, I wanted my second project to emanate from outside the UK. This would change my sonic experience, as both composer and researcher. This would also differentiate between the two projects, and showcase the transferability of methods across different migration groups. English-speaking Jews making *aliyah* positively want to move.<sup>72</sup> Migration is seen as a positive endeavour, with no desire to return to their countries of birth (UK, USA, Canada, South Africa etc.). The English-speaking Jews moving to Israel are seen as relinquishing their diaspora identity, and becoming Israeli. But what, sonically, does ‘becoming Israeli’ mean for these new immigrants? This is a question I hoped to inquire into. The interviewees had different reasons for making *aliyah*: from wanting to be part of the unfolding story of Israel, to wanting to live in/near places with familiar names from Jewish sacred texts, to experience a feeling of ‘home’ in a space that transforms you from minority to nation. This project hoped to give a platform to the different sonic meanings of identity in Israel for *olim* (diaspora Jews who have moved to Israel). As Gottschalk (2012: 106) comments:

Zionism is not solely an ideology that promotes geographical migration; it also promotes identity transformation, particular ways of being and a particular ‘sensory orientation’ (Geurts, 2002). While the sensory qualities of Zionism have long been ignored in academic discussions and are typically absent from political debates, they should be acknowledged as they have transformative and generative powers.

Throughout this chapter I chart the unfolding of this year-long project.<sup>73</sup> My aim was to capture in my composition the sonic biographies, sonic histories and sonic ideologies surrounding the interviewees and their sonic identities. It is not my purpose in this chapter and accompanying composition to discuss, or critique opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although if participants mention the conflict, I would include their thoughts, since this project is concerned with them reflecting on their own lives. Thus, I invite readers and listeners to vicariously accompany my journey to Israel, investigating the identities of people coming from widely different backgrounds, having to adjust to their new home.

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<sup>72</sup> As stated before: At the time of my project, some Jews were moving to Israel for safety reasons due to higher levels of antisemitism in certain countries, however, this referred primarily to France, Russia and the Ukraine, which were not part of my project (see: WZO, 2015). For some Anglo Jews, and increasingly since the end of my project, antisemitism may also be a contributing reason for moving (Boffey, 2018).

<sup>73</sup> This research was undertaken whilst I was a visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This project comprises a sonic exploration of Jewish identities, which is a particularly complex and pertinent exemplar, bringing with it, issues of:

...discrimination, marginalization, and shame versus pride, but in other ways, Jewish identity is unique. ...[some people] may think of Judaism only as a religion and fail to consider the far-reaching influence of Jewish cultural identification. (Friedman, Friedlander & Blustein 2005: 82)

Individually and collectively, this study asks important questions about how diaspora Jews imagine themselves to be Jewish, before and after becoming Israeli. This project intends to find an accessible means of illuminating these complicated identities. Westerkamp (1981) commented on her own soundscape composition, *Under The Flight Path*: ‘speak back to the community with sounds of its own making’, this parallels reflective auto-ethnography (Denzin, 2014). This is why many listeners reflecting back on the first draft of this composition are members of the British Jewish community (see: chapter five for further details of audience responses).

### **Interviewing Olim**

These interviews included British, American, Canadian and South African English-speaking Jews who had moved to Israel: some recently, others some time ago. This gave the project diversity, not just in terms of the interviewees’ current age, but also with regards to their age when they made *aliyah*. There was also religious diversity in terms of Orthodox, Reform and secular Jewish identities. The research sought to inquire into the experiences of *olim*: ‘representing the subject’s own understandings of their world’ (Alexander, 2006: 400). In particular, this project examines their sonic experiences of home as they ‘dwelt within a new landscape’ (Ingold, 2000), as well as memories of their lives before moving to Israel, as the ‘simultaneity of [home] stories experienced thus far’ (Massey, 2005: 9). As Berger (1997: 9) said: ‘Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our lives that we narrate to ourselves... We are immersed in narrative’. Andrews (1995: 11) has reflected on her work located in a country where she did not speak the language: ‘...French is not my native tongue. Never again will I conduct research in a place where I have no possibility of catching the subtle innuendo of language’. Language had been a major cause of concern in my first project as both interviewees were not native English speakers. I was relieved that this was neither an ethical nor compositional issue in the second project, since I was interviewing native English-speaking *olim*.

The first project included only women interviewees. I wanted, and achieved, more of a gender balance for the second project.<sup>74</sup> The interviews spanned a ten-month period and a total recorded archive of seven hours: a mean average of one hour and ten minutes per interview for the six interviewees.<sup>75</sup> I wanted to include the optimum number of interviewees whose stories could be fully told in a one-hour composition. Informed by my first project, six interviewees seemed a good fit with my *modus operandi*, predicting the dispersal of speech between sound sections. Even if all the English-speaking *olim* in Israel had been interviewed, this composition would still not wholly represent this community. Communities are constantly evolving and changing, as Bradley (2016: 81) commented ‘...but even if the whole population [of Holbeck] featured in the piece, the result would still not represent [Holbeck]’. I have included examples of interviewee documents in Appendices F and G to illustrate ethical considerations and decision-making during the project. My interviewing practice has been influenced by Lummis (1988), Thompson (2000) and Rogaly & Taylor (2009):

There are some essential qualities which the successful interviewer must process: an interest and respect for people as individuals, and flexibility in response to them; an ability to show understanding and sympathy for their point of view; and, above all, a willingness to sit quietly and listen. (Thompson, 2000: 222)

My open questions were focused on context, identity, sound, belonging and home. I pre-planned some questions (see: Appendix H), and otherwise let the conversation flow (see: Grobel, 2004). This follows Lummis’ (1988: 51) method for oral history interviews, whence the researcher and interviewee are ‘aware of each other as people and of setting about a common task of recording experiences... in an open and conversational manner’.

I was initially concerned about sourcing my interviewees, but gradually became part of Anglo-Jewish Jerusalem myself, where I found project participants who would become ‘gate-keepers’ (Bryson et al., 2014: 57) of my project. ‘Gate-keepers’ is a term borrowed from oral history. This cascade method works by asking interviewees for further recommendations of other interviewees (see: Rogaly & Taylor, 2009). This allows the

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<sup>74</sup> Listeners to the first project had suggested a more diverse selection of interviewees would improve the project.

<sup>75</sup> There were in fact, seven interviewees originally, but one interviewee requested that their words be re-recorded by an actor for the composition. Since I had already acquired sufficient, diverse recordings from the previous six people, and this would render the outcomes of working with one interviewee radically different from all the others, I decided not to undertake this additional layer of complexity.

gatekeepers not to recommend people who are currently experiencing a high degree of stress in their lives. Where possible, each research relationship began with an informal meeting with the interviewee in order to discuss the project face to face. This allowed them to ask questions, and sign consent forms. For *Charedi* interviewees, this was also the best time to organise necessary arrangements. *Charedi* women, for example, would not be comfortable sitting in a room alone with a man.<sup>76</sup>

This initial meeting also gave me a chance to hear the interviewees' initial thoughts and worries about the project. Hopefully, I could alleviate their concerns. We would then agree an approximate duration for the interview (though it would often overrun) and discuss the possibility of further interviews. This meeting also allowed me to reflect on whether to alter my pre-prepared questions, depending on people's interests and histories. Interviewees who were children when they made *aliyah* would be asked slightly different questions from those who came as retirees. Each interview began with the interviewee describing what they had for breakfast. This enabled me to ensure the recording gain level was correct.<sup>77</sup> The interviews were held either in the interviewee's homes, or a place of their choice, 'the [interviewee] is then in command of the social situation and relaxed in the comfort of familiar surroundings' (Lummis, 1988: 66).

At the beginning of interviews, participants provided a brief personal background, and the story of their relationship with Jerusalem (or wherever they had first arrived when they made *aliyah*). After the initial interview, I asked a selection of interviewees to share addresses, postcodes and walks in places of significance, that they had mentioned (see: O'Rourke, 2013). People had often forgotten the street names, which after examining a map, awoke other dormant memories of the area. Once people realised that I was not interested in a factual representation of their local area, interviewees became excited to explore their own 'personal memory maps' (Kuhn, 2002: 27). I noted down all locations, addresses and walks to record for the soundscape composition. I had decided against walking conversations (see: chapter two) on account of the technical difficulties incurred, particularly during windy weather, but also because I required full flexibility during the composing process: 'the recorded interviews are more flexible in terms of, editing,

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<sup>76</sup> In many *Charedi* communities, men and women are kept separate in social situations in order to conform to traditional Jewish Law (see: Davis, 2006: 1021).

<sup>77</sup> This procedure also enabled participants to feel at ease and get used to being recorded.

composition and mixing... we aimed for the cleanest recordings possible as a rule of thumb' (Campion and Côté, 2017: 116). Additionally, I did not want to be guided, but rather, to walk around their areas (which I had never visited before) freely experiencing them, just as the research participants had done when they had first arrived.

When the interviewees pointed out familiar routes they took or important places on a map, this often reminded them of familiar locations outside Jerusalem. For instance, one interviewee walked past a post office on the way to their child's house every Friday. This brought back memories of living next to a post office whilst attending university in the UK. During a project, Glass (2016: 103) observed that while passing locations, his participants reminisced about times spent in similar places, and of the people associated with those areas. My interviews allowed people to share stories about their pasts (see: Rhys-Taylor, 2017). I anticipated, therefore, that some of the people listening to this composition might have old memories awakened. As Nancy (2007: 6) comments '...to be listening is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible'. In Becker's *Telling About Society* (2007) he investigates the ways that films, photographs and maps can uncover unconventional knowledge about society. Similarly, Holgersson (cited in Bates and Rhys-Taylor, 2017: 83) claims that urban sociologists and ethnographers are storytellers. My compositions, I would argue, provides a means of 'unconventional storytelling' (see: *ibid.* and Becker, 2007).

### **Speaking Hebrew**

I now want to highlight the matters that interviewees wanted to discuss the most. These topics reflect some of the most important concerns of *olim* settling into Israeli life. A Hebrew teacher of mine, originally from Argentina, when hearing about my project, told me; '...in Buenos Aires, I was always told, "you're a Jew!" Then I come to Israel and I'm told, "You are Argentinian!"' This frustration about having a dual identity still, even after making *aliyah*, is, I think, common amongst immigrants to Israel. From my interviews, however, it seemed that the younger the *olim* were when they moved to Israel, the less likely they were to feel this way. Hebrew was a main topic of these conversations:

A Zionist writer reported that a shiver of joy ran through his body when he first arrived in Tel Aviv and encountered a Hebrew street sign: 'It seems like a small matter, merely street names; but the sweet sound of our own tongue is like a balm for the Jewish soul, after having to hear only foreign sounds all day long'. (Helman, 2002: 370)

Diaspora Jews are often taught as children at *Cheder* (Hebrew school) the Hebrew alphabet and how to read and say Jewish prayers.<sup>78</sup> There is a huge difference between those skills and being fluent in a language in the market, or on the phone to the gas company. *Olim* do get free full-time immersive Hebrew courses when they arrive in Israel for the first 6 months (NBN, 2018). This is sometimes not enough for those who struggle with languages, or, perhaps, for *olim* who are not able to attend classes full-time. My younger interviewees, I noticed, had often changed their name to an Israeli one, indicating their identity transformation: Joseph, for instance, becoming Yosef.

Israeli society has only in its recent history, been more open to foreign languages being spoken by its immigrants. Helman (2002: 363) writes that in the 1930s:

When shops, restaurants and kiosks played radio channels or gramophones records in Yiddish or German, pedestrians in the street complained to the municipality, which then tried to silence or at least moderate the un-Zionist noise.

The advent of modern-day tourism and Hebrew's established revival as a national language (Glinert, 2015: 212-246), have led to greater tolerance of *olim* preferring to use their native tongue. When Israel was a new country, the push for immigrants to speak Hebrew was stronger (see: Helman, 2002). From my own observations, however, currently on the streets of Jerusalem, English, French and Russian bookshops are commonplace. I noticed that older interviewees, especially those who had retired to Israel, lived their whole lives in English. This was made possible via technology and community. They had, predominantly, English speaking friends, they went to English speaking synagogues and they watched and listened to the BBC. Many had tried to learn Hebrew but had given up. Some continued with lessons, whilst acknowledging the painfully slow progress.

One of my interviewees said:

Look. I lived in London all my life. I'll only have lived in Israel for a tiny, tiny percentage of my time on this earth. I, by paperwork, am Israeli. But I'm not Israeli. I wasn't in the army. I don't speak Hebrew. I don't have many Israeli friends. I get friends who travel over to bring me PG tips and Marmite. I'm a retired British Jew, living in Israel. This is my home now, but I'm not Israeli.

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<sup>78</sup> This connection between sound, identity, memory and minority languages has been well documented by Lane (2016) in her work entitled *Mapping the Outer Hebrides in sound: towards a sonic methodology*.

This statement makes complete sense. It is also incredibly baffling. Jewish identity has always been complex. As Levin (1995) wrote:

...when I am filling in a form on which there is a space labelled religion, I don't hesitate, but put Jew...am I a Jew? If I do not pray with the Jews, and sing with the Jews...how can I be a Jew? Well, don't forget the form that I filled in.

This connects with my next area of focus: religion.

## **Religion**

In many English-speaking diaspora countries, progressive streams of Judaism are popular. In the USA, for example, thirty-five percent of Jews are Reform and only ten percent are Orthodox (Pew Research Center, 2013). In Israel, however, denominations other than Orthodoxy are a small minority:

Reform with its notions of voluntary, individual religious choices, is simply incomprehensible for them [Israelis] either in concept or design. For most Israelis, an individual may choose what he or she will observe, but the religious tradition itself is fixed by divine law. (Elazar, 2018)

Israeli culture is entwined with the Jewish religious calendar and, therefore, you do not need faith to feel 'Jewish' in Israel, unlike diaspora Jews living in other countries. You could say, that many Israelis fulfil their Jewish identity by simply being Israeli. As Rogoff (2000: 149) comments:

As a native Israeli I was taught to understand Judaism through the land of Israel... Now I have begun to wonder about an inverse model, about the possibilities of reading Israel through the divergent histories of numerous Jewish communities outside of the state.

Some younger interviewees (ages twenty to thirty) found this difficult. One interviewee, from a Reform Jewish background, had to go through an Orthodox conversion in Israel.<sup>79</sup> It would have been impossible for her to marry if she had not gone through this process, as all Jewish weddings, are officiated through the Orthodox rabbinate (Ferber, 2017; Rosenberg, 2018). Other interviewees found it hard to find synagogues that matched their progressive religious preferences. This was especially the case if they lived outside Jerusalem, where there is less religious presence and, therefore, less religious diversity (Shillat, 2018; Kaunfer, 2010).

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<sup>79</sup> This is because within Orthodox Judaism her Jewish status was contested.

Interviewees did not repeat their answers in a language other than English, although half of them spoke Hebrew, fluently, in their day-to-day lives. They still identified English as their native tongue, so translation into Hebrew was unnecessary. The snippets of conversation recorded on the streets showed the juxtaposition between the Hebrew of the streets, and the English of the *olim*. One interviewee mentioned:

I have become used to not understanding most things said in the street around me now. I sometimes catch a word here or there. But mostly, I am unaware of what is being discussed. But that's now normal. When I visit London and I understand everything being said around me, I now find that exhausting.

Moving to Israel involves many challenges for immigrants, many realising that their dream vision differs drastically from the actual experience (see: Milevsky, 2016). I realised that the interviewees were not the only people affected by their move. The family and friends back in their previous home had also been affected. A qualitative study (ibid., 17) of American grandparents of children living in Israel showed that the grandparents experienced feelings of isolation from their grandchildren. They also noticed behavioural differences between Israeli and American children (ibid.). The Americanization of Israel, however, can make the transition, at first easier, for Americans (see: Waxman, 1995). There are many large American communities in Israel, compared to the smaller number of people from the UK. American *olim* might seem more at ease with their move, but this is perhaps not long term. Forty to sixty percent of American *olim* eventually return to the USA (Eisikovits and Sigad, 2010). British people recognise less 'British-ness' in Israel, which perhaps, pushes them to learn Hebrew, and eventually adjust better to Israeli society (this comment is, merely based on my cursory observations).

In my first compositional project, with new refugees adjusting to the UK, there were very specific moments in their lives that were connected to their asylum story. When interviewing the *olim*, however, there was ambiguity about which sections of their lives were suitable for discussion. This sometimes meant the interviews continued longer than I would have liked. I prefer to keep interviews to one hour. In the past this has been a good length of time for interviewees to feel at ease and talk openly, without becoming exhausted. My desire to explore Jewish identity connections for people moving to Israel, opened up many stories that people wanted to share. This sometimes pushed interviews into a longer time period:

Yes. Oral history is a wonderful practice – a powerful way to preserve traditional customs and confront contemporary problems. Graham firmly believed that. But he also believed that he knew what it was like to be married to a tribal elder whose storytelling is a bit on the long-winded side. (Heiny, 2018: 52)

An example of this was when an interviewee said he was free in half an hour. I said yes, he could come to my apartment. I asked my wife to kindly wait in our bedroom while the interview took place. She was not happy when the interview lasted two and a half hours! I decided that the interviewee was enjoying telling long-winded stories, he was gaining something personally from the reflection, which is why I let him naturally finish the interview himself and did not bring it to a close.

Throughout the process of this thesis, I did not transcribe the interviews into written text. There is broad consensus that oral history interview transcripts are useful for researchers since they offer an efficient way to search content. This, I would argue, distracts from the oral characteristics and quality of the interaction. Transcriptions are always an estimate when compared to a recorded interview (see: Venuti, 2012, 483-503). As Samuel (1972: 19) states: '[the] perils of the transcript... the spoken word can very easily be mutilated when it is taken down in writing and transferred to the printed page'. My central thesis challenges the domination of written text within social inquiry, as Back (2007: 16) comments:

...research findings are presented in the form of long block quotations from research respondents. These excerpts are expected to simply speak for themselves. The portraits of the research participants are sketched lightly if at all and the social location of the respondent lacks explication and contextual nuance.

When researchers transcribe oral history interviews, they can render interviewees awkward and incoherent, due to the unusual pauses and repetitions that obstruct the natural flow of words in a written text. Frisch (1990: 85) states that:

...speech that sounds coherent and articulate to the ear tends to read, when too literally transcribed in print, like inarticulate stage mumbling; such transcription becomes an obstacle to hearing what the person in the interview is trying to say.

I wanted to keep some natural pauses in my composition. I noticed, as my project continued, that the silences lessened. 'But what if language expresses as much by what is between words as by the words themselves?' (Mazzei, 2007: 34). This was, perhaps, because the interviewees, and I, grew to know each other and they were more confident

in speaking with me. For a more exhaustive exposition on silences throughout this project, please see Appendix B: *Silence, (coughs) and pauses*.

Reflecting on my position(s) as the researcher at this point in the thesis: I was a British Jew who was currently living in Jerusalem. Do I, therefore, write this thesis from the perspective of a fellow ‘Jewish Brit’ who has lived in Jerusalem? As a researcher? As a friend of some of my interviewees? I had not made *aliyah*, but I could feel my position shifting, as I spent more time with my interviewees. I was still an outsider, but with an experience close to theirs. As Wilson Vasquez (2016: 270) found:

Still, my access to academic circles enabled me to have a foot outside the [participant] group. Even more, the fact that I did not live in the country definitely made a difference with the [participant] group... I had a certain safety cover, with the academic badge I was wearing and the fact that I was only temporarily living in Peru...this made me an outsider. Even more, it was this ‘outsiderness’ that made the testimonial project possible.

### **Soundscape Accessibility**

I have already reviewed (in chapters one and three) the ways that soundscape composition allows access to different kinds of knowledge, in different forms, from those made available through traditional written research. I now want to consider other kinds of accessibility: namely the ease of understanding that sound research affords non-academic communities, and the emotional and affective availability of soundscape compositions for all human beings, regardless of academic status or linguistic or cultural grouping.<sup>80</sup>

As far as the academy is concerned, sound research gives ethnographers of everyday life access to different kinds of knowledge by virtue of attending to that which goes routinely unnoticed or remains hidden in the day to day (see: Highmore, 2002: 1). Attending to sound forces us to ‘make the familiar unfamiliar’ (Van Maanen, 1995). Bauer (2000: 268) categorises sound into intended and unintended; the latter being labelled ‘noise’ and notices that these everyday sounds are often overlooked. Willis (2000: xiv), asks ethnographers to view everyday relations with a ‘sensitivity to life, like we perceive art’. Creative sound research can support listeners in attending to these everyday sounds, and

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<sup>80</sup> See: Landy (1994) for discussions of help for listeners experiencing electro-acoustic music for the first time. Landy gave them a ‘helping hand’ and ‘something to hold on to’, thus making contemporary work more accessible.

noticing them more. Drever (2009) claims that heightened listening when walking is a means of engaging with the geographies of everyday life. Heyl (2001: 375) suggests that, ‘all the messiness of everyday life can intrude’ in reflective, open, qualitative interview research. I would argue that we want to hear, and gain access to, this wider context of the messiness of everyday sound. Sound and its messiness, partakes of the everyday (see: LaBelle, 2010). Interdisciplinary soundscapes can provide greater access to this.

Whilst recognising the contribution to the scholarship of the everyday, outlined above, it was the wider access issues that piqued my own interest in soundscape composition. I did not anticipate enormous benefit, or challenge, in writing a thesis that would sit in a university library: ‘Academics, in general, don’t think about the public; they don’t think about the average person’ (Bosley, 2015). It is my contention that there is an uneasy disconnect between university scholarship and general public audiences, as Oppenheimer (2006) argues in *Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity: problems with using long words needlessly*, advocating the use of clear, simple words instead of needlessly complex ones. Online, open access journals are becoming increasingly common, but open access does little to overcome the elitism of language, which is a wider problem.

My commitment to the use of clear, accessible language and awareness of the politics of clarity is self-evident to readers of this thesis, not least in the replacement of heavily theoretical sections of my argument with the conversational elements that I have included in Appendix A: *Validity and Reliability, a Dramatised Account of a Conversation*. The most accessible parts of my research, however, are my compositions. These are not trapped in a library. They are available to anyone with headphones. The presentation of research as accessible audio can be seen as a step towards breaking down existing divisions between academic and public histories (Kean & Ashton, 2008; Kean, 2013). To gather public feedback on my compositions, I travelled, by arrangement, to different cities across the UK (see: chapters two and five) to allow anyone to listen. As discussed previously, headphones permit closeness and even intimacy between sounds and listeners (see: Bull, 2006). Headphones are for many, very ordinarily accessible. Contemporary people in the western world are used to wearing headphones. As Bull (2000: 4) writes:

Each morning millions of urban inhabitants place a pair of headphones over their heads, or place earpieces directly into their ears, and turn the music on as they leave home. They walk down streets, sit on tubes or buses and keep listening till they reach their destination. They might continue listening on arrival, whether it be furtively at the back of a classroom, one hand over the listening ear, or in their place of work. Many users never go out in public without their personal stereo.

I simply utilised the familiarity that people have with headphones, in order to facilitate their experience of listening to other people's life stories.

My compositions also played on loops in accessible venues. People did not need a student card to enter these facilities, nor did they need to understand academic language to listen to the soundscapes (see: Willinsky, 2009). Compositions can eventually be uploaded online, similarly to open access research papers.<sup>81</sup> Thus, there is a politics to the art of composition. Composition as research opens up the limitations and restrictions of the academy (see: Freeman, et. al., 2011). It not only opens the doors of the academy to dyslexic scholars, such as myself; it produces far more inclusive and accessible 'texts' than those of traditional written theses, and similarly, provides a challenge to the exclusivity of scholarship.<sup>82</sup>

Listeners can be educated:

We as a species take in and experience the world as much through our ears as through our eyes. Moving from the written word to sound enables aural historians to reach those who spend little time reading and a great deal of time listening. (Hardy III, 2009: 161)

Wolf (2013) studied the influence of teaching on the change in inexperienced listeners' appreciation of electro-acoustic music. She concluded (ibid., 4-5) that the appreciation of the music was enhanced through the acquiring of listening skills after training, as well as the broadening of vocabulary to describe the listening experience. This, however, does not change the accessibility of my research. My compositions include recognisable environmental sounds; they include voices that are telling stories. The compositions are also very accessible: embedded in a deliberately structurally composed piece, which does

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<sup>81</sup> These issues lead to wider debates on copyright and research participant privacy, which are beyond the scope of thesis (see: Silva, 2000; Belanger & Crossler, 2011).

<sup>82</sup> I am aware that some sound compositions require complicated, expensive speaker set-ups. Similarly, heavily processed compositions can prove hard to listen to (see: Babbit, 1958).

not require you to listen to the entire work in order to understand the stories and memories. The narratives have been chopped into segments so that short moments and memories can be listened to briefly.<sup>83</sup> Aural access to people's stories can feel more approachable than a written text (Boyd & Larson, 2014). People are nowadays used to spending a lot more leisure time listening to music and podcasts on their phones (McIntyre, 2017). The amount of time people spend listening continues to increase (Ofcom, 2018).

An example of this emphasis on accessibility would be Fujiwara's (2016) *The Humanizer*: a sonic installation in Ireland. Listeners hear the story of the historic Easter Uprisings of 1916. Professional actors read the script and a soundscape accompanies the narrative. '*The Humanizer*, asks if today's audience ... can picture an entire movie, its locations, cast and even its message without having to see it' (Fujiwara, 2016). I watched both very young children and very elderly people walking through this installation. The listeners' concentration on the story was far greater than I had ever seen before at a museum. The emotional reactions of the listeners seemed very intense, perhaps due to the sonic nature of the exhibition.

'Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?' (Thoreau, 1854: 10). The premise for this section is the promotion of aural empathy: hearing through each other's ears. Krznaric (2014: x) defines the meaning of empathy as '...the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives and using that understanding to guide your actions'. Further discussion of sonically 'stepping into each other's shoes' can be found in Appendix D: *Walking Places*. This appendix reviews the literatures of walking and embodiment in relation to place, home and belonging that have informed my own thinking, with regards to diaspora identities.

Empathy is often confused with sympathy, the latter involving pity, which does not involve trying to understand another person's emotions or point of view (Krznaric, 2014). Biologists have recently shown that humans are naturally empathic beings (ibid., xiii). Other contemporary studies, however, show a dramatic drop in empathy levels amongst young Americans between 1980 and the present day (Konrath et al., 2011). Krznaric (2014: iv) has called for humans to exhibit greater empathy in their daily lives by

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<sup>83</sup> However, I have kept one of the interviews in its original structure (see earlier discussion about this choice in chapters two and three), with others edited and placed around it to create thematic links.

following six habits, including: ‘practicing the craft of conversation; fostering curiosity about strangers and radical listening’. I would postulate that soundscape composition can help people develop empathic listening.

Berendt (1985: 177) showed through blindfolded experiments that ‘seeing entails judging. The eye passes judgement’. Humans make unconscious, snap assumptions and judgments about others, without knowing much about the lives of the people they are judging (see: Gladwell, 2006). This is, perhaps, why people find it hard to accept that they hold prejudices (ibid., 61-66): ‘making sense of immediate experience is often a process that is unconscious. Ideas, concepts and memories are evoked by the sounds we encounter going about our lives’. This illustrates the importance of language use. Watson (2013), for example, cites politicians using words such as ‘illegal’ to describe refugees.<sup>84</sup> Krznaric (2014: 39) claims that:

...we cannot switch our prejudices and assumptions about others off like a light switch, for they are typically far too embedded in our personal psychological histories. But we can certainly erode their power over us [with empathy].

McEwan (2011) wrote ‘...imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity, it is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality’. Acknowledging the humanity of other people and understanding their individuality and uniqueness starts by getting to know their story. This process of ‘humanizing the other’ (Levinas, 2006) starts by hearing about the other’s life. Krznaric (2014: 56) observes that ‘Highly empathic people are engaged in a constant search for what they share with other people, even when those people appear alien to them’. This searching for what they share is, to my mind, a beautiful way of describing in-betweenness (that which sits in-between two people). This notion of in-betweenness is completely integrated into my projects (Grosz, 2001; Springgay et al., 2008). People who have lived in two countries often inhabit an in-between identity. As Marks (2000: 23) comments: ‘a meeting of cultures generates new forms of sense experience and new ways of embodying our relation with the world’. Bradley (2016: 84) goes further and states that ‘...a polyvocal oral history might possibly help to draw polarized views together through the act of walking and talking’. It was my intention that audiences to my compositional

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<sup>84</sup> This resonates with Wiesel’s (1984) famous quote: ‘no human being is illegal. That is a contradiction in terms’.

projects would draw polarised views together through the act of listening. Borrowing from Labelle (2014: viii): ‘I approach listening then as the basis for a knowledge production that is equally a position of radical empathy’. These discussions draw together the emphasis on narrative empathy (see: Berendt, 1985) that my work seems to evoke.

If eyes help people cast judgment (see: *ibid.*) on others, the design of projects can help people engage with others before this happens. ‘Sound inhabits the subject just as the subject might be said to inhabit sounds, whereas vision in contrast to sound, represents distance, the singular, the objectifying’ (Munt, 2001: 241). People need a chance to be able to listen to each other with their full attention, and, perhaps, have a moment to comprehend what other people have said. Counsellors (according to Rosenberg, 2003) should concentrate on empathising when listening to their clients. Empathy is a skill that can be exercised in everybody’s daily lives. As has been discussed, soundscape compositions encourage listening, especially to the environment: ‘openness to the voice(s) of one’s sonic surroundings is maintained as a hallmark of soundscape works’ (Chapman, 2009: 83). Could soundscapes encourage empathic listening to other aural sources, such as narratives?

Kendall (2014) outlined the ways in which feeling and emotions contribute to meaning, when listening to electroacoustic music. He wrote (*ibid.*, 201):

...art enables us to participate in a collective exploration of feeling qualities, especially in relation to our shared cultural symbols and patterns. In this way, to create a world of feel that is both a product and a part of culture.

I found that listening to soundscapes increased my empathy and awareness. My more conscious listening came about through recording soundscapes. I noticed homelessness more on the streets; I noticed elderly people who were struggling with a physical task; I noticed a pickpocket working the tourists in a busy market. Chapman (2009: 84) states: ‘Sound artists are intimately familiar with this process of becoming self-aware through listening at the same time as they acknowledge the deep impact our sonic environment has on our sense of self in any given moment’. This self-awareness is, I would argue, an awareness that the world does not revolve around us: we are not at the centre of this post-human world, either as individuals, or, perhaps, as human beings (Braidotti, 2013).

Soundscapes encourage intense listening (both for the recordist in the making of the soundscape and the later audiences), which pulls the listener out of the centre of their life, creating empathy for others and for the planet we inhabit. This attuned listening is similar to the metaphor of the *koppel*: the wearing of the Jewish skullcap.<sup>85</sup> This tradition is said to have become a custom after a woman was once convinced that her son was destined to become a thief. To prevent this from happening she insisted that he always had his head covered, to remind him of God's presence and instil within him the fear of heaven (Mindel, 2019). Modern interpretations call for the *koppel* to remind the wearer that they are not what the world revolves around, creating self-awareness and empathy (Simmons, 2002). This is the kind of empathy I wanted to evoke in listeners to my compositions. Walking around and listening to people's memories and reflections can draw listeners closer to people who are different from them (see: Bradley, 2016).

I was curious to know if listening to a soundscape composition could enable people to actively listen in the same way I found myself doing, with conscious listening, which can remove the self from the centre.<sup>86</sup> Stocker, (2013: 5), however, stated that:

Everybody inhabits a distinctly individual soundscape, dynamically responding to our surroundings and to others that inhabit it with us. Personalities notwithstanding, our individual sense of sound perception is also influenced by social, cultural and even economic meta-factors that establish the backdrop of our auditory sense of who and where we are.

I was hopeful that my compositions could help people to get out of their individual soundscape and into an inclusive form of listening. Borrowing from Oliveros (2012: iii): 'Listening can be focused, linear and exclusive and listening can be open, global and inclusive... inclusive listening is receptive to all that can be heard in an ever expanding field of continuous simultaneous events perceived as a whole'. To listen strengthens our relationship with the environment, but since: 'sound is part of our everyday life as a hybrid of the material and the imagined' (Chapman, 2009: 87), could sound not also strengthen our relationship to others? Could sound awaken our curiosity to want to understand more about others? To help us '...explore auditory experiences and memories of natural and urban environments, and attend to and reflect upon the depth of daily

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<sup>85</sup> *Koppel* is one of the Yiddish names for the Jewish head covering. In Israel it is also widely known by its Hebrew name, *Kippah*.

<sup>86</sup> See: the *Ultra-red* project, which uses group soundwalking as a test space for Friere's (1968) 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Graham and Rhine, 2019).

rituals' (McCartney, 2004: 185). My compositions could, perhaps, encourage listeners not to ignore so much of their surroundings. Another of Krznaric's (2014: iv) six empathic habits was the 'practice of the craft of conversation fostering curiosity about strangers and radical listening'. I would argue that soundscapes can shift us to an experience of walking in another's shoes and hearing through another's ears. As Foreman (2011: 268) comments: 'soundwalking, then, rather than phenomenologically grounding us in place and time, re-integrating the walker-listener into his or her soundscape, can be a dislocating experience, displacing us'.

A moment of intense listening, when you are solely focused on aural experience, has been called the *sharawadgi effect* (Augoyard and Torgue, 2006). Schryer (2001: 125) describes the *sharawadgi effect* as a 'state of awareness in which one tends to open the ear in the hopes of experiencing the sublime beauty of a given sound in an unexpected context'. It is my contention that this experience is partly due to the sound making us more conscious and curious about everything, and everyone around us, especially since '...a soundwalk can be similar to meditation: the world happens, the sounds occur and they pass' (Westerkamp, 2006). Listening opens up new knowledge, 'sounding and listening as a knowing-in-action, a knowing-with and knowing-through the audible' (Feld, 2015: 13), that we can constantly discover in diverse places in our collective environments. As Rose (2012) asks:

How do you take yourself, in an ongoing way, out of the centre... how do you embody a life in which you understand that your consciousness, that your ego, and your sense of 'I', is not at the centre of the picture, is not what the whole world is spinning around.

I would argue that greater empathy is the means of achieving this, and listening to other people and listening to their environment can help encourage this empathy.

During my time in Israel, I experienced a Nira Pereg video installation in the Tel Aviv Museum of modern art entitled *Ishmael* (Pereg, 2014). *Ishmael* is the third and last installation in a series, all of which are focused on the cave of the patriarchs,<sup>87</sup> a place sacred to both Jews and Muslims. This location is entangled with an intense history: Jews were forbidden to enter until 1967 (ibid.). It is also the site of a mass murder of Muslim worshippers by Baruch Goldstein in 1994 (ibid.). The piece includes multiple video

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<sup>87</sup> This cave was also the main focus of Reich's (1993) multi-media opera *The Cave*.

screens, but I closed my eyes after a few minutes of watching. The story follows the muezzin calling Muslim worshipers to prayer over the course of a day. The muezzin must pass through a security door to the synagogue, and then again through another locked door before taking up his position for the call to prayer. This happens four or five times a day and is accompanied by police and army soldiers. The repeating sounds of the muezzin knocking on the door and of keys opening the locked doors, before finally hearing the call to prayer, sonically encapsulates the political and religious soundscape of the cave of the patriarchs.

After experiencing that piece, I considered sound in the case of trauma, especially its role within a place of conflict and how that transpired acoustically:

But can we listen to trauma? How is trauma remembered or unremembered through sound and listening? Do soundscapes bear witness to trauma? Does the background noise of the present space silence the testimony of past events? Does listening, or do soundscapes, provide a response to trauma, or a space in which trauma can be presented? (Foreman, 2011: 266)

As mentioned in more detail in chapter one, the trauma of the Holocaust sonically changed the Yiddish language forever. Birdsall (2012) conducted an oral history project with Germans who were children and young adults during the National Socialism period, to investigate the implications of sound within the Nazi era with regards to control and terror. Birdsall (ibid.) discusses how memories linked to sounds, such as a sound event or souvenir, can happen during traumatic events as well as nostalgic ones.

Wood (2016: 47) describes how, in 2012, missile sirens sounded across Tel Aviv for the first time since the Gulf War:

The sirens themselves lasted only a few minutes at a time, their existence in the wartime soundscape promoted new regimes of auditory attentiveness. Friends and colleagues reported changed practices of everyday listening ('I listen to podcasts with one earphone only, in case there is a siren') and a growing intimacy with the sounds peculiar to this upsurge of conflict ('the siren sort of coughs before it begins').

During my time in Israel, my wife and I woke one night to the sound of a siren. We rushed to the bomb shelter at the bottom of our building, only to find it empty. Where were our neighbours? We waited there several minutes, alone and confused, before returning to our apartment. The next morning we asked a neighbour, who told us it had merely been

the fire alarm. Many Israelis experience these ‘false alarms’, so much so that during 2014 Israeli ambulances altered their emergency sirens to a fluctuating high-low tone to avoid confusion (see: Wood, 2016).

Sirens are a defining sound in the Israeli public space, which made me consider community spaces and their soundscapes. Truax (2001: 66) states that:

The acoustic community may be defined as any soundscape in which acoustic information plays a pervasive role in the lives of the inhabitants (no matter how the commonality of such people is understood). Therefore, the boundary of the community is arbitrary and may be as small as a room of people, a home or building, or as large as an urban community, a broadcast area, or any other system of electroacoustic communication. In short, it is any system within which acoustic information is exchanged.

Surely then, sound can play a vital role in helping us understand, connect and empathise with different communities to our own? Wood and Smith (2004: 133) argue that it is not so much what we hear, but our personal responses to it, that help shape a sense of belonging and community. Truax (2001: 67) also notes that, ‘sound signals... bind the community together and contribute to its character’. The recorded soundscape of a community is a sonic earwitness (see: Birdsall, 2009: 30).<sup>88</sup> It is a testimony in its own right, not merely documentary evidence (see: Foreman, 2011). As Chapman (2009: 87) comments: ‘Experiencing sound means letting it go in the very instant it is apprehended. Sound(scape) artists play with this moment...’. By playing with this moment, we can inquire into many different realms, which is why soundscape compositions are inherently interdisciplinary.

As I have outlined above, soundscapes, sustained and informed by diverse methodological thinking, are able to explore the unexpectedness, contradictions and possibilities of personal (and community) experiences as we live in our sonic-full environments, grounded through listening. Sounds are vital in helping us make sense of our everyday places. Soundscapes can enable listening attention to be directed towards other people and to different understandings of the places of our everyday lives. The memories sparked by sound have an important part in understanding the lives, histories, identities, communities and environments through which people make sense of their

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<sup>88</sup> Earwitness: ‘The author of verbal or written descriptions of sounds, usually those of the past. Collections of earwitness accounts form one of the few sources of historical soundscape documentation’ (Truax, 1999).

places in the world. I vividly remember the first time I recorded a live soundscape through a pair of biannual microphones. I listened carefully for hours, picking out the subtle changes on a coastal footpath at the end of an autumn walk. I was changed by it. But I'm not sure really, *how* it changed me. Pinto (2017: 52) comments that '...soundscapes require sound studies, which interpret them in order to say what they are unable to say, whereas soundscapes are only able to say it by not saying it – but sounding it'. Some changes cannot be fully, or immediately, understood, never mind interpreted. Krznaric (2014: ix) claims that 'Empathy... has the power to transform our own lives and to bring about fundamental social change'. I hope that my work, by immersing listeners in these sounds, can reinforce and help bring about change: 'sound is like a river we all dive into as we wake in the morning. Sound waves connect bodies, places and minds' (Chapman, 2009: 87).

### **Composing: Jerusalem**

Living as a Jerusalem 'sound novice' benefitted my recordings. I was on the constant look-out for distinctive sounds. I even planned, in the moment, how to use certain sounds in a soundscape mix:

Soundscape work without the journey into the inner world of listening is devoid of meaning. Listening as a totality is what gives soundscape work its depth, from the external to the internal, seeking information about the whole spectrum of sound and its meanings, from noise to silence to sacred. (Westerkamp, 2003: 12)

Having a 'fresh ear' for sounds, where everything was sonically new, was advantageous (Paquette, 2004). The first compositional project in this thesis (see: chapter two) had been recorded in London, where my ear automatically went into 'background listening' mode. Therefore, long-term habitation of a location might, somewhat counterintuitively, act as a barrier to what Truax (2001) termed 'soundscape competence'. Familiarity and attachment, however, were reassuring attributes that I occasionally missed in Jerusalem, as a recordist. I sometimes felt on edge in my desire never to miss opportunities to record interesting new sounds. I was living in Jerusalem for a year, and initially intimidated by the prospect of sustaining my engagement for such a long and open-ended soundscape project. By the time I returned, however, I had come to appreciate the benefits of the longevity of this project.

For a comprehensive, geographical and technical exploration of my recording adventures in Israel, please see Appendix C: *Space and Sounds of Olim*. This appendix comprises discussions of recording a yearlong project encompassing sounds of deserts and nature; ancient and modern cities; community and religious gatherings (including *Yeshivos* and *Charedi* areas), as well as the creative placement and use of equipment.

‘In some sense, the river is never the same each time we put our foot in it, or perhaps it is always the same’ (Emmerson, 2001: 104). Months after returning to the UK from Jerusalem, I sat at my computer and began to listen to the soundscape I had recorded over the previous year. Listening again to the sounds of the *shuk* (market), I was transported back amongst the vegetables, spices and halva. The sounds seemed to alert other senses and I could instantly see and, almost, smell Jerusalem’s busy market stalls. I heard an unfamiliar voice during the recording: ‘*Ka-ma ze o-leh?*’ (How much is it?) A woman asks, before my microphones picked up another voice from the other direction ‘*RIMON! GEZER! GEZER! KHASA!!!*’ (Pomegrante! Carrot! Carrot! Lettuce!!!) A market seller screams at passers-by. I heard birds chirping in a nearby tree as I made my way out of the *shuk*. Suddenly my daydream was shattered and my senses returned back to London, as I heard a familiar voice on the recording: my voice. I am talking to my wife, as she returns with some olives:

I listen closely to the sounds I have collected, I am thinking, ‘It is me’. It is my breath, my panting into the microphones, my feet against the branches, kicking up dirt and dust. When my head turns, so do the microphones. My recordings have captured me, my body, as much as my surroundings. (Lyonblum, 2017: 14)



Figure 7: Vegetable stall in Jerusalem’s shuk.

I listened to the entire recording, and a structural idea for the piece began to emerge. I had been in Jerusalem for a year and had collected many sounds that entwined with the Israeli week and Jewish yearly cycle, as well as utilising the sounds that signify places and journeys from the interviewees' lives. I wanted to sonically structure the work around these cycles. Using the same techniques that I had used in the first project, (see chapter two), I meticulously grouped sounds together thematically and highlighted sounds that would have a prominent place in the composition. With regards to structuring the piece around the week and year, for instance, I grouped sounds connected to Shabbat, as well as sounds that connected to the different annual Jewish festivals.<sup>89</sup> After grouping the sounds, I listened back through all my interviews, before deciding on which interview formed the central narrative structure of the piece (see chapter three for a more in depth discussion of this structure). My plan was to keep the original structure of one of the interviews and fit sections of the other interviews around it. The structure of the piece was based on an original interview, but the multiply-voiced vocal segments would be themed to become more engaging for listeners. I cut up the remaining interview recordings; ordering them into groups of similar themes, to use later. Then I decided that I wanted to compose the pieces binaurally, thus making creative use of the manner in which humans interpret their sonic environment.

In the case of conventional stereo signals, sound is internalised, but using binaural recordings over headphones, the sound is enveloping and becomes externalised (Smalley, 2007; Barnard, 2010). Binaural compositions are not very popular in the acousmatic, or even in the wider sound composition community,<sup>90</sup> perhaps because recordings can only be translated into two audio channels. Multi-channel surround-sound methods offer composers wider techniques to use channels and enable group, rather than individualised, listening experiences. I consider the positive aspects of binaural compositions outweigh the limitations: headphones and binaural compositions create closeness and an intimacy with the sounds (see: Bull, 2006). Also, as noted in Appendix C, recording with binaural microphones allows an inconspicuous presence, enabling me to record without

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<sup>89</sup> Due to traditional Jewish law not permitting the use of electronics during *shabbat* and certain festivals, all sounds recorded were from rehearsals or festivals where electricity is permitted.

<sup>90</sup> As previously stated, binaural techniques are popular for soundwalks (see: Cardiff in Schaub, 2005) and a minority of other sound artists use them (Simpson, 2019). I have recently discovered that binaural recording is also very popular within the ASMR movement on youtube.

influencing the behaviour of the people around me.<sup>91</sup> Headphones are a far more accessible presentation format, which people do not find intimidating. One less desirable way that binaural techniques are utilised is that the presence of the recordist is often removed or minimised (see: Appendix C). Revealing the composer's presence, to remind listeners that this soundscape was ultimately filtered through the researcher's decisions (a glimpse into the making of the composition) makes ethical sense to me. Barnard (2010: 39) discusses how, when using binaural recordings, the composer is part of the recording apparatus, affecting the whole process: 'the organic nature of this results in a unique spectral profile of the recordist existing in all in-ear binaural recordings made, a characteristic that can be known as the spectral watermark'.

This 'watermark' was captured in all my soundwalks. The composer's sonic presence in the soundwalk has been defined by Truax (1999) as soundmaking: '[to] become aware of one's own sounds in the environment context'. Simpson (2019) comments:

I seek out a location. I perceive the sound universe of that location – this represents the acoustic reality of that space... As an artist I may desire to explore that environment in such a way that I transform some of the acoustically invisible visual (or other) realities into sound.

I had neither purposely made noise during my recordings, nor tried to hide my presence. I listened back, again, to some of my soundwalk recordings and tried to focus on my presence. I noticed, again, how soundwalks bring the attention of the listener to often ignored events, such as my walking, my footsteps and even the swish of my clothes. Soundscape methodology often calls for ecological issues to be noticed. Perhaps soundwalks can also offer different ways to call for ignored topics to be discussed? McDowell (1999), a feminist geographer, insists that a woman's presence on the streets, particularly at night, is always complicated by her gender. This gendered position always marks her visibility, rendering the notion that a woman can observe quietly and detachedly almost impossible (Gabriele and McCartney, 2001). Focusing the attention of listeners on these, often overlooked, issues is reminiscent of oral history's original claim to articulate the voices normally overlooked and left out of history.

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<sup>91</sup> There is a fine balance to be created here between people acting differently because they know they are being recorded and intrusions into personal privacy. In this study we are borrowing from visual arts ethics practices whilst recording in public places. We only gained formal consent from interviewees and professional performers (see: Quinn, 2015).

The use of reflexivity and voice is a highly contested phenomenon throughout narrative and post-qualitative inquiry (see: Hertz, 1997; St. Pierre, 2018). I can only touch briefly and tangentially in this thesis on the immense interdisciplinary scholarship on voice and representation. For a more detailed discussion on voice, please see Appendix E: *Voice*, at the end of this text. In Appendix E, philosophical and theoretical ideas of voice, informed, and became entangled with my thinking, and the making of these projects. This includes the ethics of composing with voices and the relationship between language and diasporic identity.

Returning to the construction of the binaural soundwalks, I recorded some sounds with a shotgun microphone in fixed locations at Jerusalem sites. As Westerkamp (cited in McCartney, 2014: 217) says:

What would my microphone pick up if I do this, and how do you play with environment and voice at the same time, live, while you're out there? How do you deal with people who approach you? So I developed a fairly passive style of recording. Very different from the radio journalist. I would just stand someplace and record. Then people who were familiar with that environment would approach me, I would not approach them. And as a result I got some very interesting conversation.

These two methods of recording: 1) whilst still, at a fixed point, the microphone watching the world pass by, and 2) moving and taking part in the environment; meant the sounds of the binaural and shotgun microphones are almost juxtaposed with each other. I hoped this would capture or emulate the flux identity of migrants to a new country: sometimes feeling part of the crowd; sometimes watching from the outside. Rosaldo (1988: 85) describes immigrants to North America as bobbing and weaving between assimilation to the new culture, and allegiance to their original one, creating for themselves a border zone which resembles both, yet is part of neither.

As discussed in chapter two, Aveyard (cited in Barnard, 2010) has argued for two points of audition in the making of soundscapes: a spatial point-of-audition, when a soundscape is heard from the perspective of a non-presence and a subjective point-of-audition, when sound is heard from the perspective of a participating (but not necessarily audible) recordist. I had previously combined binaural soundwalk recordings and occasional recordings from a shotgun microphone. I realised I could use these points of audition interchangeably throughout the composition. The sounds I recorded on the shotgun

microphone would, predominantly, be used in the background. The binaural recordings would comprise the foreground for the listener. Listening back to the shotgun recordings, I noticed a vehicle roared by with the fan-belt squealing: a deafening noise that briefly eradicated all other sounds around it. By the time I got my hand on the microphone, I was too late. The audio was clipped and extremely distorted. Listening to it a second time, however, I noticed that the distant approach of the vehicle was one of the more evocative traffic sounds of the project. I knew it could be used in the composition.

I started to create the soundscape, firstly by making some interesting background textures. I like to use quite low-pitched sounds for my background noises. Motor traffic always seems to be a good place to start. I suppressed some sounds and magnified others. I captured some very quiet birdsong, which I magnified in the mix. Creating this layered, textured background gave warmth and fullness to the composition. Building these layers, I cut out pitches, bands of frequencies and slices of time. At other times I duplicated or slowed down layers, stretching time or repeating events. To quote Westerkamp (1996: 20): 'I transform sound in order to highlight its original contours and meanings, similar to the manner in which a caricaturist sharpens the contours and our perception of a person's face'.

The building of these textures, through layers, evokes other dynamics of longing for, and belonging to, multiple places, and multifaceted discussions surrounding home. Salih (2003: 70) makes distinctions between home as the physical, inhabited space and home as 'the symbolic conceptualization of where one belongs'. This tension between the layers of home seems quite specific to diaspora identity and seems to stem from the experience of 'living here, relating to there' (Baumann, 2000: 324). It is part of what Clifford (1994: 322) calls the 'empowering paradox of diaspora'. It was, therefore, important in the piece to have moments of the interviewees speaking about their previous homes, so that listeners could experience these multiple layers. The conversations of passers-by were included on the soundwalks, which added to the richness and warmth of the layering. Brief fragments of conversation had been given new musical meaning throughout the piece, as the sound of people talking is placed as a context-driven aesthetic in the manner that Lane (2006) would categorise as 'narrative suggestion'.<sup>92</sup> These noises sometimes

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<sup>92</sup> This is where vocal events are not foregrounded, but rather, used to indicate human presence as representational of the recorded situation.

contrast with other sound material in the piece, but nonetheless, represent an important aspect of the environment: the public space (ibid.).

On top of this warm background, I also wanted to keep listeners alert by creating build-ups and breakdowns of highlighted sounds. The piece starts, for instance, with the sound of the Jerusalem tram, because one interviewee had taken it the first time they had arrived in Jerusalem, and remembered seeing the city for the first time whilst sitting on it. This beginning of the piece is mixed in French stereo,<sup>93</sup> which created interesting textures, though it keeps the original sounds recognisable. If I had transformed a sound, I often placed the original sounds underneath, to evoke a warmer feel. This is a similar technique to Harvey's (1998) *Mortuos Plango Vivos Voco* where he keeps the original, and processed, bell sounds throughout. Throughout the piece, the sounds of the tram return, simulating the way in which the tram winds its way, stopping and starting, through the city.

The ethnomusicologist Lomax (cited in Lyonblum, 2017: 22) felt compelled to make field recordings in order to preserve American folk songs in the early twentieth century. In the 1930s, Lomax had a phonograph disk recorder in the back of his car, allowing him to travel and record people singing folk songs (see: Porterfield, 1996), many of whom were African-American prisoners. The ethnomusicologist in me had recorded many snippets of music throughout my year in Jerusalem: from religious songs to buskers in the street, to outside music festivals. My microphones had captured them all. Sometimes, during a sound section of the composition, a small section of music enters into the soundscape. Sounds and music inserted between the spoken texts were collages, which in some way related to the texts and created a certain space. This aided the 'mental digestion' of the spoken words. One of my favourite examples of this is when a *niggun*<sup>94</sup> enters the soundscape. *Niggunim* are particularly central to *Chasidic* groups, who believe that the inner parts of your soul are most deeply expressed through melody. Rebbe Shneur Zalman of Lyady (cited in Rubin, 2005: 145) said that 'music is the pen of the soul'.

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<sup>93</sup> Doubling the audio file and starting one a few milliseconds behind the other. Then, sharp panning the two channels, one left and one right.

<sup>94</sup> A *niggun* is a form of Jewish song which has no words, but often has repetitive sounds such as "Ni-ni-ni", which allows the song to have endless meaning (DovBer, 1999).

The different styles and melodies used throughout the piece showcase the musical diversity of Jewish folk and prayer songs: ‘Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives’ (Frith, 1996: 124). Jewish music has many different styles, from klezmer to synagogue cantor music; from *Chasidic* to *Ladino*<sup>95</sup> songs; from Yemenite folk music to modern Israeli pop. The same song, set to different melodies by different communities are vastly different. For example, the Sarajevo and Yemenite melodies of *D’ror Yikro*, a popular song that is often sung on Shabbat. Both versions start on different notes, but are still recognisable as the same song. By including fragments of diverse Jewish melodies, my composition reflected the cultures of my interviewees, whose families came from assorted backgrounds. As Attali, the French Jewish writer, comments: ‘Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. A tool of understanding’ (1985: 4).

The European klezmer revival, which started in the early 1990s in Poland and Germany, has continued to develop despite widespread disapproval (see: Waligorska, 2013). In Germany this modern revival has been called a ‘klezmer cult’ and has gathered some bad publicity: ‘klezmer in Germany, from the beginning, constituted a controversial case, and the 1990s witness a heated public debate about whether non-Jewish Germans had the moral right to perform klezmer at all’ (Waligorska, 2013: 59). This klezmer revival by non-Jewish musicians is a very unique situation with regards to sound and identity.

In some, cases non-Jewish musicians have experienced antisemitism because of the links between the music they perform and the culture that it evokes:

I don’t want to destroy this culture again that was already destroyed by my own people. It doesn’t mean that I’m ridden with a sense of guilt, but a small part remains... I cannot distance myself from the fact that Germany is responsible for the Holocaust, for the end of klezmer and this culture! (ibid., 216)

Reading this text evoked my own complicated feelings about the complex power dynamics within music/research projects. The power ostensibly wielded by researchers often made me nervous about undertaking a large project, such as a PhD. I noticed however, I felt significantly less tension than the, above, German musicians. I realised

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<sup>95</sup> An almost extinct language spoken by *Sephardi* Jews, originally spoken in Spain before the Jewish expulsion in 1492 (Harris, 2011). There is a current revival of Ladino music (see: Levy, 2009).

that I had felt more at ease throughout this second compositional project than I had during the first. Perhaps my lack of anxiety is due to my own Jewish identity. I was no longer the potentially powerful researcher (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009), researching ‘the other’. I was researching my own people. Whatever the reason may be, I was able to relax and produce a much more creative final project (see: Myerhoff, 1978<sup>96</sup>).

The sounds of walking, people’s narratives, the sounds of birds and the wind and clips of music; came together to create a very rhythmic piece. Whilst the narratives were unfolding I had to ensure that the sounds did not completely cancel out voices.<sup>97</sup> I had to construct pre-arranged parts of the soundscape and integrate them as an ‘accompaniment’ to spoken words. The pace of the piece is calm but rhythmic. Unlike my first project where I focused on creating ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), this piece embraces the sonic disjointedness of diaspora identities. There are deliberately un-edited moments where I am audible as the recordist, (through speech or movement sounds), which adds to the rhythm, perhaps knocking it slightly out of flow. This was important to include as an awareness of ‘ethnographic presence’ (Fetterman, 2005), which is crucial to the understanding of the soundscape process for listeners. Rhythmically, the disjointed flow of the piece mirrors the steady rhythm of *shuckling*, from the Yiddish word meaning ‘to shake’ (Weinreich, 1968: 399), the ritual swaying of worshippers during Jewish prayer: ‘Traditionally speaking, music is fundamentally about our experience of time passing. All the elements that we think of as comprising music, pitch, rhythm, timbre, etc. interact to create a sense of moving through time’ (Chasalow, 2006: 65).

I wanted to create different soundmarks<sup>98</sup> throughout the composition, something to drop in at various points along the soundscape. Soundmarks are of cultural and historical significance and merit preservation and protection (Truax, 1999). There are, for example, church bells in the piece, which accompanied one interviewee’s weekly walk to see her sister. Similarly, Jerusalem’s Shabbat siren, goes off every Friday to mark the beginning

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<sup>96</sup> In a film discussing Myerhoff’s research (1978), she asks ‘Why don’t I study my own kind?’ she responds ‘I will one day be a little old Jewish lady’ and she goes on to say, that this gives her research greater validity.

<sup>97</sup> With the exception of fade outs or voices building up and overlapping.

<sup>98</sup> A term derived from ‘landmark’, soundmark is used in soundscape studies to refer to a community sound which is unique, or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community (see: Truax, 1999).

of the Jewish Sabbath. This sounds out as a marker in the composition. My method for creating the remainder of this piece emerged out of the ways that certain sound excerpts resonated with the spoken narratives in direct and indirect ways. I placed the soundwalks of interviewee's local areas alongside the sections of the composition in which they were speaking. The main dynamic of the composition is that of soundscape and narrative juxtaposition and the development of musical gestures and tonal materials, with a series of sound intermissions. The sound intermissions, either had a soundmark or music clip, or even sometimes an acousmatic mixture of them. These intervals were used to make some reflective space for listeners, intending to draw them into a new focus upon the details of the material; either for them to reflect on the narratives that have just been spoken, or to take a moment to listen intently to some sounds that they might not normally to listen to.

I gave an overall length of sixty minutes as the target for the duration of the entire piece. I have found that giving listeners a known length of time seems to relax them: 'the walker can relax into the experience, relieved of the choice whether to continue or not within a piece of indeterminate length' (Bradley, 2016: 171). I also had to consider listeners who might not want, or have time, to listen to the full composition; so sporadically a section sonically ends or slows down, to allow people to leave at that moment. After laying down the background layer of the soundscape, I formed the narrative structure. I placed the original full-length interview that was at the centre of this structure down on a track, before bringing in the cuts of other interviews. I removed myself from the original interview, deleting my questions. This process created some natural break points where I could insert other interview clips. Even though I was searching for a natural narrative structure, I did not intend one interview to dominate the others, so the original interview was cut down significantly. It then became impossible to tell which was the original load-bearing narrative. The greatest technical challenge was in enabling the narratives to run flowingly into each other, which took many hours of audio processing on Logic.<sup>99</sup> I wanted to keep the emotional highs and lows of participants' narratives aurally accessible to listeners, whilst at the same time regulating the sudden increases in volume, which tend to delineate such moments. The binaural mixing together with the narratives creatively evoked the way I first heard the original sounds. Thus, creating a relationship between

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<sup>99</sup> Logic was the digital audio workstation (DAW) of choice for my compositions.

the listener and composer. This suggests and echoes the relationship that I, the interviewer, had with the interviewees.

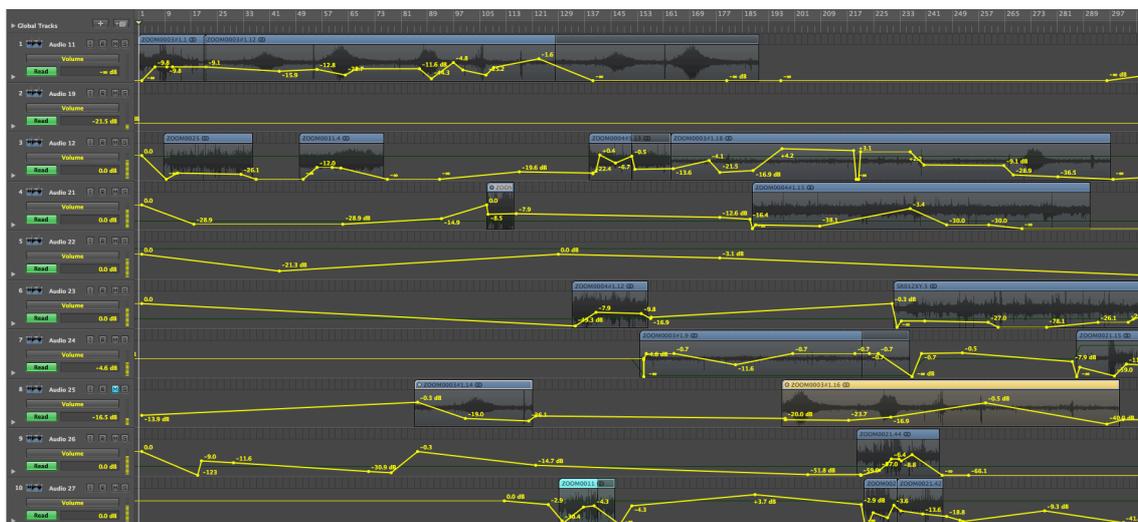


Figure 8: An example of this project's very beginning stages of structuring and automation using Logic.

I have often mentioned my concerns about creating a ‘tourist soundscape’ (Westerkamp, 2002). Westerkamp (ibid., 55) warns that if you are new to an environment it is easy to create a ‘superficial, touristic sonic impression of a place’. I wanted to continue the mindful thinking that I aimed for throughout the recording process into the compositional section of my project. Drever (2002) also argues against ‘sonic tourism’ as a compositional position and urges composers to take a more reflective, ethnographic approach. I had recorded at popular tourist sites in the old city, for example at the *Kotel* (Western Wall). These were places that my interviewees had visited, so the inclusion of these passages carried integrity. I had also made soundwalks of normal, everyday routes that could contrast with these well-known sounds. I additionally recorded some casual chatter at a *yeshiva* that one of my interviewees attended. The people were speaking a mixture of English and Hebrew in American accents, which offered a good insight into the multi-language world the *olim* lived in.

In the composition, there is a section, fundamental to the Jewish yearly cycle, where I had captured the *Megilla* reading (the scroll of Esther). This scroll is read during the festival of *Purim*, wherein traditionally the audience to the story try to drown out the name of Haman (the enemy of the Jews in the text) with vocal noises or with *groggers* (rattles/noisemakers). This was significant, as it is a central sonic moment in the Jewish

yearly cycle. In Jerusalem, there was a visiting exhibition on *Purim groggers* at the Israel Museum, which incorporated a sonic composition of their sounds (Kaufman, 2017).



Figure 9: *Purim grogger*

Another example of the annual significance of sound is *Rosh Hashanah*, (Jewish New Year). A *shofar* (rams horn) is blown several times during the *Rosh Hashanah* service and at the end of the *Yom Kippur* (day of atonement) service, which falls ten days later. The sound of the *shofar* sonically signifies this holy time. It is blown every morning for a month leading up to *Rosh Hashanah*. Jewish sages believed that to hear the *shofar* during this time was a *mitzvah* (positive commandment) (Heiman, 2013). There is a debate about whether a person has fulfilled the *mitzvah*, if they have heard an echo as opposed to the original sound. The *Shulchon Oruch* (code of Jewish Law) concludes that only the listener who hears the original sounds fulfils the *mitzvah* (Heiman, 2013: 587). This is understood since listeners hearing the reverberation may not know or recognise that the sound is a *shofar*. During my composition listeners hear a processed *shofar* at first.<sup>100</sup> They may be unaware of the source of this sound (being almost acousmatic and unrecognisable). By the end of the piece, when hearing the recognisable *shofar*, the composition is trying to emulate people fulfilling this *mitzvah* at the end of *Yom Kippur*.

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<sup>100</sup> As previously noted, due to traditional Jewish law not permitting the use of electronics during *shabbat* and certain festivals, all sounds recorded were from rehearsals or festivals where electricity is permitted.



Figure 10: Man blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, inscription: *L'Shana Tova* (Happy New Year).

This composition was totally constructed out of sounds connected to *olim* and wider Jewish life, even added reverb, which was recorded from natural sources in an English-speaking synagogue. For added sonic textures, I occasionally utilised the recording of the wrapping of *tefillin*,<sup>101</sup> as well as the whooshing of a *tallis* (Jewish prayer shawl) being pulled on. I used the audio programme Sound Studio to chop up and copy short clips from the recordings I had collected into a new file. After increasing the speed, the new file fluttered through the short samples of sounds, creating an unusual texture. I took this file into software programmes such as, Spear and Audiosculpt. I used many treatments on the spectral analysis of the sounds, such as the harmonic pencil tool to create imaginative filters. I experimented using my own photographs, such as landscapes of places I had recorded, as image filters.<sup>102</sup> I was searching here for a way of processing these sounds that had more congruence with the place or context they came from. This method gave the place itself agency (as opposed to the composer) in the composition of the piece. Additionally, I employed time stretching and the freeze tool to create pulses on sounds. These acousmatic moments were only brief, and I used them to re-awaken the concentration of the listener. Many of the acousmatic moments of this composition were merely layered rather than processed. This layering, nonetheless, built up acousmatic

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<sup>101</sup> Small boxes with arm and head straps worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers.

<sup>102</sup> Image filters are used as grey level visual filters superimposed on a spectrum to modify the amplitudes of their components.

moments. Many sounds were intriguing and required no editing whatsoever. The tahini making machine, for instance, which ground sesame seeds freshly in front of passers by; the sound is sticky but clicks at the same time.



Figure 11: Fresh tahini machine in Jerusalem's shuk.

The end of the piece continues with this simulation of a Jewish cycle as, the mourner's *kaddish* (a prayer recited in memory of the dead) is heard, this prayer is traditionally intoned towards the conclusion of a service. Structurally, I prefer to compose my pieces in a circular way: ending with similar sounds to those at the beginning. I saw this piece, however, as part of a trio of compositions. This work is combined with my compositional first project and the bridge piece, and therefore it needed a different ending. I built a mass of interviewees' voices that slowly faded out. The narratives had different speeds, subjects, voices and emotions. I used binaural mixing to emphasise the participants talking from a different range of proximities to the listener. The narratives in this section are almost acousmatic as you can only understand snippets of words. This ending borrowed heavily from Andean's work on the connections between acousmatic and narrative.<sup>103</sup> He maintains: 'I would argue that emotional response to an acousmatic phrase is almost entirely determined by narrative aspects' (Andean, 2013: 4).

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<sup>103</sup> The work of John Young (2002; 2007), electro-acoustic composer, also influenced the final sections of this piece.



Figure 12: An example of this project’s very beginning stages of binaural mixing using Logic.

The sonic significance of this layered ending brings to mind how the streets of Jerusalem are filled with real, complicated, diaspora stories. In 2016, for example, Israel saw a large increase in the number of Jews emigrating (Gottlieb, 2016). Ten thousand Jews from France, three thousand from the United States, seven thousand from Russia and an additional seven thousand from Ukraine, all arrived in 2016 (ibid.). Despite the language, cultural, social and religious difficulties *olim* were experiencing, they were still happy to share their complex stories: ‘History is not simple or linear or easy to understand. It is complex and mysterious, contradictory and multi-vocal’ (Hardy III, 2014: 61). The multi-layered narrative ending of this composition also evokes Bakhtin’s work on the complex factors that make dialogue feasible. Bakhtin (cited in Clark and Holquist, 1984: 50) argued: ‘The contexts of dialogue are without limit... Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never finally be grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue’. Future listeners to my composition will be repeatedly renewing these narratives/dialogues.

### Inspiration, Self-doubt and Reflection

The compositions in this thesis are interconnected with each other. Ideas that emerged from audience feedback and my own thinking concerning the conclusions to my first compositional project informed the second project. These two compositional projects, conducted in London and Jerusalem, around similar, yet different, migratory themes;

represent a continuous creative progression of practices, ideas and thoughts. The inquiries are different. They, nonetheless, demonstrate a compositional and scholarly progression from one to the other. The final composition, seems, on initial hearing, thinner than the first (*Hearing Home* includes a deep-sounding stretched piano drone throughout). *Sounds of Aliyah*, however, contains a wider diversity of sounds, which makes it sonically richer and more engaging. The disparity between the construction of the two pieces reflects, in part, my development as a composer. *Sounds of Aliyah* is, in my opinion, by far the most aesthetically pleasing piece.

Three compositions, in particular, have inspired my practice and supported my thinking at moments of self-doubt. These are Gallagher's (2012) *Kilmahew Audio Drift*; Gasoir's (2007) *Sounding Griffintown* and Rosenblum's (2013) *If One Night*. *Kilmahew Audio Drift* is described by its creator as an audio walk. This piece integrates oral history with field recordings, music and soundscape composition. The piece is based around the St Peter's Seminary ruin on the Kilmahew Estate. Unlike my pieces, *Kilmahew Audio Drift* is meant to be listened to whilst exploring the site it was recorded in. The voice collages combined with acousmatic slices, mixed with the environmental sounds and oral narratives, are sonically beautiful. They inspired my creative vision, particularly with regards to the acousmatic parts of my work. In describing his process, Gallagher (2015: 478) writes:

As the light fails in the late afternoon of winter, I search out quiet spots away from traffic noise, wandering along the back streets, a near-deserted cycle path and then the dead calm of a cemetery. Raindrops rattling on my hood make a fitting counterpoint to the voice of a priest who trained at the seminary recalling how there were buckets all over the building to catch the water dripping from the leaks.

Additionally, another piece that was inspirational was *Sounding Griffintown* (2007). This work is described as a 'listening guide' and was created by Gasoir exploring the area of Griffintown. Griffintown was once a bustling suburb of Montreal, made up of predominantly working class, Irish communities. By the 1960s the area was swiftly depopulated and demolished (Gasoir, 2007). This piece integrates interviews with field recordings, soundscapes and sound design effects to immerse the listener. This work is very unlike my piece. There is, for example, a voice-over giving instructions as to where the listener should walk. What inspired me about the piece were the pauses afforded to the listener. Time is given throughout the piece for listeners to pause and reflect; to take time out from the headphone experience and listen to the sounds of their own present

location. These pauses inspired the reflective, calmer, sonic moments throughout my own piece. This work also helped me to reflect and decide on the ways that I wanted to structure and organise the voices of interviewees in my own composition. In reviewing *Griffintown*, McCartney (2014: 15) comments that:

The listening guide draws attention to conflicting ideas of truth and the workings of memory... the focus of narrative voices shifts from that of experts to competing claims on truth and memory, where different voices contradict each other.

Finally, Rosenblum's *If One Night* (2013) is an ethnographic soundscape composition. Rosenblum's piece was originally composed for a theatre performance, directed by McLeod and Blenkarn (Moretti, 2013). This project explored the experiences of young people moving to new places and searching to find their home in a city. The composition incorporates diverse languages, street music, traffic noise, public conversations and radio advertisements. The piece inspired my compositional outlook on soundwalks, including fragments of conversations of passers-by, and busker music:

*If One Night*... beautifully describes how living in and journeying through a city, a market, or a neighborhood also means participating in the lives of other people and spaces. Always through fragments, traces, or snippets of sounds and stories that we listen to, interrupt, voice, and echo, and that are always coming from and traveling to somewhere else. (Moretti, 2013)

The flow of Rosenblum's piece floats between heavy urban and gentle nature sections, profoundly influenced the mixing and rhythmic ideas in my own piece. This piece helped me reflect on what I wanted listeners to experience during my composition:

Listening to the piece will be different for each listener, as the sounds become recognizable, or perhaps remain unfamiliar and acousmatic, decontextualized and re-embodied in ones own experience. This is the fascination and the danger of the soundscape. Each listener takes away from the piece what they will, making their own sense of place, just as we do with our conception of home and away. (Rosenblum, 2013)

After finishing the compositional process, I had concerns about what listeners would make of it. Hill has studied, in some depth, the ways in which listeners interpret 'real world' sounds in compositions. He comments:

The individual who recorded the sound (in this case the author) carries with them a whole complex of associations relating to the recorded sound and its position in the real: where it was recorded, when it was recorded, why it was recorded, what the weather conditions were, what microphone was used, how the sound was recorded, what actions were performed to create the sound, how it has been edited, where it has been used since, etc. Therefore, when the author listens back to it, they have access to a whole complex of extra-musical associations that frame their interpretation of the sound within a unique context. The audience members possess none of these poetic associations and do not receive any of them by simply listening to the sound. Each audience member will listen to the sound and interpret it independently. (Hill, 2017: 12)

This statement reflects my post-composition worries. I was, perhaps, the only person interested in the soundscape composition that I had created. Self-doubt seeped into my thoughts. I nearly cancelled some of the listening opportunities for the piece. I recalled, however, that sound is experienced through memory, perception and awareness, which all combine with the other senses (see: Gibson, 1966; Nudds & O'Callaghan, 2009). Some of the audience, perhaps, would find something about the compositions interesting: '...these processed sounds appeal to the inner world of memory, symbolism and metaphor. The listener is invited not merely to identify the elements of a soundscape, but to meditate on their associations and inherent meanings' (Truax, 2012: 198).

My self-doubts played into my constantly developing reflections about ethical concerns in my work. As has been made transparent, the ethical codes for social inquiry have been of paramount importance. Drever (1999: 25) notes that:

There is rarely an evident acknowledgement by sound artists to any essential qualities pertaining to the sound objects, or even to its history. Sound artists habitually have little concern that their appropriations may compromise their subject's sense of identity or may violate their most intimate regions of privacy.

I must protest that I am not one of those sound artists of whom Drever comments. I have, to the best of my ability, given, as Butler (2005) would say, an account of myself, and feel comfortable with my ethical and aesthetic decisions. In this second piece I had experimented more creatively within the composition and, in a sense, put more of myself as a sonic artist on the line.

I was extremely anxious about audience reactions. Hill (2017: 18-19) ends his paper with:

Each individual possesses their own reality, built from experience. Experience engenders the real, which can take many forms. Context exists within the listener and is formed out of their relationship to the world. Thus, there is no absolute distinction between a real world and the abstract, between soundscape and acousmatic. The nature of sound is more malleable than concrete, it is plastic.

And with that thought reverberating through my mind, I felt ready to share my composition. Carpenter and McLuhan's (1960) concept of acoustic space discusses the way that sound divulges the physical and dynamic space of its environment. The listeners to my soundscape would unknowingly get their sonic information from various physical environments in Jerusalem, perhaps without ever having been there. I began to realise that my compositions would become very different experiences for those listeners who had been to Jerusalem before. Feld and Basso (1996: 11) argue that a sense of place is:

The relation of sensation to emplacement, the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities.

I hoped that other listeners to my composition, who are themselves new to Jerusalem, experience the freshness of different sounds and feel empathic (Gordon, 2005) towards the new immigrants. It was my intention that if listeners heard both compositions (from the first and second projects), this would cause them to reflect on both pieces, integrating and complementing each other. The compositions evoke reflections on the distance that immigrants may feel from both the place they have come to and the place they have come from (see: hooks, 2009). I named this final composition, *Sounds of Aliyah*.

## Chapter Five: Feedback

### Introduction

The precedent set by most, if not all, soundscape work has been to leave ample room for the voices of the sounds one is working with, as well as the interpretive capacity of one's audience... a central practice of sound (scape) art challenges listeners to continue listening long after they have left a work behind. (Chapman, 2009: 87-88)

I was worried about presenting my soundscape to its first audience. Ten venues were visited around the UK in order to invite people to take part in the feedback process and showcase the composition. This included synagogues, community centres, learning institutions and people's homes. To enable full anonymity, the communities and listeners wished to remain unknown (which made many participants more comfortable about taking part, especially those from *Charedi* communities). The communities were predominantly located in London and Manchester, where the majority of the British Jewish Community lives (BoD, 2019). Some communities played the piece from stereo speakers, whilst others played it in a room as an installation on loop for a day. Most of the communities had a private space where members could listen to the piece with headphones.<sup>104</sup> By the end of March 2019, all communities had sent back their listener response forms. Looking at the listener surveys<sup>105</sup> – a variety of thoughts and reflections had come from hearing my composition (see: Appendix I, for an example of a listener response form). Readers will notice that my first compositional project was played to audiences both within and outside British refugee communities, whereas this final composition was only shown to Jewish communities. This discrepancy was due to my own Jewish identity. I did not want to personally inculcate the kinds of antisemitic attention that someone Jewish presenting work concerning Israel might attract. Was I right to not play it to a wider audience? As Anidjar stated (2017: 189):

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<sup>104</sup> Despite both pieces having been composed for optimum listening through headphones, not all of the communities involved in both the feedback processes had the facilities to provide this listening experience. It seemed preferable, however, to still include such communities in this study, as their members would still have an experience of the composition.

<sup>105</sup> One interesting avenue not taken by this thesis was an in-depth exploration of audience modes of listening. This thesis focuses solely on listener responses to my work. For more extensive studies of audience interpretation, see: Erlmann, 2010; Chion, 1994; and, in particular Marty, 2019 (who examines Derlande's, 1989, 'listening behaviours' in depth).

Is the struggle against antisemitism a matter of consensus or in opposition to it? Is it local or global, a matter of concern for civil society, for the state or the international community, for national and international law? How does it relate to other struggles? Do I have my priorities right? ...Perhaps I should simply affirm my active participation as a self-evident comportment. I cannot be everywhere at once but I must be where I can.

There was a range of response from listeners: many listeners engaged with the sounds of Israel and the narratives of the interviewees. People seemed to really like the presence of environmental sounds, as well as the voice and music elements in the piece: 'If a group of listeners finds a piece of electroacoustic music "rewarding" it is because there is some shared experiential basis both inside and behind that music' (Smalley, 1997: 107). Overall, I am pleased with the way listeners welcomed and reflected on my composition. I realised that I had an opportunity to connect this work specifically to the larger context of British-Jewish identity and to openly address this with listeners. After they had finished listening to the composition, I talked to people about their identities, refugee stories and family journeys of coming to the UK. We talked about how British they felt and about any thoughts they might have had regarding a move to Israel. Many people responded by saying that my composition had shed light on the broader issues of modern immigration to Israel. The majority of listeners had family or friends who had taken this journey.

### **Listener Feedback**

Collecting feedback was very important in trying to understand how the piece was received by its audience.<sup>106</sup> As James Andean comments, 'A listener is not granted direct experience of a work; rather, the work is accessed through listening contexts which potentially have a major impact on how the work is understood and received' (2011: 126). This chapter makes detailed reflective and contemplative observations<sup>107</sup> on listener feedback. These observations informed my subsequent discussions about making different plans for future work.

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<sup>106</sup> See: Landy's (2006) investigation of the relationship between composer intention and listener response.

<sup>107</sup> For a more detailed analysis of listener experiences with regards to sound compositions please see: Andean (2011); Hill (2017); Smalley (1997).

Below I will briefly look at some listener responses to the first question on my feedback form. I included responses to question one as this was the most open question that was asked, and then selected responses at random.<sup>108</sup> For more detailed examples of listener comments and feedback and further discussion of the design of this questionnaire, readers are encouraged to see Appendices I and J.

The first question on my listener response form was: ‘Please list any initial thoughts that came to your mind from listening to the composition’. Selected responses are indented below with added commentary.

‘Loved the intro and the ending. I really liked the part when a woman sings in Hebrew. The place feels very alive because of the sounds. It feels as if you are actually there’ (Listener 29).

This feedback resonates with a listener response to my first project (see: chapter two), who also felt transported to another place by the composition, without actually being there.

‘As a secular Jew: the religious sounds introduced me to a landscape I was completely unaware of and have never experienced’ (Listener 7).

I believe this listener is referring to the way the piece uses the ups and downs of Jewish liturgy intertwined with the Jewish year to express, joy, sadness and pause.

‘The piece was like an invitation to listen to the world around us, to pay attention to the ways in which sound helps create the many spaces we experience’ (Listener 38).

My sense here is that the listener is struck by the use of solo sounds and moments of quiet in the urban soundscape, used throughout the composition. One example of this is the use

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<sup>108</sup> This random selection process consisted of throwing the response forms up in the air and collecting those that landed nearest the researcher each time, thus avoiding privileging any particular responses. It would have been impractical for me to include all of the listener comments in this thesis. Out of fifty-three listener response forms, I randomly picked twenty to discuss in this chapter and in Appendix J. Listener forms were collected from composition feedback sessions held in the UK in 2019.

of isolated *yeshiva* background chatter. This enabled listeners to hear and reflect on their own environment.

‘I had never been to Israel... it was really interesting listening to what sounds were familiar, Jewish-ly, and what sounds weren’t, Israeli’ (Listener 21).

This connects to one of the interviewees in the composition who discusses enjoying living in a place that follows the rhythms of Jewish life. The interviewee later mentions, however, that he understands little of the everyday language spoken around him. Similarly, for this listener, perhaps, the sound of the *Shofar* is recognisable, but the amount of car-horn usage amongst the traffic noise in Israel is less familiar.

Many listeners to the composition also reported entering a dream-like; head in the clouds; intense but reflective feeling of reverie:

‘With the nature, music and traffic mixed up moments... I sometimes felt like I was day dreaming... but extremely focused on it!’ (Listener 12).

I had several responses similar to this one, noticing that they were concentrating intensely, although relaxed.

‘The sounds made me feel like I was in a meditative trance sometimes. It was very relaxing listening to other people’s worlds’ (Listener 51).

Listeners who experienced the piece through headphones often commented that they had gained insight into another person’s aural experience of life.

‘When contemplating what the interviewees had been saying... listening to the sounds, it felt like I was lost in my thoughts’ (Listener 34).

Quite a number of listeners commented that the composition gave them the space to contemplate the sounds and narratives in the soundscape. This attention to sound and narrative also led them into attending to their own contexts and stories.

In the feedback there is a pattern of listeners (perhaps from an older age-bracket) who reacted strongly when listening to some of the audio effects. For instance, sometimes the binaural mixing (of footsteps or someone talking near to them in the composition) would spook them and make them feel uneasy:

‘I didn’t like the feel that someone was following me with footsteps... I’m not used to all this technology’ (Listener 1).

‘It was more realistic than a movie... Sometimes the sound really felt like it was happening around me, I had to keep my eyes open!’ (Listener 32).

‘The voice montages, that blurred the boundaries between the environmental sounds and the oral testimony, were interesting but slightly disorienting to myself. I’m just more familiar with conventional audio books/tours!’ (Listener 40).

After witnessing an elderly listener look imbalanced whilst experiencing the piece, I made sure to let other older listeners know that these audio simulations would occur in the composition. I also set the volume slightly lower for these listeners (to avoid uneasiness and disorientation), and made sure that there was comfortable, safe seating available. I had not thought about this issue before. It was called to my attention early on, and thankfully no-one was hurt.

Gallagher (2015: 480) discusses similar concerns:

I was taken aback by the affective intensity experienced by some listeners. It is therefore worth considering the ethical implications of inviting members of the public to engage with such works. Auditioned on headphones in situ, environmental audio is immersive and constantly unfolding, without the safe distance and reassuring stability of written texts. Responses to the drift suggest that environmental audio works may on occasion overwhelm listeners, creating a sense of entrapment or distress. This possibility calls for care in how works are framed and introduced, such as whether listeners are advised to walk alone or in groups, and perhaps giving people ample warning where appropriate, especially if the research topic is emotionally sensitive... Environmental audio can affect listeners’ movement, spatial awareness and balance.

Similarly, I have been surprised by the level of engagement with these projects from listeners, which has contributed far more than I could have predicted at the outset to the

collaborative nature of the process. Some of the listener responses reminded me of the term ‘source bonding’ coined by Smalley (1997: 110):

I have invented the term source bonding to represent the intrinsic-to-extrinsic link, from inside the work to the sound world outside... The word bonding seems particularly appropriate since it evokes binding, inescapable engagement or kinship between listener and musical context... They can be constructs created by the listeners; different listeners may share bondings when they listen to the same music.

Perhaps the ‘bonding’ in regards to my projects also applies to the collaborative nature of the process.

### **Second Draft Alterations**

A selection of interviewees, as well as listeners from the UK, were given the opportunity to hear the piece. The interviewees themselves gave detailed, useful and (mostly) positive feedback on the first draft. One of them noticed, for instance, an error within the mixing of the piece, whereby a narrative suddenly disappeared, which I had failed to notice.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, showing feedback from the listeners to the interviewees was a crucial and validating aspect of this work. It gave the interviewees an opportunity to gain the audience’s perspective on their personal narratives, and to see how these stories could be used educationally, as well as emphasising the shared and diverse impact of their *aliyah* experiences.

I am grateful for these listener and interviewee responses to the first draft of my final compositional project. It becomes harder to listen attentively to your own work over time, whilst also composing. The mistakes that were pointed out to me I had missed due to overfamiliarity with the piece (when composing, every bar of music is heard so many times that the composer stops noticing anything). By engaging with listener feedback I was also able to follow the relational and ethical principles of a collaborative, a/r/tographic inquiry (see: Bickel et al., 2011; Reason and Rowan, 1981). I allowed a month in the timeline of my research schedule to integrate alterations, such as the one

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<sup>109</sup> It was beyond the word limit of this thesis to discuss in greater depth the minimal, albeit useful, feedback from interviewees about omissions and changes to the composition.

outlined above, into the final compositional mix. Feedback also alerted me as to segments of the composition that had seemed confusing to listeners.

Had I chosen to undertake only one compositional project, there would have been a far lengthier discussion of the collaborative qualities of listener feedback received, but the cyclical pilot project/main project design of this thesis placed limitations on the attention I could pay to audience responses. Suffice to say, that there were moments in the composition where the mixing needed tweaking. Interestingly, there were no requests for the creative compositional elements to be altered or removed. To my surprise, there were calls for the inclusion of more creative sound elements amongst the soundscape sounds.

Before altering sections of the composition in accordance with listener feedback (most of which were mistakes in Logic's<sup>110</sup> processing which I could easily rectify), I decided to sit back and listen to the whole piece again, a last chance to note any changes I wished to make. Whilst listening to the work, I found the chronology of the piece to be straightforward enough to not confuse listeners, whilst the narratives and sounds were sufficiently tangled to evoke the complicated identities and stories caught up in the places. The soundscape sections that disturbed the narratives by drifting off down sonic tangents gave textual interest to the material, occasionally juxtaposing and layering audio from different places, similarly to Weidenaar (2002: 68), who comments:

The sound is still rooted in its time and environment. But it has been reshaped and sculpted, taken away from reality, into a mediation in continuous contact with its origin. Certain of its formative, gestural or emotional elements having been strengthened, the listener is given an expanded reimagination of the locale and its culture.

Often the sound sections had been inspired by the unexpected coincidences that occurred from the walks across the landscape and these memories came flooding back to me. I could hear when the audio material had been composed in a 'purist' soundscape compositional manner, and the other times when it had been composed using a more playful, fictionalised approach. I had used the biannual stereo space accomplished by headphones, to mix the interviewees' voices, panning often towards the left, with the succeeding voices towards the right, positioning the listener in the middle of the conversation. I listened, noticed and remembered the moments of resonance at which I

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<sup>110</sup> Logic was the digital audio workstation (DAW) of choice for my compositions.

had knitted together the recordings of sound and narrative. I jotted down a few extra changes to the final mix. I closed my eyes when listening, in order to edit the final version, which aided my concentration. I pondered about asking listeners, in the future, to close their eyes.

The concluding, editing and mixing requires serious concentration; continually tweaking levels and timings to ensure all audio files are flowing in and out smoothly; keeping the mix full but not too messy. I use software automation to alter volume and panning levels over time by drawing in countless points and lines. Each point has to be added in, adjusted and re-adjusted many times. When I finished the first draft of the composition, nearly six months ago, I hadn't taken into consideration the vastness of the piece. But as I return to it, I can see how the layers have steadily built up. Ultimately, I have used nearly 100 tracks of audio, integrated with innumerable cuts and crossfades. For every hour spent walking and interviewing around Israel, I have spent twice that length of time at my desk in London, sitting at my computer, repeatedly reviewing and tweaking small segments at a time.

This life sitting in front of a screen is very far away from the field work of recording in Jerusalem. Whilst being hunched over a computer, it is hard to imagine what the work will sound like outside a small room. It is impossible to get the balance of the levels exactly right, without knowing what real-life sounds will be happening around the audience at the time of listening. When you are curled up in your quiet home office/studio this is impossible to judge. I decided that I was not too concerned about how able listeners were to hear 'live' sounds in their own environments. The sounds would inevitably fold into the soundscape, blurring the distinctions between them. When I am composing and mixing, I use good quality studio headphones, but as I had witnessed at some of the trials of the composition, many of the audience would listen back through their 'bog-standard free-with-your-phone' in-earphones. My job was just to do the best I could. I could not accommodate all possible variables.<sup>111</sup> At two o'clock one early morning I finished my final mix: a mix that sounded best through studio headphones, and good enough with inexpensive headphones and speakers.

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<sup>111</sup> It was helpful at this juncture, to peruse the BBC's (2019) 'Radio Audio Quality Information', which contained useful guidance.

I remember feeling exhausted that night, praying that Logic didn't crash as it rendered the final bounce of the audio file. I wanted to make sure that this version was the 'final final' version. I grabbed my coat and popped my dog's lead on. As we made our way onto the street, the dog excited about a middle-of-the-night adventure stroll, I pressed play on my phone one final time. I searched out quiet spots away from the all-hours London traffic noise, wandering along back streets, before the dead calm of a deserted park. That was the last time I listened to the composition. It was, thankfully, the 'final final' version. I could feel the stress of finishing my composition being lifted off my shoulders.

### **What I Would Have Done Differently and Future Plans**

The lovely feeling of finishing something is soon followed by the contemplation of what you would have liked to have done differently, given another chance to do it again. Shortly after finishing my composition, I was at a 'community potluck' Friday night dinner. I met a young man, who we shall call Benjamin, who had spent the last two years in Israel after making *aliyah*. He had returned to the UK, however, after deciding that it wasn't for him. My researcher side kicked in and I could not resist asking him a lot of questions: 'What happened? How do you feel now you have returned? What was the final push that made you leave Israel?' I apologised and explained that I had just completed a project on *olim*. He was very open with his responses, one of which I have included below with his name changed:

The thing is... Unless you speak Hebrew you can't get a good job over there, unless you're in technology. If you are in technology there are loads of English speaking well paid jobs... but otherwise, you're stuffed. I worked at a bar after leaving Ulpan [Hebrew course for new immigrants] as that's all I could get for two years. After coming back... I'm glad I tried and everything... But it's also now a bit of a bureaucratic nightmare... I have to de-register tax and my bank account is over there... It's a bit of a mess... I know other people who also came back after a few years... but I also know some people who have managed to stay (Benjamin, informal conversation, 2019).

This story is quite common, a research study by Gvahim (2015) reported that forty percent of recent immigrants to Israel 'consider returning to their countries of origin' and this figure may be even higher for North American *olim* (see: Milevsky, 2016; Eisikovits & Sigad, 2010). There is no way to measure the actual numbers of immigrants that make this return move, since *olim* often don't give up their Israeli citizenship when they move

back (Tabachnick, 2017). Similarly to Benjamin's story (above), sixty percent of *olim* in the study instigated by Gvahir (2015) said that the strongest reason for their move back was employment issues in Israel. After considering my conversation with Benjamin, it would have given a more nuanced picture to have compared the *olim* that I interviewed in Israel, with some of the stories from people whose *aliyah* journeys had not been so successful: people who had returned back to their diaspora home countries. Such a project would have rendered this study too unwieldy for the length and purposes of a PhD, but I look forward to eventually completing this future follow-up, comparative, investigation. This project was intentionally partial and contingent to quote Oz (1983: viii):

I do not consider these articles to be a 'representative picture' or a 'typical cross-section' of Israel at this time; I do not believe in representative pictures or typical cross-sections. Every place is an entire world and every man is a world in himself, and I reached only a few places and a few people, and even then I was able to see and to hear only a little of so much.

In the future, I would collate the feedback from audiences slightly differently. The work was composed to be heard through headphones. It would have been useful, therefore, to compare the feedback from audience members who heard the piece through headphones to those who had heard it through loud speakers. This would, perhaps, illustrate more clearly the differences in their listening experiences. I would be interested to discover if the manner of listening made any difference to these first time audiences.

I have also thought of asking audience members to read participants' written accounts of their migration experiences, before asking the audience to listen to the piece. It would be interesting to find out more about the differences between reading and hearing these stories. It would, equally, have been intriguing to have had some audiences listen to this piece outside, increasing their ability to simultaneously hear their own soundscape, alongside the composition: 'an uncanny sense of the two seasons merging' (Gallagher, 2015: 479). These were impractical additions, given current time constraints, but they are experiments that I would like to undertake at some future opportunity.

Thinking about listeners' experiences of my composition, I wondered if it would have been possible to create a soundscape composition if I had not recorded the sounds myself? Westerkamp (2002: 55) says:

...knowledge of a place extends beyond the recorded soundscape to the smells, the air, the temperature, the time of day, the atmosphere, the feel of a place, the season, the social situation, and, significantly the changes that occur when a microphone enters a space.

If I had used someone else's recordings in my project, I would not have the knowledge described above. What would happen if a composer worked with someone else's recordings of a place? Rather than the composer seeing the material as a collection of memories from a place, they would see it merely as 'acquired material'. (Truax, 1997, attempted such a feat with his composition *Pendlerdrøm*, which consisted of Truax composing with recordings made by a Copenhagen commuter). If I had decided to use someone else's Jerusalem recordings to create my composition, my knowledge would be solely aural and would not extend to an embodied experience, akin to that of the diaspora. I am intrigued by the idea of a soundscape collaboration. The *[60] Project*,<sup>112</sup> conceived by Adkins in 2008, is a good example of such collaborative work.

One idea I would have liked to have put into practice during this project was to give some audience members a notebook to note down any thoughts/sounds in the composition that they felt compelled to record whilst listening to the piece. This is a similar idea to a sound diary<sup>113</sup> (see: Duffy and Waitt, 2011):

These responses also opened up incredibly emotional narratives of the interconnections between, place, self, and sound. From these conversations insights were sought into: (i) how participants understood and classified sound, (ii) how sound mobilized their bodies and, (iii) any potential relationships felt between sound and place. (Ibid., 125)

The piece is long (around an hour), it would be helpful for participants who had difficulty in articulating their responses, or who had poor memory skills, to jot down thoughts about the piece as soon as they came to mind, rather than waiting until the end. These are the kinds of insights that only occur with the benefit of hindsight and from experience. In the future I will find some ways of incorporating ongoing and instant audience feedback. I

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<sup>112</sup> The project consisted of sixty sound artists. All of the sounds were then made available to all artists involved to process as they wanted. Adkins then took all of this material to INA-GRM and mixed the final 60-minute work. Adkins used a part of every sound contributed, allowing himself only to edit and transpose material a small amount to enable smooth transitions (see: Adkins and Gatt, 2009).

<sup>113</sup> A sound diary is where participants are given a sound recorder or notebook to record or note down sounds and noises that were meaningful to them in that present moment.

do not believe that my current feedback method enabled the collection of in-the-moment reflections.

After pondering upon more collaborative ideas of sound diaries, in which participants recorded themselves, I considered the possibilities of allowing interviewees to become a more collaborative part of the recording process. As discussed in chapter four, several interviewees shared with me the places and routes that were linked to their lives. But what if I had walked these routes with the interviewees? What if we had followed their itinerary of places that held significance for them, and what if they had recorded moments of the soundscape?

As Wilson Vasquez (2016: 172) says ‘...our main activity was to walk and talk, and observe where we were. We were taking our conversations (the memory-work) out for a stroll, and letting them roam out-and-about’. This would have been useful, as quite often interviewees had wanted me to record certain places but had not known the specific address, so they had been relying on their own recollections of the area. If they had accompanied me, they, perhaps, would have been able to recognise the exact spots that they had wanted to record. Being able to watch and accompany an interviewee return to a place that holds special meaning and a ‘personal relationship’ (see: Neal et al., 2015: 466), would have been a compelling moment to witness: an old place of memory becoming a new one in front of me, memory here being defined as a reflective, creative process (Boym, 2001).

I would, in the future, like to experiment with the ‘walking interview’ (Emmel and Clark, 2009). Perhaps walking alongside an interviewee in the space that they are reflecting upon would be thought-provoking, though this would affect the compositional elements<sup>114</sup> greatly, which is why I had decided not to do it before. As Campion and Côté (2017: 115-116) suggested: ‘...close-up interviews of the different interviewees allow the voices to fit more easily with the musical materials; since no background sound is heard, the recorded interviews are more flexible in terms of editing, composition and mixing’. Multiple interviews with the participants, some when walking and some when not, would be a good alternative. This would enable the same compositional opportunities whilst

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<sup>114</sup> I would not be able to separate the voice from the environment it was recorded in, meaning that I would have less creative freedom during the composing process.

allowing the interviewees a more integrated relationship with the soundscape process. Solnit (2001: 5) has observed that the process of walking involves more than: ‘just walking; it requires... connections between the body, senses, emotions and meanings’. For this project I asked several interviewees to show me on a map where to record. Massey (2000: 228), however, finds maps dissatisfying, as ‘they flatten and deaden, immobilizing places, people and cultures’. Sinclair (2003: 142) agrees with Massey, calling maps ‘partial documents’ as they need ‘a powerful dose of fiction to bring them to life’, alone they cannot tell the stories from the places that they represent.<sup>115</sup> It is possible that there were other places that the interviewees would have wanted to be recorded. Perhaps participants were not reminded of them when looking at the map. If future interviewees accompanied the process of recording, perhaps having our conversations along the way, being physically, in these places (see: Jones et al., 2008), might have produced/reminded them of more stories.

As Wilson Vasquez (2016: 175) comments:

Such experience made me wonder about the links between places and being-in-places and memories. Do places suggest or realize other memories? Could these disturb the memories we hold so dearly? By walking and being-in-place, memories become more corporeal, they feel closer and with more of our bodies (maybe just different?); they become more embodied, even for those witnessing the doing-memory-in-place.

I have often found that one project leads to, and informs another, hence undertaking a pilot before the main project of this study. As Hall et al., (2008: 1035) notes:

Questions asked in noisy spaces lose the authority a quiet room affords, thinned out as they are by the myriad other sounds into which they dissolve. Answers, likewise bear a lesser weight of expectation: respondents can speak without breaking silence; they can pause without things going quiet.

Just as interviewees would talk differently to me during a walking interview, the questions I ask myself as a researcher reflecting at the end of a project, are different to those I would

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<sup>115</sup> Ingold (2016), however, holds quite a different view of the trails, routes and lines that human beings have made across the surface of the planet: ‘the Inuit moved through the world *along* paths of travel, the British sailed *across* what they saw as the surface of the globe... these are lines of fundamentally different kinds’ (ibid., 77) and the documentation thereof, in the form of maps.

have asked at the beginning. This creates a constant circle and cycle of methodological change and progression. All of these new ideas would have an impact on the future aesthetics and ethics of compositions. I would definitely like to experiment with these ideas in the future, particularly, since all of them would create a greater sense of collaboration, between people and places (Anderson, 2004), which in turn would produce other, different, knowledges.

In chapter one of this thesis, I maintained that:

The tenet of ‘shared authority’, as advocated by oral historian Frisch (1990)... informs all my work. Thus, this is partially a collaboratively constructed inquiry (Heron and Reason, 1997) that undertakes a cycle of cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996) and incorporates participant ideas and feedback at each stage... This thesis is a collaboration between its writer/composer, its participants and its readers/audiences... All of this feedback will inform the composition’s final configuration. (see: chapter one, this volume)

I am confident that I have kept to this framework, from interviewees suggesting soundscape locations to record, to listeners advising on the final mix of the composition. Additionally, a proportion of feedback from listeners came from other members of similar communities (i.e.: refugee communities/ Jewish communities). Nonetheless, for the first compositional project, and to a lesser extent for the second project, I tripped across the ethical ‘cross-cultural faultlines of collaborative research’ (Pryor et al., 2009) with a researcher’s PhD-oriented project venturing into other people’s worlds.

The collaborative elements of my thesis have widened my perceptions of the power dynamics of projects, (see: *ibid.*) especially those that are collaborative (Farr, 2018). I had, perhaps naively, thought that by giving participants the control of soundscape locations that were recorded and the routes taken I had somehow reduced the power imbalance. By crafting the whole composition, however, the researcher is in control of all thematic and sonic issues: narrative structure; amount of processing and/or repetition; what is cut; what is kept; etc. It dawned on me at the end of this project that this was *my* PhD and there is always going to be a massive power differential between academic researchers and their participants (see: Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). All we can do is strive for as much fairness as possible in these circumstances:

Of course, there is nothing new about contention over the right to edit, revise or censor oral history interviews. Oral historians have long debated, for example, whether interview participants should be permitted to review transcripts of their interviews, and if they are, which of the changes they propose should be effected in the final version. (Maze, 2014: 152)

We can also be more honest about this power differential and make it more open to listeners and the participants themselves. It seems vitally important for researchers to keep an awareness of possible ethical concerns, particularly those surrounding power dynamics, throughout projects (Zimmerman et al., 2003). It is essential to ensure that the voice of the participants, and of their wider communities, is heard and not overshadowed by the authorship of the researcher. I did feel ethically more 'secure' as a researcher in this last compositional project, perhaps because of my connection to the community being researched.

Since Frisch's (1990) creation of the term, 'shared authority' has been lengthily discussed, becoming as Shopes (2003:103) comments, 'something of a mantra among oral historians'. This straddling of the line between two worlds: of researchers and researched, sounds very similar to the straddling of ethics and aesthetics, between two disciplines, that I contemplate in this thesis.

As Bradley (2016: 58) writes:

The historical material generated from the interview is authored by both the interviewer and interviewee... In trying to plot a course between the two poles of professional, scholarly history and a community or public history that resists the interests of academic boundary making, Frisch saw shared authority (1990) as offering a trajectory that took the best of both.

It has been argued that textual sources remain 'safer' to work with than 'live' data, since in the case of primary sources: 'He [the researcher] produces the final account, he provides the dominant interpretation, he judges what is true and not true, reliable or inauthentic' (Johnson and Dawson, 2003: 85). Furthermore, Wilson (an artist), criticised shared authority from another perspective, saying that: '...as an artist you're not really sharing. I don't think people should share authority to the degree that you devalue your own scholarship, your own knowledge. That's not sharing anything' (cited in Adair et al., 2011: 237).

I found that both the collaborative ethics and artistic aesthetics of this project were assisted by ‘shared authority’ (Frisch, 1990), as it provided a vast section of knowledge that would not otherwise have been explored, and also the possibility of experiencing as many voices as possible, rather than just my personal vision as a composer. More creative ways of thinking were opened up as I incorporated the participants’ opinions and ideas in the piece. Working with interviews enhanced the creative challenges I found, as I felt a responsibility to edit the material in a way that would be respectful towards interviewees, representing their diverse and differing views and experiences. The interpretation of the composition occurs between the composer; the interviewees and the audience, thus bringing forth ‘extra understandings’ (see: Beattie, 1995; 2004). I had to think ethically, and creatively, about balancing out their ideas and not just taking my artistic preferences into account. As Maze, (2014: 154), stated:

Our tasks now are not only to define, describe, and preserve our collection of oral history interviews while striving to make them accessible, but also to enrich that collection, to broaden and deepen the understanding of each of its stories, to reveal many facets of their significance to diverse populations.

In Pearson’s<sup>116</sup> *Bubbling Tom* (2000), friends and family are guided around the village that Pearson grew up in as a child. The work was initially intended to reflect on his childhood reminiscences and memories of place. The audience, however, kept interrupting with their own versions and their own stories, making the piece more participatory than Pearson had at first envisaged. Pearson then built on what he had learned, and the following year, repeated the walk, expecting and incorporating a more shared collaborative style. Similarly to Pearson’s first attempt, I have noticed throughout both of these projects spaces where more collaboration with participants could have taken place. I could not have foreseen these issues and feel certain that a collaborative project must evolve naturally, and can be a highly complex process (High, 2009). As Rishbeth and Powell (2013: 164) suggest:

Building on Sandercock’s emphasis of ‘a multiplicity of stories’ (Sandercock, 2003b), we can emphasise the role of the researcher as enabling both spontaneous accounts and reflective responses of participants’ engagement with the specific places they encounter in their daily lives. We achieved this by developing narrative methods, and ensuring that the majority of the data was produced in the immediacy of the outdoors, rather than through filtered recollections of an indoor interview (Finney & Rishbeth, 2006; Scott et al., 2009).

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<sup>116</sup> Pearson works predominantly with site-specific acts of theatre and performance events at diverse landscape locations (see: Pearson, 2010).

Another reason to explore interviewees being more involved within a project's creation, would be an attempt to remove some of the '...problematizing "voicing" aspect that it [the project] carries from its critical theory upbringing (where the researcher role is a mere medium for "giving voice" to excluded/marginal subjects)' (Wilson Vasquez, 2016: 228). My projects could be seen as having fallen into the traditional interview-based research impulse of 'giving voice' (Andrews, 2007: 41), particularly with regards to the first project, since I am not a member of their community. This issue with 'giving voice' is that it can actually replicate imbalanced power relationships, based on representations of the 'sidelined' interviewees as having no voice, and the 'significant' researcher who can give it (Osgood, 2010; Davies and Gannon, 2006). However, giving interviewees the freedom of participating in the recording process as part of a project, would, I suspect, reposition (even more) the power balance of the research. Furthermore, the material might actually be more representative of daily places visited by interviewees, as they were directing the research themselves. The participants would be creators of their material, which unlike some other research practices, would be effortless and not intimidating for them to accomplish:

...through this [collaborative] method we involved and retained people who would not normally take part in research projects, established trust over time so they felt able to offer candid accounts, and allowed the emphasis of the project to be informed by issues that were genuinely raised by participants. We acknowledge the ultimate role of the researcher in analysing themes across the contributors, and representing the research within academic debate. (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013: 167)

Reviewing my projects for this thesis, I am also reviewing my development and 'coming of age' as a researcher and considering future trajectories. I acknowledge that, limited as I was by the PhD project, its restrictions and the concomitant stage of my own practice, I believe I engaged with the right amount of collaboration for these projects at this time. I would like my future projects to have more involvement with, and ownership from, communities. Community engagement and collaboration<sup>117</sup> is definitely the direction of my future scholarship. As Iscen (2014a: 134) posited:

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<sup>117</sup> Otondo (2017) has written extensively about context-based composition in interdisciplinary collaborative frameworks.

...such an approach, which enables people to voice their experiences in relation to or in the presence of others, reflects the multiplicity and rationality of different levels of meaning. Therefore, it can address issues regarding the dialogue between the composer and the soundscape/place in novel ways. More collaborative platforms for creating soundscape composition which create a more balanced dialogue between participants and cultures can be helpful in diverse settings from ethnographic to educational.

It would require long-term commitment and considerable funding to develop a project where interviewees can be more involved in stages of an interdisciplinary soundscape composition project. Such a project would, nonetheless, demonstrate a multilayering of testimonies, reflecting the collaborative nature of the project, including the juxtaposition of different ideas and perspectives:

...that is because to a great extent, the inquiries of a/r/tographers are highly interpretive. The richness, breadth, and depth of the interpretations that may come from the researcher, from reader(s), and collaboration of researcher-participant(s) may be considered an indication of the impact of a piece of arts-based educational research. (Springgay et al., 2008: 231)

### **Conclusion: Process Not Method**

I conclude this chapter by highlighting this study's contribution to method. A major theme running through the thesis has been that of methodological balance between ethics and aesthetics, often illustrated by conversations between my researcher side and composer side. As I near the conclusion of my research journey, I consider that 'method' is too precise a term for my interdisciplinary soundscapes. As discussed in chapter three, Rogoff (2000) and Bal (2002) both suggest that an emphasis upon process rather than method allows space for more flexible scholarship that sits between existing disciplines. Similarly, Manning and Massumi (2014: ix) maintain: 'Our goal is not simply to describe the complexity of a work's workings but to activate its modalities of thought, its rhythms, in a new connection'. I now consider that my interdisciplinary soundscapes should not be considered a traditional 'method' of collecting data, but rather, an on-going process that develops, as in a journey.<sup>118</sup> Reducing my project's experiences to a mere method of data collection fails to do justice to the nature of composition as an art form and diminishes the vast potential of this mode of sensory inquiry. 'Method' is too limiting because it

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<sup>118</sup> The term 'method', albeit not fixed in the ways that a/r/tographers use it, remains a structure that lacks the fluidity and movement, seen in inquiries that conceptualise research as an ongoing process that is always becoming, rather than arriving (see: Bal, 2002; Manning and Massumi, 2014).

predetermines the (how, where and what) kind of knowledge and understanding which may unfold as the project advances. This terminology of ‘method’ is a complete contrast to my experience of my soundscape projects. The kind of knowledge and understanding that unfolds in soundscapes is an emergent practice and process, which keeps evolving (as this reflective feedback chapter has highlighted). To cite Manning and Massumi (2014: vii) once more, soundscape composition is an artistic practice, which originates its own process: ‘to challenge [us] to compose with concepts already on their way to another mode, in the mode of artistic practice, in the mode of event formation of activism, of dance, even of everyday perception’.

By treating interdisciplinary soundscapes as a ‘method’ in my mind as a researcher, I think there was a possibility of restricting the capability of this mode of inquiry even before a project began. This is because the traditional concept of ‘method’ suggests an orderly and efficient way of accumulating data in response to a distinct and precise research question. Having this traditional term in our heads, even if we have explored more open and modern methods, such as arts-based methodologies like a/r/tography (which this thesis was influenced by) most of which reject these older principles, the box of ‘method’ is hard to break out from: ‘It objectifies those with whom we walk as research participants, and it turns our own walking bodies into research instruments subservient to the need to collect data and reach a conclusion’ (Vannini et al., 2017: 192). I had considered at one point restructuring this entire thesis in a traditional format; including a literature review, methodology section and research process, leading to a conclusion. I realised, however, that the journey structure of this thesis was congruent with its conception as an ongoing process of becoming, never arriving and therefore not formally concluding, but rather, stopping at a given point in its moving process. Even with research methods that claim to have broken free of traditional barriers, we are automatically programmed as researchers to see ‘method’ in a certain way that I found impossible to shake off. To be as open-ended as possible, to avoid the formation of new barriers to inquiry, I agree that more importance needs to be placed upon research as a practice and process (Rogoff, 2000; Bal, 2002).

It was, at first, important for me to be thinking with immovable ideas and concepts about ethics, aesthetics and compositional techniques during these projects. Gradually I realised that my thinking was focused on a continuous interdisciplinary debate between ethics and aesthetics, which, instead of making the work stronger, was becoming a hindrance to the

free-flowing progression of the project. Instead of seeing ethics and aesthetics as fluid, free-floating, connected processes borrowed from different disciplines, I had boxed myself into a corner, by seeing these concepts as fixed, diametrically opposed elements. In order to make the leap from fixed to fluid ways of thinking with these concepts, I found I needed a less rigid, traditional descriptor than method. The term process allows and encourages more movement and flexibility. As Law (2004: 66) states:

The problem, then, is that the commitment to visible singularity directs us away from the possibility that realities might in some measure *be made in other ways*. Or, to put it more generally, the presupposition of singularity not only hides the practice that enacts it, but also conceals the possibility that different constellations of practice and their hinterlands might make it possible to enact realities in different ways.

Truman and Springgay (2016: 266), in discussing walking research techniques, reflect my feelings about soundscapes:

Walking... methodologically, this is quite different from giving directions, collecting data, or establishing pre-determined methods. Walking propositionally demands that we conceive of research happening in the now... Walking sets in motion a variety of bodily movements, intensities, and effects that unfold and extend new variations.

I am incredibly grateful to a/r/tography for inspiring so much of the theory behind this inquiry. In chapter one of this thesis, I describe my work not as thesis, but as exegesis: 'We prefer to see the process of living inquiry, as well as the understanding created through the inquiry, as comprising the full research enterprise. An exegesis provides opportunities to do just that' (Springgay et al., 2008: xxix). Although the use of exegesis seems to allow for a more flexible approach to methodological issues, I still believe that the use of the term 'method' was the reason for my uncompromising pre-occupation with the aesthetics and ethics debate, and perhaps with producing an outcome/result. I am now wary of engaging with the term 'method'. A/r/tographers have translated their artistic practice into a research method, but I have come to regard my practice as a composer as a process, albeit also a form of inquiry.

All such processes using soundscape composition as research would need to go through cycles of scrutiny and maintain codes of conduct in order to preserve their scholarly integrity, which in my case, I have borrowed from social inquiry. Furthermore, my research journey has demonstrated to me that in order to maintain their fluidity and

freshness, inquiry processes need to keep evolving and borrowing from different modalities, to avoid reduction into a fixed, criterion-based method (see: Rogoff, 2000). My artistic practice has its own technical and tacit forms of knowledge production, which when enhanced by the research ethics formulated for the protection of participants, creates a means of inquiring into the world. As a researcher, I would strive for movement: I would go to a place, with a recorder; experience the landscape; experience the soundscape; experience encounters with people.

Thus emboldened by the experience of this study, I have discovered that if I want to be able to do my best exploratory research I need to be able to be *present* in what I am doing, and not be worrying about the end result: letting the project develop on its own. In keeping both ethics and aesthetics at the back of my mind, whilst I experience the current present, the ‘now’ of my practice, the project becomes a process. The project is always becoming: ‘a becoming that has always been there’ (Gale, 2018: 2). When thinking about it in this way, moving away from fixed points and destinations, perhaps citing Deleuzian concepts of fluidity and movement and states of ‘always becoming’ (see: May, 2003: 139-41), it seems that ethics and aesthetics are not fixed entities but are themselves in process, are always in a state of movement and becoming and are quite possibly entangled: one with the other. I conclude that ethics and aesthetics are not differently disciplined, separate entities, but are both equally integrated into my practice. Describing interdisciplinary soundscapes as my ‘practice’ and not as my ‘method’, creates greater flexibility, not as a project which is heading towards a destination, but one which continues to evolve, even after this study has finished, exploring:

Not a single truth, but a plurality of truths, each appropriate to its realm, each fallible, but each subject to continuing refinement and improvement. Never perhaps reaching the Promised Land of Pure Ultimate Truth, but over the centuries moving steadily in the right direction. In that limited but real sense, we can see that we have a truer picture – more properly, truer pictures- of the world than those who came before us, but also that we can never assume we have arrived at the ultimate destination: our successors may well come to possess a truer version still. (Gardner, 2011: 37)

## Chapter Six: Conclusion, A Creative Epilogue

### Introduction

Endings like beginnings, can take various forms. Authors often rely on a rhetoric of authority, offering definitive summaries of what was done to suggest the work is finished or complete. This closure of the conversation with readers is something I wish to resist. The study reported in prior chapters is a work-in-progress, and I would like this concluding one to serve as an opening for others to enter into a dialogue about narrative and identity. This book is my ‘turn’, and I hope others will be interested in taking theirs. (Mishler, 2004: 145)

It is now April 2019, and I started this thesis in the autumn of 2015. These past four years have flown by. Some things have changed and some things have stayed the same. I am, for instance, still listening to the same music or library soundscape (see: chapter one) as I write. The location of this writing, however, has changed significantly over these years. I have been in North West London; Jerusalem; the Pembrokeshire coast and sitting in cafés in Bristol. I find myself now in Stoke Newington, North East London: ‘Over the years I realised the existence of other stories, and that places in which they were enacted (told) mattered. Spaces and places heavily marked the stories possible, as it happened to us, and our stories...’ (Wilson Vasquez, 2016: 245).

By calling this a conclusion, we assume that there is an ending or completion of some kind; that the author and, subsequently, readers, will come to a definite closure; and that after such a winding, knotty and complex journey, elaborated by the compositions; that there is a final arrival point. This all assumes there is an ending, and yet, these projects do not end. As promised at the beginning, this thesis has opened up more questions than it has answered: ‘...the single question leading to more questions, embodied in the figure of the ethnographer/recorder who repeatedly states ‘I need to ask more questions’’ (Pollock, 2005: 9). Instead of a conclusion, I offer a creative epilogue with some thoughts, reflections, renewed questions and notes about what the future holds for this and similar research: ‘The most interesting words in [research] aren’t “eureka!” it’s “that’s funny...” When you see something that doesn’t quite make sense and you think, hang on, no, you’ve got to pursue that, and that’s what research, I now realise, is!’ (Clark, 2017).

Throughout the construction of this thesis, particularly when discussing my research with other people (see: chapter three), many questions came up, about what makes this a legitimate research project. On numerous occasions I was told that: ‘recording sounds and people’s stories... that’s not research... how is that useful?’ (see: Appendix A). Apparently I needed to build a more ‘traditional academic’ argument, secured by theory and data analysis (even though some, such as Mishler (2004), above, would say that traditional research could be seen as a story as well).<sup>119</sup> But even after many of these conversations, I still reject the idea of considering my interviewees’ narratives as merely ‘data’: ‘It worries me that one does violence to the life history of the story by turning it into the disposable commodity of information... with its echoes of surveillance and disclosures of truth’ (Behar, 2003: 13).

When I first started out on this PhD adventure, conversations like those in the paragraph above were quite common, but as the years flew by, soundscapes became a more recognised and understood concept. I found that by the end of my thesis, when discussing my research with people for the first time, I no longer had to explain what a soundscape was. During these four years of research, sound has started to become more accepted within mainstream society. There has been a *Soundscapes* exhibition (2015) at the National Gallery in London; an immersive exhibition that invited the visitor to ‘hear’ the paintings and ‘see’ the sound. Indeed, the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, in its exhibition of diverse synagogues (2018) from around the world (India, Germany and South America), has restored and reconstructed whole synagogues in the museum, in which visitors walk around in the spaces, listening to soundscapes of the culture, music and prayers from those communities. The British film, *Notes on Blindness* (Brett, 2016) came out, following John Hull’s audio diaries as he lost his sight and his hearing became his primary sense. Hollywood films have also recently become heavily imbued with a sense of sound, with such films as *Bird Box* (Clark, 2018), whereby the characters must blindfold themselves and rely on hearing alone, throughout most of the movie. Additionally, *A Quiet Place* (Bay, 2018), is another film where sound is heavily focused upon: the characters must be as quiet as possible to survive and consequently they have to learn to listen. As well as films utilising the theme of ‘sound’, the film world has also become more interested in soundscapes. As Martin (2013: 123) discusses: ‘contemporary film

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<sup>119</sup> See: Biehl (2013) and Van Maanen (2011) who discuss different research styles and legitimacy.

soundtracks do not exclude music, but seamlessly integrate it with sound design and soundscape composition'. Martin (ibid.) uses the examples of *The Hurt Locker* (Bigelow, 2008) and *Katalin Varga* (Strickland, 2009) to support this viewpoint.

Similarly, in academia, sound research has taken off amongst diverse disciplines:

Critical discussion of field recordings, soundscape recordings, and sound art projects as ethnographic endeavors along with the rapidly expanding literature on studio production practices, circulation processes, ethnographies of listening, the poetics of the voice, and the politics of globalization in relation to expressive culture offers anthropology a possible path toward a reflexive aural turn. (Samuels et al., 2010: 339)

During the time of this research, sound studies has entered into its most accepted, busy, and 'trendy' period, with new articles and books flooding journals and shelves. It has been hard to keep up. In my final year of study I had to draw a cut off point. I decided to stop reading. I was finding new articles published every week. Sound(scape) research is now being explored throughout the following disciplines: qualitative research (Hall et al., 2008); media geography (Duffy and Waitt, 2011); cultural and human geography (Gallagher, 2014; 2017); Jewish studies (HaCohen, 2016); American history (Rath, 2008); American studies (Keeling and Kun, 2011); history (Bailey, 1996); urban environments (Schulte-Fortkamp, 2002); anthropology (Samuels et al., 2010; Carter, 2016); education (Gershon, 2018; Gallagher et al., 2017; 2018); queer culture (Truman and Shannon, 2018); law (Parker, 2011); trauma (Foreman, 2011); Islamic culture (Hirschkind, 2006); modern culture (Bohme-Mehner, 2008); fascist, political culture (Birdsall, 2012); political action (LaBelle, 2017); humming (Kim, 2018); auto-ethnography (Findlay-Walsh, 2018); gender (McCartney, 2006; Sofer, 2017); memory (Lane and Parry, 2005; 2006); environmentalism (Philpott, 2018); architecture (Alvim, 2018); sociology (Vannini and Waskul, 2012); pilgrimage (Wood, 2014); Yiddish studies (Newman, 2002); place (Chattopadhyay, 2012; Meireles, 2017); ecology (Westerkamp, 2002) and listening and place (Truax, 2012; Iscen, 2014a). This list is not exhaustive. Given the diversity of this list, this written thesis could have taken so many different paths. I remain happy with the paths I took.

## Everyday Metaphors

The aural turn has not lessened in academia (see: Samuels et al., 2010): in 2009, the University of Salford completed their *Positive Soundscape Project*: a multi-disciplinary investigation of soundscape perception, which brought together scholars from different fields to use sound as a platform in which information can be shared with less disciplinary boundaries. Harvard University has offered a sonic ethnography module since 2015, as one of its graduate level options. In 2019, for instance, composer Seah Hotson conducted an around the world adventure. Instead of written postcards to friends, she sent *Sonic Postcards* (2019). What I think these last paragraphs show is the diversity of interest in sound, which calls for interdisciplinary methods. As I have argued throughout this thesis, stringent, fixed methods can often hinder research, in fact the term ‘method’ can be problematic (see: chapter five). With research becoming interdisciplinary it often becomes messy, as Law (2004: 9) argues:

It is usually said that messy findings are a product of poor research. The idea that things in the world might be fluid, elusive or multiple is unthinkable. This is wrong and it is time for a new approach. If methods want to know and help to shape the world, then they need to reinvent themselves and their politics in order to deal with mess.

Finding the right balance and system to work through questions that arose during the project was crucial, and a/r/tography (Springgay et al., 2008: 242) really inspired me to not run away from them, but to discuss them openly: ‘when artistic practice is used within the context of inquiry, there is an investment in the potential that insight may emerge as a reflexive action sparked by a creative impulse that can help to see things in a critically different way’. I predict that more and more creative researchers will be moving away from traditional ‘method’ towards more open terminology. Manning and Massumi’s *Thought in the Act* (2014), for example, explores creative practice as a form of thinking or process philosophy. Manning describes the process as ‘a collaborative mode of thinking in the act at the intersection of art, philosophy, and politics’ (ibid., vii). These more open terms for methodologies will inspire new creative researchers. As Law concurs, when he finishes his book *After Method* with the sentence: ‘metaphors for quiet and more generous versions of method’ (2004: 156). My method metaphor,<sup>120</sup> borrowed

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<sup>120</sup> This might seem confusing terminology, given my recent turn ‘against method’, but in the chronology of this thesis, this metaphor emerged before the turn. I would now rather label this term an ‘everyday metaphor’.

from my Jewish identity (see: chapter three) was incredibly useful to me as a researcher. I encourage other researchers to incorporate ways of thinking and decision-making from their daily lives, thus enabling a different perspective on their studies: ‘research-centered art-making processes can also be richly metaphorical’ (Springgay et al., 2008: 239). Everyday metaphors can open projects out and continue explorations and inquiries: ‘building a trusting space for dialogue, generating probing and effective questions, developing deep listening skills and producing sophisticated interpretations of orally expressed memories’ (Boyd et al., 2014: 131).

In chapter three I outlined how metaphors are the language of the everyday and the importance of using metaphors from everyday life in the research process (in the case of this researcher, from *halocho*). In chapter four I discussed the scholarly engagement with the histories, geographies and anthropologies of the everyday (Highmore, 2002; Heyl, 2001; Glassner and Hertz, 1999) and how more recently scholars have demonstrated how sounds can evoke this attention to everyday life (Drever, 2009; Bauer, 2000; Labelle, 2010). I want to go one step further and claim that inquiry into this *everyday* knowledge, that includes sound, requires *everyday* metaphors to draw out the nuanced accounts of *everyday* life. I would argue that the process of inquiring into the everyday demands metaphors, languages and rhythms from daily life, not methods constructed far from the daily decision making of the lives people actually inhabit.

Additionally, these issues of the everyday, connect this epilogue with my thoughts in chapter two, concerning borderlands (Anzaldua, 1987). Anzaldua (ibid.) describes borderlands as creative, inhabited spaces where tensions are productive. It is my contention in this thesis, that ‘everyday metaphors’ are similarly overlapping creative spaces, enabling researchers to construct productive pathways for their inquiries to take. Anzaldua (ibid.), furthermore, rejects fixed, artificial lines between countries and identities, which could be paralleled with the traditional structures of ‘method’. The presentation of this study does not fit into carefully separated sections, such as method; result; conclusion. In fact my research is made up of ‘the space of the in-between’ (Grosz, 2001: 91). Throughout this study, my thinking and practice around the compositional projects has become increasingly entangled. Thus mirroring the ‘diasporic identities’ theme of these projects, whereby identities do not fit neatly into geographical, linguistic or cultural borders: instead diaspora inquiries overlap; are entangled and inhabit multiple borderlands.

My projects also tried to contribute towards a greater ‘democracy of the senses’ (Berendt, 1985; Back and Ware, 2002; Howes, 2005). In the first chapter of this thesis, I expressed a hope that sound would add something slightly different to the exploration of migrant and refugee identity. An examination of feedback (see: chapter five and Appendix J), suggests that listeners to my compositions believe that it has.<sup>121</sup> During the contemporary, xenophobia-inducing climate of Brexit-obsessed, twenty-first century Britain (Taras, 2012; Khalili, 2017; d’Ancona, 2018), any project which can re-humanise the conversation about migration has to be good. As argued in chapter four, empathy (see: Krznaric, 2015) is a huge part of this task, entangled as it has become with much of this thesis. If we pay close attention to the soundscapes and narratives inhabited by, and belonging to, refugees and migrants, we can gain significant understandings and empathies about their lives and experiences: ‘a listening... inherent to auditory experience, expressed in the migration of voices, the shifting of the body, the animation of knowledge, as well as the deepening of attention; in short, the production of radical sharing’ (Labelle, 2014: x).

Just as I was completing this study I came across Herzogenrath’s edited collection of essays on ‘*sonic thinking*’, positing a different form of thinking ‘*with and through*, and not just *about* sound’ (2017: 5). As Herzogenrath and colleagues, (ibid., 6) indicate: ‘...thinking with sound enables us to grasp the resonance of the world around us’. This construct of *sonic thinking* appears to offer a sonic version of Manning and Massumi’s (2014) *thought in the act*. *Sonic thinking* epitomises the form of thinking that interdisciplinary soundscape composers engage in and such compositions engender in audiences. Indeed, borrowing from Berendt’s (1985) description of listening without visual cues as ‘narrative empathy’, together with LaBelle’s (2014) construct of listening as ‘radical empathy’, it would be more congruent with this study to argue that interdisciplinary soundscape compositions evoke *sonic empathy*.

The current refugee crisis is the greatest in Europe since World War Two (UNHCR, 2015). Migration research centres have sprung up rapidly across the academy.<sup>122</sup> Multi-

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<sup>121</sup> This also goes some way towards answering my first and third research questions, which I deal with in greater depth further on in this concluding chapter.

<sup>122</sup> The growth of migration studies centres in the UK has witnessed a burgeoning of new arrivals, for example, at the universities of Oxford (2003) and Essex (2018) as well as those throughout London, including: LSE (2007), SOAS (2007) and UEL (2011).

disciplinary research has been conducted focusing on migration including, but not limited to: arts practice and narratives (McKay and Bradley, 2016); art and refugee youth (Guruge et al., 2015); photography (Lenette, 2016); oral history (Sheftel et al., 2013) and film (Clayton, 2017). Sound(scapes), are also key in exploring the experiences of these refugees.

As Norman (2017: 179) comments:

We move and, in every perceiving moment, transform information into knowledge. In doing so, we make and form familiar places through constant comparisons between past and present experience, and remember these comparisons. Each repeat visit, each remembering of a memory, deepens the attachment.

If place and knowledge (see: Casey, 1996) walk hand in hand, how do we explore them? Meireles (2017: 101) argues that: ‘Capturing the experience of place involves weaving together social, acoustic, cultural, historical and natural elements – the character of a place’. I have explored throughout this thesis the entanglement of sound and place (Norman, 2012) and the ways that soundscapes have the potential to be used as an effective tool to investigate and articulate this ‘spirit of place’ (see: Lacey, 2016).

Soundscape with its compositional approaches and techniques such as sound marks and sound signals (see: Truax, 1999) can, as I have shown throughout these projects, create compositions that ‘focus and draw the listener’s attention to the sonic layers within a particular soundscape’ (Martin, 2018: 20). The effectiveness and distinctiveness of soundscape composition has been examined by Norman (2012: 266):

Environmental art is effective, and affective, if it changes our relationship to the world and makes us more aware of our connectedness to that world – and its places – in a sustained and fundamental sense. Not every listener will turn to sonic ‘activism’ or eco-composition but those who do are vital in their role of heightening our connectedness to place, and our understanding of art as something that, heightens the very metaphors we use to organize reality – a place that we thought we knew. We are all in this together.

### **Final and Future Thoughts on Soundscapes**

Soundscapes can, indeed, awaken an interest in environmentalism and, as with other artistic practices, increase our awareness of what it means to be human (Nussbaum, 2014). I also concur with Martin’s (2018: 20) claims that:

Soundscape compositions, with a background in acoustic communication and soundscape studies, affords cross-disciplinary opportunities and relationships where composers and sound artists are not only focusing on natural and urban soundscapes, but also exploring other cultural and social aspects of the soundscape, such as community soundscapes and changing soundscapes due to economic and industrial developments. The approaches and techniques used in soundscape composition are often used within a broader context to document cultural and political change.

In 2018, Israel saw another increase in the number of Jews emigrating (Jewish Agency, 2018). Ten thousand Jews emigrated from Russia alone (ibid.). This will have sonic implications for Israel. As I have tried to demonstrate in this thesis, soundscape compositions are valuable tools for exploring such situations. I believe that interdisciplinary soundscape composition that incorporates social inquiry (see: Drever, 2002; Rennie, 2014) is a valuable tool for investigating this kind of community change. Soundscapes are not only ideal for recording the sounds of a place, but can also explore the relationship of those sounds within a community and a community's experience of changing sound. Norman (2017: 179) commented that '...within the memory theatre of cognitive mapping, historians and biologists alike discover that mental maps, those internalised journeys down remembered paths, are fundamental to retaining knowledge of an environment'. By incorporating interviews (and other creative elements) in these compositions, I believe that listeners can experience a wide perspective on place and identity, integrated with personal and community memories, as well as sounds from the local environment: 'In listening into these conversations about "raw" material being collected in different contents of inquiry and enlivened by being braided into new forms and perspectives...' (Sullivan cited in Springgay et al., 2008: 242).

Looking back at the feedback about the compositions, the narratives from the interviewees definitely played a part in emphasising personal experiences of place, and how that became entangled with identities. Listeners were often inspired to think, and enter dialogues about the pieces, which resulted in interesting exchanges, both with each other and about migration, home, belonging, and so forth. The relationship that is established between listeners and soundscape compositions creates memories and connections between the interviewees, the place and environments recorded, and the listeners themselves:

Memories prompted by place can give a sometimes-fleeting sense of familiarity, but these findings suggest a deeper dynamic at work. Memory appears to have a role in supporting an ongoing recognition and working out of how one might belong in a new place. Experiences of remembering landscapes can sometimes exacerbate the negative shock of the new, but can also be restorative means of envisaging how everyday life continues beyond the strangeness. (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013: 175)

Looking back at feedback from the listeners to my compositions, I described the ways that I would tackle these projects differently the next time, (see: chapter five). I will, briefly, outline here the future that I envisage for interdisciplinary soundscape projects, as I explore my creative research practice. I would be interested in extending my practice towards multi-sensory work. As Riek (as cited in Lane and Carlyle, 2011: 177) notes: ‘when presented to an audience, although immersive, the sound recordings can provide for a fragmented experience as they only convey one aspect of the recorded moment, the sound’. All sensory ethnographic accounts are partial. Any single sensory exploration would be a fragmented experience (see: Ingold, 2007). As Rhys-Taylor (2013: 396) notes: ‘This partiality should not be taken as a weakness, but rather as a position from which criticisms of more totalizing claims about the contemporary city, and urban culture, can be developed’. As Boyd and Larson (2014: 4) said: ‘...we have to continually ask ourselves what we are not capturing in the way of meaning’. Similarly, inquiry through only sight/written word is an incomplete knowledge (see: Berendt, 1985). As Meireles (2017: 102) comments:

...to supplement field recordings with an interdisciplinary dialogue that also includes photographs or text is a move adopted by a growing number of artists, as these recording practices have particular similarities. Transcribing the experience of place through sound, photography or text usually requires an awareness that surpasses the mere brief insight. It demands a direct involvement of the recordist as an active part of the environment. A combination of techniques and durational experiences can then allow artists to articulate an evocative suggestion of the experienced event.

I feel it would be a disservice to this thesis not to outline some of the critiques of soundscape studies.<sup>123</sup> I do not want my thesis to present a well-crafted argument, merely by ignoring criticisms. Koutsomichalis (2013), for example, has argued that ‘phonography fails as a medium to preserve, to document, or to represent environmental

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<sup>123</sup> See: Ingold’s (2007), *Against Soundscape* for one such example.

sound in its essence... [since a recording cannot] preserve the original semantics and subliminal significances of someone's encounter with an acoustic environment'. Koutsomichalis' argument is irrelevant to this study, however, since, as a composer, I have never intended for my work to merely digitally replicate the original environmental sounds and the semantics of environments, but rather, to represent the sound stories and memories that inform participant's lives. Even Koutsomichalis (ibid.) is forced to admit: 'practitioners are now seeking... sophisticated approaches toward understanding and investigating soundscapes, as well as exploring how this knowledge may influence and redefine their individual working methodologies and goals'. No research genre is perfect, and I do believe that soundscapes have a lot to bring to interdisciplinary inquiries. This thesis never intended to privilege listening over vision, but rather, to promote sound onto an equal status with image. As Gallagher (2015: 479) commented:

In a context, where representations of space often involve images with strong truth claims attached, - maps, photographs, architectural drawings, landscape paintings and so on- environmental audio recordings are prone to being more elusive in their meanings: unverifiable, referential unstable, hinting at things which are never quite fully revealed.

Aware as I am of the privileging of sight, vision, and the written word throughout academia, I would be wary of a project of this nature becoming written-word dominated, with sound providing merely illustrative support on the side. Researchers could develop a balanced dialogue between genres.<sup>124</sup> This idea partly emerged from the process of writing this thesis alongside my compositions, which gave greater context to listeners, shaping my presence throughout this commentary on the project's creation. This thesis reveals my presence as the researcher throughout the compositions. In chapter one of this thesis, I was less positive in my views about having a written element, together with this practice-based work. As I end the thesis, however, I realise that this written text offers an additional, reflective, ethical openness and has a further purpose in using another modality to offer a commentary on the soundscape.

Multi-sensory approaches invariably privilege sound and vision, as a partnership, over taste and smell (see: Rhys-Taylor, 2013). Smells and tastes, however, are integral to the creation of diasporic identities (Manalansan, 2006). I would be interested in the future in exploring a sound/smell/taste sensory collaboration, exploring the 'transculturation'

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<sup>124</sup> See: Meireles (2017), *Extended Phonography: experiencing place through sound, a multi-sensorial approach*, for an example of such an attempt.

(Ortiz, 1995) of migrants in their new homes through a ‘sensescape’ (Degen, 2008). Whilst different senses produce qualitatively different ideas and knowledge, they all deserve scholarly attention (see: Simmel et al., 1997). Similarly, sound, smell and taste have all been overlooked by traditional modes of social inquiry (Rhys-Taylor, 2013), so perhaps would make a fitting partnership in scholarship. Sensory scholarship (see: Pink, 2009) connects to elements that I already use in my research, such as (sound) walking practices. I look forward to exploring, these multi-sensory, interdisciplinary research foci in the future:

The challenge and the opportunity for sensuous scholars is to cultivate and attune their senses, decipher these clues, or perhaps note their absences, as well as show their significance. It is precisely by evoking these ways of knowing that walking, as a method, succeeds where traditional methods with their emphasis on the discursive have left much to be desired... walking encourages us to think with all our senses, to notice more, and to ask different questions of the world. (Rhys-Taylor, 2017: 5)

Having listed oral history, urban sociology, ethnography and soundscape composition as my sources in the introduction to this thesis; I notice that different projects emphasised different aspects of this bricolage. Both projects seem to have a large focus on oral history (as seen in the interview aspect) and soundscape composition (as seen in the use of environmental sounds), with secondary attention paid to urban sociology and ethnography as sources (see below for more on this discussion). The aesthetic merit of the compositions improved as this study progressed. The inclusion and juxtaposition of two interlinked projects greatly enhanced the quality of the work contained in this thesis, but created too great a quantity of material to be legitimately included within the confines of a PhD, thus producing a plethora of appendices (including Appendix K: *An Alternative Epilogue* to this chapter).

### **Closing Reflections on the Compositional Projects**

As predicted at the advent of this investigation, different projects privileged different interdisciplinary combinations: my first project in London had more of a focus on urban sociology, being situated in an urban environment. My final project in Jerusalem incorporated more ethnography: this was a longer project, exploring the communities and ethno/socio/religious identities of the interviewees. The two compositions grew, cumulatively, out of each other: the technical and ethical know-how of project one

informing the final project, as well as inspiring a creative progression. It was interesting to explore and contrast two different kinds of diasporic identity, with different, interconnected senses of belonging and ‘home’, and similar experiences of becoming culturally ‘othered’: contemporary experiences of Islamophobia and antisemitism remain intrinsically interconnected:

...for British Jews and British Muslims, antisemitism and Islamophobia constitute a significant factor that determines their place in the vexed picture of Jewish – Muslim relations... The social hesitation and fear that some British Jews and British Muslims have against each other is a symptom of wider problems in the way in which ‘minority’ groups are perceived and treated in the UK (Egorova and Ahmed, 2017: 294).

During the process of writing this chapter, the Jewish festival of *Pesach* (Passover) fell. As part of its observance, a *Seder* plate, which is a distinctive plate that holds symbolic foods during the Passover meal, was on my mind. This year we added a modern addition to the Seder plate. As mentioned in chapter two, the world was shocked by the images of Alan Kurdi, another victim in the Syrian refugee crisis. His father, Abdullah, had survived the journey. In teaching people about his son’s life, Abdullah mentioned that Alan had loved bananas, a luxury in Syria. Since 2015, Jews have placed a banana on Seder plates, to tell this story as a reminder of Alan, and children everywhere, who are caught up in this modern-day exodus (Reform Judaism, 2019).

What I have learned from these changing emphases and locations is that the context of the soundscape composition and the identity of the interviewees greatly affected the research trajectory and choice of methods. Urban sociology is being utilised currently by sound composers (see: O’Keefe, 2014; Waldock, 2016), particularly with projects focusing on how areas of cities change over time and how this affects local residents, through shared sonic experience. As Schwarz (2015: 205) says:

The world is rarely silent: most activities produce cognizable sounds. People vary in the sounds they produce and in the ways they experience, evaluate, and react to sounds; places, too, vary in their real and imagined sonic profiles, yet sociologists rarely listen to most of these differences.

I would be interested in returning back to Israel and seeing the *olim* in the future. I remain in contact with all my interviewees from the two projects and have become close with several of them. I would like to re-visit the *olim* to see the areas/communities they are

living in, and explore the concomitant sonic implications of their Hebrew/English language experiences. In *Manifest* (2013a) Rennie documents the sonic ethnography of two protests in Barcelona. This lively soundscape uses compositional techniques to take the listener along a narrative of the protests. I, too, hope to continue integrating ethnography within my future work, capturing the sonic atmosphere of places, whilst also exploring socio-political contexts. This responds to calls for ethnography to be more of an ‘open manifesto’ rather than a methodology (see: Willis & Trondman, 2000). As Erlmann (2004: 1-20) stresses, aural ethnography is concerned with an understanding of how people know, communicate and relate to each other through sonic experience. I am particularly interested in continuing sonic ethnography research about Jewish communities around the world. Perhaps, therefore, a more fitting terminology for my future work would be sonic auto-ethnography (see: Findlay-Walsh, 2018). Further studies into specific groups, for instance the Iraqi-Jewish community in Israel (see: Julius, 2018), would also be a pertinent future project and would mitigate against any ashkenormative<sup>125</sup> trajectory in my future research. I am influenced in making such future plans by Wood and Smith’s (2004) claim that it is not so much what is heard, but our own responses to our everyday listening, that help build a sense of belonging and community.

This thesis furthers the legitimization of interdisciplinary soundscape compositions, not just as aural interviews or data, but as sonic representations of socio-cultural environments. Recording devices can record customs; traditions and ways of life; and therefore cross into the dimensions of place; language; memory; community and belonging (see: Bull and Mitchell, 2015). It becomes hard to imagine how to transcribe what has been recorded, since: ‘The authority comes not from the pen and written word of the historian, but directly from the voices of our interviewees as performers embody and recreate their pasts’ (Pollock, 2005: 169). In interviews, people do not speak in perfect sentences. People leave things out, and then remember something and return back in a circle. They do not tell their life stories in chronological order.<sup>126</sup> They forget and use the wrong names. A guide by Emerson (2011:13) to writing ethnographic fieldnotes even lists these sonic issues:

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<sup>125</sup> Ashkenormativity is a term referring to the predominance and assumption of *Ashkenazi* Jewish practices and culture, over *Sephardi* or *Mizrahi* practices and culture (see: Katz, 2014).

<sup>126</sup> This tendency is mirrored by the cyclical structure of this thesis.

...a transcript is the product of a transcriber's ongoing interpretive and analytic decisions about a variety of problematic matters: how to transform naturally occurring speech into specific words, how to determine when to punctuate to indicate a completed phrase or sentence, given the common lack of clear-cut endings in ordinary speech; deciding whether or not to try and represent such matters as spaces and silences, overlapped speech and sounds, pace stresses and volume, and inaudible or incomprehensible sounds or words.

How are researchers meant to transcribe spoken language into writing, without altering the original meaning? 'The problem of methodology is frequently mentioned in the literature within diverse fields, including ethnography, referring to the difficulties in expressing, analyzing or representing complex sensory experiences' (Isken, 2014a: 127). Sound research, perhaps, makes much transcription redundant, since the compositional process can highlight these sensory experiences and do justice to their aural complexity, especially since 'future generations may prove more aurally oriented' (Baum, 1996: 43).

The research community must strategically adapt research platforms to remain as accessible and current as possible. For example, whilst researching for this thesis, I stumbled upon Sanchez's (2006) sound art installation *2487*, which speaks the names of the two thousand four hundred and eight-seven people who died while trying to cross the US/Mexico border between 1993 and 2006. The piece consists of Sanchez speaking each name, effectively giving voice to these lost diasporas. Each name and pause between names, is placed randomly. Sometimes names are played slightly over the other; sometimes multiple names are spoken simultaneously, at different speeds. Sanchez (ibid.) maintained that these diverse rhythms mimicked the 'organic patterns much like migration patterns themselves'. Originally a gallery installation, the piece now lives online, where you can additionally see the MaxMSP software score. This piece using sound to keep memories alive as an art form, becomes part of something influential and accessible to listeners.

Throughout this long sojourn within my projects, I have been curious about the ethics of practice-based research. This written thesis has shown my development and thought process via the ethics I used in my creative practice. My thesis adds to ongoing discussions about the lack of ethics processes in sound research, and, equally, aids other scholars in similar fields:

Working with voice recordings compromises the social research convention of anonymity, for example... I felt responsibility to edit the material in a way that would be respectful towards them, representing their contrasting views and experiences without allowing one voice to dominate. (Gallagher, 2015: 479)

As noted before however, ethics procedures, particularly with regards to sound research, are very limited (see: Lyonblum, 2017). Though some composers are starting to grapple and ask questions surrounding ethics (see: Andean, 2014b; McCartney, 2016a). I found that general research ethics training, given by institutions, was not especially relevant for the research I was doing. Having an ethics process for sound research projects is vital, as Gershon (2018: 135) states:

Prescribed procedures are central to methodology precisely because they are an important factor in the difference between doing research and making shit up. Doing work in sound does not alleviate researchers from this central aspect of qualitative research methodologies.

Of course, written textual research also comes across these issues, as Richardson (1995: 199) comments: ‘writing is not simply a “true” representation of an object “reality”; instead, language creates a particular view of reality’. When utilising written research many ethical decisions are made (see: Brown, 1977; Edmondson, 1984; Fisher, 1987; Van Maanen, 2011). Sound researchers should now continue to push for their work to be as ethical as possible, by keeping on asking the right questions: ‘What are the ethics of this expression, and how are these ethics informed by underlying ideologies of sound, of sound production and of sound ecology?’ (McCartney, 2016a: 160).

### **Ethical Guidelines for Future Scholarship**

These guidelines emerged from my reflections, at the end of the thesis, on the main research questions first asked in chapter one. To reiterate these questions:

1) What different knowledge emerges in diaspora/migration studies, when we use soundscape composition as a research platform? Does a sonic form of inquiry produce different thinking, in understanding journeys; communities and diaspora identities to those emanating from written scholarship?

2) How do these four fields (soundscape composition, ethnography, oral history and urban sociology) combine to develop and provide frameworks for sound research? How are decisions made around the balance and on-going dialogue between aesthetics and ethics in an interdisciplinary inquiry?

3) Does soundscape composition, as research, widen access to scholarship with non-academic audiences? Can sonic platforms that reveal the lived experiences of others produce more empathic responses in listeners?

I realise that if this thesis had had a traditional structure, this would be my opportunity to answer these questions, point by point. For precise answers to these questions, however, I refer readers back to chapters two and four, where they will find specific; contextualised; contingent answers to them as they occurred. In this study I have taken readers on a critically and purposely meandering research journey that has led them to this juncture. My findings are less specific, and contribute more fluid and flexible guidelines for future scholars in the emerging; moving; innovative world of interdisciplinary soundscape composition. Here I offer future scholars a distillation of the more generalisable, non-context dependent guidelines that have emerged from this inquiry. These guidelines have emerged in the form of questions for interdisciplinary researchers to ask themselves in the context of their own work, thus ensuring the transferability of ideas and practices across disciplines and borders (see below):

<b>Preparation for composing/inquiring</b>	<b>Questions for scholars and others to ask themselves</b>
Research process	<p>What kind of research trajectory (e.g. journey/story/layered narrative /traditional account) is this?</p> <p>In what way is your inquiry process congruent with your practice?</p> <p>Why would your research best fit a more structured method, or a more fluid process?</p> <p>How will a sonic inquiry process differ from a traditional written account?</p>
Plugging into everyday ideas and metaphors	<p>What kinds of ideas (from everyday life/ literatures read/professional practice) inform your life and work?</p> <p>How would these ideas manifest as metaphors for the process of your inquiry?</p> <p>How would metaphors from your everyday life inform decision-making in your inquiry (and, therefore, unearth everyday knowledge)?</p> <p>Why can using ways of thinking from your everyday decision-making (theological, political, ethical) help you solve dilemmas that arise in your inquiry?</p>
<b>Undertaking and recording the composition/inquiry</b>	
Narratives (interviews and narrative forms of composition)	<p>What are the ethical considerations when representing participants' narratives in research, especially when your inquiry uses a sonic platform?</p> <p>What different confidentiality concerns occur when using audio recordings of participants' life narratives?</p> <p>How far can you sonically alter/ combine/ juxtapose multiple narratives for research purposes without distorting an individual's core story?</p> <p>How can you build an aesthetically pleasing narrative journey in a composition whilst respecting and maintaining ethical research standards?</p>

<p>Collaboration (participants and audience)</p>	<p>How can collaboration with participants inform and change the power dynamics within an inquiry, and what is the impact of this?</p> <p>How can you optimise the use of collaboration with participants in your inquiry?</p> <p>In what ways can participants be involved in the recording and compositional process?</p> <p>How will you provide your audience with multiple opportunities to contribute to your inquiry?</p>
<p><b>Composing and listening to the inquiry</b></p>	
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>How does using composition as the final platform for your research affect its accessibility?</p> <p>Why do sonic research dissemination methods increase accessibility amongst non-academic audiences (in non-academic spaces)?</p> <p>How will elements of the composition (length/ style/ listening opportunities/ choice of audience) affect the accessibility of the piece?</p> <p>How do aesthetic and ethical concerns, together with issues of representation, compare and contrast with researcher concerns about accessibility?</p>
<p>Towards a sonic empathy</p>	<p>What kind of different platform (from written research) do sonic inquiries give to the lived experiences of others and enable more empathic responses in listeners?</p> <p>How can you use recording, mixing and compositional techniques to evoke empathic responses in listeners?</p> <p>Why does composition offer audiences an opportunity to witness the experience of people that they would not otherwise come across in their everyday lives?</p> <p>How does working ‘empathically’ as a sound artist nurture new styles of compositional practice?</p>

<p><b>Composer presence</b> (These questions should be applied to all of the sections in the table above)</p>	<p>How important is the presence of the composer in your inquiry?</p> <p>When is the presence of the composer revealed?</p> <p>What steps are taken to prevent the composer's presence dominating the piece?</p> <p>When does your creative editing start to hinder the narrative(s) you are trying to tell?</p>
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Figure 13: Ethical guidelines for interdisciplinary soundscape composition.

These questions intend to provide useful guidelines for interdisciplinary scholarship. As I reflect on these recommendations, I realise that they are the very questions that I would have liked to have been asked as I started this research journey. My own inquiry focused on diaspora identities and included sonic and multi-sensory explorations. I am primarily a soundscape composer and was informed, at different moments along my research journey, by urban sociology, oral history and ethnography. The guidelines, above, develop frameworks for future interdisciplinary scholarship across arts practice and social inquiry. They are intended to inspire future scholars to plug into different ways of thinking and working. There are infinite combinations of disciplines that can inform and contribute to the development of interdisciplinary soundscape research. As predicted in chapter one of this thesis, my inquiry has generated more questions than answers. Sometimes questions are more beneficial to future scholarship than answers. I hope others will come to see this research, in the way that Mishler (2004, 146) notes:

By this hope for a continuing conversation I neither intend or envision that other investigators will replicate the study, wholeheartedly adopt its [processes], or rely on it uncritically. That would be treating it as a template, a way of production which... is neither interesting nor creative and hardly worth the necessary investment in time and energy. Rather, I assume those who choose to enter the dialogue about narrative and identity will have found something in the study relevant to their own work: a perspective that suggests new questions or methods applicable to their problems, or they may be more skeptical about its value and view their work as a critical response to it. Ideally, whether they see it as a resource or a target, they will recognize early on that difference between our respective studies may require them to modify and adapt the approach, making something of their own.

## Diaspora Identities and Memory

Diaspora identities were an ideal topic to inquire into with this interdisciplinary methodology. The project was timely, given the current global interest in migration and distinct lack of sound research in migration studies. I had initially chosen this complex subject matter, migration and its fragmentation into ‘diaspora’, in order to demonstrate the efficacy of these interdisciplinary methodologies. Throughout the thesis I have also shown the congruence between the subject and process; particularly their mutual connection to ‘place’. The scholarship that soundscapes can uncover about the historical and lived experiences of others, is essential knowledge:

Rather than disorienting you, such work potentially creates a clearer sense of place and belonging for both composer and listener, since the essence of soundscape composition is the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environments and listening perception. (Westerkamp, 1999: 2)

Diaspora identities and soundscapes are already integrated with human memories of place and remembering places making connections through sound, through stories and through identity (see: Schindel and Colombo, 2014). The importance of remembering and learning from the past is not new. *Zakhor*, which is the Hebrew word for remember, features frequently in the Torah. In the book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 32:7, for instance, Moses tells Israel to: ‘Remember the days of old; reflect upon the years of [other] generations. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will inform you’ (JPS, 2000: 446).

As Shilling (2012) claims, when a person moves to a new place, their memories, and habits can be derailed by new sonic experiences. My sonic investigations show the fluidity of these relationships and identities with regards to place. The narratives recorded by migrants and refugees in these projects highlight some of the complexities of affiliation, community and memories that shape the feeling of belonging to locations (see: King, 2000). Migrants’ lack of ‘soundscape competence’ (Truax, 2001) in new places, creates numerous difficult situations. My aural inquiries suggest that during the early stages after migration, relationships to a place will most probably be created through comparisons between the current place and the places recently left. New sounds may startle migrants in unusual ways, or trigger their ‘imaginative hearing’ (Ihde, 2007).<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ihde’s concept of ‘auditory imagination’ (2007) highlights how we recall familiar sounds.

After a period of time, my interviewees developed language, and local knowledge, which gave feelings of security and stability. This is supported by Scannell and Gifford's (2010) theory of place attachment in new migrants, together with Wilk's (1995) 'learn to be a local' concept. My interviewees narrated the time between first arrival through to feeling more settled. Length of time spent in the new country was definitely an aspect of feeling settled, however there were also threads of life history involved, which offered a more multifaceted pattern of experience and dimensions of dwelling (Ingold, 2000).

These sonic experiences play a significant role in migration studies since diaspora identities can shift as a result of sonic experiences, as Marks (2000: 196) argues:

When people move to a new place, they bring sensory repertoire in their bodies and practices, and may perceive the new environment in different ways from its older inhabitants. In such a context, we can explore both how the newcomer's perception of the soundscape and the relationship to the city, and more importantly, how the newcomer can access and express her or his experiences in more performative and relational ways. Furthermore, we can also ask what such an impact tells about the soundscapes and acoustic communities of that particular city.

The sound methods utilised throughout this study, allowed reflective thoughts on experiences to be made by first generation migrants and refugees, contributing to understandings of both sonic belonging and diaspora identities. The soundwalks mapped out by the interviewees sounded out recollections of the interviewee's everyday lives (de Certeau, 1998), whilst their voices leapt between memories of the past and present, which enabled listeners to experience the soundscape in different ways. The sonic dynamics, and the shifting of power towards the interviewees as collaborators, played a vital role in the projects and contributed to the study: 'The interrelationship of people and place has been studied in various academic fields, but many traditional social science methods, quantitative but also qualitative, marginalize the experimental, temporal and sensory qualities of a place' (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013: 161).

I would be interested in creating more collaborative future projects (see: Iscen, 2014a; Otondo, 2017). This reminds me of *chavrusa* learning, as earlier mentioned in chapter four. Famously, Rabbi Yochanan on his *chavrusa* with Reish Lakish said: '[When studying with him] whenever I would say something, he would pose 24 difficulties and I would give 24 solutions, and as a result [of the give-and-take] the subject became clear' (Steinsaltz, 2014: 84a).

This links to the intrinsic ideas behind collaborative research, as Iscen (2014a: 132) notes:

I would like to emphasize the importance of a collaborative and process-oriented approach to soundscape composition. Such an approach, which enables people to voice their experiences in relation to or in the presence of others, reflects the multiplicity and relationality of different levels of meaning. Therefore, it can address issues regarding the dialogue between composer and the soundscape/place in novel ways. More collaborative platforms for creating soundscape composition which create a more balanced dialogue between participants and cultures can be helpful in diverse settings from ethnographic to educational.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This thesis claims to push interdisciplinary scholarship forward. My compositional projects have demonstrated my practice-led, process-driven work to fellow scholars and indicated how I dealt with, and solved, conundrums along the research journey. In chapter one, I privilege the term ‘exegesis’ over ‘thesis’ for artistic practice-based works, such as this. I included my debates between aesthetics and ethics, and ended in chapter five by concluding that the traditional term of ‘method’ can be limiting and a poor fit with arts practices. If research should be moral and ethical, and if creativity and critique helps us understand and form our inquiries, then our inquiry and our creativity should not be in conflict with each other, which is how I, for the most part, experienced my research. My aesthetic sensibilities gave my research a particular set of expectations and enhanced my experience of striving for meaning and knowledge. There were, however, moments of aesthetic/ethical conflict. Two conflicting value systems were demanding my allegiance: creativity opens up different knowledge outcomes and explorations for research and enables innovative scholarship. Similarly, research ethics protect those who are vulnerable and promote trustworthiness. When we position creativity and ethics in opposition, we are losing either our new forms of knowledge or our trustworthiness. Perhaps these difficulties will be overcome when the academy decides to demand an exegesis, rather than a thesis, from arts practitioners: a commentary on their process, not their method.

Research, particularly interdisciplinary research, represents a conversation with myriad previous and future scholars. An engagement with previous scholarship usually reveals that the dilemmas being grappled with have been addressed in some way before. In this way, what I have shown in my thesis is ‘how knowledge is opened up and proliferated

rather than foreclosed and simplified' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2013: 261) by plugging into metaphors from my everyday life, and my practice of soundscape composition. Thus, other scholars with open minds can pursue research that combines moral and ethical responsibility with creative practice. I found that conceptualising aesthetic and ethical considerations as fixed, 'disciplined' terms, rather than fluid, overlapping constructs, disrupted attempts to plug texts into each other. This long discussion, which ran through the entirety of my thesis, reminds me of a quote by Buxton (2009: x), wherein I have changed the word religion for ethics, and the word spirituality for creativity:

Rather than seeing [ethics and creativity] as separate – or worse, as opposed – I suggest that if [creativity] refers to the innate human instinct to seek meaning and fulfillment, then [ethics] are the formation of that in terms of a way of life, to which we have a duty to be faithful and true. Thus [ethics and creativity] are inseparable: if you divorce one from the other it becomes either vacuous or lifeless.

I look forward to the ever-growth of future scholarship that pushes towards a more open, process-orientated approach to methodology (see: Bal, 2002; Rogoff, 2000; Manning and Massumi, 2014) and 'plugs into' creative arts practices not as a 'research method' but as a legitimate inquiry process. This is currently a trend in academia; with scholars pushing for more open methodologies (see: Wills and Trondman, 2000), whilst still keeping research responsibilities:

If the intent of inquiry is to create a different world, to ask what kinds of futures are imaginable, then (in)tensions need to attend to the immersion, friction, strain, and quivering unease of doing research differently. (Springgay and Truman, 2017b: 1)

Throughout this dissertation, I have used a/r/tography as a sounding board from fellow arts practitioners for my methodological concerns. In 2017, two prominent a/r/tographers published an article concerning sound art (see: Springgay & Truman, 2017a). They discussed *Walking to the Laundromat* (WalkingLab, 2017), a sonic art performance that combines walking methodologies and trans theory. This was first performed in Sydney, Australia, where the audience not only listened to the soundscape, but also walked, washed and folded clothes in a launderette, producing a performance through their moving bodies: '*Walking to the Laundromat* enacts a virality of mutation through intensities of affect - sounds, vibrations and repeated rhythms - and by thinking transmaterially across different bodies and spaces' (ibid., 47). The inclusion of the participants' movements is thought-provoking since as Norman (2012: 259) comments: '...my feeling is that there is

equal value in finding ways to encourage listeners to participate in “making-place”, so that they might feel that place is “happening” to them, and because of them, through their movement in the world’. Research has suggested that listening occurs around and through our bodies (DeNora, 2000; Back, 2003; Wood et al., 2007).

Sound studies, not unlike other research disciplines, suffers from a shortage of diverse voices. Citations from projects and compositions created by women, black and ethnic minority researchers as well as disabled and LGBTQ+ people, are scarce in this dissertation. Currently, the diversifying of sound fields is underway, with various groups cropping up.<sup>128</sup> Wilson (1998) noted that soundwalks were often in isolated, far away places, such as national parks or nature reserves. Access to such spaces has a political dimension. They are often inaccessible to people who only use public transport. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in soundwalk research projects in accessible locations associated with music festivals and urban sonic research groups (McCartney, 2014). Drever (2019: 93) also states the case for aural diversity in sonic arts practice, advocating that: ‘...we embrace our own aural diversity and empathetically that of others’. Furthermore, sound studies can help create greater understanding between people. In Montreal, Lopez’s *Blind City* (2006) created relationships between sighted and unsighted people, as a result of soundwalks which allocated sighted participants a blind leader to guide them through the city. Lopez (2006) stated that:

It works as a piece/experience that explores the possibility of transferring apprehensions of the world through the interaction of people living in different perceptive universes... assumptions that may even subconsciously exist about such listening groups as the blind, are challenged and reworked for the participant.

Soundscape composition operates ‘in a different emotive register than does most academic writing. It is ephemeral, elusive... sound and music have the power to move us in unpredictable ways’ (Gallagher, 2015: 479). This thesis is, on the one hand, a wholehearted celebration of the infinite potential of sound research. I also acknowledge, however, that it represents the flawed, developmental progression and exploration of my own personal practice. As Mishler (2004: 146) observed of his own (then innovative) narrative inquiries:

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<sup>128</sup> At the University of Edinburgh, the Women In Sound Women On Sound (WISWOS) research group identifies the need for action to tackle issues for inequality and gender bias in sound and music technology. Additionally, Queer Sonic Cultures is a walking-composing project collaborated by academics at the Manchester Met University (see: Truman and Ben Shannon, 2018).

Unasked and unanswered questions leaped out between the lines; limitations were glaringly obvious... On reflection, I came to see the problems I was finding as clear signs of the unfinished nature of the work, potential openings and points of departure for others in their own studies.

I argue in my thesis for soundscape composers and arts-based social inquirers, to use arts processes - in my case composition - as inquiry modes. As Sullivan (cited in Springgay et al., 2008: 241) argues for a/r/tography: 'In fact, as researchers using artistic processes they not only have the right, but also the responsibility to "push" the interpretation of the data into new forms'. Although I have tried to become interdisciplinary, these projects will still be limited, as well as extended, by my expertise in sound composition. I aimed to open dialogues about places, identities and community narratives; opening fluid discussions rather than fixing or closing them off. This dissertation is a start to further conversations, and I hope other researchers will be encouraged to tell stories, exploring and inquiring into place and identity, through sound. This process of learning about different people's stories can improve our own self-understanding: '...the life of each becomes bound up with the other. Every entwining is a knot, and the more that lifelines are entwined, the greater the density of the knot' (Ingold, 2011: 148).

This thesis offers both an acknowledgement of previous practices and suggestions for the future. Using methods and knowledge from soundscape composition, oral history, ethnography, urban sociology and more, the content of this dissertation is as diverse as the varied fields that it draws from. Through the innovations detailed here, composers, listeners, researchers and readers may further explore and discover new creative practices of recording, listening, and collaboration. Sound exists in the everyday: environmental, autobiographical, social, cultural, political, individual and in communities. Sound can help us reflect on our experiences of time and link the past, present and future. If we should wish, as creative researchers, to use our privileges and skills to contribute to the empowerment of the people we study, then we should, indeed, value sound. There is huge undiscovered sonic knowledge out there, which will provide us with different insights to those gained through written textual inquiries. My thesis has contributed, in a small way, to the wealth of these new worlds of thinking and knowing. It has created the possibility of experiencing, connecting and exploring the *Sonic Diaspora*.

'Now I will do nothing but listen...' - Walt Whitman

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## Appendix A:

### Validity and Reliability, a Dramatised Account of a Conversation

Only practice can pronounce theoretical validity, yet without theoretical validity no practice can be evaluated. (Bal, 2002: 14)

During the completion of my thesis, people in my everyday life usually had one of three different reactions to descriptions of my research (which were always very concise and brief): group A was non-committal and quickly moved on to another topic; group B was excited and eager to know more; but group C (a smaller proportion of people, who had almost always been trained in late twentieth century social science) were *appalled*. The section below, on validity and reliability, is written in the form of a dramatised account of a conversation with a member of group C, versed in the traditions of conventional social research. This appendix has been strongly informed by Gouzouasis' (2008) writing about validity, particularly his focus on music as research and his use of a conversational style to explore questions around reliability.

**‘Ok, nice summary of your research, but now I’m full of questions. What criteria did you use for your inquiry?’**

My research does not fit comfortably within the rubric of traditional research criteria that were employed in the early days of qualitative research; when attempts were made to take a scientific approach by making explorations of human experience more ‘objective’. As Bal (2002: 11-12) commented:

It came into currency in the humanities... during the 1960s, when the humanities discovered the importance of methodology, beyond the discourse of criticism alone. At that time, the formative years of my academic life, a number of slogans from the philosophy of science became dogmatic guidelines for the humanities and the social sciences, both eager to emulate the more self-evidently scientific other, the natural sciences.

All research is flawed. All researchers overlook certain aspects of their field. All research, especially if judged by criteria that were not used in the initial shaping of the project, can be found wanting. I am engaged with interdisciplinary soundscape research, thus radically, and somewhat messily (see: Lather, 2010), breaking with conventional regimes of truth for qualitative social research. To engage with ‘scientificity’ (Davies, 2009: 1138)

in our scholarship would seem a ‘fraught and fragile’ (ibid.) position for any arts-based researchers. Our work as composers is crammed with messy, human subjectivities. It seems counterproductive to attempt to hide from that.

We all come to scholarship with assumptions and biases. These biases will inevitably shape our research and its practices in music or social science. If multiple backgrounds, tangled with multiple disciplines, shape research, why seek a ‘one size fits all’ set of criteria for research evaluation (see: Gouzouasis, 2008)? In engaging with new research arenas straddling the borders between two disciplines we are borrowing methodologies to open up new spaces of inquiry. I feel that we need to use different criteria to make judgments about these different forms of inquiry. Criteria need to be living and fluid, not fixed (Lincoln, 1995).

I initially critically evaluate my interdisciplinary soundscape projects on their aesthetic merits as compositions, not using the standards or principles borrowed from any forms of research. I also judge these projects on audience feedback and take comments from listeners as an important and democratic form of evaluation (see: chapter five). This concurs with many inquiries in arts-based, multi-disciplinary, sensory methods that have been developing over the past 20 years (Drever, 2002; Westerkamp, 2002; Springgay et al., 2005; Pink, 2009). Atkinson (cited in Gouzouasis, 2008: 224) said ‘reliability and validity are not necessarily the appropriate evaluative standards for a life history interview’, and, similarly, this thesis. Braidotti (2013) took this further and argued that traditional criteria do not fit with the post-human era in which we now live and conduct scholarship.

**‘But... It’s not real research is it? It’s art! So that’s why it’s not valid...’**

Some researchers (see: Atkinson et al., 1988) have attempted to borrow traditional notions of scientific validity and bring them into qualitative research. But many have freed themselves from these restrictions and developed new ideas of validity where the separation of art and research is blurred. For example, my thesis has included the approaches of soundscape composition (Westerkamp, 1999; Drever, 2002; Rennie, 2014) and a/r/tography (Springgay et al., 2005; 2008); both of which have pushed for more creative and human-centred approaches to validity. Lastly, Sparkes (2002: 37) says: ‘...problems arise when the scientific way of representing reality is taken to be the only

way, and other legitimate forms of representation and ways of knowing are denied'. I hope this explanation convinces you that conventional notions of validity are not appropriate in the evaluation of my investigation.

**‘Hmmm... when framing your inquiry though, does, predominantly, your arts background inform the inquiry? Or the social sciences that you are borrowing from?’**

I think that I need both inquiry (from social science) and my background discipline (music) to form and inform each other in understanding my research. This is an early twenty-first century inquiry, undertaken at a time when social research is conducted and informed by post-human philosophical thought, whereby human beings and their endeavours are no longer conceptually privileged above the concerns of environments (see: Braidotti, 2013; Manning & Massumi, 2014). Similarly, music and soundscape composition are undertaken in an era of ‘the material turn’ in the arts, whereby the agency and influence of nonhuman factors and technologies are equally valued (Barrett & Bolt, 2012). This position is where I find myself comfortable as a composer/researcher. Where research and composition define and refine each other, where interdisciplinary soundscape composition is ‘neither subject nor object but is a project (Langer, 1989: 23-26) in an on-going process of living inquiry’ (Gouzouasis, 2008: 226).

This more open interpretation of methodological thinking entangled with practice, fits more congruently with creative inquiry forms which interlink everything relating to their body of work; including the selves of the composer, the researcher, and the field of study. During the course of this inquiry, as my thinking has developed, I have felt more in tune with interdisciplinary inquiries that maintain a balance in the spaces in-between art and social science. Inquiries that engage in cycles that critique and inform themselves through other means than traditional methods require continual scrutiny (Bal, 2002). And as this dialogue demonstrates, thinking, theorising and methodology are reflected on and critiqued throughout my work.

**‘But you have to admit... you can’t get proper data from a compositional process??’**

I agree with Gouzouasis (2008: 220) that ‘there is no such thing as pure data’. Data cannot be divorced from subjective human experience (see: Pepper, 1942; Sultan, 2018). If you are working with people’s personal narratives you can’t boil it down to ‘hard facts’; their emotions, their tone of voice, their remembered version of events float between fact and fiction (see: Portelli in Abrams, 2010). Our lived experiences are hugely weighty data that we can use in research (Van Manen, 1997). Through methods that allow us to record, interpret and reflect on human experience we come to ‘truer pictures’ (Gardner, 2011) of the world around us. My soundscape compositions explore human experience and are process-based research explorations. In my compositions, form informs research and research informs form in a continuous cycle (Heron, 1996). This process-based focus leads to a continuously developing and evolving project. This thesis has discontinued that cycle at a particular moment and recognises that my ‘successors may well come to possess a truer version [of the truth] still’ (Gardner, 2011: 37).

**‘Well.... Ok... how do you measure the success of your research then?’**

I have struggled with this question myself. How *do* we evaluate soundscape compositional research? I have borrowed my collaborative criteria for impact from participative inquiry and have collected and included participants’ and listeners’ responses and comments about my projects (see chapter five). This audience/participant feedback has been invaluable when reviewing projects and has proved particularly useful as it has formed part of the research process and has shaped the compositions, rather than following on after an already completed process. I’d just like to finish our conversation with a quote:

In this sense, an a/r/tographical act is its own possible measure. A/r/tographical research in every respect generates itself from within – the processes, the modes of inquiry, the methods by which one conducts research, the analysis and even the assessment – is created in the act of being in the midst of a/r/tography. In other words, assessment and impact can’t be something that exists outside of, or prior to, the a/r/tographical research that it is then measured against. Rather, how the research is assessed (both in terms of validity and impact) is generated during the a/r/tographical process and could be quite different for each a/r/tographical endeavour. (Springgay et al., 2008: xxxii)

**‘Oh I see... I’ve never thought about any of that before...’**

Well to be honest at the outset of this study I was not comfortable presenting my compositions as research. Composition as inquiry (after Richardson’s ‘writing as inquiry’, 2003) seems quite a radical move. For me, a key part of how my compositions contribute to academic study is through exploring the balancing of ethical and aesthetical concerns as thoroughly discussed and interrogated throughout my projects and thesis. Descriptions of this thesis as a PhD in sociology received far less hostility than descriptions of the work as a PhD in music. But, I’ve learnt to deal with it. My work opens up inquiry spaces in which ideas and theories co-exist with/as inquiring arts practices. Thus, thinking about and doing inquiry inhabit the same space. A sonic space, perhaps, that could never be replicated entirely through words.

## **Appendix B: Silence, (Coughs) and Pauses**

Silence it would seem, is that spectre that rattles around in the dark... and at times [it] makes it clear to us our intentions and possibly our actions. (Mazzei, 2007: xi)

Sometimes in the interviewing process, there were moments of silence. What did this silence mean? Mazzei (2007: xi) posits: 'What good methodologists are not taught is how to hear silence, to listen to the import in the discourse that weaves its way in and through speech and conversations with barely a whisper'. Staying with silences, which ultimately determines the pace of the interviews, seemed important to the representational ethics of this study. Mazzei (ibid.) goes on to say: 'Good methodologists are taught to organise what they have seen, heard and read'. This includes silence, surely? Silences also connect to the fact that when conducting interviews, I found it important never to push an interviewee out of their silence. Ross (2003: 67) argues that silences are often employed as 'survival strategies' and thence deserve respect.

Sometime interviewees were silent for a moment because they were recalling a memory, particularly when discussing family history, or events that happened in childhood. Here research dips into the realms of second-generation memories, or 'post-memory' as coined by Hirsch (1997; 2012) in her work with the children of Holocaust survivors. Some of my interviewees came from a long line of Zionists who had wanted to move to Israel; some were children brought to Israel by their parents. Are these memories theirs, or do they belong to their parents? Is it even possible to make such a distinction? Perhaps not. This aspect of the interviews could be described as a continuing thread of oral history, in harmony with 'oral tradition' (Vansina, 1985). These silences that walked hand in hand with interviewees reflecting on inherited memories were sonically interesting to retain.

So how did I negotiate silences in my project? I noted important silences during the initial interview, even if the silence was completely unintentional. Sometimes the silence was due to reflecting on my question. Sometimes interviewees had become bored. At other times, perhaps, there was just a natural pause, or people had finished speaking and were waiting for another question. Whatever the meaning, I wanted to make sure that I included meaningful silent moments in the composition. If silences were part of a story or the answer to a question I would class them as important, otherwise I would not. For instance, sometimes interviewees would create silence to '...[refuse] to give experience words, in

the ability to do something with the experience (i.e. to hold it inside, silent)' (Ross in Das, 2001: 272).

I remember on the plane to Israel reading an article about sound minimalism (Tunggono, 2016), a way of life that does not just focus on fewer items and objects in the home, but that also wants to reduce noise. This is achieved by moving carefully around the house: '...my movement becomes more graceful and pleasant' (Numahata, 2016). This sound minimalism resonated somewhat with my interviewer experience when, if I needed to move, to perhaps check the microphone or to have a sip of water, I did so very slowly, in order to not make noise on the recording or disrupt the flow of the interviewee's speech. When placing the silences in the composition, it was almost like attempting to negotiate their place in different spaces and time. Silences definitely brought something to the compositions: '...certain knowledges do not transit through verbally explicit channels and lanes but through silences, holes/gaps' (Jelin, 2012: 144). Why have moments of silence and pauses in compositions? Their presence can be explored by listeners and interpreted in many different ways, similarly to Mazzei's (2007) notion of 'inhabited silence', all my interviews are 'punctuated by silences' (Bull, 2018: 76). Compositionally, I focused on the silences that struck a chord, or resonated with me (see: Ellis and Bochner, 1996).

As I wanted my listeners to reflect on the composition as much as possible (hence the bridge piece, discussed earlier in this thesis), occasionally silences throughout the piece encouraged listeners to construct their own experience; to reflect on the subtle expressions given by interviewees and interactions between soundscapes and voices. Silence was utilised to sometimes enable greater depth in sound composition, '...silence promotes listening as a way towards language: not to fragment but to hear the fragments fragmenting' (Voegelin, 2010: 87). Silence also gives listeners a moment to re-evaluate the sounds in their own current environment (the environment they are listening to the composition in). This weaves present day sounds into the prepared sounds of the soundscape composition, between a flowing present and testimonies of the past; allowing every listener a unique experience of the composition. This links to Cage's (1952) famous 4'33" piece. In this work, silence was full of environmental sound. Cage wanted to encourage another way of listening, which was later taken up by Schafer (1994), and Neuhaus (in Cox, 2009) amongst others. The final composition in this thesis, includes several moments of quiet: a very peaceful moment with few cars on the road, for example,

to signify *Shabbat*, and other moments with one lone voice singing, or isolated bird song. There is one instant of complete silence, before sound slowly builds up again; but I used silence sparingly, lest listeners were led to believe, wrongly, that the piece had ended.

Yom HaShoah is Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day. This day is very sonically interesting. Laws and rules have been put in place in order to encourage people to respect the day (Gould, 2012: 93). Entertainment places and venues are closed, for example, and the radio stations only play low-key and sombre music. At ten in the morning, a siren sounds throughout the entire country, giving everyone the same aural experience. For two minutes, silent reflection is observed: 'all traffic on the roads shall cease' (Young, 1993: 271). The Israeli public stops what they are doing. This includes people driving on motorways, who stop their cars in the middle of the road and stand beside them. Klagsbrun (1996: 141) describes this annual moment as incredibly poignant, with everyone motionless: 'People look like figures in a wax museum'.

One of the first Modern Hebrew poets, Rachel Bluwstein, suffered from tuberculosis in Russia during the First World War. She later lived in the Galilee, and, limited by her illness to a single room, she wrote very moving poetry. In one of her final poems, she asks: "Will you hear my silence/You, who did not hear my words?" (Wittenberg, 2017: 100). This poem evokes, to me, the silences between my interviewees' words and sentences. Returning to the concept of 'borderlands' (Anzaldúa, 1987), as discussed in chapter two, there are borders between speech and silence: between the 'real' conversation and the created interview. These interactions are not opposites, but there is space 'in-between' them (Grosz, 2001).

## Appendix C: Space and Sounds of Olim

My own practical suggestion with regard to soundscape recording and composition is to begin not with recording or processing in the studio, but rather with the experiences of soundwalking in the soundscape. (Truax, 2012: 196)

In this appendix, I briefly revisit the thinking behind recording a Jerusalem soundscape (including the nearby towns and places of interest in Israel). I had been accepted as a visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I lived in the Baka neighbourhood in southern Jerusalem, which is situated between the German colony and the Talpiot area. Baka is a diverse neighbourhood that includes both secular and religious residents. It has a high percentage of English speakers (twenty-five percent) (Borvick, 2012).

Whenever I start to record a soundscape, I like to imagine what the finished composition would, ideally, be like: I did not want this composition to emerge sounding like an audio tour created by English Heritage, or like a standard museum audio guide, as they are often dry and sonically dull (for example see: Visit Liverpool, 2014). I had in mind more interesting pieces, such as Graeme Miller's, sonically fascinating, *M11-Linked* (2003), from the permanent archive of the Museum of London. Miller, originally from a theatre and performance background, broke the mould of traditional oral history projects with this piece: firstly by removing more than ninety percent of the original one hundred and twenty hours of oral testimony (see: Bradley, 2016: 158); then by cutting this testimony down to words and very short sentences, rather than full narratives. These clips were looped and spliced together and entangled with music and soundscape, whilst at times sections of the piece were left without sound, to allow listeners to encounter the existing soundscape. This echoes the work of Cage (1952), Neuhaus (see: Cox, 2009) and Schafer (1994). This work creates an immersive sonic experience.

I intend my own piece to fit in-between the staid style of museum audio tours and the intensity of Miller's work, leaning slightly towards the work of Miller. I anticipate that listeners will 'get a bit lost' (Perks and Thomson, 2006: 427) during the piece. I would not, however, sonically alter the conversations as much as Miller. I am interested in listeners hearing more 'whole' narratives. Two elements of Miller's work, nonetheless, inspired my final composition. These were: a) combining environmental sounds and oral interviews, (thus providing a compelling presentation of place, memory and history); and

b) editing techniques that created opportunities for listeners to construct meanings from the sounds and voices. Miller creates both these features by chopping the vocals short and using extreme shifting between music and additional sounds. This practice ‘slows listening down’ (ibid.) to encourage reflection. Indeed, it was Miller’s piece that I carried round with me in my mind’s eye (or ear?) as I recorded the soundscape of Jerusalem.

I feel very comfortable with the sonic collection process. Experience has led me to believe that our lives are worth documenting through sound (or at least, this is my preferred way of working as a composer). My small kit (in-ear headphones, zoom stereo field recorder, zoom shotgun microphone, and soundman binaural microphones), has become almost as precious as my everyday carry items (such as wallet and mobile phone). I carry my microphones in my shoulder bag at all times, as well as spare batteries and SD cards. Oftentimes I find my mind wandering into minor technical concerns. Did I bring the spare batteries with me today? Has the recorder got enough battery to last the day? Should I put some more AA batteries in? Is the gain up high enough? Are the binaural mics working? Should I put the windshield on?<sup>129</sup> Are my shoes crunching too much when I walk across this dirt? If I waddled would I make less noise? (Probably, but I’d also look ridiculous...!)

I remember hiking up Masada.<sup>130</sup> The sun was not yet up, but I was really warm. My brain was a little fuzzy (which is probably normal for hiking up a steep incline at 5am in the morning). I tried to stay silent as I made my way up, but I could hear heavy panting and feel the sweat running down my face. As I finally reached the top, silence greeted me, punctuated only by the sound of distant birds. The view was magnificent. I wandered around gathering different sounds from different parts of the plateau. More and more hikers reached the top and the sounds of other visitors, in the foreground, were picked up by my microphones. I lingered there for a while, the sounds of their technology: phones and cameras, taking photos all around me. Then I moved to a more secluded space and listened for something else.

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<sup>129</sup> The challenge that wind noise brought to both compositions was around the creation of a balance for listeners to experience the natural weather conditions whilst still being able to gain adequate access to the surrounding sounds and voices.

<sup>130</sup> Masada is a rugged natural fortress, of majestic beauty, at the top of a ravine in the Judaea desert overlooking the Dead Sea. It has an ancient history of Jewish/Roman battles and sieges, as well as being the site of King Herod’s palace (see: UNESCO, 2019).

Occasionally, I went out recording with friends. I usually like to record alone. Sometimes if it was a long trip, it was good to have some company. When this is the case, my friends also got into the rhythm of recording. For instance, every time I took out my recorder, my friends would prepare by saying everything they thought they might need to say for the considerable future:

‘Who’s got the sun cream?’

‘Which way is it?’

‘...And you’ll signal when you’re about to stop recording?’

Sometimes the recorder overheard the end of this last minute frenzy of speaking. The binaural microphones I wear look just like headphones, so nobody else notices or stares. I flick the switches, check my levels, and press record. As the red light appears, my friends stop talking and just like that, recording begins.

As discussed in chapter two, I had wanted to come to a different country so that my ears would be more aware of interesting, novel sounds. I did not, however, want to cross the line into the creation of a ‘tourist’ soundscape (see: Westerkamp, 2002). I made soundwalks around historically significant places in Jerusalem such as the Old City, Mount Zion, the Mount of Olives and Jaffa road. I also spent ten months recording in urban streets across Israel; in deserts that were part of national parks. In synagogues, concerts, rehearsals, gatherings, festivals, supermarkets, gyms, beaches, farms, vineyards, schools, universities, office buildings and more. This was the longest amount of time I had spent collating a soundscape. I created soundwalk routes around the nature reserves where my interviewees walked their dogs, or along routes they used to walk to school. All of the sonic locations could be traced back to the interviewees’ mentioning these locations. I wanted to record and reflect the *olim*’s lived, everyday experiences of place. The project was designed to focus on the ‘emotive and social dimensions of encounters with outdoor places’ (Manzo, 2005 discussed in Rishbeth & Powell, 2013: 161). Collecting the material that made up this soundscape was a lengthy process.

Listening to the recorded footage, I noticed that I had captured the interventions of curious onlookers. Microphones make people quizzical, especially in residential areas. Lane (2015) states: ‘You have ideas of what to record but you have a problem of access, you can’t always go everywhere’. Gaining access to record was challenging for several reasons: a) the security situation in the region: I stood out by carrying my equipment, which raised suspicions; b) Jewish religious laws often restrict the use of electrical

devices (such as on *Shabbat* and during major festivals); and c) areas with *Charedi* communities also proved difficult. This group was very uncomfortable with recording, as *Charedim* are often wary of interacting with the secular world. As Barnard notes (2010: 31):

What is perhaps the most significant issue... is that it alters human-related features of place. Like any kind of observation, it disturbs the phenomenon: people are reacting in one way or another to the sight of a microphone. The primary concern was not the sonic quality of the result but the transparency of the process, in order to ensure that what is being recorded is unaffected by the presence of the recordist.

As well as walking around with my recorder, I experimented with placing it under parked cars with a shotgun microphone (I had heard that you could catch resonance from the under bodies of cars). Finding corners and crevices in urban environments helped create spaces that translated into rich recordings, with sounds full of symbolism. I placed the recorder on the street pavement, about three feet from the curb. I noticed the different ambience, listening back to the material. This set-up ameliorated traffic rumble. Distant sounds of human activities were more apparent. I repeated the same soundwalks a second time, with subtle binaural microphones as there were difficulties recording people in everyday life situations, whilst trying to remain inconspicuous. This led to my 'disguise' techniques such as pretending to be listening to an mp3 player, holding my recorder down at my side. Hahn (2002: 59) speculated about a similar idea, saying: 'I know a recording engineer in Seattle who conceals a pair of miniature stereo microphones in the frames of his glasses. While this is an excellent idea, my solutions were limited to the equipment at hand'.

One thing that struck me, whilst recording in Jerusalem, was the different variety of sounds; different tones and reverberations that had diverse characters and qualities. It was easier for me to notice dissimilar sounds, since I was not attuned to this soundscape, in comparison with London. If a place was crowded, certain voices would stand out, or perhaps, recording in the desert, a particular bird song would. It is almost as if my ear was acting as a shotgun microphone. The auditory environment of a location consists of an infinite number of sound events (Altman, 1992). Listeners, however, only focus on some of these events and are left with a partial soundscape, depending on their background/context (Chattopadhyay, 2012). I used a binaural microphone to record the sounds of the surrounding environment, and a shotgun microphone for directional sounds that lent character (often the sounds that stood out to me) to the aural location. I wanted

to utilise multiple microphone placements. I saw these recordings as the foundations of the composition I was building.

During my time in Jerusalem the *Sounds of The Old City Festival 2017* took place. This festival comprised many musicians and sound art performances around the Old City. Walking around the Old City at night with my microphones, the whole place seemed eerie. It felt as if I was on a secret mission of some kind. The festival spanned a large area. I got lost walking between the narrow-cobbled alleyways, occasionally coming across a silent disco or some sound art before entering into a square with a band playing. The juxtaposition of the Old City, with its ancient walls and buildings with modern sounds, technology and music was an incredible experience to witness, as well as very interesting to record within the natural echo of the Old City walls:

The creative instincts (and skill) of the soundscape composer are present even in seemingly simple production choices, such as deciding where to walk or point a microphone: these constitute the first of many acts of mixing through listening for the soundscape artist. (Barnard, 2010: 35)

Another key element in this recording was the sunrise at the top of Masada. Masada is a National Park in Israel, which contains, at its centre, a huge rock plateau, about four hundred and fifty metres high (see: Israel Nature & Parks Authority, 2017). Masada's proximity to the lowest land in Israel (the Dead Sea) renders its massive height a mere fifty-eight metres above sea level. Historically, Masada was the last bastion of Jewish freedom fighters against the Romans in seventy-three/seventy-four CE (UNESCO, 2019). The hike to the top, up the traditional snake path, is challenging. The path criss-crosses up the huge rock face, and the very steep climb can take over an hour. Many hikers choose to climb before sunrise: the hike is horrendous in the desert heat. Sunrise at the top of Masada is stunning. Sounds of nature in the desert, such as birds chirping at dawn, are mesmerising. I recorded this alongside the sounds of the hiker's relief that they had reached the top.

I recorded a hike in Ein Gedi Nature reserve, another National Park. Ein Gedi has an ancient synagogue, waterfalls, a spring and a canyon. There are ibexes (mountain goats) and rock hyraxes (rock rabbits). I made recordings of Tristram's grackle (a black bird with orange tipped wings and a loud song that rang out throughout the reserve), and the fan-tailed raven (which hovered high overhead, making its characteristic loud cries). Over

200 different species of birds (see: Israel Nature & Parks Authority, 2017) can be observed in Ein Gedi. My recording trips were not undertaken at random. Interviewees had spoken about visiting each of these places. It was, nonetheless, delightful to experience these sonically diverse places in the environs of Jerusalem.

Several Jerusalem *yeshivos* (religious educational institutions) also became sites for making recordings. The primary focus of a *yeshiva* is study of the Talmud (oral religious law of Judaism and its commentaries). Some *Charedi* men study full-time in *yeshivos* for many years, in place of conscription, thus straining relations between secular and religious Israelis (Pew Research Center, 2016).<sup>131</sup> Students traditionally study the Talmud in pairs called *chavrusos* (plural of *chavrusa*) and discuss what they are learning with each other, out loud (see: Holzer and Kent, 2014). This is often undertaken all together in large study halls. As I entered each *yeshiva*, I could hear the murmurings of *chavrusos* learning together. My microphone picked up the movement of furniture as people entered and left the study hall; the removal of books from shelves and the turning of pages; a student scribbling notes and a rabbi muttering in Aramaic; a Talmudic debate getting louder outside the study hall and the noise of a water bottle being drunk from. I later recorded the hubbub as people congregated for the afternoon prayer. I made recordings of the mumbles of collective responses, and of the shuffling of feet during the standing prayer (wherein the congregation takes three steps backwards and three steps forwards before starting). As I walked home from one of these *yeshivos*, I remember thinking that the sounds were subtle, but at the same time very distinctive.

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<sup>131</sup> Traditionally, only men attended *yeshivos*, but there are now non-orthodox and modern orthodox *yeshivos* that are open to women. I recorded in a variety of *yeshivos* to reflect the diversity of my interviewees' educational experiences.

## Appendix D: Walking Places

In childhood we were fascinated by the walkers, by the swinging arms and wide strides they made to swiftly move forward, covering miles in a day but always walking a known terrain, leaving, always coming back to the known reality, walking with one clear intent- the will to remain rooted to familiar ground and the certainty of knowing one's place. (hooks, 2009: 2)

For many of the younger *olim*, I found that their main reason for making *aliyah* was romantic, they wanted to ‘...find [their] place in this world, to have a sense of homecoming, a sense of being wedded to a place’ (ibid.). Reflecting on the walking during my soundscape recording process, I really understood why walking is a helpful means of acquiring a sense of place (see: Jenks and Neves, 2000; Middleton, 2010). Walking involved my entire body (see: Rhys-Taylor, 2017), as compared to sitting in a car, with the microphone hanging out of the window. To fully experience the city whilst I was recording the soundscape, I never used a car. Walking enabled me to ‘explore the significance of sensing the city through multiple sensory modalities’ (Mags and Guy 2007: 133). I also came across sounds that I would otherwise have missed. Walking led to multiple spontaneous ‘off-route’ recording excursions. It was also during these walking/recording moments that my thinking turned most to ideas of ‘place’. Traditional geographical notions of place have been transforming into new theoretical frameworks that include emotional, affective, embodied experiences such as emplacement, movement and memory (Schine, 2014). Scholars from diverse disciplines have stressed the relationship between bodies, minds and environments that contest static understandings of place (Rodaway, 1994). Ingold (2011) and Massey (2005) define places as events, which produce multiple interactions and relations. Reflecting on my experience as a sound recordist walking through Jerusalem, I am forced to concur with these reconceptualisations of ‘place’.

During the 1920s, Israeli educators decided that many of their social, political and therapeutic objectives (Gottschalk, 2012: 118) could be achieved by inspiring young people to walk together in the difficult desert hikes of Israel. I have found that walking over time, through different places, creates a sense of calm. As Foskett (2016: 169) says of his experience walking El Camino de Santiago:<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> A famous pilgrimage that weaves through French and Spanish countryside and finishes at the cathedral of Santiago di Compostella.

I walked with Espe and Tamar who had arrived later the previous evening, for part of the morning, but then let them go ahead. I wanted to come to terms with this new part of Spain. I rested more often, content with just sitting at the side of the track, listening to only the birds, insects and the rustle of the grass as the wind whipped through it. Everything seemed intensified. Sounds were amplified, demanding that I stop and listen. I felt I could hear things that I would normally miss. My senses were becoming more acute and refined. I took an endless stream of photos to try and capture it all, but I knew the real experience could never be taken back with me, except in my memories.

Foskett (2016: 84) also shows that walking can become a rhythm: 'I carried on churning out the kilometres. By this stage I was so attuned to my walking speeds and distances that I knew exactly, almost to the minute, when I would arrive somewhere'. Gallagher and Prior (2017: 169) argue that Lefebvre's rhythm analysis has resonance with listening walks because 'so many rhythms of spaces are articulated sonically' and the walker is in rhythmic motion. Imai (2008: 330) comments: 'one can come across many scenes that are deeply rooted in the local and spiritual traditions of that city and [better understand] how the past and present merge in that place' through walking. Whilst walking, I also noticed that I was more confident and at peace recording, compared with a stationary position.

This perhaps connects with Wylie's (2005: 240) idea that walking '...precipitate[s] a certain sense of self'. How do we capture these changing, fluid places? Particularly if, as Ingold (2008: 1808) puts it, 'places do not exist so much as occur'? How can we inquire into a '...place's fluidity, constantly changing nature and gathering togetherness' (Isken, 2014b: 30)? De Certeau (1988) stated that walking in cities would generate more grounded understandings of everyday urban spatial practices. Walking recordings added yet more layers to this understanding. In tuning into sounds that routinely escape attention, we can reveal unexpected knowledge about the spaces of everyday life (see: Chapman, 2009).

The experience of 'place' that I gleaned from listening to interviewees, seemed often to be formed in everyday living, as well as memories of childhood, and of those previous places left behind: 'Landscape is performed in a process of flows, where combinations of memory, action and meaning are complex and performed together' (Dorrian and Rose, 2003: 254). Previous research has shown that places in which people have grown up have particular significance (Marcus, 1992; Thompson et al., 2008). When interviewees reflected on the past places they had lived in, they sometimes struggled to remember

details, especially if they had moved as a child, or a long time ago (see: Levitt, 2009). Parents who moved to Israel, did not necessarily have children who felt connected to their previous, or their parent's home (see: Alba and Nee, 2003; Kasinitz, 2004). 'Most children of immigrants ultimately embrace the norms and institutions of the place where they are raised' (Levitt, 2009: 1239). This fits in with what Elder (1996) and Herting et al. (1997), assert: the longer a person had lived in a place, the more settled they felt and the greater their attachment to it. There is much scholarship (see: Brown and Perkins, 1992; Fullilove, 1996; Bisharat, 1997; Knott & McLoughlin, 2010) on the devastating implications for individuals after a loss of place (connecting with my first project's findings). A thorough explication of this work was beyond the scope of my current thesis.

Some interviewees still wanted to tell stories about previous places, using these memories as reflective, creative processes (see: Boym, 2001). Rishbeth and Powell (2013: 175) explain:

Memory appears to have a role in supporting an ongoing recognition and working out of how one might belong in a new place. Experiences of remembering landscapes can sometimes exacerbate the negative shock of the new, but can also be a restorative means of envisaging how everyday life continues beyond the strangeness.

People (however multiply-placed) make relationships with their local places (Armstrong 2004; Gustafson, 2001). Scannell and Gifford (2010) show the importance of people connecting themselves with the locations they find themselves in. This has a particular significance for immigrants.

Paquette (2004) studied a Canadian neighbourhood, in order to examine the relations between listeners and their sonic environments. He concluded that listeners' histories, and their everyday activities, informed this relationship. Soundscape compositions include sonic elements that can help listeners perceive their environment, but are also shaped by the listener's 'subjectivisms and identities' (Strozier, 2002: 52-79). If a sense of belonging to a community is enabled through sound (Smith, 1993), then wider access to the sonic worlds that other people inhabit would, perhaps, enhance inter-community relations? As Iscen (2014a: 126), states: 'Sonic environments are perceived, experienced and interpreted by the individual and community in constantly changing ways'.

My explorations of the identity of *olim*, through documenting a sonic experience of places on a local and global scale, enabled my composition to contribute to understandings of personal senses of belonging (Sandercock, 2003a). One contribution to my thinking about place and sound was the idea of sonic ‘place attachment’. ‘Place attachment’, the emotional and symbolic dimensions of thinking and feelings for places (Altman & Low, 1992). Rishbeth and Finney (2006), for example, describe the heightened emotions of refugees in the UK who recognised familiar plants within the landscape. Sonically, these ideas link with the ways that *olim* often recognised the Jewish religious sounds of Jerusalem. The *olim* often felt socially alienated in Israel if their Hebrew was not of a good standard, which fitted with Buchecker’s (2009: 294) findings about migrant withdrawal from public spaces if they did not understand the social identifications of a place. By way of contrast, the *olim* who had mastered the Hebrew language, had heightened feelings of security and comfort in their new home, possibly because they had ‘learn[ed] to be local’ (Wilk, 1995).

## Appendix E: Voice

‘Man communicates with his whole body, and yet the word is his primary medium. Communication, like knowledge itself, flowers in speech’ (Ong, 1967: 1). This is the first sentence in Ong’s *The Presence of the Word*. Aristotle defines voice as ‘a particular sound made by something with a soul; for nothing which does not have a soul has a voice’ (1993: 32), thus making a distinction between noise and voice. Connor (2014: 7) also argued: ‘Noise is accident, voice is intent’. Heidegger (1962) insisted that language is not even a system of sounds. The sounds of language, are still sounds or noises, that have been given significant meaning: ‘Every human voice is obviously a sound, an acoustic vibration among others, which is measurable like all other sounds; but it is only as human that the voice comes to be perceived as unique’ (Cavarero, 2005: 177). Whatever their relationship to noise, voices tend to carry through other sounds, as human ears focus on them (see: Chion, 1994).

Ong (1967: 3) recalls that:

...the ancient Hebrews tended to think of understanding as a kind of hearing, whereas the Greeks thought of it more as a kind of seeing, although far less exclusively a seeing as post-Cartesian western man generally has tended to do.

I have argued that ancient Jewish is primarily oral (see: chapters one, three and six) and I believe there are many oral elements to contemporary Judaism. Ihde (2007: 163), for example, states: ‘to know a sentence entails knowing a language. This also implicates the community that speaks the “language”. To enter the language is to enter a form of life’. This thesis, however, is concerned with people who speak a language but do not understand every word they are saying. Many diaspora Jews can read Hebrew, but their understanding of the meaning behind their words is not fluent. They also know many songs in Hebrew, but the majority of the words have unknown meanings to them. This is similar to communication between humans and animals:

My dog understands something from my speech: she knows her name, even when it is spelled (which she has learned to recognize). In new sciences there is hope of understanding dolphin language sometime in the future. (Ibid., 154)

This reminds me of an occasion when a friend started speaking on the phone in French to her mother. I don't speak French and could not understand what she was saying, yet her voice was still recognisably hers:

No matter what you say, I know that the voice is yours. Jacob's voice is not only different from Esau's, but it is different from every other voice. The voice is always unique and the ear recognizes it as such (Cavarero, 2005: 177)

Language is:

...overwhelmingly oral, that of all the many thousands of languages – possibly tens of thousands – spoken in the course of human history only around one hundred and six have ever been committed to writing, to a degree sufficient to have produced literature, and most have never been written at all. (Ong, 2002: 7)

This makes it even more surprising, and nonsensical, that oral sources, history and narratives should be less privileged than written ones: 'The emitted voice always comes out into the world, and every ear within earshot – with or without intention- is struck by it. The ear is an open canal; it can be surprised from anywhere at any moment' (Cavarero, 2005: 178). LaBelle (2014: 3) argues that it is impossible to separate the voice and the mouth: 'The mouth is so clearly around voice – it is the voice's physical envelope...'. We look each other predominantly in the eyes when talking and we miss the movements that other people's mouths make; we only really think about our own mouths moving, if we are learning a new language, which has different mouth movements than our native tongue (see: *ibid.*). I discovered this in Jerusalem whilst practicing my Hebrew.

Dolar (2006: 70) argues that the voice is integrally 'acousmatic': 'the source of the voice can never be seen, it stems from an undisclosed and structurally concealed interior... Every emission of the voice is by its very essence ventriloquism'. Connor (2000: 17) disagrees and maintains:

It took me six years of writing *Dumbstruck*, a book I got into the habit of calling a 'history of disembodied voice', to let on at last to myself and others that there is no disembodied voice – no voice that does not have somebody, something of somebody's body, in it.

Whilst composing, in my own mind's eye, I could always see my listeners imagining interviewees talking. These faces were perhaps blurred, but they could see somebody talking. When I personally listen to sound pieces that include spoken narratives I often

picture bodies speaking, even though I don't know what the people look like. I remember, for instance, picturing the speakers when I first heard Gould's *The Idea of North* (1967), a piece composed around a train journey from Toronto to Winnipeg. This work features the frequent rumbling of trains and other ambient sounds and music, alongside multiple narratives of local people discussing their lives working and living in northern Canada.

Arendt writes: "Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, "matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes a man a political being"" (1958: 3). Cavarero (2005: 189) argues that:

For Arendt, what makes speech political is not signification, expression, or the communication of something, even if that 'something' is the just, the useful, the good, or the bad. Rather, the political essence of speech consists in revealing to others the uniqueness of each speaker.

Levi (1986) remembers that in the days following the liberation of Auschwitz, a child of about three years of age was found.<sup>133</sup> This child 'could not speak and had no name' (ibid., 191). The child continually repeated a sound, which people interpreted as his name and so they called him Hurbinek. People tried desperately to understand, and to communicate with Hurbinek, who, due to the dangerous circumstances of the camp, had elected not to speak (ibid., 192). As Ihde (2007: 149) writes, 'Word does not stand alone but is present in a field of deployed meaning in which it is situated. In this sense there are always other significations along with the word'. Levi continued (1986: 191): 'The speech he [Hurbinek] lacked...the need of speech charged his stare with explosive urgency... in the will to break his muteness'. Hurbinek could not be understood, but his stares and sounds confirmed his presence and his sonic survival. This gave him a 'voice'. As Ong (1967: 113) maintained:

Abraham knew God's presence when he heard his 'voice'. We should not assume that the Hebrews necessarily thought of a physical sound here, only that what happened to Abraham was more like hearing a voice than anything else.

How do all these ideas and personal reflections on voice enter my creative thinking around compositions? In my compositions: 'human voice without a visible physical source represents, if only in the historic sense, the essence of the acousmatic – an unseen speaker addressing assembled listeners' (Naylor, 2016: 204). Throughout this thesis I

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<sup>133</sup> Cavarero (2005) explores this narrative in detail in her *Politics of Voices* chapter.

have raised questions concerning the interviewee's voices; the presence of the human voice in my compositions is perhaps, the most powerful component. Listeners are drawn to human voices. As a composer I have to draw listeners towards environmental sounds. I have a concern that this vocal power relegates the soundscape to a background role. Compositionally, I constantly try to compensate for this bias in my own work, by creating voice-free sections in my compositions that are both sonically varied and interesting.

Much of the negotiation around what goes in and stays out of this thesis has been around the process of straddling the space between the requirements of social inquiry and soundscape composition. I found this negotiation instinctive when it came to my recordings of people's stories, as I was protective towards the original meanings of people speaking in the interviews. These were, after all, people with whom I had made relationships. These were, after all, people who had taken the time and trouble and commitment to take part in this project. Wishart (2010: 22) comments on how it is possible to 'do violence' to participant voice recordings. He argues that the 'personal embodiment of the speaker has to be respected' (ibid.). I followed his guidelines, ensuring that sound manipulation did not conflict with, or ridicule, the values expressed by interviewees.

'...Listeners may even look for ways to identify with a recorded voice... our response will also inevitably be strongly affected by our personal experiences, knowledge, likes and dislikes' (Naylor, 2016: 206). I did not process the interviewees' voices in the compositions. Their voices are easily recognisable as human voices. Their gender, age and other characteristics are discernible to listeners. Ong (1967: 112) speculated:

Words are powerful. We take them in tiny doses, a syllable at a time. What would the shattering psychological experience of the hearer be if all the knowledge written in books were somehow suddenly uttered all at once?

Indeed, another creative element in my compositions is the layering of voices. If, for example, they were all talking about where they were born, I might start with a few voices speaking on their own, and then build up to many voices. Unlike the scenario Ong (ibid.) outlined above, however, most speakers are comprehensible, having been spatially, panned around listeners. This 'massing of voices' technique is used in Hostetler's (1986) *Happily Ever After* and Lane's (1999) *Hidden Lives*. I also use Lane's (2006: 5) 'the accumulation of meaning by sonic association'. This technique uses the relationship

between sounds in connection to the meanings of words in compositions. The sound of a bell, for example, is heard, after a voice speaks about a church.

Wishart's *Globalalia* (2004) uses syllables collected from 26 different languages. He later describes the piece as 'a set of studies worked on different sets of syllables... bound together in a rondo-like structure by a thematic utterance constructed from a wide variety of syllables taken from many languages and individual speakers' (Wishart, 2012). Wishart's composition is a sonically noteworthy piece. It is not, however, a technique suited to working with interviewees (whole people contributing whole stories). In my present work, I would never compose by chopping up voices into small segments. This would distort interviewees' voices. My work demonstrates 'multivocal experiences that quite literally give people a voice in the interpretation of their neighborhood' (Butler, 2007: 370). Sound composers need to decide how to compose with voice and how to position voices, according to the specific requirements of their venture. As 'manipulations of sound are neither "right" nor "wrong" in terms of aesthetic merit, but judged "appropriate" or "inappropriate" according to the composer's prerogative' (Kelly, 2006: 77). The focus of a composition that includes material that touches on people's lives cannot always rest on aesthetic merits, nor on human ethical considerations, but rather, needs to seesaw between the two criteria.

Lane (2006) suggests that the use of spoken word material in sonic composition may amount to a sub-category or genre. She splits compositional works that include spoken word into three groups: 1) those, which use performed spoken word from a script; 2) those that use interviews; and 3) those that use archive material. Lane (ibid.) also distinguishes between composer's intentions, such as those who wish to keep the real-world associations and meanings behind the sounds, and those who wish to follow acousmatic traditions. In my compositional practice, I do both. I process the environmental sounds and create acousmatic sections in my work, but for the reasons outlined above, I would never modify the interviewee's spoken words. This combination, informed by different codes of practice, leads, I would argue, to aesthetic listener interest and attention, whilst enabling people to engage with the political and social aspects of voices and sounds:

While some listeners may be particularly interested in formalistic attributes, such as texture, shape and structure, even those who listen relatively abstractly will likely rely on some kind of synesthetic connection between audible and intellectual constructs to make sense of the work. And those who listen more referentially – giving in to our strong instinct to attribute a plausible source to any sound we hear – will certainly apply ‘imagination’ to their attempt to identify (and understand) the sounds that reach them, in any creative context. (Naylor, 2016: 205)

Explorations of Jerusalem revealed sonic particularities. In the city centre, near the market, there is a stone ring of seats with a circle marked on the floor facing the ring. At first glance this looks just like public seating (see picture below). If, however, you stand in the centre of the circle and speak in a normal voice, your voice bounces off buildings nearby and projects itself to your listeners seated in the ring (perfect for tourist groups). This installation offered an architectural ‘echo’ of the participants’ voices that I was recording, as I walked around Jerusalem.



Figure 14: Voice projection circle in Jerusalem.

## Appendix F: Consent Form Example

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:** Olim interview research for C.Weleminsky's PhD  
*Goldsmiths, University of London*  
*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

The nature and purposes of the project have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the processes in which I will be involved have been explained to me. I understand what my involvement will be in this project and I understand the ways in which particular recorded material developed from this project will be used.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participation in the project, which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without being obliged to give any reason.

**Participant's name:** (BLOCK CAPITALS)  
*[Leave blank if participant wishes to remain anonymous]*

---

**Participant's signature:**  
*[Anonymous participants may sign with a signature of their choosing. Initials or even a tick will be sufficient to confirm that they have read the project information.]*

---

**Project manager's signature:**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Interviewee Project Information Sheet

### Project information:

*Olim Interview research for C. Weleminsky's PhD*  
Goldsmiths, University of London  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

### Project contact email: [removed for publication]

Firstly, thank you for taking an interest in participating with this project. If you decide to participate you may keep this information for your records.

**About the project:** Carter Weleminsky is a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths, University of London, and is currently a visiting research fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research is around creating a new methodology for the social sciences such as exploring oral history, ethnography and urban sociology through sound. For his PhD he is inquiring into people's relationships to their homes, additionally discussing diaspora and refugee identities. For this final project he wants to explore the identity of olim. He will be collecting participants' narratives and thoughts surrounding family history, migration, spaces, places, feelings of what it means to be at home and how this entwines and changes with our identities. The narratives will become part of a soundscape composition, in a sound documentary style, creatively showcased amongst past and present sounds linking to these identities such as: music, environmental noises, prayer, language and sonic atmospheres.

**Interview process:** The interviews will either take place in a pre-arranged setting or in a public place. If you are concerned with where the interview is taking place, please let Carter know. The questions being asked have been chosen carefully, however, if you feel certain sensitivity towards a particular question, please feel free to express your concerns at any point during the interview process. You have the right to stop the interview at any point. The audio of your interview (unless you state otherwise) may be used in Carter's composition. The composition will be played to members of the public in the United Kingdom and may appear online. Carter has had sensitive interview and trauma awareness training.

**Confidentiality:** Names will *not* be used in the composition. During the interview process your name does *not* have to be audio recorded. If this is your preference, your name will not be associated with any audio data. You can choose to have your name absent in the written report of the research as well. Please leave your name blank on the consent and survey form to indicate this. The interview consent forms and surveys will be kept on a hard-disk that only Carter will have access too. Your confidentiality in this project will be treated with the highest importance. *Please note: child participants cannot be anonymous on the consent form.*

**Extra note to participants:** The questions have been designed in a hope that participants may gain something personally from their interview. The questions created were not just purely chosen to help Carter complete his composition project, rather it is wished to make a mutual exchange. This will perhaps give participants a certain level of fulfillment while reflecting during the interview. Participants are encouraged to see the interview as an opportunity to gain an insight into their own experiences and positions.

### Key points for participants:

- You have the right to stop the interview at any point.
- You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.
- You have the right to refuse to answer.

## Appendix H: Interview Example Questions

- How long have you lived in Israel? (What's your family's history?)
  - Follow on: Why did you/they move here/Where from? Do you like living here in Jerusalem? What's the best thing about living here? Can you compare it to other places you've lived? (Does it sound different?)
- How would you describe the importance of being Jewish in your daily life? Has it always been that important, or maybe at different stages of your life perhaps it took a different role? Has your environment affected your Jewish identity? For instance, British Jewish communities compared with others. Can you talk of a moment of being Jewish in a new environment, perhaps on holiday?
- Jews are a minority in Britain, there's about 300,000 of us. How have you found living in an area with a bigger community (in Israel where Jews are a majority)?
  - If not British: can you talk about the differences between the Jewish community where you previously lived and here? Have you ever experienced living in a smaller community?
  - Follow on: How does identifying as a minority/Diaspora Jew compare/feel different to Jewish identity as a majority/Israeli Jew? Do you think this affects us sonically? (With Hebrew not being our main tongue etc).
- How is your Hebrew? How did you learn it? Did you struggle with it? (Did your kids find learning Hebrew easy?)
- Have you noticed any cultural differences between the country you grew up in (or previously lived) to where you live now? Any stories? What was the hardest thing about making *aliyah*?
- If you had to highlight a specific moment that represented "being someone who made *aliyah*" to you (anything!), what would it be?
- How would you describe your identity now? In any way that you see fit, for example, a British-Israeli Progressive Jew.
  - Follow on: Is your diaspora identity only connected to your past now?

## Appendix I: Listener Response Form Example Questions

### Note to reader on the questionnaire design:

The questions in this response form comprise, in each section, an open-ended question so that listeners can give their own feedback and are free to talk about whatever stands out for them about the listening experience, together with a series of questions targeting specific compositional elements. These latter questions gave some structure for responses to people who were not familiar with this type of questioning. This questionnaire, (which I tried to make easy, answerable and not so lengthy that listeners would fatigue before completing it, see: Harris, 2014; Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018) was informed by Eisner's (2002: 184-94) work on including traditionally quantitative data collection methods and his inclusion of participant empathy within the new qualitative paradigm.

Please list any initial thoughts that came to your mind from listening to the composition:

What do you think the composer's intentions were for this piece?

Did you recognise any sounds in the composition?

Did the composition conjure images in your mind?

Did the composition suggest a narrative, be it a story or any other time-based discourse?

Did the composition seem to convey any emotion?

What did you find most engaging about the composition?

What did you find the least engaging about the composition?

Did the composition make you want to keep listening or was it uninteresting?

The composer occasionally included his own voice in the interview sections of the composition. This was to ensure that the listener knew the interview process was genuine and that the stories were real and not acted. Do you think this was a good idea?

## **Appendix J: Second Project Feedback Continued**

As discussed in chapter five, I collected feedback from listeners in the UK in 2019 using the form as shown in Appendix I. Out of fifty-three listener response forms, I randomly picked twenty to discuss here and in chapter five. This random selection process consisted of throwing the response forms up in the air and collecting those that landed nearest the researcher each time, thus avoiding privileging any particular responses. It would have been impractical for me to include all of the listener forms in this thesis and would have made this appendix unwieldy. Of the twenty I randomly picked, I chose the most interesting comments to include below from each question of the form. I did not purposefully pick positive comments, since there were no overtly ‘negative’ comments collected. I assume this was because uninterested listeners chose not to spend time giving feedback.

### **What do you think the composer’s intentions were for this piece?**

‘Reflect fairly on Immigration to Israel, but to also focus on the progression of Olim identity through their experiences of their environment and language’ (Listener 4).

‘To create a different viewpoint of the Immigrant-Israeli identity, and to explore how it’s formed. To show complexities and subjective viewpoints by putting them in a wider context of purely sound’ (Listener 53).

‘He explored, through peoples own personal stories, their own connections to home in Israel and their past homes in other diaspora countries’ (Listener 35).

‘I think the idea was to use sound as a way to reflect on modern Jewish identity... The sound aspect made it original. I have never heard anything like it before. It brought anonymity, yet somehow through the voices... it humanised them’ (Listener 19).

### **Did you recognise any sounds in the composition?**

‘A synagogue service.... Jewish music themes running through.... There was lots of religious sound symbolism. There was the Shabbat siren, a Purim megillah reading, a shofar being blown.... I guess Jerusalem does sound very religious...’ (Listener 36).

‘The sounds of Hebrew conversation. I think I heard Yiddish at one point. I liked hearing the snippets of conversation in the street. My Hebrew isn’t great but it was good to pick out some words... I guess that’s what it would be like if I lived there’ (Listener 25).

‘There is walking throughout Jerusalem... voices, street talk, laughter, street busker music of different kinds, birds, traffic noise (Israeli Drivers!!), cafe sounds. There were short moments of silence...But really until the final fade out into silence there was always movement and transition’ (Listener 10).

‘The Jerusalem market sounds! The sellers yelling at you about their fruit and vegetable deals. I remember that from visiting my cousins. I also heard Mizrahi Jewish Music and plenty of nature... birds mostly’ (Listener 45).

### **Did the composition conjure images in your mind?**

‘Images of different modern Jews talking.... I tried to imagine what the people looked like and what locations they were in. Sometimes it felt like they were all in a separate space. Sometimes they merged together like in one big room’ (Listener 15).

‘Different Urban Spaces and places in nature. On the streets; in the city and outside in the countryside, birds in gardens, traffic on roads. Then inside with people in their homes, perhaps inside shuls [synagogues]’ (Listener 20).

‘So many images of Israel! My sense of seeing throughout the piece became irrelevant, as my location in Britain was not needed while I was listening to the piece. The images were all of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where I have family’ (Listener 32).

‘Having never been to Israel, I saw abstract images of the sort of nature and buildings, environments that I imagine are over there. During the voice sections, I often envisaged the interviewer and interviewee having the conversation – though their faces were blurred in my mind, it did not matter as the voices I was listening to held the details I needed’ (Listener 21).

**Did the composition suggest a narrative, be it a story or any other time-based discourse?**

‘The voices talked about similar and different things. I think it was meant to represent the diverse stories of how Jewish olim find making aliyah’ (Listener 38).

‘The story got more hopeful as it went along. At the beginning, I felt like you could really feel the pain of leaving the familiar, and all the hardships of moving... But by the end you’re feeling happy for them. The ending really feels like the end of a journey’ (Listener 34).

‘For me the narrative was based around sounds of the country. The voices were snapshots into people living in these places, but the storyline was following the Israeli soundscape’ (Listener 7).

‘I became caught up imagining the places and the people that I didn’t really focus on the structure... The narrative flowed because I didn’t notice it! I just enjoyed listening to all the nature, social and cultural sounds... Nothing felt forced’ (Listener 12).

### **Did the composition seem to convey any emotion?**

‘When the people spoke of personal moments, it was quite touching. Some parts felt like you were listening in to a private conversation. Warm and intimate’ (Listener 51).

‘There were moments of sadness, but ultimately it journeyed on to something positive’ (Listener 1).

‘The composition brought varied emotion throughout. First of all the soundscape brought happy and energetic feelings, such is the culture of Israel. The voices of Olim, had experienced a lot during their transition to becoming Israeli and as a listener I felt all of it’ (Listener 40).

### **What did you find most engaging about the composition?**

‘The sounds of the city and culture, building up a picture. It sounded, overall, very heartfelt’ (Listener 29).

‘It took me somewhere different outside of my normal experience’ (Listener 4).

‘The soundscape gave an opportunity to reflect on how strongly some places we are familiar with are associated with specific sounds’ (Listener 45).

‘One of the aspects that I particularly enjoyed was the wonderful coming together of voices, laughter, music, noises, and silences’ (Listener 19).

### **What did you find the least engaging about the composition?**

‘Younger kids might find the length annoying’ (Listener 32).

‘When they talked about some things... I didn’t understand it very well sometimes. But this might have been intentional by the composer’ (Listener 25).

‘There was one small bit of messy noise I didn’t like... but I understood why it was there’ (Listener 1).

‘I sometimes wanted the music or singing to continue on longer... I would get into it and then it would stop’ (Listener 36).

**Did the composition make you want to keep listening or was it uninteresting?**

‘I wanted to keep listening to see how the composer would evaluate the interviewees at the end. You could tell it had personal relevance’ (Listener 53).

‘It was interesting, but any longer would not have suited it, unless, it introduced a new element. It was a good length’ (Listener 15).

‘I was transfixed as I listened journeying through a city, a market, or a neighbourhood, passing by the lives of other people and through snippets of sounds and stories.... It held my attention’ (Listener 40).

‘It was very interesting. I did not expect it to hold my interest as long as it did – I was late to a meeting!’ (Listener 10).

**The composer occasionally included his own voice in the interview sections of the composition. This was to ensure that the listener knew the interview process was genuine and that the stories were real and not acted. Do you think this was a good idea?**

‘I felt it was good as it helped you visualise the situation that the interviews took place in’ (Listener 20).

‘Very good. Especially by the end of the composition, it became part of the piece’ (Listener 35).

‘Yeah it did mean you knew the people were real. I thought it was clever, it also made you more aware of the process that the project went through to be made’ (Listener 12).

‘It gave the piece an open and rawness. It was the right decision by the composer’ (Listener 34).

## **Appendix K: An Alternative Epilogue**

One strong memory that remains with me from my PhD journey was a hike in Haifa, northern Israel. I woke up early one morning whilst staying at a friend's house and decided to go for a hike in the nearby valleys. The change between rural and urban habitats was strange; as I walked along the last paved street, wild grass occasionally poked through the grey cement slabs. Then dust and rocks followed, before the pavement dissolved completely and I was walking along a dusty path. The hike was hard, with winding paths and steep downward inclines.

By the time I reached the bottom of the valley, the sun had climbed in the sky and the temperature had risen with it. I was sweaty, thirsty and somewhat dizzy. I sat there listening to nature, the sun glaring into my eyes, my ears picking up the subtle noise of the local insects. I remember at that moment, being acutely aware as to what impact the 'senses' have:

Sense is sensation and meaning and therefore the term 'sense' – literal and metaphorical- leads to deeper questions about sense and reality. Therefore a sensuous geography cannot just describe the experience of the senses and their role in the constitution of geographical experience, it must also consider more fundamental questions about the nature of person-environmental relationships and what constitutes a geographical reality for a given society (or culture) at a given moment in time and space. (Rodaway, 1994: 5-6)

I believe that my soundscape compositions help explore these kinds of experiences. I also, again, want to encourage researchers to utilise a personal metaphor in order to grapple with their interdisciplinary research puzzles (see: chapter three). The use of a metaphor might seem precarious, but the memories and knowledge accessed through creative arts inquiries are not founded on claims of 'reality'. They are, rather, concerned with exploring identities. The 'truth'(s) (see: Gardner, 2011) of these memories of place, are not the foundation of the inquiry.

As Berger (2008) says, describing the revelation to Jews on Mount Sinai:

If I could stand at the foot of a mountain and know that, that was the mountain, it would send shivers up my spine. I'm not sure it would make me more Jewish than I already am today. And if I was told, absolutely concrete evidence, that this was a backstory to understand my position in exile, to me that's still a valid form of my identity. This is my people's identity, and the narrative that draws us together and gives us a framework and rituals. Even more important, it helps us to understand either our position as: we are strangers in the land and how to behave, or how do we identify and support others who are strangers in our lands, because we were once strangers. The metaphor is more important than the reality; the metaphor and the shared identity that it creates.

Indeed, I would link this emphasis on identity back to Buxton (2009: x) who comments: '...to be most fully who and what we really are, is to be formed and defined by relationship to a shared story, and to engage with and participate in a collective practice'.

Soundscape interdisciplinary projects exist in three shapes: the original interview and environments visited by the researcher; the recorded version of the interview and environments; and the final interpretation/composition created by the researcher. I have explored each of these parts, plus the fourth dimension of the audience response, through the journey of these projects, in this dissertation. Each of these parts is different from the other. This written thesis, is, similarly, spawned from the different shapes of the composition. These varied formats are a sequence of interpretations, generated from each other. At each stage several practical issues emerge which have had implications for the interpretation to be undertaken. These decisions to be made by the researcher, which I have explored throughout this paper, unavoidably influence recordings gathered, and in turn impact the interpretive stages.

My experience with both of the projects in this dissertation, suggest that there are particular ways of inquiring/knowing that soundscape methods are principally geared to producing, and which are valuable for exploring the relationship between people and places. Soundscapes are, therefore, useful for, and harmonising with, diaspora and displacement research. Interdisciplinary soundscape composition offers ways of inquiring into the relationship between space, place, identity and community; by releasing the need for rigid representations, and offsetting the norm of visual knowledge dominance that still surrounds much academic research today:

What, then, of the ethnographic ear? Clifford's call will continue to resonate until anthropologists attend to the soundscape and the politics of aurality. It is our hope that by tracing the genealogies and histories of the concept of soundscape we promote such attention and enable anthropologists and other scholars of culture to engage the full potential of sound. (Samuels et al., 2010: 339)

'Working in sound not only conveys information to others, but it also shapes yourself with reverberations and resonances that attune your sensibilities and recalibrate understandings as they echo long after a project is done' (Gershon, 2018: 156). As a European, and as a British Jew, I have experienced extensive Holocaust education through film, survivor talks, history texts and lessons. Nonetheless, one particular sonic moment at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, in Jerusalem, really stood out. There are multiple memorials around the museum for different victims. The children's memorial is almost a cave, dimly lit by candles. You can barely see. Your vision is impaired. As Kahn (1999: 27) claims: 'listening is crucial to dislocating the frontal and conceptual associations of vision with an all-round corporeality and spatiality'. In this cave, through the darkness, names are spoken 'all-round', one by one, followed by ages and locations: name after name, after name. Despite all my previous knowledge, that sonic moment was really the most evocative awakening to the sheer violence and darkness of the Holocaust, that I have ever had. I use a sound clip from this experience towards the end of my second composition.

Since completing this thesis, I am convinced that treating recordings as integral components and equal partners in an inquiry, represents an advance for social research. When Feld, for example, was exploring the hard to define boundary between art and anthropology, he noted that field recording might act as a crucial bridge: 'for me art-making is something that could be central to anthropological thinking. But it has never happened. Field recording could be an important piece of making the connection' (Feld in Lane and Carlyle, 2011: 211). Coming to these projects from a composer background, I was more open to creative and fluid interpretations of 'method'. As I witnessed (see: chapter three), there is a spectrum for everyone's creative practice. Each researcher will have a different standpoint and will find the place that their research most comfortably sits. The scholarship that soundscapes can uncover about the historical and lived experiences of others, is essential knowledge:

Rather than disorienting you, such work potentially creates a clearer sense of place and belonging for both composer and listener, since the essence of soundscape composition is the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environments and listening perception. (Westerkamp, 1999: 2)

Malpas (2010) has argued: ‘place is perhaps the key term for interdisciplinary research in the arts, humanities and social sciences in the twenty-first century.’ Cresswell (2014: 6) has undertaken interdisciplinary place research, and states: ‘Given the ubiquity of place, it is a problem that no one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place’. Each definition seems to be contested. However, creative researchers and artists attempt to evoke place in their work (including soundscape composers), and try to literally create a sense of place in their compositions. Urry and Sheller (2006) have shown the importance of sensory memories as an ‘affective vehicle’ through which people sense places. Layers of environmental sound integrated with spoken word can form another dimension of research that inquires into place. As Norman (cited in Emmerson, 2000: 240) comments: ‘There is something external to my perception of a music that uses the sounds of landscape and a landscape that is music. The invisible is apprehended for a while’. One perception of the ‘invisible’ that Norman refers to here is the background and residual trace of historical sounds in a landscape. Recordings of new and old material and of music and speech can be structured into compositional pieces to produce creative interpretations and discussions of our pasts, in dialogue with multiple presents. Lastly, Norman poetically notes that ‘...whether reading a text, walking a path, or listening to a rainforest composition - place making is a collective act’ (2012: 255).

Recordings, furthermore, enable us to hear what the human ear might normally ignore, as Gallagher (2015: 479) notes: ‘Audio recordings are much less selective than human hearing, since they register the “messy, asignifying noise of the world, without discrimination” (Cox, 2011)’. In 2009, at the Euronoise conference, Drever undertook a listening walk for acousticians and noise control experts to disturb and reawaken discussions away from their routine focus on noise reduction. I envisage great potential for sound compositions, sound/listening walks and sound installations to be used in: ‘research and teaching where sound, per se, is not the focus... [particularly where] other teaching methods would struggle to accommodate’ (Gallagher and Prior, 2017: 175). For instance, with regards to the natural sciences, climate change, sociology, engineering and architecture. Additionally, early years educators might find sound platforms useful,

enabling children to concentrate better, and allowing them to hear in a deeper more expansive way (ibid., 174).

Sound recording technology has been used widely since the invention of the gramophone in the nineteenth century (see: Eisenberg, 2005). Drever (2007: 3–6) characterises field recording as deriving not only from the work of the World Soundscape Project in the 1960s but also from much earlier work, such as from the GPO Film Unit, used as early as the 1930s (ibid.). Jumping forward to the present, the platform of soundscape composition is being adopted as an interdisciplinary methodology by researchers (see: O’Keeffe, 2014; Rennie, 2014). This walks hand in hand with the recent popularity of soundscapes in mainstream society, for example in art galleries (see: National Gallery London, 2015) and film soundtracks (see: Martin, 2013), which has raised the profile of the significance of sound, outside of sound studies. Even with this latest surge of interest in sound studies, however, auditory understandings still do not have equivalence with ‘visual culture’, which has overshadowed other sensory disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Soundscape compositions can help to enrich our understandings of our relationships to our homes and environments, exploring the socio-cultural and political issues that are often entangled therein:

Soundscapes bring our focus back to ourselves and our place, not as separate and autonomous entities, but as connected beings. Such connections are often articulated as feelings of belonging. Sound is therefore crucial in helping individuals make sense of everyday places. Listening redirects our attention to our connectivity to the people and place of our everyday lives. (Duffy and Waitt, 2011: 133)

I hope to have provided in this thesis, evidence that soundscape compositions, integrated with ethnography, urban sociology and oral history can enable researchers to build relationships with participants and communities. This is particularly important for diaspora communities, since:

Soundscape methodology allows a person to retain a sonic memory of a place that they may want to save, such as the sound of their home, which can be more powerful than a photograph. Sound has the power to evoke memories and past experiences, which are part of our connection to place, culture and our community. (Martin, 2018: 27)

There has been a ‘digital revolution’ within oral history:

Some merely upgraded their recording technologies, while others envisioned new, creative ways for fundamentally engaging with oral history. Each one recognized the importance of the voice in oral history and they were not afraid to explore or experiment with emerging frameworks in order to find more effective and meaningful ways to connect users/researchers to their powerful interviews. (Boyd and Larson, 2014: 5)

Technology advances will continue to widen oral historian’s capabilities for sharing their work with listeners, and engaging in creative practice-based research that incorporates oral history recordings. Hardy was one of the first oral historians to realise the opportunity of presenting oral history utilising new audio tools (see: *ibid.*, 8). Thompson (2000: 18) stated that ‘the tape recorder not only allows history to be taken down in spoken words but also presented through them... the words may be idiosyncratically phrased but all the more expressive for that they breathe life into history’. *Going Places* (Miller, 2013) was a media-participatory oral history project working with young refugees. Miller (2013: 114) called the project a *memoryscape*: ‘[which] is a method, used by artists and historians, that combines personal narratives, interviews and ambient sounds to help audience experience places in new ways’.

Sound art/research is also becoming more accessible outside the academy, through the development of sound maps, which enable people to upload their own recordings online. Sound maps can act as a contemporary approach to online community research. There are several cities including New York, London, Berlin, Aberdeen, and Toronto, for example, for which there are online websites dedicated to soundmaps.<sup>134</sup> These contemporary means to upload sound experiences represent an innovative way to explore sonic collaborations outside academia. These elements of collaboration and accessibility connect to the founding principles of digital humanities as an area of research (Gardiner and Musto, 2015). The Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0 states that ‘Digital Humanities = Co-creation’ (2019: 4). There is, however, a lack of sound research currently in the open field of digital humanities (see: Barber, 2016). In the future I would like to build more connections with digital humanities scholars. I have a lot to learn from the importance they place on collaboration (see: Nowviskie, 2011) and accessibility:

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<sup>134</sup> See New York’s Sound Map for a good example, plus resources: <http://www.nysoundmap.org>.

There is a democratic spirit that is common to... digital humanities that engenders a sense that the materials created, shared, generated or parsed belong to everyone – not just to the educated or the well-to-do, but to those outside the university walls as well as those within. (Boyd and Larson, 2014: 11)

Oral history and soundscape composition both communicate the power of listening. They have the potential together to explore human stories in different forms, and to acknowledge that sound has the ability to re-create and mould space and time. By creatively showcasing a detailed acoustic environment, including narrative experiences that many people can relate and connect to, such compositions can illustrate individual circumstances alongside collective understandings and knowledge. As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, oral history emerged in order to give voice to the minorities that were left out of traditional research (or in some cases the illiterate majorities that were left out of traditional histories of the world, see: Fisch, 2007). The initial idea of the soundscape appeared as a way of drawing our attention to the everyday sounds we take for granted in our lives (Westerkamp, 2002), thus both these genres provide a platform and a voice for stories that are normally overlooked and are not usually told. The use of interviews within soundscape composition prompts a new direction for oral history, enabling a platform for multiple narratives: ‘Collecting interviews from a group of individuals... allows for multiple perspectives on a particular time and place... A rich dialogue among voices’ (Chasalow, 2006: 64).

I believe that through the dialogue I have entered in this thesis, I have shown that social science and creative art practices can inspire and stimulate each other to deepen our understanding of inquiry. Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions can support inquiries into marginalised populations, to create moments for them to speak for themselves: allowing people and places to express themselves sonically on their own terms. What I hope my projects have shown is that this research can turn passivity into empathy. Listening requires a kind of slowness and reflection, as narratives are left to unfold: ‘[narratives] constitute a major reservoir of the cultural baggage that enables us to make meaning out of a chaotic world and the incomprehensible events taking place in it’ (Bal, 2002: 10). Interdisciplinary soundscape compositions document the political, social and cultural aspects of sound, highlighting communities’ sonic environments.

This PhD really helped me think about the choices I make during a research project, particularly during the compositional process. Throughout my education as a soundscape composer/researcher, I have been engaged in making decisions very quickly, developing an almost instinctual, ‘tacit’ knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). This is especially the case when composing on a computer, with decisions at the click of a button. This written thesis has helped to slow my thinking process down and contemplate the many choices that I make whilst composing. These choices ultimately affect the story re-presented to the listener:

Stories are compensatory. The world is unfair, unjust, unknowledgeable, out of control. When we tell a story we exercise control, but in such a way as to leave a gap, an opening. It is a version, but never the final one. And perhaps we hope that the silences will be heard by someone else, and the story can continue, can be retold. When we write we offer the silence as much as the story. Words are the part of silence that can be spoken. (Winterson, 2011: 8)