

Sonic Perceptual Ecologies: Strategies for sound-based exploration, perception and composition in spaces of transient encounters.

by  
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This thesis and the accompanying portfolio of works and documentation are submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

This Thesis contributes a novel, cross-disciplinary framework to the field of sound studies. It examines how our inherent capacities as listeners are manifested in transitional urban environments, and the primary role of voice as a vehicle for perception in field recording and soundwalking practices. Using the conceptual triad of 'node, counter-atmosphere and meshwork' as its analytical device, this research considers the polyphonic physical, personal and social ecologies at play in our encounters within transitional spaces. By doing so, it highlights the importance of sound for countering their functionality and opening them up to a more engaged perception.

In its theoretical scope, this conceptual triad draws on and re-contextualises existing terminologies from a variety of disciplines: urban planning and Kevin Lynch's notion of the node; philosophy and Gernot Boehme's theory on the atmosphere as well as Gaston Bachelard's concept of seeping through; anthropology and Tim Ingold's idea of the meshwork. Coined as a sonic perceptual ecology, this triad is a new analytical tool that is the immediate result of the practice developed as part of this research. Involving three consecutive stages, the work spans across intensive fieldwork, workshops, hybrid telematic soundwalks, radioart pieces, public events and performances engaging with different sites in London and elsewhere.

This thesis presents a constellation of original outputs, essential to creating and understanding the novel conceptual framework of the sonic perceptual ecology. This is achieved by testing new methodologies, by analysing, in new terms and through the *Sensing Cities* interviews series, existing creative work and by developing a portfolio of practice that has been presented as part of commissions, conferences and curated events. Key to these activities is the proposition that we perceive not as authoritative presences but as organisms whose voice is, as Mikhail Bakhtin would suggest, a chain of human and non-human utterances.

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I would like to extend this acknowledgement to my collaborators in this journey: Grant Smith, Dawn Scarfe (soundCamp), Robin Rimbaud and Bojana Šaljić Podešva as well as to all the artists who participated in *Forms of Ventriloquism*. Many thanks are also due to the practitioners and researchers interviewed for *Sensing Cities*: Olivia Bellas, Zeynep Bulut, Joel Cahen, Daniela Cascella, Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, Viv Corringham, Franscesca Panetta, Ian Rawes and Iain Sinclair. I would like to thank wholeheartedly Stéphane Cousot for contributing his expertise to the final stages of preparation of my portfolio as well as Leila Kassir and Leo Clarey at the LCC library for their valuable help in the early stages of my research. An important acknowledgement is also due to the University of the Arts London for awarding a *London Research Scholarship* to my research proposal and hence putting faith in my work and providing a much-needed financial stability throughout its development.

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*To Apostolos and Athena*

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## Timeline

A summary of the different facets of practice undertaken over the three years of research.

### Phase One: Field Visits

November 2012-January 2013

Initial solitary field visits in Hackney, Liverpool Street and Stratford that resulted in the formation of initial observations toward the creation of a methodology and the production of the following creative responses to be presented in Ch.4:

- Journey of a journal entry
- Word-based memory maps (word-maps)
- A microcosm city: subtitled
- Edith's Noise
- Liverpool Street Station: Words, Images, Sounds

### Phase Two: Exploratory Workshops

January 2013 – November 2013

Workshops with co-walkers mainly in the same locations as the Field Visits:

- Homerton, Hackney
- Liverpool Street Station
- Carpenter's Road, Stratford
- Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre

The workshops facilitated the application, testing and fine-tuning of the methodology developed in the first phase and lead to the making of a series of creative responses by my co-walkers. They also assisted in clarifying the key themes and ideas relating to this research.

### Phase Three: Commissions / Residencies / Major Works

November 2013 – May 2015

#### ***To begin is to follow on from***

Radio piece created as part of a 15-day residency in November 2013 at Tobačna and commissioned by CONA, MGML and CC Tobačna 001.

Presented at: "radioCona: REuse MESTO: REuseRADIO" temporary radio exhibition, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2014; "Invisible Places", Viseu, Portugal, 2014; "Radiophrenia", Glasgow Centre for Contemporary Arts, 2015

#### ***Conductcontacttransmit***

Audiovisual collaborative performance with Bojana Šaljić Podešva commissioned for CONA's ZVO.ČI.TI so.und.ing DUO series and developed between November 2013 and August 2014.

Presented at: ZVO.ČI.TI so.und.ing DUO, Kino Šiška, Ljubljana, SI, September 2014; Sonorities Festival 2015, SARU Sonic Lab, Queen's University, Belfast, April 2015; Surprise and Serendipity, Apiary Studios, London, April 2015

#### ***A Certain Geography***

An ongoing series of site specific works combining methodologies of soundwalking, writing and telematic art for the creation of sonic perceptual ecologies.

Presented at: Sensingsite, Parasol Unit, London, April 2014; Forms of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, collaboration with Scanner, London, July 2014; In this neck of the woods, CSM, London, June 2015, ISEA – Disruption, Vancouver, August 2015; Mobile Audio Fest, Marseille, November 2015

### ***Pol #8 Sonic City***

A preparation of three soundwalks around the Museum of Dockland's quayside commissioned by Points Of Listening (Salomé Voegelin and Mark Peter Wright, CRiSAP, UAL)

Presented at: Museum of Dockland's *Late London: Sonic City*, London, September 2014

### ***soundCamp/REVEIL***

Annual listening event coinciding with the International Dawn Chorus Day and framed by a 24hr broadcast of live daybreak sounds provided by a transient global network of open microphones and existing but repurposed resources. The 2015 event was funded by *Sound And Music* and *Arts Council England*.

Presented at: Stave Hill Ecological Park in partnership with *Locus Sonus*, Wave Farm/WGXC, *Resonance FM* and *The London Sound Survey*, London, May 2014; Stave Hill Ecological Park and other locations around the world in partnership with *Sound and Music and Arts Council England*, *Locus Sonus (Aix /Bourges)*, *Wave Farm / WGXC (Upstate New York)*, *Resonance FM (London)*, *Octopus Collective (Cumbria)*, *Soundart Radio (Devon)*, *NAISA (Toronto)*, *CONA (Ljubljana)*, *Limnaria (Italy)*, *CRiSAP at LCC/UAL (London)*, May 2015

### **Previous research related work exhibited during the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the research**

September 2013 – July 2014

Some of the creative responses produced in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phases of this research had an afterlife as they were presented in exhibitions and events.

### ***Edith's Noise* (The Dark Outside, Scotland, 2013)**

Developed after a field visit in Homerton Station, *Edith's Noise* is an audio piece where the words from a novel by Iain Sinclair become shifters for the creation of a fictionalised response to the experience of the visit. The piece was featured in "The Dark Outside", a 24-hour site-specific radio transmission within the Dark Skies Park, Scotland on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2013.

### ***My A is your B* (ECHOES #2: Audio Portrait of Place, Portugal, 2013)**

*My A is your B* is an audio piece resulting from one of the exploratory workshops in Liverpool street station developed in the second phase of the research. It was broadcast on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 on Portuguese radio station Stress.fm as part of the OSSO Radio exhibition and the second instalment of its ECHOES series themed as *INTERMISSION: AN AUDIO PORTRAIT OF PLACE* curated by Jennie Savage

### ***A microcosm city: subtitled***

This short video piece, initially made as a creative response to a field visit in Homerton, Hackney, was presented in two events: *Visual Urbanism* Screening Room, The British Library, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013; *Forms of Ventriloquism*, IMT Gallery, London, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2014

## **Other Relevant Activities**

September 2012 – March 2015

### **Reviews I wrote for *Fluid Radio* and *The Field Reporter* (September 2012 – September 2014)**

Selected Reviews: Peter Cusack – *Sounds from Dangerous Places*; Thomas Köner – *La Barca*; Daniela Cascella – *En Abîme*; Budhaditya Chattopadhyay – *Elegy for Bangalore*; Rui Chaves – *Paraty*.

### ***Sensing Cities* (Resonance FM, May 2013-October 2014)**

A series of interviews with artists and writers about exploring the city through listening, recording, writing and new media. Past Interviewees: Viv Corringham, Dan Scott, Daniela Cascella, Iain Sinclair, Francesca Panetta, Tom Wolseley, Olivia Bellas, Joel Cahen, Ian Rawes, Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, Zeynep Bulut, Irena Pivka and Brane Zorman (CONA), Will Montgomery, Mike Cooper.

### ***Resonances: W14/Convento* (P-public, Chania, Crete, June 2013)**

A locative app project developed for P-public's *Public Space in Progress* festival. The locative app soundwalk was created in response to remote locations, one in the UK and one in GR in an effort to find the resonances between the two. Participants were asked to share a device and the exploration was facilitated by conversations between co-walkers.

### ***Here Comes Everybody* (Close and Remote, Lewisham, July 2013)**

A locative app project developed by Close and Remote in response to the River Pool walk across the Southend Lane in Lower Sydenham. For the project I assisted Peter Cusack in the gathering of field recordings from the area and the sound-design of some of the sounds used in the app.

### ***Wandering Ruins Workshop* (Tate Britain, March 2014)**

Tate Britain's Wandering Ruins was a month-long intensive workshop about site-specific work and the use of the 'wander anywhere' app which resulted in the development of a collaborative locative project about the not yet demolished then Heygate Estate.

### ***Forms of Ventriloquism* (IMT Gallery, London, 24 July 2014)**

A one day event curated by Maria Papadomanolaki. Using the creative responses produced during her workshops as prompts, Papadomanolaki invited a group of artists to respond and create new works and performances. Invited artists: Sarah Kelly, Kostis Kilymis, Marina Tsartsara, Kevin Logan, Iris Garrelfs, Yiorgis Sakellariou with Artur Vidal, Maria Papadomanolaki with Scanner.

### ***Christian Marclay Exhibition: Fluxus Scores Performances* (White Cube, Bermondsey, London, February 2015)**

As part of a schedule of daily re-enactments of Fluxus Scores, I performed Tomas Schmit's *Zyklus* and George Maciunas's *Duet for Full Bottle and Whine Glass* (with Artur Vidal).

### ***Residency and Workshop at Locus Sonus* (Aix-en-Provence College of Art, France, March 2015)**

A week long residency at Locus Sonus as part of the workshop phase for Mobile Audio Fest. The residency led to the creation of a customised platform for mobile live audio streaming to be used in future iterations of *a certain geography*.

## Conference Presentations

- *Sonorities 2013* - Paper presentation: Joining the dots: a trajectory of processes in search of environmental sound - Belfast, SARC, Queen's University, Ireland, April 2013
- *Re-contested Sites* - Paper Presentation: Words as process: can we revisit and re-evaluate a site through contemporary urban writing? - TrAIN, Chelsea College of Fashion, UAL, London, May 2013
- *Functional Sounds*, ESSA's 1st International Conference - Paper Presentation: Initial Experiments: Experiencing sound from and beyond the books - Humboldt University of Berlin, October 2013
- *Visual Urbanism* - Paper Presentation: Tracing Paths: exploring landscape and listening from and beyond the books - The British Library, London, October 2013
- *Points Of Listening #3* – Presentation and Screening: *Listening to the voices of the city in "Wings of Desire"*, The Old Cinema Museum, London, March 2014
- Music Tech Fest – Pre-recorded contributions to presentation by Grant Smith / SoundCamp: *Reveil* – LSO St. Lukes, London, September 2014
- Balance/Unbalance 2015: '*Water, Climate, Place: Re-Imagining Environments*' – Paper Presentation with Grant Smith and Dawn Scarfe: *Reveil: New Experiments with Environmental Radio*, Arizona State University, USA, March 2015
- Locus Sonus Lab: Practice/Research presentation to students, Aix-en-Provence College of Arts, France, March 2015
- Sonorities 2015: *Fractured Narratives* – Paper Presentation: To Begin Is To Follow On From: The Voicing Of Fragments in Tobačna - Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland, April 2015
- *SOUNDSCAPES & SOUND IDENTITIES* – Paper Presentation: Perceptual Ecologies In Spaces Of Ephemeral Encounters - CASTELLO DI BESENO, Besenello (TN), ITALY, May 2015
- Network Ecologies – Paper Presentation with Grant Smith and Dawn Scarfe: Networking the Live Audio Archive, University of Hull, June 2015
- ISEA 2015: *Disruption* – Remote presentation: A certain geography: disrupting site-specific sound through networked performance – Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, August 2015

## Publications

- Les Sons I've Learned (Essay) in *The Field Reporter*, online, January 2014
- Journey of a journal entry in *Reflections of process in sound*, Ed. Iris Garrelfs, CRISAP, UAL, London, April 2014
- Mention of Journey of a journal entry in *The Wire* magazine, September 2014
- Caging the Elephant in ArtAngel's 2014 *OPEN* shortlisted projects, online, 2014
- Maria Papadomanolaki talks 'Soundcamp/REVEIL' in *Sound Reflections*, online blog curated by La Cosa Presioza, 2015
- SoundCamp in *Uniformmagazine* No.3, Uniformbooks, Spring 2015

## Interviews

- Interview on RTV 4D (National Slovenian Television) about *Conductctcontactttransmit* (9<sup>th</sup> September 2014). Available from: <http://4d.rtvsllo.si/arhiv/prispevki-in-izjave-kultura/174294130>
- Interview on WGXC's 'Afternoon Show' about my research and practice (16<sup>th</sup> May 2015). Available from: <https://wavefarm.org/wgxc/schedule/tdkdp7>
- Interview on Vietnam-based blog Cảnh đồng âm nhạc : <http://canhdongamnhac.com/post/130797525329/interview-with-maria-papadomanolaki>

## Introduction

In 2010, during my stay in New York, I came across a poem by Allen Ginsberg entitled 'Manhattan Thirties Flash' (Ginsberg, 1973). The poem carries a process of listening, walking, thinking, and writing, trying to keep up within the belly of the city of Manhattan

Long stone streets inanimate, repetitive machine Crash  
cookie-cutting  
dynamo rows of soulless replica Similitudes brooking  
tank-like in Army Depots  
Exactly the same exactly the same exactly the same with  
no purpose but grimness... (Ginsberg, 1973)

The writer's pace assumes the transient sensing of somebody who moves inside a landscape, who is becoming part of it. Within its short length the poem manages to encapsulate the essence of how it can feel to be part of this big city and to glide within its busy streets. Most importantly, the moment I read it I immediately started to breathe in my own private experiences, and found myself resonating with Ginsberg's aphoristic vision. An important exchange was established between Ginsberg's own poetic voice and my own. The text functioned as a key trigger for unlocking my personal voice by letting my inner-processes seep through, be sounded out and significantly affect the way I connect to the city where I live, while enabling me to counter the tendency of urban environments to be normalised as 'pass-through' spaces. Similarly to Ginsberg's comment on a city in a state of mechanistic metamorphosis and regulated functionality, a pass-through space can be defined as a site that we pass-through either for commuting or temporary leisure. The poem, contrary to the transient and regulated urban pace, made me slow down and reflect on the sounds of the city, gather past encounters with these sounds and how they become carriers of the intricacies of an environment.

That experience prompted me to reassess my previous understandings of how I listen to the environments I inhabit by making me aware of how the city is simultaneously embedded in my way of perception. My work and research within the discipline of sound art and practices related to field recording and soundwalking had

until that point obscured that simple realisation. I had often been directed toward a way of engaging with an environment that demanded the performance of certain protocols, such as minimising the audible presence of the recordist in field recording or remaining silent during a soundwalk. These protocols inevitably repositioned the subjective voice to a secondary layer of perception and a mediating channel, often muted in order to be able to listen properly and from a distance. In a transient and polyphonic city such as New York, such an attitude risked silencing my presence. An easy solution to such a frustration would be leaping into the creation of an isolated, individual and self-centred perceptual bubble facilitated by iPod playlists and noise-cancelling strategies that would effectively isolate me from fully feeling and sensing the overwhelming city.

My experience of Ginsberg's poem, made me reflect on its potential to break that perceptual bubble. It also led me, by setting any notions of skilled and conscious listening aside, to want to research further into the importance of allowing our voice to be heard and of acknowledging its valuable presence in our day-to-day encounters within pass-through spaces. It is at that exact point where the main research question for this project lies: In what ways can the thinking- and speaking- voice be embedded within sound-based strategies for exploring pass-through sites?

By referencing existing soundwalking methodologies, championed by practitioners and thinkers such as Hildegard Westerkamp and R. Murray Schafer, as a useful practical framework, I want to investigate how these can be expanded to facilitate the emergence of a perceptual experience similar to the one I had with Ginsberg's poem. Through the three distinct phases of this research, also outlined in the timeline, I devise a customised methodology for conducting field visits and exploratory workshops (Phase One and Two). In these activities, site-sensitive texts referred to as text-scores become, similarly to Ginsberg's poem, catalysts for sound-based exploration, perception and reflection.

The custom methodology, as it will be explained in more detail in Chapter Four, Sections 4.2 and 4.3 (pp.104-163), involves two stages:

- Solitary field visits, enriched by processes such as drifting, listening, thinking, writing, interacting with people, recording. These are reflected upon in the making of creative responses after each walk.

- Workshops with co-walkers (as I like to call my participants in this project) where site-sensitive conversation is encouraged as a means to reflect on the experience.

In the first stage I use one page long location specific text-scores containing fragments of site-sensitive encounters such as sounds of spaces and thoughts, fictional or factual interactions among other things. These are pre-existing or are written from the scratch in response to a site. In the latter case, the preferred period of field visits can be up to a week or ten days for the gathering of fragments of experiences as mentioned above. The text-score is internalised prior to the visit and I choose the most resonant words or phrases from the text as prompts for different listening, recording, writing or other site-sensitive activities. After the completion of a visit, these motions of experience of a site are summarised in the making of a creative response.

The second stage is designed to further inform the experience of the site as resulted in the first stage by inviting co-walkers to repeat a similar process as in stage one as part of an exploratory workshop. This workshop protocol involves:

- i) Internalising the text-score (or not depending on the group, see below)
- ii) doing a soundwalk or conversational soundwalk (the choice is up to the co-walker) where the co-walker explores a site, listens for sounds, uses the resonant words to interact with the site
- iii) discussion of the experience, impressions
- iv) making of a creative response

Within this protocol, the co-walkers are divided into groups of biased (who have internalised a text-score) and unbiased (who have not internalised a text-score) followed by an examination of the different biased and unbiased experiences. These workshops are on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The soundwalk can have a more conversational nature but when the co-walker(s) prefer to remain silent then that is respected. In any case, I let them choose instinctively how they wish to contribute. The workshops presented in this Thesis involve working with a small group of people, male and female, chosen from within my local creative and academic network. More specifically, the group includes native (British) and non-native speakers (Greek, Polish, Italian) and practitioners from visual (architecture, design, writing) and sound (field recording, sound art) related backgrounds. These

participants are also chosen because of their genuine commitment and their will to contribute anonymously their responses to the research.

Because of our different nationalities and the common condition of living in the UK, a compromised decision is taken to use English as our language of exchange. My Greek background and my interest in sound and literary studies seep through my English-speaking voice and become embedded in the meshwork of interactions within the environment, affecting and being affected by what is being said, written heard and practiced. The shift from first to second language is an important aspect in communication and phenomenology studies, and will be drawn out where relevant in this Thesis. The field itself, however, will not be closely examined within this document as its aims and objectives reside in an interdisciplinary context; the plurality of backgrounds, voices and accents becomes the main vehicle for generating and demonstrating some of the research's key findings. These include for instance the voice's ability to embody the polyphonic character of perception and the importance of bringing our voices to the foreground in sound related activities.

In the later phase of this research (Chapter 5, pp.165-231) I refabricate the resulting concepts applied in the above methodology into a novel practical framework of compositional strategies and production of original work. Within these activities, I attempt to ask and answer questions that gradually position the self in the midst of a complex field of interactions. These interactions not only destabilize the self's central (and specialist) role but define it as an agent, equally affecting and being affected by the interactions, shifting between the solitary and the collaborative. Under such volatile dynamics, my intent is to suggest how the spaces of these activities can be listened to and perceived by temporarily turning them from neutral pass-through zones into polyphonic and intimate nodes of interactions. Furthermore, by taking inspiration from my own experience with reading Ginsberg's poem and my academic background in literary studies, I examine the relation between the use of literature as a text-score for site-sensitive exploratory strategies and a text-score's potential for bringing our voice to the foreground.

In doing so, I also question the lack of emphasis on the role and use of voice - in the form of our thinking- and speaking-voice - in the majority of site-specific soundwalking methodologies and field recording practices. In order to illustrate the ways in which the voice manifests itself in sound-based site-specific work, I look into

different examples of practices from the field of sound art ranging from voice-less compositions about cities in change to locative audio-features about urban parks and site-specific installations. The method of selection of artists and works is based initially on whether the artists use methodologies specific to drifting, recording, writing to create their work and whether the works deal with sound and voice, transient spaces, technology and change. Most importantly, they are finally selected because I had the chance to acquire a deeper understanding of these works as I could either physically experience them on-site; closely review them; attend presentations or conversations by the artists; read relevant research writings by the artists and discuss with the artists themselves. Throughout the document, and in support of the thesis, I reference excerpts from *Sensing Cities*, a series of interviews I conducted with these relevant artists, broadcast on Resonance FM between May 2013 and October 2014.

Through reviewing other artists' work, I want to shed some light on the relation of perception to the role of the voice by trying to answer a series of smaller questions. Is it always necessary to background our voice in soundwalking processes? Is our voice an entity dissociated from other people's voices? Is it just a descriptive tool for our listening experiences or does it play a more catalytic role in the way we connect to our environments and people? How does sound and listening through our voices connect to the other senses and the material aspects of a city?

In an effort to further answer these questions within my own practice, between 2012-2014 through the variety of research projects, workshops and residencies, I investigated relevant sites in London, UK and Ljubljana, Slovenia. More specifically, I explore East London by means of the canal path linking Broadway Market to a gallery in Bethnal Green; elsewhere I investigate the connecting route between the overground station and Hospital in Homerton. I also visit Liverpool Street station and its neighbouring Broadgate Centre; East India Quay and Canary Wharf; Tobačna, Ljubljana's old tobacco factory; the Elephant & Castle shopping Centre; Carpenters Estate near the Olympic Park; a gallery in Old Street and Stave Hill Ecological Park, a small-scale urban nature reserve, located in Rotherhithe peninsula.

Confronted with issues of programmed functionality, and in some particular cases regeneration (Minton, 2012; Davis, 1990), I was led back to the inherent idea that prompted this project: the burning need to develop strategies for exploring and

countering these looming narratives of spatial regulation and for enabling us to perceive a site differently. In the process of developing these strategies, I found myself gradually moving away from solely focusing on existing sound-oriented literature and the study of acoustic ecology, with which I was already familiar. The complexity of encounters and observations that emerged from the actual practice, led me to create a new cross-disciplinary theoretical framework combining resources from anthropology, geography, sociology, urban theory and philosophy.

At the heart of this experiment, I bring together notions that bridge the internal mode of perception (Gaston Bachelard's concept of seeping through), the external and the multisensory (Tim Ingold's meshwork) with the atmosphere of a site (Gernot Bohme) and its exploration through drifting (a notion I derive from the work of the Situationist International). I apply these theoretical terms as they emerge through the practice to assess the value of the practice itself. I also want to use this framework to further understand how a pass-through space can be turned into a node (a device invented by urban theorist Kevin Lynch) of meaningful associations that form part of what I coin in this research as a sonic perceptual ecology.

I would like to expand on the new cross-disciplinary framework references above by providing some of the key terms frequently used in this Thesis. While these may be charged and unfamiliar terms at this point in the thesis it is my aspiration, nonetheless, that by the end the reader will not only understand the terms but their value for the kind of exploration I am conducting:

- **Internal 'seep through':** borrowing Gaston Bachelard's notion of the 'seep through,' by internal 'seep through' I imply our ongoing internal processes, individual backgrounds and 'building materials' that emerge or seep through in our exchanges within our environment and affect and shape the way we perceive it. The internal 'seep through' is not a pure and unaffected body but a living entity that is in continuous change.
- **Counter-atmosphere:** Gernot Bohme has developed the notion of the atmosphere as the gluing matter between senses and materialities while emphasising its aspect as a means to aestheticise the urban environment. A counter-atmosphere uses the above notion to suggest a way of opening-up and questioning existing narratives and aesthetics within the spaces in question.

- **Meshwork:** I borrow Tim Ingold's term to refer to the sum of interactions (between senses, materials, forms or motions) that can take place within a node.
- **Node:** Kevin Lynch describes the node as a junction which is both important to and inseparable from city life. In my thesis, I use this term to allude to the **physical plane** where the practice takes place and where the meshworks occur. In the context of this research however, I am expanding it by emphasising the relationships and meshworks that happen within the obvious features of the node. In that sense, a node can be a perfectly enclosed space such as the confines of Liverpool Street Station or an old tobacco factory in Ljubljana but it can also be the territory explored during an exploratory workshop or a field visit such as for example the canal path connecting Broadway Market to Bethnal Green or Carpenters Road in Stratford. But, a node can also be a locality enriched by translocal exchanges as in the case of The Stave Hill Ecological Park.
- **Sonic Perceptual Ecology:** a synthesised notion of perception consisting of the **node** (physical plane), the **counter-atmosphere** (triggering of our **internal 'seep through'** and facilitating conversation) and the **meshwork** (interactions)
- **Co-walkers:** all the people who contributed to my workshops
- **Polyphony:** Drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the utterance in relation to dialogue, by polyphony I imply that our voice and in consequence our internal 'seep through' are a polyphonic constellation of other voices and utterances both human and non-human. This is reflected in the ways we perceive our environments through sound.
- **Pass-through:** A site that we pass-through either for commuting or temporary leisure and has a pre-planned functionality. Within this research, Liverpool Street Station, Homerton Overground Station and its surroundings, Stave Hill Ecological Park in London, the Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre, two London galleries as well as Tobačna, Ljubljana's old tobacco factory are referred to as pass-through sites. Similarly to my understanding of the term node, I also view as pass-through, sites that are pertinent to transience marked by trajectories or paths inscribed during a walk (as part of a field visit or an exploratory workshop) such as for example Carpenter's Road in Stratford or the quayside in Canary Wharf.
- **Text-score:** Following on from experimental score paradigms such as John Cage's *Song Books* or the Fluxus *Event Scores*, I coin as text-scores, the text-based pieces

used for interacting with a particular site either as part of a soundwalk or another activity. They are consisting of words inspired by a particular location. These words are used as shifters for exploring that site and for triggering exchanges across people, spaces, senses and materials. The text-scores can function as catalysts for the production of a counter-atmosphere and hence the emergence of the internal 'seep through'.

- **Shifter:** Drawing from Rosalind Krauss's definition, a shifter is a word or a phrase on a text-score that when internalised assumes a different meaning depending on the person and the context.
- **Conversational Soundwalk:** Taking as a point of reference the soundwalk protocols, as developed by Hildergard Westerkamp, a conversational soundwalk allows co-walkers to listen in conversation during the walk. This gesture allows for a richer network of associations to be made and to engage with a space through embodied experience, memory and critical reflection. The co-walkers exchange ideas and together establish a polyphonic understanding of a place.

The structure of the thesis aims to support the gradual unpacking of these terms as they are encountered within the practice and lead to answering the research question and my intent to subvert the functionality of pass-through sites in the city. Within the scope of this project, such spaces are opened up, re-voiced and, to a certain degree, re-claimed through the iterative and sound-based methodology I have developed. This methodology involves working extensively with a site in order to design sound-led activities that trigger the emergence of a sonic perceptual ecology; a perceptual process echoing my intuitive response to Ginsberg's poem.

In Chapter One, I begin by trying to define what a sonic perceptual ecology is and what its constituent parts are. I also elaborate on its ability to provide a useful framework for understanding perception as an on-going process and where sound plays a significant role as a mediator of dialogue across different registers of perception. With reference to the sites that this research investigates, and the notion of the pass-through, I argue that developing this particular framework was a necessary stage for accessing and countering the functionality attached to the sites in question.

In Chapter Two I expand on the importance of sound by evaluating the role of the voice as an active sonic catalyst in our communication and exchanges within an

environment. I also question whether this unlocking of the voice is necessary in opening up the pass-through spaces by creating what I am calling a sonic perceptual ecology. By analysing different examples of other artists' practices through the prism of the framework presented in Chapter One, I wish to demonstrate how the emergence of the voice manifests itself and how important its contribution is to the composition and perception of a particular site-specific work.

In Chapter Three, I further expand the enquiry by probing the use of text-scores as catalysts for triggering a sonic perceptual ecology. By drawing from a variety of examples from the history of the practice, I elucidate how a text-score might operate within my own work and the framework of a sonic perceptual ecology. I wish to illuminate whether a text-score can tap into the everyday urban environment and assist in the creation of situations that subvert spatial narratives and prompt exchanges between people, senses, sites and materials. The chapter concludes with presenting different excerpts of literary texts that were deployed as text-scores in the first and second phases of the research.

In Chapter Four, I present the first and second phases<sup>1</sup> of practice undertaken as part of this research and demonstrate how the ideas discussed in the previous three chapters not only provide a useful theoretical context for accessing and understanding the outcomes discussed here but also how these ideas organically emerged from within the practice itself and assisted in the design of the methodology for field visits and workshops. I also provide examples of how the preselected text-scores were manifested during the explorations of sites and how these explorations were further channelled in the creation of new work by myself and others.

The argumentation is further supported by examples of my own major works, created in the third and final phase of this research, presented in Chapter Five of this document. I illustrate different case studies where the methodology developed through the first two phases is expanded and adjusted into original strategies for composing and designing work in the context of commissions, residencies and performances. This is a necessary step as it brings the findings of the research out in the public realm and investigates whether it is possible to generate a sonic

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive summary please refer back to the 'Timeline' in the beginning of this document.

perceptual ecology in wider contexts where audience participation or collaboration with other artists is involved.

The Thesis ends with a set of conclusions and aspirations for future work. This final section is not only serving as a way of summarising the main contributions to knowledge of this research but it also highlights some of the subtle nuances pertinent to it as well as some of the possible inefficacies it may entail. It finally offers an overview of threads to be pursued in future work and research.

The different enquiries explored within this Thesis are further supported by samples of my own work in the form of audio or video clips and appendices that can be found in the accompanying Media Folder, stored in the DVD provided. This thesis consists of different types of audio and visual materials such as: a) documentation of field work or other practice in the form of photographs and recordings, b) creative responses produced after field visits and exploratory workshops in the form of drawings, writings, video or audio pieces and finally c) Recordings and Documentation of major works presented in Chapter Five.

All these different forms of practice, which in most of the cases can be classified as documentation, do not aim to provide the reader with a series of finished end-products but with fragments of the experiences and activities undertaken as part of this research. In that sense, this Media Folder is not organised to be experienced prior to reading the thesis, as a standalone testimony of my practice, but as supporting evidence to what is referenced in the main body of the text. This perhaps reflects a general attitude that I have towards my artistic output. I am interested in creating ephemeral experiences that enrich our understanding of our own potential through sound and the importance of always questioning our certainties in relation to our surroundings. I am drawn to situations where the solitary and the collaborative coexist contingently and my work attempts to open up spaces for reflection within locations of change. I believe this is an important small-scale gesture against private or exclusive grand narratives. Within that perspective, my art making is better located within socially engaged contexts, as part of performances or radio broadcasts, and not as an artifact exhibited in a gallery, although this might occur occasionally.

The creative practice produced within this project assumes a similar path and the Media Folder is a resource for making the experience of reading the Thesis, and

of the research as a whole, more accessible and easy. In order to simplify the way of navigating through the samples, I have applied a very basic naming and ordering protocol i.e. Audio Clip 1 or Video Clip 2 followed by a more detailed title i.e. Audio Clip 5: Field visit 4. These are clearly referenced in the text by their allocated order number and type. The intricate details surrounding these clips are all referenced in the main body of the Thesis while only the basic information is made available on the Media Folder's different sections. Additional higher resolution copies of referenced visual material within the text can be found in the relevant Appendices 1 to 4, available in digital form in the Media Folder.

To access the Media Folder and navigate through the different sections (Audio Clips, Video Clips, Appendices) please initially open the [index.html](#) file. Please note that each section when clicked opens a new tab in order to facilitate your scrolling through different types of resources and sections. A digital copy of this document can be downloaded by clicking on the 'THESIS' tab on the menu. The Media Folder has been tested and works well in Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome while it has mixed results in Internet Explorer and Safari. It would be advisable to avoid using open source platforms such as Tor Browser or similar. In some of the above audio or video examples, I have made a deliberate choice to leave the way these should be experienced open to the reader. In some cases it might be more useful to listen to a recording while reading the text while in others it might be preferable to experience the sample before or after the text. My suggestion 'please feel free' used throughout this Thesis, leaves the decision-making to the reader.

While reading Donald Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner*, I encountered his notion of 'discussion with the situation' (Schön, 1983, pp.77-78). This concept means that a project has to remain open and adjustable to new shapes and be able to be looked at from all different perspectives. From its inception, this practice-based research has significantly expanded its initial scope while shifting back and forth between theory and practice, the one attending to the other and allowing important research ideas and concepts to emerge. Within this document, I aspire to elaborate on the connections between the theoretical and the practical by identifying the essential and original concepts and strategies forged.

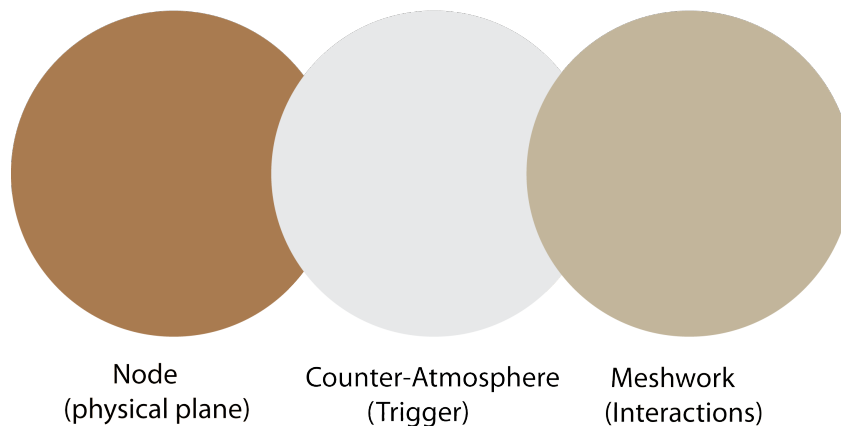
# Chapter One: A Field of Interactions

## 1.1 A brief note on this Chapter

In the following chapter, I elaborate on some of the theoretical underpinnings pertaining to this research in an effort to define what the concept of a sonic perceptual ecology is and its importance for considering the physical spaces this research investigates. By unpacking the different layers of the sonic perceptual ecology, I focus on the relevant themes that according to my understanding are embedded within them and suggest the practical aspects that they support within this project. In doing so I bring together a refined suggestion of the *dérive*, Boehme's notion of the atmosphere and Kevin Lynch's idea of the node by critically enriching them with Ingold's concept of the meshwork and Bachelard's account of seeping through in order to establish their value for the exploration of pass-through spaces. The totality of this approach is what I will be calling throughout this document a sonic perceptual ecology.

## 1.2 Situating A Sonic Perceptual Ecology: the Pass-through Spaces

### Sonic Perceptual Ecology



[Image 1: Sonic Perceptual Ecology]

I would like to begin by posing a simple question: what is a sonic perceptual ecology (Image 1)? By looking at the diagram in Image 1, one can immediately discern three overlapping layers that altogether make the conceptual cluster of what I call a sonic perceptual ecology. Beginning from the first layer, I would like to position the creation of this cluster in the physical plane where it unfolds. This physical plane is defined not by the 'all-seeing-power' of a site observed from above but on the ground level interactions<sup>2</sup> (De Certeau, 1984, p.92); not on geometrical or geographical certainties but on pluralities of urban practices and fictions of '[a] migrational and metaphorical city [that] slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city' (De Certeau, 1984, pp.92-93). The physical plane of a sonic perceptual ecology therefore emerges in the urban fabric through locations that combine the pluralities of fragmented everyday trajectories with a 'clear and planned' urban text.

These locations could be described as pass-through spaces that we all have to traverse as city dwellers for one reason or another but our connection to them often

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<sup>2</sup> Sections of this chapter and chapter 2 have been presented at the conference of "SOUNDSCAPES & SOUND IDENTITIES", CASTELLO DI BESENO, Besenello (TN), ITALY  
[tp://www.paesaggiosonoro.it/soundscapeandid/](http://www.paesaggiosonoro.it/soundscapeandid/)

resides on the surface and is tied to a particular temporary purpose. These spaces are of different scales that balance between the public and the private realm, a tightly scripted (LaBelle, 2010) or a more open architectural plan. In some instances these locations can be associated with regeneration agendas tied to Business Improvement District organisations (Minton, 2012, pp.40-50) or private Estate Agency schemes (Hill, 2013, unpaginated). Pass-through spaces, on all accounts, prescribe a certain type of urban practices that favour mobility as the result of function control.

Such claims perhaps resonate with Marc Augé's definition of similar spaces as 'non-places' (Augé, 2009, p.63) devoid of a living essence and identity. In that sense, our behaviour when in similar spaces is conforming to what the functionality of the space is and what is expected from us to do. From my personal experience, in particular occasions, we might be given the opportunity to access a different aspect of a space through programmed activities such as a busker playing in a train station. However, this cannot account for a space's general use which is transient (and still pre-programmed). This lack of spontaneity attached to these locations, to me, summarises a big part of what I see happening around me in the majority of cities I have been living in during the past ten years, most notably New York and more recently London. Connecting that observation back to my experience of Ginsberg's poem, I also imply that this change does not happen irrespective of the people and other species that inhabit them. It affects the ways we respond and connect to our environments and in my case it risks drowning my voice, as explained in the introduction, and my need to be engaged with the places I live in or temporarily encounter.

It is in these pass-through locations nonetheless where I would like to argue that by developing a sonic perceptual ecology, we can forge engaging reciprocal exchanges that bring to the fore our inherent capacity to listen, reflect and reclaim them. In that process, sound plays an active role within other registers of perception not only because it mediates meanings but also because it facilitates our ability to experientially inhabit our environments. It can potentially embody connections across spaces, species and senses that cannot be pigeonholed and that may be intuitively generated. In its ambiguity, sound can transcend the notions of control and planned functionality described in the previous two paragraphs and it can open up a temporary node of interactions. By closely looking back at the diagram above,

you can clearly see that I am using the term node to refer to the physical plane of a sonic perceptual ecology.

### **1.3 A Node in A Sonic Perceptual Ecology**

In *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch discusses the notion of the node (Lynch, 1960, p.70), as a junction of strategic importance for both the urban designer and the city dweller. These spaces invoke great meaning to inhabitants and to passers-by as they usually act as springboards for associations. The nodes become meeting points of paths that are important for people in order to remember, choose or change direction. According to Lynch, although a node's position is designated on a map, its directionality remains a blurred and undefined territory until a traveller projects their intentions onto it. In that sense, its borders are constantly negotiated as well as its centre of gravity. A node maintains a certain amount of order only to be saturated by the effect of the movements of fragmented everyday life. The design of a node therefore resides in facilitating the generation of trajectories and to a certain extent allow the travelers to take control of their own shifts. Within the framework of the research, the concept of the node, therefore, becomes a relevant term when it comes to referring to the spaces in question and my interest in reverse-engineering their functionality. As a term put into practice as part of this research, Lynch's definition of the node is further expanded by focusing on the possibilities of interactions that can take place within it; moving the conversation from how a node is or should be designed to that of a bottom-up production that is characterised by ever-changing and ongoing networks and the slippages between senses, bodies and materials.

It is by these 'down below' encounters of 'the ordinary practitioner', the walker - as de Certeau writes - that these nodes, can be opened up and invented (de Certeau, 1984, p.93, 98). The spaces investigated in this project are explored through intertwined layers of experience produced *in situ*, by walking alone or with co-walkers in an attempt to reverse existing (often quite authoritative and programmed) narratives and to make a temporary timespace through sound (Voegelin, 2010, pp.123-124) for dialogue and mutual exchanges. Walking, and as it will be discussed later soundwalking, becomes an important impetus not for passing through the node

but for exploring and perceiving it in sound. As with some of my previous projects <sup>3</sup>, my practice draws on psychogeography and more specifically on the theory of the *dérive* (or drift in English), which is one of its basic tenets.

As defined by Guy Debord and the Situationist International (an organisation that emerged in the 50s) on its most basic level, a drift inside a node should call for actions outside the habitual zone of dwelling, setting into motion the intuitiveness or inventiveness of an individual, permitting them to become more empathetic to their surroundings and experience them anew. Debord's idea was essentially based on 'the construction of situations, that is to say, the concrete construction of momentary ambiances of life' (Debord, 1957, unpaginated) through intuitive and inventive interventions in the urban environment (Debord, 1958, unpaginated).

In the context of this research, I find a level of resonance between Kevin Lynch's node and Debord's drift based on the understanding that the city becomes a plateau attuned to the needs of its inhabitants and not the other way round. In psychogeographical terms, such a connection is further supported. More specifically, psychogeography as a method for such an embodied and socially engaged practice elicits the imagination and points at times to a more refined and attuned investigation of a space's hidden, ineffable properties. According to Coverley, psychogeography offers an escape from the 'banalisation by which the everyday experience becomes one of drab monotony' (Coverley, 2010, pp.12-13).

By offering an alternative take on geography, psychogeography intended to playfully criticise the burgeoning capitalist system and to remind people of their ability to counter it and scale the city back to a level where it can be intuitively inhabited. By encouraging, for example, the escape from the authority and alienation of the urban environment, the psychogeographical approach aimed to bring to the surface more psychological undertones of a landscape. Drifting along the 'unities of ambiance' of the city - as the Situationists often described the moods and zones created within certain urban neighbourhoods - the wanderer (or drifter) could perceive the particular atmospheres, characters or feelings that spaces evoke.

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<sup>3</sup> *Trajectory* (IMT Gallery, London, UK, 2008) video documentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KWqMOMLoU4>

*Sounds-In-Between* (Cabinet Magazine Gallery Space, NY, US, 2010):

<http://postcardsfromgowanus.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/maria-papadomanolaki-sounds-in-between.html>

I would like to acknowledge that there is a certain buzz around the field of psychogeography that is prone to idealising it, often ignoring that it was framed by a way of life outside the bourgeois society and economy, associated with heavy drinking, hashish and panhandling (Mension, 2002, pp.101-105; Nicholson, 2011, pp.150-152). That idealisation poses a few problems because it can prescribe how it is perceived and executed in its more contemporary forms. In more recent times, as for example in the British 80s tradition of psychogeographers, championed by writers such as Iain Sinclair and Will Self, the *dérive* often involves, as writer Iain Sinclair explained to me during our interview for *Sensing Cities*, strenuous walking across long distances as a means to connect to the landscape's supernatural forces (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013). That particular tradition of psychogeography, nonetheless finds more of an immediate antecedent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century writings of Baudelaire and the tradition of the *flâneur* that is often associated (and critiqued) as the epitome of the walker who with his (male) gaze possesses the city as a highly visual and female-like entity (Wolff (1985), Wilson (1992), Dreyer & McDowall (2012), Carrera Suárez (2015)). In other accounts the *flâneur* is understood as the aimless stroller in quest of the 'other', intoxicated by the city through his tourist and cinematic gaze (Bull (2007, 2012); Benjamin (1973)).

Beyond the playful and at times arbitrary nature often attributed to the *dérive* and the possible cultural, literary and methodological canons associated with it, through the practice generated in this research, I am interested in contesting such divisions and premeditated patterns by exploring the possibilities of a drift within certain, restrained sites, not necessarily demanding long walking sessions and often involving a site-sensitive conversation between both male and female co-walkers, as I would like to call all the people who contributed to this research's workshops. A drift, apart from what one sees, can offer a timespace, to use sound artist and writer Salomé Voegelin's term, where the aural can coexist with other materials and senses. This implies not only focusing on the acoustic details of a visited location and responding to them but sometimes also unfolding more nuanced personal references and memories that transcend the space itself. In that sense a *dérive* can be expanded into a focused and meditated aural practice resembling a soundwalk but where the psychological or emotive side of the experiential is enriched by that of thought and where the sensation of sight supports and coexists with that of sound (Tuan, 1977,

p.8). In the timespace of a drift, the division of space over time is negated by what Voegelin describes as a fluid, contingent and intersubjective, 'complex sensory concept' (Voegelin, 2010, p.125). Our relationship to senses, materials, and activities through listening constantly ties space to time and time to space constructing a thick sensory and emotive knot. Voegelin's timespace therefore refers back to the node of a sonic perceptual ecology and my suggestion earlier in this section that sound can open up the possibilities with which we explore and perceive such a node.

Henri Lefebvre talks about the 'natural' as 'spontaneous' (Lefebvre, 1991, p.70) and I am interested in the spontaneity and how it can be re-inserted in the ways we inhabit the node. It is that exact concept of the natural that in Lefebvre's terms merges time with space as the one is apprehended within the other (Lefebvre, 1991, p.95). And it is that exact timespace that is erased with the advent of modernity. In favour of time modernity reduced space into a temporally driven concept 'recorded solely on measuring-instruments, on clocks that are as isolated and functionally specialised as this time itself' (Lefebvre, 1991, p.95). Consequently, space comes to be closely associated with labour, programming, functionality and growth and production becomes, at times, a series of rational, geometrical calculations, concerned with legibility. It is within this framework that Lefebvre and Voegelin suggest the importance of subjectivities, the multiplicities of spaces, possibilities, meanings and networks of associations and the relational aspect of experiencing and perceiving.

#### **1.4 The Aestheticised Atmosphere and The Sonic Perceptual Ecology**

The relational dynamics between a programmed space and how subjective exchanges are manifested within it take us to the next layer in the above diagram, that of the counter-atmosphere. In the process of establishing a channel of exchanges, the concept of the atmosphere as the invisible, shadow-like presence in a space assumes an important role, especially when approached from the perspective of sound. Gernot Bohme discusses sound as one of the many layers that compose the atmosphere of a space that with its elusive and vanishing spatial movement is responsible for modifying the bodily-experienced space by adding emotional undertones and how we feel in the space. According to him, atmospheres are

phenomena experienced through antitheses that affect and change our mood and therefore act as the gluing matter between the materialities of a space and the human sensibilities and senses. Extending this idea, Brandon LaBelle argues that an atmosphere has the ability to exist both independently and in conjunction with the physical attributes of a space, both in harmony (gluing matter) and as an interrupter to the narrative of a particular environment (LaBelle, 2004, p.216).

In terms of the material side of the argument, the ability of the atmosphere to exist in-between the different registers of perception offers tremendous possibilities for projecting, even if subconsciously, a particular aesthetic cue about a space. Boehme, for his part, expands on the idea of the atmosphere from the perspective of aesthetics and how it can affect how a space is perceived and how it can allow or hinder interactions to occur. As he writes 'the full range of aesthetics is now the full range of aesthetic work, which is defined generally as the production of atmospheres and thus extends from cosmetics, advertisement, interior decoration, stage sets to art in the narrower sense' (Boehme, 1993, p.116).

The production of atmospheres, for Boehme, involves a synthetic process of 'making', of 'aestheticising reality' (Boehme, 1993, p.123), of conditioning and programming the experience of space. In Boehme's terms, all the different materialities we experience happen simultaneously, affecting one another and our perception of them as well as the way we relate to them. The concept of the atmosphere within a node, where all these elements are intertwined, lies therefore between the subjective and objective and it is a matter equally of perception and of production. His idea of aestheticising reality, however, intercepts this assumption by suggesting that the built environment and the objects contained within it may act as 'generators of atmospheres' and therefore there is a proposed additional shift from the concept of production to that of staging. Staging does not necessarily only allude to negative connotations of artificiality and over-aestheticising as it can also mediate or highlight the feeling of a specific environment, its familiar identity and character and therefore enrich our subjective experience of a space. Boehme mentions in relation to sound that 'the characteristic feeling of a life-style, of an urban or rural atmosphere, is significantly determined by the related acoustic space' and hence when thinking about the design or 'staging' of the built environment, an urban

planner or architect should consider the soundscape as well as the landscape and its acoustic atmosphere.

Landscape is, therefore, the symbiosis of what one sees, hears and feels and the acoustic atmosphere allows the character of a locale to emerge and permeate it. In that sense, staging can become, to revisit LaBelle's reference to the atmosphere as an interrupter, a very useful strategy for reactivating our engagement with the pass-through sites by countering existing narratives and by retuning our thoughts, senses and bodies to the particularities of a site or the ways with which we experience, remember and live. It is therefore within this framework that in the sonic perceptual ecology diagram, a counter-atmosphere becomes a trigger. A counter-atmosphere is an atmosphere that sits in dialogue with the existing one in an explored site with the intention to counter it, to open it up and activate a meshwork of interactions.

It is that particular ability of the atmosphere that I redefine in my practice by experimenting with its possibilities as a trigger for creating awareness, dialogue and gestures of subversion and interaction. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, for instance, in a series of field visits and workshops I held in relevant sites, the counter-atmosphere is used as the trigger for the generation of a sonic perceptual ecology that favours the spontaneous over the programmed and neutral and wherein materials, textures, senses, thoughts, utterances and memories all merge toward the formation of a subjective experience of site and the generation of original creative responses such as the video piece *a microcosm city: subtitled* (Image 2).



[Image 2: Still from *a microcosm city: subtitled*; the sustained atmosphere of an experience as the poetics of inner speech.<sup>4</sup> The piece will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.]

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<sup>4</sup> The video was screened as part of the *Visual Urbanism* event at the British Library in October 2013 and was exhibited at the IMT Gallery in July 2014 as part of *Forms Of Ventriloquism* (See Timeline)

Tim Ingold, while acknowledging Boehme's argumentation, chooses to focus on materials themselves rather than to reiterate the dichotomy of materiality and immateriality, which to him raises a certain level of detachment (Ingold, 2011, p.22). He therefore points out the importance behind the emergence from within the material as opposed to the distanced hermeneutics often associated with materiality. He writes:

The forms of things, far from having been imposed from without upon an inert substrate, arise and are borne along – as indeed we are too – within this current of materials. As with the Earth itself, the surface of every solid is but a crust, the more or less ephemeral congregate of a generative movement. (Ingold, 2011, p.24)

And although perhaps such a suggestion resonates with Boehme's idea of the 'gluing matter', it does engage with a more dynamic, fluid process that resides in movement and change, in a notion of 'being along lines' as Tim Ingold describes (with reference to the work of Deleuze and Guattari), the way we tend to experience our surroundings (Ingold, 2011, pp.63-64). Such a perspective not only emphasises the idea of mobility which is important when referring to the node but also adds a certain level of agency not only to us as the perceiving individuals but also to the different facets of an environment wherein an atmosphere can play a significant role. In other words, atmospheres, people, materials are all equally important in this constellation of lines.

Ingold, in his definition of the line, refers to the idea of interaction, of a line that is in continual growth and part of what he calls a meshwork, a world of becoming and of interwoven lines of interaction. Ingold applies the same concept to listening by emphasising the importance of positioning sound in this meshwork of interactions that escape the exclusive grip of the aural and become part of a wider scheme of materials and senses present in the environment. In fact, for Ingold, sound is an omnipresent phenomenon of experience similar to that of light whereby any systematic categorisation, or 'scaping' as he calls it, is nothing but a deceitful undertaking, hence his stance against the use of the term 'soundscape'. For him, sound exists along with other registers of experience, the wind, the light and other 'fluxes' (Ingold, 2011, pp.136-139). I would argue that this perspective posits Ingold's longstanding research about 'dwelling', 'landscape' and 'taskscape' under scrutiny, especially when considering, as it will be further clarified below, his earlier focus on

the importance of sound in our everyday life exchanges and his own categorisation of the environment into different types of ‘-scapes’.

Ingold’s concept of dwelling is concerned with an ongoing engagement (or ‘enduring record’ as he calls it) with a landscape, in our continuous and in depth inhabiting of the landscape, which Ingold argues - by quoting Goodwin - consists of forms ‘generated and sustained in and through the processual unfolding of a total field of relations that cuts across the emergent interface between organism and environment’ (Ingold, 1993, p.156). Ingold’s ‘taskscape’ comes to define these relations as the intertwining of social activities and technical expertise in the ways we dwell in our environments. In the taskscape we are ‘participants in the very performance of our tasks’ (Ingold, 1993, p.159) rather than observers. The taskscape is mainly what we hear ‘[a]nd since the forms of the taskscape, suspended as they are in movement, are present *only* as activity, the limits of the taskscape are also the limits of the auditory world’ (Ingold, 1993, pp.162-163). In relation to the taskscape, Ingold posits landscape as what we see and ‘dwelling’ becomes the ongoing unraveling of these forms of perception over time. Temporality becomes a means of tying our dwelling to our landscapes that became in this way the carriers of our taskscapes bearing the traces of our paths and movements. To dwell means to produce, Ingold argues ‘[f]or production is tantamount to dwelling’ (Ingold, 1993, p.169).

### **1.5 A Meshwork and The Sonic Perceptual Ecology**

As Ingold himself admits in the introduction of his book *Being Alive* (2011), in these early phases of his research that I have just detailed, he was ‘preoccupied with the notion dwelling’ leaving aside the dynamic and fragmented nature of life as a bundle of lines where our historic and continuous dwelling patterns are challenged by disruptions in movement. This is where Ingold’s idea of the meshwork and his later re-assessment of his perspectives about ‘scaping’ become articulated. As you can see in the sonic perceptual ecology diagram, I use the same term to refer to the third layer of the cluster where the interactions occur. The meshwork allows for plurality and transience to take place and affects significantly the way we perceive the environments we inhabit. In places of high mobility we certainly cannot discuss

laying roots nor can we establish a longstanding and enduring engagement but we can temporarily turn it into an environment of focused and committed exchanges between senses, materials, voices and bodies and within that allow our historical life to seep through and become embedded in the experience.

That plurality of voices, senses and materials is not an abstract concept but one that through the everyday practice emerges instinctively on the experiential plane. In that sense, the importance of an enduring, skilled or expert exchange often becomes secondary and the exchange itself as an open platform for co-existing and conversing differences becomes more important. It is at that exact junction that a counter-atmosphere as a trigger can become an important agent in the generation of these exchanges within and beyond sound and I will expand on that in the next chapters. By referring back to the diagram presented above, within a sonic perceptual ecology, if an atmosphere is the catalyst for activating relations between us and the environment then we can consider the meshwork the sum of the interactions taking place. The balances and dynamics of these exchanges between the different agents with a node, turn the cluster of overlapping layers into an 'ecology'.

Although not immediately connected to urbanism and urban planning, this research finds some common ground with current discourses on 'ecological urbanism' that favour the study of processes and relations as opposed to 'object qualities of a space' (Gorth & Samson, 2013) or to a solemn focus on its material aspects. In that particular context, an ecology is defined as a hybrid system of interactions of human and non-human communities, technologies, materials, senses and activities. In a similar manner, a sonic perceptual ecology is an inclusive system where all these different agents are of equal importance and are taken into account within its different layers: a) the node (as the physical site) b) the counter-atmosphere (as a trigger) and c) the meshwork (of interactions) pertaining to it<sup>5</sup>.

The plurality of the meshwork is realised through sound and within sound other forms of perception are articulated. In hearing, Boehme finds the ability 'to jump over the experience of what is in between' and 'to listen inwardly to what came from outside' (Boehme, 2007, p.57). Similarly, within a sonic perceptual ecology, my

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<sup>5</sup> And this is perhaps a starting point for further developing and expanding this research's methodology by applying it to other disciplines and research fields including but not limited to urban planning and design.

practice attempts to create, through a counter-atmosphere, a tuning loop allowing the self to listen to the outside by listening inwardly and back outside again. The overarching aim of this process is to lead to an active, focused and engaged meshwork of exchanges. When it comes to the perception of the environment, Ingold positions hearing, as already explained, on the same level with all the different sensory registers and 'scapes'.

In reference to these experiential phenomena, Ingold underlines the notion of 'within'. We listen, see and feel from within the environment, positioning the act of embodiment in the centre of the space in question. The meshwork therefore emerges from within this unassuming sonic ecology where perception 'takes place in circuits that cross-cut the boundaries between brain, body and world' (Ingold, 2000, p.244). Ingold's concern about dichotomies in the sensorial register stem from his inclination to critique the Western tradition of individualist, rationalist and vision-oriented thinking by placing the body with the mind, the light with the sound, the inside with the outside in a simultaneous mode of perception. From this vantage, Boehme's idea of listening inwardly can be further enriched with the proposition that the ability to listen inwardly cannot be dissected from the ability to listen from within the environment which establishes a way of connection and of perception that beyond 'translating' our environment, it calls for an action of attuning to it<sup>6</sup> (Ingold 2000, pp.243-244).

In both cases, the agency emerges primarily from an actual process of engagement that echoes Gaston Bachelard's notion of the 'seep through' and the reciprocity between the inner and the outer environments. Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space* draws on Paul Valéry's essay on the mollusc that seeps its building materials through its shell. The action of seeping through (I would like to refer to this as the internal 'seep through'), according to Bachelard, calls for an imaginative engagement with that which is unknown, mysterious yet soon to be experienced (Bachelard, 1994, p.106). The emphasis therefore moves from the concept of form to that of formation. Similarly, perception can be understood as the 'seep through' of the building

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<sup>6</sup> Here, we can also trace a reference to the Western philosophical tradition of phenomenology and to Husserl's idea of intersubjectivity and consequently to Merleau-Ponty's suggestion to "to give voice to the world from our experienced situation within it, recalling us to our participation in the here-and-now, rejuvenating our sense of wonder at the fathomless things, events and powers that surround us on every hand" (Abram, 1996, p.37 and p.47).

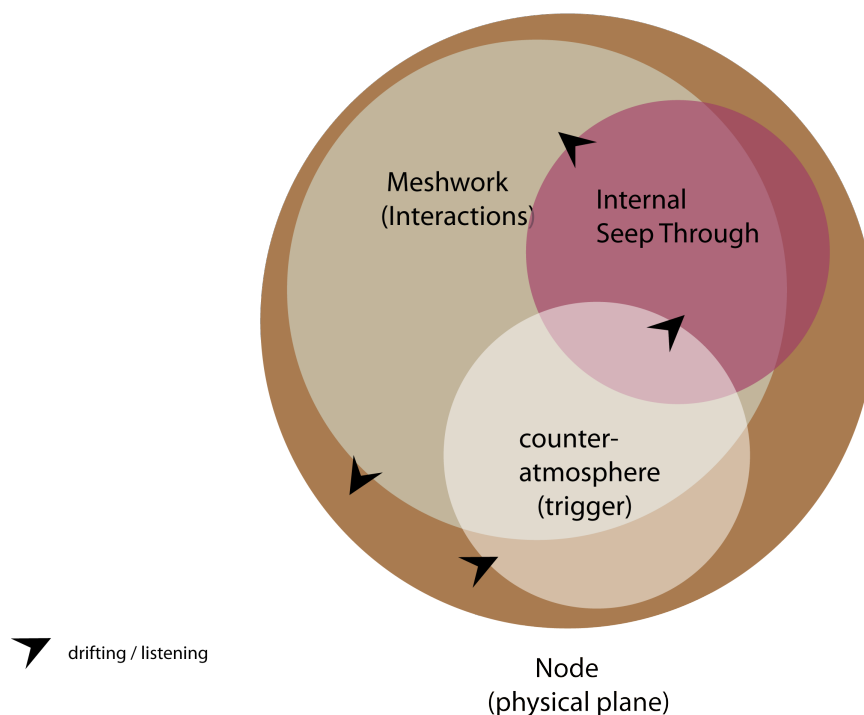
materials that we contain which allow the slow and gradual formation of the environments we encounter. In reference to the internal 'seep through', Bachelard offers a series of examples to suggest the possibility of such a construction from within. Similarly to a 'slug that [is] building its house...from its own saliva' (Bachelard 1994, p.128), our encounters and exchanges within a node, through sound, open up this ability of activating (and questioning) our inner processes, subjectivities, memories and thoughts as they merge and attune to stimuli and other experiential triggers from the environment. Within this framework of occurrences, the counter-atmosphere can function as a supportive layer, existing in-between the physical properties of the node and the possibilities of interactions in the meshwork. These challenge, poke and break the rigidity of the self by introducing polyphony (I will be explaining what I mean by polyphony in the following chapter). Our internal 'seep through' unravels but not as a self-contained, pure and unaffected body. Through dialogue and interactions it can permeate, reflect, affect and be affected.

Within these exchanges, the internal 'seep through' manifests itself primarily through our spontaneous drive to communicate and to connect through our voices and our thoughts, an idea I will explain further in the next chapter. By triggering the internal 'seep through' of inner-processes, the meshwork of interactions is simultaneously created to counter any architectural structures and social narratives attached to a space. These narratives and structures are experienced both through their repercussions on how the space is produced (Lefebvre, 1991) and as the result of a 'conjunction of functional use of space and opportunistic use of time' (Sennett, 1994, p.188). The creation therefore of a sonic perceptual ecology questions these rigid functionalities by assisting in the emergence of a timespace of subjectivities. The node becomes a *plateau* of exchanges and disparate meanings in a continuous experiential interchange that resembles a process of articulation (Augoyard (1979), LaBelle (2010)) where human and non-human utterances coexist and affect each other and critically reflect on the narratives and functions assigned to a pass-through space.

By taking the internal 'seep through' into account, I would like to therefore further enrich the first diagram by adding an additional intermediate layer that sits between the counter-atmosphere and the meshwork (Image 3). In this diagram, I reflect on the different motions that take place within the node and how one layer

leads to the next. The internal ‘seep through’ is the moment where our focused engagement with a site is formulated leading to interactions and the creation of a meshwork. Later in this document, I will be enriching this concept by presenting examples of how a counter-atmosphere can be triggered by a text-score. In order for all these exchanges to be activated we may return to the concept of the drift discussed in section 1.3 and the notion of movement and its relation to our way of perceiving and unlocking if you may our internal ‘seep through’.

## Motions in A Sonic Perceptual Ecology



[Image 3: Motions in a Sonic Perceptual Ecology]

Drifting is a necessary gesture for activating the overlapping layers of a sonic perceptual ecology by ‘propel[ling] the body *within* the...world’ (Ingold 2011, p.35). Movement creates a dynamic exchange between the receiving body and the environment. It warms the body up, preparing it to receive and respond more intensely to stimuli (Sennett, 1994, p.43). It is by means of movement that Bachelard’s idea of the slow and continuous unfolding of meaning takes place and a process of creating counter-narratives can be achieved. Michael Jackson, in his essay entitled ‘Thinking through the body: an essay on metaphor,’ argues that ‘[w]alking can be seen as a narrative process that weaves together time and space because at

the same time that stories connect the past and the future they also articulate peoples' notions of who they are and where they belong' (Jackson 1998, p.177).

This idea of belonging is further supported by the inherent need to reclaim and to take control of our paths in the city. I discussed earlier the idea of the counter-atmosphere as a way of questioning the existing aesthetics and atmosphere of a space. It could be argued that this is tightly connected to our need to reclaim, to connect as opposed to the fleeting, filmic gaze of a *flâneur*. Similarly, Michael Bull's iPod aesthetics offer an antidote to the visually driven urban culture. Mobility and sound become central in developing 'cognitive strategies' that allow the urban dweller to possess the city by adjusting it to their 'predispositions' (Bull, 2012, p.155). The filmic 'otherness' of flaneurism is negated by a more dynamic process of individual and private aesthetisation characterised by an imagination at will that can work across geographical locations, anywhere and anytime.

A Sonic Perceptual Ecology, however, attempts to use these predispositions (in the form of the internal 'seep through') to reverse-engineer the privatised mode of living in a modern city. Walking, combined with listening outwardly and inwardly, in a meshwork aims to lead to the destabilization of boundaries that elicit ownership, privacy and controlled urban practices. It is interested in forging, as I will be discussing later, links between people and sites and the polyphonic nature of our sonic experience in a process of countering and re-inventing the node. It can be argued that by walking within the urban realm, the aesthetic experience as well as its boundaries are constantly negotiated. Jean-François Augoyard in his analyses of walking explains that '[e]very walking, every inhabiting gives itself out not only as structures, figures, but also configuration, structuration, that is to say deformation of the built world such as it was conceived and re-creation of space through feeling and motor function' (Augoyard 2007, p.128).

Listening perhaps is an appropriate way to establish this peripheral, ongoing and 'sociable way of communication' (Ingold, 2010) mainly because of its ambiguous directionality and the ability to simultaneously engage with the many possibilities of an experience, to 'challenge the singularity of actuality' (Voegelin, 2014, p.22). Listening can incorporate, to rephrase Boehme, not only the sonic properties of a given situation but also its physical, material or psychological undertones. This cross-pollination can happen because listening can merge the material implications of an

environment and the sensibilities (in other words the internal 'seep through') of a person by 'allow[ing] fantasy to reassemble the visual fixtures and fittings, and repositions us as designers of our own environment. It challenges, augments and expands what we see, without presenting a negative illusion, by producing reality of lived experience' (Voegelin 2010, p.12).

## **1.6 Sounding The Sonic Perceptual Ecology Out**

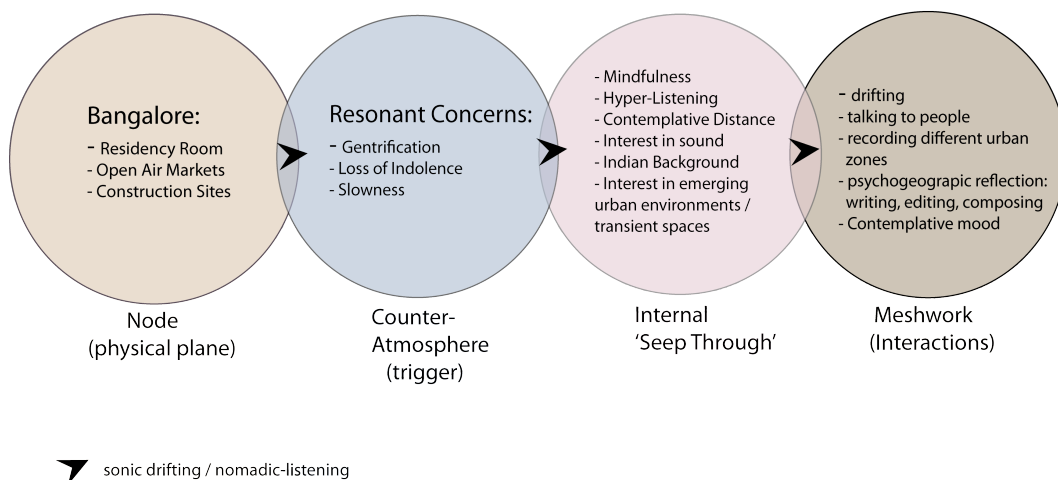
In listening (and walking), the reality of lived experience assumes a shape that coexists temporarily, for example, with the seen or felt and in which an imaginative and performed gesture of communication is established. The body in movement shifts its listening positions. There is not one centralised or optimum listening position and the self/body nexus follows an ongoing process of exchange with its surroundings. In this last section of the Chapter I would like to use the theoretical framework of the Sonic Perceptual Ecology to access and analyse two sound-based works by sound artists Bhudhatiya Chattopadhyay and Rui Chaves. I chose these two examples not only because I had the chance to closely experience them as a reviewer for *The Field Reporter* but also because they are applying methodological approaches involving drifting, listening and responding to a site. In doing so I want to elaborate on how sound plays a significant role in the creation of the respective sonic perceptual ecologies and why using that particular framework can make the works more accessible to a listener. To further support the argument, I have prepared two diagrams exemplifying my personal understanding of the sonic perceptual ecologies behind the works.

Bhudhaditya Chattopadhyay's *Elegy For Bangalore* and Rui Chaves's *Paraty*, both take place in sites that are undergoing or have undergone a process of regeneration. Both works can be seen as testimonies of the artists' engagement with their cities of choice, both consisting of a sonic element (a CD) and a textual element (a booklet). While *Elegy For Bangalore*, the sonic and textual layers are densely created to form a contemplative pace, in *Paraty*, we are confronted, as I will be describing later in this section, with fragments of experiences. The former observes the city of Bangalore at a time of intense change and 'modernisation' whilst the latter offers a glimpse into a town that is already remodelled into a tourist destination. Of

course, here we are not dealing with a restrained locale, a node, but with whole cities where the question of transience remains relevant.

Drifting, listening, reflecting and composing become a constellation of interwoven movements in an effort to represent a lived experience that dwells as much in real events as in imagination and fiction, as much in critical reflection and attentiveness as in artistic expression and intuition. The encounter with a city is established through a similarly iterative and experimental listening methodology that allows the internal ‘seep through’ to gradually emerge, immerse itself into the environment and intertwine contingently with the experienced events. It is through this (initially) formless transient process of personal excavation that their practice of listening becomes embodied, immersed, ‘simultaneous and vertiginous’ (Voegelin 2010, p.133), superseding concrete temporalities and catalysing the generation of sonic perceptual ecologies.

#### Motions in A Sonic Perceptual Ecology: Elegy For Bangalore



[Image 4: Motions in a sonic perceptual ecology: Elegy For Bangalore]

In the case of *Elegy For Bangalore*<sup>7</sup>, a major part of the work was effectively constructed through what Chattopadhyay terms as ‘sonic drifting’ and ‘nomadic listening’<sup>8</sup> both engaging with listening from a transitory, fluid perspective that

<sup>7</sup> This section is based on a review I wrote for the work, published in the online re-source *The Field Reporter* in October 2013. You can listen to excerpts from the piece here: <https://soundcloud.com/budhaditya/excerpts-elegy-for-bangalore>

<sup>8</sup> ‘Sonic drifting’ is a term that Chattopadhyay uses in reference to the aural equivalent of the *dérive* already discussed in this chapter. ‘Nomadic Listening’ refers to a practice of listening that embraces mobility, migration and rootlessness and places itself among physical or ‘pervasive, digitalized environments.’ (Chattopadhyay 2013)

remains in 'the margin of sound with an observational-contemplative distance.' (Chattopadhyay 2013, p.145; Chattopadhyay to Papadomanolaki 2013<sup>9</sup>) Birthed out of an art residency in Bangalore in the autumn of 2010, *Elegy for Bangalore* is another incarnation of Budhaditya Chattopadhyay's engagement with emerging urban environments in India and transient spaces. Departing from a sound/video installation entitled *Eye Contact With The City* (2011, Honorable Mention, Prix Ars Electronica), the 55:49 minutes of the work dwell on the concept of a meditative and in-depth observation that reshapes 'memory associations disconnected and erased during the course of time', as Chattopadhyay explains in the sleeve notes of the work. A vast and extensive pool of materials was built in a period of six months while the piece took its final form during a subsequent artists' residency at the School of Music, Bangor University, in the summer-autumn of 2011.

In *Elegy for Bangalore* the theme of a construction site permutates endlessly in a contemplative-poetic mood of elegiac pace. And that is according to Budhaditya Chattopadhyay more than a compositional strategy. It is, in fact, a multi-layered listening methodology, necessary to accomplish the in-depth perception of the spatiotemporal implications of the city in metamorphosis: the fast-lane yet arbitrary and incomplete urban-growth that is reflected in the building of new and hybridised cities and the loss of the cathartic indolence often associated with their past. It is important to note that according to Chattopadhyay, recording in the field (and its distillation later through composing) involves 'listening through a process of experiencing the sound environment during [one's] own intervention with a particular concern for the locale and its historical transition over time' (Chattopadhyay 2013, p.148).

In fact, despite the long-standing engagement with the different sites of the city and its different zones, Budhaditya Chattopadhyay has extensively researched and written about the impossibility of fully understanding sound especially when taking under consideration the perspective of the nomadic listener<sup>10</sup>. Subjectivity, the personal perspective and background of a listener contribute to a more

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout this document I will be referencing *Sensing Cities*, a series of interviews I produced for Resonance FM between 2013-2014.

<sup>10</sup> This concept was developed in relation to Jean Luc Nancy's definition of listening as being on the edge of meaning: 'To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in an edgy meaning of extremity, and as if the sound were precisely nothing else than this edge, this fringe, this margin' (Nancy, 2007, p.7)

phenomenological approach in listening that Chattopadhyay describes as contemplative listening or 'hyper-listening.' According to him:

hyper-listening is not just deciphering the knowledge-structure of a sound but going beyond the knowledge-structure into...an exploration of the previous experiences...a sense of pre-cognitive association (of a sound)...and that sound is a sense of triggering into a zone, into a mindfulness of experiences of similar sounds.(Chattopadhyay to Papadomanolaki, 2014)

The process of precognitive association according to Chattopadhyay involves the past as well as the future in a stream of consciousness, not unlike the internal 'seep through', where memory and a form of inner listening assume an important role in constructing the work. Sound becomes the trigger that by means of its simultaneous, indecipherable and immersive porosity establishes a particular counter-atmosphere of perception within which Chattopadhyay attunes to the city. By unravelling his internal 'seep through', he generates the meshwork of interactions pertinent to his work. Initially from the edges of the city, through distanced listening from a window and later from a ground-level engagement with the city's different zones, people or street markets, Chattopadhyay manages to find his way in the volatile, chaotic and perplexed sonic, social, political and cultural layers of the sites he investigates. It is through this transient methodology of listening as Chattopadhyay argues that one can achieve an 'in-depth observation of the corresponding historicity and passage of time, and psychogeographic reflection on emergent urban spaces' (Chattopadhyay, 2013, p.151). The sonic perceptual ecology is generated here by listening, walking, writing<sup>11</sup> and engaging with the city of Bangalore on many iterative and intertwined levels. The 'simultaneous and vertiginous' sounds of the city are encountered, reflected upon, re-invented and reciprocally voiced through all the different resulting activities.

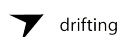
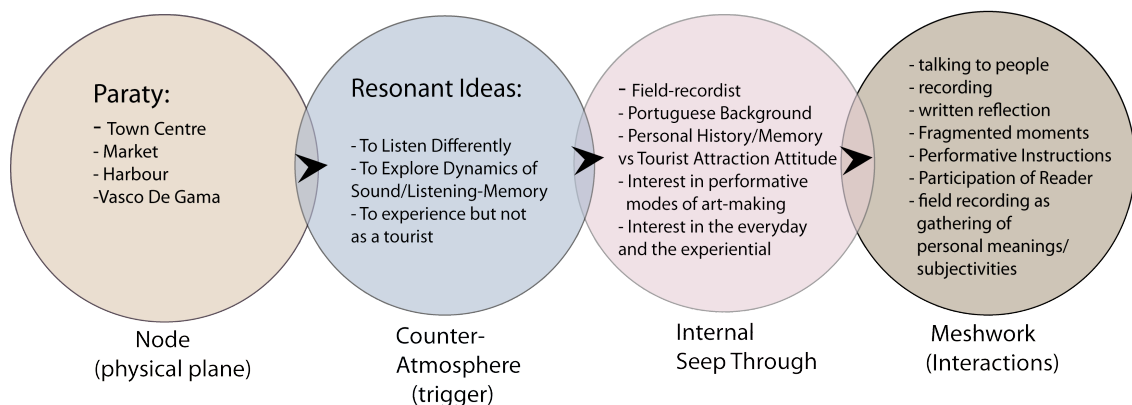
From the perspective of the listener/audience, the completed work offers a cinematic drift through the different alleys, neighbourhoods, voices and lives of Bangalore at the moment of being crushed by machines, vehicles, grinding saws and workers at enormous metro-rail construction sites. At times through a ground-level *mise-en-scène* and at times from a solar position, the work observes, detached from what's taking place. Slowness and indolence are key points for listening to this work.

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<sup>11</sup> A more extensive account of his ethnographic notes can be found in Field Notes #3 *Traces*

We gradually immerse in our journey through the city, we focus on its echoing details in long exposure, experiencing its heavy breathing, layer after layer, in a state of slow and gradual decomposition. In *Elegy for Bangalore*, Chattopadhyay encapsulates within the 55:49 minutes of duration of the work not only an interpretation of the experienced sites but also traces of the corresponding sonic perceptual ecology, even though at times obscured by the complex layering of the work. The work opens up the field of inquiry, and through its fluid atmosphere we access it, through sound. By having triggered our own internal 'seep through', we re-invent and re-imagine its meshworks inside our local node of listening.

### Motions in A Sonic Perceptual Ecology: Paraty



[Image 5: Motions in a sonic perceptual ecology: Paraty]

On a similar ground, in his limited edition book (with audio recordings) entitled *Paraty*<sup>12</sup>, Chaves shares his reflections and memories of his visit to Paraty in Brazil both as texts and as recordings that are bound to coexist, compliment and at times contrast each other. His Portuguese cultural background creates as he writes a sense of alienated familiarity in this Brazilian tourist town (Chaves, 2013). With Paraty, Chaves perhaps seeks to trace echoes of the lineage between his own native country and this distant relative. Through a series of drifts both physical as well as mediated on tape and paper, Chaves attempts to break the tourist-attraction bubble

<sup>12</sup> Since July 2013, *Paraty* is also available online on Green Field Recordings: <http://gfrnetlabel.tumblr.com/post/54711753852/gfr-066-rui-chaves-paraty>

by trying to summarise the most important aspects of his trajectory and by trying to inhabit, even if only temporarily, the town of Paraty. Driven by his interest in more performative creative contexts, he wants us to participate in the exploration. The acoustic scenery (textual or sonic) is oftentimes destabilised by Chaves' series of recurring suggestions and instructions to the reader/listener. *Can I read and listen? Can I read this book in order to listen? Can I remember while I read and listen?* The book's structure introduces the reader to different times and locations of Chaves' stay in Paraty such as the arrival, the Vasco da Gama celebrations, the town centre, the *mercado*, the harbour and in each section words are interwoven with listening exercises and complemented by a series of sounds contained in plain white, hand-numbered CDs. The work itself offers a witnessing of the process behind its creation but also a glimpse into a sonic perceptual ecology that can be restaged within the reader's/listener's own environment. We read and listen to fragments of what happened, the time and place of each visit and how the environments and their atmospheres affected and were being affected by Chaves' passing. We are also invited to re-appropriate these findings and expand them into our own lived space.

There is no ambition to present this work as a complete recounting of the experience. It is obvious that Chaves is interested in the fragmented nature of moments that finely balance between the fictitious and the lived and that altogether resound his experience of Paraty and his need to retell it through his gathered acoustic and written memories. It is rather, to me at least, more about providing a journey through an environment that consists of minute sparks of experience. And within it Chaves asks me to take part, to transpose it to my own locality and stand with him amidst busy markets and open windows, distant dog barking, donkeys, mechanical boiling fluids and serendipitous explosions. But more than anything else, Chaves' work suggests possible ways of listening and engaging with our surroundings and of essentially practising 'field recording'. He wants us to take this journey through Paraty and use it as a map to all possible destinations, a map for unlocking and, why not?, recording what matters to us and what marks our memory.<sup>13</sup>

The book itself, as already suggested, offers an indicative example of what a sonic perceptual ecology might be as it brings to the fore the meshwork of the where,

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<sup>13</sup> This whole section dedicated to *Paraty* is an edited excerpt from a review I wrote for the work, published in the online resource *The Field Reporter* in October 2014.

whens and hows of Chaves's visit, the visual, sonic and other intricacies of these exchanges and positions them in dialogue with Chaves himself, his thoughts, his drifts through the locales and his shifting listening modes. The book and the accompanying sounds also transmit the specific counter-atmosphere that triggered his internal 'seep through' manifested as a meshwork of textual and sonic interactions. With these different layers, Chaves manages to open up the visited locations and re-invent them. The artist follows this tuning-loop, gives voice to the lived experience by means of his own writing voice and his recordings. An important difference to Chattopadhyay's approach is that this particular work's format and structure calls for our immediate participation in the process. As Chaves writes, the book:

will also propose small exercises, using sonic and textual material provided, as a background from which the listener should infer their own personal meanings. This comes, not only from the listening situation itself, but also from their experience in being in other places, with other people. (Chaves, 2013, unpaginated)

The recordings are only one layer of the whole project which can be treated as a sum of building blocks that the reader/listener can flip-through and re-arrange at will. This exact process of active understanding and exchange is, to me, the key element in any sound-sensitive and site-specific activity and one that I am attempting to establish within my own creative and practice-based research and the spaces in question. The polyphonic nature of these meshworks constantly destabilises my centred perspective and leads me to intuitively establish a more immersed connection to my surroundings and to other people. As opposed to Chattopadhyay's contemplative-distance and opaque layering of manipulated sounds, I aim to choose an embodied transmission of ideas. In that respect, I find more common ground with Chaves's incomplete and open approach. In Chaves's work I recognise the prominence of spontaneity (and performativity) in the way he treats and shares his materials while rendering his working methods more transparent. This cannot be said for Chattopadhyay's work where the final creative artefact is the result of the obscuring of methods and notions of sharedness.

It can nonetheless be argued that both works, despite their creators' intentions, question concepts such as coherence and oneness in an effort to create an experience that aspires to acknowledge and critically reflect on the world we inhabit (Sennett 1994, p.25). As such, in a sonic perceptual ecology, an artist must

assume the role of a mediator who challenges 'old definitions' (Fontana, 'Sonic Ecology And The Transformation Of Noise') and reciprocates exchanges by means of 'speaking and listening...conversation...sound and voice' (Conquergood 1991, p.183). The presence of an intimate and subjective voice is therefore highlighted as an important contribution within such an approach. Even though, not credited, a very personal voice still hovers through Chaves' scribbled memories, his passing through busy markets and fairs or even in Chattopadhyay's journal entries and his hyper-listened streams of consciousness. His internal 'seep through' manifests itself in the form of a meditative poetic inner discourse in a process of distant observation of his surroundings. In both cases, their way of engaging with their surroundings, of writing about them, is manifested through their own inner voices. Their respective ways of listening through thinking, as it will be discussed in the next chapter, are an amalgam of other voices, human and non-human alike. The cluster of layers in a sonic perceptual ecology can offer, as demonstrated in the two examples of work by Chattopadhyay and Chaves, a novel platform for accessing and thinking critically about site-sensitive work not only as an end product but as an open-ended framework that allows these voices to be heard and to be merged with ours.

### **1.7 A Sonic Perceptual Ecology: Some Observations**

As outlined in this first chapter, the starting point of this research is the intent to work extensively with spaces of high mobility. Within this context, I addressed the notions of Boehme's atmosphere and Bachelard's notion of the seep through as important agents for turning the neutrality of the spaces in question into a meshwork (an expanded understanding of Tim Ingold's term) of spontaneous sound-sensitive interactions across materials, senses, bodies and voices. In these explorations sound can play a catalytic role not only as channel for mediating exchanges but also as a fluid trigger of embodied subjectivities. With reference to the practice of drifting, I considered the importance of movement as a means of exploring and re-inventing a site and its potential, through sound, to create meshworks across different registers of perception.

Finally, all these different concepts and processes were embedded and reflected upon through the multi-layered theoretical framework of the sonic

perceptual ecology. This structure involves the physical plane where the activities happen. This is a space that it is turned, with reference to Lynch's device, into a node. In this node, with the assistance of the counter-atmosphere we trigger our internal 'seep-through' and perceive our environment. The sonic perceptual ecology is generated by the meshwork of experiential interactions that are activated by this triggering. Within this ecology, I have hinted toward the notion of polyphony and the emergence of voice as a dynamic channel for listening and sounding within the explored sites.

## **Chapter 2: Listening, sound and voice**

### **2.1 Branching out**

In my introduction to the novel theoretical framework of the sonic perceptual ecology, I have emphasised the role of sound in how the different layers of the scheme are generated and interrelated. Beginning from the node, I have expanded on how sound can facilitate the transmission of subjectivities that subvert the prescribed function of a pass-through space. Within the counter-atmosphere of a sonic perceptual ecology, these subjectivities, in the form of the internal 'seep-through', are triggered and are attuned to the subtleties of a site. Sound becomes an important carrier of the meshworks of interactions that follow, supporting a polyphonic exchange between the heard, the seen and the felt across human and non-human voices.

In Chapter 2, I further expand on this idea by emphasising the role of human voice (thinking- and speaking-voice) as an instinctive activity that is embedded within the life of the city and which cannot be isolated from non-human voices but is, on the contrary, inhabited and affected by them in a mode of polyphonic cohabitation. With this second chapter, I outline how voice can branch out and become a valuable channel for letting the internal 'seep through' emerge when listening to and through a site, especially in site-sensitive sound-based work as well as in existing field recording and listening-related methodologies where it is often back-grounded. By providing examples of soundwalking practices, locative audiowalks and site-specific sound installations and how they can hinder or support the use of voice and the generation of a sonic perceptual ecology, I propose a different way of conducting soundwalks and making site-sensitive work that will be further explained in the following chapters.

### **2.2 Voice and Polyphony**

Listening from within, as Ingold suggests, calls for a process of participating in the urban environment. The challenge therefore lies in unravelling the how and what of the process. What is important? What does this listening from within mean to me

personally as a listener, a city dweller and a researcher? Amidst a multitude of theories, terms and definitions regarding listening that range from the semantic aspects of meaning (semantic listening) (Chion, 1994), to focusing on its emotional undertones (affective listening) (Gallagher, 2013; Simpson, 2009), and its potency to trigger associations (associative listening) (LaBelle, 2010), this research resonates with an open-ended approach where listening within a meshwork of interactions might assume all the above. Most of the time, what is more important, especially within the context of the sonic perceptual ecology, is to allow oneself to connect to an environment through experiencing and where 'listening' is not necessarily limited to 'listening to the space' and its acoustic and material aspects but also to oneself in simultaneity with the environment. Beyond specialist knowledge on the trends of how to (accurately or perfectly) listen, I would argue that everyone possesses the necessary 'building materials' that can enable them to listen in such a way, if only these materials are triggered and brought to the foreground.

This approach turns the search of awareness to that of self-reflection, of listening to the environment through simultaneously listening to the self and to the outside, to others. In the previous chapter, I discussed Tim Ingold's taskscape and how important is the social activity of attending to one another for the performance of everyday tasks. This sense of collaboration, he continues, is manifested through sound, the use of voices, speech along with the sounds of the environment altogether changeable as the seasons change, according to the temporality of the landscape (Ingold, 1993, pp.170-172). It is within that communion of materials, bodies and activities that being heard and listening merges with the use of voice within the sonic perceptual ecology. Brandon LaBelle mentions in his book about site-specific sound that 'thinking itself is a form of listening.' By placing the thinking-voice in the context of speech, sound-making and sound perceiving, LaBelle argues that the 'subject's understanding of an experience' is defined by the many layers of thinking voices that are 'played out through speech' (LaBelle, 2004, p.11). In the example of *Elegy for Bangalore*, such a form of communion is sent to the background. The work itself is devoid of any signs or presence of the exchanges Chattopadhyay had. However, we can still follow the traces of his trajectory through his thinking-voice that is embedded both in how the materials were recorded, how they were processed and composed and in what terms they were written about and discussed.

In other words, his internal 'seep through' was manifested within that particular voice, as it was demonstrated in the relevant diagram about my deciphering of the work's sonic perceptual ecology. And that latter observation becomes perhaps more transparent and clear in Chaves's work although still the presence of his voice is not addressed and, of course, is absent on the recordings featured in the compilation. Despite it being silenced, it is there but framed as background or supportive material. Nonetheless, it is because of that voice that we encounter *Paraty's* sonic perceptual ecology as it is build from memories inhabited by sounds, spaces, people, animals and smells.

[Please listen Audio Clip 1 before continuing reading.]

The samples you just heard are excerpts of conversations from various workshops undertaken throughout this research. As I will be discussing in more detail, one of the recurring patterns that emerged was the need to use the voice, to instigate mutual exchanges and reflections through conversation. The desire from the part of my co-walkers to listen to the site through their own bodily presence and their voices has proven to be of great importance to them and consequently to this research. Listening, walking, thinking and talking often co-existed as forms of 'a participatory communion of self and other through shared immersion' (Ingold, 2000, p.247) allowing for the internal 'seep through' to emerge and form meshworks of interactions within a sonic perceptual ecology. In these examples, as well as in the works by Chattopadhyay and Chaves, the thinking- and speaking-voice, become an instinctive way of attuning to the sociocultural and experiential implications of a space (Pinker, 1994, p.17). This dynamic relation between our voice and perception is further supported by the former's capacity to simultaneously function inside and outside us. Tim Ingold writes in reference to Don Ihde that '[i]n speaking, the voice, sounds through from the inside to the outside; in hearing it conversely penetrates from the outside to the inside' (Ingold on Ihde, 2000, p.247). The voice (speaking- or thinking-) by actively participating in these exchanges of intersubjectivities can significantly assist in the triggering of the internal 'seep through' and merge our internal building materials with the outside stimuli; an idea also discussed in detail from a phenomenological perspective by Merleau-Ponty (1962). In that sense, I could

argue that it is less a voice that seeks to establish a rigid, objectified and authoritative knowledge that it is one in perpetual change and in critical engagement with its surroundings.

[Please watch Video Clip 1 up to 01:50 before continuing reading.]

‘When in the city, our voice doesn’t belong to us’ I say at 01:08 in the video you just watched, which is an excerpt from a performance entitled *A certain geography* that I will come back to in more detail in Chapter Five. By ‘doesn’t belong to us’ I imply that my live transmitted voice becomes a polyphonic carrier of my innermost stream of thoughts that are not mine in the sense that they have within them already distilled the encounters with the voices of my surroundings be they people, spaces, animals or materials. When trying to talk about the way we perceive our environment or how it is echoed and reverberated through our human scale of experience and communication, it is impossible not to talk about voice and speech (Murray Schafer, 1977<sup>14</sup>). Furthermore, this voice being more than a stream of sounds, it is a polyphonic assemblage of fragments of encounters that came from outside, stirred and merged with our existing building materials, enriching in this way our way of perception.

I would like to borrow and expand here Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the utterance and his idea about the polyphonic nature of communication and the fact that our voices, our utterances are a polyphonic composition of other voices, other utterances. We become who we are, in speech, through others (Bakhtin, 1986, p.78, 98). Our speech is inhabited by other people’s words, but also other listenings, sounds and voices, and what we consider as ours doesn’t necessarily belong to us. The meshwork of a sonic perceptual ecology is another affirmation of such a perspective because it is a field of pluralities and polyphonies. Our internal ‘seep through’ is our way of resounding these voices, of re-connecting the inside with the

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<sup>14</sup> Murray Schafer mentions throughout his research and argumentation in his book titled *The Tuning of the World*, the importance of the ear and the voice as sensors for, inhabiting, perceiving and communicating with our environment. He discusses different examples of ‘impression’ and ‘expression’ through speech communication across different historical, sociopolitical or literary epochs as well as geographical longitudes and how these samples of utterances sit in close, active and reciprocal relation within the other voices in the environments they inhabit. (Murray Schafer, 1977, pp. 1047.1449)

outside and realising that they exist simultaneously and that by instinct we are listeners more than viewers. Bakhtin's definition of the utterance, opens this dialogue of encounters and positions each different element of it in a polyphonous chain of interactions, of voices affecting each other. In a similar manner, the text functions 'as a unique monad that in itself reflects all texts... [t]he interconnection of all ideas (since all are realized in utterances)' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 105). Therefore, either in the form of intuitive exchanges or composed artefacts (or texts), polyphony is an inherent characteristic of our encounters within the city and consequently within a sonic perceptual ecology. I would like to demonstrate how this idea translates into practice by presenting relevant field recording works.

American audio archivist and media pioneer Tony Schwartz, for instance, dedicated most of his work<sup>15</sup> attending to that polyphony consisting of ephemeral conversations and voices, their rhythm, musicality and their small but significant place in everyday city life. *New York 19* (1954)<sup>16</sup> is a prominent example of his engagement with the polyphonies of a single postal zone in Manhattan, New York City consisting of recordings of street musicians, everyday conversations, religious groups mingled with the sounds of trains, car traffic and street drillers. By experiencing the work from the framework of a sonic perceptual ecology, I can retrace in my understanding the ways with which Schwartz opened up the city, what themes (triggers of a counter-atmosphere) are resonant to him, how these are manifested through his internal 'seep through' and to what meshworks they lead. Without going into too much detail, to me, polyphony is apparent in all these different layers; not only in how the sounds were recorded and layered but also in the choices of locations, the types of encounters and the cohabitation of the human voice aspect with the non-human.

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<sup>15</sup> A comprehensive list of his works can be found here: [http://www.folkways.si.edu/search/?JsonSearchModel={%22FiltersModel%22%3A{%22AppliedFilters%22%3A{%2C%22AvailableContentTypes%22%3A\[%2C%22ContentType%22%3A0}%2C%22PaginationModel%22%3A{%22ResultsPerPage%22%3A0%2C%22StartItemIndex%22%3A0}%2C%22Query%22%3Anull%2C%22SelectedView%22%3A0%2C%22SortingOption%22%3A0%2C%22SpellingSuggestionSearchRestricted%22%3Afalse}&query=tony%20schwartz](http://www.folkways.si.edu/search/?JsonSearchModel={%22FiltersModel%22%3A{%22AppliedFilters%22%3A{%2C%22AvailableContentTypes%22%3A[%2C%22ContentType%22%3A0}%2C%22PaginationModel%22%3A{%22ResultsPerPage%22%3A0%2C%22StartItemIndex%22%3A0}%2C%22Query%22%3Anull%2C%22SelectedView%22%3A0%2C%22SortingOption%22%3A0%2C%22SpellingSuggestionSearchRestricted%22%3Afalse}&query=tony%20schwartz) [Accessed 12 June 2015]

<sup>16</sup> You can listen to samples of the work here: <http://www.folkways.si.edu/tony-schwartz/new-york-19/documentary/album/smithsonian> [Accessed 12 June 2015]

In more recent terms, Ian Rawes' *London Sound Survey*<sup>17</sup> follows in the steps of Schwartz by mediating within other non-human sounds, the voices of protests, buskers, salesmen or people in markets as they inhabit the different neighbourhoods of the city of London. Initiated in 2006, through its customised online soundmaps, Rawes' project creates an alternative multifaceted palette of interwoven layers of human voices, bird calls, sounds of trains and waterways in this sonic cosmogony of the everyday. Unlike other soundmap-based projects, Rawes' *London Sound Survey* can be seen as a site sensitive art project with no claim to authority but with the aim to embrace, as Rawes explained to me<sup>18</sup>, the value of the subjective and the everyday and where the human voice is an inseparable part of its polyphony. This is also reflected on the custom made map designs and the contextual information provided about Rawes' project and ongoing interest in the urban environment. It is through ground-level engagement with the city, by drifting across different zones, stations, neighbourhoods or fragments of events and experiences that Rawes meticulously sculpts the textures for his fictional maps and historicities of changes, losses and memories of sounds (Rawes to Papadomanolaki, 2013).

Similarly, Peter Cusack's *Favourite Sounds* (1998-ongoing)<sup>19</sup> offers a platform for people to think about and share the sounds of their cities that are the most significant to them. By initiating the process through asking people a simple question about what constitutes their favourite sound of their city, Cusack, offers to his contributors the possibility to become more aware of the positive aspects of their city. In a recent presentation, Cusack explained that people, despite not being conscious listeners, often give very detailed replies about their favourite sounds (Cusack, 2015, unpaginated). Cusack's question seems to trigger a counter-atmosphere within which people subvert the prominence of the seen and unlock their inherent capacity to hear. The resulting meshworks are a fascinating account of how polyphonic our listenership can be and how our thinking-voice is equally inhabited by human (the sound of a baby crying) and non-human voices (nightingales in the park or the rustling leaves) altogether forming a sonic perceptual ecology that is simultaneously unique to us but also accessible to others. *Favourite Sounds* is

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<sup>17</sup> Website: <http://www.soundsurvey.org.uk/>

<sup>18</sup> Throughout this document I will be referencing *Sensing Cities*, a series of interviews I produced, broadcast on Resonance FM between 2013-2014.

<sup>19</sup> Website: <http://favouritesounds.org>

primarily a socially-engaged practice and as Peter Cusack explained during a presentation at *Functional Sounds* first International ESSA Conference in 2013<sup>20</sup>, the methodology and the ways people respond to a seemingly simple question, reveal a lot about the sites in question: their sound but most importantly how we relate to them. By listening to people's thoughts and memories, it also offers meaningful insights into the suggestion that we are constantly aware of our soundscapes and our perception of them resides in our ability to intuitively embrace the polyphony that we are also part of. It is therefore a way of conversation that can move beyond the sheer cartographic documentation of a place to more deep and critical questions about place.

Cathy Lane, another artist working extensively with voice, speech and oral history, emphasised, during her keynote speech at the 2015 *Sonorities* symposium at Queen's University Belfast, the importance of instigating conversations with other people as a means to trace voices that are not represented in the big scheme of History (with capital H) and to bring to the surface stories that are part of the fabric of the environment but are as Lane calls them 'stories from below' (Lane, 2015, unpaginated)<sup>21</sup>. In Cathy Lane's work, these stories are not isolated from the environments they inhabit. They are not treated as sterilised fossils extracted and imported into a lab for observation and indexing. On the contrary, they form part of the many voices that inhabit the environment and allow for the sonic perceptual ecology behind the work to emerge and expand toward us. As Salomé Voegelin writes in reference to Lane's *On the Machair* (2007)<sup>22</sup>, a work about the coastal grassy plains found on the Outer Hebrides:

[t]he place heard emerges from the gusty weather that marks its arrival. It does not stand on a certain site but rushes by. It is made of voices, cows, goats and the sea and encourages in its sonic persistence that you muck-in. The artist's voice welcomes and guides you around the island, narrating stories of the past and commenting on the flora and fauna of the present. Her tentative report offers me a way in: to tune my listening into her production of the place and make it mine. (Voegelin, 2010, p. 21)

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<sup>20</sup> *Functional Sounds* conference, 4-6 October 2013, Berlin. You can download the conference's programme from here:

[http://www.soundstudies.eu/assets/ESSA\\_ConferenceFunctionalSounds\\_Programm.pdf](http://www.soundstudies.eu/assets/ESSA_ConferenceFunctionalSounds_Programm.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> More info on the symposium's theme and programme can be found here:

[http://www.qub.ac.uk/sonorities/symposium\\_programme.html](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sonorities/symposium_programme.html)

<sup>22</sup> A sample of the work can be heard here: <https://soundcloud.com/playingwithwords/on-the-machair-1>

The centrality of polyphony in Lane's stories from below is to me catalytic in expanding the work to my own sonic perceptual ecology so that within it I can actively participate not only as a listener but also as co-producer. Being not a work about a fixed listening point but a transient perspective, it is entangled in the volatility of the encountered environments and situations. *On the Machair*, originally composed in 2007 and later included in Lane's *The Hebrides Suite* (Gruenrekorder, 2013) is the result of the artist's longstanding engagement with the Hebrides. As a whole *The Hebrides Suite* offers an exploration of language, people and place and how these are interwoven with the environment, its social, religious and cultural complexities, composing altogether a fragmented continuity across past and present histories. People, as they're embedded in Lane's work - but also in the work of Schwartz, Cusack or Rawes - give life to the spaces they inhabit. Their voices and conversations are carriers of important, personal yet dense sociocultural references and they are bound to coexist, affect and be affected by other voices both human and non-human. And in this polyphonic constellation we are not the most unique species but one that needs to be constantly reminded of its equal position in the chain of life.

Let us revisit the sonic perceptual ecology diagrams and focus on the relation between the internal 'seep through' and the meshwork. I have talked about the plurality of the latter and how it enriches and affects the consistency of the former. If we add the concept of the polyphony to this equation then we can perhaps have a deeper understanding on why we are constantly aware of our surroundings and why sound plays an important role not only as a source of information but as a catalyst in the creation of polyphonic meshworks of interactions. And voice can become, to paraphrase Ihde, our instinctive means of participating in this communion and of allowing complex patterns of associations to develop and assume meanings that fluidly blur the inside/outside division.

Similarly to a sonic perceptual ecology, Steven Feld, in his acoustemological account of the Kaluli bird song, has written about the bird song becoming significant not as an index of names and species but only when understood as a carrier and participant in a dense network of sound, space, social and cultural interactions and relationships (Feld, 1990.) Following on from Murray Schafer's suggestion that the

soundscape is echoed in how people use language, speak or sing, Feld in his 'echo-muse-ecological' study of the rainforest culture, discusses the harmony, or the 'lift up-over sounding' as he calls it, between non-human and human voices and how the former is distilled within the latter and vice-versa. In this ecology, voiced memory plays a significant role for blending presence with absence and 'how in the forest sound reveals what vision conceals' (Feld, 1994, unpaginated). It is a 'pattern of fluid but tense egalitarian social life, where an anarchic synchrony of energy and assertion take prominence over fixed categories, in a social order without political or economic hierarchy' (Feld, 1994, unpaginated). When in the urban environment, our voice, that we play out through speech, assumes a similar function. Its sound permeates inside us and repurposes our building materials through the ways we perceive and compose our memories. It can become significant when it is considered as part of a relevant meshwork where apart from being a means of communication, it also gives us immediate access to 'states of mind, thoughts and feelings' (Tuan, 1994, p.4) and how these are triggered and affected by other experiential stimuli and voices.

### **2.3 Designing narratives: voice as inhabiting and countering spaces**

At this intersection between voice and our environment, I would like to consider my initial proposition of the sonic perceptual ecology as a means for producing site-sensitive work that enriches, opens up and tentatively subverts existing narratives and staging of atmospheres. Modern city spaces are more and more becoming closed-up, privatised and added value in the form of blue plaques and 'prestigious living' regeneration plans. Walking and living in the city in many cases resembles a controlled territory where access is questionable and freedom has a function (Davis, 1990, p.231). Each site of the city, each alley-way, each station, house, becomes now more than ever, a space in-transit and a pass-through site. Within the sonic perceptual ecology of a site-sensitive exploratory workshop, a temporary installation or even performance, sites can be turned into nodes, inhabited and immersed in sound by letting the stories of their polyphonic voices (the everyday people, the objects, the events) be recounted and through that actively engage us as listeners and as companions. In his *Minima Ethnographica* Michael Jackson addresses the importance of reciprocal story-making as a means of 'tracing

of human lives over time' and of enacting everyday rituals that sustain us in the 'deep matrix of being.' As he writes 'stories link people to places and legitimise these links... without such stories the connection between one's own life and the longer matrix of Life itself is lost... Stories can also forge and create links' (Jackson, 1998, p.136).

A sonic perceptual ecology can allow these links to be forged by triggering the internal 'seep through' and letting our thinking- and speaking-voice interact with existing stories and to transmit new ones, always as part of the particular social, political and cultural subtleties of a meshwork. When experiencing a space either as part of a drift or through the aesthetic triggers of an artwork, we are participating, through walking, speaking, thinking, listening, to that 'deep matrix of being' that Jackson is referring to. On every iteration of a trajectory in this matrix we can discover different aspects of a location and how we connect to it. As sound writer Daniela Cascella explained to me in a conversation, when considering listening and sound, 'there is not one aspect of a place, one permanent version of a place' (Cascella to Papadomanolaki, 2013). In a sonic perceptual ecology, this alludes to the fluid dynamics between our internal 'seep through' and perception and how our voice (our thinking-, speaking-voice included) can, when in conversation with other voices, become an ever-changing carrier of subjectivities and other subtleties. It is a form of 'a participatory communion of self and other through shared immersion' (Ingold, 2000, p.247).

In reference to the polyphonic and multifaceted perspectives that can emerge through everyday listening and conversation, Communication Studies Professor and soundwalking artist Andra McCartney borrows Donna Haraway's term 'partial knowledge' to address the 'partiality' of such experiences only to be completed by relying 'on connections with others for objectivity and the creation of knowledge...that provide the possibility to listen together' (McCartney, 2014, p.120). And, even though it may be questionable whether we can attain a completeness of knowledge through listening, as I will be explain later, it is important that through speech and conversation we can unlock particular sites in a motion that connects our inner listening and 'seep through' with that of others.

Dutch artist Saskia Olde Wolbers' audio installation *Yes, these Eyes are the Windows*<sup>23</sup>, on display at 87 Hackford Road in Stockwell, London between May-June 2014 attempted to follow the shadow of Vincent van Gogh during his one year stay in that property. Commissioned and produced by Artangel, the installation expanded Wolbers' fascination with the cinematic claustrophobia (Wolbers to Evans, 2014, unpaginated), usually created in her video pieces, into the medium of sound. A multispeaker arrangement is attentively placed in the different rooms and hallways of the three-storey house, to re-enact the factual and fictional stories of a family of tenants. We, as listeners, witness the moment when they were informed by the local council about Van Gogh being a resident there in the past and consequently the enormous changes that this sudden added value brought not only to the property itself but to the lives of its tenants and neighbours. According to the exhibition's brochure the fictional narrative written by Wolbers was:

[P]ieced together from information gleaned from local residents, council archives and tabloid headlines telling of Van Gogh's apparent love affair with his landlady's daughter. The house itself recalls overhead conversations and events that question the mythologising of Van Gogh and the ensuing impact on its owners. (Artangel, 2014, unpaginated)

The mosaic of fiction that Wolbers constructed out of her two-year residency in the area takes the form of a séance with voices from the past, readings of memories and newspaper clippings, conversations with locals. The particular atmosphere instigated by these stories, the scandals, the social, political, emotional undertones of the locality and hidden histories of the people encountered allowed Wolbers to attune to the minute details and intricacies attached to this temporary installation space, allowing her internal 'seep through' to emerge and cohabit the environment. At this particular stage, following the artist's research process of walking, speaking to local inhabitants, of digging through the different layers surrounding the historicity of the site, a particular sonic perceptual ecology begins to be formed. This ecology is also distilled and re-enacted through the multilayered narrative of voices of the different fictional characters that roam around the house. The enchanting memories of the past are further reinforced by the house itself that has been left untouched since the seventies, with a strong smell of mould and dust

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<sup>23</sup> Exhibition website: [http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2014/yes\\_these\\_eyes](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2014/yes_these_eyes)

visible on the walls and remaining furniture. The artist tried to change as little as possible the condition of the house and the arrangement of the scattered objects found in it (Wolbers to Evans, 2014), leaving it open for the audience to explore and make their own associations while walking around. The same house, the same spaces are revisited through the different stories, memories and characters featured in the audio installation. Their voices are moving in the house like ghostly presences, transmitting fragments of the artist's narrative that the audience tries to trace by walking inside the different rooms listening, smelling, touching their traces found on objects, photographs and newspaper clippings scattered throughout the house. Memory becomes the driving force behind both the narrative and the audience's intimate experience as we try to somehow glue these pieces together, listening in to the different stories. The house becomes the node of all these associations, the core of the memory at play.

We could suggest that any attempt to revisit or to trigger a memory creates a new meshwork of associations and a '[timespace that] invites the experience of ephemeral stability and fixed fluidity' (Voegelin, 2010, p.124). Let us revisit Cascella's suggestion that there is not one singular version of a place. In her interview for *Sensing Cities*, she argued in relation to her book *En Abîme: Listening, Reading, Writing* that as a reader, writer and listener, she is constantly subjected to an ambiguous interplay between transience and memory by means

of [re]visiting a number of specific places within the [fiction] of a city through writing about them... and using this writing as a way of inhabiting these places and somehow showing that there is not one aspect of a place, one permanent version of a place... and how this is varied, eroded through the process of listening and writing. (Cascella to Papadomanolaki, 2013)

Can we contemplate that each listening experience, in its fluidity, involves 'reality' as much as 'fiction'? Could that erosion that Cascella refers to, allude to what cannot be recollected and to a possible suggestion to embrace transience and loss through imagination, other stories, subjectivities and voices? In that sense, McCartney's notion of attaining completeness in our knowledge through partiality is always out of reach as each listening experience creates a new reconfiguration of perception that may or may not hinder the previous ones but it surely destabilises any premeditated ideas and certainties. In Cascella's *En Abîme*, the city becomes a

metaphorical site for these slippages between different fragments of memory and experience in listening. It sheds light on the importance of looking underneath the material surface of things, in a non-temporal gaze, embracing 'an ethnography of one's subjective space as a kind of complex community, a site of shifting locations' (Clifford, 1997, p.88).

Wolbers's audio installation touches upon a similar approach that does not dictate authority or singularity but, on the contrary, provides a slippery polyphonic environment where the fictional devices of the artist are reciprocated, re-enacted or contested by the visitors' perspective and movement in the space. Wolber's interest in that particular house stems from her initial identification with Van Gogh's story. Being Dutch herself and coming from a similar territory to that of Van Gogh, a small rural town, she found herself resonating with the psychology of the nineteen-year-old painter who had just arrived in the city of London (Wolbers to Evans, 2014, unpaginated). Personal memory merges with an imagined one as Wolbers peels the psychogeographic layers of the house. She attunes to the stories of the locals, the stories in the tabloids, the atmosphere of the house as it is countered and enriched by these voices and these altogether allow her own private imagination and memory to seep through and create a story that 'is not that of Van Gogh's brief year in London, but that of its inhabitants 100 years later' (Artangel, 2014, unpaginated).

It can be argued that within this meshwork of interactions, taking place inside the node of the house, the sonic perceptual ecology created, relies as much on these fictions of memory taking place in the piece as within the thinking, subjective, voice of the audience that serves as the silent interlocutor whose fragile listening identity (and understanding) is gradually formed between all these associations of fluid, non-fixated patterns and shifting locations and voices. As a participant in the piece, with my walking gestures, I attune to the counter-atmosphere created by the piece and gradually begin to unravel my own internal 'seep through' in the house and contribute actively to the meshwork of the piece. My listening identity, my understanding is gradually being formed, contested, and shifted between my thoughts and my experiential gestures. William James discussed the notion of identity as a 'loosely construed thing' that mutates and changes between the experiential 'me' and the thinking 'I' that constitute the Self. Indeed, James positions these shifts within the self in direct relation to the alterations and fictions of memory:

False memories are by no means rare occurrences in most of us, and whenever they occur, they distort the consciousness of the me. Most people, have probably seen them, may have said them, done them, or they may only have dreamed or imagined they did so. The content of a dream will oftentimes insert itself into the stream of real we give to others of our experiences. Such accounts we almost always make both more simple and more interesting than the truth. (James, 1952, 241)

Wolbers' piece elegantly embraces these fictions of memory and provides an immersive sonic perceptual ecology that without our contribution would fail to exist. We as listeners are encouraged to empathise with these layers and think beyond the famous artist's frustrated love affair with Eugene<sup>24</sup>, to embrace a universal story that reflects and criticises the agendas behind blue plaques, housing markets, gentrification and the everyday people's struggle to cope within this changing indifferent landscape. Wolber's piece, like Corringham's *Shadow-walks* that will be discussed later in this chapter, does not look for an excuse to escape from the city but to creatively, playfully and thoughtfully engage with it and its people. The formation of a sonic perceptual ecology becomes an integral step of becoming part of the piece and understanding its possible underpinnings and meanings.

## 2.4 Designing Narratives: Learning What's There

In Wolbers's piece, the house becomes a junction, similar to Lynch's description of the node, whose importance is central in the piece, affecting the trajectories of the people moving inside it. The house becomes the main character in *Yes, these Eyes are the Windows* and provides a form of listening node whose spaces perform a sort of ventriloquism by being activated by different voices. In that sense, I would like to consider ventriloquism as an intuitive process of polyphonic communion with other voices and stories and of being reciprocally inhabited by them in a context of call and response, of conversation if you like. In similar terms, in British sound artist's Francesca Panetta's locative app feature entitled *Hackney Hear*, London Fields park becomes the node where Panetta is weaving different paths made of self-sustained stories and voices. In our conversation for *Sensing Cities*, she

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<sup>24</sup> Eugene is one of the characters in the piece, the daughter of the landlady with whom the artist falls in love.

revealed that space and location are the main character in her stories although they remain invisible in the app.



[Image 6: Hackney Hear: London Fields, London, 2012]

Working with the location in an effort to unravel different perspectives of it was a necessary step in the process and one that contributed to the polyphony achieved in the piece. The piece's content is skilfully edited and orchestrated in different locations in and around the area of London Fields Park in Hackney. Listeners can download the app on their phones and trigger different narratives as they walk *in situ*. Panetta's engagement with locative app projects is rooted in her production of documentaries for radio and her gradual move to the production of online content for podcasting. An important theme explored in the different facets of her work is the relation between sound, place and technology. As she explained in *Sensing Cities*:

I have always been interested in sound on location so I've always loved things like Janet Cardiff's soundwalks, art pieces like Graeme Miller's M11 *Linked* project and a lot of the straight radio or podcast pieces I do are about place. I love literature about place whether it's people like Iain Sinclair or Robert MacFarlane, Rebecca Solnit... [p]lace is really important to me. (Panetta to Papadomanolaki, 2013)

The locative technology used allows the piece to re-appropriate the public realm and invisibly restage its different sections by actively affecting the experience of the park, not unlike Michael Bull's extended analyses on the field of locative and

portable sound culture and everyday experience (Bull, 2007). It also facilitates a counter-aestheticising of the atmosphere of the space in a similar way to that already explained in Chapter One in reference to Boehme (Boehme, 1993, p.123). The appliance of such technologies in creative practices allows new types of experiential patterns to emerge; ones that involve advanced multitasking, combining heightened sensory processes (Pinder, 2001, p.5) with embodied social, relational actions. (Hemment, 2006, pp.350-351) In the context of a sonic perceptual ecology that form of aestheticising should allow the external, outward experience to coexist with internal processes while opening up space for happenstances and accidental discoveries. It can nonetheless, if overused, hinder this form of communication.

With the use of locative technology in *Hackney Hear*, Panetta attempts to apply her potent experience in feature-making to the public sphere and to offer to her listeners the possibility to 'learn what's there' (Panetta to Papadomanolaki, 2013). As she added in our interview '[i]n *Hackney Hear* you walk past a ping pong table. You might walk past it every day and not notice it's there. When you hear it panned off to the side where it is, you might turn your head and realise it's there' (Panetta to Papadomanolaki, 2013).

In that learning of place, one wanders and listens to a series of perfectly staged anecdotes and commissioned art pieces. One also wonders what may be silenced or absent. Can this listening experience involve a level of participation on the part of the audience as in Wolbers's piece, for example? What can we bring or contribute to a geolocated work as listeners, thinkers, visitors or local inhabitants? How can we allow our internal 'seep through' to mix with, enrich and interact with the piece in a way that is less 'how to' and less guided? Of course, that sort of criticism does not solely apply to Panetta's work but it can be addressed to the majority of geolocated works. This is commonplace, for instance, among many artists working on similar platforms and with whom I had the chance to discuss as part of my research. In my interview for *Sensing Cities* with London-based sound artist Joel Cahen about his series of geolocated theatre works with Interzone Theatre, he emphasised the importance of creating a detached and closed listening space in order to achieve a link between the 'psychogeographic' and the 'psychoacoustic' within the realm of a cinematic narration. (Cahen to Papadomanolaki, 2013). This is

something that is acknowledged and criticised by others artists whom I interviewed for *Sensing Cities*.

Slovenian multimedia artists Brane Zorman and Irena Pivka of the CONA Arts Institute in Ljubljana, in their locative sound performance *Walk The City* (2013) attempt to use locative sound technology in order to break the 'bubble-ness' of modern city dwelling and commuting by slowing down the process through walking, exploring and listening to the spaces in an interactive manner. In their work, they want to merge the fictitious with the real and the happenstance but again the limitations of the technology have at times hindered the process (Zorman, Pivka to Papadomanolaki, 2014). In other projects - such as London-based arts collective ScreenDeep's *Memento* designed for the Limehouse Town Hall and the area surrounding it - this attempt for inclusivity of the outside is facilitated through engaging all 'five senses' (Olivia Bellas, ScreenDeep to Papadomanolaki, 2013) with a bag of prompts and objects that the listener has to use to interact with the environment.

Panetta's engagement with that particular location stems equally from her personal knowledge of the area as an inhabitant but also from her long-standing engagement with the local communities and artists. She investigates, therefore, her site with the confidence and familiarity of a local specialist and her interacting with the site and its voices perhaps justifies her focus on guiding the listener to learn what's there in a particular way. The sonic perceptual ecology she develops throughout the preparation of the piece as well as in its staging *in situ*, offers a quite well-scripted repertoire of voices and personal interpretations of stories and events. In that sense, we get more of an informative listening experience on the park and less of an interactive and interpretative depth as in CONA's or ScreenDeep's work or Wolber's and Chattopadhyay's drifts across the psychogeographic undertones of the sites they work with. CONA's *Walk The City*, for instance, is situated within a series of carefully selected sites in the city of Ljubljana that are related to politics and power. The stories in the piece are designed to provide a sparse pool of pre-recorded words and conversations that offer hints about the sites and the piece's overarching questions. As CONA explained in our conversation, these might at times be in synch with what is happening in the experienced reality and sometimes not but they aspire to allow for this exchange to happen.

From the perspective of the audience and the resulting sonic perceptual ecology, in *Hackney Hear* we need to listen attentively to what her guests have to say, listen to the music and the 'ghost sounds' of the location as interpreted by Panetta to really learn what is there. But it is, at times, challenging to follow what is going on both inside and outside of the piece's acoustic field whilst our internal 'seep through' needs to be controlled, if not silenced. By finding inspiration in literature and in projects that deal with the reimagining of place through the interplay between presence and absence, fiction and reality, Panetta's locative project aims to 'change the world around us by changing our perception.' In our interview, Panetta discussed the proximities and differences between a book and an app project in relation to how they affect the perception by tracing their main difference in that the book operates solely on the internal and imaginary yet a locative app exposes that internal perception, as she explained, to 'a physical plane.'

We could add that a reader as much as a walker performs a kind of mental *dérive*, activated by the counter-atmosphere of a book, by projecting his or her own associations. A locative sound app project can offer that same possibility in addition to the ability, to paraphrase Augoyard, to inhabit a physical location by means of 'configuration, structuration...and re-creation of space through feeling and motor function' (Augoyard 2007). A sonic perceptual ecology activated via a locative sound app has the ability to therefore transform a sound artwork into a 'generative fiction.' Voegelin expands on this concept by emphasising that 'we inhabit this materiality intersubjectively, reciprocating its agency in the sensory-motor action of listening as a movement toward what it is we hear' (Voegelin, 2014, p.51).

*Hackney Hear*, although successful in re-creating the space and bringing interesting perspectives and stories to the surface, does so by virtue of a seemingly authoritative narrative design that, to a certain degree, risks turning the openness of the park into a self-contained 'referential fiction'<sup>25</sup> (Voegelin, 2014, p.51). But, again, can we think of a way that this kind of technology could be used for the generation of more sociable and conversational exchanges and experiences?

The answer is difficult and perhaps a less controlled and contrived layering of sounds and narratives could facilitate the cohabitation of the edited, the outside, the

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<sup>25</sup> A referential fiction exists in parallel to reality, 'based on a logic of parallelism that guarantees their autonomy in relation to the actual world.' (Voegelin, 2014, p.51)

intimate and the coincidental. These are at least questions that I have attempted to answer in the early stages of this project by experimenting with locative technologies for the creation of site-specific projects<sup>26</sup>. The limitations of the technologies combined with my small programming knowledge led me to set this aspect of the project aside for future development. From these incomplete endeavours however, I have observed that, In the context of a sonic perceptual ecology, it would be interesting, if a locative piece was designed as a collaborative activity for two listeners to experience simultaneously by using the same pair of headphones and listening through one ear while leaving the other open. Within that set-up, it could tentatively be easier to stage an audio piece that would encourage conversation, polyphonic exchange and psychogeographic exploration of place while providing a fine balance of premeditated material and stories that provide ‘the possibility to listen together’ (McCartney, 2014, p.120).

## **2.5 Voice to the mind: Soundwalks and Commented City Walks**

I have been arguing about the importance of using our voice as a means of exchange within a sonic perceptual ecology. I used the above examples to demonstrate how such a claim can be put in practice and to suggest that in listening, voice (thinking- and speaking-voice) is a valuable source for experiencing and for immersing ourselves in the environments we encounter. The use of voice and speech (especially inner speech in the form of thinking) is, nonetheless, often regarded as a sign of bad listening practice, opposed to silence that is deemed as the golden rule for attentive and conscious listening. As stated earlier, in a wide range of field recording practices, the presence of the recordist (body, voice) is usually extracted from the environment as if the microphone has summoned up on its own the purest forms of nature sounds. And yes, in some cases, speech is not necessary as the site, and its character informs us on how to respond to it, to communicate with it.

‘Still the noise in the mind’ (Murray Schafer, 1994, p.259), Murray Schafer wrote, prompting a good listener (and acoustic designer) to regain their inner positive silence and to perform ‘ear cleaning’ exercises and soundwalks that allow

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<sup>26</sup> Notably with projects like *Resonances: W14/Convento* and *Here Comes Everybody* but also the participation to *Wandering Ruins Workshop*. See Timeline for more information.

him/her to attune to the details of the soundscape and ultimately to reach silence and relief from the boisterous and lo-fi urban soundscape. In *The Tuning of the World*, he discusses the notion of acoustic design as a ‘matter of retrieval of a *significant aural culture*’ (Murray Schafer, 1994, p.206). According to him, this process of retrieval must involve every single person who is involved in the ‘orchestration’<sup>27</sup> of the environment but the most important figures should be the ‘composers’ who can turn themselves into acoustic designers by specialising in a diversity of fields such as sociology, acoustics or psychology. It is within that exact proposition that Murray Schafer places the important observation about the overwhelming of the voice and its suppression by inhuman urban design and its lo-fi acoustic analogy. And even though he supports his argument with various examples throughout his book that acknowledge the importance of the voice as our primordial source and sensor for experiencing and communicating, in his definition of the acoustic designer he moves on to focus on an acoustic environment that we are bound to understand through silence and skilled listening. The question here, of course, is whether such a silent and skilled listening position is actually the best way to counter the transient spaces that this research is interested in.

As already discussed elsewhere in this Chapter, it is through our polyphonic encounters with our environments that we become more aware of our listenership. That polyphony within the framework of a sonic perceptual ecology is not limited to a specific mode of listening. Our awareness of our surroundings through sound is constant, as it was also argued when I discussed the *Favourite Sounds* project. Most of the time it is only a matter of triggering it (and bringing it to the foreground) by letting our internal ‘seep through’ be activated through our thinking-voice in the form of memories and other embodied associations and conversations. Even in the most silent encounters with a city, field recording artists write blog posts<sup>28</sup> (or soundscape diaries) (Murray Schafer, 1994, p.231) describing all the experiences and thoughts *ex post facto*, giving in this way a more engaged and personal testimony and a sign of presence in the recorded field. It is hard to believe that these reflections magically popped up after the walk was completed and that the recordist’s mind remained

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<sup>27</sup> Having a strong theoretical background in musical studies, Murray Schafer’s theory draws parallels between the two fields (music and acoustic ecology) whilst largely defining the soundscape as a large-scale composition.

<sup>28</sup> Such as for instance this post about a soundwalk in a shopping centre in Minneapolis: <http://colabradio.mit.edu/a-soundwalk-in-minneapolis-minnesota/>

positively silent throughout the process. It is, to me, more acceptable to consider whether this inner thinking-voice is what animates us toward wanting to listen and to explore, especially in the city. Murray Schafer's definition of acoustic design training as outlined in *The Tuning Of The World* proposes the soundwalk as one of the most potent methods for experiencing our environments and practicing ear- training exercises. As he writes:

[t]he soundwalk is an exploration of the soundscape of a given area using a score as a guide. The score consists of a map, drawing the listener's attention to unusual sounds and ambiances to be heard along the way. A soundwalk might also contain ear training exercises. (Murray Schafer, 1994, pp.212-213)

The voice is used as a 'singing tool' to explore resonances and harmonics in spaces in the same way footsteps are used to walk on different surfaces. That is perhaps the optimum way of using voice for not disturbing the positive silence of the skilled listener. The groups of acoustic designers-soundwalkers most of the time are encouraged to keep safe distances from each other so for example the bodily sounds and footsteps of a person in front don't distract the person following. All the talking and sharing, is usually allowed before, after or during pauses in a walk (McCartney, 2010, unpaginated) in an effort to create an unobtrusive and immersive listening experience. But again, here I would like to argue that, leaving the idea of the skilled listener aside<sup>29</sup>, there are tremendous possibilities in allowing discussion and of the thinking-voice (and consequently of our internal 'seep through') to become an integral part of a soundwalk, especially when, in the context of a sonic perceptual ecology, it is combined with the essence of the psychogeographic drift.

Unlocking our voice and tuning it to its instinctive mode of polyphonic cohabiting and our inherent ability to simultaneously listen to the inside/outside can facilitate the process. Such an ecology would therefore reinforce learning, understanding, reciprocating not from only our own specialist ability to properly listen in silence but to embrace the possibility of learning from others, of listening to the environment as a constellation of faulty and good listenings between humans and non-humans alike. That sort of proposition is nonetheless an overlooked or back-

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<sup>29</sup> I argue that we all have inherent capacities to listen and hear potently and communicate the experience with one another. The idea of skilfulness is not of main focus in this research trajectory.

grounded activity within a wide range of traditional soundwalking methodologies although, as Andra McCartney explains, it can be equally informative and meaningful in terms of perceiving within an experienced environment (McCartney, 2014). As sound artist Hildegard Westerkamp writes in her influential essay on the practice that draws from and expands Murray Schafer's definition '[a] soundwalk is any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment... The focus on listening can make this a meditative activity, sometimes shared in silence with others.' (Westerkamp, 2007, p.49)

Contemplation, thoughtfulness and constructive thinking are therefore necessary outputs during the walk and serve to testify for the importance of 'thinking as listening' in the process of perception and engagement with the soundscape and its implications. Observation, internalisation and reflection often lead to the creation of awareness. We could argue, therefore, that it is questionable whether the absence of speaking-voice during the walk facilitates a better and more skilled listening position, especially within the context of a focused and constructive conversation that is relevant to an urban environment and is revealing important themes and angles related not only to its materials but most importantly to how our sensibilities are manifested within it.

We could also consider that the concept of silence was set aside in the series of *Soundwalking* shows that Westerkamp produced for Vancouver Co-op Radio during the 1970s, where the voice was necessary to provide context, to reflect on and interact with what was heard and with the audience. In the broadcast, Westerkamp would record preparatory and reflexive soundwalks in particular neighbourhoods of Vancouver that she would then reconfigure and present on-air accompanied by live commentary, listener phone-ins and readings of various literary resources in an effort to bring the everyday and community soundscape to her listeners' attention. The listening experience of the specific sites, although initially solitary and meditative, was re-enacted and significantly enriched through this communication and engaged exchange between the listeners and herself.

In fact, the use of the voice is a characteristic quality in many of Westerkamp's compositional works where she assumes the role of a narrator who intimately shares her thoughts and reflections with the listener. In both cases, the attention to sound is enriched with associations with the weather, time of the day,

literary references and readings as well as music, imaginary universes and the possible exchanges of emotions and ideas that surface from and beyond an actual sound. I argue that such associative and ‘seep through’ processes, are necessary within the context of urban sound studies and can be triggered and achieved with conversations that take place within the framework of a soundwalk. We can, as I already discussed, both listen inwardly and within an environment. Our responses are intuitive and we are bound to respond as we are bound to experience reciprocally and ‘intersubjectively’ (Idhe, 2007, p.118).

Let us reconsider Ingold’s idea of the meshwork. We are required to attain a certain level of openness and inclusivity, which involves a multi-sensory connection to our surroundings that is not necessarily limited, as Ingold argues, to a soundscape but where sound opens up actualities and triggers associations. We perceive from within the network of these polyphonic associations which are gradually and continuously formed, to recite Bachelard, in a motion of seeping through of our building materials. If our thought processes are present in this constellation of associations what can then be said of our voice? Can our speaking voice be part of the meshwork? Ingold’s idea of ‘sociable way of communication’ (Ingold, 2010, unpaginated) ties together the activities of walking, listening and talking with that of seeing, feeling, touching or even smelling. We can perceive reciprocally through our voice and our communication with our environments. We can all afford the same ability to such an experience through sound and it is a matter of triggering and unlocking such a potential of ‘practicing perception as a motion of immersion and inhabiting’ (Voegelin, 2014, p.62) within the sonic perceptual ecology of a soundwalk.

Artist and voice studies scholar Zeynep Bulut argues that the voice functions as a matrix and as ‘a continuum, which evolves from inside to outside, and which in turn echoes outside back to inside’ (Bulut, 2011, p.1). The linearity of a ‘here and now’ analysis often attained in a soundwalk can therefore be challenged by a thicker and denser bundle of lines that involve the possible and the imagined as well as the factual and the psychological (in psychogeographical terms). The soundwalk can become an embodied, intuitive and reciprocal meshwork of voices that interact, listen, and converse in a state that enables us to deepen our connection to an environment and to re-claim and re-activate a node.

I would therefore like to propose that the development of a more conversational soundwalk could actually be equally informative and engaging within the context of a sonic perceptual ecology. Laurie Anderson wrote in an online feature that '[w]e're multitasking by using thoughts and languages simultaneously. That's one way to use stories' (Anderson, 2015, unpaginated). Anderson presents this form of multitasking as an instinctive drive that we have towards externalising and internalising encounters and attending to others, not unlike Ingold's taskscape. In a meshwork created during a conversational soundwalk, such a form of multitasking can facilitate and broaden the spectrum of perception and our inner aptitude to listen, to rephrase Boehme, across the materials and senses within a staged atmosphere. Drawing on Yi Fu Tuan, artist and researcher Isobel Anderson argues that 'we verbalise our surroundings, and our voices and conversations tie us to place.' (Anderson, 2012, unpaginated). It is these stories that affect the way we experience, feel, listen or 'create the world around us' and that open up our listening field beyond ourselves towards a more participatory environment. Sociologist and urban planner Jean-Paul Thibaud in his ongoing research project *Commented City Walks* touches upon a similar concept by investigating 'the situationally-rooted nature of perception, mobility as a condition for the existence of perception, the interlacing of words and perception' (Thibaud, 2013, unpaginated).

Combining studies on acoustic ecology, theories on the urban ambiance and sociology, the walks place the passer-by in the role of a commentator whose words contribute to a rigorous interdisciplinary study of the urban environment. Thibaud's interest in the study of atmospheres, or ambiances to use his own term, offers an engaging and relatively grounded contextualisation of the term and positions it within the realm of human and non-human processes, as a layer that exists in simultaneity with other material aspects of a site and can become apparent/heard in three different stages. In his own terms, these stages are acclimatisation (what is being felt, tuning to the atmosphere within a particular site), variation (how it can be modulated, affected by city-dwellers depending on how it is used e.g. hectic or deserted space) and alteration (how it can be framed and formatted by walkers, passers-by themselves) (Thibaud, 2011, pp.43-53). These stages appear in simultaneity within the blurry zones of the ambiances. According to Thibaud, such an approach offers a different perspective on thinking about atmospheres as it moves

the discourse beyond how the built environment affects us to a more interactive approach where human presence can assume a more engaged and modulating role in the equilibrium of perception. 'As we can see from everyday language' he argues 'people can at one and the same time "soak up" and "create" an ambiance.' (Thibaud, 2011, p.43).

With *Commented City Walks* he foregrounds the importance of speech communication to simultaneously trigger all these different stages and reveal the inner-workings behind these schemes. Similarly to Murray Schafer's vision of engaging everyday people in the process of acoustic design, Thibaud's methodological approach, enriches the practice of soundwalking with the use of speech and the different impressions and expressions of 'gestures'<sup>30</sup> used as means for deciphering through sound city-dwellers' relations, reactions and habits. Meticulously structured listening analyses of the recordings of these 'ordinary and engaged description[s]' reveal details about the 'sensory environment of places, the perceptive behaviour of passers-by and the social activities in which they are involved.' (Thibaud, 2013, unpaginated) The prosodic qualities of the voice are as important as the semantic content in this 'here and now' study of the city and its atmospheres, attempting to 'put into words what is perceived and felt along the way' (Thibaud, 2013, p.75). As Thibaud asserts '[s]poken language is not only an instrument which allows a lived experience to be recounted after the fact, represented and shared with others; it actually participates in the experience fully and immediately' (Thibaud, 2013, unpaginated).

Thibaud's investigation, although shedding meaningful light on the value of voice in perceiving our surroundings, emphasises the material aspects of the experiential and deprives this study of place from the potential richness of other references and associations that are not necessarily pertinent to the 'here and now' of the situation. During his key note presentation at Invisible Places, Sounding Cities conference at Viseu, Portugal, in July 2014, Thibaud discussed the ambiances, among other themes, under the prism of design to intensify or to attribute a particular atmosphere of a site which recalls Boehme's claim about 'aestheticising'. Within

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<sup>30</sup> In his article 'Giving Voice to Urban Atmospheres' Thibaud discusses the notion of 'phonic gestures' where the voice is studied as the main carrier of 'expression and production of ambiances... gestures that accompany and embody public life and render the dynamics of places, flows, publics and exchanged audible.' (Thibaud, 2013, p.75)

*Commented City Walks*, even though much attention is given to the walker's intuitive and instantaneous interpretation of what is happening during the walk, it could also be argued that the ordinariness of the passer-by's responses is tentatively overshadowed by the purposeful presence, eye and ear of the researcher, standing or walking next them, intensifying and affecting how a particular atmosphere is perceived. The exchange is not reciprocal and the intuition is challenged by the almost overbearing 'here and now' task of the activity. The premise that within the walk the whole ambience-based sonic perceptual ecology of the city-dweller will become transparent and tangible might be tentatively considered hindered and aestheticised by the clinical ear of the skilful observer. All that is expected is a recorded voice comment that will then be disassembled to its constituent parts and analysed by placing the ephemeral ordinary at the risk of extinction and 'the living person now an epiphenomenon of the anatomized corpse.' (Abram, 1996, p.35) And even though Thibaud is fully aware of the complexities of his undertaking and the difficulty of fully accounting for both the measured (objectivity) and the experiential (subjectivity) in all their variations as they shift between the individual and the collective, with *Commented City Walks* he takes the risk to put his thoughts into motion and engage in a more embodied and interpersonal manner with the subjects of his research.

## 2.6 Voicing memory: Shadow-walks

In a way that parallels Thibaud's approach, a conversational soundwalk can become a localised and focused activity where a meaning or a structure is informed by way of the interests and backgrounds of each co-walker and how these are expressed through conversation. One can argue that what I attempt to achieve shares borders with ethnography, auto-ethnography, social sciences, anthropology, urban studies, social sciences, linguistic or communication studies and of course sound studies<sup>31</sup>. It is, however, more than anything else an attempt to engage with others, to contest my skilled and specialist background and to test whether within

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<sup>31</sup> And perhaps this research project could significantly contribute to any of the above disciplines and their relating discourses.

the polyphonies of a sonic perceptual ecology it is possible to subvert ideas of individual ownership and authoritative presence.

Within this framework, a conversational soundwalk aims to create a field open to interactions, happenstances and mutual trust not unlike British vocalist and sound artist Viv Corringham's *Shadow-walks*. The project encompasses a longstanding body of work with immediate references to psychogeography and the soundwalking practice. A professional vocalist and an active member of the international free improvisation scene, Corringham has been developing her methodology for over a decade with the intent to explore the affinities between memory and place. Openness is an important prerequisite for *Shadow-walks*. As she explained during her interview on *Sensing Cities*: 'I want to be a completely open book. I want to believe everything everyone tells me. Even if six people tell me something completely different about the same street, my attitude is that I will believe all of them' (Corringham to Papadomanolaki, 2013).

Reciprocity requires mutual trust and openness that can easily be established according to Corringham by 'walking side by side, talking, not facing each other. There is very little embarrassment. People are free in what they say... We establish a kind of rapport.' Walking allows a multi-sensory and embodied connection to a place (Butler, 2007; Solnit, 2001) and by walking we both 'reveal it and become part of it.' (Corringham, 2013, p.220) Becoming part of it in *Shadow-walks*, however, does not necessarily entail listening to a presence of now and its elusive pursuit. It also involves acknowledging the fulgurations of memory and the traces of the past as they emerge through voice. Corringham outlines her methodology in the following terms:

I arrive in a place, generally a place I don't know and I ask people who live there to take me on a walk that means something for them in some way... So then as we walk, I record the walk. And it's not an interview... we're just having a conversation. And often I say to them 'Why is this your special walk?' And that will set off a lot of memories. You know of course the walks are mainly about memory in a way. (Corringham to Papadomanolaki, 2013)

Corringham follows a person's favourite and meaningful trajectory in the city. She walks, listens and records the stories of her co-walkers and then revisits the trajectory and re-enacts the experience through singing. She records the walks, using a set of in-ear binaural microphones, which she then reflects on by taking notes on

keywords and spoken or unspoken nuances. These transcriptions form the basis of her vocal improvisations and are a good example of how a counter-atmosphere is formed in preparation of a site-specific piece. Internalisation becomes an important ingredient in the process and it can be argued that her internal self-reflective and interpretative perspective shapes that of her co-walkers in the final piece. What is a keyword and what is discarded? How is the reciprocity of the initial contact maintained in the edited work? As Corringham explained in our interview:

I listen to what they said and I am trying to internalise their walk through vocal improvisation. I do the exact same route and I try and sing their walk, I suppose singing their traces, singing their shadow... I don't particularly look for the emotional thing. Sometimes I look for the underlying resonances of the story, which you know maybe even the person hasn't particularly articulated but sometimes become very clear. (Corringham to Papadomanolaki, 2013)

We could argue that Corringham follows her own shadow as much as that of her co-walkers. Her dependence on other people's voices and trajectories is filtered through her own 'inward listening to what came from the outside' (Boehme, 2007), which again is both reflected in and affected by the 'seep through' of her own building materials. The internalised voices of her co-walkers and the resonant words and sounds form, as already discussed, an immersive counter-atmosphere within which Corringham attunes to the stories and thick layers of memory. Embracing the polyphony of our inward listening processes and the slippage between what we consider as other and as ours is perhaps, here too, a useful observation to keep in mind when it comes to understanding Corringham's work in *Shadow-walks*.

Reciprocity in listening ought to allow a space for that polyphony of voices to happen and for 'the possibility to listen together', to recite McCartney. It must be noted however, that in *Shadow-walks* the sonic perceptual ecology between the two co-walkers involves, as Corringham explained in our conversation, listening to stories and only stories, leaving aside the particularities of other non-human occurrences. These are documented on tape nonetheless and re-inserted later in the editing of the audiowork. Corringham attunes to the human voice exclusively and chooses to remain attentive to what it is being said. She is fully entrusting her co-walker with the intentions and possibilities of the undertaken drift. Later, in her solitary revisitings and reiterations of the walks, she re-enacts the many layers of voices, resonances,

both said and sensed; navigating herself by picking up the traces left in the walk and giving them a voice, not unlike the song-lines of Indigenous Australians (Corringham, 2013, Chatwin, 1987).

In her final pieces that polyphony is present in the different shapes, forms and layers that these may take, for example as an audio piece for radio or a gallery piece often accompanied by evidence, as she refers to the objects found during her walks. By introducing the singing voice as an accompanying layer to the edited conversations, Corringham emphasises not only the idea of the speaking and singing body as the gluing matter between the perception of the everyday environment and the surging of memory but also makes a suggestion of what a sonic perceptual ecology might mean in the context of her practice and her search for the connections between memory and place. Interestingly enough, her finished pieces usually carry elements of the relevant meshworks generated, resounding the resonant frequencies and undertones of the stories told. I listen to the shadow-walk and I can follow in its steps and somehow feel the immediacy and sincerity of its intent, something that is not fully perceptible in *Elegy for Bangalore* or *Hackney Hear* where the aesthetic choices made and how the work is been mediated add different levels of complexity and distance to how it is being perceived.

As it will be demonstrated later in this document, in my own practice, effort is made so as to remove my assuming or authoritative presence in my explorations with my co-walkers in an effort to listen openly and to achieve reciprocity. The interest therefore lies not so much in the 'phonic data' themselves but in the process and the methodology for creating a sonic perceptual ecology consisting of a counter-atmosphere that triggers our internal 'seep through' and leads to an engaged meshwork of interactions in the nodes in question. From that respect, I find Corringham's *Shadow-walks* an inspirational project but, as it will be discussed in the following chapters, in my personal encounters with people and sites I seek to form a sonic perceptual ecology through speech communication (talking, thinking, writing text-scores) and to unlock the voice and its inherent ability to instinctively listen and speak, express itself through sound, about and beyond sound, as it is inhabited and it inhabits other voices, human and non-human alike. The stories I attend to move beyond the 'singing-back' of a walk to the simultaneous 'back and forth' contingency

between individual and collective and toward a poetics of perception and how it can be triggered, it can affect and be affected.

## 2.7 Some Conclusions

In the previous Chapter, I have discussed how the overlapping layers of a sonic perceptual ecology become connected through sound via the transmission of subjectivities and the creation of meshworks that subvert the programmed functionality of a pass-through space. Drifting becomes a catalytic activity that brings the experiential to the foreground by merging it with the psychological. In that respect, a drift, when approached from the perspective of sound can function in ways similar to a soundwalk although adding more enriched nuances about space ranging from the subjective to the psychological and the phenomenological. These are all activated when the internal 'seep through' is triggered by means of a counter-atmosphere. In some of the examples presented, the latter was framed as the emergence of resonant themes or key words that one can use to subvert a pass-through space and within a sonic perceptual ecology turn it into a node.

In this Chapter the emphasis on sound, and its relation to the internal 'seep through', is further expanded by considering the role of voice (thinking- and speaking-voice). By reviewing a selection of practices including soundmap projects like the *London Sound Survey* and *Favourite Sounds*, site-specific installations such as *Yes, these Eyes are the Windows*, locative app works like *Hackney Hear*, as well as soundwalk related projects like *Commented City Walks* and *Shadow-walks*, I demonstrate how the interweaving of voice with the unlocking of the internal 'seep through' can emerge through practice when considered from the perspective of a sonic perceptual ecology. In a sonic perceptual ecology, our voice is bound to unlock, through conversation, our internal 'seep through' and merge our sensibilities with those of other voices and stimuli around us. That connection to others is not a singular process where we only receive but it involves a more nuanced, intersubjective meshwork of exchanges that is based on the concept of polyphony.

By polyphony, one could consider an on-going chain of utterances both human and non-human that affect each other and altogether form the fluid sonic perceptual ecology of the city. The addition of the polyphonic element in the

understanding of how sound (and voice) facilitate the emergence of the internal 'seep through' can elucidate claims that we are constantly aware of our environments, even if not listening consciously. We can embrace the polyphony of our everyday life by being part of it through sound and using our voices. In practice, site-specific work can bring these dynamics to the foreground by making us active participants and by subverting tropes of functionality attached to a space. The same applies in soundwalking methodologies where the use of voice is often backgrounded. A conversational soundwalk has the potential to enrich our experience and bonding with a space by adding subjective textures (memories, fictions) to a conversation about the material aspects of a space, not unlike a psychogeographical drift.

## Chapter 3: Text-score as trigger

### 3.1 One step at a time

In the afterword to *The Production of Space*, David Harvey summarises Lefebvre's philosophy of living life 'as a project' (Lefebvre, 1991, p.431), with all its fluidities, changes, detours and revelations. Similarly, throughout the first two chapters, I have explained the particular ideas and questions raised as a result of the actual life and the different stages of this project. More specifically, in Chapter One, I elucidated on the theoretical and conceptual nuances of a sonic perceptual ecology and its potential to facilitate the perception of a pass-through space. This ecology is based in the overlapping layers of the node (physical plane where actions occur), the counter-atmosphere (triggering of our internal 'seep through') and the meshwork (of interactions between materials, senses, voices). In Chapter Two, I argued that within this particular context the use of our thinking- and speaking- voice, as part of a conversational soundwalk or within site-specific work, can assume a valuable role for the activation of the 'seep through' and the generation of polyphonic meshworks of interactions through sound and listening. It becomes a means of inhabiting our environments, referring to Idhe's suggestion, intersubjectively. In support of these claims, I provided examples of work in order to demonstrate how a sonic perceptual ecology is generated and how this conceptual framework can be used to access or think about an experienced work.

In this third chapter, I expand further my argumentation by implementing the notion of the text-score as an important prompt for generating the counter-atmosphere. In fact, the very existence of this project was birthed from the idea of using excerpts of literary texts as text-scores to catalyse processes for urban exploration, perception and composition; an idea that, of course, has changed as the practice moved on. I have mentioned in Chapter Two that in soundwalking methodologies, a score (usually a map) (Murray Schafer, 1994, p.213) is used to guide and direct listeners around a site. By drawing on examples from a recent history of text-score related practices, I propose a new way of considering the text-score within the context of the sonic perceptual ecology; as a generator of a counter-atmosphere

that by triggering the internal 'seep through', unlocks our voice and we actively participate in the production of meshworks of interactions, as a way, to borrow de Certeau's idea, of 'poaching' and subverting existing norms and narratives within space (de Certeau, 1984, pp.30-34). Finally, in this chapter, I shed light on how the theme of the pass-through emerged at the early stages of the project through the process of researching and selecting pre-existing literary texts to use as text-scores in my practice.

### 3.2 On text and the internal 'seep through'

Long stone streets inanimate, repetitive machine Crash  
cookie-cutting  
dynamo rows of soulless replica Similitudes brooking  
tank-like in Army Depots  
Exactly the same exactly the same exactly the same with  
no purpose but grimness... (Ginsberg, 1973)

I would like to go back to where it all started; Ginsberg's poem about Manhattan and my experience of reading it. Despite Ginsberg being associated with the (visually driven) Baudelairean tradition and psychogeography<sup>32</sup>, as I briefly recounted in the Introduction, the text functioned as a key trigger for unlocking my personal voice by letting my inner-processes seep through and significantly affect the way I connect to the city I live in. In other words, the text set my 'thinking as listening' process in motion. Ginsberg's 'repetitive machine Crash' became a soniferous event emerging from my own listening exchanges with the city. I found, through these words, a way to claim my place (or to subvert it if you like) within the urban strata and to follow the pace of the city, this time with intent (and a voice). I did find a moment of clarity in 'bringing out' the text in an active and dynamic social terrain. The text shifted through my active involvement from a poetic structure of representation to a trigger of practice, critically filtering and opening up possibilities of thinking and acting within the environment. Julia Kristeva in her study on poetic language writes in reference to text as practice that '[t]he text thereby attains its

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<sup>32</sup> 'The vowellic heat comes from single-minded devotional awareness of death. And the preciousness of the human body alive. Drugs have been a side experiment, just to cover those classical possibilities- Baudelaire, Gautier, old Bohemia. Buddhist Vajrayana studies reinforce natural inspiration. Because it's practice of breath awareness.' (Ginsberg, 1977, unpaginated)

essential dimension: it is a practice calling into question (symbolic and social) finitudes by proposing new signifying devices' (Kristeva, 1984, p.210).

For Kristeva, the term practice, as opposed to the self-referential subjective experience, involves a strong commitment to the social realm oftentimes rejected by avant-garde texts that she describes as typically an 'a-social' system of representation of experience, one that is 'very narrowly subjective' (Kristeva, 1983, p.195). Despite her criticism of the inherent failures of the avant-garde texts, her claim for the ability of the text to question and open up when positioned within a socially engaged practice offers a useful tool for understanding this critical shift in my own engagement with the city. It is by using the text as a trigger, by escaping the rigidities of its page and the confinements of its author's initial experiential points of reference, that the text can become a 'moment of practice' which by dissolving 'the subject's compactness and self-presence, first [...] puts the subject in contact with and thus in a position to negate various objects and other subjects in his social milieu, with which the subject enters in contradiction whether antagonistically or not' (Kristeva, 1983, p.203).

The element of contradiction, is perhaps the first step for accessing the text as a practice. In my case, Ginsberg's text is internalised and its structure becomes dissolved allowing specific words, elements, key meanings to emerge, making them relevant in the way I perceive my experience-in-practice of the city, its social and political, physical and psychological undertones. These key words resonate with me, they trigger different stages of my knowledge of the city, of my internal 'seep through' and these same internalised and resonant words set me in contradiction with the elements of the environment that I want to confront, criticise by establishing a 'new way of signifying'. My 'narrowly subjective' role in the equilibrium is constantly destabilised in the polyphonic meshwork of interactions. The sonic perceptual ecology, therefore, within this constellation, is certainly formed through the catalytic role of the text. The Ginsbergian poetics, the textures, rhythms, sounds form a unique counter-atmosphere which sets my 'seep through' in motion.

The text therefore becomes an important addition to the idea of polyphonic perception. Kristeva's 'text as practice' posits it in the role of the trigger of meshworks within the social realm and here is where we can re-introduce the internal 'seep through' as a filter that puts that text into practice. The text is bound to

be read and to resonate differently within each person and hence trigger polyphonies that may already be inherent in it. To go back to Bakhtin's definition of the text, it functions within a similar sphere to that of the utterance, 'as a unique monad that in itself reflects all texts... [t]he interconnection of all ideas (since all are realized in utterances)' (Bakhtin, 1986, p.105).

The use of text-scores within a sonic perceptual ecology forges utterances that are interconnected through sound with other senses, materials and bodies. As a trigger of the counter-atmosphere, the text-score needs to be internalised in advance and to be forgotten during the exploration by allowing only its resonances to affect the way we perceive the site in question. Of course these resonances differ among readers. The words of the text are felt as a trace in the social plane, *in absentia*, as a shifter that assumes different meanings to different people and can be assigned to different sites or material aspects of a site. Rosalind Krauss borrows Jakobson's term to emphasise the importance of a shifter as 'something empty' whose signification shifts depending on the meshwork of interactions it becomes part of (Krauss, 1977, p.69). It is nothing more than a trace triggering the 'seep through', something that cannot be sensed immediately, a blurry presence not unlike an atmosphere of a site that instigates perceptual motions and exchanges.

A text-score being a polyphonic assemblage, to borrow Bakhtin's device, offers that possibility of shifting between different perspectives and of being inhabited by many voices, not unlike a ventriloquised territory. In an interview I conducted with writer Iain Sinclair for my *Sensing Cities* programme, he discussed his process of writing about the city by saying that '...the whole process of writing is actually a form of ventriloquism, a sort of séance with the city whereby you walk through these threads that seem to trigger some sort of story because you've recognised the characteristics of a place' (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013). Such a proposition echoes Bakhtin's notion of the utterance as a constellation of threads of voices and fragments of experiences. It also provides another example of how tightly connected words (and language and ultimately thinking-voice) can be to our way of perceiving and to opening up a particular site in contradiction, to revisit Kristeva, to any established truth or norms about it. During her interview for *Sensing Cities*, Zeynep Bulut talked about the relation between listening, the thinking-voice and truth:

[W]e romanticise the connection between listening and truth a lot as we romanticise the connection between the voice and the truth a lot. We have unique voices as we have unique bodily configurations, as we have unique selves. But actually there is also a changeable, adaptable, adjustable aspect to us... [In sound, listening and thinking] it's all about loss, displacement. It's all about falling to a space, and that space, it's an active space of thinking, of listening... [One has] to be able to fall into that space of thinking, [of] the multiplicities of the voices that speak to you. (Bulut to Papadomanolaki, 2014)

Embracing this displacement therefore is a necessary step for coming to terms with the idea of polyphony, of the destabilisation of authoritative control and of the search of THE truth about a site. Within a sonic perceptual ecology, 'myself' needs to be contested, I need to let my internal processes be inhabited by these other threads and allow myself to become a 'stranger' to my own certainties, allow intuition and spontaneity as means of perceiving in 'partiality', as McCartney argues, through others. With sound we can never be sure of one singular truth and in listening we ought to be able to attune to many different aspects of a site, through our voices and the way they co-exist with other elements. This strangeness constantly questions 'the singularity of actuality and articulate[s] a different sense of place and a different sense of self that lives in those possibilities and shows us how else things could be' (Voegelin, 2014, p.22).

The text-score should therefore be the trigger toward that form of sonic perceptual ecology as a 'text as practice' where our internal 'seep through' emerges in dialogue with our environment and leads to the creation of meshwork of polyphonic exchanges. The text-score is an aestheticised assemblage of ideas, fictions and senses and as a counter-atmosphere is there to inspire exchanges in a creative and imaginative way. It is by no means a list of instructions but a textual-trigger exposed to all sorts of reading perspectives and imaginative uses. Salomé Voegelin in *Sonic Possible Worlds* touches upon the possible use of a literary text in sound sensitive practices by reciting W. H. Auden's definition of the libretto. More specifically:

the job of the librettist is to furnish the composer with a plot, characters and words: of these, the least important, so far as the audience is concerned, are the words [...] The verbal text of an opera is not to be judged by the literary quality or lack of it which it

may have when read but by its success or failure in exciting the musical imagination of the composer. (Voegelin, 2014, p.68)

The libretto's verbal text - similarly to a shifter - triggers a response to the imagination of a composer which might be irrelevant to the librettist's initial concerns or the text's literary quality. In the context of a sonic perceptual ecology, the text-score creates a similar exchange between the writer and reader, with the former becoming backgrounded and the latter assuming a more active role by responding to the words of the text. Within the context of a conversational soundwalk this response is deeply related to how and why our internal 'seep through' sounds in a particular way within the social realm and the polyphonic meshworks of associations created in a node. Similarly to Voegelin's composer, with the traces of a text-score's counter-atmosphere, our perception through sound becomes an imaginative means of acknowledging the intricacies of our emplacement in the node and engaging with the particularities of the environment we encounter. Listening becomes a participatory practice where we invest in exploring the pass-through and overlooked sites by attending to one another as city dwellers and everyday practitioners, as de Certeau writes, operating on the ground-level.

### **3.3 Text-scores and the everyday**

I would like here to further contextualise this novel understanding of the text-score as a trigger by briefly looking into contemporary practices where a text-based score was used to 'take the audience outside' (Neuhaus, unpaginated, 1976) and experience the city. With *LISTEN* (1966), an antecedent of the soundwalk, American sound art pioneer and experimental percussionist Max Neuhaus opened up a field for exploring and listening within the urban environment. On its initial iteration in 1966, a group of people, mostly friends of the artist, gathered and walked down 14<sup>th</sup> Street towards the East River with the word 'LISTEN' rubber stamped on their hands. The word itself was used as a text-score instigating the walkers to listen to their surroundings. By not giving any particular details as to how and what to listen to, the word functioned as a 'shifter' meaning different things to different people. At later iterations of the work, Neuhaus would engage that audience of a concert hall or a lecture theatre by taking them outside:

[s]aying nothing, I would simply concentrate on listening, and start walking. At first, they would be a little embarrassed, of course, but the focus was generally contagious. The group would proceed silently, and by the time we returned to the hall many had found a new way to listen for themselves. (Neuhaus, 1977, unpaginated)

Within these *in situ* 'lecture demonstrations' as Neuhaus preferred to call these walks, he wished to unlock his co-walkers' inherent abilities to listen by setting aside any notion of expertise. 'Listening for themselves', implies that the participants established an embodied connection with their environment. Within this mode of sonic perception, as I have discussed already, the triggering of the internal 'seep through' plays a significant role as it allows for the listener to reach out to resonant sounds, to think and feel in response and in conversation with them. Within the sonic perceptual ecology developed during these walks, the word itself impels the walkers to throw themselves into the city by being 'exposed to the sense of something going on, something active, a kind of evanescent effluvium which exists only as long as something or someone is actually producing it' (Connor, 2000, p.17).

In similar terms, American avant-garde music theorist and composer John Cage in his *Song Books (Solos for Voice 3–92)* invites his performers to immerse themselves in the everyday environment, to walk and to use the voice to activate zones of interactions, melodic lines and to ultimately establish mutual exchanges between human and non-human voices. Inspired by Henry David Thoreau's *Journal* among other sources, the *Song Books* (1970)<sup>33</sup> within their four categories<sup>34</sup> offer a series of scores with a set of open instructions. Within this context of openness, one can trace Cage's attitude towards blurring the barriers between music and the everyday by focusing on the importance of 'experimental action' (Fetterman, 1996, p.86) and the need to remove any ideas of skilfulness or technical competence from within this action.

Thoreau's writings are broken down into words, maps, images, graphics and are re-compiled as text-scores, as 'texts to practice' essentially serving to push the boundaries between the site and discipline-specific term 'solo for voice', the

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<sup>33</sup> You can access the first and second volumes of the work via Monoskop:  
[http://monoskop.org/images/0/03/Cage\\_John\\_Song\\_Books\\_Volume\\_1.pdf](http://monoskop.org/images/0/03/Cage_John_Song_Books_Volume_1.pdf)  
[http://monoskop.org/images/d/d6/Cage\\_John\\_Song\\_Books\\_Volume\\_2.pdf](http://monoskop.org/images/d/d6/Cage_John_Song_Books_Volume_2.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> As Cage writes in the introduction to the work  
'Each solo belongs to one of four categories: 1) song; 2) song using electronics 3) theatre; 4) theatre using electronics.' (Cage, 1970, p. 1)

everydayness of socially-sensitive sound and the in-between space created through imaginative expression and communication. In 'Solo For Voice 3' for instance, Cage asks his performer to go out, follow a certain path. He offers him/her a map and some sparsely selected words from Thoreau's *Journal*, spread across four pages using different typefaces and sizes. He instructs among other things: 'Use any of the following words by Henry David Thoreau as text (Journal Volume III, p.143). The different type-faces may be interpreted as changes in intensity, quality, dynamics.' (Cage, 1970, pp.2-6) In the following 'Solo For Voice 4' he refers to the map to outline a different path: 'Go from Lee's Bridge (K6) to Emerson's Cliff (H8). Use any of the following words by Henry David Thoreau as text (Journal, Volume III, p.54)' (Cage, 1970, p.7).

The notion of the text-score in the above examples offers a means of highlighting, opening up, re-inventing, triggering the voice within the city. The path itself is not a prescribed one, the suggestion of location can be transported on any latitude and longitude the performer may choose. The voice is allowed to be affected by changes in travel, changes in path and is treated as a means for singing the line of that travel, for letting the performer's internal 'seep through' cohabit with the words, the sounds and the coincidences of the everyday. The theme and meaning of the work becomes exactly that process of triggering and composing by taking under consideration the ambiguities behind language, the importance of the participatory aspect of the work and of bringing the socially-engaged practice within the realm of "high art" and making it possible to change and affect, certainties and determinations aside: '[h]earing it, it's practically a popular tune, as popular as a slogan or a flag. But it can enter into this enlarged situation, without determining the nature of the situation' (Cage and Charles, 1981, pp.146-147).

Even though, in its many iterations, the work has been performed within theatre environments, its sense of indeterminacy and its openness toward the performer, allows the work to be 'staged' in a way that contests the theatre both as a space and as an institution confined by traditional aesthetic and functional clichés. That exact Cagean philosophy of the everyday had been embedded and further expanded in many of the Fluxus street and city-infused events of the 60's where actions similar to Cage's 'experimental actions' and, to a certain extent, Neuhaus's 'Lecture Demonstrations' involved artists reclaiming the urban realm. Many of the

most prominent members of Fluxus did in fact develop many of the early examples of these event-scores as part of John Cage's class at the New School. Alison Knowles, Allan Kaprow, Al Hansen and George Brecht were only a few among the artists who started expanding on Cage's idea of developing unorthodox 'musical' events and scores (Friedman, Smith, Sawchyn, 2002, p.1).

### **'Street Cleaning Event (Hi-Red Center)**

Performers are dressed in white coats like laboratory technicians. They go to a selected location in the city. An area of a sidewalk is designated for the event. This area of sidewalk is cleaned very thoroughly with various devices not usually used in street cleaning, such as dental tools, toothbrushes, steel wool, cotton balls with alcohol, cotton swabs, surgeon's sponges, tooth picks, linen napkins, etc.' (Friedman, Smith, Sawchyn, 2002, p.49)

The text-scores behind these events did not rely on the notational value of the words, as with some of Cage's *Solos* in Song Books, but on their role to instigate, propose actions of a playful and situational character, wherein the performers by means of their creativity would allow their internal 'seep through' to negate existing orthodoxies, to mix and match the clinical approach (and commitment) of a traditional virtuoso performer with the informal 'goofiness' of an everyday person. In the above score created by the Japanese Fluxus and neo-Dadaist artist group Hi-Red Center (1963), cleaning the sidewalk with a toothpick is both a gesture of reclaiming and denouncing space. It creates a site- and gesture-specific event in an effort to open up possibilities by criticising the street as a site and by destabilising the artist as a confined entity functioning within determined means. It can also become a political gesture as in Joseph Beuys *Ausfegen (Sweeping Up)* (1972) event, where the activity of sweeping up the Karl-Marx-Platz in West Berlin after a Labour Demonstration, addresses not only ecological concerns but also questions about unions, the political Left in relation to workers, cleaners and low wages.

### **'Walking Event (Milan Knizak)**

On a busy city avenue, draw a circle about 3m in diameter with chalk on the sidewalk. Walk around the circle as long as possible without stopping' (Friedman, Smith, Sawchyn, 2002, p.64)

Walking in the city in circles is a ritualistic motion that can be described as the epitome of the urban life-style. In Czech Fluxus performance artist Milan Knizak's *Walking* Event such an activity reaches out to the city, it occupies a space and it silently protests against what this space represents, both physically and metaphorically. The openness of the instruction nonetheless does not (over)define the reasons of each protest. It does however, despite its muted presence, allow for a sonic perceptual ecology to be created within which possibilities emerge to withstand commercial and elitist nomenclatures and authoritative voices. Most importantly, in both examples above, the notion of the text-score calls for participation and the countering of the divisions between composer and performer, artist and anti-artist, specialist and non-specialist.

By repetitive every-day gestures, the Fluxus artist establishes a relation with his/her materials and other beings that, on the one hand, reduces the actions taken to the minimum, turning the performance into a stance for escaping the self by tuning into the conditions and circumstances in a fully embodied motion of contestation and play. Macuinas' vision was immensely inspired by the possibilities of play and 'inventive gags' as well as the importance of effacing the heightened, artistic 'ego' in the process (Kellein, 1995, pp.14-18). On the other hand, one could also argue that such a gesture also opens up a critique against the authoritative control often associated with the notion of the score. As Ken Friedman underlines those scores relied 'on brief verbal notations. These notes are known as event scores. In a general sense, they are proposals, propositions, and instructions. Thus they are sometimes known as proposal pieces, propositions, or instructions' (Friedman, 2002, p.2). In that sense, similarly to a text-score, they leave their interpretation up to a performer's imagination and internal 'seep through'.

### **'Zyklus (Tomas Schmit)**

Water pails or bottles are placed around the perimeter of a circle. Only one is filled with water. Performer inside the circle picks the filled vessel and pours it into the one on the right, then picks the one on the right and pours it into the next one on the right etc., till all the water is spilled or evaporated.' (Email communication with CRiSAP, 2014)

In February 2015, I was invited by CRISAP, my research centre, to perform the above piece, by German Fluxus artist Tomas Schmit, inside the White Cube gallery in Bermondsey as part of Christian Marclay's exhibition<sup>35</sup>. For the piece, I arranged 24 glasses and bottles of different sizes and capacities in a circle (Image 7) and within the duration of 50 minutes I completed the piece by spilling the remaining drop of water on the floor of the gallery. I regard galleries as equally controlled and sterile environments and my work usually is situated outside them or on different platforms such as radio or telematic performances. With this performance, however, I attempted to work with the idea of using the text-score as a way of countering the gallery's environment by introducing my way of everydayness into the space.

Performing the piece was indeed a very liberating experience in the sense that I gradually unlocked my own possibilities of working within the limited space of the piece to focus on the minute details of my task. I didn't apply any virtuosic skills in the way I performed, just my everyday experience. My circular action took various speeds and gestures as my ears and eyes, hands and body all worked together. A seemingly everyday and casual gesture of pouring water, from inside the circle was turned into a sonic perceptual ecology of heightened exploration where my internal 'seep through' was expanded into a form of negating the actual space by creating a meshwork of interactions between body, mind and space. The focus was constantly shifting from the weight of the water to the sound it produces within certain shapes of vessels into how my speed of pouring affected the amount of spilling on the floor. These gestures allowed me to escape my self's limitations by allowing me to expand the ways I connect and disconnect with my environment and to question with my presence the hard lines and tentative expectations imposed by the gallery.

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<sup>35</sup> Some documentation of my performance can be found here:  
[http://whitecube.com/channel/in\\_the\\_gallery\\_past/christian\\_marclay\\_week\\_5\\_2015/](http://whitecube.com/channel/in_the_gallery_past/christian_marclay_week_5_2015/)



[Image 7: The array of vessels inside the White Cube gallery.]

### 3.4 Text-scores as poaching

In the above examples, the text-score provides a starting point for the unfolding of a socially engaged and open-ended ‘text as practice’ and, as in my experience of the Fluxus score, to a more embodied engagement. In this chapter, I have been discussing the text-score as a trigger of the counter-atmosphere, generated by how a reader internalises resonant themes, key words or phrases. This process, as demonstrated in the examples above, can become a potent way of enriching the experience of the city and of questioning any narratives attached to it.

Michel de Certeau when discussing his idea about reading as ‘poaching’ presents the reader as an entity that subverts the hegemonic cultural narratives and meanings by introducing marginal, speculative and transient meanings and re-appropriations of popular and mass-consumption narratives. (de Certeau, 1984, pp.174-175; Jenkins, 2013, p.26). Reading allows for a silent yet playful protest. ‘[F]rom the nooks of all sorts of “reading rooms” (including lavatories)’ he writes ‘emerge subconscious gestures, grumblings, tics, stretchings, rustlings, unexpected noises, in short a wild orchestration of the body.’ (de Certeau, 1984, p.175) This is the form of plurality that I am interested in when using a text-score in my own practice,

which, can also be distilled, as with Iain Sinclair's ventroloquisms, in how the text-score is written. Michel de Certeau's 'subconscious gestures' are resounded in my own appropriation of the internal 'seep through' and his 'orchestration of the body' is further expanded in the actualities of the social realm during a conversational soundwalk or any other encounter with a site.

Henry Jenkins expands de Certeau's idea of poaching into the field of popular texts by highlighting its potential as a participatory cultural practice that 'typically involves not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism, and it is the combination of the two responses which motivates their active engagement with the media' (Jenkins, 2013, p.23). This is an engagement, on the part of popular culture fans, with 'mass produced texts which provide the raw material for their own cultural productions and the basis for their social interactions' (Jenkins, 2013, p.23-24). This form of social interaction for Jenkins supports the 'articulation of concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media' (Jenkins, 2013, p.23). Similarly to Cathy Lane's 'stories from below', textual poaching, within a sonic perceptual ecology, can open up a space for conversation and thoughtful listening exchanges among everyday practitioners whose voices and concerns are, often, not part of the grand narratives of the city.

### **3.5 Selecting text-scores**

Textual poaching as a means of negating authoritative voices can perhaps also be found in Bakhtin's notion of the utterance but it can be certainly traced in Sinclair's ventriloquist approach in writing about the city. This is a common thread among many writers who through their psychogeographic drifts reappropriate passages and fragments of other texts. During the first phase of this trajectory, while initially searching for existing literary resources, I made a conscious decision that the text-scores that I would use for my research would be extracted from writers whose own practice involves psychogeographic drifting, reading and reappropriation of texts and existing materials. As explained, earlier, such texts would offer dense fictions about place while at the same time, a certain amount of openness would be retained in the way they are perceived and responded to. Fiction in the case of Sinclair, and other similar writers, is always a contested term as his writing easily flows from

prose, to poetry or essay. His writing, especially in his fiction novels, is also seen as bordering between a kind of 'documentary fiction' and 'an attempt to become one with the eroding spirit of place to point out how architects, planners, developers and governments destroy the "non-semiotic" dimension of society[...] contained within the subjective mental and the discursive' (Groes, 2011, p.99).

That kind of fiction is deeply rooted in and stirred by the sociopolitical reality of a site. It is an animated territory where different forms of voices are embedded and reflected. In that sense, I was interested in texts that would incorporate external material aspects of the urban environments with the subjectivities of an inner discourse still in contact with the 'real' environment of reference. With the help of my supervisors, I managed to expand on these ideas by pinning down some initial criteria for selecting the sample texts to be used in the urban explorations as part of the research:

- The initial research should focus on specific areas in East London. This was mainly because of the plenitude of texts available for that area and because, for practical reasons, the chosen locations should both be accessible via public transport and be within areas that I am to some extent already familiar with.
- The selected texts should carry references to the physical, aural, political and social geography and atmosphere of a location.
- In an effort to facilitate the search we agreed to limit the scope to texts that were published within the last 20 years.
- For the practical purpose of being used as a text-score for in situ walks and explorations, the text should be concise and provide a direct reference to a location in London and comply to the above criteria within the space of one or one and a half pages. If the excerpt was longer than a page, I would edit it to fit in a page.

The selection of the excerpts to be used as texts-scores involved a four-month period of reviewing novels, selecting and testing through conducting solitary field visits. The selection process concluded with a provisional group made of four text-scores that would be used for the carrying-out of field visits; and from this provisional group, one text was later deducted, finalising the number of excerpts to three. At a

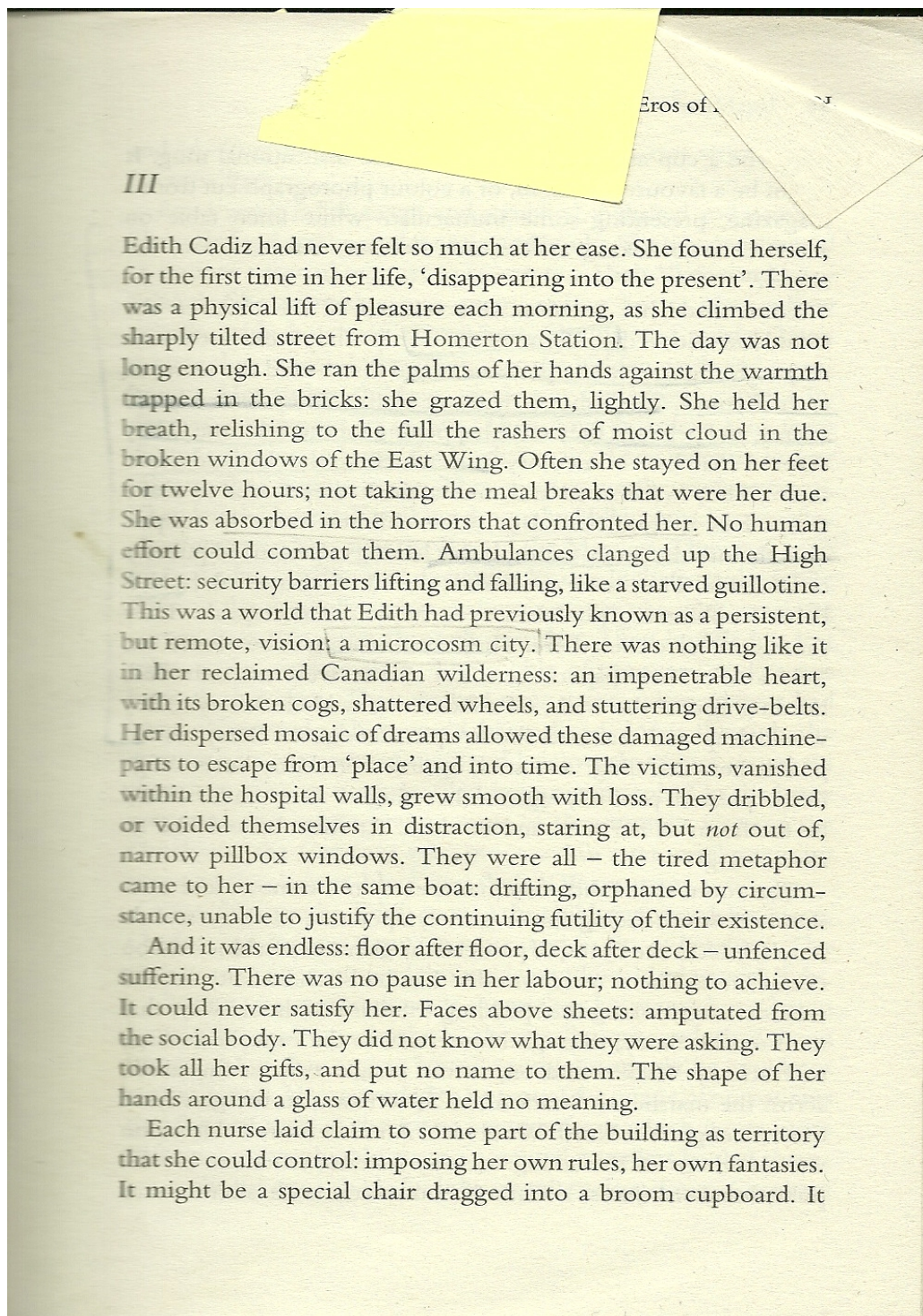
later stage, as I will be discussing in the next chapter, on the occasion of a seminar-workshop at Elephant & Castle, I was given another sample by a local resident in the area and member of the Ultra-red<sup>36</sup> team here in London.

The selected text-scores below explore the city through iterative drifts; embedding within the fabric of their texts segments of other voices, found photographs or writings. These text-scores, despite their seemingly secluded and visual nature, have distilled within them the environments they inhabit both in sound and image (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013). Their steps become gestures for articulating and speculatively re-reading the environments they encounter. Coming from different generations of writers, each one can be seen as a continuation of the other, although the writing style ranges from street-wise (Ford), to elegiac (Sebald) to aphoristic (Sinclair). The city, in the first selection presented below, for instance, becomes an aggressive sequence of socially secluded events, while in the final selection it is a celebration of grass-root community culture.

Please note that you can find a higher resolution of the samples in Appendix 1 in the accompanying media folder. The first sample (Image 8, Appendix 1, p.2) presented below, was taken from Iain Sinclair's *Downriver*. Featured in the chapter entitled *Eros of Maps*, the excerpt forms an idiosyncratic interpretation of the aural, physical and social geography of the path between Homerton Overground Station and the hospital as depicted through the character of an Australian immigrant nurse who goes by the name Edith Cadiz. In the one page excerpt, the presence of sonic elements coexists with the visual ones leading to the composition of an atmosphere of roughness, abandonment and isolation. Sinclair writes '[a]mbulances clanged up the High Street: security barriers lifting and falling, like a starved guillotine. This was the world that Edith had previously known as a persistent, but remote, vision of a microcosm city.' (Sinclair, 1991, p.87)

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<sup>36</sup> Ultra-red are an international sound art collective whose work engages with a strong political content and activism. I will be discussing an aspect of their practice in more detail in Chapter Four.



[Image 8: Excerpt from *Downriver*, 1991]

A second excerpt selected (Image 9, Appendix 1, p.3) was from W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* where the main character (Austerlitz) observes the people and activities inside Liverpool Street Station. The Sebaldian prose is nicely demonstrated in the text, giving the reader a rather dynamic, fluid and gloomy depiction of the station while different layers of sonic and visual references, sounds and scenes fall into a 'vortex of past time' (Sebald, 2001, p.180):

Even on sunny days only a faint greyness, scarcely illuminated at all by the globes of the station's lights, came through the glass roof over the main hall, and in this eternal dusk, which was full of a muffled babble of voices, a quiet scraping and trampling of feet, innumerable people passed in great tides, disembarking from trains or boarding them, coming together, moving apart, and being held up at barriers and bottlenecks like water against a weir. (Sebald, 2001, pp.180-181)

cracked sleepers, the brick walls with their stone bases, the cornices and panes of the tall windows, the wooden kiosks for the ticket inspectors, and the towering cast-iron columns with their palmate capitals were all covered in a greasy black layer formed, over the course of a century, by coke dust and soot, steam, sulphur and diesel oil. Even on sunny days only a faint greyness, scarcely illuminated at all by the globes of the station lights, came through the glass roof over the main hall, and in

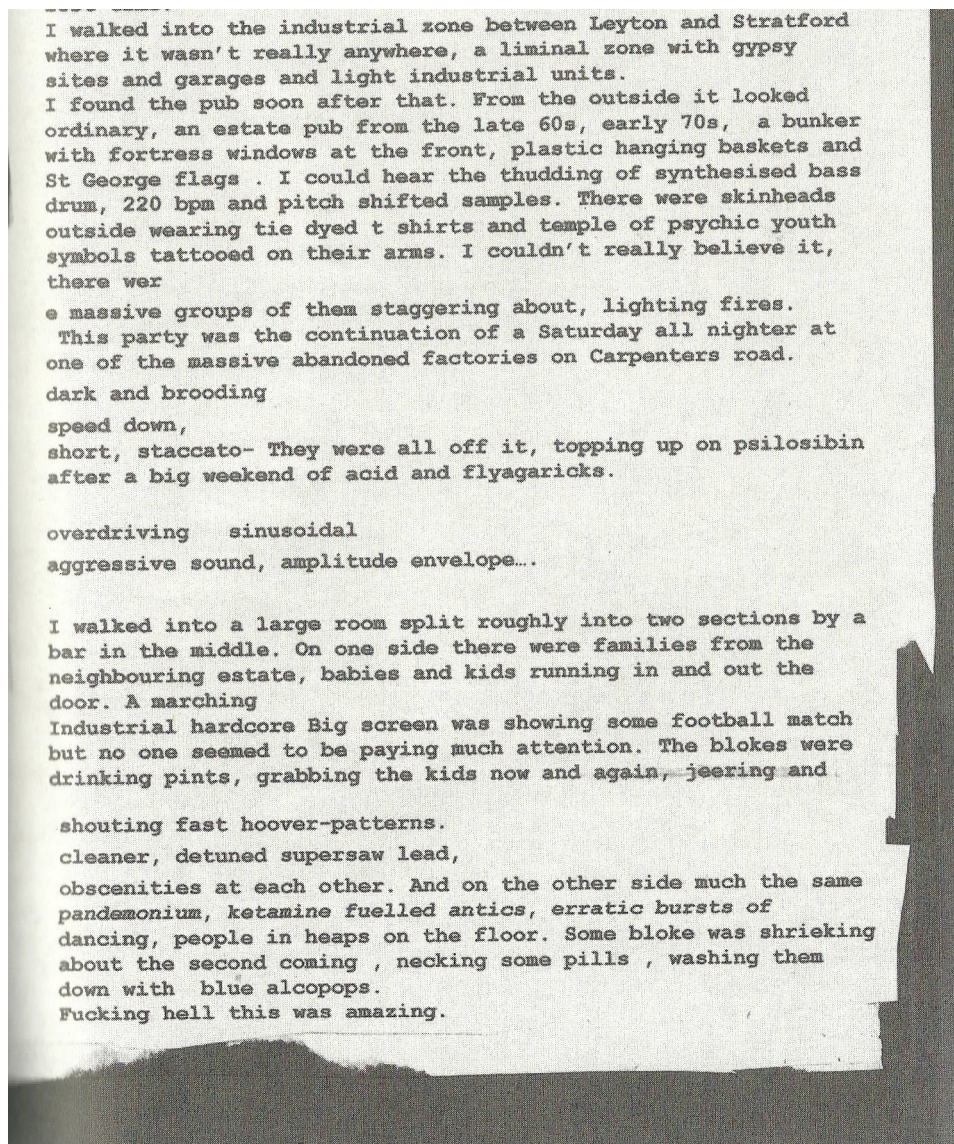


this eternal dusk, which was full of a muffled babble of voices, a quiet scraping and trampling of feet, innumerable people passed in great tides, disembarking from the trains or boarding them, coming together, moving apart, and being held up at barriers and bottlenecks like water against a weir. Whenever I got out at Liverpool Street station on

A third selection (Image 10, Appendix 1, p.4) was taken from Laura Oldfield Ford's collection of Xerox zines entitled *Savage Messiah*. The sample involves a private recollection of a walk around Leyton and Stratford where the principle character, being the writer herself, ends up in a pub located in a narrow alleyway next to where today stands the Olympic Stadium. The tone and form of the sample is influenced by the spirit of psychogeographical enquiry placed in a contemporary, semi-fictional scale which is marked by the absorption of physical and social actualities by the subjective and fictional / of the writer:

I walked into a large room split roughly into two sections by a bar in the middle. On one side there were families from the neighbouring estate, babies and kids running in and out the door.

(Ford, 2011, unpaginated)



[Image 10: Sample from *Savage Messiah*, 2011]

### 3.6 The emergence of the pass-through

#### Research log 29/10/12

*I have started reading the first core texts and I have been focusing on the idea of the solitary book character. The scenes that caught both my eye and ear so far are taking place in spaces of transit that in the character's psyche function as chambers of memory. In these scenes there is a strong presence of sound as well both in the foreground and in the background, as an element in the character's interaction with the environment and as an overall canvas of human and mechanical activities. And most importantly these scenes are referring to real places.*

The above is an excerpt from a journal entry written during the selection/reviewing process of text-scores. Homerton Overground Station is the starting point for Sinclair's fictional drift through Edith's interior struggle while Sebald's Austerlitz is navigating us through the dark corners of Liverpool Street Station. Ford is drifting through east London to find herself in a different kind of pass-through space, a pub in Carpenter's Road in Stratford. All these segments had a more refined reference to a site while the rejected sample involved a longer distance trajectory. I wanted to compare environments with some common characteristics and see how different text-scores affect the way I interact with a site. The element of the 'pass-through' seemed to captivate my interest and to make me want to explore these locations. I was also intrigued by how in these samples the writer's voice was inhabited simultaneously by a variety of voices (sounds) both human and non-human and how the environment triggered their internal processes; a motion that I would soon recognise in Bachelard's 'seep through'. I was also attracted to the idea of how the internal processes were enriched by that form of polyphonic chain of perception that includes sight, sound, matter, utterances and the psyche; an idea that I also found at a later stage embedded in Bakhtin's notion of the utterance.

Running like a common thread between the samples, an urban junction, to be later rediscovered in Kevin Lynch's notion of the node, is transformed into a field of interactions and memory, not unlike the much later encounter with Ingold's meshwork. The perception of the public environment is infiltrated by coincidences, reveries as well as personal recollections. These sites, on the one hand, are listened

to through a device similar to LaBelle's 'thinking as listening' that blurs the division between real and fictional. On the other hand, the sociopolitical geography attached to these sites is embedded in the text, it provides a certain pace and is reflected in the material aspects of the scene. The atmosphere of the site is there, too, allowing its vaporous presence to be inscribed in-between words.

We listen to the writer's recollection, representation and reimagining of these spaces, how they felt, sounded and looked like. We listen to the environment through listening to the 'thinking voice', the interior monologue if you may, of the character and ultimately the writer. Within the workshops undertaken in this practice, the aim was to poach this textual fiction by reading it so that any possible concreteness of the associated pass-through landscape is negotiated by the individual interpretations of the text-score by my co-walkers and myself. Jonathan Raban writes:

For at moments like this, the city goes soft; it awaits the imprint of an identity. For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. You too. Decide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form round you. Decide what it is and your own identity will be revealed, like a position on a map fixed by triangulation. (Raban, 1974, pp.9-10)

This identity is fluid, changeable and it encapsulates within it a multitude of possibilities that render themselves felt, imagined and affected through sound, through an antagonism of materials and voices, an antagonism that nonetheless shelters reciprocity and exchange. As I argued earlier, such a claim applies to all three characters in the selected samples and that psychogeographical writing about place is different from other types of texts exactly because of its plural connection to place. With this research project, however, as I explained in Chapter Two, I attempt, by applying Kristeva's concept of 'text as practice', to question established canons of contemporary psychogeography (mostly dealing with long-distance walks and the myth of the solitary male drifter's gaze) and experiment with the possibilities of a psychogeography where the sonic sensibility is equally addressed among other registers.

I wish to take Debord's initial claim to create 'situations [that are] ephemeral, without a future. Passageways.' (Debord, 1957, unpaginated) and within these passageways, to develop a sonic perceptual ecology that enriches our understanding

of our own potential through sound and the importance of always questioning our certainties in relation to our surroundings. Essentially this is a practice that attempts to open up and counter the pre-existing narratives and functionalities of the pass-through sites in question through a conversation that primarily begins with reading as an embodied, experiential practice for unlocking our internal 'seep through'. In doing so, the text-score becomes an integral part in the process by providing a counter-atmosphere, necessary for the triggering of the 'seep through'. Finding inspiration in examples of contemporary text-score practices, I wish to further investigate the function of such a prompt when considered through the prism of the sonic perceptual ecology: how it can trigger our perception through a counter-atmosphere and how it can stir our inner processes and re-animate our senses and memories within a node. A text-score is applied not as a canonical document made of instructions but as a composite of experiential fragments that call for an active reader and listener to poach them and use them as stepping stones for reclaiming their voices within the node and for finding 'new ways of signifying' that merge materials, senses and utterances.

## Chapter 4: Voicing the field

### 4.1 In the field(s)

I began the previous Chapter by revisiting the example of how my personal reading of a poem by Ginsberg led to the idea of using the text-score as a counter-atmosphere and a catalyst in the formation of a sonic perceptual ecology. I have argued that by triggering our internal 'seep through', the text-score, while operating in the background like a supportive layer, is facilitating the unlocking of our voice (thinking- and speaking-voice). Elsewhere, I expanded on the importance of the voice (as conversation or thinking-voice) in opening up the pass-through sites in question and how it can lead to the formation of a sonic perceptual ecology in a variety of site-specific practices. This sonic ecology consists of a node explored through polyphonic meshworks of interactions, forged by drifting in solitude or through a conversational soundwalk. In this fourth chapter, I will present the first and second phases<sup>37</sup> of practice undertaken as part of this research and demonstrate how the ideas discussed in the previous three chapters not only provide a useful theoretical context for accessing and understanding the outcomes discussed here but also how these ideas organically emerged from within the practice itself.

More specifically, I will be explaining in more detail the methodology I developed for exploring the sites in question, beginning from solitary field visits and then expanding it through conducting exploratory workshops with co-walkers. In all the different cases, the use of voice either in the form of thinking or conversation, becomes an important trigger of the exchanges that took place. As already hinted elsewhere, the field work was initiated by the preparatory reading and internalising of resonant words from a text-score that were then used to explore the visited sites. In the following sections, I will provide examples of how the text-score was manifested by means of walking, listening and responding to the experience and how that exploration was further channelled in the creation of new work. I also aim to demonstrate how through sound (and the use of voice) the polyphonic meshworks created facilitated a type of perception across senses, ranging from the material

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<sup>37</sup> For a comprehensive summary please refer back to the 'Timeline' in the beginning of this document.

aspect of encounters to the more psychological or memory-led. The resulting sonic perceptual ecologies form the basis for demonstrating how the concepts of the counter-atmosphere, the internal 'seep through', polyphony and the meshwork manifest themselves when put to practice.

## **4.2 Phase One: Field Visits**

### **4.2.1 The fourth sample: thinking as listening**

Since the early stages of this research, I started developing a methodology in which the selected textual excerpts identified in Chapter Three would form its basis. Between December 2012 and January 2013 I conducted a series of solitary drifts in the form of (silent) soundwalks. As explained in the previous chapter, the intent was to use the selected texts as text-scores for exploring certain locations in London and to use their words as shifters. More specifically, the process involved reading and internalising resonant words and phrases from the sample in advance, usually one or two nights before the walk. Within this sort period, I attempted to intuitively engage with the chosen words and think about the way I would poach them, to refer back to de Certeau and Jenkins, and put them to practice by bringing them out to the social realm. That was followed by a visit to the relevant location consisting of soundwalking (silently), recording sounds discreetly using mainly my in-ear binaural microphones (or my handmade contact microphones when necessary) and taking photographs. After each visit, I composed a series of creative responses that reflected my experience.

As already explained in the last section of Chapter Three (p.95), there was a fourth sample that was rejected after it was tried out in the selection period and which, nonetheless, assisted significantly in the development of the process. That example was another section taken from *Downriver* where the character is walking along rail tracks from Dalston Kingsland to Hackney Central (Image 11). That first visit was conducted following the above methodology: soundwalking silently, listening and using my reading of the sample as a text-score. The process was further documented with a digital recorder and a digital camera. You can listen to an excerpt

of the walk on Audio Clip 2. You can carry on reading if you wish while the recording is playing and feel free to stop whenever you want.



[Image 11: Images from preparatory field visit, December 2012, London]

Working with that particular sample as a text-score lead to some very important realisations about the way my thinking-voice manifested itself by means of my internal ‘seep through’. Please have a look at Image 12 (Appendix 2, p.2) which is the creative response I made after the visit in the form of a journal entry and which was later further annotated and published as ‘The Journey of a journal entry’ on the second instalment of the online journal *Reflections On Process In Sound* edited by artist and researcher Iris Garrelfs<sup>38</sup>. As I write in the introduction of the piece ‘[t]he journey of a journal entry addresses the notions of thinking as listening, self-reflection and the potential challenges of walking and engaging in a “here and now” mode with the sounds of a location’ (Papadomanolaki, 2014, pp.45-47).

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<sup>38</sup> My piece was also mentioned in a feature on the journal in THE WIRE magazine. You can find a scan of the article in Appendix 2, p.3.

### December 8th 2012: Muted streets, car parks and alleys.

On the morning of December 8th I walked along the railway path from Dalston/Kingsland to Hackney Central following in the footsteps of the narrator in one of the chapters in (Iain Sinclair's) *Downriver*. For this walk I was totally unprepared as to what sounds to search for and where. I embarked from Kingsland Shopping Centre's parking area where the contact with the railway tracks is immediate.

The trajectory began with the sounds<sup>1</sup> of a busker who roamed around the staircase leading to the parking area. I tried to record his motion while moving around him but the intrusive sounds of the cars and shopping carts made my work more difficult. On my way out of the garage, a kid came near me and asked me if the train had passed.

Sound becomes one of the many voices that inhabit the experience as part of a series of material clusters. It can be used to define relationships between these but its elusiveness makes the whole attempt ambiguous and challenging. Does it really matter what it sounded like at that particular moment, what dynamics it had?

The itinerary rapidly enough became obvious to me. The contact with the tracks was lost after a while and I ended up walking along streets full of silent presences and the usual suspects: the sounds of traffic. Dysfunctional street lights, "unattended" garbage, heavily breathing tunnels<sup>2</sup> and deserted man-made constructions caught my attention. The signs of the passage of time and the ruin-like side of the city became more prevalent to my senses. The coldness of absence was there again to accompany my walk<sup>3</sup>.

This is perhaps the only sound that I physically remember, the breathy sound of the tunnel. It is a pity that it is merely audible in the recording.

The sound is not fore-grounded; it rather becomes an indirect source affected by the landscape that is part of. Absence and distance: I engaged with the heard world through the activity of recording but how was I listening at that particular moment? What references did I carry with me and how did these lead me to shape that particular understanding of the urban landscape? How did I negotiate my presence and movement in the landscape? Did the technology I used act more like an intermediate safety layer so that I ensure my proximity/distance from it?

The occasional Graffiti art would make its ghostly appearance and fade away at a glance. After about half an hour I arrived at Graham Road. The roads in London are too narrow to accommodate both pedestrians and double-deckers. Too many of both in such a small piece of land. I decided to cross the street and in a few seconds I was walking up the alley to the nearby mega-Tesco. And yet another site to confirm my idea of London's "under construction" vortex state. Again I engaged with the sounds of trolley carts, trains, people talking loudly (some of them foreign or drunk), car sounds and the distant yet persistent presence of a dog and a crow.

Somehow it all made sense to me. I could hear (and see) where the world of the writer stems from. That whole trajectory was nothing I had previously encountered, it was something new but it somehow felt familiar as it contained all the important ingredients of the Sinclairian world, and for that matter any world that struggles to come to terms with that everyday grind of materials, sounds and experiences. We all feel the need to either block all this information out in order to rest calm and safe or to let it all in and overwhelm our senses. For a writer, I can easily assume that the second state is more relevant; a state of hyper-sensuous neurosis where the mind escapes the reality by means of fiction. But again fiction may not be a stranger to reality; would it be naive to say that it's "realistic" in the same way that "futuristic" relates to the future as a vision of reality?

[Image 12: A journal entry in response to the preparatory field visit, London, 2013]

In the red-text sections, I raise my concerns about the polyphony of our environment and how the sonic and visual and the tactile and felt, the human and non-human contribute to our sonic perceptual ecology. As I write '[s]ound becomes one of the many voices that inhabit the experience as part of a series of material clusters. It can be used to define relationships between these but its elusiveness make the whole attempt ambiguous and challenging.' (Papadomanolaki, 2014, pp.45-47) I ask myself 'does it really matter what it sounded like at that particular moment?' and by that I criticise my inability to 'properly listen' to the fragmented nature of these encounters, which I refer to as material clusters. The visual stimuli of graffiti and garbage cans are 'sonified' in my 'thinking as listening' and become part of the 'silent presences' that I describe in the entry.

Further down, I consider the disjuncture between sonic events being inscribed in my thoughts but not on the actual recording (for example the sound of a tunnel). Going back to Boehme's idea of the atmosphere as the 'gluing matter' between materials and senses within a space, I could argue that the presence of the text-score has allowed for all these links between material clusters and thoughts to be forged and this meshwork of interactions to be created but the text also enabled a critical reflection on the experience. The counter-atmosphere of the text and the way it triggered my internal 'seep-through' led me to question, my silent and distant listening position while relying on the recording technology as a discerning means of engaging with the environment. I also observe that the text itself is almost absent in my explorations and yet it can be recognized within the environment, it is made out of the same atmosphere. That first visit was therefore an important step towards clarifying the objectives of the research, the importance of the voice and its role for unlocking experiential and other associations and getting a first idea about the connection between the text and the notion of the atmosphere, something that I went on to research afterwards.

That particular excerpt, however, was not finally selected due to its location and to not matching my selection criteria. It did not provide, for example, many references to sounds *per se* as well as other social and physical characteristics. There was, also, more than two sites referenced in the text and the in-between distance was bigger than I anticipated. After the walk, I felt that I needed a more contained territory with a stronger pass-through feel to it. Nonetheless, working with that particular excerpt brought to the foreground notions such as the polyphony of experience and of thinking as listening, both important elements in the gradual understanding of what a sonic perceptual ecology might mean.

#### 4.2.2 Seeping through a microcosm city

The next field visit planned was to Homerton Station and it involved walking around the area surrounding the station and the path that connects it to the hospital. The text-score used in this visit was Iain Sinclair's excerpt about Edith Cadiz from *Downriver*. This is a very compact and yet highly 'in-transit' location and the positioning of the station in proximity to the hospital makes it an interesting node inside an area of many contrasting old and new developments. In this second visit, the role of the text-score's counter-atmosphere became more nuanced in how it triggered my internal 'seep through' and the meshworks I created. It also provided insight about how a pass-through site can become a node (a term that at that stage I was not yet familiar with) and how the node is further distilled in the creative responses. Please listen to an excerpt of the recorded walk on Audio Clip 3. Feel free to listen while you read this section of the document and stop whenever you want. On a brief journal entry before my visit to Homerton, I reflected on my process and my reading of Sinclair's sample by saying that:

I begin with a text. I internalise it by reading it. There are certain elements in it that I find more attractive, words, phrases, atmospheres... In that particular text, there is a certain feel of decline, roughness and negativity framed by the constant echoing of ambulances. I will visit the place next week and look for these sounds of decline. (Papadomanolaki, November 2012, unpaginated)

In my poaching of the text-score, I resonated with how the counter-atmosphere of the Sinclairian text expanded the character of Edith Cadiz on every single detail on the landscape as I walked around and listened. The sound of the ambulances was, as anticipated, quite prominent, and the presence of rusty and dusty surfaces (Image 13), cracked walls (Image 14) and broken glass was further enriched by the rumbling sound of the passing trains. The colour grey was pronounced, too, as the area was full of car repair shops with aluminium gates (Image 15) whose silent and seemingly dormant voices I tried to record. In my re-enactment of the text-score's counter-atmosphere, grey was encoded as the colour of isolation, amputation, ambiguity, discomfort and decline. 'She never felt at ease' is one of the phrases that I found resonant and one that triggered my motion through the landscape. By confronting the elements that caused such a discomfort, instead of

passing-through the station, I created a node on the physical plane of the visit by focusing on details and listening closely.



[Image 13: Image from field visit #2, December 2012, London]



[Image 14: Image from field visit #2, December 2012, London]



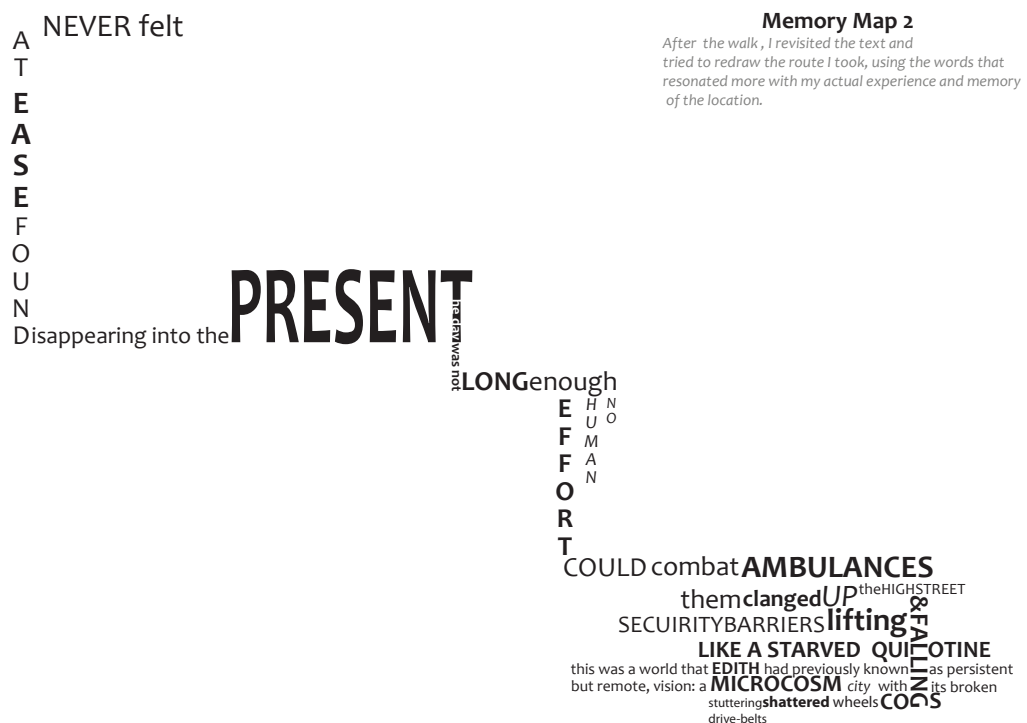
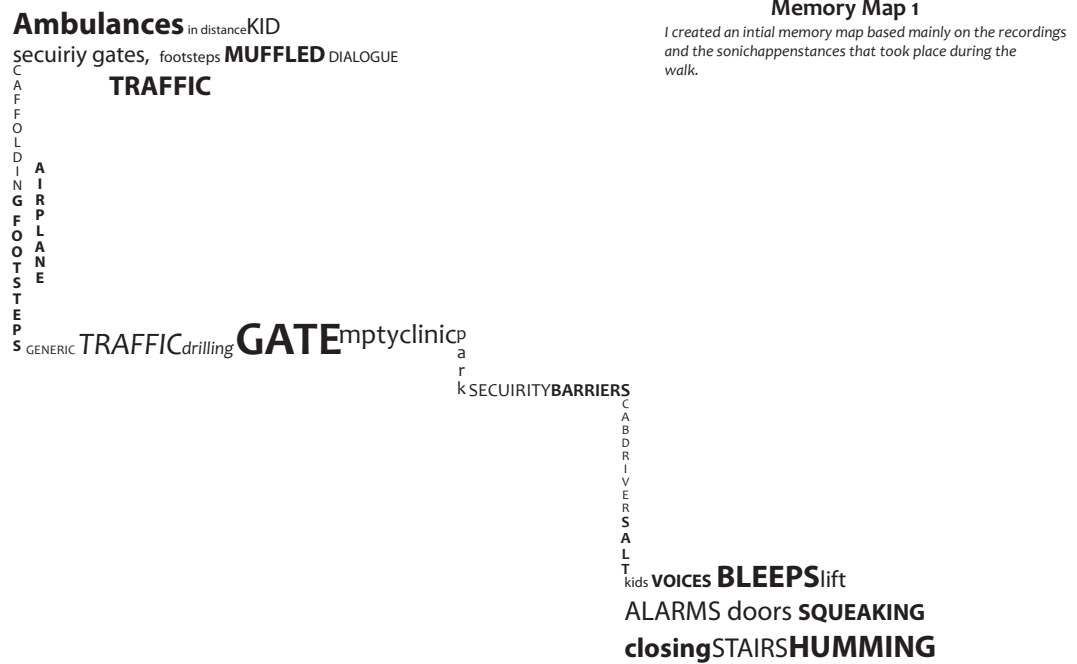
[Image 15: Image from field visit #2, December 2012, London, Image courtesy of Apostolos Voulgarakis]

As I wrote after the visit:

I felt that sound alone is not the answer. The architecture, the textures on the buildings, the facades, the broken cables, the soil and dust, the garbage, the smell of spaces added to my perception of the atmosphere. Something I felt before, elsewhere but here it all made sense. The text brought my senses to life and made me look closer to these discarded details. (Papadomanolaki, December 2012, unpaginated)

The text-score's counter-atmosphere and my poaching of resonant words and phrases made me more sensitive to the environment and more attuned to the location before my arrival there. I was immediately listening and responding to these exchanges by letting my internal 'seep through' enrich my experience. In the resulting meshworks of interactions, my thinking-voice was picking up sounds, textures, turning them to words, to names of streets to colours to sounds and back out again in an on-going channel of conversation. After the visit I tried to intuitively produce two word-based memory maps reflecting my experience (Image 16, Appendix 2, pp.4-5). In these responses, I emphasise my poaching of the text and its role in my explorations. Its strongly visual aspect nonetheless is not hindering the encounter with other senses and materials. The way the letters are arranged and the

language is disjointed on page are reflecting the way my internal 'seep through' reappropriated the text-score and how it was re-enacted in the field visit.



[Image 16: Rewriting the text-score: The memory maps created after visit #2 ]

I would like to borrow Theo Van Doesburg's, disguised as I. K. Bonset, description of the new (constructivist) poets as a way of referring to my own attitude toward the original sample. According to him '[a] city is a horizontal tension and a vertical tension...As is the city is the poem...the new poet constructs his language out of the ruins of the past, and since everything derives from language, he creates with it...a world and a new man' (Bann, 1974, pp.111-112). In similar terms, with the word-maps, I attempted to rewrite the sample, to poach it and deviate it from its novel form into a poem-like reconstruction of the node made of the resonant words I chose (Map 2) and the resonant sounds I encountered in response to these words (Map 1).

Not unlike the Cagean treatment of Thoreau's text in *Song Books*, I experimented with the idea of liberating the typography of the text in an effort to give it a form that doesn't refer to the original but it is my own psychogeographic response to the experience. The typefaces and the visual form of the words had a particular function attached to them, adding emphasis on words, parts of the walk and how they correlated with the anticipated words and sounds. In a way, the maps attempted to experiment with 'the relation between language and experience' (Drucker, 1998, p.147) and how aspects of a sonic perceptual ecology can take on a more material form. The words and letters as materials provided a palette for adding stress to particular locations, expressing the challenge to perceive in an overwhelming environment as well as the physical and psychological properties of the visit.

With reference to the aesthetics of visual poetry, these two responses move beyond the word and destabilise the fixtures and constraints of language on the page by bringing in the 'mismatch between conventions in syntax/grammar/language and visual form' (Drucker, 1998, p.23). As John Cage explained in reference to his literary texts and experiments with typography also present in his *Song Books* '[a]s soon as you surpass the level of the word, everything changes; [I don't] deal with the question of the impossibility or possibility of meaning. [I] took for granted that meaning exists' (Cage to Charles, 1981, p.114).

This meaning is nonetheless embedded in the visual form of the word, its placement on the page allowing different ways of reading and hence different ways of meaning. As Johanna Drucker underlines 'the work has a distinct shape on the page and loses part of its meaning if its rearranged or printed without the attention

to the typeface and form which were part of the poet's original work' (Drucker, 1998, p.111). In Guy Debord's and Asger Jorn's situationist *Mémoires*(1959) for instance, the book is often described as a work of psychogeography and as a whole it escapes both any genre definitions and the fixtures of the page by poaching - or détournement of as they would call the technique of cultural reappropriation - existing popular culture texts found in newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and other resources found in the city. The artists write '[l]es mots même prennent un sens nouveau' ([t]he words themselves take on a new meaning) and that meaning relies on the arrangement of materials and how they are framed around other elements such as splashes of pigment or images.

Such a proposition reminds us of Jenkins' idea of the textual poachers as discussed in Chapter Three but it also positions the fabrication of a text on the level of practice, to return to Kristeva, that engages with the social and political implications it draws from. In more recent terms a similar approach can be seen in the interactive computer graphic installation entitled *The Legible City* (1989)<sup>39</sup> developed by Jeffrey Shaw in collaboration with Dirk Groeneveld. In its three versions - Manhattan version (1989), Amsterdam version (1990), Karlsruhe version (1991) - the piece replaces ground plans of the three cities with:

textual formations written and compiled by Dirk Groeneveld. Travelling through these cities of words is consequently a journey of reading; choosing the path one takes is a choice of texts as well as their spontaneous juxtapositions and conjunctions of meaning. (Shaw, 1989, unpaginated)

The audience sits on a bicycle, pedalling across the paths of their choice, and the piece's sonic perceptual ecology through the mediation of technology becomes that of intuitive explorations of text and numerous possibilities of meaning. Similarly, the word-map pieces offer a small subjective account of the experienced visit that can be appropriated and re-enacted differently by someone else.

Taking the conversation a bit further, in *microcosm // a world within a world*, a collaboration with Marina Tsartsara, Marina created a dance performance transforming my memory maps into embodied movements and visual scores (Image

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<sup>39</sup> More info on the work as well as high-res video documentation: [http://www.jeffrey-shaw.net/html\\_main/frameset-works.php](http://www.jeffrey-shaw.net/html_main/frameset-works.php)

17). You can watch an excerpt of Marina's performance in Video Clip 2<sup>40</sup>. The performance was presented in July 2014 at the IMT Gallery as part of *Forms of Ventriloquism*, an event I curated and where I commissioned a variety of artists to re-enact a selection of creative responses produced from the field visits and workshops, also discussed in this chapter. Different samples of this event will be presented throughout this chapter, as well as excerpts of their assessments<sup>41</sup>, to contextualize the framework of this research trajectory and its various outcomes.

Marina worked intensively with the word-pieces for a period of a month, using them as text-scores, internalizing them and responding to them intuitively by creating a series of drawings (Image 18), which she then used to score her performance. The aspect that triggered her internal 'seep through' was the multiplicity of sonic and visual typographic variations all folded into each other and the challenge of voicing these microcosm worlds simultaneously. As she wrote in an email assessment we exchanged:

[t]he chosen sample triggered both city sonic associations and spatial relationships through the map made of words of different sizes and relationships. In the final work these were filtered through my physical perception, sense of space and sensation of sound of both the chosen sample and its integration in the performative space and new city sounds. At the same time, the drawing was tracing my physical response to all the above in the performative space. (Tsartsara, 2014, unpaginated)

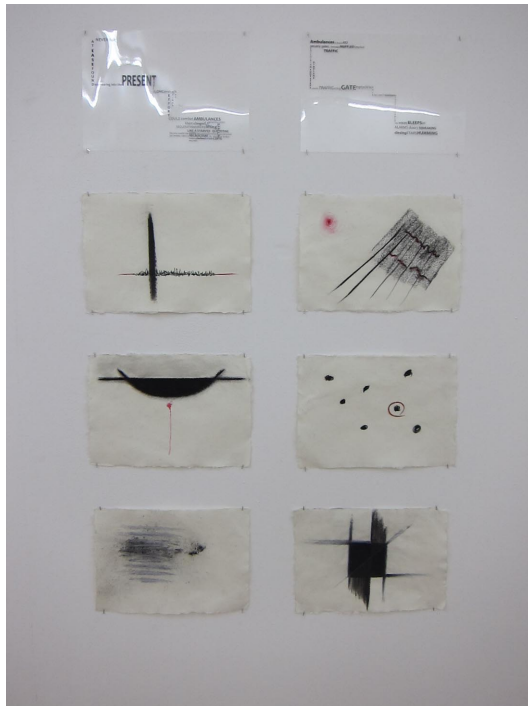
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<sup>40</sup> To watch the video clips please reference the 'Video Clips' tab in the Media Folder page.

<sup>41</sup> Throughout this chapter I will be referencing excerpts from a questionnaire I created for artists to self-assess the work they contributed to the event which I have been referring to as 'assessment' and which was circulated via email. You can see the questionnaire in Appendix 3, pp.26-28.



[Image 17 Marina Tsartsara performing at IMT gallery. Photo courtesy of the artist.]



[Image 18 The drawings produced in response to the memory maps.]

For her performance she emphasized the difficulty of voicing the simultaneous layers embedded in the word-maps by performing on the window of the gallery. She used it as a surface to redraw her intuitive internal scores whilst at the same time trying to be in contact with the actualities and the sounds of the surrounding environment. With her responses she subverted its spatial limitations by exploring possibilities of expression through a language made of body movements and drawing forms. The audience, according to Marina's assessment, 'was very

absorbed during the live performance and at the end of the show I received very positive feedback, about the way I chose to draw, by using my whole body, movement and the external soundscape of that specific moment.’ (Tsartsara, 2014, unpaginated)

I would like now to go back to Debord and Jorn’s words that ‘take on a new meaning.’ Please watch Video Clip 3: *a microcosm city: subtitled*. In *a microcosm city: subtitled*, I have expanded the meaning and editing of the text by intuitively incorporating more textural, rhythmical, aural, psychological subtleties from the experienced node in how the words are sequenced and degraded. The piece was self-initiated as one of the resulting creative responses of the walk. It was later screened as part of the *Visual Urbanism* event at the British Library in October 2013 and was exhibited at the IMT Gallery in July 2014 as part of *Forms Of Ventriloquism*. The ‘greyness’ of the counter-atmosphere, described earlier in this document, is sustained throughout the piece as a monochrome background providing a wall for the letters to emerge. The letters themselves are digitally degraded to approximate the cracked walls that I encountered during my walk. An audio layer consisting of sounds recorded during the visit, as a response to resonant words also present in the video, exists in parallel to the video creating overlaps and clashes.

Here we have perhaps another example of how the visited node’s sonic perceptual ecology becomes words, sounds and colours on screen. It is through this sustained atmosphere that the textual element of the piece attempts to experiment with the poetics of inner speech as a polyphonic platform of voices, human and non-human, material and mental. The viscosity that the piece activates is interjected by the soundtrack while its sonic perceptual ecology aims to make us listen (and think) more than see. By placing the text in the bottom of the frame, I use the cinematic convention of the subtitle not as an authoritative bridge across meanings and languages but as a means of prompting exchanges.

Subtitles, often associated with the notion of foreignness and a discourse around social and cultural politics and policies (Sinha, 2004, pp.172-173), are rarely used in ways that negate their ‘translational’ role. Derek Jarman’s *Blue* perhaps

breaks the barriers of such a saturated territory by using an IKB<sup>42</sup> inspired background to be filled only with subtitles and a soundtrack. Being Jarman's last film, *Blue* offers to the audience 'a film without compunction or narrative, existing only for an idea...exploring the juxtaposition of sound and image... an atmosphere of calm and joy' (Esch, 2004, p.509). The blue screen provides a silent atmosphere, cleansed by the 'cacophony of images', a gateway to the 'admirable austerity of the void' (Esch, 2004, p.509) where the audience can listen and immerse themselves into the work's 'potent distillation of autobiography, historiography, subjective memory and documentary reality' (Esch, 2004, p.510).

Jarman's void embraces sound in favour of sight, creating a form of 'blindness' that opens up the possibility for unlocking the senses and for a deeper understanding through listening, through attuning our 'mind's eye' to sound. A *microcosm city: subtitled* explores a similar territory, aiming to find a dialogical space where the total absence of images opens up a space for thinking as listening. Language through the use of text becomes a shifter that is not designed to narrate but to trigger synapses that converse with sound. The austerity of the grey background, similar to Jarman's 'void,' allows for such a meshwork of interactions to emerge. In its latest iteration, the piece was installed in the corridor space of IMT Gallery in London (Image 19). Having set it up close to the ceiling, I wanted to frame the surrounding environment of the piece by an austere configuration of walls that expand the piece in the physical space. Playing in a loop the audiovisual piece was there to offer a sonic perceptual ecology where the fictionalised world of the work conversed with the actualities in the gallery and opened up a space for reflection siting against the pass-through character of the corridor.

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<sup>42</sup> Before creating *Blue* Jarman has presented work inspired by Yves Klein's monochrome IKB paintings. IKB became the singular color that Klein would use in this series of works and which he coined as the International Klein Blue.



[Image 19: Still from the installation of *a microcosm city: subtitled* at IMT Gallery as part of *Forms Of Ventriloquism*, July 2014]

In *Edith's Noise*, the same text is used as a libretto, to borrow Voegelin's reappropriation of the term, to produce a sound only creative response. You can listen to the piece in Audio Clip 4. Feel free to listen to the piece while reading this section and stop at any time desired. The spine of the work is based on field recordings collected from the location. The final piece is a recording of an experimentation made using a laptop, the recordings and mini FM transmitters used to create feedback loops between devices as well as textural disruptions. The piece is structured so as to recreate my sense of the counter-atmosphere of the text, using harsh sounds (recordings of metallic gates, ambulance sounds, squeaking, doors) to re-enact the experience of the visit. The sequencing was all improvised while I used subtle panning and filtering to approximate the aural textures and motions of the experienced sonic perceptual ecology.

Many months after its production, *Edith's Noise* was featured in "The Dark Outside FM", a 24-hour broadcast aired between the August 31<sup>st</sup> – September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 as part of the International Environmental Arts Festival, Galloway Forest Dark Skies Park, Scotland. The broadcast curators invited artists to submit previously unreleased and unheard music to be included in the site-specific transmission hence providing a durational soundtrack sitting in dialogue with the sounds of sheep and other fauna and flora species in the area while prompting the passers-by to listen to the location differently.

### 4.2.3 Walking along lines

In many ways, the creative responses presented above provide good examples of how the counter-atmosphere can trigger the internal 'seep through' and the meshworks of interactions it can lead to. In the following two visits, similar patterns emerged and in the next pages I will try to summarise the important elements encountered. My third field visit took place at Liverpool Street Station. The station itself and the surrounding spaces offered another example of a node, demarcated by train platforms, underground entrances and stairwells. The station's main arcade renovation in the 1980s was a preamble to its extension to the Broadgate Estate with common seating and entertainment area adorned with water features, ping pong tables and sparsely positioned restaurants. The gloomy environment in Sebald's excerpt prompted me to move inside the Liverpool Street Station and beyond its renovated façade. In my poaching of the text-score, I emphasised a strong sense of exile that connects to the idea of losing oneself, something that can be felt in pass-through spaces like Liverpool Street Station. Nonetheless, within the text-score's counter-atmosphere, as with my previous visit, I created a space for reflection and focused engagement. I listened to the sounds in a mode similar to Chattopadhyay's 'hyper-listening' (Chapter One, p.45) connecting them to past experiences of travel and migration but also made associations between the common threads running across the Sebaldian text and the station's current state. The walk was documented by recording and taking photographs. Unfortunately the recording of that visit was finally not saved due to my digital recorder's failure during the walk.

My creative responses were based on assigning these remaining images to the resonant phrases and words from the text (Images 20-22). By looking and reading closely to these assemblages, it can be understood that my internal 'seep through' engaged with the sounds of the station on a more critical level, reflecting on the character of the space and the politics associated with it. It made me think, for example, about controlled and restricted migrant movement. As I wrote in my journal response to an image I took (Image 20):

Sebald's metaphor of the 'weir' has now been transformed into a decorative corporate water feature just on the back of the station. It flows and its initial pressure is tamed as it circles around the

silently vigilant stones; until it falls down again, in a clear, soft and calculated weir. (Papadomanolaki, 2013, unpaginated)



[Image 20: *Water against the weir*: Image from field visit #3, January 2013, London.]



[Image 21: *a quiet scraping and trampling of feet*: Image from field visit #3, January 2013, London.]



[Image 22: *A faint greyness*: Image from field visit #3, January 2013, London.]

In comparison to my previous encounters with a station, the sonic perceptual ecology of that particular visit allowed me to reflect on my recurring need to confront such spaces. Again as with the Sinclair's excerpt, the counter-atmosphere of the text-score triggered my immersion into the environment of the station before my arrival. And, although no actual sound recording survived that visit, my listening memory of the station proved to be quite rich and informative about a kind of listening that can be found in the viscosity of texts and images.

The fourth field visit took place in Carpenters Road, a narrow street behind the Olympic Park in Stratford where the Carpenters Estate is located. The bringing of the Olympic Games to the area and the construction of the neighbouring and enclosed Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, despite its claims to engage with local communities, appears to have left that particular strip of land outside its radius of influence. You can listen to an audio excerpt of the walk in Audio Clip 5. Please feel free to listen while you read and stop whenever you wish. In this occasion, I applied a similar methodology to the previous visits, also described in page 104. The text-score's counter-atmosphere, created a sense of positive anticipation that was contradicted at the outset. The wind was quite prominent during the walk and that was also documented in the recordings. Ford's sample essentially takes place in the one and only pub (Image 23) located in the road.

My internalising of the text-score led me to look for stories from local people and to start conversations with the owners and staff of the pub. In the recording, I enter the pub, one can listen to the TV playing in the background, the noises of the fridge behind the bar and myself attempting fruitlessly to engage in a conversation about the pub. Unfortunately, the man who worked there was new in the neighbourhood and there was no one else around to talk to. Instead, I sat down with Apostolos, my husband, had a beer and chatted. The presence of a PA system (Image 24) in the back room gave a hint about the pub probably hosting parties for the local community but nothing more. On the other hand, this failure to connect to the locality of the area is a significant observation in its own right on how the area has in fact changed and the continuity was broken after the arrival of the Olympic Park. Interestingly enough, it is overtly visible where the private zone begins and where the municipal territory ends. The sonic perceptual ecology of the visit was summarised in the editing of the audio recording you are currently listening to, focusing on the moments of failure that nonetheless brought up thoughtful realisations about the character of the area which were further expanded in the next phase.



[Image 23 The pub at Carpenters Road.]



[Image 24: The PA]

To summarise some of the main observations resulting from the visits I would say that despite my silent listening mode, my thinking-voice acted as a means of bridging the external sonic encounters with my internal thoughts in the realm of a sonic perceptual ecology. This led to a polyphonic listening experience where other senses were manifested through the sound of my voice and where my voice was inhabited by the sounds of visual or textural cues provided by the encountered materials (cracked walls, water fountains or glass ceilings). This is perhaps an appropriate example of what a polyphonic meshwork can be in practice especially when referencing Tim Ingold's idea of the plural and multisensorial way of perception. It also demonstrates how through a focused action of drifting, a pass-through site can turn into a node.

Another important realisation was the subconscious presence of the text-scores in my explorations and how they prompted me to perceive and explore a location in a particular way. One could argue that the text-score limited my perception by colouring it but that was a deliberate choice as I wanted to experiment with that exact idea. My reply to such a criticism is that the text-score was equally controlled by my reading habits and how my internal 'seep through' resonated with its different elements. There was no prescribed way of reading it nor of responding to it. As already demonstrated in the samples of journal entries, recordings, video and audio pieces, my listening experience, through the bias of the text-score, was

expanded and enriched by the meshwork of interrelated sounds, images and thoughts reflected in different outputs. The resonant words and phrases contributed toward a sonic perceptual ecology where, as stated above, my voice was heard and inhabited by other voices and stories that supersede notions not only of ownership but also unity. Within these explorations, the text-score appeared to be a catalytic element also in the sense that it emerged in my creative responses.

Editing and crafting text-based works as a means of destabilising the language and the singularity of meanings was a way of escaping the tentative control of the page and of exploring the possibilities of a new language and a form of intuitive literary response to the city. As Alex Murray stated in relation to urban literary work, 'literature doesn't simply imagine a different reality, but presents the possibility of [reality] being created' (Murray, 2007, pp.116-117) and within the scope of the shifter and the notion of the 'text as practice' such possibility of creation takes place within the social realm, in the midst of locations where such events happen. It is through the poaching of the text-score that the 'city goes soft' - to refer back to Jonathan Raban (Raban, 1974, pp.9-10) - and we challenge fixed identities tied to prescribed functionalities and narratives about spaces.

At that stage, the scope of the research became clearer and I wanted to further explore the dynamics between internal 'seep through', sound, site and text-score. I wanted to test the methodology with other people and let myself be exposed to and challenged by other perspectives. In order to achieve that, I invited a series of co-walkers to do an exploratory workshop with me in the same locations by following the exact same methodology: internalising a sample, doing a soundwalk and creating a response. These people were chosen, as explained in the introduction, through a network of friends and colleagues because of their interest and willingness to be committed to the task. Please note that I have obtained permission from all my co-walkers to use anonymously the recordings, images and creative responses produced during our workshops as part of this thesis.

### 4.3 Phase Two: The Exploratory Workshops

In March 2014 I introduced the screening of Wim Wender's film *Wings of Desire* at the Old Cinema Museum as part of the series of events entitled *Points of Listening* co-convened by Salomé Voegelin and Mark Peter Wright. Moving away from the cinematic conventions, in my presentation I focused on how listening to the voices of the people of the city becomes an important step towards the crossing of borders and the creation of identity. One of the examples used was that of Daniel, the protagonist of the film, and his gradual decision to fall from eternity and become mortal. As I argued in my presentation from the perspective of Daniel listening to other people's thinking-voices:

is a way of creating his own identity and it becomes the driving force of desire. Through listening to people's thoughts, Daniel desires to feel, taste, touch. The film begins with Daniel as a mortal at the moment he writes the first verses of his poem of childhood and hence enacting his mortal stream-of-consciousness that gives form and a shared space for all the thoughts he collected, his desires, aspirations, reflections, merging them within his inner voice... (Papadomanolaki, 2014, unpaginated)

Daniel's fall can be seen perhaps as a metaphor for acknowledging the importance of polyphony in the construction of identity through sound, of letting other voices and 'stories of below' affect and destabilise certainties and enrich the way we perceive the city. This is the core idea that emerged gradually through an intense period of workshops conducted between January and November 2013. With these workshops I activated a space of multiplicities that facilitated a 'convergence' of voices, bodies, rhythms and thoughts (Lee and Ingold, 2006, p.81).

In this second research phase, I divided my co-walkers into two categories: the biased, as I will call them in this section - who would use a text-score - and the unbiased who would do a workshop in the same location but without a text-score. By creating this division, I aimed to test the differences in the explorations with and without the text as well as the similarities that may emerge and to what extent these differences and similarities can offer constructive insights on whether the use of psychogeographic writing is a potent means for sound sensitive exchanges. These workshops were semi-structured in order to create space for my co-walkers to

express themselves and to allow their sensibilities to emerge. In that sense, I provided suggestions informed by the experiences I gathered from my field visits.

For those who used a text-score I requested that they read it before the visit and internalise any words or phrases that they would like to use as prompts for the explorations. For those who didn't, I mainly requested that they listen for sounds and other prompts relevant to their own interests. The aim was, as already stated above, to compare the two different types of workshops and to test whether the use of the text-score prompted people to react differently, to be more creative, attentive and reflective during the walk and in their responses. Similarly to the listening protocols developed by the international sound art collective Ultra-red, these suggestions aimed to facilitate 'the important dialectical rapport between open attentiveness and intentional commitment' (Ultra-red, 2012, p.4). Ultra-red, founded by two HIV activists in Los Angeles in the early nineties but now having its network of members spread across the globe, developed protocols for organising 'listening as a collective rather than as an individual procedure-listening as a relation to an other' (Ultra-red, 2012, p.7). The term collective has a very particular meaning for Ultra-red that is associated with working closely with local communities and spending time familiarising themselves with the social and political nuances of these communities. Their protocols refer to different strands of interconnected activities such as field work, soundwalks, listening sessions and creative responses all aiming to open up the possibilities of 'world-making' through 'militant sound investigation' (Ultra-red, 2012, p.3).

In the framework of this research's workshops however, the 'militant' aspect of listening as well as the collective are rather challenged by the very nature of the locations, being strongly related to the notion of the pass-through. One could argue that unlocking one's voice and subverting the functionality of a space can also be listed as a militant sound investigation, a way, as Jenkins would write, of subverting power structures and narratives. The spaces are revisited, many times and with different co-walkers participating in 'the kinaesthesia and sonaesthesia of shared place, encountered and learned by the moving, sensing, experiencing body' (Feld 1996, p.105). That process can assume a militant value when being a transient listener in a node. There is a value in the unfamiliar and the unknown, too, and in the very process of learning 'how to travel' (Solnit, 2006, pp.16-24) through the node.

Therefore if there was a draft workshop protocol to be presented at this stage that would be:

- i) Internalising text-score / Preparatory suggestions
- ii) soundwalk
- iii) discussion
- iv) making of creative response

#### **i) Homerton**

The first round of workshops took place at the Homerton location. The trajectory taken was roughly similar, following the path from the station to the hospital. Arriving there, I briefly informed my co-walkers that I would discreetly record our walk using my in-ear binaural microphones and we would begin our exploration by walking and listening. Although most of the workshops were documented in some cases, the digital recording device did not function properly and hence the recording was not saved. Images were also taken when necessary using a smart phone. One of the recurring patterns that emerged from the sum of the visits was the need for my co-walkers to use their voice during the soundwalk. On the one hand, it was not fully clear from my part whether staying silent was a necessary instruction, making it possible for them to speak if they wanted. On the other hand, the focus of the workshop was to listen but through any way my co-walkers preferred, setting aside any specialist guidance from me. By moving away from the 'refrain from speaking' instruction often used in soundwalks, I allowed my co-walkers to express themselves and to listen to the environment anyway they wanted. The aim was to learn from others as much as from my individual experience. That was an important step towards understanding the nature and potential of a conversational soundwalk within a sonic perceptual ecology.

When moving within the node, having established a more dialogic way of listening together, to refer back to Andra McCartney's suggestion, allowed me to question my own thoughts but also affect the process by asking questions or making suggestions. Similarly, in Bakhtin's definition of 'dialogic', conversation is based on these fluctuating dynamics where '[t]hough no shared agreements may be reached through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views

and expand their understanding of one another.’ (Sennett on Bakhtin, 2012, p.19)

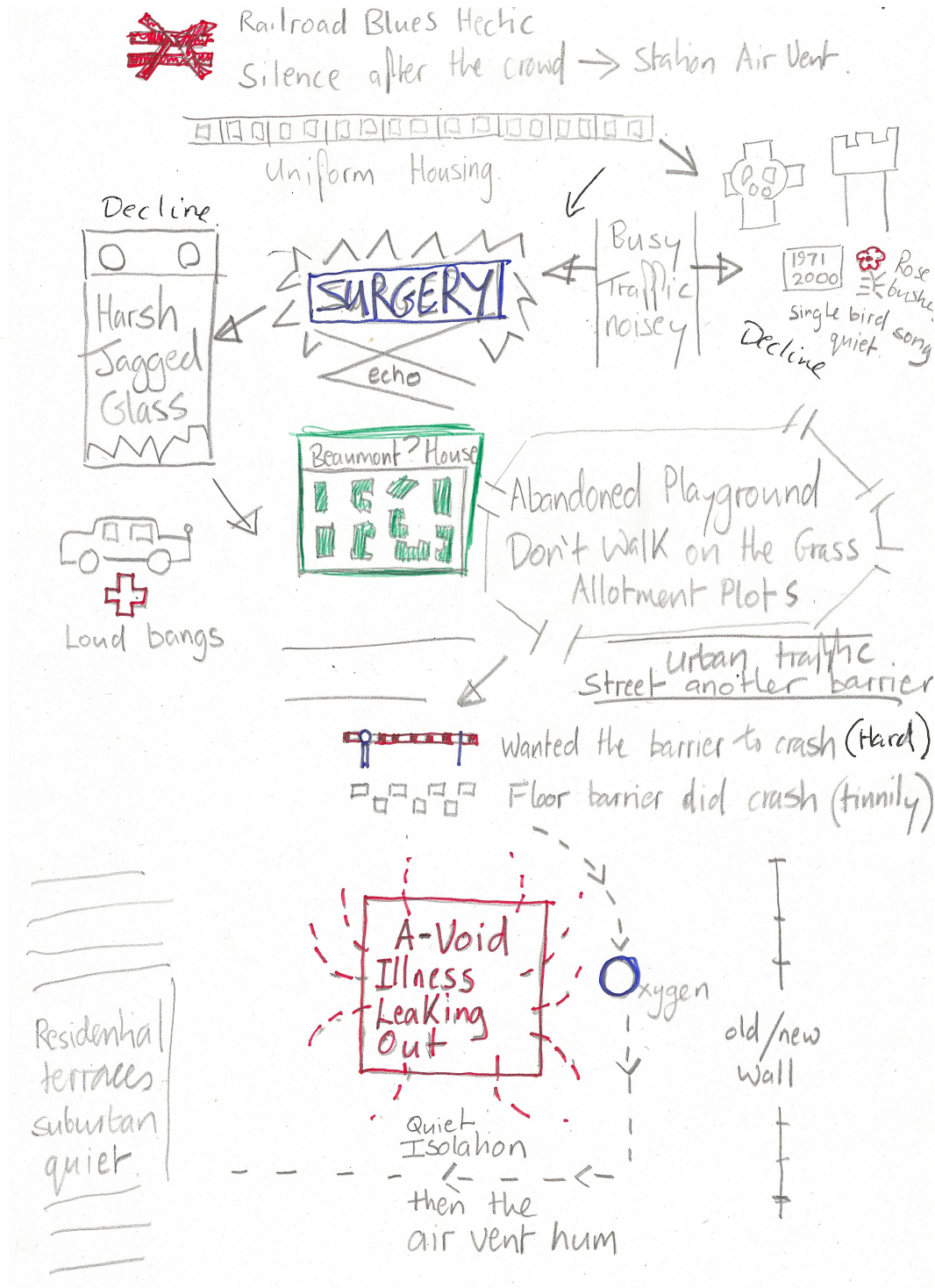
The poaching of the text-score and the suggested counter-atmosphere, through conversation, became triggers for looking closer at different details from the ones in my visit. Please listen to Audio Clip 6 before proceeding. For instance, in the clip you just heard, we have an example of how the same resonant theme of isolation (of being cut-out) as in my solitary field visit, was approached from a different perspective by my co-walker whose internal ‘seep through’ (influenced by his background in architecture and design) led us to the church and adjacent graveyard (Image 25) in proximity to the station, wondering about the time it was built and exploring it. We generated a meshwork of movements and conversations that further expanded my previous encounter with these resonant words from the text and the location. Please listen to Audio Clip 7. Similarly, my other biased co-walker singled the same church out but because of its contradiction to the newness of the other buildings. As he later wrote in his response (Appendix 3, p.7), he associated this ‘old meets new forced blend’ with a reference from the text about ‘escaping from place into time’ which offers a totally different approach to the same detail.



[Image 25 The Old Church and the adjacent graveyard.]

By listening to the two clips, we can hear the voices of the two co-walkers engage with the polyphonic meshworks surrounding the church through voicing its different elements (materials, historicities, characteristics) and therefore drawing another line in the node of the sonic perceptual ecology. The church and the graveyard were documented in both co-walkers’ creative responses and in our discussion afterward (Images 26 and 27, Appendix 3, pp.3-8) and as it can be seen, these responses have distilled within them the above polyphonies of the meshworks.

They are, in a way parallel to my word-maps and audiovisual responses, reiterations of their respective nodes on paper.



[Image 26 Creative Response of co-walker No 1, Page 1 of 2]

## Mental map 15 March, 2013

- Station, nice sound of trains (~~both at underground~~  
~~and~~ while waiting)
  - First couple of minutes - typical (boring  
in context)
  - Revelation: the two old buildings  
the hospital & school  
almost fake, lost in time
  - The clinic at the opposite side, a bit spooky, but  
mainly in relation to the school and church  
It had a "David Rosenberg" aspect
  - No sonical interest
  - The hospital was like a "border" between  
the area ~~starting~~ the station and where we  
are now.
  - After the hospital the location looked more  
familiar, more like "London"
- Overall it's a place that is somehow  
between old (abandoned) and new (progress)  
but none of the two can dominate

[Image 27 Creative Response of co-walker No 2, Page 1 of 4]

The text-score prompted a counter-atmosphere of reflection and focused engagement, moving beyond the flaneurist approach, deviating from the designated pass-through path, discerning details and making personal associations that did not subtract us from the environment but embedded us within it, not as tourists but as travellers. The area was seen as a divided territory where the Hospital functioned like

a border between the (declining) old (Church) and the new communities and hip high street coffee shops and restaurants on the opposite side across Chatsworth Road (Image 28). Boehme's suggestion that the atmosphere facilitates the perceptual merging between visual and sonic, as presented in Chapter One, through these workshops was made valuable in practice with the use of the text-score as a trigger for a counter-atmosphere. The visual prompted the aural, and the aural animated the visual. Please listen to the short Audio Clips 8 and 9 before continuing reading.

1 disappearing into present

2 physical lift of pleasure

3 confronting horrors

4 mosaic of dreams

5 escape from "place" and into time

How they made sense to me:

1: exploring London. That a very current situation ~~for~~ for me

2: hospitals: unpleasant

3: school and (maybe) church \*

4: I just liked it

5: this 'old meet new' sort of forced blend.

\* graveyard / DEATH

In Audio Clip 8 the presence of a singular bird sound (also documented in Image 26) is perceived through its contrast to the surrounding architecture. Similarly, if you listen to Audio Clip 9, the presence of harsh and metallic sounds in the text (Image 26) prompted my co-walker to pay attention to the surrounding details that consisted of a façade surrounded with broken glass and metallic scaffolding breaking into it. The mechanical and the harsh were also encountered in the sounds of the ‘station air vent’ (Image 26). The recurring presence of sirens was immediately felt not only in the actual sounds but also in the connection to the idea of emergency, illness and death prompted in the text and anticipated (and encountered) in the visit. The talking did not hinder the siren’s perception but established a polyphony of materials, senses, thoughts and utterances. Stephen Connor writes in relation to the voice’s role in aural-oral cultures that:

words are events, in visual-literate cultures, they are mnemonic objects. This suggests a distinction, which in some historians of orality can take a very idealizing form, between the participative relationship between humans and between humans and their non-human environments characteristic of oral cultures, and the dominative and non-reciprocal relations between the human and the non-human worlds characteristic of visual-literate cultures. (Connor, 2000, p.187)

This folds back to the idea discussed earlier in Chapter One of the solitary 19<sup>th</sup> century *flâneur* who with his male gaze ‘was stimulated by what he saw, and took those impressions, as it were, home with him’ (Sennett, 2012, p.80). With these visits, however, we used our voices to find ourselves in ‘a vast interior in the center of which the listener finds himself together with his interlocutors’ (Ong, 1981, p.164). And within this capacity, the text-score and the resulting counter-atmosphere facilitated the unlocking of the voice as a means of participating in a focused and embodied sonic perceptual ecology.

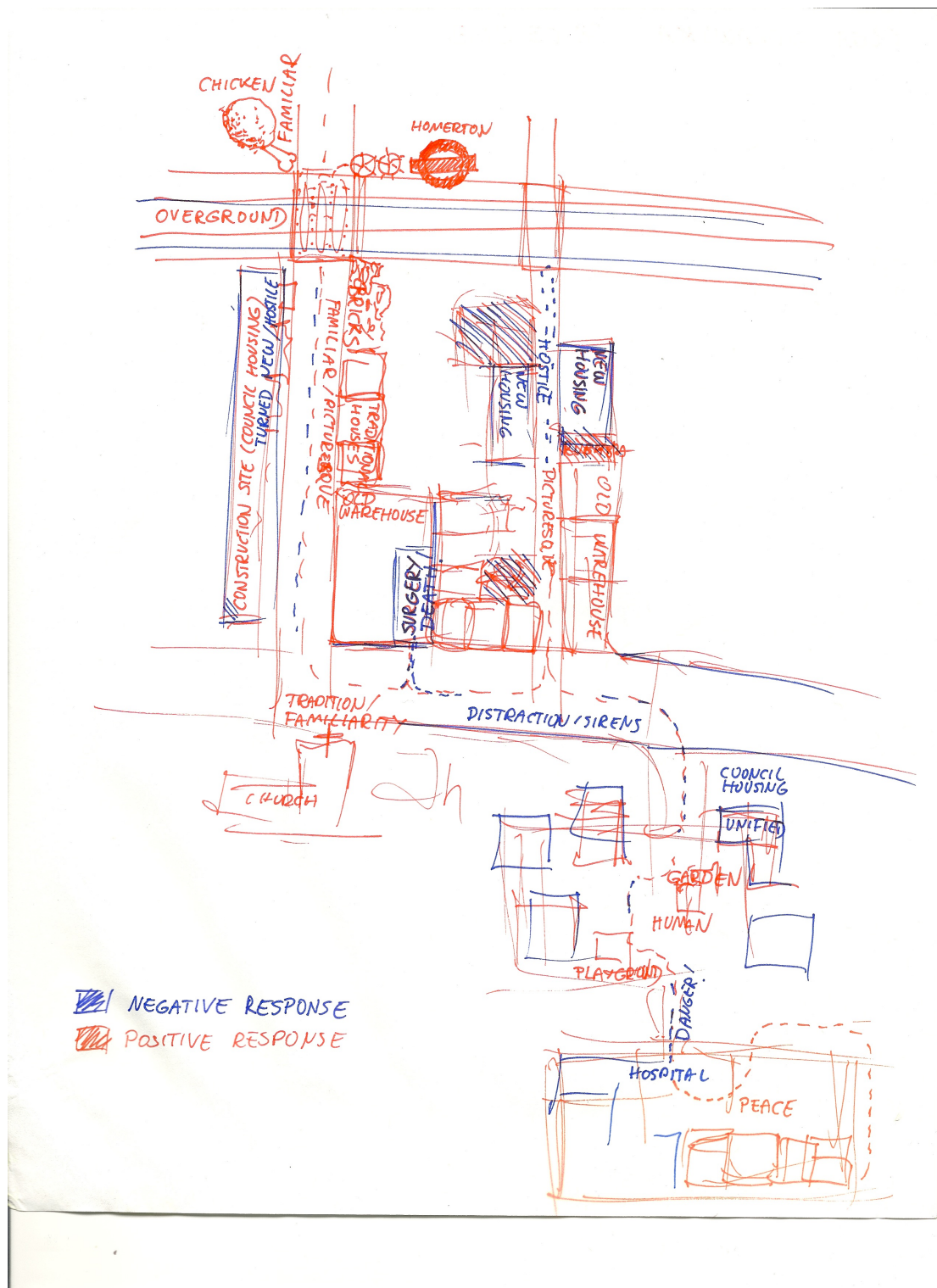
In the case of my unbiased co-walker, the workshop took a different approach, not focusing that much on particular details rather than making references to the past experiences of the area and on the overall negative and positive responses that the area gave her (Images 29-28, Appendix 3, pp.9-10). Due to the fact that it was a rainy day, the sounds of water dripping and flowing were among the ones she paid attention to the most. The recording of the audio from the visit was

slightly unfortunate as I pressed the wrong settings and I ended up recording from the inside of my coat's pocket throughout the walk. Please listen briefly to Audio Clip 10 to get an idea. As it was later discussed, she found that the area was 'disjointed but balanced' (Image 30) and distinguished by intense contrasts (open, enclosed, cozy, hostile, old, new). She also observed the presence of sirens as a characteristic sound in the environment as well as the sound of the Overground train.

Even though no text-score was used similar patterns started emerging - especially in relation to the atmosphere of the location<sup>43</sup>. This meeting point between the biased and unbiased responses allowed me to make a useful observation about the possibilities of using psychogeographic writing to produce site and sound sensitive text-scores. In it the properties of the environment are deeply distilled in the fabric of the words and yet a level of openness and ambiguity is retained. The workshops also confirmed my initial suggestion that a text-score should not be memorised by heart with precision but be used, as I explained in Chapter Three, as a shifter.

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<sup>43</sup> Although it has to be noted that the unbiased walk was, at times, synoptic and perhaps prone to flaneurism.



[Image 29 Creative Response of unbiased co-walker, Page 1 of 2]

## DISJOINTED BUT BALANCED

SOUND OF THE OVERGROUND

FRYING CHICKEN

WATER DRIPPING

WATER FLOWING

SIRENS

COSY SILENCE VS HOSTILE ACOUSTICS  
(IN PICTURESQUE AREAS) (IN ABANDONED AREAS)

FAMILIARITY TURNS INTO DANGER

OPEN AREAS / FREEDOM OF EXPLORATION VS BEING TRAPPED

SILENCE WITHOUT PEOPLE (EMPTY FLATS)

SILENCE WITH PEOPLE (HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM)

OVERGROUND

BUILDING SITE

SIRENS (AMBULANCE, POLICE)

FAN

VAP

[Image 30 Creative Response of unbiased co-walker, Page 2 of 2]

Similarly to Sinclair's sample, a sound and site sensitive text-score could be fragmented, prompting sounds, thoughts of sounds and of internal and external synapses. A text-score could tentatively be the result of a process of combining the practices 'of writing, walking, thinking and meditating about the city' (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013, unpaginated). The similarities between the creative response

from Image 26 and Image 29 can provide further support to the idea that the experience is distilled into the text and that the text beyond its representational fiction, to go back to Voegelin's suggestion, can also provide a meaningful starting point for a generative fiction. As in Sinclair's writing and Edith's character in particular, a sound sensitive text-score could 'manifest the characteristics of a particular area' (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013).

Taking this dialogic communication between the two responses a bit further, Kostis Kilymis' *Location and Soundtrack* is a response to the drawings on Images 26 and 29, created as part of *Forms of Ventriloquism*. Please feel free to listen to Audio Clip 11 while you read the following section and for as long as you wish. As he wrote in his assessment, working with the creative responses:

affected my working method positively, in that it provided me with a set framework from which to choose ideas and responses, but this set framework was also challenging, in that it suggested specific colouring in the character of the material I chose, which was sometimes contrary to what I would have chosen on my own. (Kilymis, 2014, unpaginated)

For the *Forms of Ventriloquism* event Kilymis created an installation piece consisting of three photographs (Image 31) and an audio composition, an excerpt of which you are currently listening to. Each one of the two different layers of the work corresponds to each one of the two responses, both consisting of materials collected from his visit to the area of Homerton. As he clarifies in his assessment:

I used one creative response as my guide for the images, and another for the audio. I used the first one as a map, to guide me to the specific locations that the score focused on. I then photographed these locations, taking into account the type of response they elicited in the original 'reader'. For the audio, I drew from the score an overall emotional colour reflected in the responses, which I then attempted to incorporate in the sounds, and in the overall tone of the complete work. (Kilymis, 2014, unpaginated)

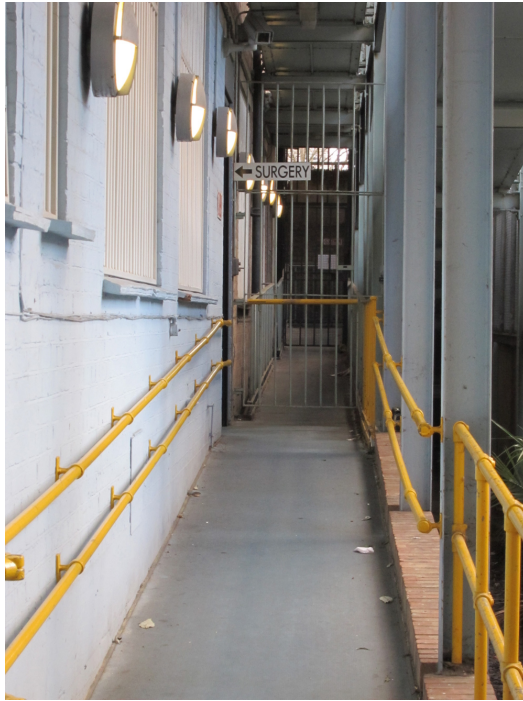


[Image 31 Kostis Kilymis *Location and Soundtrack*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]

*Location and Soundtrack* essentially provides another possibility, another reading of the drawings but interestingly enough it leads the artist to retrace the steps previously taken as he takes the 'original reader' into account and to challenge his own creative habits. This process of dialogue with the drawings led him to photograph and inscribe some of the same sites through his piece such as for instance the 'Surgery' (Images 32 and 33) and provide re-enactments of sounds of hitting and mechanical beating prompted by words in the text.

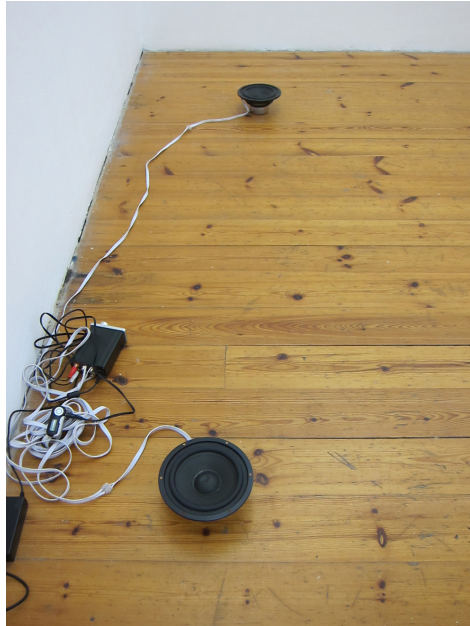


[Image 32 Kostis Kilymis, Still from *Location and Soundtrack*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]



[Image 33 The Surgery: a stop for both my field visit and workshops, also referred to by one of my co-walkers as a site out of a “Cronenberg film” (Image 27)]

The piece was installed in one of the four main walls of the front room of the gallery and within its conceptual framework the audio was intentionally placed in low volume so as to be almost inaudible and to merge with the sounds of the gallery and the outside, a choice perhaps informed by Kilymis’ personal involvement with the aesthetics and the community of *Wandelweiser* composers which favour the silent, minute and sparse as opposed to the loud, heavy and audible. To me, the engagement of the piece with the threshold of inaudibility added an interesting layer of ambiguity to its sonic perceptual ecology as it was not clear, at times, where the sounds came from and whether that was intentional. Laying the speakers on the floor (Image 34) further facilitated this sense of inaudibility and of an intimate experience not demanding to be heard or listened to. The same can be said of the three images attached on the wall in that they provide alternative views on the ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ atmospheres of the drawings. The size and the angles of the images allowed for a more ‘work in progress’ feel to emerge. The piece was open for viewing during the day when the gallery was less busy and the artist decided to leave it running during the performances, something that in his assessment he evaluated as a negative outcome as he would ‘have preferred for it to be discreetly cordoned off for the evening’ (Kilymis, 2014, unpaginated).



[Image 34 Kostis Kilymis, Still from *Location and Soundtrack*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]

## ii) Liverpool Street Station

Please listen to Audio Clip 12 before continuing to read this section. Feel free to listen for as long as you wish. As part of our interview for *Sensing Cities*, I asked writer Iain Sinclair to give his response to Sebald's scene from Liverpool Street Station. What you just heard is a recording of it with us 'standing up above the station' and Iain unravelling his internal 'seep through', responding to the Sebaldian scene of the station as 'tunnelled out of the earth.' A coincidence brought my choice of Sebald's sample closer to Iain Sinclair who during a reading about Arthur Machen at Housmans bookshop in April 2013, briefly presented his then newly published *Austerlitz and After: Tracking Sebald* (Test Centre, 2013) consisting of an 'unused and adapted section' (Test Centre, 2013, unpaginated) from his book *American Smoke*. In the book Sinclair follows in the footsteps of Sebald with a passage dedicated to Liverpool Street Station. The publication offers, as a whole, a generative fiction made out of a walk the writer did with poet Stephen Watts that lead to anecdotes and an extensive use of images, re-appropriated to echo Sebald's use of images in his novels.

In our re-enactment of the scene, the station as a sea of journeys, according to Sinclair, offers a screen of contrasting stories; glorified as a 'Tom Cruise movie',

haunting as the story of the *Elephant Man* or as personal as his own autobiographical memories of working in the station where a ‘few years back none of this smart, new, made over pastiche existed.’ Sinclair’s response, although highly visual (his relationship to sound as he stated in our interview is somehow partial or disproportionate) and distanced provided an opening to reflect on the station as a node where the sonic perceptual ecology, in order to be achieved, calls for an ability to think about transience and to be able to experience it on ground level as opposed to the distant, tourist ‘up above.’

Lavinia Greenlaw’s *Audio Obscura*<sup>44</sup> (Artangel, 2011), a sound work for mobile listening specially created for Manchester, Piccadilly and St. Pancras International stations, the station is re-invented by listening in to passing fragments of thinking-voices of travellers. The listener interacts with the human microcosms of the station on ground level, perhaps like Daniel from *Wings Of Desire*, witnessing their transient presence as a means of subverting the atmosphere of the station. In the resulting publication from this commission, Greenlaw writes:

[a]t a railway station, everyday dramas are constantly being played out: meeting, parting, anticipating, escaping. The atmosphere is an odd mix of tension and contemplation. Everyone is waiting for something to happen or moving between events. In a station we are forced into proximity. We observe one another yet behave as if being in a crowd confers invisibility. We tend to assume that we are neither overheard nor overlooked. (Greenlaw, 2011, unpaginated)

The station’s functionality (‘behave as if being in a crowd confers invisibility’) is therefore reverse engineered by the work’s sonic perceptual ecology. Greenlaw uses the idea of overhearing and overlooking by giving voice to the node and adding value to these voices that overlap, disconnect or amplify the station, leading to an ‘act of listening, or dark listening, in which unconscious aspects of perception are brought to light in ourselves’ (Greenlaw, 2011, unpaginated). We listen to ourselves through listening to others and in this polyphony we forge links, to recite Jackson, with the ‘deep matrix of life.’

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<sup>44</sup> You can listen to the piece here: <https://soundcloud.com/artangel-2/lavinia-greenlaw-audio-obscura>

More information on the project:

[http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2011/audio\\_obscura/audio\\_obscura/about\\_the\\_project](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2011/audio_obscura/audio_obscura/about_the_project)

Similarly, in the three workshops at Liverpool Street Station, the sonic perceptual ecology took a step toward unlocking not only the sonic actualities of the site but more ‘dark listening’ modes that through the triggering of the internal ‘seep through’ and the use of voice were brought to the surface. Please listen to Audio Clip 13. Feel free to continue listening to the audio while reading this section. You can stop reading whenever you would like to focus on the audio and vice versa. This is an excerpt from a biased workshop of the three conducted in the location. The co-walker preferred to soundwalk silently and talk only during pauses; a choice perhaps justified by his background in field recording. His poaching of the text-score, prompted him to search for remains of the ‘dark’, ‘sinister’, and ‘underground’ counter-atmosphere of the text. During our discussion after the walk<sup>45</sup>, my co-walker emphasised that, in contradiction to the text-score’s atmosphere, the whole experience of the workshop had an evanescent feel.

The dark and sinister atmosphere of ‘soot, steam, sulphur and diesel oil’ was replaced by nice smelling soap shops and fancy restaurants combined with the compelling soundscape of the station where you could still find quiet corners. His willingness to explore the station in search of the prompts from the text-score, triggered his internal ‘seep through’ to dig out what is, to him, important in such places and similar personal references that emerged throughout his silent listening mode. Later in our discussion, I mention that for immigrants stations can also signify unpleasant arrivals (not unlike my own reading of Austerlitz’s experience in the sample). In response to my comment, my co-walker made an interesting remark about train-stations in Brussels being surrounded by immigrant communities, something that is difficult to find in London where they are usually placed in the heart of re-generation projects in-between privatized and no man’s lands. The sonic perceptual ecology through these conversations became gradually more nuanced and the actualities of the site were enriched by more critical and reflective perspectives. As already argued elsewhere, having made all these exchanges during our soundwalk could have assisted in a more embodied experience of the site. I would therefore like to add in the internal ‘seep-through’ layer of the sonic perceptual ecology diagram the word conversation so as to reflect on the importance

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<sup>45</sup> Please note that a recording of the discussion is available in Audio Clip 14. Feel free to listen to it if you wish.

of letting the voice take part in the process of creation of the polyphonic meshworks through listening and speaking.

Please stop reading and listen to Audio Clip 15. Feel free to listen for as long as you wish. In the case of my second biased co-walker, the poaching of the text-score and its 'dark' and 'sinister' counter-atmosphere lead to a 'dark listening' mode while moving in loops inside the station, going up and down the escalators, relating prompts of the text to my co-walker's personal trajectory as a writer, childhood associations such as the myth of Persephone, literary connections to Dante's *Inferno* ('muffled babble of voices') and later on the impossibility of being able to grasp a place in its totality 'there and then.' We agreed that sound escapes in the same way thought and senses escape, always in transit yet leaving a mark, all tangled together as it can be heard in Audio Clip 16. The resulting sonic perceptual ecology opened up yet a new perspective to me toward an exploration of the site as the self and the importance of letting that voice become a valuable listening perspective. Through listening and voicing we are in constant dialogue with the frictions and fictions that lie in between our hearing, our anticipating and our imagining, affected, as Bakhtin would probably say, by all the voices that we have encountered. My co-walker's creative response (Image 35 and Appendix 3, p.12) embedded dialogically all these different threads, making loops through the repetition of words, phrases, inhabiting many different voices and letting herself be inhabited by them. The station remains in the journey but as a supporting form, making its presence felt or heard through elements that stand out in the sample, re-enacted in the response, embedded in the movement of the text.

*that constant wrenching inside me ... caused by the vortex of past time* we, adding another black layer of understanding, walk in a loop in one of the darkest and most sinister places in London, its eternal dusk not here but inside. a visitor, she was a visitor. last night i read the main concourse is below street level, an entrance to the underworld, I find myself no longer here but in the space of my youth, recalling the story of Persephona she was a visitor visitor resonating inside all these years though I was never sure why. muffled babble of voices echoes a reading from last night, dante in hell heard sighs that make the air tremble. no permanence but return, like in writing, the dissolving of our voices in writing, *caused by the vortex of past time* we walk in a loop in one of the darkest and most sinister places, until you no longer know what came before and what came after, who is quoted and who quotes, who is summoned and who summons, *caused by the vortex of past time* we, adding another black layer of understanding, walk in a loop, and certain voices cannot be recorded and cannot be heard unless you a visitor decide to summon them and what you hear in them matters and what you keep reading and hearing repeating in a loop in one of the darkest.

[Image 35 Creative response of my biased co-walker No 2 after our visit at Liverpool Street Station]

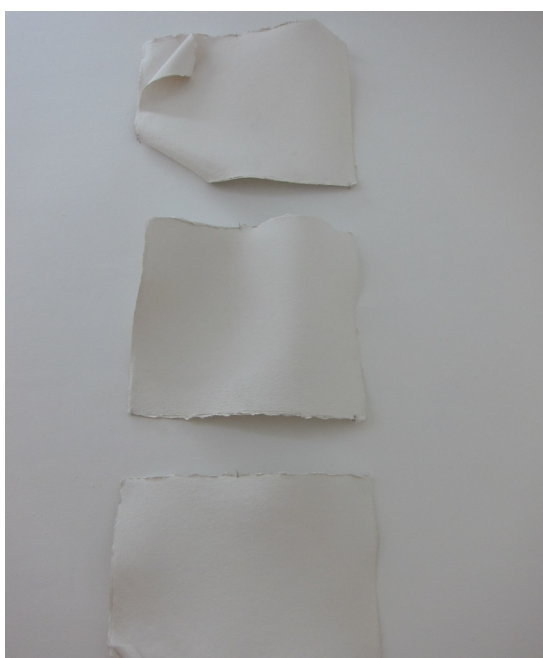
Please listen to Audio Clip 17 while you look back and forth between the creative response in Image 35 (also Appendix 3, p.12) and images 36 to 39. The Audio Clip is 6:32 minutes long so please feel free to stop it whenever you wish.



[Image 36 Detail from Sarah Kelly's *Summoning Visitors*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]



[Image 37 Detail from Sarah Kelly's *Summoning Visitors*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]



[Image 38 Detail from Sarah Kelly's *Summoning Visitors*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]



[Image 39 Detail from Sarah Kelly's *Summoning Visitors*, Forms Of Ventriloquism, IMT Gallery, July 2014]

The audio and the images you just experienced are from artist and poet Sarah Kelly's work entitled *Summoning Visitors*, a voice soundscape and paper sculpture installation presented at my event *Forms of Ventriloquism*. Installed in one of the

corners of the gallery, the piece consisted of a sculptural element (Images 36-38) and an audio element (Image 39) set up to face each other. The work was inspired by the creative response (Image 35) from the second workshop discussed above. As she writes in her assessment:

[t]he response that was given to me fed well into my existing method of performing, I felt that there was almost a seamless divide between them, rather than a specific challenge or affect. The text that was written could easily have been written by myself and many of the layers it hinted at were themes recurrent in my pre-existing creative interests, such as those of permanence, repetition and presence. (Kelly, 2014, unpaginated)

It must be noted that all the different artists I invited to participate were carefully selected according to their creative background but without any particular expectation toward what they would contribute to the event. Sarah Kelly, in particular was recommended to me through a common friend after I expressed the interest to invite a poet and experimental writer to work with that particular response. Kelly is a British artist working with the concept of impossibility in writing and voicing, often incorporated in her performances, readings and her handmade paper sculptures and installations. In the case of *Summoning Visitors*:

[t]he content of the original material and my response to that content affected my choice to place the work in the corner position, as I was very keen that the experience of listening and perceiving the pages was, if not intimate, then closed off somehow, sheltered, physically speaking. I was also very keen for the pages to be not presenting themselves in a frontal position, displayed to the 'gallery' and 'audience' but rather, facing another wall, echoing back to themselves on the white wall. (Kelly, 2014, unpaginated)

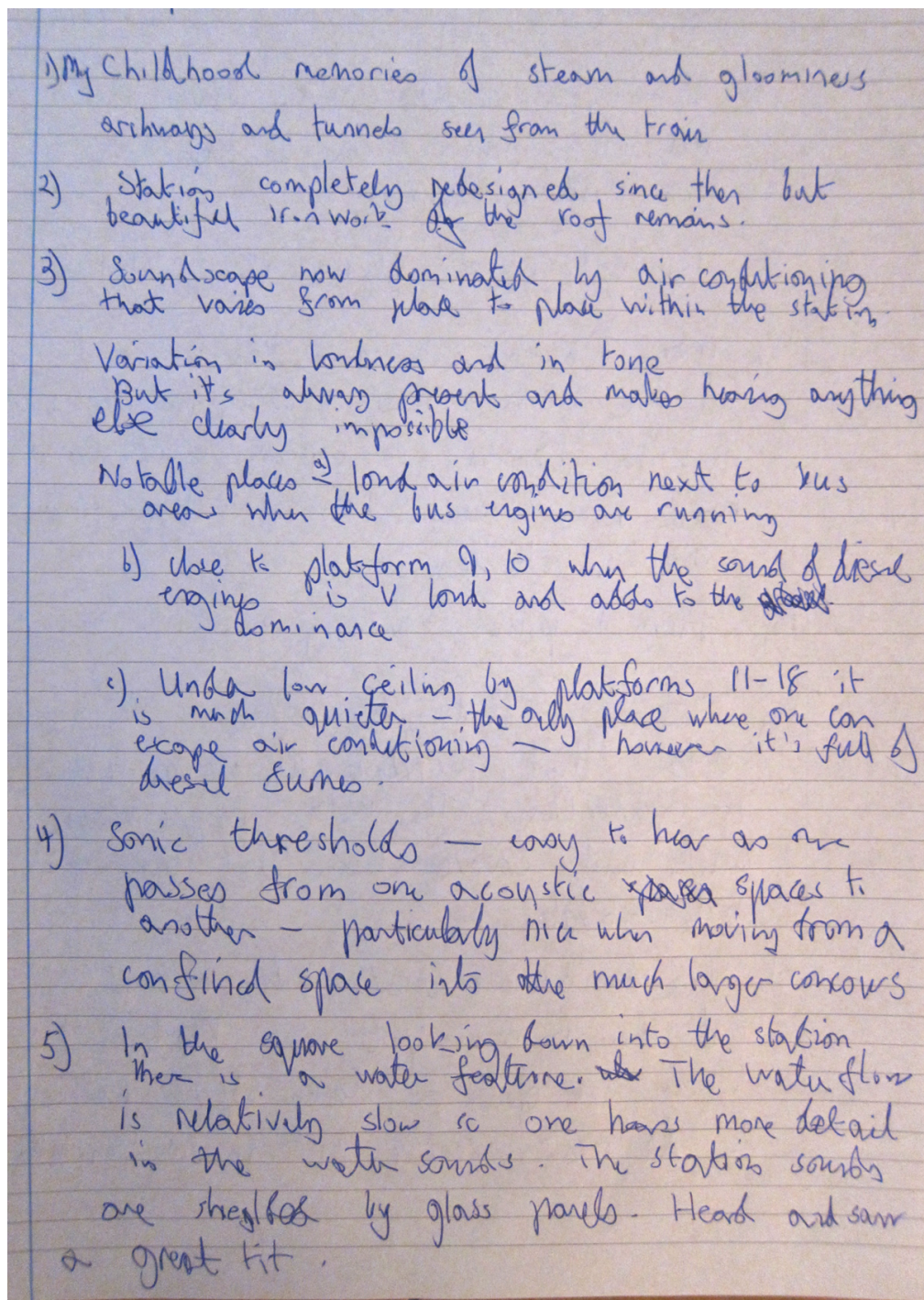
The work creates a short circuit within the node of its sonic perceptual ecology - it invites the audience to enter the loop and be part of it. The audio layer is intended to sit in dialogue with the three seemingly blank pages attached on the wall. Consisting of repeated improvised readings triggered by the original response, the audio is summoned by the listener who then closes the loop by becoming part of it. The piece received interesting responses from members of the gallery audience, mostly commenting on its tactile nature and how the blank pages complemented the hectic voice piece. *Summoning Visitors* brought some reflections to me as it presented the dialogical from the perspective of miscommunication and of the

impossibility of making sense of these voices. To me a similar feedback loop of voices can happen when we do not take control of our shifts in a city and when we mute our voice by letting it circulate internally, locking it deeper and deeper inside us; something that I attempt to break within a sonic perceptual ecology and through the iterative visits with my co-walkers. Before continuing reading, please listen to Audio Clip 18. The piece is 20 minutes long so feel free to stop whenever you wish.

What you just heard is a piece entitled *My A is Your B* that I created especially in response to a call for works with the theme of *Intermission: An audio portrait of place*. It was broadcast on stress.fm in Portugal in September 2013 as part of the ECHOES series of events and radio programmes. *My A is Your B* is an edited down version of my recorded documentation of the third workshop I did with my unbiased co-walker in Liverpool Street Station. The piece demonstrates the polyphonic nature and subtleties of a sonic perceptual ecology that was generated through a conversational soundwalk. The node of Liverpool Street Station is opened-up by a meshwork of interactions where listening echoes McCartney's listening together in partiality. My co-walker and I explore the station, discussing and prompting each other to move in the space, listen to sounds, share thoughts and reflect on the experience. In fact, it is a soundwalk where voice and conversation form an active role in the process of exploration and perception. My co-walker begins by describing the station's past as dark and gloomy. His internal 'seep through' is triggered by his familiarity with the place since childhood. We discuss about sonic thresholds within the station and how they introduce us to different acoustic zones, or perceptual zones as I add, where the change in sound is also linked to a change in smell and the overall feel of the space. The polyphonic nature of the meshwork is nicely articulated as our voices during the conversation shift from site-specific sound references to personal memories and reflections on the socio-political aspects of the city.

My co-walker's appreciative attitude toward the station's soundscape reminded me of my first biased co-walker's response and how both, through sound, manage to engage with the positive sides of the station. It is important to underline that, in this instance, the lack of a text-score did not affect how nuanced the meshwork of interactions was. On the contrary the resulting soundwalk, and creative response (Image 40 and Appendix 3, p.13) demonstrate discursive, critical and highly engaged exchanges, perhaps also justified by our sound specialist backgrounds and

the fact that we were both already familiar with the site. It is nonetheless, important to acknowledge that the text-score bias, added an element of surprise through its counter-atmosphere that destabilised my biased co-walkers' previous experiences of the station and their anticipations. In the case of the first co-walker, the sinister tone of the text made him want to focus more on the bright and positive side of the space whereas in the second case, it prompted her to re-invent the space through a very personal meshwork of references.

- 
- 1) My Childhood memories of steam and gloominess  
archways and tunnels seen from the train
- 2) Station completely redesigned since then but  
beautiful ironwork ~~of~~ the roof remains.
- 3) Soundscape now dominated by air conditioning  
that varies from place to place within the station.  
Variation in loudness and in tone  
But it's always present and makes hearing anything  
else clearly impossible  
Notable places of loud air condition next to bus  
area when the bus engines are running
- b) close to platform 9, 10 when the sound of diesel  
engines is loud and adds to the ~~sound~~  
dominance
- c) Under low ceiling by platforms 11-18 it  
is much quieter - the only place where one can  
escape air conditioning - however it's full of  
diesel fumes.
- 4) Sonic thresholds - easy to hear as one  
passes from one acoustic ~~space~~ spaces to  
another - particularly nice when moving from a  
confined space into the much larger concourse
- 5) In the square looking down into the station  
there is a water feature. ~~the~~ The water flow  
is relatively slow so one hears more detail  
in the water sounds. The station sounds  
are muffled by glass panels. Heard and seen  
a great fit.

[Image 40 Creative Response of unbiased co-walker, page 1 of 2]

The workshops with my co-walkers at Liverpool Street Station made me even more aware of the possibilities of the text-score as a trigger for the counter-atmosphere. Through listening to others, I also learned to listen to myself in reciprocity to the environment and add different perspectives to my own partiality. These soundwalks, for example, made me appreciate the site far more than I did in my solitary drift. Through this ongoing shift between solitary and collaborative voicings, I found stronger resonances with terms such as the meshwork, the utterance and the internal 'seep through' that would later become the layers of the framework of the sonic perceptual ecology.

### **iii) Stratford**

I would like to go back to my personal failed encounter with Carpenters Road; a different example of a node framed by a road traversing a pocket of council housing and its surrounding community buildings. In my field visit I only managed to get a glimpse, despite my effort to start a conversation, of the presence of the local communities there. The sonic perceptual ecology of the experience was left as broken as the area itself. Coming back to it many months later, I only managed to conduct unbiased workshops due to spending a big part of that summer (2013) in the hospital as well as the following year mainly indoors. In retrospect, that particular outcome seemed to work better for that location because the text-score was explicitly referring to the pub and the notion of community and its absence offered an opportunity to prompt movements and responses that would reflect from a different perspective my own experience of the site. Please listen to Audio Clip 19 and feel free to look at Images 41 to 46 while you do so. Feel free to stop whenever you wish. The last image (46 and Appendix 3, p.15) is the creative response produced after the conversational soundwalk and the discussion.



[Image 41 Still from workshop in Stratford with unbiased co-walker No. 1]



[Image 42 Still from workshop in Stratford with unbiased co-walker No.1]



[Image 43 Still from workshop in Stratford with unbiased co-walker No.1]

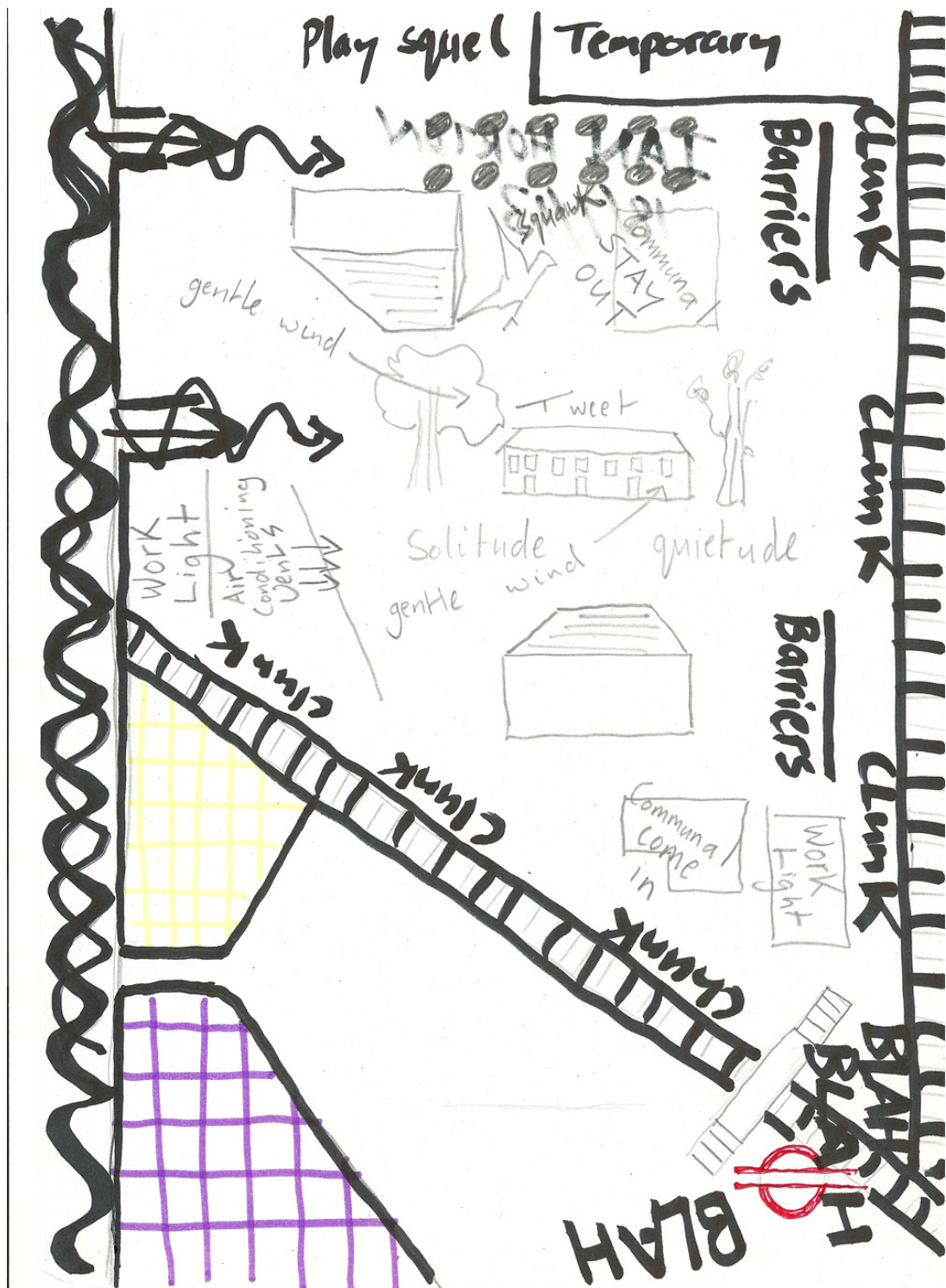


[Image 44 Still from workshop in Stratford with unbiased co-walker No.1]



[Image 45 Still from workshop in Stratford with unbiased co-walker No.1]

What you just heard is an excerpt from the recorded conversational soundwalk with my first unbiased co-walker in Stratford, accompanied by relevant images connected to that section of the recording and the final creative response. Something that can be immediately understood by comparing the recording to Image 46, is that in the latter the sonic elements are more pronounced by my co-walker than in the recording itself where we spent time analysing the community housing, the low-budget architecture and its contrast to the nearby developments. If we were to compare images 26 and 46, both created by the same person, we could say that the first one is more detailed and more 'busy' compared to the second. It is nonetheless important, to me at least, that in the second drawing the co-walker managed to pick-up the element of the communal and how it was contradicted by the presence of barriers, 'keep out' signs and a general atmosphere of quietness and non-presence.



[Image 46 Creative Response of unbiased co-walker No.1 from workshop in Stratford]

The conversational nature of our drift, as already explained above, did not hinder my co-walker's awareness of the sounds. More specifically, the presence of constant track loading-unloading and construction sounds in the background is registered as a 'work light' indication in the creative response; the surrounding sound of passing DLR trains as 'cluck cluck' and so forth. This is an important observation especially when considered under the prism that we are constantly aware of our surroundings through sound. The polyphonic experience and the multisensory perception within the meshwork of the visit's sonic perceptual ecology were amplified by our voices (internal and external) that were simultaneously inhabited, affected by non-human and human voices.

Please listen to Audio Clip 20. In this audio sample, my co-walker makes an interesting suggestion about Kevin Lynch's definition of the node and how it relates to what I do by saying that I am exploring what happens to all the relationships in-between the 'obvious features' in the structure of the node. That is an influential moment because it made me further contextualise the physical plane of the research. I also drew connections to the internal 'seep through' and the meshwork, which resulted in drafting the framework of the sonic perceptual ecology.

Please listen to Audio Clip 21. Feel free to simultaneously look at the images and read the text in the following section. You can stop listening to the audio whenever you wish, preferably at 3:00 minutes. In this second workshop, we soundwalked silently, after my co-walker's request, while I occasionally took some photographs (Images 47-48). We explored the same territory as with my first co-walker.



[Image 47 Still from workshop with unbiased co-walker No. 2]



[Image 48 Still from workshop with unbiased co-walker No. 2]

The (silent) soundwalk lasted for about 30 minutes and it was followed by a post-walk discussion<sup>46</sup> and the production of a creative response (Image 49 and Appendix 3, pp.16-17). Despite the silent focused mode, the soundwalk triggered my co-walker's internal 'seep through' toward a less situational sonic perception and a more memory-led meshwork. A similar listening perspective emerged to a certain extent in our walks together in Homerton and in Liverpool Street (as a biased co-walker) but in Stratford, it constituted the main meshwork of the sonic perceptual ecology. In our discussion, for instance, my co-walker focused on making connections to very personal experiences from his childhood in Athens and the same feel and atmosphere he got by the Olympic Stadium being in proximity to us. He did however notice the Carpenter Community-related clubs and activities that we encountered in our walk and their contradiction to the newly built Olympic Park and Westfield super mall. To him, this area has value only by looking into these hidden stories that make the place more 'vivid', 'true' and 'real' (Audio Clip 22, 4:20-4:23).

As already argued in reference to similar instances, If such a discussion had happened during our walk it could open up a more engaged meshwork of exchanges. The presence of a text-score could, without limiting the slippage into personal references, potentially trigger my co-walker's internal 'seep through' toward nuanced listening perspectives relevant to the locality of the soundwalk. In conclusion, the text-score could prompt both of my co-walkers to seek talking to the locals, as they were both genuinely interested in the community aspect of the area and how it is broken by the Olympic Park barriers. My personal experience of the site during my solitary visit brought to my attention many of the issues discussed with my co-walkers but the text-score itself had coloured my anticipation positively in its references to the community (even though in reality I failed to engage with it.) I did not emphasise the poor value of the buildings but the possibilities to engage with their hidden stories and their people. It is important nonetheless to consider that the sonic perceptual ecologies in both cases carried elements that were present in the text-score (community) and that my own sonic perceptual ecology from my field visit was both echoed (broken community) and significantly enriched by these interactions because I was exposed to different perspectives and details. Finally, the reflections on the first workshop, further confirmed the polyphonic nature of our

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<sup>46</sup> This is fully documented and available in Audio Clip 22.

sonic exchanges with our environments and the claim that we are constantly aware and in conversation with our surroundings even when we are not consciously listening. The term node became prominent after this workshop as well as its connection to the internal 'seep through' and the meshwork; a synapse that set the ground for the formation of the theoretical framework of the sonic perceptual ecology.

It was quite a relief to leave behind the area of Stratford station with its monstrous Westfield mall and the shopping centre across the street. <sup>Looking at</sup> The Olympic stadium, visible from almost everywhere, brought me back a beautiful memory from my childhood. My football team used to play in the Olympic stadium in Athens and I used to go to watch games with my father. Looking at the stadium from a distance was the start of some sort of ritual, as we would walk towards it ~~and~~ starting to sink into the atmosphere of the game. That feeling is always evoked when I'm near ~~the~~ big stadiums.

Back to present, I notice what I suppose is social housing, totally different architecturally compared with "standard" London style. We passed a ~~small~~ museum of some kind of "Hidden Histories". I guess that hidden stories carry the more intimate and "real" dimension of the city. London seems to be a blend of small stories taking place in neighborhoods and not the ugly malls or the London eye.

So, what stories could be hidden here? We walk down Carpenter road and I see a lot of signs like "Carpenter community", "Carpenter elementary school" and so on. Maybe here was a "Carpenter ghetto". Well, the word ghetto is totally wrong, I know. However, the place seems to be hosting ~~the~~ lower class people, it's certainly not fancy. I see a lot of muslims and a lot of muslims.

#### iv) Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre

In November 2013, I was invited to do a workshop at the Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre with the students of the *Design Cultures* course at LCC, UAL. In preparation for the workshop, I arranged to visit the neighbouring 56a Infoshop run by Ultra-red member Chris Jones. After our conversation about the location, my workshop methodology and the use of text-scores, Chris Jones offered to give me one of his own texts inspired by psychogeographic investigations in Elephant & Castle, including the shopping centre. Entitled *Nine Things That Aren't There: A Manoeuvre Around The Elephant & Castle*, the text drifts around the different zones of Elephant & Castle (Appendix 3, p.19), exposing fictional atmospheres that critically engage with the area's changing character due to regeneration and counter-grassroots politics. Jones has been active in community issues and a big part of his research and practice for Ultra-red explores the dynamics of community voicing, such as for instance in projects like *WHAT IS THE SOUND OF COMMUNITY ACTION?* in Dundee. Exploring existing narratives in collective movements is a topic thoroughly investigated by Ultra-red especially in reference to the occupy movement and the use of people's microphone. Robert Sember writes in their 2011 annual report:

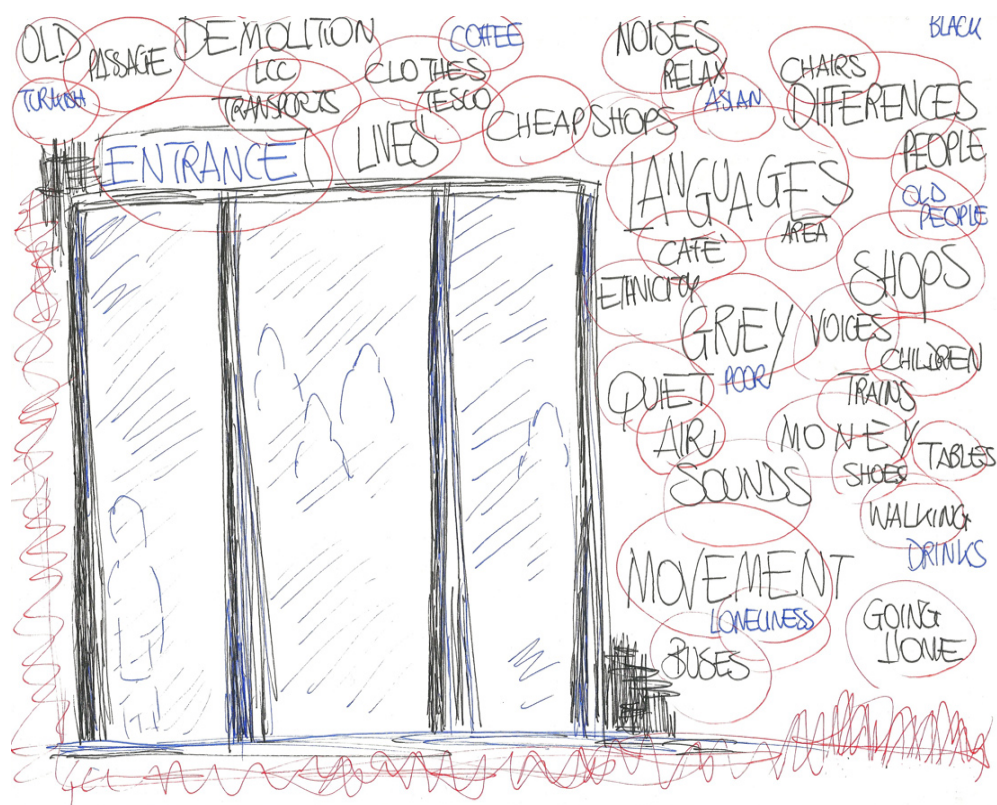
Two dimensions of the people's mic are particularly important to me. First, the manner in which it underscores how active listening must be in a movement. Underscoring this action is the fact that the mic includes not only the restating of the words of the primary speaker at that moment...Consequently, restating what we have heard another person say becomes a powerful performance of listening it slows things down, it moves words from voice to voice, it performs a collective listening. (Ultra-red, 2011, p.2)

For my workshop at Elephant & Castle, I experimented with an activity similar to collective listening (and voicing). The session started with a brief introduction to my research methodology. The students, all coming from varied backgrounds and interests were divided into two groups. One group of 5 biased co-walkers and a slightly bigger (8 people) one of unbiased students. The biased students were given the text in advance to read and internalise. With each group we took a 30 minute walk inside the shopping centre followed by a brief group discussion and the making of creative responses. I had previously asked each one

of my co-walkers to identify a specific location inside the centre, lead the rest of us to it and discuss their choice with the group. We then engaged in a 'collective listening' where we drifted as a group from one spot to the other, listening to each other's stories about their site of preference, opening up its many entrances, sounds, cultures and atmospheres.

Please listen to Audio Clip 23 before continuing to read. What you just heard is an excerpt from the walk with my unbiased participants. Unfortunately the walk with the biased co-walkers was never documented as I failed to press record. In this part of the walk, one of the co-walkers leads us to the Bingo shop inside the centre. This is just one of the many instances where listening to a site becomes a possibility for a more critical engagement with a location through sound and collective voicing. In all cases, the overall movement of groups seemed like an unravelling meshwork of associations and discoveries which we all collectively contributed to, listened to toward the creation of a collective sonic perceptual ecology.

Stories moved on from one person to the other activating my co-walkers' different internal 'seep throughs'. The biased co-walkers had a more focused approach to the exploration, voicing themes such as the 'under-underground,' the exotic/ritualistic elements of the text-score as they were echoed inside and outside the centre such as the DIY stalls extending the shopping space outside the centre, the multi-ethnic communities and languages (African Jamaican, Polish, Greek, Chinese, Columbian), the existence of relaxing spots (seating areas). The second group of my unbiased co-walkers seemed to be inspired to respond to some of the themes I discussed during my presentation and lead us to pass-through spaces such as the different entrances, the Bingo Palace, the Tesco supermarket. The unbiased co-walkers made references to sounds while adding personal comments and experiences to contextualise them. In both cases, the element of polyphony was strikingly prominent not only in how the students talked about sounds but also in how these were embedded with the other registers of perception, recalling once more the Ingoldian meshwork and Boehme's atmosphere. The above reflections are also apparent in the creative responses of the two groups (Images 50-54 and Appendix 3, pp.20-28).

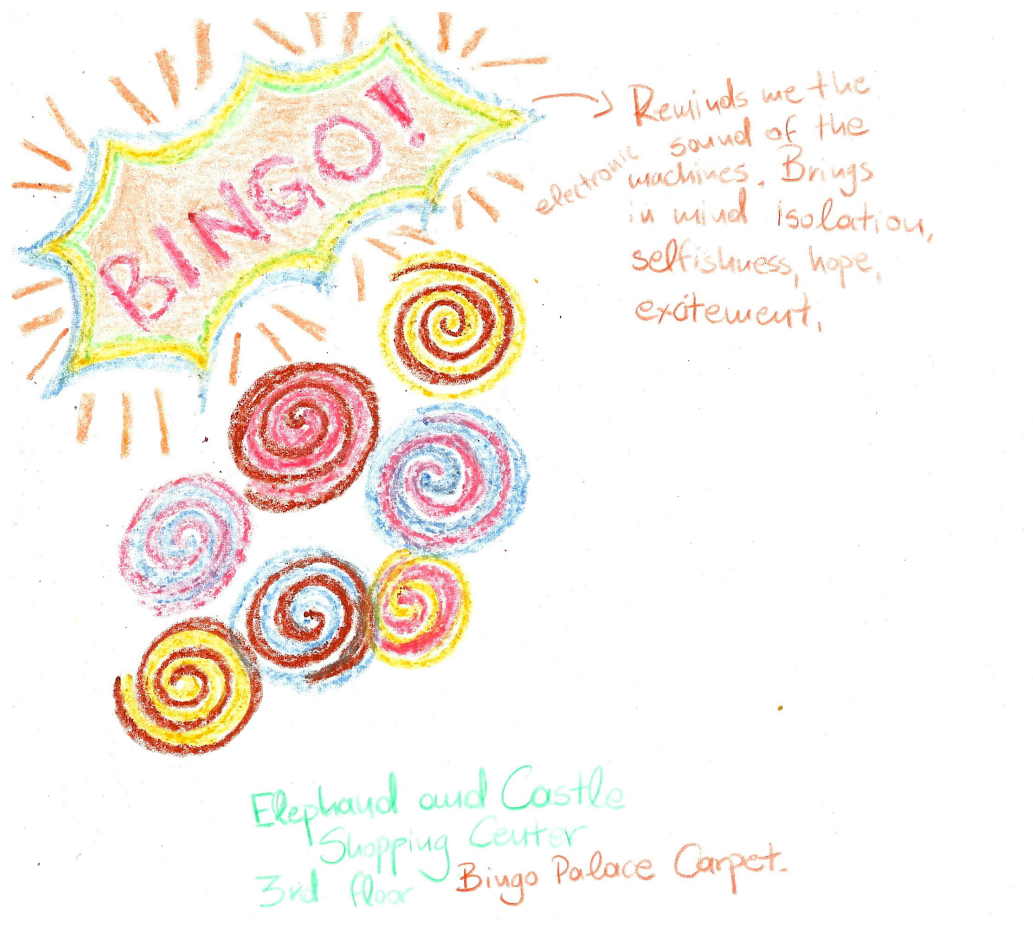


[Image 50 Creative response by an unbiased co-walker]



[Image 51 Creative response by a biased co-walker]

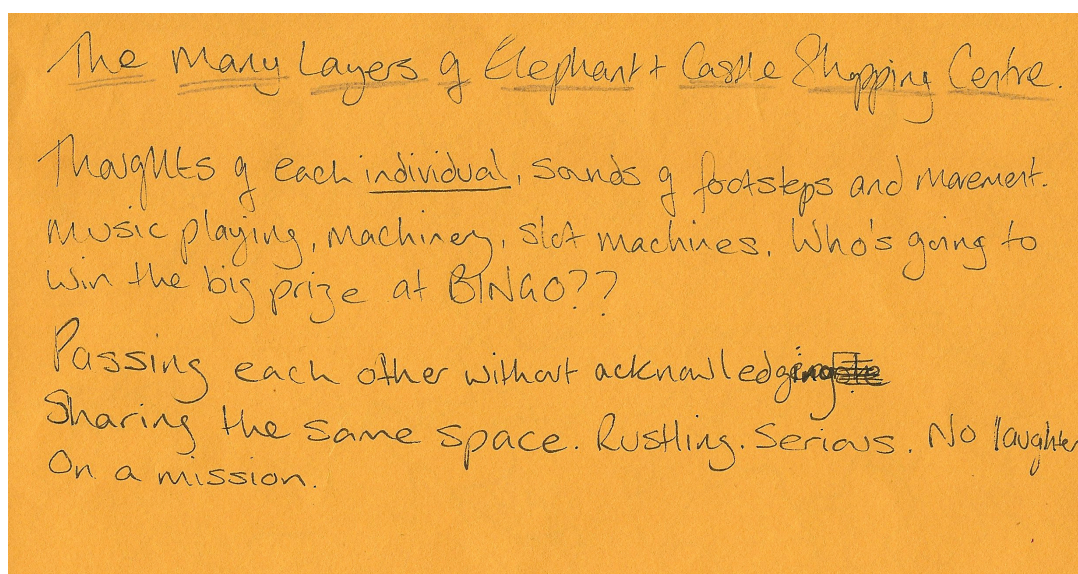
In some cases of the creative responses, students used words to express the movement of the groups in relation to the different layers of experiences (Image 50). In others, they witnessed the influence of collective voicing, as in Image 51, where a co-walker repeated an observation uttered by another member of the group about noticing 'sound around us when we are not from the environment.' In images 52-54, it is documented how one student preferred to focus her creative response on another student's choice because she felt it actually resonated more with her personal interests.



[Image 52 Creative response by an unbiased co-walker who initially chose a shoe-shop as her location of preference and who finally responded to our visit to the Bingo place]



[Image 53 The creative response of the unbiased co-walker who chose the Bingo place (front)]



[Image 54 The creative response of the unbiased co-walker who chose the bingo place (back)]

The collective movement in both cases, biased and unbiased, created a sonic perceptual ecology where the polyphonic experience became the driving force behind the explorations and how people listened together in partiality. During our discussion, the students emphasised associations between the sounds, sights, smells and personal thoughts and ideas and hence actively participating in the task by letting, to revisit Bachelard's conceptual terminology, their sensibilities seep through and critically engage with the specific locations. The text-score created a counter-

atmosphere but, interestingly enough, the collective movement seemed to be a more effective element in the walk, creating a gesture of fine-tuning between the different people, their voices, opinions and motions. The students enjoyed listening together in a dialogical chain of utterances, affecting each other and leading to a sonic polyphony where ownership was replaced by cross-pollination, not unlike Bakhtin's definition of the utterance.



[Image 55 A seating area inside the shopping centre that was selected by a co-walker, documented in Image 51.]

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

In Chapter Three I suggested that a text-score, through its counter-atmosphere, can lead us to the triggering of our internal 'seep through' and the generation of polyphonic meshworks of interactions. In this Chapter, by presenting my novel methodology and workshop protocol, I demonstrated how this idea can be put into practice. Initially, through my solitary field visits (Phase One), followed by a

series or exploratory workshops with co-walkers (Phase Two), I provided examples where the poaching of resonant words led to a variety of meshworks where sound, always in cohabitation with other senses, materials and utterances, became a catalyst, equally present in sonic and visual creative responses. Through a comparison of biased and unbiased workshops, I explored the differences and synapses between the two and highlighted how more nuanced, intimate and focused the triggering of the internal 'seep through' was in the former. These reflections on the text-score's role in the process, confirmed its potential as a composite of experiential fragments. The presence of the thinking-voice in the silent soundwalks and the use of the speaking-voice in the conversational soundwalks became two strong features in both phases of the research as they facilitated a polyphonic perception of the visited environments, through sound and through listening together.

The use of voice also demonstrated how our listening experience is constantly inhabited by other registers of perception and how it can further facilitate the emergence of our internal 'seep through' by triggering our memory. In particular cases, I pointed out that the speaking-voice did not hinder the perception of sounds that were happening simultaneously. This supports the earlier suggestion, made in Chapter Two, that we are always aware of our surroundings. Listening to my co-walkers, allowed me to expand my listening perspective, to challenge my certainties about the experienced site and to further refine what a sonic perceptual ecology might be in terms of the inner workings of an internal 'seep through', its relation to counter-atmosphere, meshwork, polyphony, voice and the node. It can be argued that the colouring of the text-score prescribes a particular behaviour and hinders the openness of an experience. Although, not in disagreement with such a claim, the examples provided above, demonstrated that the readers are in full control of how they poach the text-score into a 'generative fiction.' The influence of the counter-atmosphere, far from being prescriptive, facilitated a nuanced and intuitive engagement with a node. By being extensions of our internal 'seep through', these polyphonic meshworks, in progress and in dialogue with all the external stimuli and our listening together, resonated with Bakhtin's notion of the utterance and my suggestion that we become who we are in sound through others.

## Chapter 5: Voicing Nodes

### 5.1 Temporary Revisiting

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the practice and the theory are interrelated within this research project. The concept of sonic perceptual ecology (node, counter-atmosphere, meshwork) and the interlinking between the internal 'seep through' and the thinking-voice/speaking-voice would not have emerged without the workshops and the personal observations that resulted from them. The ideas of the multisensory and polyphonic perception and the notion of our voice being immersed into and inhabited by our environment and our relation to others, in reference to Bakhtin, were sparked by looking closely at my own and my co-walkers' responses after our visits. Ultimately, the expansion of a solitary drift to an exploratory workshop was an immediate response to the need to connect with others as a means of confirming or disapproving former considerations, habits and methods. Within this constellation of activities, the use of the text-score as a counter-atmosphere formed a catalyst for the visits and a backbone for a series of mini-observations about writing site and sound sensitive text-scores.

In this chapter, the journey moves on to its third phase where all the observations and the methodology are further tested and fine-tuned for the creation of works for site-specific commissions or performances. The framework of a sonic perceptual ecology, for instance, is applied to design activities in a London urban nature reserve as part of *soundCamp/Reveil* (2014/2015). As it will be demonstrated, the event addresses the notions of meshwork, polyphony, internal 'seep through' and voice (human and non-human) by amplifying the characteristics of the node through a constellation of interrelated listening practices. It is providing a different example of a sonic perceptual ecology in that the counter-atmosphere is triggered by a set of activities rather than a text-score. This shift is further supported by the scale and character both of the event and the site as the use of a text-score is designed for particular performances and more intimate, small-scale projects and workshops. In projects like *To Begin is to follow on from* (2013) and *PoL #8 Sonic City* (2014), the workshop protocol is further adjusted to fit the temporal and spatial limitations of a residency or event programme. In *a certain geography* (2014) and *conductcontacttransmit* (2014), I write original text-scores by tapping into my

previous observations about making a composite of fragments. I also revisit and expand ideas applied in the responses created after my field visits such as *a microcosm city: subtitled* (2012) or the word-map pieces (2012). I use the text-score as a prompt for workshops - as in the previous Chapter - but also for the creation of audiovisual compositions and performances. The notion of the node becomes a point of reference whether the work was undertaken inside a gallery space or within a gallery's environs (*a certain geography*), an old tobacco factory (*To begin is to follow on from*), a concert space (*conductcontacttransmit*), an urban ecological park (*soundCamp/Reveil*) or London's financial district of Canary Wharf (*PoL #8 Sonic City*). Within these examples of pass-through spaces, the aim is to create a sonic perceptual ecology that encourages the participation in a collaborative and polyphonic listening meshwork through the unlocking of the internal 'seep-through'. It also offers examples of how the methodology and proposed theoretical framework facilitated the development of original work and its understanding.

## 5.2 Voicing Fragments

### 5.2.1 *To Begin is to follow on from*<sup>47</sup>

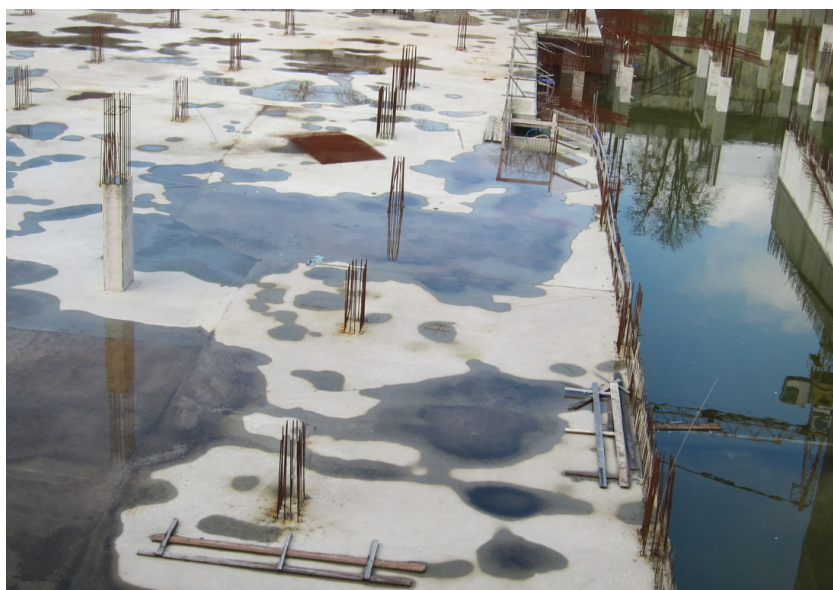
Please listen to audio clip 24 before continuing.

What you just listened to is a radio piece entitled *To begin is to follow on from*, created in November 2013 during my residency in Tobačna, the old tobacco factory district in Ljubljana, Slovenia and commissioned by CONA and MGML/CC Tobačna 001. The piece was broadcast on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2014 as part of CONA's *radioCona: REuse MESTO: REuseRADIO* radio exhibition and it was later featured in the listening room of *Invisible Places: Sounding Cities*, a two day international conference taking place in Viseu, Portugal, 18-20 July 2014 as well as in *Radiophrenia*, a temporary radio art station housed in Glasgow's Centre for Contemporary Arts, in

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<sup>47</sup> This section was presented as a paper in Sonorities 2015 Symposium *Fractured Narratives*, Queen's University, Belfast, 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2015.

April 2015<sup>48</sup>. In its 29 minutes of duration, the piece constantly shifts across the divides of radio feature-making, documentary fiction and experimental radio composition and marks an exploration of the liminal space of the factory. Different strands of voices and miniature compositions transmit fragments of the location, be these imaginary, personal, collective, historical, social, from the present, the past or the future.



[Image 56 The empty construction pit]

During my residency, I decided to experiment with the work-in-progress methodology I have been developing in London in order to produce a piece for the exhibition. In this iteration, however, I wanted to challenge myself to write my own text-score (and use it as a trigger for a counter-atmosphere). The location of the residency itself felt appropriate for the purposes of this work as it resonated strongly with the notion of the node: a cut-up and pass-through space filled on the one side with municipal offices that were busy during daytime, private one-man companies, university clubs, restaurants and libraries, a cultural centre and residency space with

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<sup>48</sup> radioCona: REuse MESTO: REuseRADIO website <http://www.mgml.si/en/tobacna-001-cultural-centre/exhibitions/archive-exhibitions/anna-friz-city-at-night-radiocona-reuse-city-reuse-radio-12962/>

Invisible Places: Sounding Cities website: <http://invisibleplaces.org/>

Radiophrenia website: <http://radiophrenia.scot/>

a somehow difficult to find (from the outside) tobacco museum installed in its premises.

On the other side, across the boundaries marked by rail tracks and the outskirts of the city, there was an empty construction pit with a couple of cranes adorning it, hanging as if frozen in time (Image 56). During night-time, the office buildings closed and the factory became dark and empty while walking was difficult as the access gates to different zones were locked. The only recurring sound was the echoing night freight trains moving towards the coast. The people of Ljubljana all have to pass through this location for some reason or another but this bloc of buildings, according to my co-walkers, remains nonetheless under an adjunct status, constantly changing its functionality and reason for being. As one of the voices says at some point in the piece, Tobačna, has a certain sense of 'otherness' that is further reinforced by its current state of limbo after a series of failed gentrification attempts. 'After all these years of feeling that otherness of this space is now nice to confront it very slowly' a voice says in the piece (01:49) while another utters 'I feel empty here somehow' (02:02). In the piece, I try to amplify the pass-through nature of the site with some *in situ* feedback improvisations inside the factory's commuter subways that can be heard for instance at 07:35 or at 09:40-10:30.

For the purposes of the residency, I asked CONA to circulate a call for participation in my workshops and this resulted in the gathering of four co-walkers who were keen and committed to the project. Among them were an artist and former tobacco worker, a student who used to live nearby, a local inhabitant and an architect who in the past had drafted a proposal for re-programming the space and the existing facilities. Drawing from the reflections on the workshops and field visits from Phase Two, I initiated the process by conducting a series of solitary soundwalks at different times of the day, listening and recording sounds using pick-up coils, contact or binaural microphones and by keeping notes. One of the first elements that drew my attention was the statue of the anonymous tobacco worker created by Dušan Tršar and positioned at the side of one of the buildings, covered by leaves and trees. In the piece, my co-walker (05:56-06:03) is telling me the story of the sculptor and while we try to clean the statue from the leaves to find his signature (Image 57) we observe that the statue was almost ready to fall.



[Image 57 Dušan Tršar's signature on the base of the statue]

Having previously read that there is a tobacco museum in the location, I started asking passers by if they knew where the tobacco museum was but without being rewarded with any conclusive results. In the piece I had created a repetitive and rather self-sarcastic miniature composition to comment on that exact struggle to find the museum (11:32-12:14). I gradually discovered that the museum was temporarily (and conveniently) housed in the same building and actually on the same floor where my residency room was. Strangely enough it never occurred to me that this was a museum as there were no signs outside and the space was often dark and unused. I spent sometime going through the small number of exhibits, listening to the audio guide and watching the videos and that's when I came across the first indication about the female tobacco worker and the stereotype of her being a woman of easy and free willing virtue, or 'venus ultraliberalis.'

The piece begins with me starting a conversation with an imaginary tobacco worker: 'what is your name? venus ultraliberalis' (00:01-00:004) and then the thread of the piece unfolds as I follow on from one exchange to the other. This reputation is recounted later in the piece (at 18:34-19:07) by the museum's manager who spent a whole afternoon with me discussing the history of the factory. It is through that accidental discovery that I started developing a more engaged exchange with the site, letting my internal 'seep-through' emerge. Hence, I immediately started making

connections between this particular angle of the location's past and its current fragmented nature by following the paths that chance discoveries opened up for me. I also let these connections be challenged, enriched and inhabited, as I will be discussing later in this section, by the voices of my co-walkers. That process had significantly affected the way the final piece was made and it is also reflected in its title.

The attempt to erase or cut up the location's past by keeping the statue hidden from public view was further aggravated by the fact that the different zones of the site were separated by an endless and arbitrary system of fences and entrance gates. 'It's a maze made of dead ends,' (20:31), 'it's this odd cut-up space...in a way it feels like a corpse that's been cut up' (09:13) another co-walker says. I used the contact microphones (for example, at 08:37 or at 14:36) to record many of the fences encountered in the site, dividing the different sections and how they echo and amplify it's current state and acoustic environment of empty warehouses populated by flocks of pigeons or the intermittent thunder of passing trains. I also attempted to voice its different acoustics with *in situ* sound improvisations that can be heard at different points in the piece but mainly in the final section (22:00) where I try to project my voice against the persistent hum of the building and the roar of the passing train.

The unlocking of my internal 'seep though' within these iterative drifts made me also contemplate an area in my own hometown, an old soap factory, on thoughts of obsolete machinery, buildings, histories and how they interrelate with my footsteps on broken glass, cracked floors and rusty machinery and the sound of rain encountered during my walks. All these different elements formed my initial polyphonic experience of the Tobacco City, as it is called nowadays, which was then incorporated in the creation of a text-score (Image 58, Appendix 4, p.3). I wrote in Chapter Four that a sound and site sensitive text-score could be 'prompting sounds, thoughts of sounds and of internal and external synapses' (Chapter Four, p.135) and within this first attempt to write a text-score, these gathered facts were turned into fiction and the sound of thoughts coexists with the sound of spaces, people and memories echoing Bakhtin's notion of the utterance as discussed in Chapter Two. Before completing the text-score I decided, as will be explained further down in this

section, to start my exploratory workshops with my unbiased co-walkers in an effort to try and incorporate our exchanges and conversations in it.

/to begin is to follow from

What's your name I asked?

"Venus Ultraliberalis" she said. "It sounds kind of ironic, mar ne?" she later added. / It's 11 pm. Tobacna is empty. I walk alone weaving my way around the humming breath of a-totem-cooling-tower-at-sleep near Kclub. The gate is closed. / The surrounding construction site fences were reminding us of what's to come in this part of the city. / I am not here, I am trying to be here, this is not a place where one can belong to. / Knowing by gradually becoming though a mutual "listening" experience. / "I wanna show you something" she exhaled and grabbed my hand. We started running across the parking lot towards the big offices building. / Broken glass, rusty joints, barricaded warehouses and season-burned leaves is what I found, interchangeable Tobacna Ulica 1(2,3,4)5, 1871, 1917, 1945, 1957, 2004. Buildings, numbers, letters, functions, footsteps on cracked floors. I think of nodes, offices. I think of the interplay between power and struggle. I think of the paradox at play in this place. / "I like to whisper to the melodies of the buildings" she said to me. "it's the only thing left to do here. People don't know who I am, in fact they don't even notice me, like a word that doesn't exist anymore." / A statue of a woman hidden prominently behind the trees facing the "great divider". / I stood next to the rail tracks for quite a while. / Do you know where the Tobacco Museum is? / "It's here" she told me and pointed at a dark corridor covered by the persisting drone of electrical currents. "I love it here" and she moved away from me until I could not see her clearly. Her whispered sorrowful song was the only sign of her presence as it started dancing with the hermetically closed power hums until she gradually faded away. / I spend my days in Tobacna, waking up. Looking out of the windows, walking around at night. Recording, thinking, remembering, imagining other places I have been to that are echoed here: old soap factories, obsolete machinery, obsolete histories, dreams and visions of prosperity; the sounds of rain falling from a cracked roof, down the drain. In the middle of a game. Going to sleep. / It's only me and what's left of the "Tobakarica", listening to the passing trains. / "The pillar of Bad Consciousness" she concluded and I agreed. /

[Image 58 The text-score created after my solitary soundwalks]

In the above text-score I interpret the space's many divides by embedding different parts separated by a division slash ( / ) symbol. The page becomes a composite of fragments and each fragment reflects the varied 'thinking as listening' motions, conversations with passers-by, my co-walkers and perceived listening angles of the location. My way of creating the text was significantly informed by all the observations made during my workshops in London about how the samples manifested themselves in the walks, also discussed in Chapter Four. Hence, the text-score becomes my first attempt to create a 'text as practice' and a means to subvert

the site's fragmentation, to revisit Kristeva's notion presented in Chapter Three. At times personal and at times more fictionalised, the different fragments entwine as they all allude to the statue of the tobacco worker in more or less obvious ways. Inspired by the spirit of psychogeographic exploration and writing, the text resembles a sequence 'of writing, walking, thinking and meditating' (Sinclair to Papadomanolaki, 2013, unpaginated) between the many voices of the factory and myself, as well as a peculiar meshwork of its aural, material, social, psychological or political undertones and divides.

The text-score attempts to capture the transient motion of my internal 'seep through' as it converses with the environment. The words become shifters, 'something empty' (Krauss, 1977, p.69) whose meaning shifts as my encounters with these voices shift. They are words as events, to return to Stephen Connor's quote from Chapter Four, containing no objective value or big truth. Boehme's and Ingold's convergence of materials and senses is embedded in the text-score aiming to create a counter-atmosphere that will facilitate during the biased workshops the 'communication between different "actors"' (Goffman, 2005, p.35). All these different layers as they unravelled during my drifts formed a sonic perceptual ecology that was also embedded in the writing of the text-score.

In parallel to working on the text score, as already stated above, I invited two of my four co-walkers to do an unbiased workshop. Similarly to the protocol described in Chapter Four, the workshop involved:

- i) Internalising / Preparatory text-score (for my biased co-walkers) or suggestions (for my unbiased co-walkers)
- ii) soundwalk
- iii) discussion
- iv) making of creative response

The soundwalks with the co-walkers followed different paths and both my co-walkers preferred to listen to the site through using their voices and by speaking. Again, I have not attempted to interdict their choice or to interfere with any skilful sound-guidance. Focusing on the social, political, architectural and poetic undertones of the site, our experience merged contrasting perspectives in conversational soundwalk, subverting borders and reactivating fragments of the landscape, creating

alternative routes through Tobačna. As I write in my journal these workshops offered:

[a] listening experience, more than a *dérive*. A dense, mutual listening experience that gave to both of us an insight to the current state of the site and the city, through prompts to the past, the paradoxical layout of the architecture, the clash of the municipal, the national, the individual struggle, the fight against gentrification overshadowed by the yet-to-come Tobačna Mesto-dream city...Listening, prompting, provoking, remembering, reflecting in this place in limbo. An ex-factory worker spoke about smell, machinery, random-red buttons of inspection we listened to pigeons intoning to the electricity hum next to the 'limbo pit'...We listened to sounds but most importantly we engaged/embraced the mutual experience that led us to many revelations: introspective, challenging, discursive, contrasting, inclusive, reflexive, with open ears, eyes, minds and critical mechanisms. (Papadomanolaki, 2013, unpaginated)

The creative responses (Images 59 and 60, Appendix 4, pp.4-5) offered an additional perspective to the soundwalks, affirming many of the points discussed during the walk by opening up and re-inventing the terrain of exploration and finding their way into the final text-score and ultimately in the piece. The discussion I had with the ex-factory worker, that I mention in my journal entry above, found its way into the piece such as at 00:32 or later in the piece at 21:06. Her words are inhabited by a strong sense of machinery and the sounds of electric and mechanical repetition which prompted me to record many of the automatic ticket machines and electricity generators in the site using my telephone pick-up coil (also heard at 00:06 onward). The same applies for my other co-walker, a local architect and artist whose words and exchanges were echoed both in my journal and in the piece (for example at 04:11). Their internal 'seep through' affected my own experience of the space and their voices were embedded in my way of composing the final piece.

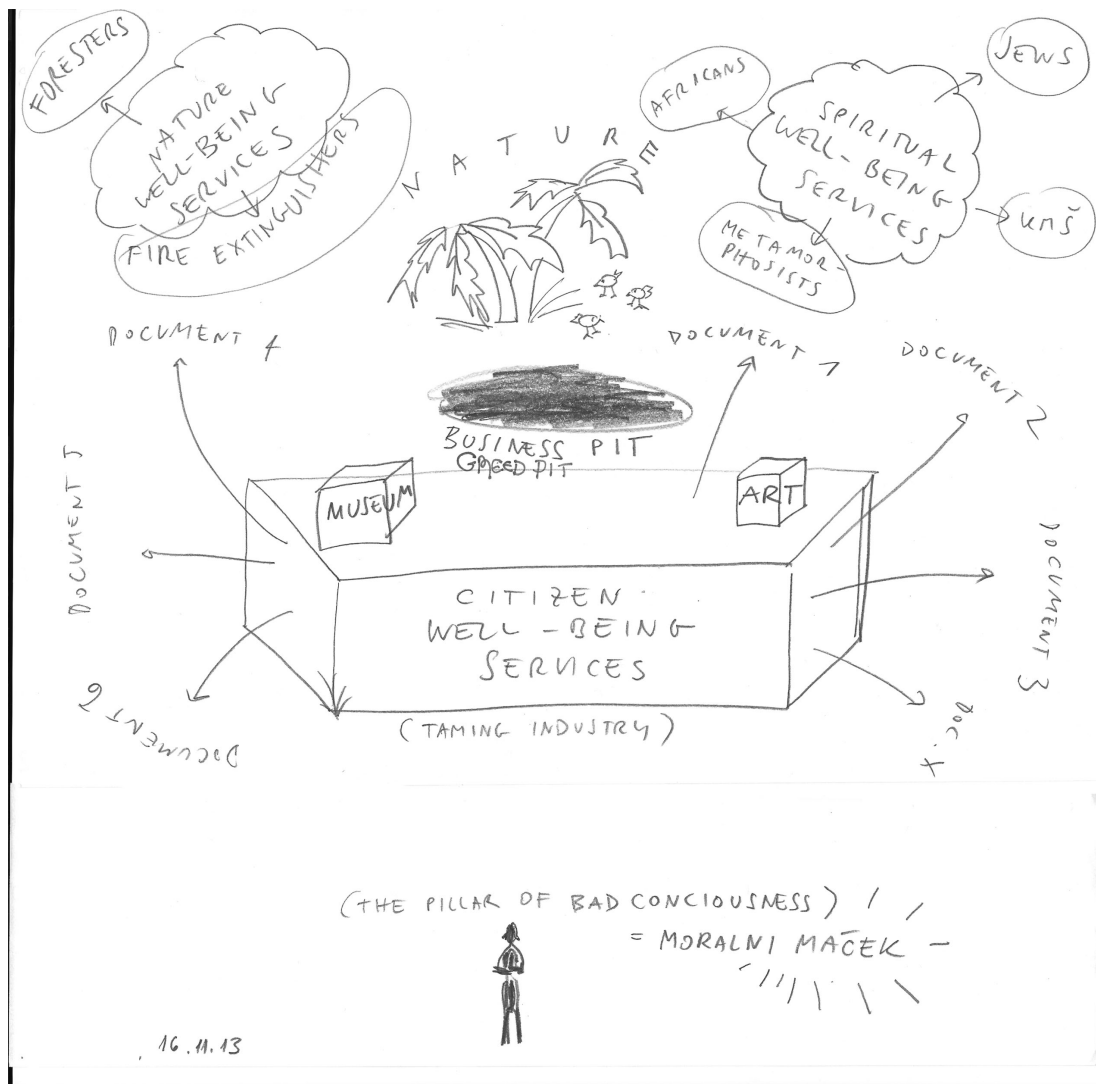
That text-score was used in the workshops I did with my biased co-walkers leading to the creation of similarly engaging creative responses (Image 61, Appendix 4, p.6). By looking at the different samples of responses here one can perhaps get a sense of the polyphonic meshworks generated during the workshops such as the areas, ideas and moods, the conversations and exchanges, the material aspects as well as the personal sensibilities at play bringing us in mind all the ideas considered in Chapter One about the perception of the environment as a meshwork of interactions

between senses and materials and the role of our internal 'seep through' in the process. These are not simple drawings of facts but a reanimation of events, not only a summary but also a creative resonance to the temporary connection established between ourselves and the site.

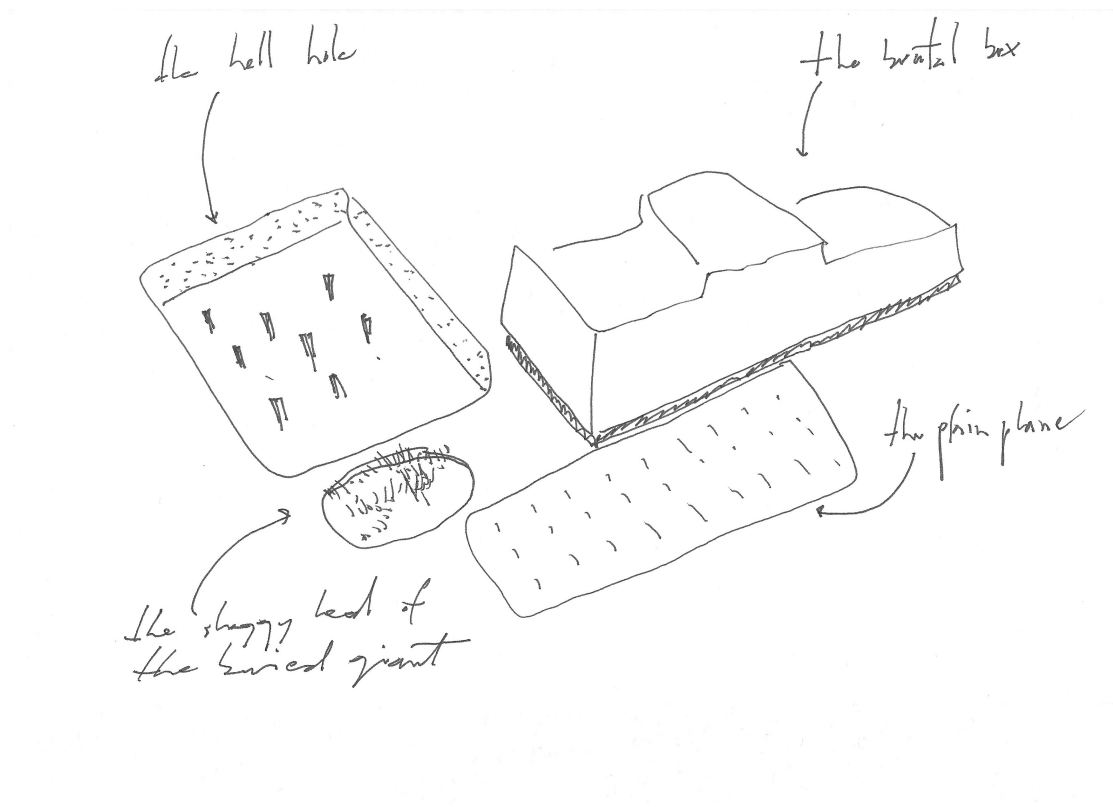
According to my biased co-walker's post-walk discussion, the text existed in the subconscious, not present as an actual material but rather as a mood. As I wrote in my journal about one of my co-walkers after one of the workshops 'the text helped him in a non-prescriptive way to go back in time and listen to his own thoughts about the place. It also made him contemplate on the fact that the space's transitional use means that people can still hack it, access it' (Papadomanolaki, 2013, unpaginated). This can, in fact, be heard in the piece (at 19:11-20:05) positioned next to a different perspective uttered by another co-walker (unbiased) who refers to the space, as a dead end maze.

The poaching of the text is established *a priori* but the text-score cannot dictate the path of our exploration. It does, nonetheless, provide a more intimate starting point for allowing the internal 'seep through' of my co-walkers to confidently emerge and co-exist with the environment, instinctively through voice and speech. It manifests itself while operating on a plane that negates language and linguistic barriers. We manage to communicate on neutral ground (in English which is our non-native language) and to allow misunderstandings and mishearings to occur and destabilise our certainties. Our dialogue, similarly to Bakhtin's notion, pre-exists our meeting and our voices contain assemblages of words and voices not necessarily belonging to us but reappropriated by us, reactivated to become something different or new. Brandon LaBelle offers a similar perspective by writing that:

In speaking, I am registered as an individual with something to say, yet this something is in turn an amalgamation of what I have been told elsewhere, of what I imagine it needs to be said as a kind of socializing demand. Therefore, my voice is crowded with others that paradoxically are always separate from me, apart and found in the larger field of interactions. (LaBelle, 2004, p.11)



[Image 59 Creative response of an unbiased co-walker]



[Image 60 Creative response of an unbiased co-walker]



[Image 61 Drawing Meshworks: Creative Response by one of my biased co-walkers]

In both cases of my biased and unbiased workshops, the process allowed my co-walkers to 'follow a rather introspective path and a need to reclaim the space through their memory' (Papadomanolaki, unpaginated, 2013). Through dialogue and

movement we managed to develop a sonic perceptual ecology by gradually voicing the node by unlocking our internal 'seep-through'. The text-score prompted a more nuanced meshwork with the site whereas the unbiased workshops created an at times distanced and critical approach. 'I have no memories' my unbiased co-walker says in the piece. It must be noted that all these the soundwalks were discreetly recorded using my binaural microphones and formed another aural layer to be used in the final piece. All my co-walkers were informed about all the different processes involved in the workshop and have all agreed to be recorded and participate.

The final stage of the residency involved working intensely for five days to create the radio piece. As already explained, the text-score formed an integral part of the piece, not unlike Voegelin's libretto mentioned in Chapter Three, allowing me to intuitively intertwine the most resonant fragments from the different drifts and meshworks created. *To begin is to follow on from* is partly a different iteration of that text-score and partly an autonomous piece of work with its own qualities. In both cases however, the location itself becomes the main character that is inhabited by the many voices. These voices narrate it, critically engage with it and present its past, its present condition and its possible futures, creating a non-linear continuity between past and present, prompting 'the articulation of the different interwoven stories of the people' (Jackson 1998).



[Image 62 One of my co-walkers featured in *To Begin Is To Follow On From*. Image courtesy of the researcher, November 2013, Ljubljana]

The piece moves fluidly, as already demonstrated in the examples above, from one exchange to the other through following on from voices, footsteps, rail tracks, gates and doors. It attempts to abstract and mimic the fragmented and transient nature of the sonic perceptual ecologies created and how these were embedded in my experience of the site, my movement in it and the sounds I recorded. An added layer of ambient guitar fades in and out of the different vignettes to obscure and fictionalise further these motions, to add a supporting atmosphere of anticipation and suspense. The listener is called to participate in the narrative by gluing these different pieces together any way they like, if they like. The knowingly obscured structure and form of the narrative behind the piece serves to provide a glimpse of the atmosphere of the place as experienced through walking and writing about it without trying to over-inform and over-interpret the location's stories. Ultimately, the piece seeks to re-enact these sonic perceptual ecologies by providing through partiality, to revisit McCartney's notion about everyday listening conversations, these 'stories from below' (Lane, 2015, unpaginated).



[Image 63 One of my co-walkers featured in *To Begin Is To Follow On From*. Image courtesy of the researcher, November 2013, Ljubljana]

By placing the emphasis on these stories and atmospheres as narrated by my co-walkers and how they were reciprocated within my own voice and presence, I created an intimate, slow-evolving and uncanny story. *To begin is to follow on from*, similarly to Olde Wolbers' and Corringham's work draws on the ambivalences and fictions of memory as recounted through my co-walkers' voices and then revisited and filtered through my memory. Let us revisit Williams James's idea of the false memory and how instrumental it is in understanding the shifts within the self. The recorded conversation becomes distilled in the thinking voice of the artist who then makes possible associations between lived or fictionalised memories, resulting in a multiplicity of selves. The formation of a sonic perceptual ecology allows such accidents as possibilities for making associations, connecting, sharing, understanding and inhabiting a place, possibilities that perhaps are able to reveal unseen/unheard aspects and truths of such a place.

*To begin is to follow on from* is almost a radio feature about place, similar, in a sense, to Panetta's work, but its reliance on more fictional rather than factual material positions it differently. The factual content is re-appropriated and destabilized by the editing and compositional process and the stories assume a new role that dwells not in the centre but on the edge of established and institutional knowledge about that location. The work itself does not aspire to become the story of 'what's there' but rather a passing witness of a temporary and conditioned meeting between time and space, not unlike the works by Rui Chaves and Budhaditya Chattopadhyay. An interesting observation nonetheless in relation to the latter is that *To begin is to follow on from* allows the listener to somehow access or imagine the sonic perceptual ecology and the possible methodology behind the piece and to contribute their internal 'seep through' as a means of recomposing and reflecting on the piece in a more constructive way. Its form, pace and texture do not necessarily obscure the contrasting and varied layers of the work and the process it went through; something also apparent in Chaves' *Paraty* and something that cannot be attained in *Elegy for Bangalore* unless one reads the accompanying booklet or the artist's academic writings about the piece or perhaps assume a more skilled listening position.

### 5.2.2 *Conductcontacttransmit*

In the collaborative composition with Slovenian electro-acoustic composer Bojana Šaljić Podešva entitled *conductcontacttransmit* the text-score of *To begin is to follow on from* and the stories of Tobačna assume a different iteration. Developed between 2013-2014 and produced by CONA Institute For Contemporary Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the piece follows on from the work undertaken during my residency in Ljubljana by creating a collaboratively generated new text-score and a performance. More specifically, the piece becomes the springboard for a different sonic perceptual ecology between two artists working together remotely, exchanging existing texts, prompting the generation of new scores as in Images 64-66 (Appendix 4, pp.8-9). Although coming from different creative backgrounds, after a series of meetings and exchanges, we agreed to start our collaboration on a philosophical and conceptual level while focusing on the material aspect of language. Bakhtin's notion of the utterance becomes the main poaching mechanism, to revisit Jenkins and de Certeau, for the deconstruction, reconstruction, merging and re-appropriation of keywords as shifters of meanings, as we initially agreed to call the resonant words that we selected from the original texts, (Images 67, 68, Appendix 4, pp.10-11).

With a common interest in the urban fabric and its many stories and textures, Bojana Šaljić Podešva and myself initiated a conversation about reclaiming and articulating the city. Through the iterative re-workings of the texts and the sculpting of shifting words and meanings into changing motions and forms, not unlike Bakhtin's chains of utterances, our internal 'seep throughs' merged and interacted to create, through words, meshworks of sounds, textures, sensations, thoughts, feelings gradually drifting away from meaning into nonsensical sequences. These are not referring to a particular site but to the city as a node of felt, opaque, embodied and yet at times intangible environments. The piece can, therefore, be applied to any city and through its sonic perceptual ecology can trigger each listener's/viewer's internal 'seep through', their thoughts, feelings and responses toward perceiving the urban and how fragmented, disjointed or playful it can be. As its title reveals, the work explores this dynamic process of conduction, contact and transmission of ideas and materials between the two composers. The concept of the city is treated as a meeting point of clashes and departures. The keywords become shifters of a series of

permutations, playfully escaping fixtures of meanings, descriptions, turning familiar symbols into volatile events.

***I'30***

If I say that I want to be »here and now«, than this defines also the existence of »elsewhere, in another time«. Which means that I am aware of my point being just one point in the space-time, but at the same time I am resigning to the knowledge of the contents of the rest of the space-time, which is not »here and now«. Except if the information about the rest of the space-time comes into my point. But – if I am thinking about the information which does not belong to my point, then I am not here and now. Consequently, the principle of »here and now« might be quiet ignorant. Except if it embraces in itself the concept of the awareness-expansion, meaning that my point »here and now« grows.

***Laurynas Katkus – for Aleš Šteger***

Now I am in this divided city, and time  
rushes clanging along like the wheels of the underground train.  
A semaphore temporarily out of order,  
unable to catch up, I watch them tailing one another.

Listen friend. Hear that? – they're birds  
gabbling, cooing, warbling in the student quarters,  
constructions sites, little nations with unpronounceable names,  
in the very eye of time's whirlwind.

[Image 64 Bojana Šaljić Podešva's original text ]

What's your name I asked?  
 "Venus Ultraliberalis" she said. "It sounds kind of ironic, mar ne?" she later added. /  
 It's 11 pm. Tobacna is empty. I walk alone weaving my way around the humming  
 breath of a-totem-cooling-tower-at-sleep near Kclub. The gate is closed. / The  
 surrounding construction site fences were reminding us of what's to come in this  
 part of the city. / I am not here, I am trying to be here, this is not a place where one  
 can belong to. / Knowing by gradually becoming though a mutual "listening"  
 experience. / "I wanna show you something" she exhaled and grabbed my hand. We  
 started running across the parking lot towards the big offices building. / Broken  
 glass, rusty joints, barricaded warehouses and season-burned leaves is what I found,  
 interchangeable Tobacna Ulica 1(2,3,4)5, 1871, 1917, 1945, 1957, 2004. Buildings,  
 numbers, letters, functions, footsteps on cracked floors. I think of nodes, offices. I  
 think of the interplay between power and struggle. I think of the paradox at play in  
 this place. / "I like to whisper to the melodies of the buildings" she said to me. "it's  
 the only thing left to do here. People don't know who I am, in fact they don't even  
 notice me, like a word that doesn't exist anymore." / A statue of a woman hidden  
 prominently behind the trees facing the "great divider". / I stood next to the rail  
 tracks for quite a while. / Do you know where the Tobacco Museum is? / "It's here"  
 she told me and pointed at a dark corridor covered by the persisting drone of  
 electrical currents. "I love it here" and she moved away from me until I could not see  
 her clearly. Her whispered sorrowful song was the only sign of her presence as it  
 started dancing with the hermetically closed power hums until she gradually faded  
 away. / I spend my days in Tobacna, waking up. Looking out of the windows,  
 walking around at night. Recording, thinking, remembering, imagining other places I  
 have been to that are echoed here: old soap factories, obsolete machinery, obsolete  
 histories, dreams and visions of prosperity; the sounds of rain falling from a cracked  
 roof, down the drain. In the middle of a game. Going to sleep. / It's only me and  
 what's left of the "Tobakarica", listening to the passing trains. / "The pillar of Bad  
 Consciousness" she concluded and I agreed. /

[Image 65 My contribution to the project]

maria papadomanolaki, bojana šajlić p. conductcontacttransmit  
 key-words for the text-score

<b>content-related groups</b>	nodes	burnt	semaphore	<i>/musical extention of the spirit/</i>
	offices	out of order	passing trains	spirit/
	power	decay	drain	humming breath
city	name	sleep	pillar	whisper
site	struggle			melodies
point	crowded but obsolete	<i>/faded-away/</i>	<i>/resistance, change, movement/</i>	word that doesn't exist
	unpronounceable	cooling-tower	birds	anywhere
<i>/beautiful capitalism/</i>		old soap factories	gabbling	hums
surface	<i>/time, inavoidable carrier of change/</i>	obsolete machinery	cooing	faded away
image	eye of time	obsolete histories	warbling	echo
new	travel	dreams	student quarters	rain
sterile	sediments of the history	visions	constructions sites	drone of electrical currents
hermetic	here and now	prosperity	little nations	
concentration	elsewhere	<i>/reflections of mistreatment/</i>	underground	<i>/near-past-ruins/</i>
construction sites	another time	closed	working class	broken glass
big office-buildings	temporarily	fence		rusty joints
shiny	1871	gate	<i>/the spirit of faded life/</i>	burnt leaves
rush	1917	divided	hidden	cracked floors
trees	1945	hermetic	covered	cracked roof
<i>/behind the curtain/</i>	1957	barricaded	fragmented	
unable to catch up	1989	great divider(?)	memory	<i>/potential/</i>
constructed memory	2004	ignorance	Museum	new content
tobakarica	2014		Venus Ultraliberalis	repaired memory
bad consciousness			corridor	a statue of a woman
game	<i>/act of fading away, act of mistreating/</i>	<i>/reflections of civilization/</i>	books	
buildings	vacation	parking lot		
numbers	forsaken	big offices building	<i>/present state, past state, possible state: tension</i>	
letters	abandoned	warehouse	evokes emotion, sentiment/	
functions	empty	train		
footsteps		rail tracks		

[Image 66 A first reworking and reordering of keywords from the two original texts, contributed by Bojana]

## Surface

Rusty  
Constructed  
Empty  
Barricated  
Repaired  
Temporary  
Fragmented  
Crowded  
Burnt

Buildings  
Nodes  
Trees  
Rain  
Site  
Museum  
Fence  
Pillar  
Trains  
Offices

Material/Textural Surface Terrain  
:: here and now ?

## Under

Sleep  
Hidden  
Divided  
Cracked  
Covered  
Obsolete  
Humming

History  
Point  
Underground  
Floors  
Quarters  
Footsteps  
Machinery

Material /Textural Underground Terrain  
:: sediments of history

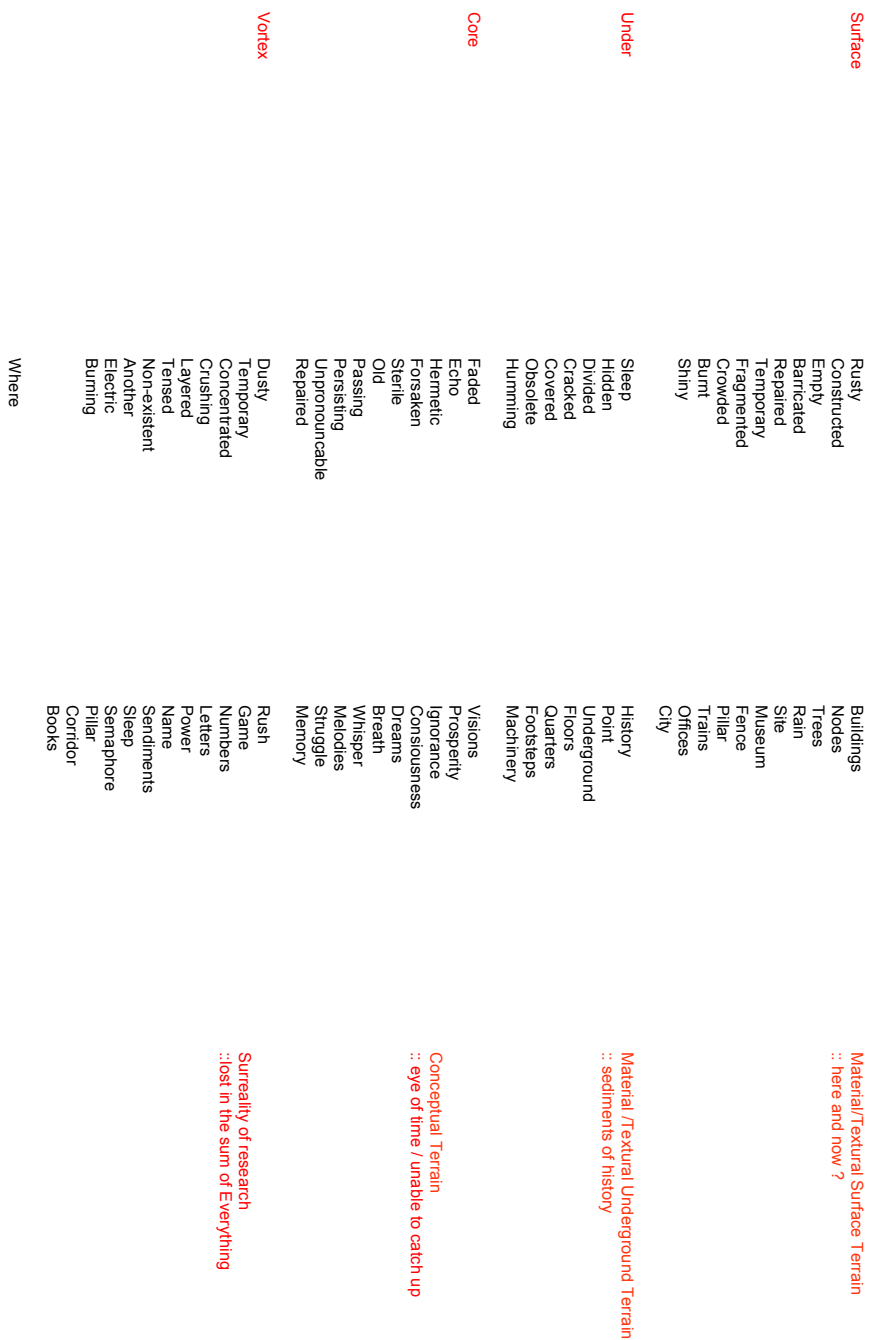
## Core

Faded  
Echo  
Hermetic  
Forsaken  
Sterile  
Old  
Passing  
Persisting  
Unpronouncable

Visions  
Prosperity  
Ignorance  
Consciousness  
Dreams  
Breath  
Whisper  
Melodies  
Struggle

Conceptual Terrain  
:: eye of time / unable to catch up

[Image 67 A second reworking and reordering of keywords from the two original texts with an addition of conceptual strata contributed by me]



[Image 68 A third reworking and reordering of keywords from the two original texts with further refinements on the conceptual strata contributed by Bojana]

Please watch Video Clip 4 which is a documentation of the performance consisting of the text-score and a stereo recording. Feel free to stop at anytime desired.

The final iteration of the text-score took the form of a text-based video piece. For the video piece, I borrowed the idea of the subtitle, already presented in Chapter Four, (and which I had previously applied in a gallery performance to be presented in the next section). The black background offers a canvas where a series of movements occur consisting of fast and slow couplings and permutations of words. For the final stage of this collaboration, I did a small residency in Ljubljana where I worked intensively with Bojana (Image 69) to prepare for a performance of the piece that took place at Kino Šiška, Ljubljana, Slovenia on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

Using the text-score as a starting point, each one of us responded to it by creating a sound pool that we would use to improvise with during the performance. We also decided to expand this idea of exchange and dialogue by creating a set-up where we would exchange our audio outputs, but only as an additional source of manipulation as the core sound pool would be produced from both of us and would be left intact. We also chose to apply a quadrophonic speaker set-up as a means of diffusing the volatility of the text-score into the sounds themselves. We left a lot of creative space to each other to add our individual style and sound to the piece. In terms of source material, I used many of the recordings I created during my stay at Tobačna as well as recordings of my voice reading parts of my text-score along with laptop-generated sonic experimentations. Bojana used Kyma<sup>49</sup> to create and manipulate live sound design.

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<sup>49</sup> <http://kyma.symbolicsound.com/>



[Image 69 Discussing with Bojana our text-score and how we will perform it, Photograph by Brane Zorman]

Instead of following the text-score word by word, we chose to use it as a libretto for structuring the piece and choosing the sounds. In its four consecutive movements titled 'surface', 'under', 'vortex' and 'core' the final form of *conductcontacttransmit* emerges from the synapses and conflicts between the text-score and our improvised mutual sonic exchanges. With text-score and sound equally prone to fragmentation and contingency, the performance attempts to offer a playful and thought-provoking interplay between these registers of perception. The text-score (Images 70-74) and its fast-moving words touch upon the sound found in visual stimuli and vice versa, on the interplay between antitheses such as new, repaired, shiny, dark, fast, slow, empty, crowded, open, closed, private, public, outdoors, indoors, hope, disillusion, dream, nightmare, vision.

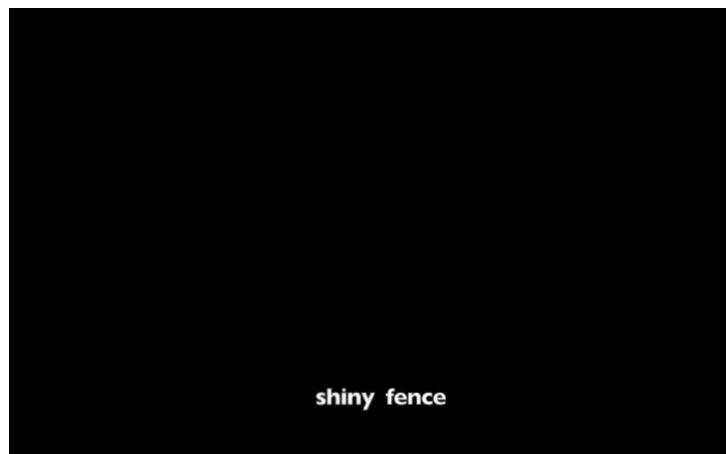
By using simple words in different configurations, we critically reflected - and this is another example of when the internal 'seep through' is at play - on the notion of the city from its surface to its core, addressing issues of consumption, alienation, capitalism. These motions gradually unpack and become more intense as the piece reaches 'vortex' (at 11:00 in the documentation video) and are released as the piece finishes. In-between words or sequences of words, the absence of language is pronounced by a pitch black screen, a blank canvas that destabilises further any idea of habit or expectation by bringing in an element of surprise and suspense.



[Image 70 A screenshot from the text-score]



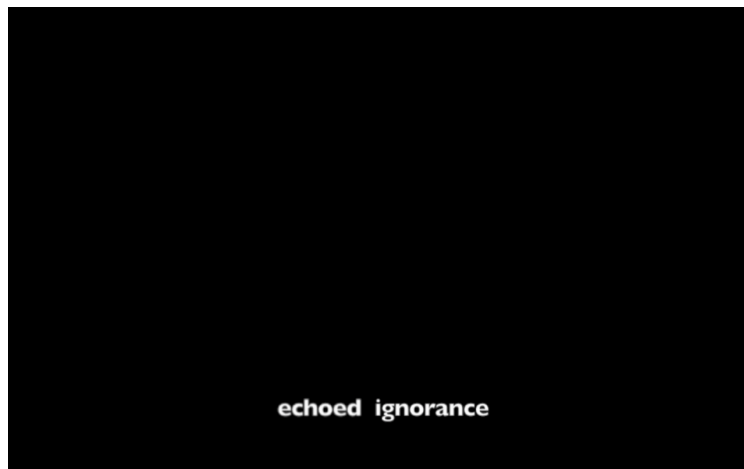
[Image 71 A screenshot from the text-score]



[Image 72 A screenshot from the text-score]

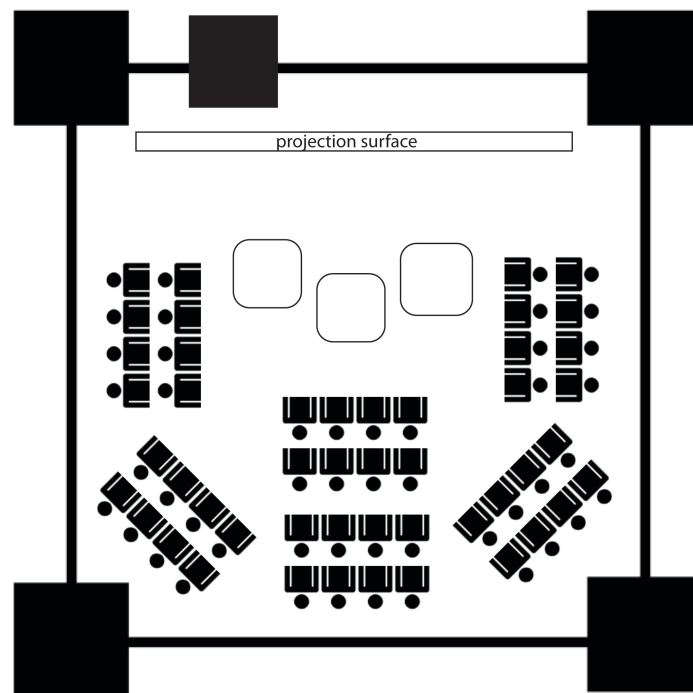


[Image 73 A screenshot from the text-score]



[Image 74 A screenshot from the text-score]

We speculated that the above text-score in the concert space and in juxtaposition with the live sound would create an open sonic perceptual ecology where the audience could assume a more active role and by using projected words as shifters (of meanings) would expand these ideas further while unlocking their internal 'seep through' and their 'thinking as listening'. The 'admirable austerity of the void' (Esch, 2004, p.509) of the black screen creates such a space (and counter-atmosphere) for reflection and meshworks of interactions. The auditorium is turned into a node where the audience, the performers and the audiovisual layers converse with each other, both in solitude and in simultaneity. The performance of the final piece took place in a full house (Image 76). We set-up our equipment and instruments in the middle of the room, off-stage, in-between the audience, all facing the projection screen and with the four speakers surrounding us (Image 75).



[Image 75 Our set-up at Kino Šiška]



[Image 76 Performing at Kino Šiška, Photograph by Brane Zorman]

Judging from anecdotal comments that I received from members of the audience, in terms of how our collaboration worked, people sounded very supportive emphasising how successfully we complemented each other's sounds despite our different backgrounds. On the level of how the text-score worked in relation to the

sound, again the comments and general reflections that I gathered from the audience lead me to think that it made them be more engaged on what was to come. The text-score created a level of anticipation and suspense as the audience gradually came to understand what was at stake with the performance and that the whole piece was improvised. In some cases, people did not exactly understand whether we were performing a live soundtrack to an image-less film or whether the projected video functioned like a text-score. Perhaps having such information further clarified in the programme notes would have resolved the issue. In retrospect, I believe that that level of detail was not necessary and that leaving it open and ambiguous created this rather interesting pool of reactions in the audience especially when considering our initial aim to create an inclusive sonic perceptual ecology.

The piece as a whole seemed to work on many levels as it sparked thoughts in some members of the audience who described the experience as simultaneously confusing, immersive, entertaining and intense. The sharp synapses and contrasts between the sounds and the words, allowed for some members of the audience to think and feel about the city as an abstract entity, an atmosphere where they found equal glimpses of familiarity and alienation. I could argue that this resembles a form of drifting where we place ourselves outside our zone of comfort and in the middle of an agitated terrain of interactions where we are actively engaged by contributing our own thinking as listening processes to make meanings and ultimately our own version of the piece. The text-score therefore plays an important role in gluing all these voices together and catalysing these interactions. The internal 'seep through' here might not be an embodied activity in the same sense as in the workshops but it is an important private contribution in completing the transmission chain between the composer and the audience.

In the above context, Bakhtin's chain of utterances becomes even more pronounced not only as a methodology for collaborating and poaching the text-score but also as a means to produce a collective counter-atmosphere that posits the audience in the driver's seat, making their own associations and meshworks, performing the piece in simultaneity with us, deciding whether they watch an image-less film or participate in this transient and sound-sensitive node. Despite its displaced nature, the sonic perceptual ecology created within the piece is one that calls for personal geographies, cities and experiences, it is an open ended 'map to all

possible destinations, a map for unlocking and, why not, recording what matters to us and what marks our memory' (Papadomanolaki, 2014, unpaginated). Following its debut performance in Ljubljana, the piece was also presented in *Sonorities Festival 2015: Fractured Narratives* in SARC'S Sonic Lab in Belfast as well as in UAL's *Surprise and Serendipity* event at Apiary Studios in London.

### **5.3 A certain geography**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

*A certain geography* is an ongoing site-specific networked performance, initiated and developed as part of my thesis but which I am planning to expand further, beyond my PhD research. The project is a continuation of a series of projects, most notably *Trajectory* (2007-8), which I have been creating since 2007 that deal with soundwalking, listening and the use of live mobile sound transmission. This piece follows a long lineage of projects dealing with telematic art, radio art and transmission, a field which I have been researching between 2007-2011 as part of the published project *Transmission Arts: Artists & Airwaves* (PAJ Publications, 2011). These projects find inspiration in Hildegard Westerkamp's *Soundwalking* series at Vancouver Co-operative Radio and socially engaged locative projects like Peter Cusack's *Favourite Sounds* dealing with the nuances of sound, voice, listening, locality and technology.

For *a certain geography* I was initially interested in further developing the existing protocol for *Trajectory* by introducing the key ideas generated by this research to create a focused sonic perceptual ecology and a platform of exploration and interaction. For *Trajectory*, I have developed a system of mobile transmission where a roamer outside a gallery space streams back live sound from the environs of the space while the listeners from inside can send her/him text messages to prompt actions. In *a certain geography*, I use the exact same system but with the addition of some adjusted methodological tools from my workshop protocol described in the previous chapter.

More specifically, I do repetitive field visits for a short period of time within the environs of a specific site in order to choose the path for a soundwalk which also

leads to the creation of a locative text-score to be used in the performance. In these visits, similarly to my workshops with co-walkers, I try to engage with as many perspectives of a site as possible, constantly destabilising my focus on myself. During the drifts in the field, I interact with the site, instigate conversations with people, take notes on sounds, thoughts and events, fragments of which are incorporated in the text-score. The performance consists of myself transmitting live my soundwalk back to the chosen site where the audience is located listening while watching/reading the projected/printed text-score. The transmission loop closes with the audience participating in some way in the exploration by sending messages to me and responding to the experience. The performance concludes when I enter the site where the audience is located.

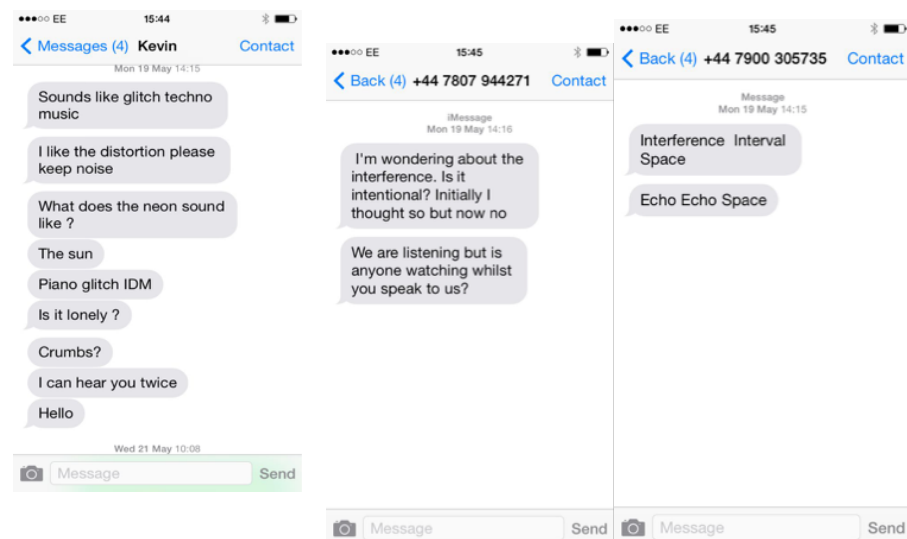
*A certain geography* is a project whose site is a hybrid one as it resides in the porosities, overlaps and disruptions between local and remote, embodied and disembodied, textural or temporal, anticipated and technologically-mediated spaces and listening positions. Its iterative and interwoven layers lead to the creation of a transient and delicate sonic perceptual ecology where the individual and the collective exist contingently. Taking as a point of departure the intent to disrupt the spatial confines of a performance space, the project seeks to employ the experimental methodology developed during my workshops and field-visits as a means to subvert and enrich our listening experience within the identified space by creating a meshwork of simultaneous remote and local sonic layers and to attune our internal 'seep through' to the minute psychological, physical or material details contributing to the meshwork.

Mobility becomes the plateau for the instigation of dialogue, and for using the body/voice axis as a sensing lens of ongoing interactions. The geography of both the space and the remote site, with all their underlying intricacies and ambiguities are reciprocally contested, opened up and invented (de Certeau, 1984, pp.93, 97, 99) through the perpetual creation of a walking story. Words, gestures, sounds are repeated, countered, disjointed, destabilised by silences, delays and disruptions of signals. In the following sections I will be discussing the two different iterations of the project that have been presented so far, each one involving the same methodology of revisiting the site but resulting in different outputs and forms of presentation.

### 5.3.2 Parasol Unit: a certain geography

Please watch Video Clip 5 which is a documentation excerpt of the piece.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2014, I performed a 15 minute live telematic soundwalk inside Parasol Unit gallery in Old Street, London as part of the *sensingsite* event themed as 'Transcribing Site'. The piece involved the audience seated in the main conference room listening to my live streamed soundwalk while I used my voice and body to narrate and interact with the spaces' acoustics, the sounds from the exhibits and the accidental activities taking place. The members of the audience also interacted with me throughout the event by sending text messages (Image 77), sharing their thoughts, asking questions and instigating me to take actions.

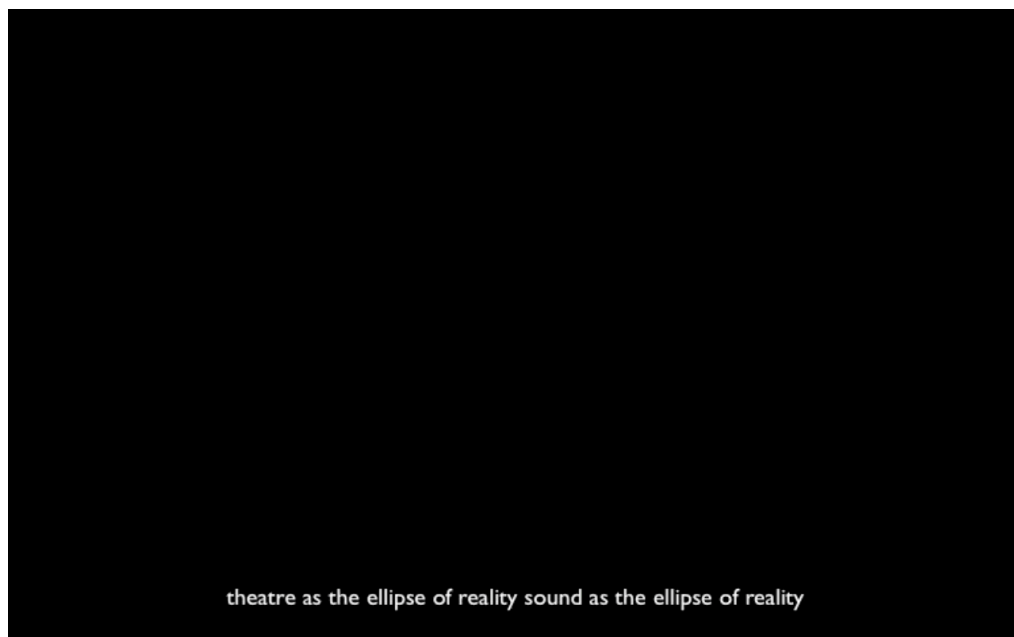


[Image 77 Samples of screenshots of the messages received on the performance]

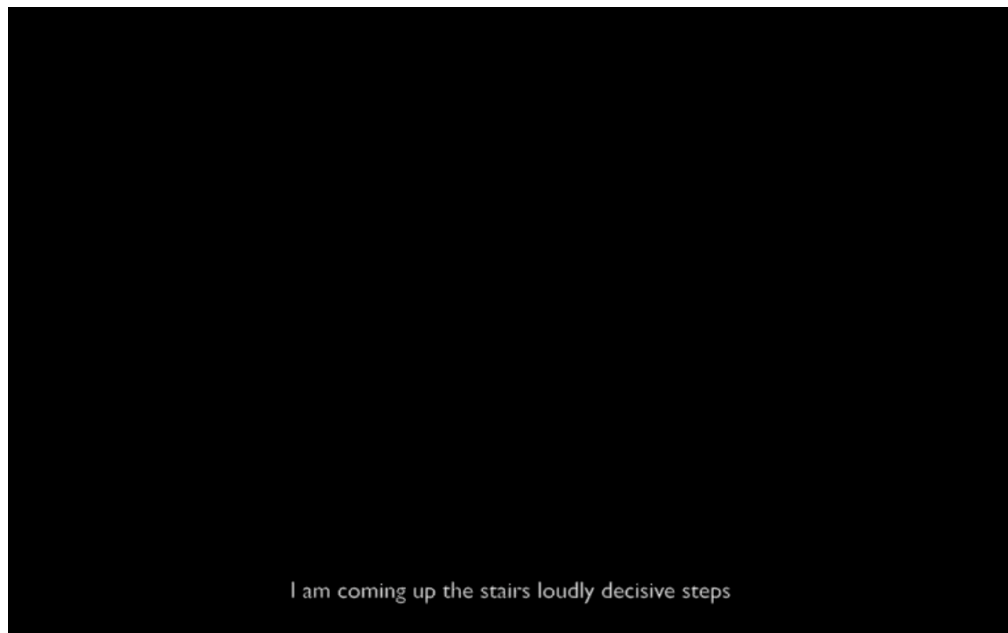
The performance created a sonic perceptual ecology where the nodes' different spaces, their acoustics merged with my own passing through them, the past iterations of myself in the same spaces and the audience's anticipations, altogether amplifying and repurposing the gallery's environment. This meshwork of interactions - despite its briefness - engaged and instigated people to reflect on, and interact with what was being streamed. My initial plan was to do my soundwalk outside the gallery and my first field visits had taken place in the environs of the gallery which at that

time were significantly impacted by major construction work that made my task of finding a meaningful route extremely difficult since for most of the time access to certain paths was denied. Hence the decision to focus my research inside the gallery which, within its microcosm, was another type of pass-through space with pre-programmed narratives embedded in it.

In preparation for the piece, I spent a week revisiting the gallery, walking around the different rooms, interacting with the exhibition on display, visitors and taking notes on thoughts and sounds and gradually allowing my internal 'seep through' to break into the environment. These fragmentary scribbles were then used for the creation of a text-score video (Images 78 and 79) that was projected in the event room while I was streaming my soundwalk. Positioned discreetly at the bottom of the screen, the text-score replicated my approach for *a microcosm city*. As explained in Chapter Four, this sort of unorthodox subtitling conversed with the incoming sound that at times overlapped and at times not.



[Image 78 A screenshot from the projected video]



[Image 79 A screenshot from the projected video]

Inspired by the idea of overlapping temporalities (past, present and future), one of the themes in Shezad Dawood's exhibition (Image 80) on display during that week, the text-score provided a glimpse into the past, the sounds of myself exploring the space (Image 79), the sounds of my thoughts in response to the exhibits (Image 78) while the streamed sound was the link to the present. The audience's interactions represented the future in the form of anticipated actions and sounds. Similar to Westerkamp's soundwalking radio show, these different temporal 'thinking as listening' layers provided a suitable context for the listeners as they made them more aware of the experienced sound environments inside the gallery not only during the time of the performance but also of their experiences before and after.



[Image 80 A view of Dawood's *Why Depend on Space and Time* based on the concept of overlapping past, present and future portraits of the author Robert Anton Wilson. Photograph by Maria Papadomanolaki]

The sonic perceptual ecology that was formed on the day of the performance managed to balance all these different lines of interactions. On one hand, the selective use of the voice and the way it coexisted with the other sounds and layers, facilitated the emergence of associations and tensions. These were also significantly affected by the particular technology used and more specifically by the occurrence of interference and latency. After the completion of the performance I circulated via email an assessment of experience questionnaire<sup>50</sup> to a total of five audience members, of which two have managed to fill it in. In one of the two questionnaires, a member of the audience, when asked about the use of the voice as well as the nature of the technology and how it affected the experience of the performance, replied that:

[t]he voice created tension – the distortion and varying quality of transmission made me a more active listener...[t]he technology used highly enhanced the experience. If the transmission was immediate and of perfect, clear quality I would not have engaged as strongly. (Audience member to Papadomanolaki, 2014)

On the other hand, the audience's text messages constantly destabilised my prescribed trajectory and activated a more instinctive mode of conversation with

<sup>50</sup> The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4, pp. 16-17.

them. Within this context, the text-score provided an on-going supportive bridge across my transmitted sounds and the rigidity of the listening room. The internal 'seep through' of my listeners emerged in the form of questions about the sound itself, poetic expressions in response to the text-score and the sound, humorous comments and questions about my state of being, how am I feeling or whether it is lonely (Image 77). The interplay between the proximity and the distance of the soundstream captured many of the listener's imagination and made them more aware of the possibilities of sound as a catalyst for perception. In the discussion that followed the performance<sup>51</sup>, one member of the audience states that:

what's so interesting with your piece was the porosity of the building and questions of spatiality of proximity and distance, because you were both very close and yet you were very far away, at the same time...knowing that we were all within the same building... (Audience member to Papadomanolaki, 2014)

The projected text-score created a counter-atmosphere in the room that inspired some people to anticipate sounds, to reflect on the incoming sounds or to write text messages in response to it. A member of the audience claimed during our post-performance discussion that the text-score created this space of ambiguity between the recorded sound (text) and the live sound, a sort of anticipation of what to hear. She says, by illustration, in relation to the footsteps on the text-score (Image 79) 'with the footsteps I was thinking, now she's going to come in at some point, you know "oh she is coming, oh no she's not" and the kind of playing with the different senses' (Audience member to Papadomanolaki, 2014).

In the same discussion, another audience member found it very engaging that she could see people sending text messages and then hear the incoming message sound on the stream and me interacting with it. And these are only a few examples of how the emergence of the internal 'seep through' of the different members of the audience manifested itself. In all cases I tried to respond by creating a sonic perceptual ecology through a shared loop of communication where my position as a controller of the process was constantly negated by the audience's interactions. Going back to Ingold's idea of the meshwork and Bachelard's gradual formation of meaning, we could argue that the interaction and conversation between the

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<sup>51</sup> which you can listen in full in Audio Clip 25

audience and myself was an exploration of the different angles that can be perceived through sound and its combination with other senses, the materials of the environment and the sensibilities of those involved in the transmission chain.

The voice - as opposed to its role in Thibaud's *Commented City Walks* - was not a mere commentator of facts but an integral activator of this meshwork. A member of the audience, during the post-performance discussion, made an interesting comparison to Saskia Olde Wolbers's installation by pointing out the common way with which the two pieces through the use of sound, voice and movement amplify the aural porosities of the space and appropriate them to make a new and refreshed angle of perception. With that in mind, one could argue that the performed soundwalk was both a mental and a physical *dérive* through which the space of the gallery was creatively and playfully rediscovered and the whole sonic perceptual ecology created a shared and tense experience of a psychogeography of conversation between the audience and myself that felt like a 'suspenseful ping-ponging between a populated mystery box and another lost and musingly narrative pingpong ball' as an audience member wrote in the evaluation questionnaire (Audience member to Papadomanolaki, 2014).

### 5.3.3 Bethnal Green: a certain geography

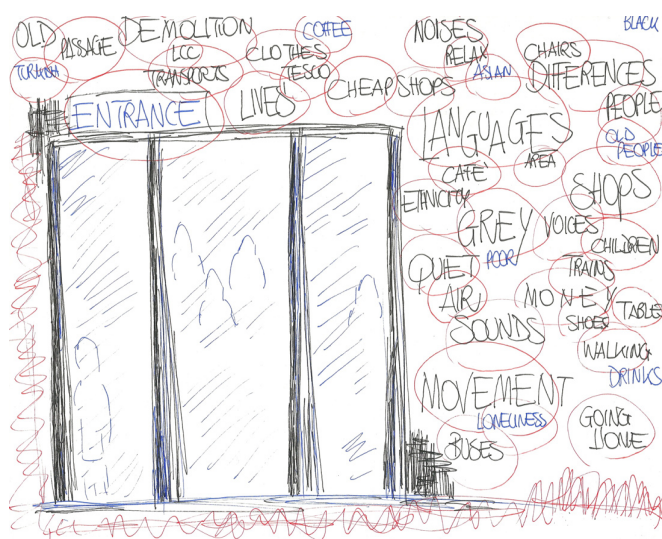
The second iteration of this project was presented in *Forms of Ventriloquism*, a one day event I curated at IMT Gallery in July 2014<sup>52</sup>. As already explained in Chapter Four, for the event I invited artists to work with a creative response from the ones generated during the workshops conducted in 2013. As part of this event I wanted to prepare a second iteration of *a certain geography* with the difference that my starting point would be a creative response. I also wanted to introduce a new element inspired by my collaboration with Bojana Šaljić Podešva by inviting another artist to pick up my signal and improvise with it. British sound artist Robin Rimbaud (aka Scanner) was an appropriate choice for this occasion. Rimbaud has extensively worked with live transmission sources such as police scanners as a means to channel disembodied voices and mobile conversations into his music releases, most notably

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<sup>52</sup> Event Page: <http://www.imagemusictext.com/events-archive/maria-papadomanolaki-forms-of-ventriloquism>

in *Scanner 1* (ASH, 1993) and *Scanner 2* (ASH, 1993), and performances that bring 'into focus issues of privacy and the dichotomy between the public and the private spectrum...capturing and highlighting the threads of desire and interior narratives woven into everyday life' (Joseph-Hunter, Duff & Papadomanolaki, 2011, p.41).

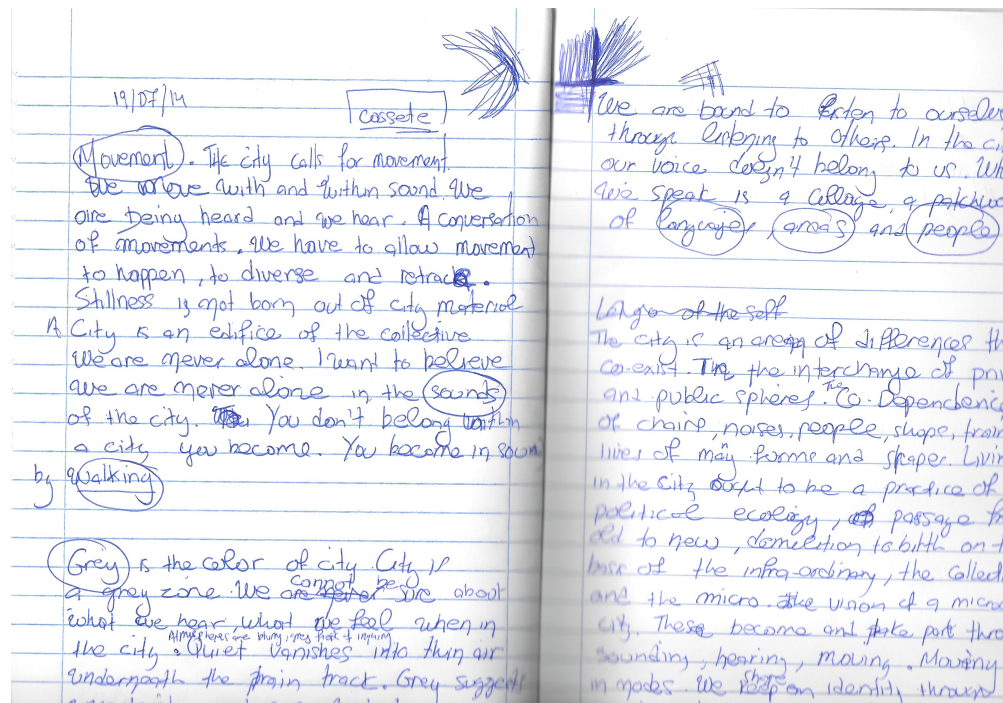
I met with Robin one month in advance to discuss the concept and set up of the project and select the creative response we would use as our score. We agreed that Robin's sounds would neither cover my voice whenever it was used nor the sounds of the immediate outside environment. It was important to me that the piece would create an inclusive sonic perceptual ecology rather than the illusion of a soundproof concert space where anything outside or everyday is usually considered obtrusive. We chose a creative response (Image 81) from the workshop in Elephant & Castle as it provided a lot of source material (words, visual) that we could work with.



[Image 81 The creative response by an unbiased co-walker used for *a certain geography*]

After this first meeting, I started the preparatory process by reading and reflecting on the creative response and focusing on the words and how I could poach it to explore the area. Using the methodology applied in my workshops, I internalised the response by picking resonant words that I then used to write a new text-score (Image 82, Appendix 4, p.13). This final text-score uses the original response's words as stepping-stones to unlock my internal 'seep through' for the creation of an intimate zone of thinking-voice where I weave in the words of the response, the sounds of thoughts, the sounds of the city and ultimately the city itself. In its fabric I 'sound out' many of the key observations in my research such as the importance of

movement (and drifting), my thoughts about atmospheres, the importance of using the voice in the city and of 'thinking as listening' as a means of becoming part of the polyphonic entity that is the city.



[Image 82 The text-score I wrote in response to the creative response]

During the next stage of the preparation, I conducted field visits in the area surrounding IMT gallery at different times for a period of a week and managed to shape a soundwalk with a variety of acoustic environments that would reflect the different climaxes in the text-score. The chosen path resonated with the notion of the pass-through as it is a path uniting Broadway Market to Bethnal Green. For the soundwalk, I chose to zoom in and out of aural and material nuances of the trajectory by hitting surfaces (05:29 in Audio Clip 26), improvising with railings, standing still, matching words like 'trains', 'grey', 'voices', 'Tesco', 'movement', 'walking', 'sounds' with a tactile embodied engagement with sites, activities encountered during the trajectory (Image 86). I talk about grey as a grey, blurry zone, not unlike my piece *a microcosm city: subtitled*. I write (also see Image 82):

Grey is the colour of the city. City is a grey zone. We cannot be sure about what we hear, what we feel when in the city. Atmospheres are blurry, grey fields of inquiry... Grey suggests uncertainty and unresolved trajectories. It links to walls, cement and the genealogy/ecology of buildings. (Papadomanolaki, unpaginated, 2014)

In an effort to further elaborate on the idea of ‘ventriloquism’ and use it as a mechanism to merge the text-score with these tactile mobile interactions, I recorded my voice on a portable cassette recorder reciting the text-score in the actual locations of the soundwalk. I chose the cassette recorder for two reasons: a) it was portable and fitting with my existing streaming toolkit (consisting of my mobile phone, a microphone adapter and my in-ear binaural microphones) and b) it added an uncanny texture to my voice, making it resemble the ghostly voices in Scanner’s previous work. The device itself becomes a mechanical puppet reproducing my voice - as I also say in the beginning of the performance (Audio Clip 26, 01:13). The pre-recorded text-score functioned as a narrative tool that was starting and stopping at different points of the soundwalk enriched by in-between interactions with the site.

For this iteration, the way of sharing the text-score with the audience was in print form (A3 poster) while the initial creative response (Image 81) was projected on a wall. The idea was that the audience could, if they wanted, shift between the two and decide how to use them in response to the incoming sound. By taking inspiration from the word-pieces I had previously created (Chapter Four), in the print iteration of the text-score, I simultaneously embedded parts of the narrative and a (hidden) map of my trajectory (Image 83, Appendix 4, p.14). The words in bold signified the resonant words of the creative response and the passage from one section of the text-score to the next. The text-score is edited down, parts of it cut-out, leaving only a sparse amount of its content visible on paper. That was a deliberate choice, as I wanted to create breaks between the spoken-word, the projected response and the printed text-score.

The sonic perceptual ecology consisted of the incoming streamed sound, the immediate sound in the gallery, Scanner’s improvisation and the audience’s internal ‘seep through’ surrounded by different textual sources (printed and projected) that they could use if they wished. I specifically did not want to force the audience to read and respond to the text-score because it could hinder other possible responses. The transmission loop was closed by inviting the audience to complete the text-score by writing resonant words on the entrance of the gallery (Audio Clip 26, 21:27). These words would be their response to the experience, their thoughts or feelings. Before the performance, I met with Robin for a second time to set up and do a quick test. I also briefly explained to him the concept behind the text-score, how the narrative

would move and how the performance would end, including the part with the audience. Robin was happy to fully improvise and respond intuitively both to the text-score and the incoming sound. Please listen to audio clip 26 which is a recording of the performance. Feel free to stop when desired.

The performance lasted for 28 minutes and it ran smoothly. Due to high attendance, not all members of the audience managed to get inside the gallery. From people's general comments afterwards, there was an 'electric' atmosphere in the room during the performance. People found that my voice worked exceptionally well with Scanner's imaginative and atmospheric soundscapes. After the completion of the performance, I circulated an assessment of experience questionnaire<sup>53</sup> among ten audience members with six questions about the role of the voice, the text-score, the effectiveness of the live streamed soundwalk and its relation to Scanner's contribution and the audience participation.

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<sup>53</sup> An example of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix No. 4, pp.18-20

**movement**  
the city calls for movement. we move with and within sound.  
we are being heard and we hear. a conversation of movements.  
we have to allow movement to happen, to diverse and retrace  
Stillness is not born out of city material. A city is an edifice  
of the collective. we are not alone.  
I want to believe that we are Never alone in the  
sounds of the city. You don't belong  
within a city, you become. You become  
in sound by walking.

**grey**  
is the colour of the city.  
the city is a gray zone. we can  
not be sure about what we hear, what  
we feel when in the city. Atmospheres  
are blurry grey fields  
of inquiry.  
the quiet vanishes  
into thin air  
underneath  
the train  
track  
grey suggests uncertainty and  
unresolved  
trajectories  
it links to  
walls, cement

and the genealogy / ecology of buildings  
we  
are bound to listen to ourselves through listening to others.  
In  
the  
city  
our  
voice doesn't belong to us. What we speak is a patchwork of  
**languages, areas and people.**

[Image 83 The print version of the final text-score]

From the audience's responses to the questionnaire, it can be understood that the performance succeeded in creating a sonic perceptual ecology where everyone was attentive and engaged. The overall balance between Scanner and myself was described as good with only a few moments of Scanner's soundscape taking over. The gallery director reported that many people were very thoughtful; some took notes while others seemed to be fully absorbed in the piece. The presence of the voice added an atmosphere of intimacy. As one member of the audience wrote in their assessment:

I experienced the nature of the spoken word very close to the way that I experience the city, due to the 3D element of being in a space and perceiving many different, simultaneous, layered narratives from other, external spaces, and always perceiving it in my own way in relation to my internal narratives and associations of sounds. (Audience Member, unpaginated, 2014)

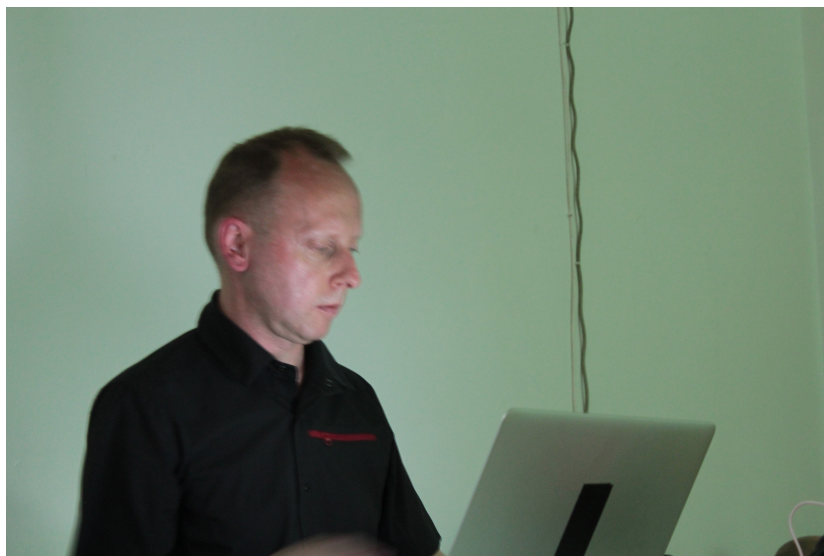
What is striking about the above is that it reaffirms her active engagement with the piece by triggering her internal 'seep through' and how her internal voice is embedded reciprocally within the polyphony of the city, an argument that this research is strongly supporting. Another audience member in his assessment and in relation to the question about the voice emphasised the nature of the spoken word by saying that:

[o]ne of the levels of the performance was of course the addition of the spoken words. For me it was significant that there was no theatricality and that they were spoken in a "natural" tone. That actually created a more surreal atmosphere. Their contribution was essential, otherwise the material provided by Scanner would have been weak. (Audience member, unpaginated, 2014)

The voice therefore seemed to provide a useful connecting thread that held all the different elements of the performance together, adding dynamics and depth both to the audiences' perception and to Scanner's part. In reply to the question about the effectiveness of the technology and Scanner's contribution, another audience member writes that it:

provided a strikingly direct superimposition of audio within the immediately observed performance. It did not add an additional reality, but an additional actor in the performance, someone who was registering a different sensibility than the one channelled by Scanner, and doing so in real time. I was not concerned by the

inside/outside dichotomy, but by the 'otherness' of the experience.  
(Audience member, unpaginated, 2014)



[Image 84 Robin Rimbaud aka Scanner performing inside the gallery, Photo by Peter Smith]

The fact that the listener was not 'concerned by the inside/outside dichotomy' confirms the successful creation of a sonic perceptual ecology operating on multiple layers of sounds, the inside sounds, the immediate outside sounds and the streamed sounds. In addition to this was also the layer created by the audience itself and their participation in completing the score (Image 85). In relation to audience participation, an audience member wrote in her questionnaire that:

[e]verybody was very concentrated to the soundscape and although that was a very individual experience at the same time the concentrated silence was very intense. When the audience interacted with the score, people paid more attention to each other and to the space. (Audience Member, unpaginated, 2014)

For another audience member, that direct connection to the listeners 'created a consciousness of the audience about its possibilities of doing something' (Audience Member, unpaginated, 2014). The text-score seemed to be bypassed by the majority of the audience probably because it was not placed in a prominent place inside the gallery for people to pick it up. In the few cases where people engaged with it, it did trigger a more active response. As one audience member wrote in her assessment, the text-score, 'instigated my participation, and from a receiver I became reflective audience, reflecting on my experience and responding to the work' (Audience member, unpaginated, 2014). Another audience member on his written evaluation

emphasised the themes that resonated the most in the text-score. He wrote: '[t]he text talks about irresolution of life in the city, and its uncertainties...However, the text also proposes a strong commitment to the possibilities of the city as a collective creative project involving, specifically, exchanges of voicing and listening' (audience member, 2014, unpaginated).



[Image 85 The audience completes the score]

Within this constellation of polyphonic possibilities, Scanner's live soundscape provided a necessary atmosphere for binding all these together in a meaningful meshwork of exchanges. It also assisted in amplifying the remoteness of my sound and my voice by creating a very fragile exchange evocative of ritualistic performances. As one member of the audience writes in his assessment:

I was struck by resonances with Steven Feld's description of performances he witnessed and recorded in Papua New Guinea.

These were based on the evocation through speaking and singing of specific places and journeys that were significant to the audience, usually associated with people who had died. Feld describes a process whereby the audience, or some members of it, gradually come to realize what is at stake: which places are being referred to, which people no longer alive are being evoked, and they are moved... As in the case of the Papuan performances, there seemed to be a carefully prepared effect by which hearing the absent voice among the sounds of traffic, trains and suggestions of urban indifference, gave rise to a sense of aloneness and fragility, arising somewhere at the interface of speaking and hearing the text, and clearly at least in part a projection on the part of the audience. The audience, accordingly, were moved, and correspondingly relieved, in a sense, by the artist's reappearance, as if something risky or even fatal had been evoked and for now averted. (Audience Member, unpaginated, 2014)

People have generally commented on Scanner being the best possible companion to this journey, reminding them of his early work. In the evaluation questionnaire, the overall performance was described as a 'memorable', 'unforgettable', 'dreamy', 'original and challenging', 'intense, very present, embodied, honest, experiential and clear' experience. The sonic perceptual ecology was not interrupted by Scanner's contribution but on the contrary it was enriched by Robin adding emphasis on the word-less sections and by creating climaxes, moments of tension and release. People's anticipations and their internal 'seep through' were significantly enriched by this interplay of live and manipulated sound because it created, as stated above, this space of ambiguity where the division between inside and outside did not matter. On the contrary, we were all participating in this on-going meshwork of exchanges activated by my spoken-word, through resonant words and how they co-existed, *in absentia*, with other sounds, materials or voices. As an audience member said to me 'You were a ghost', perhaps a ghost bringing to the attention, through sound, the porosities and spatialities of the city as 'an immense social experience that is, to be sure, broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric' (de Certeau, 1984, p.103).






[Image 86 During the performance, streaming from outside. Photo by Apostolos Voulgarakis]

#### 5.4 PoL #8 Sonic City

De Certeau's idea of the city as an 'immense social activity' of intertwined trajectories is strongly associated with his ideas about the legibility of the city as a space of pedestrian speech acts that exist contingently, in dialogue, resembling Bakhtin's chains of utterances. De Certeau's idea resides in the visual/spatial axis which, as it was argued in Chapters One and Two, is constantly negated by the cohabitation and juxtaposition of other materials and senses. The use of 'voice as instinct' and of the 'text as practice' can prove to play an important role in the unravelling of our internal 'seep through' as a means of re-appropriating the city, especially in nodes of high mobility.

The above served as a meaningful and important conceptual framework for testing out my workshop methodology in a public workshop in Canary Wharf, London's financial district. The district as a whole epitomises perhaps pass-through projects tied to organisations associated with the Business Improvement Districts agenda (Minton, 2012, p.40-50). On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2014, I was invited by Salomé Voegelin and Mark Peter Wright to contribute towards a second *Points of*

Listening event that they had organised as part of the Museum of London Docklands Late called *Sonic City*<sup>54</sup>. For the event, I agreed to lead three consecutive soundwalks (Image 87) around the quayside surrounding the Museum.

	<p><b>Points of Listening</b> <b>Listening on the quayside</b></p> <p>This voucher entitles <b>1 person</b> to attend the tour. This voucher is <b>only</b> valid for the time stated. The Museum reserves the right to refuse admission. The Museum reserves the right to make alterations to the program in the event of circumstances beyond its control.</p> <p><b>Meeting Point: Entrance Level</b></p>	<p><b>7.25 pm</b></p>
	<p><b>Points of Listening</b> <b>Listening on the quayside</b></p> <p>This voucher entitles <b>1 person</b> to attend the tour. This voucher is <b>only</b> valid for the time stated. The Museum reserves the right to refuse admission. The Museum reserves the right to make alterations to the program in the event of circumstances beyond its control.</p> <p><b>Meeting Point: Entrance Level</b></p>	<p><b>8.15 pm</b></p>
	<p><b>Points of Listening</b> <b>Listening on the quayside</b></p> <p>This voucher entitles <b>1 person</b> to attend the tour. This voucher is <b>only</b> valid for the time stated. The Museum reserves the right to refuse admission. The Museum reserves the right to make alterations to the program in the event of circumstances beyond its control.</p> <p><b>Meeting Point: Entrance Level</b></p>	<p><b>9 pm</b></p>

[Image 87 The vouchers handed to the three different groups]

In preparation for the event, and similarly to *a certain geography*, I worked intensively with the area by conducting solitary drifts at different times of the day for a week, listening, walking, taking photographs and keeping notes, merging fragments of experience with underlining patterns and narratives. The process resulted in the shaping of a trajectory consisting of eight points of listening. For each point I produced a creative response in the form of a card where I inscribed different thoughts and open-ended reflections and questions all drawn from the pool of materials gathered through the visits. Each card was numbered from one to eight according to the point it was referring to. I printed three different packs of cards, one for each group. These cards functioned as text-scores for the soundwalks in order to create a counter-atmosphere against the overwhelming environment and open up a

<sup>54</sup> Websites: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/london-wall/whats-on/events-calendar/event-details/?eventID=6879> and <https://pointsoflistening.wordpress.com/2014/08/28/pol-8-sonic-city/>

space for conversations and interactions, prompting the emergence of the internal 'seep through' of my co-walkers.

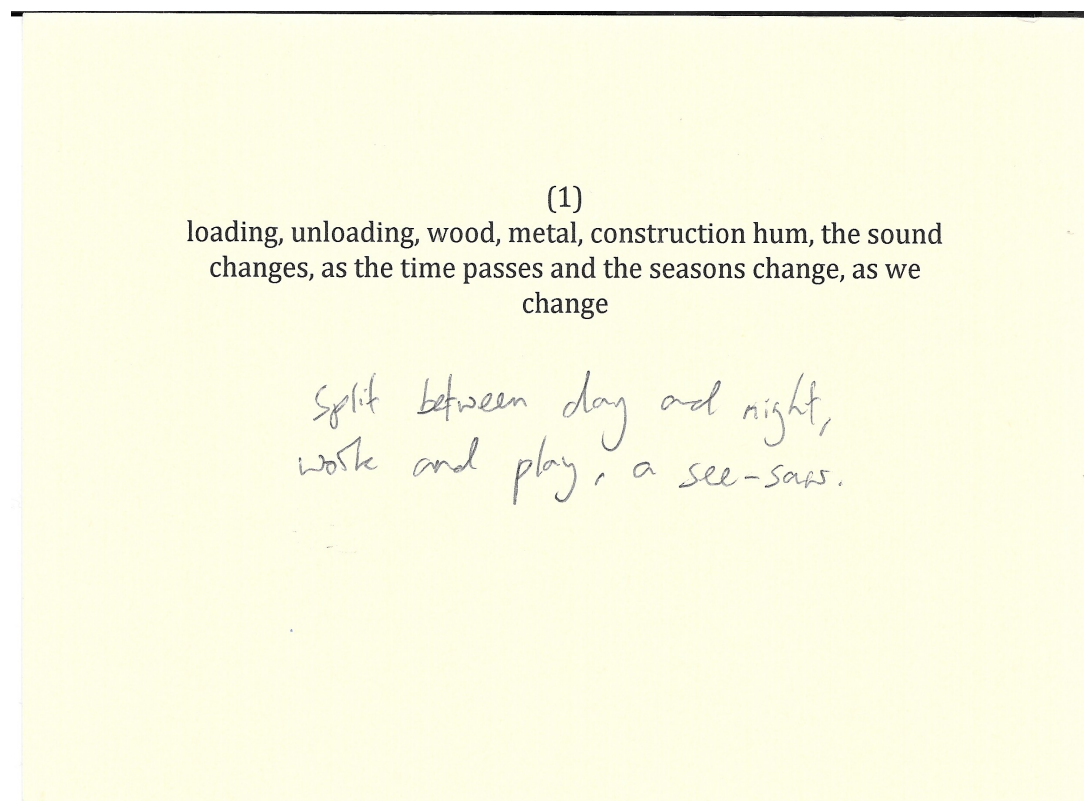
I discussed in Chapter Three Kristeva's notion of text as practice that '[t]he text thereby attains its essential dimension: it is a practice calling into question (symbolic and social) finitudes by proposing new signifying devices' (Kristeva, 1984, p.210). These text-score cards functioned as means of questioning existing social, political, geographical or other narratives. The co-walkers had the chance to inscribe on them their own thoughts and turn them into a composite of reflection and new meanings. Within these, the listening experience, enriched by the internal 'seep through' of my co-walkers, expanded in polyphonic meshworks of sound perception that pertain not only in the sonic but also the visual, the material of buildings, personal references and memories as well as provocations against the nature of the location its past and its current links to capitalism, industry and commerce.

On the night of the event, we had many more in attendance than had been initially anticipated, resulting in the formation of groups of 14-20 persons each. These groups consisted of people from a wide variety of social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds and age-groups, including bankers and employees in Canary Wharf. That facilitated the richness of responses, as described above, which were not criticised or hindered by any rule of 'proper listening'. As already argued in Chapters One, Two and Four, within this research, I am questioning the notion of the 'specialist' or the 'trained and skillful' listening guide by replacing it with the idea that we all have existing building materials and aptitudes for listening which can 'seep through' without prescribing a listening strategy or mode. In fact, this approach significantly assisted me, in that particular case, in responding with success (and ease) to the challenge of a larger group of co-walkers who I have not previously met and who, due to the pressing timeline between the three soundwalks, I did not have the time to know better.

Therefore, both the setting (the highly pass-through and scripted quayside) and the transient nature of the encounter with my co-walkers formed an ideal testing ground for this research. I asked each group to divide into 4 or 5 sub-groups and each sub-group picked one card. After having explained what role the numbers and text on the card play in the process, I invited all the sub-groups to move collectively, not unlike my workshop at Elephant and Castle, and each sub-group to listen and

respond openly to the card by talking about the sounds, their thoughts, ask questions and always be in conversation with members of the other sub-groups. After the end of our conversational soundwalk, I asked them to summarise their response by writing it on the card and then move on to the next point. The soundwalk was completed when all points were covered and we returned to the museum. Please take your time to look through the various samples of cards in the following pages.

The text-score cards, as I already said, contain small phrases, fragments thoughts, listenings, suggestions that are tied to the specific points they are created for. They propose different perspectives on what I hear, see, feel or think. They extend my listening position to that of a polyphonic encounter where the 'I' is replaced by words as events in resonance with the environment. In a similar way my co-walkers' responses are not attempting to offer any big statement but to reveal how the people who wrote them poached the text in relation to the conversations that were taking place. Of course, the polyphony is still embedded in these responses that vary in character and carry signs of movement across materials, senses and utterances similar to a meshwork, 'a crust, the more or less ephemeral congregate of a generative movement' (Ingold, 2011, p.24).



(3)  
architecture as the masking of perception, history, sound,  
sound as by-product

Transition from the gravelled space through the first  
enclosed, muted area. A muted resonance.

Aircon outlets make a 'wall of sound' — pitched, well defined  
— and on the other hand, distant voices across the water  
and the background city drone.

(2)  
the (main) Hibbert Gate, the hum of History

the water is silent  
quiet

lack of movement,  
death of past industry

the new silent  
industry

summed sound  
gravel space

(4)  
smoking zones, private zones, silent zones?

A smoking zone where  
nobody smokes,  
sound dead spot,  
noise cancelling

(5)  
overlook overnear

- 360° view
- overlooks bridge
- Bubbling conversation
- look to hear.
- ambiguity in sounds.
- Can't hear everything
- interesting things all around, but none making sounds.

"Are they Jesus?"

how should one behave?

~~Absence~~ Absence  
of historic  
sound, marked  
by a void.  
Graveyard  
- memorial

Drones...

plains  
so  
maybe  
every mins.

I'm  
in a  
surprisingly  
relaxed  
and  
reluctant  
state.

Wrens  
Landing -  
no wrens here

lips  
move  
- can't hear  
a word.  
Ouplanned  
acoustic  
environment.

(6)  
concealing filtering  
relaxing distressing

moving bodies  
conversation at  
uncertain volume.  
~~hes~~  
hesitancy.

- black silent water.

people's  
social  
(meanings of  
interactions,  
facilitator,  
my pen is clicking  
very loudly.

- nothing  
is just about  
sound.

more motives  
something  
sounds like it's  
been  
"insufficiently  
dubbed"

(7)  
codependency, materials as conductors of sound  
sound travels

Noisy || silence

tap dancing-like surface amplifies <sup>the</sup> energy  
of ~~passerby~~ pedestrians

(8)  
the sound of materials  
proximity of

sound or travel

imbalance

uncomfortable

industrial

less threatening

The soundwalks were one of the most popular activities in the event, with all three groups fully booked within the first 40 minutes of the event. Each walk ended up lasting a bit longer than expected but people did seem to enjoy the conversations, the mutual explorations and exchanges of perspectives. In one group, we needed to adjust our itinerary to accommodate a woman in a wheelchair but that did not disrupt the flow of the walk. Interestingly enough, the most unusual and sharp responses came from people who were not familiar with the field of sound studies or music but who nevertheless contributed thoughtful ideas.

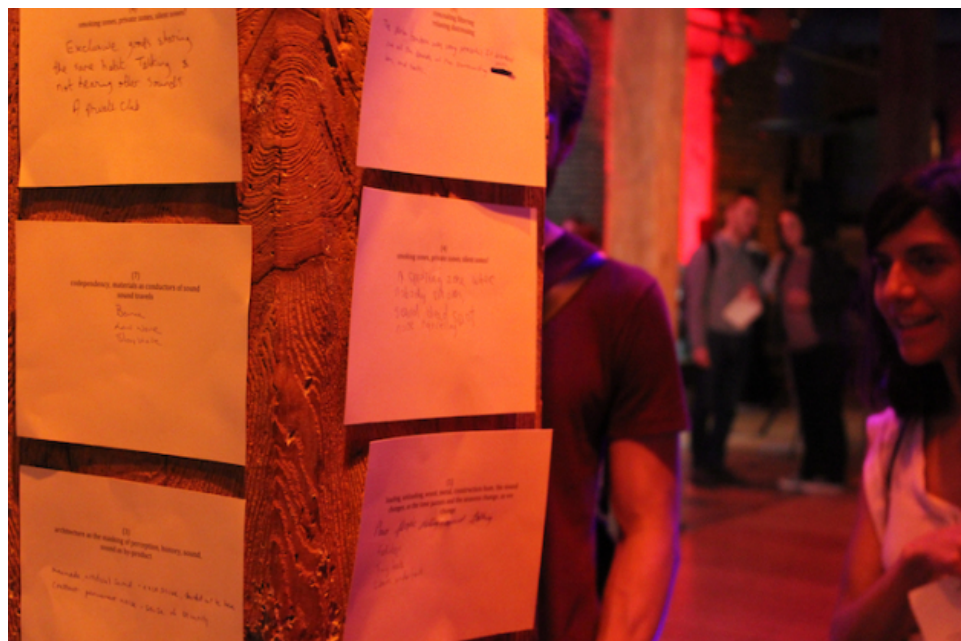
One must consider seriously the suggestion that our voice is our innermost channel to connect to our environments. And within that context the use of language becomes an embodied activity or an event, to revisit Connor. Within this event we stir existing particles and utterances to form and transmit our internal 'seep through'. These utterances are, in most cases, not entities purely born from within us but gathered from the environment, through others and essentially through listening. Therefore, during conversational soundwalks, everyone was already in the position to contribute. Everyone felt compelled to participate in this shared ephemeral encounter and we all felt more 'rich' after its completion. That is also echoed in the text-score cards. People seemed to respond well to writing on them spontaneously. The text-score cards on display above, similarly to the creative responses in Chapter Four, offer a nice overview of the listening perspectives and the meshworks created, not claiming to reveal any big truth about the soundscape of the site but opening it up and introducing subtle and intuitive marks on its fabric.

I would like to point out that in that particular trajectory, consisting of acoustic environments of mixed nature, speaking proved to be a good way of experiencing the spaces through sound. Projecting our voices against ventilation hum, using our bodies to move around and being in conversation facilitated this process of listening together through learning from each other. Even though that brief encounter did not have any characteristics of 'enduring record' to rephrase Ingold's taskscape notion presented in Chapter One or the silent, 'refrain from speech' convention applied in soundwalks and field recording practices, it offered a very engaged meshwork of perception. People progressively unlocked each other's voices, despite initial hesitance, and each one followed on from each other, using at times the same words, expanding on thoughts openly, in simultaneity with the

sounds, in dialogue with the spaces and with each other. The text-score cards certainly assisted not only in initiating a counter-atmosphere that facilitated our attunement to the environment but it also played an important role in further expanding the node of interactions as they were later displayed inside the museum allowing people to read them, discuss and reflect on them<sup>55</sup> (Image 88).

As a blogger and co-walker later wrote:

[t]he final event I took part in was a sound walk led by sound artist *Maria Papadomanolaki* from ***Points of Listening*** based at the University of Arts London. The walk took place on the quayside outside of the museum, we were divided into groups and each group was given a designated point and a card to write down our thoughts, feelings and ideas at each point. I have never been on a sound walk in the city before, and so the experience was quite an 'ear-opener' for me. It is quite astonishing how much extraneous noise our human auditory system can filter out without us even realising it!<sup>56</sup> (unpaginated, 2014)



[Image 88 The cards on display in the museum. Photograph by Mark Peter Wright]

The experience, despite the use of voice was an 'ear opener' to the blogger who has never attended a soundwalk in a city before and who has witnessed in collaboration with other co-walkers the importance of listening polyphonically, within the meshwork of voices that are 'listening as a collective rather than as an individual

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<sup>55</sup> More documentation of the event can be found on:

<https://pointsoflistening.wordpress.com/2014/09/06/pol-8-documentation/>

<sup>56</sup> Original entry: <http://www.toothpicnations.co.uk/my-blog/?p=20689>

[Accessed: 24 October 2014]

procedure - listening as a relation to an other' (Ultra-red, 2012, p.7). In fact, within the sonic perceptual ecology of the soundwalks, it could be argued that the sounds of the quayside were reiterated, amplified and ultimately questioned through collective voicing and conversation. Most importantly, through this collective voicing, each person's internal 'seep through', was enriched by these exchanges as it reached to meaningful realisations, not only about the material aspects of the soundscape but how we are, as urban dwellers, entangled within it.

## 5.5 soundCamp/Reveil<sup>57</sup>

The locations presented in the previous sections offer examples where the activity of passing through is associated with travel, work, industry and a more dense and aestheticised urban fabric. In such contexts, I have argued for the importance of voice, speech and text-score as catalysts in the creation of an ecology of perception. I wish to conclude this chapter with a different type of node, The Stave Hill Ecological Park and where the central role of the text-score, applied in intimate performances and workshops, was superseded by that of listening practices that were organised as part of a large scale event. The urban nature reserve is located near Rotherhithe and it is a site associated by the locals with leisure, recreation, including occasional sports and dog-walking. Most importantly, the surrounding area during the recent years has been - and still is - undergoing intensive regeneration works (Spittles, 2013, Byrnes, 2015). But it is also a site that presents the flip-side of the story by providing a great example of what can be done by reclaiming land, resources and with strong commitment to the community. More specifically, the park was:

[m]ade from scratch over 25 years by sowing and planting in the poor soil, in some places it has been improved or altered by the addition of sand, spent mushroom compost and a variety of mulches. The Park is intensively managed as a mosaic of micro habitats to conserve the wide variety of wildlife that colonised the area during the years the docks lay derelict, and before.  
(soundCamp, 2013, unpaginated)

Bordering with Bacon's College, the park during weekdays is filled with the sounds of the College's yard. During the weekend, it calms down giving way to more subtle activities usually involving volunteer training courses and events. Due to its densely inhabited environment by a variety of fauna and flora, the site during spring time becomes a vividly interesting site both visually and aurally. Since 2014, in this park I have been involved in the organisation of an annual outdoor listening event *soundCamp/Reveil* as one of the members of soundCamp, a London-based collective. Members include Dawn Scarfe, Kirsty Collander Brown and Grant Smith. I assisted in

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<sup>57</sup> In this section, I will be referencing parts of the paper *REVEIL: NEW EXPERIMENTS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL RADIO* co-authored by soundCamp and presented at Balance/UnBalance 2015 Conference in Phoenix, Arizona: <http://www.balance-unbalance2015.org/> and of the paper *Networking the Live Archive* co-authored by soundCamp and presented at Networked Ecologies Conferences in Hull, UK.

the initiation of this ongoing project in 2013 as part of my research interest in reclaiming and exploring urban pass-through spaces but the project has now expanded beyond the framework of this PhD.



[Image 89 The Stave Hill Ecological Park at the Rotherhithe Peninsula]

As we write in our announcement:

SoundCamp is a series of outdoor listening events on International Dawn Chorus Day, linked by Reveil: a 24 hour broadcast of the sounds of daybreak, relayed live by audio streamers around the globe.

Reveil begins at 5AM in the Stave Hill urban reserve near the Greenwich Meridian and travels West from one open microphone to the next, following the wave of sound that loops the earth with the rising sun, picking up live audio feeds from forest cams, very low frequency receivers, urban centres, deep ocean hydrophones, independent streamers or members of the Locus Sonus soundmap<sup>58</sup>.

Visitors to each Soundcamp can take part in artist-led activities that turn the site into a broadcasting and listening point, and explore the local sound ecology through workshops and dawn walks and by camping out overnight.

Reveil is a both a soundwork and a catalyst for the development of a wider and more diverse live audio network.' (Soundcamp, 2014, unpaginated)

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<sup>58</sup> Locus Sonus soundmap is a global network of open microphones:  
<http://locusonus.org/soundmap/040/>

The project that takes place on the first weekend of May (IDCD) each year offers a different approach to the concept of sonic perceptual ecology that allows for the environment of the park itself to be amplified through a counter-atmosphere of listening activities catalysing the unlocking of our internal 'seep through'. Without text-scores or words as events, the park raises its voice against the burgeoning cleansing of the area and its metamorphosis to a luxury-flat land. With *soundCamp/Reveil*, we work collaboratively to enhance the park's voice, the voices of its fauna by placing it in a meshwork of listening activities. The theme of the daybreak provides a synchronisation point around which we organise workshops (Image 90), dawn chorus walks and most importantly engage a wide variety of people, including members of the local communities, who come to our event and camp overnight (Image 91), participate in the activities and contribute to the transient ecology of the park.

Here we can perhaps revisit Tim Ingold's multi-sensorial approach towards a participatory perception within the environment and emphasise the fact that *soundCamp/Reveil* – in parallel to the soundwalk at Canary Wharf or the workshops in London (Homerton, Liverpool Street Station, Carpenters Road, Elephant and Castle) - is very much interested in establishing a similar connection to the locality of the park. Within the framework of the event, people are given the exceptional opportunity to camp in a park in the city and open up their antennas to sounds, sights and other subtleties that they were not exposed to before. They connect to the environment by leaving behind preconceptions and comfort zones while becoming part of a transient community of human and non-human lines of perception.



[Image 90 Field recording workshop participants. Image by the researcher.]

The community is further expanded with the addition of *Reveil*, a 24hr broadcast of live daybreak sounds provided by individual streamers and partner soundcamps in other locations<sup>59</sup> in the UK, Europe, the US and Asia. The displaced soundstreams enrich the perceptual polyphonic exchanges in the node by bringing the daybreak sounds of other remote locations in the locality of the park, that our visitors can experience in one of the two sound tents set up in the park (Image 92) or in our temporary radio station installed in the park's SHED (Image 93) where we mix the broadcast in real-time. This a gesture of expansion that brings to the attention of the listeners the interesting synapses that can occur between the 'here and then' sounds and the relayed sounds from afar by opening up more critical listening perspectives within the locality of the node.



[Image 91 The camping field at The Stave Hill Ecological park. Image by the researcher.]

Since 2014, the project has had two iterations and in each one the type, origin and nature of the streams has been evolving and varying; something that is always anticipated within a sonic perceptual ecology, not unlike the open and inclusive character of the workshops and projects presented earlier. A similar approach is applied to the technology used to assemble this network. Mainly consisting of low-cost streaming toolkits, handheld mobile devices, open source software and freeware, as well as re-appropriation of existing resources (such as for example webcams, VLF transmissions, marine observatory hydrophones), the network of

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<sup>59</sup> You can see the list of streams and soundcamps featured in our 2015 event here: <http://soundtent.org/2015/schedule.html>

*Reveil*, offers an alternative to commercial broadcasting by focusing on the micro-level transmission and the community-based scale. Japanese artist Tetsuo Kogawa discussed in his micro-radio manifesto (Kogawa, 2002, unpaginated) the liberation of transmission technologies from corporate control by making them accessible to people to use and to transmit live from their environments, varying in scale and character. It is within that framework that *Reveil* creates a sonic perceptual ecology of interactions between human and non-human communities, and the cross-pollination of local and global soundscapes that become part of a live, transient and fragile audio archive.



[Image 92 The two sound tents where visitors can listen to *Reveil*]



[Image 93 The SHED where we set up our temporary broadcasting hub]

Similar to Kogawa's idea of translocality and the creation of a polymorphous and non-commercial listening space, *soundCamp/Reveil* expands and enriches the locality of the broadcast whilst at the same time belonging to a bigger network of small-scale localities, bridging the microscopic and the macroscopic and allowing to the participants to take control over transmission technologies. I have been discussing throughout this thesis the importance of experiencing and embracing polyphony and I have demonstrated different examples of how people are always aware of an environment in the way they connect through their thoughts and memories. How, from one perspective, the way we talk about sound can be found in materials, textures, visual stimuli, the weather, the time of the day and how all these different registers cohabit within us instinctively, simultaneously. The issue here is nonetheless, most of the time, our attitude toward blocking things out or thinking in isolation, or nurturing the illusion of pure isolation. Within the meshwork of *soundCamp/Reveil*, we attempt to bring fluidity between networks and the emergence of a more spontaneous language that floats across media and localities.

People, for instance, are attending to each other through physical interactions onsite but also through social media like Twitter (Image 94), through listening and

writing remotely, sharing recordings, blogging or writing poetry<sup>60</sup>, altogether contributing their partialities, to quote McCartney, toward the sonic perceptual ecology of *soundCamp/Reveil*. Their internal 'seep through' as in all the other cases presented in this thesis, becomes part of a collective, collaborative experience that opens up and re-invents the node by establishing a kind of hybrid wilderness that exists between these emplaced and displaced practices and communities.

Murray Schafer and Bruce Davis's 'wilderness radio' (Schafer, 1987) would relay rural sounds to urban places to introduce HiFi soundscapes in order to cleanse and heal the saturated and boisterous urban environments. With *soundCamp/Reveil* we expand this idea by opening up the transmission chain to less 'wild' and perhaps more marginal voices as well as sounds from grassroots communities and individual resources located not only in rural and remote sites but also in urban centres<sup>61</sup>. The radio broadcast becomes the syncing point for a sonic perceptual ecology made of fragile, non-human and human voices coming from diverse locations and contexts. Therefore, in *soundCamp/Reveil*, the term ecology assumes more than one meaning and attempts to bring to our attention the importance of listening in to other voices and ways of speaking whether these are within our locality or from a remote location. We let these voices speak for themselves and through this instinctive channel of communication hopefully spark interest, thoughtfulness and empathy.

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<sup>60</sup> You can read and listen to a visitor's response to soundCamp 2014 here: <https://graftage.wordpress.com/2014/05/04/stave-hill/>. Some recordings from participants in 2015's workshops can be found here: <http://favouritesounds.org/map.php?projectid=46>

<sup>61</sup> A list of all the streams featured in *Reveil 2015* can be found here: <http://www.soundtent.org/2015/schedule.html> and a list of all the newly commissioned partner soundCamps can be found here: [http://www.soundtent.org/2015/soundcamps\\_list.html](http://www.soundtent.org/2015/soundcamps_list.html)



[Image 94 A selection of tweets about soundCamp/REVEIL coming from visitors and workshop participants at Stave Hill, remote listeners, participants in our partnering soundcamps in other sites as well partnering broadcasters.]

Please listen to Audio Clip 27 which is the introduction for *Reveil* 2015. Feel free to stop when desired. In *soundCamp/Reveil*, unlike Panetta's locative audio feature, we use radio voice-over in subtle and non-obtrusive ways<sup>62</sup>, and we let the voices of the park, like in the excerpt you just head, to breath in the radio broadcast the atmosphere of the location. The global scale of the broadcast becomes embedded in the local scale of the soundcamp where people can come and

<sup>62</sup> Although initially we wanted to feature as less voice-over as possible, from the general comments on Reveil 2014 from listeners and visitors (who are not coming from a purist field recording or acoustic ecology background), we decided to provide information consistently about what is broadcast as it is very important for keeping them engaged with the breadth and variety of the streams which they can further research in their own time

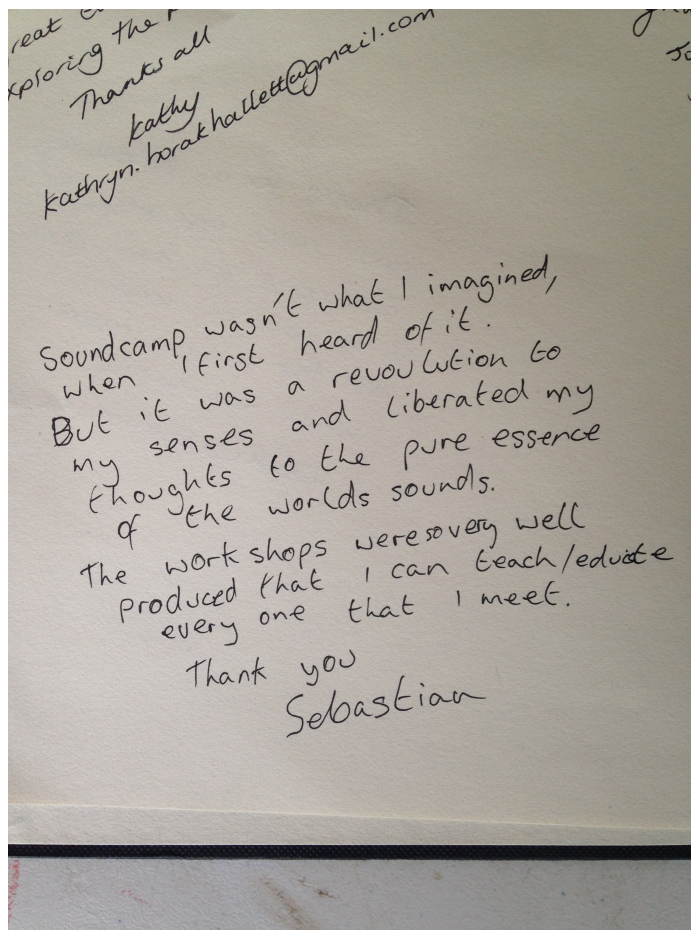
experience the sounds and the live mixing, ask us questions and discuss what they hear, how they feel and what they like. (Image 95) Our way of 'aestheticising reality' (Boehme, 1993, p.123), and of conditioning space, unlike other locative projects, comes from our becoming embedded in the environment and by framing our activities in response to the actual soundscape. Brand LaBelle argues that the *dérive* was a means of transgressing urban boundaries and ideas of alienation by 'allowing the appropriation of existing systems and official structures for the pleasures of the experiential' (Labelle, 2010, p.215). In that sense, one could argue that perhaps in *soundcamp/Reveil* we create a different kind of psychogeographic investigation that posits itself in the role of a facilitator of a conversation between human and non-human communities. It also assists in subverting official structures associated with leisure in the park by introducing a more reciprocal and sensorial experience that challenges, informs, surprises and engages (Image 96).

With reference to Timothy Morton's notion of 'ecomimesis,' *soundcamp/Reveil*, is also interested in contesting the aesthetic divides often associated with telematic and acoustic ecology practices (displacement / emplacement; embodied / disembodied; rural / urban; hi-fi / low-fi; human / natural; wild / constructed; local / remote; artist / audience). It attempts to use these differences as a way to explore new possibilities of perceiving our environment. *SoundCamp/Reveil* is not emphasising the obscurities behind the unseen or unheard sources but rather the creation of a sonic perceptual ecology where our visitors and listeners, as Morton suggests, 'open [their] ears and eyes more' (Morton, 2007, p.43).



[Image 95 Visitors conversing with us at our temporary radio station in the SHED]

The dichotomies, often associated with the nature of the technology used, within the context of *Reveil*, seen as a form of gathering of human and non-human communities, are further negated through the mechanism of the 24 hour earth loop and sound itself becomes, to borrow Dyson's reading of Michel Chion's 'reduced listening' 'an event rather than an object and in doing so to incorporate a sense of organic process, of movement, change and complexity, while maintaining a sense of identity and individuality' (Dyson, 2009, p.10). The transmitted sound, not unlike my soundwalks in *a certain geography*, is not devoid of its context -it is not just a stream coming from a microphone placed in a High Fidelity remote soundscape - but it encapsulates within it a nuanced and polyphonic set of events. Rather than just us listening to 'Wild Nature', we are aware of listening to what is going on within the sound field. We are overhearing a dialogue which we can imagine going on independently of our own presence (Connor, 2013, unpaginated) and we can incorporate and reflect on within our own locality and internal 'seep through'.



[Image 96 A visitor's comment ]

But again, as already stated earlier in this text, the term nature and the notion of the wild are in fact ambiguous and slippery not only from Morton's ecomimetic perspective but also from the simple understanding that these places are inhabited by both human and non-human beings. *Reveil*, through transmission, expands these exchanges into incorporating listening practices that 'leave the situatedness of experience intact, or rather, are translated into knowledge with a residue of their embodied origin' (Dyson on Hayles, 2009, p.115). Within the scope of soundCamp, these practices, assuming the role of a text-score as triggers, offer a counter-atmosphere that is amalgamated and embodied within the meshworks of the event, deepening our 'seep through' both to the environment and the transient communities we are part of. Embodiment according to Katherine Hayles is 'tied to the circumstances of the occasion and the person' (Hayles, 1999, p.197). Many of our campers have commented on that aspect of the project and how it aided them to further engage and enjoy the event.

Not unlike the ghostly passages of *a certain geography*, in *Reveil* the same ideas are manifested differently. Instead of counter-aestheticising the atmosphere of the park with the use of text-score, the sonic perceptual ecology is achieved with a node of emplaced, embodied meshworks of human and non-human interactions that do not overshadow the sounds of the park but exist in simultaneity, creating transient, polymorphous and polyphonic chains of utterances, seemingly disparate. However, these are in essence tightly connected and wherein the listeners actively participate and contribute towards its emanation. We imagine *soundCamp/Reveil* as a resource for the extension of these kinds of activities through wider and more diverse and diversified networks that will be explored in future research and practice.

## 5.6 Some Considerations

Within Chapter Four, I have attempted to demonstrate how important the role of practice was in the forging of all the theoretical concepts discussed in the three first chapters of this thesis. In Chapter Five, the focus falls into further shaping, testing and confirming the validity of the methodology developed and the ideas explored as well as fine-tuning them within the context of publicly accessible art practices. A sonic perceptual ecology (and its node, atmosphere and meshwork) therefore becomes a useful framework for designing creative strategies that trigger meshworks of interactions through sound, listening and voicing while engaging and enriching our internal 'seep through'.

In the example of *conductcontacttransmit*, I have explored the different perspectives that the internal 'seep through' might take and I emphasised the role of the counter-atmosphere in contexts where the co-walkers or audience did not have a previously internalised text-score and where the exchange is based in a more intuitive meshwork of interactions. The production of original text-scores and the methodology behind the site-specific projects such as *a certain geography*, *PoL #8 Sonic City* and *To begin is to follow on from* are the immediate result from the iterative workshops presented in Chapter Four. They are also an expanded perspective on how the knowledge produced from an experimental methodology developed in a specific social, cultural context can be repurposed and adjusted to different types of spaces or cultural contexts such as for galleries like IMT, Parasol

Unit, Apiary Studios, or the old tobacco factory in Slovenia, Canary Wharf and The Stave Hill Ecological Park.

I wish to close the chapter by further extending the theoretical concerns presented in the first three chapters into a different direction while making connections and finding common points of reference with all the other examples of practices presented in Chapter Four and in this Chapter. With *soundCamp/Reveil*, I point out how a sonic perceptual ecology can be applied in the context of organising a large-scale event where many of the initial concepts comprising it (such as for example the text-score) are replaced by new hybrid listening practices. And this is only a way to suggest that whatever is presented in this thesis is in an ongoing and continuous change but it is also, as I will be discussing in my conclusion, available to be reappropriated and applied in different disciplines, practices and research trajectories

## Conclusions and Future Work

### 1. Some general conclusions

In Chapter One I wrote that Henri Lefebvre talks about the natural as spontaneous (Lefebvre, 1991, p.70) and that in my research I am interested in the idea of spontaneity and how it can be re-inserted in the ways we temporary inhabit the node. By spontaneity I mainly refer to our responses to our environments. In the previous Chapter, I alluded to the idea of a hybrid wilderness that exists between emplaced and displaced practices or listening perspectives as a means of prompting this same idea of spontaneity (and intuitive responses). It can be argued that within a sonic perceptual ecology, a hybrid polyphonic wilderness is created where the human and non-human voices are brought to the foreground, contesting in this way the programmed neutrality of the pass-through site.

The importance in the above suggestion lies in acknowledging the active presence (and role) of our voice (thinking-voice, speaking-voice) as our instinctive and innermost way of experiencing and conversely connecting within our environments (Tuan, 1994, p.4; Ihde, 2007, p.247). It is also asking us to consider the suggestion that our voice is inhabited by other voices and that it is, to rephrase Mikhail Bakhtin, a polyphonic entity that is becoming through sound. In all the different sites explored within this project, spontaneity was achieved through nurturing this inherent drive and letting it seep through and lead to surprising exchanges.

This voice is therefore tightly associated with my reappropriation of Gaston Bachelard's concept of the internal 'seep through', discussed in this Thesis and forming the core of the meshworks developed in a node. Movement, through drifting, conversational soundwalks and other listening practices, is a necessary activity for setting this voice in motion and for prompting interactions. In pass-through spaces where movement is often calculated or prescribed such a gesture can facilitate 'the important dialectical rapport between open attentiveness and intentional commitment' (Ultra-red, 2012, p.4) necessary for opening up a site. The use or writing of a text-score as a composite of experiential fragments can assist in this process through the transmission of a counter-atmosphere that attunes us to our surroundings and immediately blurs any barriers across the different registers of

perception. It becomes a tool for facilitating the spontaneity and not a catalyst against it because it is used as a shifter that can take on different meanings depending on the person poaching it. The text-score becomes a stepping-stone in the process and not the process itself by unlocking our own possibilities through sound and our voice.

Sound exists on the textures of walls, the remains of broken glass, in the drawing of lines on a window. It is not a pure, material form but a carrier of polyvalent and polyphonic exchanges. Similarly, our listening (internal or external) experiences are always bound to be polyvalent as well as our voice. At least this is one of the main questions that I explored through a sonic perceptual ecology by forging links and exchanges, stories of small, temporary encounters in a node. A sonic perceptual ecology should engage with this sense of temporary place-making by leaving a mark of new perspectives on the memory of those involved.

## **2. Some conclusions on site-specificity**

Working with different types of pass-through sites offered me the chance to explore the possibilities of applying often durational, site-specific practices such as drifting or soundwalking within a constrained site and time. Most of the case studies presented in Chapter Five involved revisiting a site within a period of a week or ten days. This is by no means an ‘enduring record’ in the terms that Tim Ingold would have imagined but it is necessary for achieving the aforementioned spontaneity that is much needed against a prescribed and programmed environment. Within the site-specificity of the sonic perceptual ecology, I also suggest that we move away from the idea of the charismatic solitary drifter. I, instead, propose to constantly prompt the destabilisation of any certainties of the self by inviting co-walkers and to facilitate this ongoing exchange between solitary and collective.

The resulting activity does not offer any claims of big truth or History about the site but glimpses into transient encounters in space. In the workshops presented in Chapter 4, I demonstrated the importance of my co-walkers’ contributions to my own understanding and experience of the site and to further clarifying the overarching aims of this research. By opening up the ways the sites can be explored, these collaborations also expanded my own thinking processes and were embedded within the fabric of what I did afterward.

Ultimately, within a sonic perceptual ecology, the specificity of the site is enhanced by creating a hybrid space, consisting of interrelated actual, imagined, local, remote, present, past and future sites. Let us revisit projects like *a certain geography* or *soundCamp/Reveil*. The site-specificity of these activities is constantly opened up and enriched by the remoteness and porosity of streamed sounds. But also, let us consider the notion of site-specificity in *conductcontacttransmit* where the aim is to create a counter-atmosphere that can be transposed into an audience member's personal internal site-specificity or a memory of a site or a city (their internal 'seep through'). This is attained even more so in projects like *a microcosm city: subtitled* where the site specificity is erased to give way into a more open ended and universal "void" for reflection. Site-specificity finally pertains to the node – as inspired by Kevin Lynch's work - that is created. This node can be a perfectly enclosed space like a train station but it can also become the sum of micro-territories explored during a solitary field visit or workshop. Most importantly, a node, in the context of this research, is strongly tied to the notion of the pass-through whose node is formed by the meshworks of interactions that take place within it and 'all the relationships in-between the "obvious features" in the structure of the node.' (Chapter Four, p.154)

### **3. Some conclusions on methodology**

Pinning down a methodology from an early stage was, to me, key for the unfolding of the trajectory as it provided, as was demonstrated in Chapter Three, a solid starting point and a consistency in the process without posing any limits or prescribed ways of delivering creative results. This open-ended way of working alone or with others on site lead to the richness and variety of responses created which impacted significantly the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the project. This methodology as it has been developed so far involves therefore two stages:

- Solitary field visits, enriched by processes such as drifting, listening, thinking, writing, interacting with people, recording. These are reflected upon in the making of creative responses after each walk.

- Workshops with co-walkers where site-sensitive conversation is encouraged as a means to reflect on the experience.

In the first stage the drifter can use an existing text-score of their preference. The text-score could be (preferably) one page long and it could contain fragments of site-sensitive encounters. These fragments as discussed throughout the thesis could be of varying nature ranging from material, psychological, factual or fictionalised encounters or they could involve sounds of spaces, the sound of thoughts or activities and so forth. In cases where the main outcome of the drift is the creation of a text-score (as in *PoL #8 Sonic City* or *To begin is to follow on from*) to be used in the second stage, then it could be suggested that the period of field visits could be up to a week or ten days for the gathering of fragments of experiences as mentioned above.

During the field visit, a text-score should be internalised prior to the drift and the drifter should choose words or phrases from the text that are the most resonant. These words could function, as discussed in reference to Krauss, as shifters of meaning from one person to the other. During the visit they could also provide a supportive counter-atmosphere triggering the merging of our internal 'seep through' with the environment which could then lead to the meshwork of interactions with the site, such as for instance listening, recording, writing or taking photographs of specific resonant activities, spaces or details. After the completion of a visit, a creative response could be made to summarise the elements or motions that marked the most and enriched our experience of the site.

The second stage could be designed to further inform the experience of the site as resulted in the first stage by inviting co-walkers to repeat a similar process as in stage one as part of a workshop. This workshop protocol, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, could involve:

- i) Internalising the text-score
- ii) doing a soundwalk or conversational soundwalk (the choice is up to the co-walker) where the co-walker explores a site, listens for sounds, uses the resonant words to interact with the site
- iii) discussion of the experience, impressions
- iv) making of a creative response

Within this protocol, the co-walkers could be divided into groups of biased (who have internalised a text-score) and unbiased (who have not internalised a text-score) followed tentatively by common discussion groups between biased and

unbiased observations. These workshops can be on a one-to-one basis or in small groups as in the example of Elephant and Castle. The soundwalk could have a more conversational nature but if the co-walker(s) prefer to remain silent then that should be respected. In any case, let them choose instinctively how they wish to contribute. It must be noted that the above protocol can be adjusted depending on the nature of the activity. In *PoL #8* there was no time for my co-walkers to internalise their text-score card prior to the soundwalk so the form of the text-score was chosen to be brief and condensed. The creative response was made on the spot using the same card and the discussion was incorporated in the actual soundwalk.

The importance behind all these activities is that they should foster a focused collaborative exploration of the site where the individual is enriched by the collective and where the co-walkers start to acknowledge how important it is to listen through others but also how the environment is distilled within these interactions, how sound emerges from the visual, how the architecture is affected and negotiated by our very presence. These are, of course, suggestions as to how a particular methodology can be put to a good use. It must be remembered that this approach was developed in response to specific sites that are characterised by transience but there is no reason why the same system could not be tested in divergent spaces.

#### **4. Some conclusions on compositional strategies**

I discussed earlier how a methodology or a workshop protocol can be adjusted to fit the criteria of a different creative activity. Most of the case studies presented in Chapter Five are in fact results of just such adjustments, of how one form of working and its outcomes can be implemented into somewhere else, especially in the context of publicly accessible events and commissions. In the case of *To begin is to follow on from*, a big part of the methodology and the theoretical observations were reiterated not only in the way I worked with the site but also in the strategies I applied to make the final piece.

The idea of letting my own private experience of the site be inhabited by other voices and resonant interactions with my co-walkers led me to choose which voice samples to use, which phrases or words and what atmospheres to create around each vignette of conversation. These conversations also allowed me to reframe the text-score and use it as a libretto, to return to Voegelin's suggestion, for

the sequencing of the different fragments presented within the piece. My encounters with the site through my solitary drifts and my exchanges with my co-walkers also affected how I responded to it, what microphones I used and what to record (i.e. contact microphones on fences, on-site improvisations in footpaths or against the hum of electricity and the roaring of passing trains at night).

The aforementioned methodology for the creation of a sonic perceptual ecology is also embedded in the strategies applied for composing *a certain geography*. More specifically, initial solitary drifts lead to the creation of a text-score, which is then used for the performance of a hybrid conversational soundwalk between a roamer outside and an audience seated inside a space. The meshwork is established through remote and emplaced listening and spontaneous conversations. The focus on sound as a carrier forms the basis for these polyphonic exchanges between layers of speaking- and thinking-voices.

The way the text-score is composed has been significantly impacted by the processes developed and observations made from the initial drifts and the methodology described above. The idea of the counter-atmosphere as a sustained plateau that bridges the inside and the outside and the different registers of perception, also result from the methodology described above, has led to the aesthetic choices for composing a text-score: either as a video-piece (a black background with subtitle text) for *a certain geography* and *conductcontacttransmit* or as a blank text-score card for *PoL* or as the sparsely designed concrete poem in the case of the IMT gallery performance. The text-score is tied to a site but it can also form the basis of exchanges beyond site that reside on the social and conceptual plane, as in *conductcontacttransmit*. In all instances, the text-score is, as I explained throughout this thesis, a means for facilitating the creation of the sonic perceptual ecology and hence it is designed to trigger dialogue, generative fictions and exchanges and to amplify the voices of, within and beyond a node. These polyphonic chains of interactions within a sonic perceptual ecology can also be extended as a curatorial strategy for the preparation of *Forms of Ventriloquism* and the carefully selected choices of artists that were invited to re-enact the creative responses of the workshops in the node of a gallery setting.

In the same way, the strategies for organising the *soundCamp/Reveil* listening event, facilitate the creation of a sonic perceptual ecology that amplifies the

presence of the urban ecological park. By strategies I primarily imply working extensively with the site for a constrained period of time, inviting a variety of people to conduct workshops (such as dawn chorus walks, field recording activities) and most importantly people from a variety of communities who contribute by camping overnight and expanding the event's meshwork through social media interactions and onsite listening conversations. It also involves the production of the 24hr broadcast that expands the sonic locality of the event by bringing in voices from remote locations and hence broadening to an unknown external public the meshwork of possible exchanges within the park.

## **5. Some conclusions on the conceptual framework**

As the backbone of all these activities we find this Thesis' conceptual and theoretical framework, that of the sonic perceptual ecology. Merging different theories appropriated from different disciplines, as explained in the Introduction (p.20) and in Chapter One, with site-sensitive practices, this type of hybrid ecology calls for an engagement with a site on three planes:

- a) a physical plane or the node where the activities take place
- b) a conceptual plane or the counter-atmosphere that we must prepare in response to the site's subtleties and which triggers the internal 'seep through' and facilitates conversation
- c) a social plane or the meshwork of interactions developed between human and non-human entities and voices

Within these overlapping levels of engagement, a sonic perceptual ecology nurtures the polyphony of perception and listening and allows the emergence of a more intuitive (or spontaneous) yet critical connection with our environments through others, through conversation and more dialogic listening practices. The major part of this Thesis, in all its constituent parts, attempted to demonstrate how this framework emerged through practice and several case studies and how it can be used to support the creation of strategies for sound-based exploration, perception and composition in pass-through spaces.

## 6 Future work

None of the above conclusions should be understood to suggest that the end of this Thesis brings a conclusion to my creative trajectory. I have to clarify that this research was developed with some certainties at hand (even though it attempted to contest them). I mainly engaged with people or groups without any known hearing or speech disorders and who consequently could respond to a way (or language) that I could understand or that it would be familiar or known to me. That is to me a sort of research 'comfort zone' that nonetheless established a very fertile ground for all the outcomes to come. In Chapter Two, I talked about the voice that permeates inside us and moves, stirs and forms our thoughts, our building materials, the ways we perceive and our memories. It assumes entity through writing, reading, speaking or not speaking all. In possible future work, I would like to explore how this methodology and the concept of the sonic perceptual ecology can be used in other forms of language such as in sign language or braille. How can people with hearing or visual impairment cope with sound, listening and their thinking- or speaking-voices? How does this notion of voice manifest itself in people who have lost their speech and how can the methodologies or strategies developed here be adjusted so they become accessible to impaired people.

Returning to the 'comfort zone' of hearing, speaking and seeing, I believe that there is a big pool of subtleties to be explored in the ways we listen to our environments through our voice that was not addressed within this research. By illustration, one interesting subtlety could be the difference in dynamics developed between listening in groups and listening on my own and the tentative risk of my voice becoming too loud and how listening in group can function as a way filtering and affecting these fluctuations. I have argued elsewhere in this document that what we consider as our own voice is in fact a less pure entity but again how does that idea function in environments that are unfamiliar to us? To what voice do we listen when we are in a foreign country or culture? For instance, during my solitary fieldwork in Tobačna I was approached by people who talked to me in Slovenian (as in audio clip 28) or who were present in my solitary drifts in the site (for example in audio clip 29). In what ways did these instances affect my experience of the site?

A similar question could be addressed when it comes to thinking about my private history of migration. I have been living abroad for many years to the extent

that my own native language has become almost like a second language. How does my 'thinking voice' listen, how does it speak? In what language? Where do I position myself? And how are other foreign voices inhabiting my own voice? These are questions that are hard to answer but they might, with further research, shed some light to the inner workings within a sonic perceptual ecology.

Ultimately, as already hinted in Chapter One, the findings in this Thesis could form the basis of research projects and methodologies in other disciplines. I would be interested to see how specialists in the field of urban studies and planning could make use of the methodology to engage with how people perceive through sound their environments and how that could impact the strategies they use to design environments. Moving beyond theories of spatial acoustics and the material aspects of things, such a methodology could turn the focus toward a more 'ecological' way of working within the urban realm that posits the human within the non-human and can perhaps, on a more bottom-up process, reflect these in the planning of environments and activities. It would be, for example, particularly interesting to further explore environments that are affected by regeneration; an idea that this research did not investigate but that seems to be relevant in relation to the pass-through.

In the coming years, I would therefore like to continue working with different groups of people to further develop the outcomes of this research. I would also like to further apply my methodology on more community-based contexts such as working with kids and developing together the sonic perceptual ecologies of their localities through sound and collaborative listening. Investing in socially-engaged practices would allow this research to expand its outreach to people and places where it is most needed. In a similar way, I would also like to take this collection of writings further by editing them into a publication. In any case, an important legacy of this trajectory, now that my practice has evolved into a substantial pool of questions, methodologies and creative strategies, might well involve tracking how can these insights be challenged, developed and further explored in future creative work – practice – instigated by me or by others inspired by this research journey.

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## **Appendices Summary**

The Appendices can be accessed, downloaded and printed via the 'Appendices' section in the accompanying 'Media Folder'.

### **/Appendix 1:**

The three selected text-scores used in the first and second phases of the research.

/Sinclair\_Excerpt.jpg

/Sebald\_Excerpt.jpg

/Savage\_Excerpt.jpg

### **/Appendix 2:**

Creative Responses from field visits and paper clipping from The WIRE.

/Maria\_Papadomanolaki\_Journey\_of\_a\_Journal\_Entry.pdf

/The\_WIRE\_Mention.jpg

/Field\_Visit\_2\_Memory\_map\_1.pdf

/Field\_Visit\_2\_Memory\_map\_2.pdf

### **/Appendix 3:**

Creative Responses from workshops in the second phase of the research

/Homerton Workshop:

/Co-walker 1

/Co-walker 2

/Co-walker 3

/Liverpool Street Station Workshop

/Stratford Workshop:

/Co-walker 1

/Co-walker 2

/Elephant & Castle Workshop

/Forms Of Ventriloquism Artist Assessment

### **/Appendix 4:**

Text-scores, assessment forms and other responses created in the third phase of the research.

/To begin is to follow on from

/Conductcontacttransmit

/A certain geography

/Audience Experience Assessment Forms:

/Parasol Unit

/IMT Gallery