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VW CAMPERVAN TOURISTS' EMBODIED SONIC EXPERIENCES

Sharon Wilson, Donna Chambers and James Johnson

INTRODUCTION

I think the problem with the soundtrack for a VW is the first thing you begin to think is panic and what's gone wrong now, so sadly a lot of soundtrack brings with it a sense of dread because every sound you haven't heard before means there's something wrong, there's something rattling, something whistling, the engines not making the right sound... (Jonny, VW campervan owner, 2011)

Sound is very powerful in our social world. Yet tourism researchers have not traditionally engaged with sound or with the aural senses despite the history of the use of embodiment theory as a means of moving tourism studies beyond the visual emphasis of the tourist gaze (Pons, 2003; Rakić and Chambers, 2012). Researchers have emphasised the multisensory and corporeal nature of tourism to illuminate how a range of senses are activated through experience (Quan & Wang, 2004; Trandberg Jensen, Scarles & Cohen, 2015). Perkins & Thorns (2001, p. 189), embracing a performance metaphor state, "tourism demands new metaphors based more on 'being, doing, touching, and seeing' rather than just seeing" and to this list we would add listening and sound. Indeed Urry (2000), reflecting on the tourist gaze notes that the gaze is best conceived as interconnected to other senses including hearing. However, our exegesis of the mainstream tourism literature reveals only limited studies which engage with these issues (Liu, Liu, Liu & Deng, 2016; Mason, 2004; Schwarz, 2013; Trandberg Jensen et al., 2015; Trandberg Jensen, 2016; Waitt & Duffy 2010).

The quotation at the beginning of this introduction is from a VW campervan tourist/driver, who while travelling to a VW campervan festival refers to the 'soundtrack' of the vehicle, thus imbuing a certain musicality to the sounds the van makes while in motion. Indeed, according to Eduard Hanslick, 'sound or sound structure' characterise the nature of music (cited in Walton, 1994, p.47) and the VW campervan tourist/driver recounts the emotional response that these sounds elicit (in this case 'panic' and a 'sense of dread') particularly when these sounds are dissonant. In a similar sense Goodman (2012) refers to the power of sound to produce negative emotions such as fear or as he deemed it a 'bad vibe.' This opening vignette thus illustrates the embodied sonic relationship between VW campervan tourist/driver and van, and this is, we argue, analogous to that between musician and instrument. There are several studies that suggest that there is a special bond or even a *merging* between musicians and their instruments (Fels, 2004; Nijs, Lesaffre & Leman, 2009) with some studies indicating that this is advantageous for professional well-being (Simoens & Tervaniemi, 2013). However, this merging between musician and instrument is not always harmonious and using a cybernetic approach, Vertegaal, Ungvary & Kieslinger (1996) perceive the man (sic)-instrument relationship as a whole system made up of different parts including *emotional tension*.

In this interdisciplinary paper we draw inspiration from the use of an instrumental metaphor to conceptualise the embodied sonic experiences of VW campervan tourists/drivers. We suggest that it is through listening to the sounds of their antiquated vans while in motion, that an emotional bond is created between tourist/driver and van, between human and machine, and that this intimate relationship can be perceived as analogous to the emotional bond that exists between musicians and their instruments during the act of performance. Our use of the concept of metaphor is consistent with the 'linguistic turn' in tourism studies and the wider social sciences and heeds the call by Adu-Ampong (2016, p. 249) for tourism researchers to engage more explicitly with the "ontologically creative functions of metaphors." We have also drawn insights from the Deleuzian concept of assemblage to theorise the inherent fluidity and lack of fixity of this coupling between human and

non-human. We begin our discussion with an overview of the way that sound has been articulated in the social sciences more generally and specifically in tourism studies.

SOUND IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND IN TOURISM STUDIES

The interdisciplinary field of sound studies may be defined as the study of “material production and consumption of music, sound, noise, and silence and how these have changed throughout history and within different societies” (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2012, p. 5). Sound studies thus reflect several issues pertinent to our study including the symbolic power of sound and its affective qualities, sounds created by humans and by non-human technologies and sounds created in nature. Sound scholars have gone beyond the hegemony of the visual by considering “sound as a modality of knowing and being in the world” (Bull & Back, 2003, p. 3). Sound acts as a powerful regulatory and mobilising force in innumerable ways - the speech of a political leader, and the airport speaker announcement instructing travellers to urgently proceed are two examples. Bull & Back (2003) speak of a hierarchy of sounds where noises that are human or machine made are contrasted to the sounds created by nature. Whilst soundscapes are traditionally considered as being formed through the natural environment and polluted by human endeavour (e.g. industrialisation), sound studies focus on how technologies, material and non-human entities contribute to create and modify sonic environments (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2012).

Motor vehicles, as the most common mobile machines, are an apposite arena within which the concept of sound has been extensively explored. In the early 20th century, listening to the sound of the car was part of the skill of driving. Aberrations could be heard before they could be seen (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2012, p. 199). In the 1920s as motor vehicles became affordable for the masses, service manuals were used to actively promote the idea that self-driving required “monitory listening” and sensitivity towards the car was critical. By the mid-1960s however, car owners who once saw mechanical awareness as important, found excessive noise as no longer a sign to have things repaired or as an endearing part of the vehicle’s character, but instead time to replace the vehicle with a new one that ran properly. Bijsterveld, Cleophas, Krebs & Mom (2014) suggested that once the motorist noticed discord, he (sic) was to drive carefully and listen attentively. Service manuals also highlighted categories of malfunctions that owners were encouraged to identify by “seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling.” Bijsterveld et al., (2014) also compared this with doctors who listened to the patient’s body diagnostically, suggesting “this is how you proceed with your engine as well”. By the 1960s and 1970s policy makers however began to wage war against noise, and national and European authorities for example adopted standards on maximum sound emissions for cars (Naess, Mogridge & Sandberg 2001) further taming their noise (Bijsterveld, 2010).

Bull (2004) charts how automobiles have today come to function as a mobile and personalised auditory system. The interior of the automobile is a privatised audio space; a respite from the sensory world outside where the driver has freedom and control over the auditory environment. Indeed, as Bose (1984 in Bull, 2004) contends, automobiles are potentially one of the most perfectible of acoustic listening chambers in existence. Technology has enabled drivers to transform their vehicles into personalised, controlled and relaxing bubbles with unwanted sounds blocked out. Bijsterveld (2010) explains that with the goal of creating interior quietude, car manufactures have developed technology to reduce automobile sounds, to cushion occupants from the outside world, from engine vibrations, from external disturbances and even from impositions of driving. This creates sensory privacy that symbolises the car as a place to unwind - a process described as ‘techno cocooning’. The automobile is often presented as the place to unwind with a serenity likened to a library, which now cocoons the driver (Bijsterveld, 2010).

Ergonomic enhancements thus led to a passivity in the motorist and prompted a cultural shift where listening to one’s car is no longer necessary or expected. Presented with new listening practices, drivers unlearned prior indoctrinated listening behaviour and learned instead to de-listen (Pinch and

Bijsterveld, 2012). Bijsterveld (2008) goes further to suggest that the symbolic meaning of noise, once a sign of strength to car drivers, is now a sign of mechanical malfunctioning of which sonic overspill is no longer a healthy addition but a nuisance. The noise of the car once symbolic of wealth and power, has therefore become subdued. With noise redefined as the enemy and not a friend, we refer to Bull's (2004) contemplations of personal-stereo users, who in moving through urban spaces with such musical accompaniments, could co-construct experience and imbue it with cognitive, aesthetic and moral significance. The car radio finally replaced the din of the engine and the clanking and rattling as a new form of companionship to lonely drivers, as well as compensation for the immobility of drivers coping with problems like congestion (Bull, 2004). Audio and acoustic technologies are not the only ones enabling techno-cocooning in the car, but also the car's climate and cruise control, automatic transmission, information systems, and leather seats which all contribute to its enveloping character (Sheller, 2004; Urry 2000). Authors such as Sheller (2004) have suggested that 'prosthetization' and computerization have reduced the driver's direct embodied interaction with the car's engine, brakes and steering system.

However modern cars can be too quiet for some consumer tastes and car manufacturers' acoustic engineers create 'target sounds' for specific consumer groups to ensure that sounds associated with the brand are heard, for instance the roar of the Porsche engine (Bijsterveld et al., 2014). Drivers also adapt cars to fulfil their sonic desires, for instance 'boy racers' (sic) alter exhausts specifically to create more noise (Lumsden, 2013) and Japanese drag racers or 'drifters' fit turbo engines and elaborate sound systems to amplify speed and sound (Hansen & Nielsen, 2016). In this sense driver modifications to the sound of the automobile are associated with, and are symbolic of, subcultures.

Within the context of tourism studies discussions of sound are most often found in the burgeoning soundscape literature (Jiang, Zhang, Zhang & Yang 2018; Liu et al., 2016; Liu, Wang, Liu, Yao & Deng, 2018). Schafer (1993) suggests that soundscapes are commonly referred to "as any aural area of study" and encompass the perceptions of sounds. Tourism soundscapes are diverse and may include the roar of jet engines, ongoing construction work, children playing, and the hubbub of a hotel lobby. Tourism soundscapes are also said to be formed through the natural environment and may require manipulation or management to be satisfying (Liu et al., 2016). Sound might be perceived negatively as noise, an unwanted impact with the power to pollute tourism (Kousis 2000; Schwarz, 2013) or positively, as capable of enhancing or creating desirable environments (Liu et al., 2018). Drawing on our instrumental metaphor, an analogy might be made here between *acoustic* music; soothing, natural, classical and refined versus *electronic* music; noise, loud, deafening, repetitive and modern. According to Brown (2012) the perception of soundscapes needs to be placed into the context of the acoustic environment, time, place and activity. However, such polarity between acoustic and electronic, mutes the mix of sounds as they overlap within, and create the aural area and the conflicting demands or preferences of the same sonic environment that differing types of tourists might desire (Schwarz, 2013). Therefore, sound gives meaning to space. Soundscapes are situated and like the tourist gaze are in part culturally coded. Indeed sounds, music, conversations, dialect and dins are symbolic of types of tourism, people and places (Gibson & Connell, 2005; Knox 2008; Mason 2004; Noy, 2004).

Sound has meaning in tourism language, for instance verbal communication can act as a means of performing cultural capital (Noy, 2004). In tourism, sound is also non-linguistic and non-representational. In other words, not all tourism sounds are comprehended through semantic structures. Trandberg Jensen et al.'s (2015) study on interrailing is exemplary as they detail how sounds created by human and non-human entities fold together with other types of senses, rhythms and temperatures, to form a myriad of affective *sensescapes*. Over the course of a train journey sound contributes to a multisensory and embodied perception of the environment where sounds "animate situated experiences, affects and sensuous atmosphere" (Trandberg Jensen 2016, p. 159). Indeed, as showcased by Saldanha (2002) in his study of the Goan rave scene, sound resonates in the

whole of the tourist body, amplified electronic music is felt, its vibrations move bodies in dance and at such raves sound becomes a focal sense that binds together other senses, connecting bodies and environments to create a phenomenological awareness of space. However, arguably, sound can only be thus embodied through careful listening. Nancy (2007) has suggested that listening as opposed to passive hearing, is a dynamic act of the sense. Listening as an embodied act “refers to the varied ways in which bodies of all kinds – human and more-than-human – respond to sound” (Paiva, 2018, p. 82). Thus, listening is attentive, subjective, embodied and often performative as demonstrated by Waitt, Harada & Duffy (2015) who account for the differing visceral sensations felt by gendered performers when listening to sounds/music whilst driving cars.

Sounds are difficult to represent in written form and in this light Pinch & Bijsterveld refer to the creation of a sound vocabulary that researchers may use:

In doing so, they not only use dictionary words for sound such as “roaring,” “whistling,” or “crackling” sounds, but also draw upon *analogies with the sounds of musical instruments* (our emphasis) the human voice, and every day artefacts (2012, p. 14).

Nevertheless, some researchers have used recordings and sound bites to convey findings (see Trandberg Jensen et al., 2015). Our argument in this paper is that sound is important in the process of meaning making and that the use of an instrumental metaphor might be a useful way to apprehend and evaluate the embodied sonic relationship between tourists and their vehicles while on the move.

AN INSTRUMENTAL METAPHOR

In seeking to define metaphor, Kamoche, Pina e Cunha, & Vieira da Cunha (2003) draw upon several authors to suggest that the concept of metaphor can refer to “a way of thinking and a way of seeing” (2003, p. 2031) and as having the power to “generate alternative social realities” (p. 2031). In this sense metaphors have an ideological function to produce other ways of representing our social world. Urry (2000) takes a binary approach to metaphor by suggesting that metaphors connect two different things together based on their commonalities. He goes on to suggest that metaphors thus enable us to comprehend and experience one thing in terms of that to which it is connected (Urry, 2000). However, according to Spitzer metaphor is a very difficult concept to define and is a “composite or portmanteau category” (2004, p. 3). Spitzer goes even further to suggest that attempting to delineate the boundaries of metaphor is an exercise in futility. Yet metaphors continue to proliferate in our day to day language, and in some cases have become normalised to such an extent that they remain unquestioned and unexplored. However, as Adu-Ampong (2016) contends, metaphors “play an important role in our cognition” (2016, p. 248) and he laments the fact that metaphors have thus far only been used implicitly in tourism studies. In addition, he argues that there has been no substantive unpacking of tourism metaphors to understand their ontological status and their power to occlude ideological positions (Adu-Ampong, 2016). Drawing inspiration from this, we attempt to understand the ontology of tourism through the prism of metaphor. Specifically, based on the prevalence of sound to the VW campervan tourist experience (described as a soundtrack by VW campervan owner Jonny in the quotation at the beginning of this paper), we found that the metaphor of musician and instrument is apposite to further our understanding of the sonic nature of the relationship between human and machine while in motion.

It has been suggested that music is a cultural activity that is omnipresent in our lives and that it has the power to shape and regulate our behaviour (Merriam & Merriam, 1964). Alperson (2010) suggests that it is commonplace to believe that no culture exists without music of some kind or

another and that music is the universal language. Yet Alperson also notes that music is the “language of the emotions” (2010, p. 3) thus investing in music a certain psychological, subjective, dimension. Indeed, Hargreaves and North (1999) affirm that music also has a psychological function in the way that it relates to our individual emotions, albeit that our emotional reactions to music differ depending on the social context. As indicated in our introduction to this paper, music can be characterised as sound, sound structure or a system of sounds. Schafer’s (1993) seminal study on soundscape also defines music as sound where “all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying within the comprehensive domination of music” (p.5). However, some readers of our paper might yet argue that while music is sound, not all sound is music. But drawing inspiration from Schafer (1993) we counteract this by suggesting that all sound can indeed be perceived as music depending on the perspective of the individual and the (sub)cultural group to which he or she belongs. Consequently, we argue that music is a psycho-sociological construct.

Echard (2006, p.12), referring to musical instruments suggests that they are “usually designed for continuous operation by a human being.” Motor vehicles are similarly designed for human beings to operate (notwithstanding the historic and extant development of ‘driverless’ vehicles). Echard (2006) also argues that “questions of subjectivity and interpretive latitude are crucial when dealing with instruments” (p. 13). Continuing our metaphor, this implies that an individual’s relationship with her/his motor vehicle is a very personal one and this is apparent in the way that people anthropomorphise their vehicles. Anthropomorphism is a form of projection whereby humans apportion to non-human agencies distinctively human characteristics. Through anthropomorphism human and non-human often become interdependent and intertwined. Some musicians see their instruments as a part of themselves and develop a very close relationship with them (Simoens & Tervaniemi, 2013). Moreover, Nijs, et al. (2009) in seeking to theorise the relationship between musician and musical instrument, conclude that the musical instrument becomes a part of the musician’s body. They present a framework to understand this relationship which comprises of three viewpoints one of which is particularly relevant to our discussion, that is that “the musician-instrument connection is closely related to the musician’s subjective experience during performance” (Nijs, et al., 2009, p. 2). Fels (2004) suggests that it is possible for the player (musician) to embody the device (musical instrument) while Cumming (2000) in her seminal text *‘The Sonic Self’* argues that the violin can be an extension of the body, thus embodying one’s subjectivity. The intertwining between musician and instrument is further elaborated by Echard (2006, p. 13) who claims that “an instrument actualizes music as sound, so does a musician...a musician, as musician, cannot pre-exist her or his instruments, but becomes and remains a musician only through a long relationship with them”. This merging of human subject and instrument occurs without erasing their differences (Echard, 2006). We found the Deleuzian concept of assemblage relevant in explicating this idea.

Deleuze sees music and sound as semiotic systems which are integral to understanding contemporary cultures and he speaks of bodies as the ‘affective assemblages of sounds’ (Waitt & Duffy, 2010, p. 461). The Deleuzian notion of assemblage, while complex and multifaceted, is taken here to mean ‘a ‘functional conglomeration of [seemingly disparate] elements’ (Currier, 2003, p. 325) which are both human and non-human and which are not grounded in any prior unity. Importantly within this conglomeration the differences of the parts are not subsumed within a ‘higher unity’ (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011) and this resonates with the earlier argument of Echard (2006) who suggests that the merging between musician and instrument does not subsume their differences. Assemblage thinking enables a dismantling of traditional dualisms such as human/machine, material/immaterial, instead perceiving social relationships as multiple and indeterminate (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). The use of the term assemblage allows for a large degree of openness about the form of the conglomeration and what types of elements might be involved (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011). Applying our instrumental metaphor, we argue here that in

VW campervan tourism, there exist assemblages of sounds constituted through the interaction between the human body (the VW campervan tourist/driver) and the non-human (the van). Indeed, we contend that the sound or the 'musicality' of the VW campervan is integral to understanding the mobile embodied experiences of VW campervan tourists. That is, such a biological and mechanistic coupling "necessarily result in profound changes in the constitution of the self and its relations to its environment...(both) become integral components of a polyphonic, machinic subjectivity" (Parr, 2010, p. 246). Yet it is important to note that these sonic assemblages are necessarily ephemeral and fluid, existing only within a specific context – in the case of our study, it is a mobile context, i.e. while travelling to VW campervan festivals. This lack of fixity reflects the dynamic nature of assemblages and their inherent potential for change or 'becomings' (Muller and Schurr, 2016). In other words, in the same way that one can conceive of an assemblage, one can also consider the possibility of disassembling (deterritorialization) and reassembling (reterritorialization).

It is worth noting that in the theorisation of assemblages issues of power become problematised. For if the concept of assemblage disrupts the dualism between human and machine then it also disrupts the binary opposition which sees the former as superior to the latter. This is cogently stated by Currier thus:

'The machine and nature can no longer be explained in binary terms where one is understood in terms of the other...rather each is considered different in and of itself and thus the relation between the two is not conceived in hierarchical terms. Both elements are equally operational in a productive mode. Within an assemblage the forces of each meet and affect each other, such that it is impossible to figure one as the diminution of the other as privileged term (2003, p.331)

This suggests that within an assemblage of VW campervan tourist/driver and van, the body of the former has no privileged position over that of the latter and vice versa. Further as intimated before, assemblages are always in the process of 'becoming' and thus, arguably, have no essence or fixed identity. We contend in this paper that in VW campervan tourism, identities can be created through sonic assemblages, *while on the move*, but these identities are necessarily ephemeral. An understanding of this point is crucial to apprehending the VW campervan tourist/driver experience.

Returning to our instrumental metaphor, musicians often modify or personalise their instruments to suit their preferred way of musical expression (Magnusson & Mendieta, 2007) and also as a mark of identity in similar fashion to VW campervan tourists/ drivers with their vans. Magnusson & Mendieta (2007) in their phenomenological study of people's relationship to their musical instruments suggest that "people usually had an 'emotional' affection towards their acoustic instrument...and they bonded with its character...one responder talked about how the limitations of acoustic instruments change or evolve constantly according to skill levels but also state of mood" (2007, p. 4). Bijsterveld & Schulp (2004), in research on classical musicians and their relationship to their instruments note that "in the course of their musical life, musicians and their instruments become fused" (p 654). One of the research participants in Bijsterveld & Schulp's (2004) study, a bassoon player, indicated that musicians learned to play this instrument by "circumventing its difficulties and vices" (p. 654). They suggest that the "musicians know how to handle the peculiarities of their instruments and consider such a mastery to be part of their artistic and professional identity. They do not want to lose it" (Bijsterveld & Schulp 2004, p. 654-655). Yet, we suggest that the sense of identity felt by musicians is manifested within the context of an assemblage where musician and instrument are fused *in the act of performance*. Such an identity is necessarily temporary and unstable as it changes when it encounters other assemblages. Similarly, the tourist/driver of a classic VW campervan requires a level of skill to manipulate the controls of this cumbersome machine, and we contend that the sonic assemblage thus created while integral to the tourist's very sense of identity, *while in motion*, is necessarily impermanent.

METHODOLOGY

The metaphor of the musician/instrument and the Deleuzian concept of assemblage, enabled us to obtain deeper understandings of the nature of the embodied sonic experiences of the VW campervan tourist/driver, while in motion. This metaphor emerged inductively through empirical research with tourists/drivers (who were also owners) of classic VW campervans, travelling to VW campervan festivals in England. We were guided by a constructivist methodology and concomitant qualitative methods and this enabled us to examine driver and vehicle relations as constituted through sound. The first author, also a VW Campervan owner prior to embarking on the research, had a personal stake in the brand and this allowed us access to her visceral knowledge from the outset. The current paper constitutes part of a larger study where we aimed to understand the nature of VW campervan tourism from diverse perspectives, including that of the researcher as ethnographer, in order to foster new ways of seeing. However, what surfaced inductively through the data and which was unexpected, was also new ways of *listening* (Rosamond, 2005; Smith, 1998), as an embodied act in response to sound. These new ways of listening emerged from the continuing transformation of both the researchers' embodied selves and that of the research participants during the interactive, reflexive process of doing the research, a practice which has been deemed by Stoller (1997) as "sensuous scholarship". Pink (2007, p. 247) contends that such embodied sensuous approaches can help to understand how "people constitute both their self-identities and place through their multisensory embodied experience". It is through this sensuous approach that we acknowledge that we are implicated in the research as much as the research participants and it is this engagement that enabled an ongoing 'resensualisation' (Stoller, 1997) into new ways of listening.

In the larger study we used a diverse range of qualitative methods to develop what Kincheloe (2001) describes as a bricolage of data. In this current paper we are reporting on the findings from the ethnographic and autoethnographic field work from which the embodied sonic experiences of VW campervan tourists/drivers were inductively derived. In the ethnographic study, research was undertaken with tourists (also owners/drivers of their vans) attending Volkswagen campervan festivals in the North East of England and in Scotland. The first author visited festivals twice between the late spring and summer over a three-year period from 2010-2012, for three days each time (Fridays to Sundays inclusive). The fieldwork was conducted at Harwood Hall (Leeds), Volkspower (Redcar), The Mighty Dubfest (Alnwick Garden) formerly Druridge Bay, Durham Dubbers, (Gibbsite Hall, Gateshead), Volksfling Festival (Biggar) in Scotland and the VW Rally (Tynemouth). Particular attention was accorded to the *Flat 4 Dubs* owners club based in County Durham, where by becoming a member the first author was able to access 600 owners online and around 53 who attended the mentioned VW campervan festivals at any given time. The ethnography involved research participants from the mentioned VW campervan clubs who were often experienced VW campervan tourists/drivers familiar with the temperamental nature of their cumbersome vehicles. Informal Interviews were conducted with these 53 participants, of which 18 of these interviews were in depth and semi structured.

This was combined with an auto-ethnography undertaken by the first author, who engaged in the sensuous practices of driving her own VW campervan throughout the fieldwork period. As Ellis & Bochner (2000) note, auto-ethnography is a method where researchers use their personal lives in their studies by paying attention to physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. In practical terms, this method allowed for the documentation of her trips to the VW campervan festivals. Laurier & Dant (2008) point out that given the practical difficulties of doing ethnographic fieldwork, what happens within car interiors remains largely unexamined in most existing literature. To address this, it was

important for the first author to engage in what Ouzounian (2006, p.73) calls 'embodied listening' inside the vehicle. The first author was immersed in the VW campervan soundscape driving on the M1 motorway (the motorway in England which connects the cities of London in the South to Leeds in the North and approximately 311 km in length), and as such she was also able to capture the embodied sonic experience of travelling with her van.

From the 53 research participants, approximately 70% were male and this was consistent with the wider classic VW campervan community which is dominated by men. Most participants were 39 years old and under (65%) and this also reflected the age range of the wider community. Furthermore, participants were predominantly from a white working-class background, demonstrating the lack of ethnic diversity within the communities that attend the VW campervan festivals in question. All the data from the autoethnographic fieldnotes and the interviews were transcribed and textually analysed using NVivo software. All the authors immersed themselves in the data from the interviews and the autoethnographic accounts of the first author and through a constant iterative process of reading and re-reading the transcripts were able to collaboratively develop themes inductively from the data. It was through this process of induction that the instrumental metaphor emerged, and this enabled us to achieve a deeper understanding of the role of sound in the embodied experiences of these VW campervan tourists/drivers. In the following sections we discuss the findings under the two main themes that emerged from the data analysis – psychological and emotional connections and physiological connections – also weaving in insights from the Deleuzian concept of assemblage.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN AND MACHINE

Unlike the cushioned practice of driving modern automobiles where exterior noise and inside vibrations are minimised for a smoother ride (Labelle, 2010), tourists/drivers of classic VW campervans chose to travel in transport that is inordinately noisy. Whether by accident or design, the classic VW campervan offers a unique auditory experience as a soundtrack to the movement of its passengers. Despite the loudness of the sounds emitted by the van, they were still ironically used for leisure tourism and relaxation purposes. Furthermore, our research demonstrates that most tourists/drivers do not find these sonic 'disturbances' abhorrent, but rather perceive them as an expected part of their holiday ideal. Thus, contrary to any assertion that "noise", might be understood as something "out of place" (Hendy, 2013, p. viii) i.e. as an unwanted interference, VW campervan tourists/drivers instead hold the sounds of grinding, clanking, squeaking mechanics and engine roar in high regard. There was also an awareness of the sounds made by other onboard hardware such as the vehicle's suspension, window wipers, wheels turning and so on, where several participants spoke fondly of these as peculiarities. Indeed, the combination of these sounds from different parts of the van was akin to a musical symphony. When Alex, a VW campervan owner, was asked if he was aware of the 'noise' his van made, he commented:

I took my friend Karen for a drive along the beach when we first got her, and she said I hope it sounds as great on the outside to passers- by as it does on the inside. I don't think it is an unpleasant sound, but a nice one. (Alex, VW Campervan Owner, 2014)

Alex thus acknowledges the musicality of the vehicle (the sound the van makes is a 'nice one'), which is, arguably, comparable to immersive radio listening in a modern car. Research participants also indicated that along with listening to their engines from inside the cabin, they also opened their windows to do so as part of the pleasure of the drive. They commented on its endearing nature

rather than emphasizing its noise as an encumbrance. Some owners such as Daisy in the quote below, even perceived loudness as part of the vehicle's personality:

Anyway, for noises I know, all the noises our van makes they are part and parcel of the joy of ownership. Her indoors (Mrs BOO) doesn't notice them anyway. When a new one comes along its shruggy shoulders time. Our radio powers 6 massive speakers and the engine noise drowns these out as well. (Daisy, VW campervan owner, 2012)

Maddison, a member of the Durham Dubbers club said: "In the van its easy and peaceful isn't it. Aye, just like kipping [sleeping]." Thus, the noisy nature of the classic VW van, considered endearing by some participants, also distinguished it from modern cars. A modern car emits less sound than a classic VW campervan but together all these motorised vehicles contribute to a cacophony or orchestra of sound while in motion. But unlike the modern car which according to Bijsterveld (2010) is an 'acoustic cocoon', insulating the driver *against* the mechanical sound of the vehicle, the VW campervan tourist/driver's relationship with her/his van is *dependent* on sound. Indeed, in our study, the significance of the noise generated appeared to equal the personal wellbeing of the tourist. One of our research participants, Maddison (VW Owner, 2012) indicated that "a stressful week can melt away once behind the wheel of any vintage V Dub, no other experience can match that". He also felt that being in the van had the potential to alleviate stress. Similarly, Simoens & Teraniemi (2013) in their psychological study of the relationship between musicians and their instruments found that this coupling played a significant role in the musicians' well-being.

However, contrary to what might appear at first glance to be an entirely harmonious relationship between tourist/driver and machine, a very small number of participants thought that their vehicles added to stress levels, and some needed their vehicles to *sound right* before feeling content while in motion. Extracts from the auto- ethnography of the first author reveal that she believed the extraneous amounts of engine noise heard through single glazed windows to be disdainful:

To drive in these conditions was disturbing and unrelenting and not tranquil as many owners had described it. Also, as the external sounds were not buffered by the modern soundproofed interior, they were heard loudly alongside the campervan engine noise when the windows were open. It was not only engine noise however that was part of the experience, there was also the rattle of metal parts such as loose rivets, creaking suspension, interiors unscrewing themselves due to the process of motion (First author/VW Researcher, 2012).

I ended up listening to the engine a lot. If it sounded like it was grinding, I would back off from accelerating. Sometimes I imagined I heard faults when I concentrated on what the motor was doing. (First author/VW Researcher, 2012)

Mick had a similar experience:

So, for me the soundtrack for the VW is the difference between health and having a nice journey and feeling great to that sort of oh my god right. I have to say the whole time you have it you feel very vulnerable because it is so old and everything else you think what's going to go wrong next or it can't survive this whole thing and there's bound to be something, so I certainly have that mindset all the time that something's going to go wrong soon or what's going to be next...(Mick, VW Campervan Owner, 2012)

It is evident that these research participants felt in a perpetual state of high alert due to the volatile temperament of the engine sounds and the sounds emanating from other moving parts of the vehicle. An awareness of the different sounds of the vehicle, while it is being manipulated by the driver, meant that an anxious emotive state became intrinsic to the travel experience for these VW campervan tourists/drivers. They were very much attuned to the sounds that their vehicles were making and where the sounds appeared dissonant, it resulted in feelings of anxiety. Following our analogy, Vertegaal et al. (1996) spoke of the emotional tension that existed between musician and instrument as they formed interconnected parts of a cybernetic system or in a Deleuzian sense, an assemblage.

In terms of the sounds in question, a loud mechanical engine noise is heard from the back of the vehicle flowing into the driver's cabin. Furthermore, these sonic expressions are not the same in every campervan, but are perceived as individual scores with unique tonalities, patterns, temporality and volume. It was also found that owners learned the character of their own engine's timbre. It was evident from our research that the nature of the sounds produced by the VW campervan because of the human/machine interaction while in motion, presented challenges for different tourists/drivers. Yet these sonic challenges were an integral part of the experience of being on the move and they resulted in drivers becoming intimately connected to the changes in the sounds emitted by their vans. These mentioned differences in sonic experiences amongst these often experienced VW campervan tourists/drivers illustrates the subjective nature of these experiences. The reader will recall that Echard (2006) had pointed to the "subjectivity and interpretive latitude" (p.13) involved in the relationship between musicians and their instruments while Nijs, et al. emphasised the subjective nature of musicians' experiences during music performances:

In music performance the embodied interaction with the music implies the corporeal attunement of the musician to the sonic event that results from the performance. The embodied experience of participating in the musical environment in a direct and engaged way is based on the direct perception of the musical environment and on a skill-based coping with the challenges that arise from the complex interaction within this musical environment. It becomes an optimal embodied experience (flow) when the musician is completely immersed in the created musical reality (presence) and enjoys himself [sic] through the playfulness of the performance (2009, p. 9).

The evidence from our research therefore revealed that VW campervan tourists/drivers face many challenges while in motion, through the constraints associated with these antiquated machines. These challenges were pivotal to the travel experience but were perceived differently by the research participants – for a limited number the sounds emanating from the vehicles were stressful while for the majority the sounds were central to their personal well-being, a sign that the vehicle was operating 'normally'. But the fact that all research participants, whatever their subjective experiences with their vans, used these vehicles as the preferred mode of transport for leisure tourism purposes, suggests that, like the musical performance referred to above, there is a certain *jouissance* associated with the human/machine interaction. What is interesting also from these results is that the tourists' sense of wellbeing or stress was intimately connected to the sounds of their vans while being on the road. The situation was very different not only depending on the nature of the sounds made by the van but also when the tourists/drivers encountered other assemblages (for example assemblages created through varying weather conditions). Thus, embodied sonic experiences resulting from the assemblage of human/machine are necessarily transient and subjective. An assemblage of VW campervan tourist/driver and van, created through sound can therefore be deterritorialized, only to be reterritorialized when it meets other assemblages. This is consistent with Parr's (2010, p. 19, 27) claim that "an assemblage is thus a dynamic assemblage...for

Deleuze, one's self must be conceived as a constantly changing assemblage of forces, an epiphenomenon arising from chance confluences."

PHYSIOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN AND MACHINE

Interestingly, some VW campervans did have stereo systems on board, but they were not often used. Bull (2004) with reference to Baudrillard in his description of car travel, noted however that many automobile drivers described time spent in their vehicles as uncomfortable without music playing as an accompaniment. Indeed Bull (2004) suggested that cars are perfect acoustic spaces for listening to music where the individual choices are curated. Denora (2000) also argued that music has a prosthetic effect as people dance in the seat etc. Yet our empirical findings of VW campervan travel showed that participants were more discerning about the content of their engine sounds, "tuning in" or listening to those instead. So, rather than choosing to be entertained by the "din and to-do" of music from their vehicle's stereos (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1973, p.56) as a false pretence of revelry as they put it, most owners listened carefully to their engines to monitor the health of their vans or to enjoy them as music.

Some tourists/drivers did intermittently play popular music from their sound system, but it was found that most listened to the musicality of the VW campervan as the primary soundtrack, not the other way around. In VW campervan travel the sound of moving parts act as a backdrop against which the other sensualities expressed in road use are felt. Sheller and Urry (2000, p.747) argued that the senses are perhaps "impoverished" when trying to find expression on mundane roads. Our research questions this thesis on the basis that the sonic properties of acoustic elements are richly relevant to the tourist experience. We contend that as the engine emits sounds and tourists engage with these in particular ways, they function not as disembodied sounds in the background, but almost as an artificial "heartbeat" that can signify aliveness and pulse. Tourists/drivers also listened for potential "accidents waiting to happen" because the peculiarities of the sound helped those with often low expectations of a consistent eurhythm, to feel some security in completing their journeys without breaking down. Some tourists listened to every sound the VW campervan made and joked that they could usually hear the recovery service coming in advance. Others did claim to listen to popular music whilst travelling, but not often for the entire journey. Some participants for example occasionally punctuated their listening by pausing their popular music to check their engine status. This behaviour was mimicked by many tourist/drivers who preferred not to play additional music in the cab, as they wanted to be immersed in the sounds of the van not only so they could anticipate any untoward consequences, but also because the sounds of the van were an intimate part of the travel experience:

I prefer to hear what's going on in the engine bay and listen to the wheels etc. and of course you need to be constantly alert in case something drops off.
(Michael, VW Campervan owner, 2012)

I pretty much end up listening to the vehicle as a whole and get to know when someone doesn't sound right, I don't often have music on in the van except when camped up as I like the sound of the engine instead. The sound of the engine is an essential part of the character which is why I wind the window down through tunnels like a lot of folk I reckon. (Bob, VW campervan Owner, 2011)

Research participants also listened to the sound of their vans as though monitoring their own health, as if the van was a part of their own body:

I think I would say I notice the exceptional noises from the engine, that's what stands out. So mechanically if things started going wrong and it deviated from what it sounded like 99% of the time I would probably pick up on that, but it would be in the background you know, I don't think I'm super consciously listening to it. But obviously like all VW drivers, once you've heard one thing, you start to be overly analytical about it and then you're listening to oh did something happen there? You know. (Mick, VW Campervan Owner, 2012)

Notably Mick also intimated in the above quote that he was so intertwined with the van and the sounds it made that he was often not consciously listening. This finds resonance in the symbiosis between the musician and her instrument which as Nijs et al suggest:

results from a growing integration of instrumental and interpretative movements into a coherent whole that is compatible with the body of the musician and with the movement repertoire of daily life. Such integration leads to the transparency of the musical instrument that just like "natural" body parts disappears from consciousness. The musical instrument has then become part of the body as stable background of every human experience and is no longer an obstacle to an embodied interaction with the music. It has become a natural extension of the musician, thus allowing a spontaneous corporeal articulation of the music (2009, p.1).

Our research with VW campervan tourists/drivers revealed that like the relationship between musicians/instruments, there was a melding of human and machine, as if they were one body, and this was made possible through sound, which was integral to the embodied experience of being on the move. Here we can see that the couplings between the biological (human) and the technological (van), through sound, resulted in profound physiological changes in the very constitution of the self (of the VW campervan tourist/driver). In a Deleuzian sense we can say therefore that VW campervans "become integral components of a polyphonic machinic subjectivity" (Watson, 2010, p. 246).

In summary, a VW campervan, like other motor vehicles, produces sound in response to human interaction in similar fashion to a musical instrument. However, unlike most modern vehicles where drivers are immersed in an 'acoustic cocoon' (Bijsterveld, 2010) which insulates them from the mechanical sounds of their vehicles, in the case of the classic VW campervan these mechanical sounds are integral to the embodied experience of travel. From our research it was clear that the sound of the vehicle's combustion engine and various moving parts can be overbearing in timbre. Yet, VW campervan tourists/drivers did not recoil at the background din, but often applauded it. We thus contested the idea that tourists/drivers always choose to travel in a vehicle that buffers them from the external conditions that need only limited engagement. In fact, unlike modern cars, the antiquated nature of the classic VW campervan, due to age and basic engineering, makes extraneous sounds that can be 'felt'. As participants had an acute awareness of a kinaesthetic relationship with the vehicle, we argued that they were embodied in sound while in motion. This sonic embodiment, we suggested, is analogous to that between a musician and her/his instrument, where both become fused in the act of performance. We found that the embodied sonic experiences of VW campervan tourists/drivers were psychological, emotional and physiological as the sounds of the van either elicited feelings of well-being or feelings of stress. In other words, the intimate connection between VW campervan tourists/drivers and the sounds of their vans, whilst on the move, affected their state of mind which was subject to how their van was sounding and thus functioning. Research participants also found that listening to the sounds of their vans was like listening to their own 'heartbeat' suggesting that the machine was an extension of the human body (Cumming, 2000).

The Deleuzian concept of assemblage also provided us with some valuable insights into the nature of the embodied sonic experiences of VW campervan tourists. Specifically, this enabled us to understand the interconnections between the human and non-human, the material and the immaterial and the disruption of traditional hierarchical binaries between them. We also recognised that any fusing between human and machine, while on the move, was necessarily unstable and not fixed in time or space. This leaves open the possibility of new becomings, of a series of deterritorializations and reterritorializations as the VW campervan tourist/driver/machine assemblage meets other assemblages while on the road. This process should not be seen in a negative light as ‘deterritorialization indicates the creative potential of an assemblage’ (Parr, 2010, p. 69).

CONCLUSION

Our application of an instrumental metaphor coupled with insights from the Deleuzian concept of assemblage is a novel approach which has enabled us to unearth new ways of thinking about embodiment and motor vehicle travel, thus generating alternative realities of this mobile practice underpinned by sound. Our metaphorical analysis emerged inductively from empirical work with VW campervan tourists/drivers. We recognised in our research that humans are central to the understanding of how sound is mediated through the vehicle, and that a dialogue between human and machine, although not through a formal language, is arguably a conversation between them as an embodied element of travel. Labelle (2010) points out that sonic material, as an audio vocabulary of travel, is expressed through assemblage and we suggest in this paper that this is what occurs as tourists/drivers and vehicles are knotted together through sound. We have however stressed that this coupling of human and machine is not always harmonious, and neither is that between a musician and her/his instrument. This approach goes some way to heeding the call by Adu-Ampong (2016) for more explicit metaphorical analyses in tourism studies. Our research also adds to the often-elided attention to sound, listening and the aural senses in tourism studies. We believe that an instrumental metaphor can also be used to understand other embodied sonic experiences within tourism and related contexts such as leisure. For example, such a theorisation can be used to understand the sonic experiences of tourists in other subcultural contexts such as those who travel using Harley Davidson motorcycles or narrow boats (boats distinctively designed to fit the narrow canals in the UK). In a practical sense using an instrumental metaphor to understand tourists’ experiences with sound can help to communicate research results more readily to a non-academic audience.

We conclude with three caveats. First, our constructivist, sensuous methodological approach means that we cannot be prescriptive about our findings. Other studies conducted on different modes of transport (for example motorcycles and narrowboats as mentioned above) will necessarily reveal alternative interpretations and other becomings (*a la* Deleuze). Our focus on the antiquated VW campervan might be considered as unique due to the prevalence of the mechanical sounds that emanate from the machines’ engines and other moving parts, the level of skill that is often required in order to manipulate this cumbersome vehicle and the particular demographic profile of most VW campervan enthusiasts including those who participated in this research (male, under 39 years, white and working class) . Research participants who are aficionados of other modes of transport might well have different demographic profiles enabling an understanding of a range of other possible subjectivities that might emerge from their embodied sonic experiences with these non-human machines. In addition, while we have been unable to explore this due to our theoretical focus coupled with the journal’s word strictures, there are other conceptual possibilities that might provide further insights into an understanding of tourists’ experiences with sound including flow

theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) where one can contemplate an investigation of whether a dynamic equilibrium is possible between human and machine which can optimise the tourists' embodied mobile experience. Second, the field research, conducted approximately six years ago might be considered as dated. However, we believe that it is still pertinent to contemporary settings as VW campervan communities persist, arguably, as a subcultural group who seek to preserve the 'hippy vibe' of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, our theoretical approach to embodiment with the focus on sound and listening provides an important current contribution.

Finally, we recognise that we have not sufficiently interrogated agency and the power political functions of metaphors which might reveal dominant ideologies, for example surrounding class and ethnicity. Similarly, with regard to assemblages, Currier (2003) indicates that Deleuze was cognisant of the "operations of power [and] in mapping how power traverses assemblages" (2003, p. 325). The question here is if assemblages are constantly 'becoming', and are unstable, who or what determines their future (fluid) shape and form? In terms of agency it might be possible to contemplate research that focuses not just on the choice made by the (human) body to manipulate the machine, but also how the different moving parts of the machine are attuned or 'comported' to each other (see Ash, 2017). We recommend that future studies in tourism seek to explore such issues of agency within human/machine assemblages. Future studies might also seek to unpack how an instrumental metaphor can be used to illuminate the (im)mobilities of travel in the context of other modes of transport.

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