

38 Video, Audio and Technology-based Applications

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In this interconnection of embodied being and environing world, what happens in the interface is what is important.

Don Ihde (2001: 8)

SYNOPSIS

Video, audio and technology-based applications are components of what have recently been termed artful, creative and experimental geographies. These audio/visual approaches are conceived as both tools of engagement and methods of dissemination – they are also becoming not only more prevalent but almost impossible *not* to engage with in some way. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the increasing ubiquity and utility of these technologies offer new ways to record and distribute research. However, as researchers, we have an obligation to engage with these technologies critically. The tension wrought between the social push behind audio/visual material and our urgent need to engage these methods judiciously is inspiring changes in the way we think about and do our research. These variations have dovetailed with emerging theoretical branches in geography that give consideration to sensory, more-than-textual and more-than-representational research praxes.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Film and video as research method
- The audio in audio/visual
- From multi-sensory methods to more-than-textual methodologies

Box 38.1 Overview

- Video and audio recordings have long been a part of the work of geographers but are now coming more to the fore as part of emerging multimedia research methods
- Video opens out capacities for participatory work, documentary and ethnographic research, close analysis, and new ways to distribute these

- Audio in geography has two hurdles to jump – as an underused method and one seen as being subservient to visual methods
- These methods are more than new tools – they must be used critically
- Conceptualizing audio/visual work in the context of non-representational theory may be geography's most significant contribution to methodological reimagination

38.1 Introduction

Geographers have long experimented with forms of video, audio and technology in their work. The relationship between geography and these technologies has, however, also been riven by disputes, frustrations and concerns. These tensions primarily stem from the processual approach researchers have taken toward these methods as forms of 'data collection', rather than making the opportunity to generate intellectually robust aesthetic materials (Crang, 2003: 501). By using technology simply as tools, researchers missed a mark – for in working with video and audio in our research we undergo, whether we acknowledge it or not, an ontological reorientation that opens out new ways of being in, and engaging with, the world as well as new ways of creating and disseminating information. The process is inherently political. In re-framing these methods as methodologies, in acknowledgment of their foundational capacities to affect us, we find fertile ground that merges into modern (multi) media forms more innovatively. This type of work has been referred to as artful, experimental and creative geography at various points (Thompson et al., 2008; Paglen, 2009; Enigbokan and Patchett, 2012; Last, 2012; Hawkins, 2013). These labels might relay a sense that this type of work is happening at the margins – and that has been the case in the past. Increasingly however, we will find it impossible not to engage with these methodologies.

It is well recognized that people think and work effectively in different ways. Some people are, for instance, more attuned to listening to others speak. Others learn best sensorially, looking at, touching and feeling material objects. Still other people learn best by reading and writing. There are clearly many variations here. Geographers have been attentive to different ways of knowing and have made significant contributions to an understanding of 'visual geographies' in particular (Rose, 2016). However, the more we have come to understand the power of audio/visual products (maps, videos, photographs, audio recordings etc.), the more researchers feel the need to be critical of the hidden (or not-so-hidden!) agendas behind those productions. Consider the history of European exploration, where mapmakers acted, in a sense, as scouts for colonising forces. Often 'new' lands, such as those in North America during the nineteenth-century Westward expansion, were depicted on maps as being empty, when in fact they had been populated for thousands of years by Native Americans. We might consider this a kind of 'positioned spectatorship' where the position is wholly beneficial to those who commissioned the production of the map (Hearnshaw and Unwin, 1996; Rogoff, 2000: 11). Equally, photographs and videos of explorers 'conquering virgin territories', linked to organizations such as the Royal Geographical Society, also played a part in wielding visual methods as colonial tools (Ryan, 1997).

Though this history turned visual methods into a poisoned chalice for many geographers, this does not mean we should not engage with them. In fact, it may make it even more imperative that we do so.

Contemporary audio/visual researchers have reached for what Donna Haraway has termed 'situated knowledge', which undermines 'a conquering gaze from nowhere' (Haraway, 1991: 188) through a 'growing interest in multi-sensory methods' (Gallagher and Prior, 2014: 2). Some of this work used phenomenological frameworks to undermine the 'visual' by loading the balance more evenly among the senses and found that stretching the limits of, for instance, listening, opened up different potentialities for co-production (Ingham et al., 1999; also see Hoover, 2010, on scent). Researchers, in this vein, thus experimented with video diaries, video and photo elicitation, montage, performance, listening, sound recording and playback, and participatory video, amongst other techniques. In doing so, they realized that moving away from text-based methods text was not merely about undertaking a different type of 'field labour', producing records for analysis to prompt the production of yet more text, but that their relationship to these technologies, their co-producers and the world had been irrevocably altered. Thus audio/visual methods are

...practices that take on the production of space in a self-reflexive way, practices that recognize that cultural production and the production of space cannot be separated from each another, and that cultural and intellectual production is a spatial practice. (Paglen, 2009: np)

It follows then that when Gillian Rose tells us that visual materials should not be thought of as merely illustrative, or when Hayden Lorimer speaks of 'our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds' (Lorimer, 2005: 83), or when Hester Parr writes that that making collaborative videos can 'reduce the "distance" between researcher and researched' (Parr, 2007: 115), we understand that we are working through something more suggestive than a simple discussion of how to use new tools. Gallagher and Prior suggest, further, that 'as these technologies become increasingly embedded into social worlds, it seems likely that the possibilities offered for geographers will continue to grow' (Gallagher and Prior, 2014: 6). In short, geographers are in the midst of a multi-sensory, multi-modal, multi-media, ontological reconfiguration (Garrett and Hawkins, 2014). In this chapter, I will begin by thinking about video methodologies, follow by a discussion of audio methodologies, and close by thinking about more-than-textual technologies more generally.

38.2 Film and Video as Research Method

Neither words nor images but both of these and more besides

Nigel Thrift (2011: 22)

As recently as 2010, Nicholas Bauch remarked that video as geographic method was a '... socially ubiquitous yet almost awkwardly absent medium in our discipline as a

form of expression' (Bauch, 2010: 475). Bauch was particularly concerned about the absence of video as a form of research output, echoing Mike Crang where he wrote,

[T]he spoken and written word constitute the primary form of 'data', whereas the world speaks in many voices through many different types of things that 'refuse to be reinvented as univocal witnesses'. Qualitative research, despite talking about the body and emotions, frames its enterprise in a particular way that tends to disallow other forms of knowledge. (Crang, 2005: 230; citing Whatmore, 2009, also see Garrett, 2010b)

Looking more closely, geographers have incorporated possibilities for film and video production into four main areas. First, participatory geographers (see Chapter 13) have used video as a way of levelling knowledge creation by co-producing filmic material (Kendon, 2003; Parr, 2007). Second, geographers have made documentary and ethnographic films (Gandy, 2007; SilentUK et al., 2010; Whatmore et al., 2011; Daniels and Veale, 2012). Third, researchers have created 'video articles', a documentary film and academic article hybrid form (Evans and Jones, 2008; Bauch, 2010; Garrett, 2010a). Finally, researchers have recorded video and then analysed distinct frames to tease out nuances of embodied, often auto-ethnographic workings (Laurier and Philo, 2006; Merchant, 2011; Simpson, 2011). These categories are obviously not exclusionary and much overlap exists.

Despite this body of work, it remains a small minority of research in the discipline. There is a reluctance to undertake research with video that may stem from technological anxieties. Matthew Gandy, who produced the beautifully shot and politically powerful film *Liquid City*, about water rights in Mumbai, outlined four 'warnings' for geographers using video on a future projects:

First, a project of this kind involves a larger and more diverse team of people than is common for most academic projects. Second, the budgetary and time constraints pose a much greater risk of failure in comparison with most forms of academic research because filming schedules cannot easily be repeated or postponed. Third, the planning is complex and involves a greater range of responsibilities than is usually encountered in an academic project. And finally, there is a need for flexibility on the ground in order to respond to opportunities or difficulties that may arise (Gandy, 2009: 406–7).

These are important points. However, even in the past five years we have seen substantial changes in camera capability, portability, size, computing and storage capacities. More recently Daniels and Veale note, in the production of the film *Imagining Coastal Change*, that the cost of professional video production 'seems like a lot, but not compared to the costs of book and journal publishing' (Daniels and Veale, 2014: 502). Some of these films are also now being produced by researchers themselves, decreasing the price of production considerably. These changes are a by-product of unprecedented global technological literacy that has blossomed over the past decade. These evolving machineries, and our symbiotic relationships with machineries, are never only technological; the social ubiquity of a video camera in most mobile phones for instance has triggered ever-shifting codes of etiquette and how, when, where and why they are used

(see Fox, 2005). These newly-formed (and ever-morphing) relationships can complicate research projects greatly – but they can also assist them. Indeed, Gandy's concerns above also work to highlight one of the major benefits of film and video making – that 'documentary filmmaking is by nature collaborative. Quite simply, it's impossible to make a film about other people on your own' (Barbash and Taylor, 1997: 74). Which leads to consideration of participatory video work.

Participatory video (PV) has been described by White (2003: 64) as a process-oriented collaborative undertaking where 'interaction, sharing and cooperation' can open up possibilities for 'personal, social, political and cultural change'. In this context, PV clearly fits into the broader remit of Participatory Action Research (Kendon et al., 2008). The specificities here relate to the particularities of video as a medium: the power of the tool to bear witness and its potential for wide distribution of recorded material online. Development geographers, activists and participatory geographers have thus turned to PV as a method of co-production which, contrary to the comments of Gandy above, is seen as an accessible format where literacy is not necessary, even if access to technology is. The simple fact is that many people in economically disadvantaged areas are more comfortable co-creating images than they are in co-creating text and that even in areas of relative economic affluence children are more likely to own a mobile phone than a book (Paton, 2010). PV practitioners have recognized this and have brought many video-based projects to communities around the world, giving them a chance to co-create material with researchers. It is a frustrating process riven with power struggles – as all research with human subjects should be (see Garrett and Brickell, 2014).



Figure 38.1 The author's video setup, with a 24mm lens, an external microphone and earbuds to monitor sound

However, using video in this way, particularly because of the power and reach of the medium, has the capacity to outstrip the intentions of researchers or participants. As Haraway (2007: 263) explains, 'technologies are always compound. They are composed of diverse agents of interpretation, agents of recording, and agents for directing and multiplying relational action'. It is therefore vital that parameters everyone is comfortable with are built into these projects early on, with an understanding of what kind of (even unanticipated) work created materials might do. Data storage procedures, including encryption, deletion of unused footage, and anonymisation of imagery, are also important to discuss in the process of production. In a traditional PV model, the researcher would (gradually) give up control of the production. However, in some instances participatory goals are better met through co-authorship and collaborative work, as exemplified by the Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies project (see Box 38.2).

Box 38.2 The Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies Project

Perhaps best described as an academic documentary video production with participatory elements, Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies is an award-winning research project led by Sarah Whatmore, Stuart Lane and Neil Ward (see Whatmore, 2009). The project has been praised for its interdisciplinary methodology and scientific innovation, bridging human and physical geography in order to address flooding and pollution in two local areas of Sussex and Yorkshire. On the website of the project, the principal investigators describe their interests in the

...relationship between science and policy, and in particular how to engage the public with scientific research findings. We aim to develop a new approach to interdisciplinary environmental science, involving non-scientists throughout the process. (Whatmore et al., 2009: n.p.)

A six-minute documentary film that is, in many ways, the centrepiece of the project presentation, is interesting in that participatory methods are clearly in use yet it is not, by strict definition, a participatory film. The principal investigators have held consultation groups, had local people run the scientific modelling programmes and one participant in the film refers to Professor Whatmore as a 'facilitator' – classic PV language. However the film, rather than being made by the project participants, is clearly a documentary film about a participatory process. It has been showcased widely and is part of a suite of research outlets which included exhibitions, media appearances and numerous academic journal articles. It is the way that the film, though successful, cannot be strictly bounded or described that leads me to choose it as an interesting case study here. This project, from the involvement of local people in technical work to the well-executed (and succinct) presentation of the project on video to the construction of an interesting, up-to-date and easy to navigate website, without calling particular attention to any of these things, makes it a great model for video work.

Many participatory films are also ethnographic films. There is a small but robust body of work in geography of ethnographic filmmaking and a particularly interesting dovetail in geographers' interest in telling stories of people and places (see Chapter 6). Often, we find that as we try and tell these stories, we confront a difficulty in extending our own

subjectivities to comprehend the way others apprehend the world. As Susan Hogan and Sarah Pink put it:

Ethnographers are always faced with a problem: while we might aim to empathise with, understand, interpret and represent other people's experiences, imaginations and memories, their sensory and affective qualities are only accessible to us in limited ways. (Hogan and Pink, 2012: 236)

When we make an ethnographic film over a long period of time through a process of 'deep hanging out', we must make sense of other people's realities (including how they relate to places) by telling stories that will communicate a feeling of being there, a feeling of time spent, a feeling of connecting across registers that is very often autobiographical. Inherently then, 'the film editor's job has always been metaphorically hypertextual' (Coover et al., 2012), a process of connecting people, time and places in a way that often defies linear logic. Ethnographic films are composed of webs of connections where distinctions between autobiography, empathetic observation and the subjective understandings of others cannot be clearly delineated. Because of the capacity for editing where moving images connect to myriad sounds, voices and fragments of events and where they relay a sense, a presence, film editing is inherently non-linear and multi-sensual and this changes the way we think about the process of research.

In the case of both video production and text: 'Ideas are formulated ahead of time, relevant evidence is sought and collected, then, both are converted by some form of technology and manipulated over and over until a compelling case can be strung together in a way that is intelligible to others' (Bauch, 2010: 481). And so, in working with audio/visual forms, we are, again, not making a move 'beyond' text but working in/alongside text to spark knowledge production across multiple registers. Importantly, the ethnographic film also involves the viewer as a player in the ethnography as soon as it is released, creating a sort of triangle of meaning between the researcher, the participant and the viewer (for more on the 'triangulation' of meaning construction through viewing images see Rose, 2016; Gold, 2002; and Rancière, 2011).

Constructing an ethnographic film about others (a film that may also be autobiographical) is a practice of 'contributing to an affective politics, a politics of relation' (Kannigieser, 2011: 337). It is in the doing, the making, the production, the distribution and the response, through all of these parts of the multi-sensual, multi-modal, multi-media research event, where ethnographic film finds its form. The 'layering and composting found in editing and effects programs have altered cinematic premises about the frame, continuity, and montage; they have expanded cinematic rhetoric and poetics, perhaps defining an increasingly hybrid language that fuses writing and images' (Coover et al., 2012).

Of course, variations in moving images are also a matter of scale. One key driver for geographical video-making specifically is the medium's recognised value for moving us beyond the textual and representational, in the context of 'facial expression, intonation, pauses, uncertainties, voice inflections, and body language', where these subtleties can be tended to with care (also see Laurier and Philo, 2006; Bauch, 2010: 482). Video can be shot at frame rates of 5,000 and 10,000 still images per second.

At this speed, the camera can see what the eye cannot, allowing for, in review, rendering the imperceptible *perceptible*. The benefits of frame-by-frame analysis for research on, for instance nuances of human interaction, are clear (Laurier and Philo, 2006; Simpson, 2011).

With these examples thus outlined, it is of course important to remind the reader that none of these notions of how film and video have, can, and should be used are bounded categories in any sense. Nor are they fixed in time – new technologies will undoubtedly break down and remake these categories, even between the time of writing this chapter and publishing it.

38.3 The Audio in Audio/Visual

Sound, in my view, is neither mental nor material, but a phenomenon of experience – that is, of our immersion in, and comingling with, the world in which we find ourselves.

Tim Ingold (2007: 11)

In the same way forms of film and video cannot be easily bounded, we also cannot draw a distinct line between the aural and visual (hence the ubiquity of the audio/visual abutment). Thinking about audio in geography has moved from Schafer's 'soundscapes' to Rodaway's early distinctions between the 'auditory' and the 'sonic' to Matless's more open-ended sonic formulations (Schafer, 1977; Rodaway, 1994; Matless, 2010). Recent work by Anderson has considered non-representational (see Chapter 12) potentialities for listening and remembering; Kannigieser has done work on the politics of speaking, tone, utterance and voice; and Gallagher and Prior have usefully summarized this disciplinary attentiveness in the context of experimental geographies of phonography (Anderson, 2004; Kannigieser, 2011; Gallagher and Prior, 2013). In our consideration of audio, the aural and the phonographic, we can revisit the question of audiencing and give ample room to both the act of recording (again as an act of sensual engagement with the world rather than as simply data collection) and the act of listening. In doing so, we run up against our lingering text barriers since as Gallagher and Prior write, 'the majority of geographically aligned research on sound has ... been methodologically conventional, using techniques such as interviews, ethnography, archival research and discourse analysis, and has been disseminated via traditional written publications' (Gallagher and Prior, 2013: 1–2, citing Crang, 2003). I would therefore like, in this section, to look at some work which prioritises sound at a more sensorial level.

As with video, capturing sound is a process which can involve different forms of technology and contexts. From recording a spontaneous interview or conversation on one's phone to making sensually enticing binaural (two-channel, stereographic) recordings that mimic the way the ears and brain process sound to creating immersive soundscapes, audio recording can take many forms as a methodology. However, whatever the technology involved, Gallagher and Prior want to remind us that 'when phonographers go out into the field to "capture" sounds, they do not bring the sounds back with them' (Gallagher and Prior, 2013: 9). Sounds of course belong to the specific



Figure 38.2 An inexpensive audio recording set comprised of a recorder, a directional microphone and headphones

moments and contexts in which they exist. What we bring back are recordings – not false copies but new assemblages entirely, lush with layers of recall, anticipation and potential for replay and remix. Like video, replaying sounds will affect an audience as they bring their own experiences and expectation to bear on the process and so, with each listening, a sound is changed. This is why widely circulated sounds on the Internet become so saturated with meaning.

The Carrlands Project, led by ex-archaeologist and performance artist Mike Pearson, is an interesting aural intervention around notions of landscape and place harbouring similarities to the films of Patrick Keiller. The involvement of the Landscape and Environment program at the University of Nottingham Geography on the project (also involved in the *Imagining Coastal Change* film) is worth noting. Logging onto a website for the project, the listener is offered a selection of audio files. Each one is a rich mix of spoken word, landscape recording and dramatic music performance meshed into a tapestry of site-specific works that relay a profound sense of place, especially if one were to listen to it near to where it was recorded. On the Carrland's website it describes the project as a

small-scale case study that proposes site-specific performance as both innovative mode of enquiry and as tangible research output; performance is identified as a medium that can precipitate and encourage public visitation, inform presence, and illuminate the historically and culturally diverse ways in which a landscape is made, used, reused and interpreted. (Pearson et al. 2007: 1)

Carrlands is a reminder of course that sonic geographies are as much about listening as recording. Ben Anderson, in his research sitting with people as they listen to music in their homes, suggests that the act of listening and recalling, or indeed listening and encountering unbidden spontaneous memories, which may signify 'a not-yet conscious, visceral, logic of intensity... irreducible to wither a symbolic or emotional register', is linked to explicitly ontological questions (Anderson, 2004: 10). And so, like video, recording and listening to audio brings us once again to a point of repositioning – not at the point of distributing these productions, as is commonly assumed, but before even the moment of creation and in the anticipation of creation. For instance, Anderson writes that many people find it hard to explain why they choose to listen to certain songs when they do. Much of it has to do with a feeling embedded in that song specific to them that connects them to other times and places in their lives. Of course the anticipation of those connections is part of what guides the selection. This kind of memory might be considered *affective* (see Chapter 12) memory in that it rises not from cognition but from complex pre-cognitive feelings.

Sound is clearly very powerful. In thinking about how 'phonography is a form of writing – the inscription of sound – just as photography is the inscription of light', we must be careful not to position audio as subservient to, or indeed only visible in contrast to, video. As Gallagher and Prior tell us, 'audio is largely erased in human geography... except perhaps when subsumed within video, where it is stabilized by the referential qualities of the image' (Gallagher and Prior, 2013: 4). In response to just such prompting, I invite consideration of *Jute*, an audio/visual project led by sound.

Box 38.3 *Jute*: A Video that Foregrounds Audio

Jute is a film that was created in Dundee, Scotland, by myself, Brian Rosa and Jonathan Prior as part of an experimental geography workshop put together by Michael Gallagher and Jonathan Prior (Garrett et al., 2011). Dr Prior's research focuses on sound and listening. While co-creating the film, we made a conscious decision to preference the process of following sound over the search for 'visual' content in an attempt to subvert the normative priorities of filmmaking. In effect, we were working to pre-emptively prevent devaluing the sonic qualities we encountered as merely soundtrack-ing. As a result, Dr Rosa and I ended up filming where Dr Prior led us with his microphone, often following sounds we could not hear with our ears or follow with our lenses, such as when he submerged contact microphones into the water to capture the claw clicks of crabs fighting at the bottom of the River Tay. We were forced then to find something to film that felt like the crabs fighting, a challenging (and fascinating!) process of visualizing unseen audio that was decontextualized from its context.

During the editing of the film, we also resolved to edit the video with the sound recordings as our starting point. We were curious to see how such an approach could lead to new possibilities in capturing the sensual flow and rhythm of the landscape similar to the way we had encountered it 'in the field'. We were interested in how this would translate as an audio/visual piece, where the viewer was not party to our direct experience of sound threading *in situ*. The final film, a six-minute drift through the city, is a film as much about sound and visuals and as much about process as place. It is, in a word, experimental.¹

¹ The film can be viewed at <http://liminalities.net/7-2/jute.mov>, accessed 4 December 2015.



Figure 38.3 A still frame from *Jute*, immersed in reflection and layering

Sound-led walks have become an increasingly important way of experiencing places, especially in urban environments. Walks have been created of alternative museum narrations, street-level traversals of buried watercourses, hunting for the drone of air conditioners and ventilation shafts, and listening for urban wildlife. Many walks also just prompt the walkers to listen at particular points, waiting for a sound to come to them. Closing your eyes at these points, waiting for sounds to come at you, can be disconcerting at first but soon gives you a heightened sense of sound where vision is suppressed. Equally, recording sounds at a particular time and replaying them in the same place at a different time may also bring about a very distinct awareness of sound as the visual space empty of bodies (for instance) is populated with disembodied voices (see Gallagher, 2015). Techniques such as these can add a great deal to our understanding of the kinds of awareness cultivated by foregrounding sound.

As with video, we might assume that a certain aural literacy is required to 'properly' record and analyse sound. However, this is part of making our research more accessible to the public through participation in social practices. The public does not wait to be trained to begin recording sounds and we should not wait to be trained to begin critically recording. Further, most of us, as researchers, took the time to develop textual literacy to do our work. This likely included many fumbles, mistakes and a lot of hard work. With digital and web-based technologies pervasive nearly globally, it's important we take the same risks in learning to become aurally literate.

It is peculiar that although sound recording was developed long before the recording of moving images, moving images seem to have taken a preferential position in our interests as researchers. Even more strange of course is the fact that video recording technology costs more and generally has a steeper learning curve than audio. This would seem to reinforce suggestions of ocular-centrism in the discipline (Macpherson, 2005). However, this is perhaps to overlook the fact that audio has been used in our work to great extent in, for instance, the recording of interviews. The problem then is not one of under-recognition or utilization but, like video, one of not using these tools critically. And so we come full circle, where in the beginning

of this article I suggested that the problem is not in access to or proficiency with audio/visual geographies but in our envisioning of them as tools or methods rather than as methodological ways of being-in-the-world. It is time that we take the audio recorder many of us have in our pockets at all times – our phone – and the ability we have to upload audio files to social media sharing sites like Soundcloud, and begin to experiment. And more – once we've become comfortable with that workflow, we need to try our hand at more complicated forms of creating and editing, for it is in the tension of experimentation, which must include the hacking, subversion and reworking of these technologies, that discoveries are made. It is also vital of course that researchers push publishers, challenging the idea that these materials are not just 'data' to write from or mere supporting elements of publication but are in fact stand-alone forms of publication.

38.4 From Multi-Sensory Methods to More-Than-Textual Methodologies

[A]udio-visual data [can] bear witness to phenomena that often escape talk and text based methods.

Jamie Lorimer (2010: 251)

It is clear that audio/visual work in geography is becoming increasingly common, even if it is not yet ubiquitous. In concluding then, we might consider a few of the hurdles people still confront when working with audio and video. First, Clark has argued that 'visual material presents a significant challenge to conventional ethical practices surrounding the anonymity of participants' (Clark, 2012). This is less challenging with audio and perhaps more challenging with video. But that process of negotiating methodological ethics is important. As I suggested above, part of the interesting thing about working with audio and video is that they are now in many ways more socially ubiquitous than text. Many project participants will likely have stronger feelings about how they are depicted in disseminated audio/visual material than in academic journal articles which are not widely read (Meho, 2007). This tension requires a particular attentiveness not just to the desires of our project participants but also to the ways in which we deal with 'field' material. In other words, working with audio and video can, in some instances, prompt us to do more ethical work.

A second sticking point stems from a disjunction between desires to publish audio/visual material and reluctance by scholarly outputs to accommodate it. Expected modes of dissemination stem from university faculty being invested in a lifetime of reading and writing, from publishers using staid typesetting platforms and from constraining research frameworks that not only valorise text but also valorise the publication of it in niche outputs. These issues are undermining our capacity to do interesting, contemporary and ethical ethnographic, activist, documentary and artistic audio/visual research. In the case of journals, this is a problem easily remedied since 'the technological capability for hyperlinked multimedia in e-journals is well established, but is at present under-utilized' (Gallagher and Prior, 2013: 13).

As researchers, we can catalyse the move to video, audio and technology-based outputs by requesting that journals accommodate those needs. If we act in an official capacity for any of these journals, we can also of course catalyse those changes from the inside, as it were.

More than ever before, we are surrounded by sounds and images. Work that once required access to special skills, tools and environments to undertake is now available to many of us in our pockets. I can, if I choose, walk away from this computer with nothing but my phone in my pocket, go shoot a film over the next few hours, edit it in my phone, upload it to the Internet and get feedback on the work from colleagues and the public, all before I even return to my computer. A decade from publication of this chapter, that process I've just described will no doubt sound clunky and ancient. This is the world we live in now – and so experimental geographies 'create important bridges between what were in the past the rather separate worlds of academic social-science scholarship on the one hand, and on the other, the domains of applied public research and of arts practice' (Pink, 2012). We are seeing an unprecedented upskilling of the general populace and, simultaneously, a need for researchers to meet those new skills sets to think through their terms of use at the cutting edge of critical praxis. It is at that edge that these methods bloom best (Dewsbury, 2009: 324). It is perhaps something about how we see these methods, how they cause us to change our perspective towards their potentialities, that means the sensorial, the phenomenological and even the collaborative inherently become part of their deployment, for

works of art bring something new into the world rather than reflecting what's already there. This something new is constitutive rather than being merely representational, or reveals something already there but hidden. Works of art make culture. Each work makes different the culture it enters. (O'Neill, 2012: 158)

Human geographers are becoming increasingly brave in their experiments with, and critical reflection on, new methodologies (Shaw et al., 2015). Artistic approaches are 'part of a trend in social science and humanities research that focuses on the experiential, the sensory, and ways of knowing, being and remembering that cannot necessarily be articulated in words ... these developments are also congruent with the concern with the senses in ethnography and a move beyond written text' (Hogan and Pink, 2012) and open out new potentials for the sensory, the affective, the atmospheric, the material and the relational. Grasseni suggests that 'sense-scapes require new reflections on the power of ethnographic representation' (2012: 98). However, as outlined in this chapter, it would be naïve to think that these sense-scapes are being 'captured' and accurately transmitted through these methods. What geographers uniquely have to offer to other humanities is our distinct ability to feel our way *through* the representational, which may very well be a by-product of our complicated relationship with visual geographies of the past relegated to the dustbin of colonialism. New work with video, audio and technology-based applications depends on our capacities to reimagine what is possible in the present without forgetting the past.



Figure 38.4 Researchers experimenting with a submersible camera and a boom pole

SUMMARY

- Geography has had a long, and sometimes fraught, relationship with audio/visual methodologies.
- Many early experiments of working with multimedia methods were problematic because of tendencies to treat audio/visual methods purely as observational tools.
- Audio/visual methodologies (as opposed to methods) are experiencing a resurgence in the discipline because of interest in their creative and more-than-representational capacities.
- These new methodologies require new platforms for publications.

Further Reading/Listening/Viewing

This further reading/listening/viewing is focused more on the why rather than the how of using audio and video as a geographic research methodology.

- There is no key book in geography about using video as method. However, *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research* by Sarah Pink (2007) is an excellent resource. I engage with Pink's work, and videographic methods more generally, in a 2010 article for *Progress in Human Geography* (Garrett, 2010b). I would also recommend Simpson (2011) for an interesting empirical case study paper on video analysis of busking and Lorimer (2010) for a more theoretical treatment of moving-image-methodologies.
- If you are interested in working through how one might go about constructing an academic article in audio/visual form, it's worth watching Evans and Jones (2008); Bauch (2010); and Garrett (2010b), all in *Geography Compass*.
- Three key readings on sonic or sonorous geographies include Ingham et al. (1999), Matless (2010) and Gallagher and Prior (2013).
- Those interested in the politics of listening and speaking should refer to Kanngieser (2011), winner of the 2013 *Progress in Human Geography* Essay Prize for its theoretical and creative innovativeness.

- Finally, if you are interested in artistic, creative and experimental geographies more generally, you can get a brief sketch from Thompson et al. (2008) or a book-length treatment from Hawkins (2013).

Note: Full details of the above can be found in the references list below.

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1. Garrett, B. (2011) 'Videographic geographies: Using digital video for geographic research', *Progress in Human Geography*, 35 (4): 521–41.

This article looks at how geographers have engaged with film and video over time and the ways in which videographic production is enriching geographical research, particularly in the context of non-representational theory.

2. Gallagher, M. and Prior, J. (2013) 'Sonic geographies: Exploring phonographic methods', *Progress in Human Geography*, 38 (2): 267–84.

This paper is a fantastic overview of the epistemological implications of phonographic methods as used by geographers writing about both recording and listening to sound.

3. Dowling, R., Lloyd, K. and Suchet-Pearson, S. (2015) 'Qualitative methods 1: Enriching the interview', *Progress in Human Geography*, 39. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515596880>

Here Dowling et al. give us an overview of the ways in which qualitative methods of interviewing are being transformed by technologies and mobilities. Their discussion of autoethnographies, more-than-textual methodologies and capturing social life is astute and useful.