

Delaney Lindberg

Professor April Flynn

Composing Digital Media

26 September 2022

### Soundscape Narrative Reflection

Since my first panic attack at the age of twelve, I have learned to deal with my anxiety in many ways; however, panic attacks are incredibly unpredictable and are difficult for others to understand and process if they have never experienced one. I have tried throughout my life to explain the feeling to others who have never had one, but the words have never fully sufficed. I was therefore inspired to create a piece that enabled the listener to experience the sounds and sensations of a panic attack.

To do so, I attempted to recreate the sounds and feelings I have experienced while having a panic attack in the library. The following breakdown is how I recorded/found and edited each track (labeled as they are in the Audacity file):

#### **Typing track:**

- I recorded myself typing an assignment with the microphone close to the keyboard.
- I Equalized and used the Envelope tool across the entire track, and I Amplified later sections to increase the volume toward the end of the recording.
- I added a Fade In on the beginning of the track to create a gradual build-up.
- I used the Distortion tool on the end, altering the audio to create an uncomfortable sound that was a bit overwhelming, but not so much that one could no longer decipher the sounds. I then ended the track with a purposeful cut off to help demonstrate that the calm-down of an attack can also be unpredictable.

### **Heartbeat track:**

- I downloaded the audio from:
  - Placidplace. *heartbeat* [Pixabay.com]. Retrieved from <https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/heartbeat/>.
- The original audio clip was a fast heartbeat that gradually slowed down. For my narrative, I desired the opposite effect: a gradually increasing heartbeat. I cut the clip into slow, medium, and fast sections, then ordered them in Audacity so the clipped sections would sound like an increasing speed heartbeat.
- I again used the Fade In and Envelope tool to increase the volume.
- I left this track and the breathing track as the only two the listener can hear at the end, adding the Fade Out tool so the volume would again decrease. I wanted the heartbeat and the breathing to be the only remaining end sounds to create the effect that the person is at that point only in touch with what would be their own feelings, rather than the external overstimulating sounds.

### **Breathing track:**

- I downloaded the audio from:
  - parkersenk. *Heavy breathing* [Pixabay.com]. Retrieved from <https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/breath/>.
- The audio clip was very short, and I wanted the breathing to take up time and not be fully constant. I cut one individual breath from the clip to use three times during the first 1.5(ish) minutes in the following order:

- First breath: slowed down the clip using the Change Speed effect and used the Envelope tool to decrease the volume and give the impression of one, slow deep breath
- Second breath: increased the volume using the Envelope tool
- Third breath: used the Change Speed effect to slow down the speed more than the first, but increased the volume more using the Envelope tool, to make one, loud deep breath
- After the individual breaths, I repeated the near full-length audio, using the Envelope tool for the entire track and the Amplify and Change Speed tools toward the end of the track.

#### **Hillman talking track:**

- I recorded audio on the ground floor of Hillman to add background noise. I wanted to have people speaking and laughing, keyboards typing, chairs moving, etc.
- I again added a Fade In and used the Envelope to increase the volume throughout the track.
- I Amplified the volume and added Distortion on the end of the clip for same effect as that of the Typing track.

In striving to meet the aspirational criteria, I realize I am close to falling below some of the requirements, coming in at exactly two minutes and having four tracks rather than five. I considered adding a fifth track (that would also lengthen the project farther into the aspirational time frame): a narrated introduction somewhere along the lines of “Close your eyes and imagine you are sitting in the library...”. I thought it might help to set the scene and introduce the listener to the intention of the project. The more I considered this idea though, the more I felt as

though it compromised the narrative rather than enhanced it. I wanted to demonstrate that panic attacks can be unpredictable, frightening, and uncomfortable in a way that doesn't fully make sense. Because of this, even though I am on the lower side of the time/track quantitative scale, I feel as though the qualitative aspect of my piece speaks for itself in its effect and emotional discomfort. Upon completing the project and hearing others in class tell me they could relate, that it made sense and was effective – and, if nothing else, being able to open up a safe and comfortable conversation about anxiety and mental health – I am genuinely proud of what I have accomplished with this narrative.