

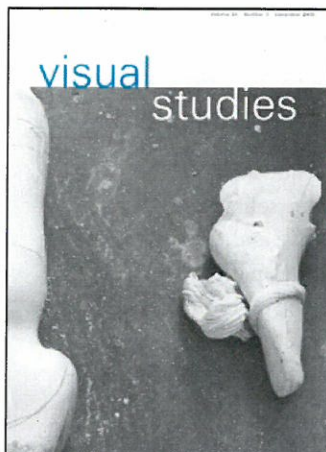
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'Walk with me, talk with me'¹: the art of conversive wayfinding

MISHA MYERS

This article considers three guided walks that conduct participants' attention to landscapes through whispering voices in the ear or through the live voice of the performer: Graeme Miller's guided walk Linked; Platform's 'operatic audio walk' And While London Burns; and Tim Brennan's alternative tour of quotations, Luddite Manoeuvre. Each walk employs various strategies to conduct a convivial way of interacting with and knowing place: attunement through kinaesthetic, synesthetic and sonesthetic perception; sharing 'earpoints' and 'viewpoints' with another through intimate or conversational conviviality; use of present tense and the tension between the real-time present and a past present; and the use of particular rhythmic structures of narrative paces and paths to encourage experiential, creative and critical states of witness appropriate to the content and context of the walks. This form of performance is explored for its convivial potentiality as a way of knowing and expressing people's perceptions and experiences of places through a sociable, conversational or dialogic mode of interaction and a particular mode and methodology of guided walking is defined as conversive wayfinding.

Walks conducted by mediated and whispering voices in the ear or by the 'live' voice of the performer engage participants in particular modes of attentiveness that generate and present knowledge of places through conversational and convivial activity, such that participants become its co-author or co-creator. This article considers three locally articulated artist guided walks that direct participants by way of spoken narrative along a predetermined route in a specific context. The first walk is Platform's 'operatic audio walk' *And While London Burns* (Platform 2006), in which recorded voices guide the ambulant listener through London's Square Mile. The second is Graeme Miller's *Linked* (2003), in which recorded voices of inhabitants displaced from their homes in an area of East London are edited into a soundscape, which a participant receives or activates from radio transmitters located along a specified route. The third walk is Tim Brennan's alternative tour of quotations, *Luddite Manoeuvre* (2008a), in which a group of walkers are guided around the East Midlands

town of Loughborough, through the artist's 'live' performed readings of other voices.

While the first two walks may not appear to be conversational in form, with the solitary listener not literally speaking back in the give and take associated with the conditions of conversation, they do involve sharing a walk with another. The communicative bearings particular to this walking practice may be understood with a more expansive sense of language, one that is 'not confined to rational, verbal articulation, but taken as the whole of embodied comportment, responsiveness and communicability' (Heim 2005, 200).

In this artistic form of conversational walking the embodied experience of a participant becomes extremely important. Rather than the locus of performance being centred exclusively in the body of the artist as performer and the audience being involved as a passive participant, an active mode of participation is set in motion, which calls upon a range of perceptual, imaginative and bodily sensitivities and skills (Myers 2006, 2-3). Where agency of participants is activated in such a mode, they may be reconceived as *percipients*.²

As particular focus is given here to the experience of percipients in the walks considered, the knowledges produced through conversational walking shape and inform this discussion of the works. As the walks do in practice, this writing hopes to walk and talk, following the logic of patterns, paces and paths of walking as experienced in the breath, rhythm, sweat and memory of the walker. An *ambulant writing* of the walks moves between and interweaves different voices and experiences of them, from academic analysis to embodied involvement and dialogue with the artists and the works themselves.

THREE ARTIST WALKS

And While London Burns (Platform 2006) is an operatic audio walk produced by the arts organisation Platform with composer Isa Suarez, that takes the listener,

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equipped with an MP3 player, on a walk 'through the web of institutions that extract oil and gas from the ground . . . the "carbon web" that is London's Square Mile' (Platform 2006). The MP3 files of the walk can be downloaded from a website along with a map, allowing the walk to be taken at the convenience of the percipient. The recorded aspect of the walk offers a different experience to that of a live 'held' tour, as will be seen in the discussion of Brennan's walk, *Luddite Manoeuvre*, which is guided through the live presence of the artist as performer. With *And While London Burns*, the walk is a continuous experience led by the recorded voice of a narrator, or guide, who gives directions for walking, relays factual information about the buildings and landscapes passed through, and sets a pace with the sound of her footsteps. This landscape is also seen through the eyes and experience of a fictional protagonist, a financial worker implicated in the 'carbon web'. I took the walk on two different occasions, in December 2006 and in July 2008, in distinctly different physical and weather conditions, all factors that significantly influenced different experiences of the walk, as revealed below.

Linked (2003) is a three-mile route from Hackney Marshes to Redbridge in East London, where 400 homes were demolished to make way for the M11 link road. Along the route, transmitters fitted onto lamp posts broadcast a soundscape comprised of an edited 120 minutes of 120 hours of recorded testimonies of inhabitants who lived and worked where the six-lane road now runs. The work is experienced by walking the route with a borrowed radio receiver, headset and map. The fragmentary structure of this work is such that it can be experienced as discontinuous, starting at any point along a defined route at anytime into perpetuity, or as long as the transmitters last. Indeed, there are no indications of a starting or ending point, but rather shorter routes are suggested. My own experience of the walk was episodic, with three visits made walking different sections of the route at different times between 2003 and 2008. Sometimes I retraced sections walked previously, going in a different direction. As with my experience of *And While London Burns*, each walk was taken in different weather conditions and states of mind and body.

In *Luddite Manoeuvre* (2008a), Brennan guided a small group of percipients through the streets of Loughborough, retracing the steps of the town's Luddites on a notorious night of sabotage in 1816. As with his manoeuvres performed and created for other locations, this work consists of readings from a collection

of quoted material that do not adhere to, resolve, illustrate or directly relate to the site at which they are heard. This walk differs from the previous two in that it is not a solitary experience mediated by technology, but involves a collective experience of a group walking together. While the three walks discussed all differ in their modes of reception and participation, they each offer opportunities for sharing viewpoints, listening and witnessing, three significant attributes of the forms of guided walking that will be discussed.

SHARING A VIEWPOINT

With the guided walk the performance event occurs in the conversational activity set in motion by the conditions of wayfaring. While the construction of conversational encounter has been recognised as an aesthetic event (Heim 2003, Kester 2004), the encounter offered by the guided walk is particular to that of movement in relation to another as articulated in Lee and Ingold's study of the 'shared walk' (Lee and Ingold 2006). While such a mode of conversation may seem to generate less social interaction with little direct eye contact made, Lee and Ingold argue it is more companionable and less confrontational, as it offers a shared viewpoint (Lee and Ingold 2006, 80). With a 'shared walk' the walkers' rhythm and the aspect of their bodies converge to become similar (Lee and Ingold 2006, 81). Indeed, Filipa Matos Wunderlich conceives 'discursive walking' as a participatory ambulant mode that 'promote[s] encounter and discovery' and the synchronisation of the walker's own internal bodily rhythms and the place's own moving rhythms (Wunderlich 2008, 133). This synchronisation does not necessarily suggest that the walkers see the view shared in the same way; indeed, they do not see 'eye to eye'. Rather, the convergence, and/or mutual alignment and adaptation, of rhythm and heading *with* one another and *with* place may encourage modes of empathetic witnessing and the co-production of knowledge through collaborative and connected encounter, making it particularly conducive as a participatory ethnographic and artistic methodology.

The strategies and conditions for conviviality, sociality and dialogue activated within the different works are of particular interest here, where this conviviality can occur as inadvertent opportunities arising through the specific kinds of encounters and invitations that walking offers, but does not determine. With the use of a voice or voices guiding a walker, the sensation of a conversation is created through various strategies of narrative voice and rhythmic structuring of pace and path. It may be argued,

as Toby Butler does of *Linked*, that 'the communication is only one-way, from the (edited) speaker to the listener' (Butler 2006, 898). Butler suggests that opportunities for interaction may be latent and depend upon the inquisitiveness and courage of the walker. However, these may be directly invited or choreographed in the work. In this way, and in the sense proposed by Heim earlier, there is a more complex sense of communication going on in these works that is multi-directional and multi-dimensional.

SHARING AN 'EARPOINT'

Guided walks create an auditory space, whether through the voicing of place in live spoken narrative or through recorded and mediated voicings and soundscapes. It is via the movement through these auditory spaces that places are sensed, made sense of, and sensually made. The percipient is invited to perceive places from multiple vantage points, 'earpoints' as much as 'viewpoints' (Edmund Carpenter in Feld 1996, 95). The tactile, sonic and visual senses are drawn upon and coordinated with the motion of walking: 'the kinaesthesia and sonesthesia of shaped place, encountered and learned by the moving, sensing, experiencing body' (Feld 1996, 105).

And While London Burns is densely packed with factual information and is fast moving, such that it can be difficult to absorb it all – that is, if only auditory perception is engaged. It is at those moments of synesthesia, when there is a merging of something I hear with a detail I see, smell or touch in the city around me, that I am able to absorb information that is no longer abstract, but embodied and more imaginatively and emotionally resonant.

On the street and in the traffic, the voice of the guide of *And While London Burns* asks if I 'hear the gentle roar of traffic . . . smell the sweet exhaust fumes'. Then she says, 'If you look closely at the fumes you can see the geology of other countries disappearing into thin air' (Platform 2006). As I walk up a stairway, the protagonist describes the fine black dust that covers everything, including the handrails where my hands now reach for balance and are covered with 'the result of endless burning . . . the fine toxic excrement of cars and trucks, power plants and airplanes' (Platform 2006).

Wunderlich argues that the Walkman or iPod affects bodily disengagement. However, the ambient sound of the actual environment and the sounds of 'intentional action and effort', 'the sound of breathing and the rustle

of the rucksack', or the click-clack of the urban walker's hard soles on pavement all become 'an anonymous soundtrack through which movement is realised' for the walker (Wylie 2005, 239). Indeed, the sounds of effort and action are the traces of bodily presence of the walker and their route (Lee and Ingold 2006, 78). In the mediated guided walks considered here, these sounds are sometimes dampened, become background or are amplified and displaced for the walker. In *And While London Burns*, as in Janet Cardiff's *Missing Voice*, it is the guide's footsteps that are audible, more than the walker's. However, instead of drowning out or dampening bodily engagement, hearing the recorded footsteps can attune the percipient more fully to the experience of place and their place and pace within it (Pinder 2001, 5). Indeed, Chambers contends that '[the Walkman] does not subtract from sense but adds to and complicates it' (Chambers 1994, 51).

The place-making opportunities of the Walkman or iPod are offered through the possibility of immersing the listener into a lifeworld: 'the possibility of a micro-narrative, a customised story and soundtrack, not merely a space but a place, a site of dwelling' (Chambers 1994, 52). The mediation of walking by the mechanism of the narrative and/or soundtrack, as practised in the works discussed here, creates such a site of dwelling and wayfinding. It is the 'active' role of place itself in gathering and keeping that Casey suggests constitutes the 'eventfulness' of places, such that they 'lend themselves so well to narration, whether as history or as story' (Casey 1996, 27). The percipients are actively creating their own narrative as they go along sensing, integrating and constructing the place into their lifeworld.

In the guided walk the percipient is invited to notice the eventfulness of places, the unique particular details and events that occur at that particular moment in time, as 'just this body in just this place' (Casey 1996, 22), as well as those of a past or future, as is the case with the walks discussed here. A particular auditory time and space is created, which enables a kind of temporary community or empathy with the voices heard and the places experienced. In these walks, however, this sensual communion with place is not always a comfortable one; the walker is 'at one and the same time part of it, emergent from it and distinct from it, like a blister on a toe' (Wylie 2005, 240).

LIVED WITNESSING

I am looking through the windows of Swiss Re's Gherkin and the protagonist of *And While London Burns* is whispering in my ear, 'You in there, I'm here, in here

between your ears, inside you. Look inside the windows ... Do you see me ... or is it you?' (Platform 2006).

In bringing the walker into sensuous contact with lived experience in real time, the three conversive walks activate a sense of witnessing that involves a reciprocity of listening – the voices of places are allowed to speak and the listener is invited to cooperate, co-compose, or co-conspire.

In *Linked* I am walking along half a street. The other half is missing. It is somewhere the other side of the tall wall facing the single row of houses 'hovering over the motorway' (Miller 2003) (see Figure 1). I wonder if people currently living in these houses now tell themselves the traffic is the sound of the ocean to get to sleep at night, as I once did when living next to this restless sound elsewhere. There are 'for sale' signs everywhere. This is an unsettled place. An abundance of litter is caught in nooks and crannies of the street, jetsam washed up from the tarmac sea. I hear faint sounds of voices through the headphones with the motorway's hiss and roar a constant background, and my walking tunes and hones in until the voices come into 'focus'. I hold my receiver to a metal gate in front of someone's front garden to get better reception, like holding a stethoscope to the heart and lungs of this place. At the corner of Trelawn and Colville Roads, the voices sound as if they are beside me. I stop to hear their fragments of the story of this street: 'They didn't offer the going worth of the house ... police smashed up the house ... the house exists in my brain, community spirit in my heart ... history is not great events ... it's a myriad of experiences of people who have gone before you and is handed down by word of mouth. So the story goes' (Miller 2003).

Upon hearing these words, I am aware of being in a contradictory position as someone who is being entrusted with these stories, and also as someone who is trespassing. Am I being a 'connoisseur of empathy' (Sontag in Urry 2007, 70), seeking further exotic frontiers of the out of the way? I look through windows into front rooms just a few feet away, the memories I hear interweaving with a displaced memory-house of my own. I become aware of the complicated way in which I am implicated in this work to witness something, to respond and be responsible, to help resurrect these houses. It is not a cosy visitation. I am bearing witness through the effort of my walking, sensing, remembering and imagining, and this effort is significant. It is what distinguishes this mode of participation from other passive forms of viewing or receiving performance or an artwork. Miller suggests that in *Linked*, the physical act of walking 'invites you to merge your experience, your narrative, with those of the stories you hear on the

headset ... you start to write your own story ... You are no longer a spectator but a witness' (Miller 2005, 162).

In *Luddite Manoeuvre*, Brennan wears a wool military-like coat and weathered walking boots, holds a leather-bound book, as he does in all of his manoeuvres, and reads a 'Luddite Oath': 'I, A. B., of my own voluntary will, do declare and solemnly swear, that I never will reveal to any person or persons under the canopy of heaven, the names of the persons who compose this secret committee' (Brennan 2008a). With a sweeping gesture of his arm, indicating the audience of walkers before him, Brennan casts us as his co-conspirators and accomplices in what will follow. There is an oscillation between the sense of being part of the narrative, walking in the shoes of those speaking, and of walking with another as the listener. In this alternation, the give and take of conversation and an active listening and witnessing are required, a listening that is prepared to act.

The guide of *And While London Burns* invites me to stop and look through the glass of a large set of double doors into an office of Deutsche Bank where oil analysts 'scrutinize and criticise the likes of BP and Shell and advise the likes of Morley and RBS' (Platform 2006). I see rows of computers that are so close I can read what is on the screens. A few office workers working at their terminals through their lunch break glance up at me, the watcher watching the watchers. Although my participation in this narrative so far has not been a passive one, given the critical and bodily engagement that has been activated and heightened, it is at this point that I no longer feel swept along having my 'eyes opened'. Rather, I am implicated and called to witness something directly that is not abstract, imagined or of the past or future, but that is actually happening before me in my presence. And I wonder how long it will take for those people inside the windows to realise they are being scrutinised by another 'body' of watchers. When I return to walk this way again in July 2008, my question is answered with an ironic response. I see a sign has been placed in the window of the office in front of blinds pulled down, with a picture of a tiger, reading: 'Do not feed the animals' (see Figure 2). This sign is evidence of the collective impact of percipients' route making, a visual retort to and mark of 'our' presence. Perhaps not a friendly one, but it is also evidence of a conversational encounter.

WALKING IN THE PRESENT OF ANOTHER PRESENT

Although two of the walks, *Linked* and *And While London Burns*, involve walking with earphones, and



FIGURE 1. View of M11, *Linked* (2003): author's photograph.



FIGURE 2. Deutsche Bank offices, *And While London Burns* (2006): author's photograph.

Luddite Manoeuvres involves a group walking together, each of these works involves a certain sociability of walking with another. Miller suggests that '[*Linked*] is conversational, but paradoxically, often what I do is pick people off one at a time, I try to create a little isolated and slightly melancholic space around people' (Miller 2008, n.p.). James Marriot, one of the members of Platform who co-wrote *And While London Burns* with John Jordan, suggests that while they attempted to create intimacy with the operatic audio walk, they lost some of the conviviality that existed in their earlier work, such as the *Gog & Magog* walks (2004), which involved more literal and direct conversation between a group walking together for the duration of a day. I would contend that both these works involve conversational modes, but perhaps there are two different orders of ambulant conviviality operating in the works discussed here: solitary one to one and group sociality.

In *Linked* and in *And While London Burns*, the walking partner may not be physically embodied, but is acoustically present through spoken words of a guide or guides, and it is significant to the sense of conviviality that they speak in the *present tense*. In *Luddite Manoeuvre*, the guide is physically present, but the words he speaks are someone else's words, someone in the past, sometimes speaking in present tense, such as in letters of historical correspondence. Brennan's manoeuvre operates 'through time in depth' such that '[t]he present rests lightly on the deeper, slow-running sense of the past' (Brisley 2004, 9).

One of the voices in *Linked* says, 'I'm going through an archway. I'm going between the buildings now' (Miller 2003), and she describes a woman pulling down blossoms next to an old church. At this point along the

route, I see an archway leading to a Tesco car park. The spoken memories of events that transpired in locations along a route are told in *Linked* in the present tense. However, there are 'two presents' held in a kind of tension: 'the first-person narrative of the speaker speaking, now in a present that must have been back then . . . A second present that is the insistent present of the landscape transformed. And between these two presents a tension . . . of the sound of memories coming into being' (Read 2003, 5). The voices seem to have a prophetic potency; the transformed landscape is the manifestation of the recounted political, economic and social dynamics and events that continue to erase, displace and remove their presence in the presence and witness of the walker.

As I turn down Quarter Mile Lane, making my way to rejoin the link road and reach the southern end of *Linked*, I walk into the site of the 2012 Olympics (see Figure 3), where a guard stops me and turns me away at a security gate. Miller later tells me that the ghost of this now inaccessible site was once a bit of a renegade:

there's a women talking about her glorious heyday . . . dancing her socks off to disco music in a pub that always had fights . . . a Hells Angel's type of pub . . . the idea that now its ghost is going to be inhabited by the rather squeaky clean international GB PLC job of hosting an Olympics . . . it's strange. (Miller 2008, n.p.)

As the work was designed to endure through time (the transmitters were guaranteed by the company that produced them to last 100 years), change is something Miller considered in the crafting of the work. He has said



FIGURE 3. Site of 2012 Olympics, *Linked* (2003): author's photograph.

that 'it will be interesting how audio hieroglyphs stand up to test of time' (Miller in Butler and Miller 2005, 82). Barely through its first decade, their silence is very noisy indeed, a poignant absence of sound that brings awareness to and knowledge of how quickly the urban landscape transforms and the powerful forces that bring about that change.

In *And While London Burns*, the City of London is experienced from the perspective, tense and pace of a walk with a narrator and a dramatised character in a semi-fictional narrative of a perhaps not-too-distant future. However, the city and the paths they guide the listener through and along have been altered, and the narrative, like the voices of *Linked*, predicts this transformation.

The chorus of voices in *And While London Burns* sing, 'Look up, look up, look up at the sky' (Platform 2006). I am standing behind the half-occupied Tower 42, opened in 1981 at the time the last recession began in the UK. At this moment the guide informs me that 'whenever extremely tall buildings are completed, it's a signal that the economy is about to go into freefall' (Platform 2006).

In July 2008, the route is barred by a construction site of a new tower (see Figure 4), at a moment when RBS announces a loss of billions, house prices are falling, the word 'recession' is poised on the tips of economists' tongues and the global economy is about to plummet into one of the worst economic crises in history. I am wayfinding now, following clues from the guide's map to a fast-paced and fragmented city that has already moved on.

These transformations of the landscape impede the percipient's way and require an active participation from



FIGURE 4. Obstacle behind Tower 42, *And While London Burns* (2006): author's photograph.

the walker to wayfind and negotiate obstacles both physically and critically. The walker in all three of these works moves between fault lines of two presents into silences, erasures, distortions and folds emergent in the complication and instability of 'memoryscape' (Butler and Miller 2005, 87) intermingling with a landscape that is not at all straightforward or fixed. The physical changes of the urban environment assert their own rhythms and the openings for conversation emerge in the rhythmic breaks.

RHYTHMS OF NARRATIVE, PATH AND PACE

If walking is 'an ideal strategy for witnessing' (Lavery 2005, 152), Miller suggests it is because walking involves a corporeal engagement in a rhythmic time: 'there's a sense of relinquishing ourselves to a rhythmic state of being' (Miller 2008, n.p.). In the guided walks the walker is either directed along a pre-determined route or towards planned points along a route with different rhythms and structures of pace and narrative. As Lee and Ingold suggest, 'variations of pace affect the experience of the walk and the environment' (Lee and Ingold 2006, 68). Further, they suggest, in the event of the shared walk, it is through 'the shared rhythm of walking, that social interaction takes place' (Lee and Ingold 2006, 80).

And While London Burns is continuous, with the percipient swept along at an allegro pace in time with the hurried footsteps of the guide. I struggle to keep up as I am waddling, not walking – six months' pregnant with the weight of a future growing inside me. This is not a sauntering walk or a drift, but a walk of appointments with purpose and places to be. Indeed, Marriot suggests the primary intended audience for the work 'would be somebody who works in the city and they do it in their



FIGURE 5. Tim Brennan performing *Luddite Manoeuvre* (2008a): photographed by Phil Smith.

lunch break . . . that's why it had to be 59 minutes' (Marriot 2008, n.p.). This guide and her rhythms would not be so foreign then to such a percipient, but her rhythm is not my own, not today.

There are three moments in the work when the pace and path take the walker for a dizzying spin, the first of which is in Bank Tube Station. As I descend out of the winter chill, the escalation of pace mirrors the escalation of temperature felt in the station and in the narrative. The voices describe future worlds at increasing temperatures – ice caps melting, deserts, seas losing all their oxygen: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, at seven degrees it's all over' (Platform 2006). As the driving, escalating pace comes to a dramatic and sudden halt, I am aware of being breathless with trying to keep up, dizzy, and disorientated.

The second spin circles me around and around once again, but this time above ground looking up at the Gherkin, another half-occupied tower of glass half-shrouded in fog. The sound of the guide's footsteps drives me forward and builds towards a crescendo at a

dramatic turning point in the narrative and transformation of the protagonist where his voice screams, 'Stop walking, stop where you are' in my ear (Platform 2006). From here, the sound of the guide's voice and footsteps stop, the pace loosens and becomes more andante. Marriot says this moment was thought about very carefully. As the walker percipients find their way down towards the Thames without the guide they have to 'figure it out for themselves' (Marriot 2008, n.p.).

At the base of the gold-topped monument to the Fire of London, the protagonist invites me to climb up together with him to look down on the city. But I am too pregnant to mount the steep steps today. Instead, I sit at the base listening to the spiralling ascent, the voices swimming in my head and meditating on the future my child will inherit. The chorus sings: 'This city of possibility . . . we could build a new city,' and a child's voice sings, 'Come to the edge, he said. They came, he pushed them and they flew' (Platform 2006). The work ends with a final loosening of its tightly wound narrative, path and pace, with a flight of imagination over the city, an invitation for the percipient to end the unresolved narrative with their own and to construct a new future.

These moments are also examples of the rhythmic oscillation between textures at work in the walk that awakens the senses through variations in levels of temperature, height and sound: 'You go down, you go up a tower, you're inside, you're on a street, you're in a club . . . The body enjoys that stimulation . . . it keeps the pace up' (Marriot 2008, n.p.). But not everyone is able to keep up, as I found when grounded beneath the tower and when I fell behind the guide's quick steps, pointing to the inaccessible landscapes and limitations of this kind of regulation.

Rather than step into someone else's skin, as in *And While London Burns*, where the walker is invited to feel what it is like to walk with the hurried pace of someone of that world of speed where 'the future is just 90 days' (Platform 2006), the pace of *Linked* enables a different mode of witnessing and movement. *Linked* is structured along a route with a staccato rhythm of stops and starts, between which the percipient can move at their own pace in time with their own corporeal rhythms, emotions and thoughts. The rhythms within the stops are varied, but overall their movement is adagio or perhaps larghetto, melancholic, as Miller describes it above. The pace of the musicality of the soundscape and its use of repetition encourage a slower, more contemplative walk, 'a hyper-aware meditative state . . .

[it is] an “audio Oxo cube” which thickens the atmosphere’ (Butler and Miller 2005, 83). Miller embeds the fragments of narrative in ‘a kind of musical jelly’, creating acoustic or ‘musical spaces’ between the fragments for the percipient’s own thought processes (Miller 2008, n.p.). According to Miller, this effect ‘creates a kind of architecture of space that is the equivalent of silence actually, it is like a little church’ (Miller in Butler and Miller 2005, 83).

The work resists the privileging of particular readings or authoritative versions of the history of what occurred in this place, as identified in a more sequential, continuous or linear annotated travel guide. Instead, the work encourages multiple readings and understandings through the soundscape’s fragmented, repeated, looped and discontinuous narratives and invites similar choreographies of walking. In this way, walking the work is appropriately like walking through a ruin, which Edensor suggests ‘characteristically involves circularity and a choreographic repetition through which the same ground is approached and traversed from different perspectives’ (Edensor 2008, 136). Although the literal physical ruins have been smoothed over under tarmac, walking through Miller’s *sonic ruin* requires these sensuous movements of walking both mentally and bodily. The variability and uneven textures of the sonic surfaces interrupt a regular rhythmic gait with a stop-go, staccato rhythm as the walker pieces together the fragments of the voices’ testaments and crouches, swoops and swerves to find better reception, to catch and climb through the narrative debris drifting on radio waves.

In *Luddite Manoeuvre* the pace is mostly andante, but also spontaneous and shifting between the collective stride of the group that straggles and lingers, and the sensitive herding of the artist as the guide. As in *Linked*, this walk is punctuated with the staccato of stops at listening stations, delays by stragglers getting lost from the group, breathers taken for refreshment in a pub, and debate or interjections made by percipients asserting their own narratives, questions, observations, insights, memories of places, and so on.

Raised above the audience on the steps outside the Charnwood Museum, Brennan explains the ‘rules of the walk’: ‘Groups do what groups do, they straggle. You can ask any questions you want, but I can’t guarantee I’ll give you the answer that you want’ (Brennan 2008a). At this point a percipient interjects: ‘Did anyone drown here?’ And another percipient responds: ‘Yes, someone did and I was there.’ Suddenly, the group of around fifteen walkers turns towards Les, a long-time inhabitant of

Loughborough, who tells us that a child once drowned here in what used to be a community bath. This is the start of a second spontaneous and parallel walk that will interweave in and out of Brennan’s manoeuvre as Les continues to share his inhabitant knowledge. This test of his relinquished authority is exactly what Brennan intends to happen here, and like Miller, he uses fragmentation to allow ‘for the divergence of a participant’s memory or that of the accrued experience which they bring to the event structure’ (Brennan 2001, 49–50).

There is a pattern of syncopation running throughout the piece; texts and places are ordered so that they ‘fit together like the teeth of a zip’ (Brennan 2008b, n.p.). A deliberate delay occurs in the reading of a text related to a particular ‘recitation point’ (Brennan 2008b, n.p.) at the next place along the route. Brennan ascribes this ‘scoring’ or ‘skewing’ of the text as contributing to its musicality and the amplification of ‘the discursive and contested nature of place’ (Brennan 2008b, n.p.). As Brennan suggests, this is not always a comfortable experience for the walker. What may appear as insignificant or unrelated details are revealed further along this syncopated pulse as part of a loosely woven field of narrative associations, which evoke questions more than provide aesthetic or political resolutions.

Outside the conjoining houses of Heathcote and Boden, the owners of the lace-making mill targeted by Loughborough’s Luddites, we discover that Les is actually the current owner and occupier of Boden’s residence, now a B&B where Brennan is staying. After Brennan reads a letter written by Boden requesting compensation for the Luddites’ damage, he disappears inside the house with a volunteer from the audience to perform a secret task. While we wait, Les describes the preacher’s hole that lay beneath Heathcote’s house where his and Boden’s families supposedly hid during the Luddite riot.

Shelter from a gentle rain is found inside the Packhorse pub, where the Luddites were supposed to have gathered and where we now pause for refreshment and discussion amongst ourselves. Further recitations are made, but the attention of the group is now dispersed as we engage in our own conversation. Brennan questions whether the walk should end here as the rain persists, night is approaching and we have gone far beyond the original time frame for the tour. But there are several stragglers determined to follow the journey through. The asides of conversation and stray threads continue weaving multiple paths, though our pace is slightly more purposeful and less dawdling than before.

On a street corner near the finish of Brennan's walk, he stops and unbuttons his coat to reveal a dress underneath while pointing to a bit of mangled machinery (see Figure 5). A bemusing disclosure of the clandestine errand at Boden's house – a costume change – juxtaposed with an uncanny coincidence provokes the group to discuss the possible events that led to this machine's destruction. We sense the presence of the 'Ludds', who could be just around the corner or in our very midst. Later, outside a bridal wear shop window displaying a mannequin adorned in white lace, we learn that Luddite men often disguised themselves as women.

The looseness and spontaneity of Brennan's manoeuvre contrasts sharply with the more regimented pace of *And While London Burns*. However, whatever their rhythmic structure of pace and path, there is a loosening element in all of the walks discussed here that creates the conditions for inadvertent encounters along the way, and encourages the agency of the walker as a percipient co-composing their own narrative and finding their way, sometimes without the certainty and fixity of a map. Moments of interruption, erasure and detour are significant instances where the work intentionally or unintentionally dissolves, falls apart and leaves silences, gaps for a percipient to fill in, occupy and inhabit with their own narratives and interpretations of the places encountered, for a conversation with the work and place to emerge.

On a particularly cold and wet day in November 2003, the weather's worsening drowns out any ability to attune with the voices and landscapes of *Linked*. Now feeling the need to retreat, I stop inside an artist collective's gallery and squat, 491, where I am offered a cup of tea. Miller tells me later that this is the last enclave of the road protesters. The headphones are abandoned to take up what Butler refers to as the 'letter of introduction' (Butler 2006, 899) that such walks offer, to meet and engage directly with the living inhabitants of places.

CONVERSIVE WAYFINDING

This article has analysed how the three walks discussed use various strategies to affect empathetic and critical states of witness, and to conduct a convivial way of interacting with and knowing place. To an extent, each route is pre-determined, but also undone by the particularities of 'just this body in just this place' at just this time. There are conditions, which the artist may create space for, but cannot pre-determine, such as weather, transformations of the landscape, walkers'

corporeal rhythms, capacities, desires and mood. It has been shown how the inadvertent encounters and disruptions that result from these conditions are the buttonholing, threading or give and take of the conversation where the walker's own observations, interpretations and knowledge become critically engaged departures or detours from the structured path.

The walks each involve embodied, participatory and spontaneous modes of responsiveness and communicability. Furthermore, they are *conversive*, activating and inviting modes of participation that generate places and knowledge of places through a conversational and convivial activity of wayfinding, where a percipient becomes more a wayfarer than a map reader, a mode of travel that encourages convivial and social interaction with inhabitants of places.

As such, this article proposes a definition of this ambulant and dialogic methodology as *conversive wayfinding*, a spatial practice that conducts percipients' attention to landscapes through mediated/live aural performance; perceptual and dialogic strategies of interacting and knowing place – shared viewpoints, earpoints, conversational conviviality and critical witnessing; the use of different paces, paths and places of narrative; and performance as a way of knowing. Wayfinding is specified here, not walking, because, as has been seen, the regulation of route and pace within such a mode can become an inhospitable demarcation of inaccessible landscapes. Therefore, it would be of interest to discover what other modes of wayfinding might offer such strategies of conviviality.

NOTES

- [1] The title is taken from a line from a 1972 song by The Four Tops, later popularised as an American expression of sympathy and trust (Horodner 2002, 10), and is noted here as the heading this discussion will take in an exploration of walking's convivial potentiality.
- [2] Where in its common usage a *percipient* refers to a person who perceives the world through their senses, elsewhere I have defined a *percipient* as 'a particular kind of participant whose active, embodied and sensorial engagement alters and determines [an artistic] process and its outcomes. This mode of participation, which is led by *percipients'* worldviews, is distinguished from another mode of participation, which is more passive, pre-determined and/or pre-directed. It is proposed that the *percipient* . . . directs the process as they go along perceiving the encompassing environment from their bodily encounter within it; while doing so, they are making place' (Myers 2008, 172-3).

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