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# MYTHOGEOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVE

# INTERVENTIONS IN SPACES OF HERITAGE-TOURISM

by

## PHIL SMITH

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in partial fulfilment for the degree of

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

MYTHOGEOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVE: INTERVENTIONS IN

SPACES OF HERITAGE-TOURISM    by PHIL SMITH

This thesis offers new models for participatory and performative interventions in sites of heritage

tourism through a theorized practical engagement. Drawing on both Tourism Studies and Performance

Studies, the primary aim of these interventions is to reveal and provoke ways of seeing and using

these sites as places of multiple meanings rather than as ones constricted and bounded by normative

heritage narratives in their production and management. The experimental phase of the project

discussed in the thesis includes three contrasting case studies: *GeoQuest*, *Sardine Street*, and *Water

Walk*. These are each analysed and evaluated through my development of a 'mythogeographic'

framework that includes the performative techniques of layering, rhizomatic interweaving, the making

of 'anywheres' and the self-mythologising of the activist.  The thesis charts a trajectory through praxis,

from developing models for ambulatory, signage-based and 'mis-guided' interventions to be

undertaken by performance 'specialists', towards a dispersal of their tactics for use by heritage

tourists in general. It thus describes a related change in the balance of the research methodology from

ethnographic participant observation towards practice-as-research (PaR), the latter of which both

generated and enacted knowledge and understanding. This PaR took the form of various visits and

forays to and across heritage sites and landscape, and also the production of a 'toolkit' of handbook,

pocketbook, website and online short films for the dispersal of tactics and a strategy that is eventually

called 'counter-tourism'. The thesis thus includes the publications *A Sardine Street box of tricks*,

*Counter-tourism: the handbook*, *Counter-tourism: a pocketbook* and the DVD, *Tactics for counter-

tourism*, as well as their fully theorized critical contextualisation. These represent a PaR enquiry that

attempts to creatively express my research findings from productions made in the field through a

popular form of writing and presentation that is capable of inspiring general, 'non-specialist' tourists

to make their own performance interventions in heritage sites.

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1/ *Mythogeography*, 2010. Axminster: Triarchy. (Published book, enclosed in thesis box).

2/ Mckeown, Siobhan, 2009. *A mis-guided tour: beer, beef and royal steps*. (DVD, enclosed in thesis box.)

3Mckeown, Siobhan, 2010. *The devil's footprints.* (DVD, enclosed in thesis box.)

4/Mckeown, Siobhan, 2010 *GeoQuest.* (DVD, enclosed in thesis box.)

5/ 'Crab walking and mythogeography' in *Walking, writing and performance: Autobiographical texts by Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery and Phil Smith*, ed. Roberta Mock, Bristol: Intellect, 2009.

6/ The mis-guide tour and the standard tour – a study of contrasting tour-guiding practices in the city of Exeter (UK). *Gothenburg Research Institute proceedings of 1st International Research Forum on Guided Tours*, Halmstad, 2009, online at https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/21822/1/gupea_2077_21822_1.pdf

7/ Burning the box office: locating the relics of theatricality in a dramaturgy of the everyday. *Performance Research*, 14 (3), pp.90-101, 2009.

8/ 'A manifesto for a new walking culture: "dealing with the city"'. With Hodge, Stephen, Simon Persighetti & Cathy Turner. In *Performance and the contemporary city.* Ed. Nicolas Whybrow. London & New York: Routledge, pp69-86.

9/ The contemporary dérive: a partial review of issues concerning the contemporary practice of psychogeography. *Cultural geographies*, 17 (1), pp.103-22, 2010.

10/ Tourists and terrorists – useful ambiguities in a search for models. *Rhizomes 21*, Winter 2010. online at http://www.rhizomes.net/issue21/smith/index.html .

11/ 'A la Ronde: eccentricity, interpretation and the end of the world' in *Performing heritage: research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011.

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At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been

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'A mythogeography of Queen Street'.  Emerging Landscapes: Between Production and Representation Conference, University of Westminster, London, 25-7 June, 2010.
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'Dispersal and dissemination: performative tactics for the appropriation and infiltration of heritage sites"?  Theatre, Dance & Performing Arts Research Seminar, University of Plymouth. February 9, 2012.
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 'De-composing heritage'.  Composting Culture: Literature, Nature, Popular Culture, Science. University of Worcester, September 5-7, 2012.

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'From interventions to counter-tourism'. Queen Mary, University of London, March 10, 2011.
'Objects in counter-tourism'. Workshoptalk, University of Exeter, April 13-4, 2012.
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The mis-guide tour and the standard tour – a study of contrasting tour-guiding practices in the city of Exeter (UK). *Gothenburg Research Institute proceedings of 1st International Research Forum on Guided Tours*, Halmstad, 2009, online at https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/21822/1/gupea_2077_21822_1.pdf  (Included as Appendix 6.)
Burning the box office: locating the relics of theatricality in a dramaturgy of the everyday. *Performance Research*, 14 (3), pp.90-101, 2009. (Included as Appendix 7.)
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 'A la Ronde: eccentricity, interpretation and the end of the world' in *Performing heritage: research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011. (Included as Appendix 11.)
'Gardens always mean something else': turning knotty performance and paranoid research on their head at A la Ronde. *Cultural Geographies* 18 (4), pp.537-46), 2011. (Included as Appendix 12.)
Mythogeography works: performing multiplicity on Queen Street. *Research in Drama Education*, 16 (2), pp.265-78, 2011. (Included as Appendix 13.)
 'History, terrain and tread: the walk of demons, zombie flesh-eaters and the blind dead' in *European nightmares: horror cinema in Europe since 1945*. Eds. Patricia Almyer, Emily Brick & David Huxley. London & New York: Wallflower Press, 2012.

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Introduction

1.1

This research project arises from a personal trajectory (often pursued collaboratively) through theatrical performance, site-specific theatre and performance (a key turning point in which was the co-founding of Wrights & Sites in 1997), walking and ambulatory performance or performance based on accounts of walking, and the articulation of principles and tactics produced during, and as a result of, these practices. It is 'personal' not only in relation to my subjective engagement, but also that in this trajectory I have been able to explore longstanding personal preoccupations with atmosphere, nostalgia, exclusion, memory, identity, personae and symbolist aesthetics.

The choice of heritage sites and the 'heritage industry' as the focus for my research project arose directly from my practice, when, often at the invitation of heritage institutions (notably the National Trust), I began to make 'mis-guided tours' for heritage properties and landscapes (for example, for the eighteenth century house and gardens at A la Ronde in East Devon [2007, 2008 & 2009] (see Figure 1.i) and on the peninsula at Morte Point, North Devon [2009]); these opportunities, prior to my PhD research, alerted me to these sites as holding powerful affective charges for audiences (beguilement, sentimentality, alienation, revulsion), and as connected to existing networks and matrices (institutional, commercial and social) that might be used to spread more widely my intervention practices.

1.2

My research interventions were made in the context of a range of performance practices around aesthetic walking (sometimes addressed as 'walking as art'), ambulatory

performance, alternative forms of tour-guiding and walking. These practices have been variously noted, described and evaluated in recent publications, including general reviews of the practices (Solnit [2000], Careri [2002], Baker [2003], Coverley [2006 and 2012], Hanson [2007], Nicholson [2008] and Ingold and Vergunst [2008]) and practitioners' perspectives (Pope [2000], Woods [2000], Mock [2009] and Miller [2011]). The influence of these practices (and the influences upon them) reflect, and have been reflected in, developments in academic geography, part of an 'ethnographic turn' specifically drawing upon walking, performance and subjectivity in the work of geographers like Tim Edensor, Tim Cresswell, John Wylie and James D. Sidaway or a literary-geographer like Shelley Trower. In a far broader context these ambulatory practices can be seen as part of wider and longer trends towards or within a 'mobilities' paradigm (discussed in Chapter One) and an interwoven critical theorisation of space and spatialisation of critical theory (Massey, 2005: 20-30) arising from the work of a number of often politically engaged theorists and philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze, Henri Lefevbre and Michel De Certeau.

In 'The Contemporary Dérive: a partial review of issues concerning the contemporary practice of psychogeography' (Smith, 2010b. See Appendix 9), I conducted a non-systematic review of the above walk-based practices, and both there and elsewhere (Smith, 2009a; Smith, 2010a) I have noted their disparate origins (including the Romantic movement, late nineteenth and early twentieth century tramping, Dada and Surrealist deambulations, the dérive of the International Lettristes/Situationist International (IL/SI), the dematerialisation of the art object in sculpture), the diversity of their practitioners' motives (revolution of everyday life, contemplation, aesthetics, occultism, eco-politics), the range of their references (such as neo-romantic literature,

painting, experimental film, performance art, esoteric philosophy, contemporary developments in architecture, archaeology and geography) and the variety of their forms (action as material for documentation, performance or object making, ephemeral performance, relational arts, solo pilgrimage, group exploration).

1.3

Many of my early interventions for this research took the form of 'mis-guided tours'. These were performance walks that used the materials of mainstream guided tours and subjected them to a process of 'détournement'[1] in which these materials were redeployed in order to upset and change their original functions; creating tours that exposed multiple meanings in sites where narratives were policed or restricted. These 'mis-guided tours' had arisen out of the early exploratory 'dérives' of Wrights & Sites (dérives, like détournement, are a tactic drawn from the anti-artists and activists of the IL/SI of the 1960s and 1970s, and these, along with the IL/SI's praxis of psychogeography[2], are discussed at greater length in Chapter One). These tours were a means to share what had been found on initial exploratory walks, and to challenge restrictions on the uses of, access to and multiple meanings of their sites. As I conducted more of them, I increasingly détourned material from mainstream tours and referenced the work of other artists and performers using alternative versions of the guided tour for their own, non-mainstream ends.

This range of alternative guided tours provided part of the context for my initial tour-like interventions for this research. The different tours across this range gave varying

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[1] A process in which moribund and ideologically constrained aesthetic or cultural materials are redeployed, to previously unintended purposes, as a subversion of their original content or function.
[2] The study, description and changing of city landscapes in relation to their psychological effects upon their inhabitants and visitors.

emphases to the different elements of the performance walk; granting greater or lesser importance to entertainment, historiography, trespass, occult atmospheres and narratives, agitation, aesthetics or site ecology. Among these were projects such as Jim Colhuoun's Company of Vagabonds (early 2000s); tours that playfully used the form of the tour itself such as FUSE's *Misguided Tours* (mid-1990s and ongoing), Gethin Dick's *The Mis-Guided Tour* (2008) in Brescia, Italy, the *Misguided Tours of Archway and Crouch End* (2008) of Richard Tyrone-Jones, Kaspar Wimberley and Susanne Kudielka's *Alternative Tours* of Stuttgart (2011-2) and Holly Gramazio's *London Liars Tours* (2011 and ongoing). For Ruth Ben-Tovin's tours in Peterborough (2010) and Tony Whitehead's in Efford, Plymouth, UK (2011) (see Figure 1.ii) members of local communities were enabled to run their own walks. There were variations on guidebooks like Chris Dooks's *Teralix Polyfaith tour of Edinburgh* (2005-6). There were audio-tours like those of Duncan Speakman's (since the late 1990s and ongoing). Tim Brennan's 'manoeuvres' (since the early 1990s and ongoing) were driven by art historiography. Amy Sharrocks's walks were often related to London waterways such as the *Neckinger River Walk* (2008) made in collaboration with artist Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre. David Overend's *Underneath the Arches* (2009) was a guided tour of a night club venue, while Kagran Collectiv led a tour of Vienna's main landfill site (2007). Many were urban tours like those of The Miss Guides in Vancouver (2009 and ongoing) or Kerrie Reading's *Swanning Around Erdington* (2012), or tours that sought to expose a non-mainstream narrative like Bodies in Flight/Spell#7's *Dream-Work/Dream-Home* walks in Singapore and Bristol, UK (2010) based on the commuting experience, or Platform's *Critical Walks in the City* (2002 and ongoing) exposing the ecological consequences of the investment decisions made in London's financial district.

My work as a core-member of Wrights & Sites exposed me, through its curatorial work, to other artists using a mis-guided or détourned tour form, like Karl Bruckschwaiger, whose *The Zone* was a tour of part of Zurich's Aspanggründe (then, 2007, an area of industrial wasteland) inspired by Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979). Some of these tours directly addressed issues around the representation, politics and performance of heritage sites, such as Alex Hanna's *Tschou Tschou* (2008) in Fribourg, Switzerland, which commandeered a 'tourist-train' (a battery-powered train-shaped vehicle for taking tourists between heritage sites), changed the route so it passed through industrial parts of the town (including its abattoir) and replaced the recorded commentary with one in which the guiding voices argued with each other over information they were sharing. Mostly, however, these tours informed my interventions through their various 'mis-uses' of features of conventional tours and their assemblage of disparate elements to keep a multitude of narratives in flow.

In a localised part of a survey of such alternative tours that I undertook in 2011 with Mikael Jonasson and Nicolai Scherle, I was able to identify 58 alternative or détourned tours (separate tours performed any number of times, not multiple performances of a few tours) in the strip of South Devon between and including Plymouth and Exeter between 2000 and 2011, conducted by 33 distinct groups or individual practitioners. Two thirds of these tours had been performed since 2006. Of the 33 individual practitioners or groups identified, only one was known to less than two other members of the 33, while the most number of recognitions was 11; so the general level of connectivity was high, but for some it was very localised. While it would be foolish to think that such networks are ubiquitous or that the conditions for such networks exist generally either on a national or international scale, anecdotal evidence suggests that, at

the time of writing (2012), there are other similar, informal networks, particularly in some major cities: in Manchester (around the Loiterers Resistance Movement [2006 and ongoing], the Manchester Zedders [2008 and ongoing], Michael Mayhew's *Art Walking Walking Art* project [2012], and the Manchester Modernist Society [1965 and ongoing]), in Leeds, in Glasgow (including the *Making Routes* initiative [2011 and ongoing]), in London (with groups like the Wetherspoons Underground Skygeosophy Club [2009 and ongoing], walkwalkwalk [2005 and ongoing] and Beatrice Jarvis's Practising Space [2010 and ongoing]), in Toronto around former elements of the Toronto Psychogeography Society, where a guide to psychogeographic walks in the city has been published (Micallef, 2010) and in Boston around the work of Tim Devin and the activities of the Institute For Infinitely Small Things (2004 and ongoing). The Facebook page for Global Performance Art Walks, through November 2011 alone, documented performance walks (some with tour elements) in Oslo and Rogaland (Norway), Montreal, Tokyo, Madrid, Mexico City, Bogota, Caracas and Barquisimeto (Venezuela), Stoke Newington (London), rural Switzerland, Billings (Montana, USA) and Linz (Austria).

1.4

In recent years, there have been a number of academic and non-academic gatherings of practitioners and theorists of psychogeographical and performative walking, including the *Pre-Amble Festival of Art and Psychogeography* (Vancouver) in 2003, the annual *Psy-Geo-Con-Flux* in New York (2003 and ongoing, though recently with a changed format), the *Walking as Knowing as Making Symposium* in 2005 (University of Iowa), *TRIP (Territories Re-Imagined, International Perspectives)* in Manchester in 2008 , *ROAM: A Weekend of Walking* (Loughborough, 2008), the ANTI contemporary art

festival in Kuopio (Finland) which was dedicated to walking in 2009 (*Footfalls*), the Still Walking Festival in Nottingham (2012), the ambulatory festival Sideways (2012) across Belgium and other conferences with sessions or strands dedicated to walking such as at the *Hidden City Symposium: Mythogeography, Writing and Site-Specific Performance* (Plymouth, 2008) and *Living Landscapes* (Aberystwyth, 2009). At the *First International Research Forum on Guided Tours* (Halmstad, Sweden, 2009) détourned tours were introduced as a subject and made up a significant strand in the subsequent *Second International Research Forum on Guided Tours* (Plymouth, 2011), for which I served on the organising committee as part of my research programme.

To an extent these practices and gatherings represent a new 'generation' of psychogeographical or 'drift'-based practitioners (mostly free of the dogmatism and small group politics that characterised some Psychogeographical Associations and Societies formed in the 1980s) who are rediscovering the tactics of the International Lettristes but are now more likely to be influenced by a far wider range of loosely related anti-art and relational art practices (Bourriaud, 2002: 14-21), and with a greater involvement of women practitioners (Heddon & Turner, 2010). They are often aware of, and work parallel with and sometimes counter to, predominantly text-based (sometimes occultist) literary psychogeographers such as Iain Sinclair and Will Self.

1.5

The multiplicity of influences and variety of performance and performative modes described above have all been drawn upon in forming the key principles of what I have called 'mythogeography' and that I will explore in further depth through this thesis. With a variable intensity of influence within and between their parts, these

performances and performative modes are drawn upon from within their context of a meshwork of related practices for which the role of space and place is privileged and the efficacy of a limited form of nomadism in criticism and practice is paramount.

2

Mythogeography

The mythogeography project, despite its half-ironic neologism, is not meant to represent the construction of a new theory, but rather to set a number of existing (and emerging) theories and practices in motion about each other, while avoiding their reterritorialisation as a definable milieu. It is based firmly in practice, and so the context of my research has not been a predominantly theoretical one, nor its trajectory one from theory to practice via hypothesis. Rather my research has emerged from the entanglement of practices and theories in various orbits about each other.

2.1

Mythogeography refers to a developing set of performance, performative and critical practices that:

> 1/ seek to transform space by performing it (informed by the idea that places are made and re-made by what is done there in the everyday, and that therefore the radical changing of those places can be achieved through interventions in their everyday life);

> 2/ develop ways of perceiving and understanding the multiple meanings of any place (and to widely promote such understanding);

3/ develop the means to producing places of multiplicity (places not only of multiple meanings, but of diverse practices; heterotopias, sometimes named as 'anywheres' (Wrights & Sites, 2006: 110-1);

4/ entangle theories of space and the spatialisation of theory with performance and performative tactics in order to develop a strategy for resistance to restrictive and homogenising spatial practices.

These ideas were published at some length and in some detail in my chapter 'Crab Walking and Mythogeography' in *Walking, Writing and Performance* (Mock, 2009), in *Mythogeography* (Smith, 2010a) (see Figure 1.iii) and in shorter papers for peer-reviewed journals (those published during my PhD are included in the Appendices).

A qualification is required here: mythogeography is a critical toolkit of praxes, not a philosophy; nor is it a hermeneutic or epistemological system. However, the book and essays referenced above do attempt to make sufficient theoretical elbow room for something more than an additional finessing of the IL/SI's psychogeography already made by various urban activists, geographers, architects, occultists and artists (Smith, 2010b). Rather, my intention has been to supply critical ideas and practical options to support a re-orientation of the post-Lettriste tradition of psychogeography towards some form of democratic activism and away from professional literary production or occultism. The adoption of the name 'mythogeography' is intended not only as a tactical seizure of a certain critical space, but as a self-parody. In *Mythogeography* (2010) I

sound a warning note about the danger of totalising pretensions arising from just such

seizures on my part:

> … mythogeography must always be a mixture of
> thoughts and actions, and not so much a theory, but
> a series of approaches, a set of modest survival
> strategies, a bran tub of prefigurative behaviours
> plus the honesty to say that no one really knows
> what is going to happen. So this is more a toolbag
> of ideas for those wanting to create their own
> mythogeographical practice and less a guide to the
> philosophy that may one day strangle it. (Smith,
> 2010a: 110)

2.2

This mythogeographical approach has produced certain hybrid 'lenses' (usually as a

result of a mixing of theories and tactics in a single formulation) through which it

generates a praxis, moving forward its entangled practice and theory simultaneously. In

this respect, mythogeography is a reflexive practice. These 'lenses' (discussed in

Chapter One) have been a key means through which to analyse and organise my

research findings, both as ways to perceive patterns and meanings in the collected

materials, but also as conduits along which to direct developing or 'found' hypotheses

between interventional tactics and mythogeographical principles.

2.3

Mythogeography includes an expanding set of practices, including site-based

performance, 'drifts', mis-guided tours, the production of fanciful maps, of pseudo-

auratic objects, and of mis-guidebooks, détourned films and toolkits. It is a project of

advocacy and rhetoric of a particular kind that I have associated elsewhere (Smith,

2009: 110-1) with a characteristically 'protestant', internally-argumentative discourse, suspicious of human voices (see Hobson, 2002). It proposes the 'evangelical' dissemination of its critical and agitational approaches to space and place. This rhetorical quality is ingrained in its various expressive forms, while particular kinds of performance, story-telling and orality colour its critical approaches and material practices. The rhetorical project of mythogeography has arisen in reaction to the strict policing and bounding of meaning and behaviour in particular spaces (in particular, in response to that in leisure, tourism and heritage spaces).

2.4

Against this bounding of space, and crucial to the development of its practices (and their expansion and diversity), mythogeography advocates a self-consciously exploratory walking that encourages a heightened sensitivity to place; a sense of eventness with its performative engagements with others; and an ambulatory pace and flexibility that can switch quickly from the narrative of wayfinding to an extreme attention to detail. The intention is to create a facility for responding to affordances[3] in sites that are otherwise screened or inhibited by or from other mobilities. It is this facility that is crucial to a production and sharing of a multiplicity of meanings about any single place.

My ambulatory explorations have sought both to set in motion the multiplicitous meanings of the sites traversed and to set different ways of thinking about space and

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[3] My use of the term 'affordance' alludes to its use by the perception theorist James J. Gibson. It assumes a particular conceptualisation of the senses as exploratory, reaching out and searching for information (rather than as passive receptors) and that these active senses interact with vibrations, changes of light, sudden 'silences' and other environmental changes that 'afford' what is perceived (Gibson, 1968: 56-8). Wherever I use the terms 'affordance', 'affordant' or 'afford' these do not refer to fixed gateways to a variegated perceiving nor to a dynamic invitation to be passively accepted, but to qualities in a dynamic, multi-dimensional environment that in its trajectories, relations, state-changes and contrasts offers particularly intense and/or resonant opportunities for complexity and meaning to exploring and interacting senses.

place in motion about each other. Exploratory ambulation frequently recurred during this research as the primary tactic for exploring any site. It was often supported by a desk-based research that aimed to provide materials for contesting the subordination of the subjective in a site, recruiting hidden or inconvenient histories and their popular-cultural associations, recovering anomalous accounts and marginalised voices, analysing the traces of the military-industrial complex or other para-political entities and critiquing the unstable institutionalisation of the irrational (such as the National Trust's exploitation of 'ghosts and hauntings' in their publicity and merchandise).

2.5

While the primacy of multiplicity in mythogeography tends toward the fluid and hybridic, often expressed in narrative forms, it is, first and foremost, an accumulation of ideas by which performances can be studied and challenged primarily in relation to place and space. To this end, I have deployed a taxonomy of spaces (garnered from critical theory, geography, archaeology and from reflections on field work), the categories of which move between the theorisation of space and the spatialisation of theory. For example, a category of 'layers' is used in this thesis in a way that references both a material, archaeological stratigraphy and ways that the 'layers' slide or buckle or drag in metaphorical relation to each other. Such variegated categories are useful because they allow me to describe how in one place there can be an interweaving of material and metaphorical spaces which, *in their relation*, have contradictory qualities; for example, between their 'smoothness' and 'striation' as defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 408-11).

In the case of particular sites of heritage tourism, I begin with their significance as places with present and past place-identities and meanings under construction, as parts of entangled and shifting meshworks (Ingold, 2011), and with how events and actions there and elsewhere are making these places and their place-identities.

3

Heritage

3.1

My working definition of what constitutes a heritage site began as a pragmatic one; the sites I chose for my initial performance interventions were those designated as ones of 'heritage' by a company, social group or institution, and were marked by designating signs and the management of their space. Even in the case of my 'Outlands Walk' (2010) around a suburban, residential area of Plymouth, the terrain was marked out with street names and plaques (and physical remnants) referencing it as the site and grounds of the long-demolished childhood home of Scott of the Antarctic (see Figure 1.iv). My approach was to work at such designated heritage sites and to utilise the ironies and contradictions that arose from the exigencies of the bounding and privileging of these over other spaces as 'heritage'.

3.2

I have approached heritage, the heritage industry and heritage sites as variegated and partial entities; challenging those mainstream narratives of heritage that close down this

non-neutral multiplicity just as they seem to open up to it, such as in Peter Hunter's

definition (Hunter, 1996: 1) where 'ranging from prehistoric antiquities' offers a

prospect of variegation that ends up at the narrowness of 'to castles and country

houses'. Included within my use of the term are institutions, objects, landscapes,

actions, memories, discourses, actors, producers, consumers and researchers. I have not

sought to catch heritage, the heritage industry or heritage sites in a single formulation

(for instance, one characterised by retreat from industrialism, nostalgic dis-ease, or as a

repository of conservative values) or engage with them as a coherent, let alone

homogenous, entity. Instead, I have sought to understand them, as in Laurajane Smith's

description, as being unfinished, self-justificatory and contradictory projects – 'a multi-

layered performance... visiting, managing, interpretation or conservation… [which]

validate[s] the very idea of 'heritage' that forms and frames these performances in the

first place' (Smith, 2006: 3). Often, of course, these incomplete and unfinished sites are

coherent and complete in their own terms and according to their own discourses.


I have understood heritage as having a contradictory dynamic. What Bella Dicks

describes as a possible contradiction, I have assumed to be a real and realised one:

> the intertwining within heritage of two – potentially
> competing – forces: its visitor-oriented market
> relations, on the one hand, and its claims to stage
> and pay tribute to 'authentic' culture, on the other.
> Heritage production involves both salvaging the
> past, and staging it, as a visitable experience. It
> makes the two inter-dependent. (Dicks, 2003: 119)

I have sought to utilise the tensions and variabilities arising from such a dynamic as

reliable materials for my own practice as research, drawing upon Smith's

characterisation of heritage as '[A]lthough often self-regulating and self-referential,

...also inherently dissonant and contested' (Smith, 2006: 3-4).

3.3

I have noted that part of the potency of 'heritage' is its capacity, implied by Smith, to generate narratives with their 'longstanding heritage' *already built in*, as in the case of the English country house. A key site of, apparently, 'timeless' national heritage these houses became 'emblematic of a "way of life"' (Mandler, 1996: 109) in the second half of the twentieth century, whereas prior to the Second World War these houses were not popularly seen as part of the 'national heritage': public expenditure upon them did not receive significant support, and the National Trust acquired very few such properties. When they did, 'heritage' and property were, apparently and suddenly, interwoven and co-present in their purchase and re-presentation. Also, 'heritage' can slide across narratives of ownership, blurring the particularities of possession (often of a class nature) with a sentimental popular identification often tied to national identity: 'a high proportion of the population regards buildings with character and history as trademarks of the British way of life' (Hunter, 1996: 1-2).

I have, however, avoided the assumption that 'heritage' is a necessarily conservative discourse. Rather I have sought to recruit the sorts of contradictions formulated in Lisanne Gibson and John Pendlebury's question '(I)f the socially democratic context of our contemporary understanding of value is one of pluralisation... what does this mean for acts of preservation which are, by their very nature, based on processes which involve the fixing of meaning and value?' (Gibson & Pendlebury, 2009: 1) The rich contradictions inherent in the projects of restoration, renovation, preservation, marketing, interpretation, guiding, infotainment and interactive education engage the heritage industry in the difficult and only ever partially successful work of repeatedly

re-narrating 'heritage' as accessible, meaningful, and consistent with prevailing narratives, including ones around morality, class and national identity.

While these contradictions can produce unexpected and even absurd juxtapositions and assemblages, there is, however, also a tendency within the above processes to bound, narrow and homogenise, in ways that are sometimes inextricably entangled combinations of practical necessity and ideological tendency. By 'ideological', I refer here not to 'a set of closely related beliefs or ideas, or even attitudes, characteristic of a group or community' (Plamenatz, 1970: 15), but, to something closer to a Marxian sense of the general circulation and reproduction of

> a relatively coherent set of "discourses" of values,
> representations and beliefs which, realised in certain
> material apparatuses and related to the structures of
> material production, so reflect the experiential
> relations of individual subjects to their social
> relations as to guarantee those misperceptions of the
> "real" which contribute to the reproduction of the
> dominant social relations. (Eagleton, 1976: 54)

Where, as here in the context of the heritage industry, there are local processes in and by which general discourses are reproduced, they, including their intimate and subjective qualities, can, I suggest, be helpfully described as, at least partly, ideological. For example, when Tim Edensor, citing Crang, describes how at 'tourist sites, memory is increasingly organised according to a commodified "heritage" which "fixes history" and thereby limits the interpretative and performative scope of tourists' (Edensor, 1998: 141), I suggest that this organising of memory is consistent with, and reproductive of, the more general discourses of ideology.

Edensor's description of the organising of memory coheres with Laurajane Smith's account of the production of heritage as 'acts of remembering' (2006: 2), and both are consistent with an apparently increasing recognition, among Tourism Studies researchers and within the heritage industry, that the 'ideological work' of a heritage site is at least partly and very often importantly subjective. Graham Busby and Kevin Meethan, for example, argue that the cultural capital of heritage is produced rather than is intrinsic: 'the value of heritage sites rests is [sic] in the experiences of place and history they routinely evoke in the mind of the observer, rather than in any intrinsic quality of the place or artefact itself' (Busby & Meethan, 2008: 148). Within the heritage tourism industry this is often articulated as 'the visitor experience', a phrase often used to me in my conversations with heritage trust officials during my research. Tim Edensor argues that this recognition of the role of the subjective has, paradoxically, tightened the restrictive tendencies of the heritage industry: '[T]he provision of an 'experience' is an increasingly important strategy in tourism marketing, and intensifies control over the tourist product. Rather than encouraging the tourists to wander and gain their own impressions' (Edensor, 1998: 188).

3.4

Beginning from a mythogeographical social critique, partly informed by Debord's critique of 'the society of the spectacle' (Debord, 1994, Debord, 1998), I am alive to such means of ideological production (including the making anonymous of the authors and translators of its narratives) as well as their products.  However, rather than adopting a 'totalizing critique offered by the "heritage industry" literature … identifying all heritage as either elitist and/or commercially inspired pastiche, [within which] little conceptual room is made for alternative uses of heritage' (Smith, 2006: 41), I have

taken the dissonance generated in heritage spaces by the above contradictions (including that between subjectivity and control) as my working material for interventions.

3.5

While there are problems with using 'remembering' as a metaphor for heritage production (an assumption about the relative importance and influence of the subjective, for example), I have sometimes adopted it. It illuminates how heritage (like memory) is a continuous, but neither incoherent nor neutral constituting of itself, achieved not through an external imposition of patterns, but through actions, choices, subjectivity and sensibility that seem to 'redeem' themselves through their incorporation. The philosopher and writer on travel, Alain de Botton, unintentionally provides a very clear example of this, when he writes that a person

> looks beyond his own individual transitory existence and feels himself to be the spirit of his house, his race, his city. He can gaze at old buildings and feel the happiness of knowing that one is not wholly accidental and arbitrary but grown out of the past as its heir, flower and fruit, and that one's existence is thus excused and, indeed, justified. (de Botton, 2003: 113)

Laurajane Smith describes the entanglement of these subjective processes with the re-tellings of the heritage industry in an 'authorized heritage discourse (AHD)' (Smith, 2006: 11) that combines grand narratives of nation and class, through the techniques of expertise and elitist aesthetic judgement (ideas of beauty that imply an obligation to protect, of monumentality and illusions of permanence, and deference to scholarship) and assumptions about "innate and immutable cultural values of heritage" (Smith, 2006: 4) naturalising assumptions about the existence of heritage and its equivalence to 'old things'.

3.6

However, my use of the term 'heritage' does not include the assumption of a passive gaze. Laurajane Smith argues that the AHD 'constructs heritage as something that is engaged with passively, while it may be the subject of popular "gaze", that gaze is a passive one in which the audience will uncritically consume the message of tourism constructed by heritage experts' (Smith, 2006: 31) which 'obscures the sense of memory work, performativity and acts of remembrance' (Smith, 2006: 34). My approach, on the other hand, assumes an agentive tourist whose agency – in memory work, performativity and remembering – contains the possibility, though not the guarantee, of a disruption of dominant narratives (although the AHD is particularly strong where it can accommodate or incorporate the free agency and authentic subjectivity of heritage tourists).

3.7

It may be true to say, at least in a UK context, that there has been some growth in the numbers and confidence of 'marginal' groups challenging dominant discourses and claiming some ground for themselves in a more relativistic and multiplicitous heritage; though assumptions about radical versions of 'progress' are as suspect as other more conventional versions. When and where they arise, a mythogeographical approach positively acknowledges such voices, and draws upon them as parts of a potential multiplicity, but notes that they are still posited around the idea of an identity, if one of 'otherness', and a more or less direct identification with a past made particular through the construction of an alternative heritage.

3.8

My general approach to 'heritage' is to assume it has a more extreme 'otherness' than

this: that, in the final analysis, the past (as a coherent narrative capable of holistic

reconstruction) is as inaccessible to, and resistant of, any alternative or marginal, ethnic,

class, gender, sexually orientated, cultural or subjective heritage as it is to, and of, the

national or class identifications of the AHD; that heritage is most efficacious when it

splinters or multiplies identity rather than affirms or mediates it; that it always fails to

reveal the consistent and meaningful past to which it claims to owe its existence; that it

reveals most about the past through its anomalies, excesses, ironies and mistakes; that

the utterance made by Mike Pearson, in my hearing, when contemplating the ruins of

Fountains Abbey (a National Trust site in Yorkshire) overlayed by its associations to the

work of his late colleague Cliff McLucas, is exemplary: 'the past is really, really weird'.


4

Research questions


With heritage as my general research field and mythogeography as the critical

underpinning for a research methodology, I began with three research questions from

which this thesis has unfolded:


1/ What performance or performative interventions most successfully disrupt, diversify

or détourn the dominant and homogenised narratives of heritage tourism sites in the

interests of mythogeographical principles (particularly multiplicity and limited

nomadism)?

2/ How effective, when applied to the production of such interventions in such sites, are different mythogeographical principles and tactics in realising their own ends?

3/ What are the opportunities and affordances for the distribution of such principles and tactics of intervention?

5

Tourism and Tourism Space

5.1

In order to address these questions I needed to make certain choices about the sites in which I would intervene and develop an understanding of the tourism in that space. Avoiding the subsuming of tourism into a mobilities paradigm, I also sought to avoid shadowing the acceleration of tourism's (and more general global) trajectories (including the virtual) and, instead, chose to intervene in tourism where it slows to a pedestrian pace, when it still takes time over artefacts, landscapes and properties, and usually away from iconic or cosmopolitan heritage nodes. Rather than an ideal or fluid space (such as the heterotopic space of a bazaar) I have purposely sought after the 'regulated tourist space' (Edensor, 1998: 67) of approximate repetitions, uneven scripts and variably sustained generic uniformity.

At the same time I have sought to avoid using the term 'tourism' as part of a general paradigm like Paul Virilio's 'Dromology' in which the tourist is one specialist among

many in an accelerating globalised culture – 'migrant workers, tourists, olympic champions or travel agents, [that] the military industrial democracies have made ... into unknown soldiers of the order of speeds' (Virilio, 1986: 119-20) – or as a culture in itself: '[R]apid movement of messages, images and bodies… perhaps we have yet another anthropologically defined cultural phenomenon on our hands, not so much tourism itself as "tourist culture"' (Boniface & Fowler, 1993: 154-5). Instead I have engaged more with specific contradictions within the discourse of Tourism Studies – for example, in discussions around authenticity, spontaneity and agency, fabrication and manipulation, and both between competing metaphors and within discrete attempts to construct viable metaphors – as potentially marking particular (and, for my purposes, affordant) dynamics within tourism itself.

For example, I have drawn from Hazel Andrews's critique of John Urry's use of difference from everyday life (Andrews, 2011: 13-4) and of 'landscapes and townscapes which are out of the ordinary' (Urry, 1990: 1) as among the defining qualities of tourism spaces (Urry elaborating on a binary-based definition of tourism as a kind of anti-work or non-work). I do this in order to exploit those points of entanglement or 'de-differentiation' (Lash, 1990: 11) when everyday life is made 'spectacular', or, from the perspective of Performance Studies, when 'theatricalization permeates the entire social life' (Lehmann, 2006: 183). Then heritage (or any other) tourism is normalised (for example, in the growing use of longstanding tourism sites as spaces for the memorialisation of the dead or the emphasis on accessibility and education in heritage sites) 'as just one of several forms of intricately connected mobility' (Church & Coles, 2007: 279). Bella Dicks describes such an interpenetration of heritage tourism and the everyday:

> heritage has expanded into the ordinary domains of human life… it is now centred on the everyday and the idiosyncratic... The objects of the tourist gaze have… multiplied, from the traditional 'auratic' mode in which rare and original historic artefacts hold centre stage, to the vernacular mode, in which the familiar, mundane world of 'the people' is displayed through reconstructed backdrops and settings. (Dicks, 2000: 37)

Also Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlström not that:

> Boundaries between tourism and non-tourism… may be much softer than we think. Our 'familiar' everyday and the unfamiliar spaces the tourist encounters may have more complicated entanglements where spaces, practices and identities, the material and the metaphorical, may merge and happen in mutually more complex ways than the familiar polarization of life in and out of tourism suggest. (Crouch, *et al.,* 2001: 264)

5.2

However, I have resisted the dissolution of the mythogeographical project in a democratic quotidianization. Though it is apparently resistant to or tending to break up a bounded and elite heritage, I have instead sought out continuities between, and entanglements of, the 'auratic'[4] mode and the historicisation of the everyday with each other.  In order to do so I have accepted the necessity 'to imagine beyond these limits backwards and forwards … not merely… through the fabrication of subaltern accounts which rely on similar principles of "historical truth"… (but) that we "make things up in the interstices of the factual and the fabulous"' (Edensor, 2005: 164). I have not, however, assumed that tourism will provide such a fabulist hub as a matter of course.

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[4] I reference here Walter Benjamin's idea of the, to his mind lost, value or power of an aesthetic or cultural object acquired as a result of its elusiveness or inaccessibility.

Indeed, some recent scholarship emphasises an opposite tendency, an accelerating 'de-exoticising' of travel and tourism and an erosion of difference:

> (I)n the past much leisure travel would have been classified as touristic… unnecessary. But now it seems that affordable, reliable and well-connected tourist-type travel is necessary for family and family life, social inclusion and social capital... in 1990 there were five times more "leisure, recreation and holidays" travellers than "VFR [visiting friends and relatives], health, religion and others"; by 2001 this had reduced to little more than twice as many.
> (Larsen, *et al*., 2006: 7, 41)

In this account (echoing certain qualifications around the mobilities paradigm), tourism becomes an obligation rather than a release from responsibilities. It is de-utopianised; touristic freedom from family, identity and labour is eroded by holidays that take in family visits, searches for ancestors, re-visiting former destinations or that serve to reinforce familial and other ties: '(F)ew tourists thus see the world as a solitary flâneur without an intended destination and a social embeddedness' (Larsen, *et al.*, 2006: 45-6).

5.3

I should qualify this argument: there is a danger in over-emphasising the significance of this 'quotidianisation of tourism', particularly alongside the advocacy I will make for an idea of the "agentive tourist" in that this may exaggerate the productive role of an agentive tourist as reflexive consumer, allowing the owners, managers and workers in the tourism industry to fade from a description of tourism production, as somehow less significant and less open to engagement with and by my interventions. Just as I have acknowledged the operation, but not the necessary dominance, of an 'Authorized Heritage Discourse', so my use of the term 'tourism' is cognisant of and, when empirically supported in particular contexts, supportive of a critique of the tourism

industry's (variably successful) construction of a 'prevailing view… carefully cultured to dovetail throughout: from preparation of the tour organisation's brochure, to achieving its chosen market of a particularly identified group' (Boniface & Fowler, 1993: 14). This is particularly efficacious where such a critique is posited on site-specific social relations; where, for example, 'in order to create a generalised, marketable destination image or brand, the richness and complexity of a place and its people (predominantly its culture and heritage) is "flattened"' (Beeton, 2005: 47) and/or where 'narratives of labour, class and ethnicity are typically replaced by romance and nostalgia' (Hall, 2003: 108).

However, where such a critique relies upon a model of the tourist as a passive dupe, a blank screen onto which this tourism projects itself – 'the sites visited scarcely matter, so long as they are picturesque and old, since the view of them will to a large extent be preordained, merely reinforced at every stopping place' (Boniface & Fowler, 1993: 14) – I have rejected such miserablism[5] on two grounds. The first is the idea of the agentive tourist always partly constructing their own tourism whether within or without the parameters of a 'prevailing view'. The second is the assumption (consistent with mythogeography's privileging of mistakes, ironies, accidental juxtapositions and anomalies) that tourism's powerful channelling and limitation of narratives makes it vulnerable to a contradictory pull from within its narrative making: its legitimisation by empirical evidence (narratives, images and things). Stretched by its need to be both generic and over-produced, uniform and yet highly textured, details inconsistent with an apparently homogeneous whole can produce absurd juxtapositions, what Barbara

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[5] Miserablism – the pleasurable embracing of pessimism about others.

Kirschenblatt-Gimblett has called the 'tourist surreal' (1998: 152), and the whole becomes questionable (see Figure 1.v).

While Boniface and Fowler emphasise tourism's straitened presentation of 'a fixed narrative or interpretation' (1993: xii) as an intentional bounding by which 'any element of chance [is] ... removed from the scene' (1993: 3), Tim Edensor addresses this general homogenisation as arising less from manipulation and more as a result of the failures of entrepreneurialism and particularisation:

> bureaucrats and entrepreneurs [who] try to manufacture uniqueness and stress spatial distinctiveness... only succeed in producing a "recursive" and "serial" monotony, producing from already known patterns or moulds places almost identical in ambience from city to city… heritage centres, hotel landscapes, resorts, interpretative and information facilities, conference centres, souvenir and craft emporia, hi-tech transportation and communication. (Edensor, 1998: 11-12)

Unlike the apparent stasis in the sites that Boniface and Fowler describe, Edensor characterises these 'non-places' as locally challenged and generally unstable, as 'forms of tourist space [that] can never merely conform to a homogenous pattern… [T]ensions are played out on local stages… [C]ritical and subaltern representations, alternative symbolic geographies and tourist performances escape the normative narratives and rituals' (Edensor, 1998: 12-13). Rather than choose between opposing characterisations of the authorised discourse as either chanceless or unstable (although Edensor's account coheres more closely to my perspective), applying the mythogeographical principles of multiplicity and suspended dialectic (in which the synthesis of differences, or the progression of changes of quantity to changes of quality, are deferred) , I have sought

mostly to exploit the contradictions in actual heritage-tourism practice reflected in this critical tension.

5.4

While tourism space may be locally striated and while 'most contemporary tourism occurs in specifiable and constricted settings which are subject to... a "controlled de-control"' (Edensor, 1998: 5) with even its excessive and informal aspects shaped, invited or tolerated, it is also a space of change and movement, 'a site in which constellations of values and meanings are negotiated' (Wearing, *et al*., 2009: 80). This is a space where such 'constellations' may move without equality with, and sometimes to the exclusion of, others; 'in a single real place, several spaces' (Foucault, 1986: 25), such as along the continuum that Tim Edensor suggests in his *Tourists At The Taj*, ranging from enclavic, controlled and policed space to the multiplicitous space of the bazaar. However, the 'smooth' space (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 409-13) of this continuum can itself be fractured between

> local, endemic, insider meanings and broader, pandemic, outsider meanings. For example, a pastoral landscape may inspire a romantic sentimentality in virtually any Western tourist, but knowledge of whose homes, farms and cattle are being gazed upon is restricted to the local inhabitants. (Knudsen, *et al.*, 2008: 1)

The focus of my research has been to address the affordant contradictions that arise from the particular spatial characteristics described above: control of de-control, constellations in negotiation, many places in one place, disrupted continua, local against pandemic gaze.

5.5

Another tension that I have sought to exploit is that around questions of authenticity and representation. Researchers can describe tourists as 'attracted by what they see as a more local, and hence authentic, tourism experience' (Wearing, *et al*., 2009: 100) while noting that destinations are first imagined or consumed as images or other representations. These representations are then 'matched' by the tourists with (and at) the sites themselves; confirmation of descriptions are sought in the material of the sites, and images are used to understand or frame what is seen: '(W)e go… to test reality by the image' (Boorstin, 1972: 116), 'they will frequently take their own photograph of the site that mirrors the official photograph' (Wearing, *et al*., 2009: 114). This might seem to infer that there is an inherently alienated and distanced quality to the 'local' and 'authentic' experience of tourism: '(I)t is discourse which delineates the sight, language which informs the tourist what must be seen… phrase precedes gaze' (Dann, 1994: 21). However, for the purposes of this research, my concern has not been with the authenticity or otherwise of the experiences of 'tourism', but with the opportunity afforded by this negotiation of the 'local' and 'authentic' through, and in relation to, 'official' images and discourse. Where this negotiation dramatises the inter-relation of the subjective with the industrial, there is the potential for engaging on a fantastic as well as an embodied level with the tourist: '[T]ourism by its very nature, involves daydreaming' (Beeton, 2005: 26). So, these encounters with sites are not simply about the (authentic or inauthentic) experiencing *of the site* by a stable tourist self. They are also about discourses, images, experiences and destinations that are both parts of a nexus of, at least partly imaginary and fabular, *self-making*, with its own contradictions, and the means to place-making:

> [T]he match between a tourist's ideal self-image and
> the destination image is a powerful motivator, as
> tourists tend to select a destination that allows them
> to experience their ideal self-image (which is usually

different from their actual self-image). (Beeton, 2005: 52)

5.6

Within my use of the term 'tourism' is the assumption that there are inherent affordances for intervention and disruption (implicit in Edensor's statement above that 'tourist space can never merely conform') and invitations to utilise tensions and enhance alternatives immanent in touristic forms. In this sense, there is a quality in touristic space and touristic behaviour in general which serves the ends of mythogeographical intervention: I have identified this as consistent with the 'chorastic'[6] quality of touristic space described by Wearing, Stevenson and Young, and will address this below in Chapter Four in greater detail.

6

Performance and Performativity

6.1

Given that I am attempting an interdisciplinary study, drawing upon and intended to be relevant to both Tourism Studies and Performance Studies, I need to clarify my use of terms in relation to the latter, as I have attempted to do above with those of the former.

6.2

In the context of my research, 'performance' refers firstly and mostly to 'live performance' which is

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[6] In the simplest terms, 'chora' denotes a notional space between being and becoming.

> still happening... [has] the potential for change in its
> very moment of delivery.... need[s] to be
> experienced... via, for example, the body of the
> performer, the physical context of its venue, the
> relationship with the audience... [it] results from
> conscious or deliberate decisions; and... [its] 'text'
> or 'blueprint' is repeatable (although necessarily
> alterable when actually (re)presented). (Mock, 2000:
> 3)

For my experimental interventions, I have sought to take advantage of this overlapping

of chosen preparations (texts, objects, rehearsed actions) with liveness and mutability,

as necessary for a sufficiently flexible engagement on 'local stages' of heritage where

'tourist performances escape the normative narratives and rituals' (Edensor, 1998: 13),

while at the same time being sufficiently 'repeatable' for the purposes of their dispersal.


In each case my live performances have served a function or functions, with the

intention of producing observable outcomes. Performance in this context was created

for purposes other than its own realisation and consumption, and to which purposes the

performances were secondary, following situationist precedent; 'art could only function

tactically, as provisional instances of a total project' (Wark, 2011: 111).


6.3

I have used the word 'performance' in the awareness of, and assuming a connectivity to,

a hinterland around live performance of 'exchanges which begin before the time the

first spectator enters and after the last spectator leaves' (Mock, 2000: 2). I have assumed

that these performances would always have consequences beyond their immediate

physical and temporal contexts, but not that their liveness conferred upon them either,

on the one hand, 'the promise of its own ontology' (Phelan, 1993: 146) or, on the other,

any intrinsic falseness, insignificance or special transience. Rather their various qualities

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(incompleteness, experientiality, self-consciousness, alterableness) confer on them the '*potential for* ideological resistance' (Mock, 2000: 4, emphasis in original) alongside a similar potential for ideological reiteration and reproduction.

6.4

I have also used the word 'performance' when referring to, or implying a connection to, the 'performance of everyday life' (the self-conscious or un-self-conscious reiteration of certain scripts or scores in quotidian situations). I have drawn from Erving Goffman's initiatory work in this area published in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* in 1959. From this, I have taken his descriptions of acting simultaneously as actor and audience as an affordance for developing performance-like explorations, fore-fronted his front stage/back stage binary (Goffman, 1971: 114-40) as useful as a disruptive and constructed demarcation (rather than as a description of the structure of the essential performance of self), and rather than accepting his 'definition of situation' as a necessary part of the production of coherence, I have specifically sought out incoherent situations in heritage, proposing a willed *in*credulity (rather than the 'tact' of a willed credulity [Goffman, 1971: 222-7]) as part of the hypersensitizing of actor/spectators in heritage sites.

I have not made a strict demarcation between live performance and the performance of everyday life, nor have I proposed their equivalence. Instead, dependent on the particular qualities of any specific instances of these two types of performance there are greater or lesser degrees of overlap, so that a partially bounded live performance can intersect with the apparently boundless and yet 'scored' performance of everyday life.

6.5

Initially, my interventions for my research project were easily recognisable as live performances; for example, they had a starting time and place and I would adopt a persona or personae for them (see Figure 1.vi). However, even these recognisable live performances methodologically 'doubled up' as research, as ethnographic practices, and as experiments in exemplary action. Different variations on performance were often made or 'played' simultaneously; consciously, one in relation to another. So, a mis-guided tour with strong theatrical elements was constructed so as to interact with the 'scripts' of tourism space (as a once exceptional terrain that is increasingly reclaimed by the performance scores of everyday life) and these entanglements are discussed in my case studies. My understanding of, and work in, tourism spaces has also been informed by my understandings of theatre and other performance spaces, extending beyond the often restricted range of theatrical metaphors  (most notably, 'backstage') used in Tourism Studies, to the far-reaching boundedness, diffused stages, body as 'stage' and violent disruption of audience/performer boundaries characteristic of Western non-naturalistic, non-theatre-based performance modes.

In my practice I drew from a range of performance: this included numerous influences from site-specific theatre and performance (both first and second hand) such as the prepared informality of Mike Pearson's *Bubbling Tom* (2000) and his crossover of theatre with archaeology (Pearson & Shanks, 2001), the social generosities of Lone Twin and the work of staff and students on numerous site-oriented modules at the University of Plymouth and Dartington College of Arts since 2002. I was also influenced by the hybridic aesthetics of Guillermo Gómez-Peña and the assemblages of Eugenio Barba in the construction of limited mythic personae, by various 'walking as

art' practices (see above), by activist intervention (*Yes Men*, 2003, *Vacuum Cleaner*, 2005) and by a variation on the confessional monologue that was 'low-tech, language-based, and highly politicised' (Gómez-Peña, 1996: 94) and informed by the 'meshworks' of narrative anomalies and fortuitous connectivities in the solo theatre performance texts of Ken Campbell (Campbell, 1995).

I have not (or only ever momentarily) performed in the intense psychological manner of character portrayal, but more often occupied a platform of personae; a 'costumed citizen' rather than an actor (Smith, 2009b). However, I have deployed performance skills and drawn on my experience in making performances. (This has significance in regard to the dissemination of interventions to an 'audience' with the view to them continuing such performances without me, when they may not have, or do not feel they have, either such skills or the requisite experience.)

6.6

My performance aesthetics overlap with many of the tendencies of a 'postdramatic theatre' defined by Hans-Thies Lehmann, including: 'disintegration, dismantling and deconstruction' (Lehmann, 2006: 44). The postdramatic is characterised by Lehmann in terms of 'the de-hierarchization of theatrical means' (86) and 'the decomposition of the human being' (163) in a dynamic that 'balances between a metamorphosis into a dead exhibition piece and ... self-assertion as a human being... returning to things their value and to the human actors their experience of "thing-ness"' (165). This requires a negotiation between the various fragmentations and 'the experience of simultaneity' (87) sited on a plane of synchronicity and myth. It is 'not a story read from... beginning

to end, but a thing held full in-view the whole time... a landscape' (Thornton Wilder, cited Fuchs, 1996: 93).

6.7

The performance interventions discussed in this thesis were not produced as commodities to be consumed, appreciated or interpreted, but as performances of 'embodied knowledges… disseminated experientially through presentations to and interactions with other people' (Mock & Parker-Starbuck, 2011: 20). One of these 'knowledges' was the performance of such 'knowledges' itself, as partly a 'dissemination' through audiences' participation in the tours, seeking to pass on part of a quotidian repertoire to the audience. This principle of performance-dissemination also informs the documentation of my performances and its dispersal to its 'audience', assembling an exemplary 'repertoire' (in the sense defined by Diana Taylor [2003]). These actions, techniques, scores and ideas are meant to be transmitted partly through toolkits and documentation and partly through embodied performance, for enactment by a wide audience in heritage sites, continuing the dissemination by their performance and its documentation:

> The repertoire… enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge…. The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by "being there," being part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning. (Taylor, 2003: 20)

6.8

Where I have publicly made available archive-like remnants of my performances, such as the films made with Siobhan McKeown, the illustrated scores of 'mis-guided tours' on the Mythogeography website[7] or the publications resulting from performance or performative interventions, these are intended as exemplary, as provocations to new productions or as toolkits for practice rather than as archival records of liveness, recoverable or not.

6.9

In this thesis I attempt to describe collectively certain kinds of complicated agency that do not easily fall under the above definition and uses of '(live) performance': audience members adopting or adapting the dynamic of live performance into their everyday life presumably at the expense of, or in addition to, the existing scores of that everyday life, the effects of provocative signage, the vibrancy of non-human materials including the generative effects of traces and installations. In each of these cases there are similarities to live performance (agency, representation, communication, fiction, playfulness), yet, in different ways, they are also deficient in it; for example, their 'agency' may be non-human or non-self-conscious, they may take place exclusively in live performance's hinterland or they may have none of the temporal or spatial boundedness of live performance. I have chosen to describe these complex acts as 'performative', but I need to define my use(s) of the word as I am deploying it to indicate different qualities in certain acts, signs or objects that at times overlap or interact and that at other times are present simultaneously but separately. I am mindful of the multiple and variously nuanced meanings that the term already carries, not all of which are sympathetic to the

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[7] Available at http://www.mythogeography.com/2009/11/a1.html .

orientation of my research arc, particularly any sense of the reproduction of a fixed, synchronic, semiotic code that excludes, neutralises or harmlessly accommodates any disruption to it, given that the 'multiple registers and framings' of tourism 'suggest we need to think not simply of semiosis but also the poetics of how these are strung together in the practices of visitors and performers – where neither monopolises the right to define legitimate performances' (Coleman & Crang, 2002: 15).


6.10

I have chosen to deploy the term 'performative' as a preferable alternative to fabricating a neologism without its resonance, on the grounds that this resonance informs an explanation of my research, and that certain elements of the theorisation of speech acts that inform many uses of 'performative' are applicable to, and are, at least obliquely, influential on my interventions and the arc of their development.


The two main qualities with which I have inflected my use of 'performative' are:


> 1/ a description of acts, objects or signs which do not
> comfortably constitute live performance, but which share certain
> qualities with it, that are 'as if' live performance, in common
> with 'a very general metaphoric usage... of "performative" in the
> sense of "like a performance", or to index the consideration of
> something in terms of performance' (Shepherd & Walls, 2004:
> 223), 'like theatre – without being theatre' (Kirby, 1987: xi.
> However, although this is a metaphorical rather than structural
> usage, more allusive than analytical, it describes an agentive (or

agency-like) rather than representational quality, that

encompasses and then goes beyond (in its second quality) the

metaphorical use of 'performance' to describe (as, for example,

in 'the performance of the rupee against other currencies').


2/ a dynamic manifest when a speaking is a doing, drawing very

broadly on speech-act theory and those derivations originating

from J. L. Austin's 'performative utterances', particularly the

self-constituting of agentive subjects by such acts without

recourse to an essential identity, as associated with Judith

Butler. This element of the term helps me with the problem of

an apparently self-evident 'past' and the construction of

essentialist identities by recourse to heritage. Performativity

allows me to step back before the constitution of the performing

subject (the heritage tourist): 'performance presupposes a pre-

existing subject, performativity contests the very idea of the

subject' (Salih, 2002: 63), and while there are problems with a

structural pre-determinism here (with a performativity that

'conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a

repetition' (Butler, 1993:12) arising from Butler's corrective to a

voluntarist reading of her early writings, I have adopted the

principle of acts constituting subjects, without having to accept a

pre-determined (and equally essentialist) linguistic or

behavioural code. A perfomativity that is not coded, and does

not know itself and is not known in advance (unlike a

performance) is a useful understanding of the improvisations
(and subject-creation) towards which my research arc moved;
from a disruptive and multiplicitous performance towards a
dispersive performativity in which the important, but still
marginal and subordinate 'still happening... includ[ing] the
potential for change in its very moment of delivery' (Mock,
2000: 3) of performance interventions becomes the dominant
qualities of a performative counter-tourism.

So, just as a performative utterance might be 'just words' (without accompanying gestures or instrumental actions) and yet in itself is a transformative or inscribing action, so the agencies and objects that I am describing (adopting new dynamics into everyday behaviour, or a sign that provokes a second and altered look at a vista) are 'just acts' or 'just things' and yet they behave in some respects as if they were live performance, though they are deficient in the defining qualities of it. Just as speech 'should not' complete an action rather than represent or propose it, so these agencies 'should not' perform, and yet they do. Rather than using a neologism such as, say, 'as-if-performance' (its connotation of representation is problematic) I have sought to describe this 'should not and yet' dynamic as 'performative' (while wary of, but also deploying, the tendency of such a description to itself be performative, imbuing what it describes with its own qualities).

This has allowed me to connect actions, often defined as functional, via 'peformativity' (in the sense used here) to live performance; for example, where the guided tour is often described as primarily an act of information-transfer and tourist management (Meged,

2010: 11), I have emphasised and exaggerated those qualities of guided tours that are most like ('as if') performance, then actively extending that 'as if' to those aspects of a tour (for example, wayfinding, directing tour attendees or the walk/stop/walk of the tour) that are most often portrayed as entirely functional.

6.11

My particular use of 'performative' has a bearing on my approach to the 'performance of everyday life'. Rather than deploying the metaphor of performance as a means to describe the costumes, situations, agencies, stages, codes and scripts of quotidian behaviour (Goffman, 1959), my intention has been to use 'the performance of everyday life' actively: '(W)hen you do life consciously... life becomes pretty strange – paying attention changes the thing attended to' (Kaprow, 2003: 195). My intention has been to bring the agency, immersion and self-consciousness – that is, both the tending and attending to (Kloetzel & Pavlik, 2009) – of site-specific performance to bear upon the performative qualities of the heritage-tourism everyday; to make unfamiliar (in some cases to make unfamiliar once again) what has become taken for granted. (This may explain the attractiveness of the interventions for some heritage-tourism professionals.)

6.12

The 'mythogeographical project' that I propose is sensitive to instabilities in the everyday. It works to illuminate manipulations and ironies in the quotidian (for example, decayed, comically overbearing, inappropriately restrictive or accidentally poetic signage) and seeks out those tipping points or points of leverage in the everyday, where small performative interventions (sometimes little more than bringing to bear the self-consciousness of live performance) can provoke places (in a broad sense that

includes terrain, built environment, human and animal inhabitants, ongoing physical processes, machines) to 'perform themselves' as multiplicitous sites. This is done not only to expose the production of tendentious or ideological discourses in everyday life, but also to change (rather than reproduce) everyday space.

6.13

It is this bias in mythogeography towards the changeable, unstable and excessive (though often in restrained contexts; it does not seek a milieu of excess) and the search for means to transform everyday space which requires a reflexive adaptation of 'performativity'. It requires engaging the performativity that is in 'performativity', while resisting any swallowing of its own theoretical tail as detected by Sue-Ellen Case in the tendency of 'critical discourses of speech-act theory and deconstruction [to] ultimately bring the notion of performativity back to their own mode of production: print' (Case, 1995: 8). My folding performativity in on itself is an attempt to overload this tendency by applying it to itself rather than accepting a variation of structural stasis or stepping outside it in deference to an imagined 'big other' (Žižek, 2008: 113-4) such as an essential subject.

6.14

I have taken encouragement for developments in my research trajectory from Judith Butler's account of her uncanny experience of becoming a 'public intellectual':

> one of the ambivalent implications of the decentring
> of the subject [is] to have one's writing be the site of
> a necessary and inevitable expropriation... the
> yielding of ownership... does open up a difficult
> future terrain of community in which the hope of
> ever fully recognising oneself in terms by which one
> signifies is sure to be disappointed... speaking is

> always in some ways the speaking of a stranger
> through and as oneself. (Butler, 1993: 241-2)

I have wilfully adopted this problem in certain ways, affecting a decentred subject (opening up the dynamics of my performance-making while increasingly removing myself from it), speaking through a stranger ('Crab Man' and then the 'counter-tourist'), writing as a plural subject on Mytho Geography Facebook and increasingly offering performance for expropriation in the hope of opening up 'a difficult future terrain of community'.

## 7

A note on the role of publication and collaboration

### 7.1

The publications that make up a part of this thesis fulfil a number of functions, many of which they share with each other. They are all, to some extent, intended as interventions (or continuances of interventions) and as parts of a process of dispersal. They all at least partly document an existing or previous intervention or set of interventions.

### 7.2

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks, Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook*, *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* and the 31 online *Tactics for Counter-Tourism* micro-movies (available on the dvd *Tactics for Counter-Tourism* as part of the main thesis) are not only attempted dispersals of intervention, but they also operate collectively as a popular version of the thesis itself; attempts to express, in accessible forms, both the findings of the research, and their realisation in a praxis that is consistent with the idea of the agentive tourist that

I adopted early on and developed repeatedly through my research arc. For this reason, these publications are submitted as part of the main body of the thesis.

7.3

Many, but not all, of the practical outcomes of this research were collaborative works. In the sense that audiences, readers or counter-touristic visitors are also collaborators, all the works here are collaborative, and so I acknowledge here, in general terms, such a general participation of others in the making of performances, readings and visits made during the course of this research. However, wherever I have worked with specialists – for example, artists, performers, designers, film makers and others, or with research panel members – I have endeavoured in this thesis to fully acknowledge the importance and significance of their participation and specifically identity where others have provided crucial insights or creative productions, both for specific outcomes and for the suggestiveness of those outcomes for my research itself. Wherever I have taken personal credit for a product, idea, observation or line of thinking, I have sought to illustrate my role in constructing, imagining, deducing or synthesizing these by reference to notes, scripts and emails. Collaboration, as a general working principle, has been crucial to the practices and themes researched for this thesis; I have therefore sought to take care that specific individual and group collaborations are acknowledged while at the same time taking responsibility for my original research ideas, hunches, productions and analyses.

7.4

The inter-relation of the written (case studies, chapters) elements of the thesis produced discretely through private reflection and analysis and the practice (film, publications)

elements is that between two distinct sets elements within which I have striven to retain

discreteness for the parts, so as not to confuse their different functions. I have also, however,

accounted for those parts of my research trajectory where 'in the field' there has been a

dynamic relationship between 'hunches' and theoretical speculation, a drawing upon

provisional analyses of previous interventions and the (often, but not exclusively,

collaborative) production of new practices.

In Chapter One I describe such a dynamic at work in my taking of field notes. In Chapter

Four I describe how the production of a double-movement in the dramaturgical structure of

*Water Walk* (2010) was only drawn out by later analysis and then, later again, generalized as

a reproducible structure within a new practice ('counter-tourism') when tested against

theories of 'chora' and of ideological production and reproduction. These analytical

descriptions, though of multiplitous and overlapping practices, are the products of private

analysis and reflection. On the other hand, and quite distinct from the above, the 'Afterword:

The Heritage IS The Visit' in *Counter-tourism: the handbook* (2012) is a popularised

summary of my research which, at the risk of alienating some general or theory-averse

readers, seeks to render the theory work of this research accountable and accessible to those

who are asked to use the counter-touristic tactics based upon it.

This discreteness has been partly determined by the need to retain a clear distinction between

any practical collaborations on the one hand (in describing each of which I have attempted

always to identify any unique, outstanding or especially significant contributions made by my

collaborators) and, on the other hand, those written elements (chapters, case studies) where,

except in those instances where I cite influences or quote directly from sources, the

organisation, analysis, terms of expression and conclusions are my own. The key hunches and changes of direction – generalisation of double-movement, extension of the virtues of the 'standard' guided tour to heritage-tourism in general, the recognition of 'chora' in the special conditions of *Water Walk*, and so on – are the results of a research process that involved sustained periods of private assembling, reading and analysis.

8

Chapter Breakdown

8.1

Chapter One describes my research methodology, which draws upon models from across the disciplines and paradigms of performance and tourism. This includes the assemblage of a vocabulary informed by debates within both Tourism Studies and Performance Studies, addressing key categories like those of space, trajectory, ambience and agency.  It also describes how ethnographic practice and Practice-as-Research are interwoven in the research and how this varies according to their different qualities of experimentation. The chapter outlines the main research techniques I have deployed and explains the role of the case studies in the research. The key theoretical concepts informing the research trajectory are outlined in terms of a mythogeographical approach: performance in tourism (seeking to broaden the performance metaphor used in Tourism Studies), the move in Tourism Studies to an agentive tourist that constructs their own tourism, the aspiration to a lay geography, the mobilities paradigm, and a limited version of nomadism (in thinking and walking). The four key mythogeographical lenses, whose repeated use is a means to giving shape and

consistency to the multimodal approach, are listed and described: layering, rhizomatic interweaving, the making of 'anywheres', and the self-mythologizing of the activist. The chapter concludes with a note on the various roles for, and different modes of, writing deployed during the research.


8.2

Chapter Two is the first of three case studies, each based on examples of my own practice made for the purposes of this research. The subject of this first case study is the *English Riviera Global Geopark GeoQuest 2010*; a week-long journey with daily workshops, performances, improvised street encounters, mis-guided tours and communal meals with audiences. The study explores the variable efficacy of a range of different performance, performative and sociable tactics as means to achieving mythogeographical ends in a heritage landscape. It focuses particularly on walking, journey and the leading of tours as means to socially interrogate that landscape. It examines the effect of explicit live performance in relation to performative tactics.  It addresses an engagement with the deep time of geological narrative as means to question assumptions about the past. The study draws conclusions about uses of 'personae', questions around deep geological time, a model for an immersed hyper-tourism, and an interweaving of elements that on this occasion seemed to move beyond the aesthetic to an 'art of living' reconnecting with situationist politics.


8.3

Chapter Three is a case study of *A Tour of Sardine Street*; a two-hour mis-guided tour of a street in Exeter (a, at least partly, heritage site visited by the city's Red Coat Tours), drawing upon a long, immersive development period and facilitating the production and publication of a handbook for the making of mis-guided tours (*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks*) which is submitted as part of this thesis. The study characterises the *Sardine Street* tour as a hybrid of standard and other tour forms, rather than as an anti-tour; and that the efficacy of the standard tactics it deployed and détourned suggests greater affordance in the standard tour and the standard tour group than mis-guiding has so far taken advantage of. It addresses some of the detailed tactics of making mis-guided tours and identifies efficacious double movements within these tactics. It explores how the physical immersion of the participants is able to affirm both the materiality of the site and then, in turn, challenge these materials as their instabilities are unfolded, as a doubled means to a complex seeing. The study also notes that the impulse for the *Box of Tricks* handbook begins early in the project and that *the tour itself* is part of a broader dispersal of tactics.

8.4

Chapter Four is a case study of *Water Walk*; a tour chosen for case study given that the doubled process applied in different, limited ways in *Sardine Street* was applied to the tour as a whole, with a qualitatively new kind of response from participants. The study explores the effects of a 'stripped-down' version of the mis-guided tour with a specific focus on the histories of a route, the effects of conveying information while denying or exorcising it, and of a move away from the guiding voice in favour of pseudo-ritual. The conclusions of the case study point to the development of the transformational

qualities of the research project as being as much about accessing the specific qualities of heritage tourism space as about developing new disruptive tactics of mis-guidance. They suggest that the tactics of mis-guidance could be developed as much for tourists as for mis-guides or performers, and within the ground of mainstream tourism itself.

8.5

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* is a 'how to' guide for making a mis-guided tour; rather than targeting a specialist theatre or performance audience with specific skills it seeks to describe basic principles and tactics to which different skill-sets can be applied. The toolkit elements are set within the narrative of the making of *A Tour of Sardine Street*, drawing on lessons from successful and unsuccessful elements. It covers the exploring for and choosing of a site, multiplicity of research tasks and means, immersive corporeal investigation, the use of the quotidian, and the application of performance elements as means to ethnographic research.

8.6

Chapter Five begins by identifying continuities within the research findings from the three case studies and problems in relation to certain scales of dispersal and dissemination arising from those tactics that relied upon a mis-guide or performer presence. It describes the emergence of tactics oriented away from performer presence: signage, films, exhibition. It places this emergence in the context of a more general move within the research trajectory from live performance to the performance of everyday life and performativity. The chapter then assesses a number of praxis-like

interventions, seeking to draw out their key theoretical or tactical developments for the project in general. Drawing upon contrasting experiences while working on signage first at Torquay and then at Cockington, the chapter extrapolates the beginnings of a general strategy, and some tactics, for an 'open infiltration' of heritage tourism organisations that aims to shift visitor experience of heritage spaces. The chapter then identifies a part of the arc of my research project from performance/performative interventions to the ideas and tactics of 'counter-tourism'. It describes the emergence of 'counter-tourism' (from different practical experiments and from the responses to, and exigencies arising from, them) as both a model for popular practice based on the agency of tourists rather than that of specialist interveners and for the dispersal of tactics and principles through publication.

The chapter then discusses the main theoretical changes that emerged from the move towards counter-tourism. These include abjection as a theory of 'the past' in the context of wider discussions of 'heritage', the role of revelation in an 'apocalyptic' characterisation of the present (*not* of the future), the principle of détournement in taking advantage of heritage tourism's overproduction and underproduction of meaning, the productive tension between a hypermodern tourist and a nostalgic heritage, and performing self in the everyday as a resistant action encouraged through the popularisation of forms of self-reflexivity. It describes the assembling of the various parts of a counter-tourism strategy, interweaving the collection of tactics with the emergence of ideas; the process of the assemblage described includes the devising, invention and collation of tactics, testing out and improvising tactics with panel members, film-making, writing 'in the field' as exemplary and productive rather than exigent, preparations for a web presence, and the emergence of a strategy from the cross-fertilisation of emerging ideas and practical assemblages, negotiations with publishers

and the editing of the texts of *Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook* and *Counter Tourism: The Handbook* which form final parts of the thesis and seek to embody and disseminate my research findings in a popular or creative form.


8.7


Chapter Six comprises of the publications *Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook*, *Counter-Tourism: the Handbook* and *Tactics for Counter-Tourism* (dvd).


*Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook* is a small publication made up mostly of a set of around fifty 'tactics' for use in heritage sites as the means to understanding these as sites of abjection, overloaded with ironies and prone to 'blurting out' their ideological machinery. The publication is aimed at ordinary visitors to heritage sites. Using the tactics is intended not only to sensitize these visitors to ironic and abject qualities, but also to change these visitors' use of the sites. The *Pocketbook*, with its minimal theorization of 'counter-tourism', is designed to stand alone, on the grounds that the tactics themselves, if sufficiently used and shared and disseminated (as much by their use in the sites as by publication and promotion), along with the 'chorastic' potential of the sites, are sufficient to provoke not only significant disruption of the dominant discourse of heritage, but also an emergent re-use of heritage sites as ideal, heterotopian spaces, realisations of mythogeography's first principle of multiplicity.


*Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* is a longer companion to the *Pocketbook*, adding background to many of the tactics in the *Pocketbook* and offering many more tactics,

while maintaining the shorter publication's emphasis on the primacy and self-sufficiency role of the tactics (emphasising their dérive-like qualities of corporeal immersion, intuition and receptivity to ambience, and anti-functionalism). The *Handbook* does, however, offer far greater theorization of counter-tourism (for example, the abjection of the past, and the underlying influence of mythogeography) and in its later sections offers specialized tactics for those (with or without specialist performance, media or arts skill sets) creating their own interventions or working within the heritage industry itself.

*Tactics for Counter-Tourism* collects together 31 micro-movies made for dispersal via YouTube with filmmaker Siobhan Mckeown. The initial ideas for the tactics and locations in the films were formed during my walk in Norfolk and Suffolk (discussed in Chapter Five); the tactics were then improvised by myself and filmed by Siobhan Mckeown over three days in early 2012. With only the guidance that the films should be short enough to invite the casual online viewer, Siobhan edited the films over subsequent months and all 31 completed micro-movies were uploaded to YouTube in September 2012. They are intended to communicate tactics for direct use by viewers and to serve as a gateway to more detailed materials available on the website and in the publications.

9

<u>The development of key themes</u>

In this section I will describe how the key themes of my research developed and changed as the project in the field and the writing of the thesis progressed. The key themes discussed

here are walking, détournement, performative intervention and live performance, space and heritage. These key themes, partly due to the multiplicitous nature of the practices under analysis and partly due to my deployment of principles from mythogeography, were often (sometimes by necessity, sometimes by choice) interwoven during my research and are entwined in the descriptions, analyses and conclusions of this thesis. While my research findings almost always relied on the overlapping of two or more of these themes, they have coherence in their own right and can be postulated as potential trajectories to be pursued in their own right beyond (or as an extension of) this doctoral research.

9.1

The practice of a self-conscious walking related to the 'dérive', particularly in relation to ideas of quest and a limited normadism, was applied first to performance interventions in, and then to experimental visits to, heritage sites, re-emerging in the ambulatory tactics and the quest-like narrative of the toolkit of 'counter-tourism'.

9.2

The 'dérive'-related practice of 'détournement' re-emerged in a complex form in the 'double-movement' of exorcism and spectral return of the *Water Walk* tour. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter One, section 10 below. This process was then generalised to become the fundamental dynamic in the practice of 'counter-tourism'.

9.3

Performance, specifically that of performative intervention and live performance with a post-dramatic presence, was relocated to the everyday of the tourist visit. The principles of this performance (fragmentation, de-hierarchization of means, and so on) were adopted as the

principles for this dispersal, including the dispersive potential of performance itself in the form of repertoire. The limitations of the 'mis-guided tour' (despite the context of the growing variety of 'alternative' tours) as a specialist production resistant to dispersal were addressed; through a revaluation of the affordances of the 'standard tour' and tourism space's 'chorastic' qualities', the terrain of heritage-tourism was re-thought as a series of potential performance-routes subject to a détourned tour-like visit practiced by general tourists.

9.4

Two of the starting points for my research were 1/ a general approach to space as unfinished, unbounded and constructed of trajectories and 2/ the mythogeographical impulse to transform this space by performing it (producing and reproducing spaces of multiplicity). Each was discovered among members of my volunteer panel; and in *Water Walk* some members self-consciously deployed this impulse and approach as a reconstructing of self. An approach to space in which self-construction is part of the construction of its multiplicity re-emerged to crucially inform the development of a self-conscious, self-constructing heritage-site visit.

9.5

My initial view of the relation of the variegated and multiple qualities of heritage sites to the bounding, narrowing and homogenizing tendencies of their management and standard use was that of a simple repression of differences. I assumed that my practice should be to subvert the latter tendencies in the interests of the former qualities. A growing awareness (and conceptualization) of the disruptive potential of tourism space led to a shift of focus. Rather than a separating out of virtuous differences and multiplicity, I began to engage with the abject and surreal effects of affordant contradictions of everydayness and strangeness in

heritage sites. While seeking multiplicity in the margins of heritage products, I found it, unexpectedly, as a motor for its own production.

10

Summary of arguments, conclusions and contributions to knowledge in the fields

10.1

This thesis argues that the findings presented here concerning the effectiveness of certain specific tactics and structures generated in my performative and live performance interventions in heritage sites can be generalised and applied to general tourist visits to heritage sites. This transfer is based on an understanding of the heritage visit that has been inflected through theories of the agentive tourist and of the 'chora' of tourism sites. The thesis argues that the 'double movement' of exorcism and spectral return, identified in the case study of the *Water Walk* 'mis-guided tour', can be applied to the heritage site visits of ordinary tourists when facilitated by a toolkit of tactics distributed to visitors. The effect is to hollow out (travestying, exaggerating and performing the formalities without the intents) the existing standard tactics of heritage-tourism behaviours and management and then 'resurrect' those emptied tactics in spectral, transparent, excessive or travestied adaptations that still remain recognizable and comprehendible to a general tourist. The practice of hollowing out tactics, rather than sabotaging or subverting the tourism site, interleaves with its 'chorastic' qualities to render it and its circulation of meanings susceptible for a while to the play of a poetic or playful subjectivity upon the processes of its ideological productions and reproductions.

10.2

The thesis, informed by idea of the 'agentive tourist' concludes that a general tourist is capable of deploying tactics comparable to those of performative interventions and live performance (détourning their own touristic behaviour through the gently transforming 'double movement') and of adopting a self-reflectiveness and reflexivity comparable to that of performers. At the same time, mainstream heritage sites, associative and resonant for their visitors, are sufficiently mutable and affordant to détournement as to be transformable and transforming spaces (open to change, but also 'chorastic' spaces in which tourists can change themselves).

The four mythogeographical lenses that were deployed during the analytical parts of the research and, more generally, mythogeographical principles of multiplicity and mobility, while crucial to the development of a counter-tourism strategy, are shown as insufficient in themselves to adequately inform this strategy. Instead, theories drawn from Tourism Studies were necessary to move beyond existing speculative and, in practice, ineffective (at the very least, contextually inappropriate) mythogeographical models drawn from political activism and to re-conceptualize and enable the re-use of existing touristic behaviours in counter-touristic détournement. Through the prism of these theorizations post-dramatic qualities are generalised out from the content of live performance as principles for general dispersal.

10.3

Contributions to knowledge generated by this research can be defined in respect of Tourism Studies and Performance Studies separately.

The continuing influence of studies by Erving Goffman (1971) and Dean MacCannell (1976) has inflected approaches to tourism spaces in much work within Tourism Studies. This has meant that there are traces of a binary stage/backstage distinction that purports to represent a performance norm. In fact, the particular metaphor of performance space deployed, far from universal, seems to be largely drawn from practices specific to a post-medieval European theatre building (with possible reference to the outdoor medieval booth-stage). In many non-European performances – for example, in the use of a half-curtain (sharing the backstage with the audience), by displaying elaborate make-up preparations (as in Kathakali) or where audiences will sit backstage to view the work of puppeteers – the stage/backstage definition is far less defined and the exposure of the mechanics and craft of performance is recruited as part of the aesthetic effect. In my research I have drawn upon such spatial practices, as well as from the expansive spaces of contemporary site-based performance, from porous spaces of engagement in performances that transgress audience/performer boundaries and from the shared or interleaved spaces of live art, for a more variegated range of performance/spatial metaphors with which to address tourism and its spaces.

The emerging understanding of the affordant qualities of a standard guide tour arising from this research challenges those limited and tendentious generalisations about these tours in some of the criticism of guided tours, museum theatre and historical re-enactment emerging from the growing interest among Performance Studies researchers. This includes my own writing (Smith, 2009c) and is also evidenced, for example, at both the Performing Heritage – Research and Practice conference in Manchester in 2008 and at the Second International Research Forum on Guided Tours in Plymouth in 2011. Rather than a performance that is wholly conservative in relation to ideological production and that is, in its particular tactics unreflexive and unreflective, the findings of my research suggest that these tour guiding

performances are far more volatile. This has offered a fruitful terrain for increasingly subtle

research enquiries and affordances which have significantly informed my Practice as

Research.



Figure 1.i  *'Gardens always meaning something else'*, A la Ronde, Devon (2009). Photo: Salli Carr-Griffin.

Figure 1.ii  Guided tour led by local residents, Efford, Plymouth (2011). Photo: Phil Smith.

Figure 1.iii *Mythogeography* (2010) publication in Dee Heddon and Misha Myers' *Walking Library* at Sideways Festival, Belgium (2012). Photo: Phil Smith.

Figure 1.iv  Part of the route of *Outlands Walk* (2010). Photo: Phil Smith

Figure 1.v  The 'tourist surreal', Domme, France. Photo: Phil Smith.



Figure 1.vi  Adopting a persona, A Yarn Around the West End (2011). Photo: Ruth Mitchell.

Chapter One

Disciplinary approaches, key concepts and the development of an inter-disciplinary research methodology

1

Introduction

1.1

This thesis takes as its core subject of study a series of visits, journeys and trajectories through heritage sites, seeking experimentally to depart from or disrupt those sites' dominant discourses by performance and performance-like interventions. This chapter describes my multimodal research methodology which combines an ethnographic approach derived from existing practices in the social sciences with performance Practice-as-Research (PaR). Partly this is in order to address the hybridic contents and modes of interventional visits, journeys and performances, but also as a means of testing in itself:

> Different methods have different strengths and different weaknesses. If they converge (agree) then we can be reasonably confident that we are getting a true picture. (Gilham, 2000: 13)

My research is largely conducted 'in the field' without the preparation of experimental conditions. As participatory research, I am involved in provoking, joining in and observing the reactions of those invited or encountered within the sites of my interventions. I do not attempt to shield the interventions and their reception (within the bounds of physical safety) from these sites and their users, but where possible welcome, on principle, interaction and engagement and observe their effects.

As discussed in greater detail below, the base methods I deploy are PaR, my own participant observation (including the making and reception of my practice) drawn from a Performance Studies that valorises such an ethnographic approach, case studies, shorter assessments and other documentation of practices; panel surveys, including a series of questionnaires, informal dialogues, and group panel discussions, plus desk research in the overlapping disciplines of Tourism Studies and Performance Studies. The range of data sources is broad – including field notes, in which I not only record my own impressions, descriptions of events, associations and informal feedback, but also 'hunches' (both ideas for future inquiry and possible hypotheses for future critical assessments and theoretical formulations), questionnaires, solicited and unsolicited emails, photographs, letters and articles in newspapers, leaflets, scores and films. In the case of the latter, the films were sometimes a means to reflect on practice and I describe a key example of this in sub-section 3.4 of Chapter Two below. I have attempted to follow Gilham's advice to '[pay] attention to the fine grain of what you are observing' (2000: 19).

In broad terms, the research project responds positively to Kevin Hannam's advocacy (Hannam, 2009) of a rhizomatic approach (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 5-20) for Tourism Studies through the paradigm of 'mobilities', but limits it and overlaps it with approaches taken from Performance Studies that share a similar manoeuvrability as 'a provisional coalescence on the move' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2002: 2) where 'there is no finality' (Schechner, 2002: 1).

2

Practice-as-Research

2.1

My PaR ranges across different areas of activity in heritage sites of various kinds from institutionalised and bounded sites with paid admission to landscapes designated 'historic'. These areas of practice include walking, performance, film-making, publication, counter-touristic forays and performative interventions in official signage. Each of these practices constitutes an experimental intervention into an existing heritage site, practice, discourse or milieu. The practice-based nature of my research is a specific response both to the importance of the consumer-producer experience in the production of heritage and tourism, and to the need for an immersive research that engages with such experience directly, while reflecting the general idea that 'the social needs to be understood as an embodied field: society is felt, enjoyed and suffered, as well as rationally thought' (Pearson & Shanks, 2001: xvi).


2.2

Each of my research interventions engages with an existing practice of meaning–production in heritage tourism: with the tourist information film, with information boards, with the guided tour, with the tourist visit, with maps, or 'relics'/'artefacts'. Each intervention generates knowledge for this thesis, targeting different domains of the general practice of heritage. This *gathering* of knowledge is neither secondary to the performance/performative intervention nor exclusively an act of collection after the event, but is often coterminous with its practice, following Estelle Barrett in 'propos[ing] that artistic practice be viewed as the production of knowledge or philosophy in action... that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses' (Barrett, 2010: 1). In my research, such productions include the teasing out of the nature of affordances for disruption and for the transformation of the consumption and production of heritage within the spaces and discourses of mainstream heritage, subjective

experiences of the consumption of heritage, contestations with (and testing out of) dominant discourses, the challenge to audiences to hypersensitize themselves to textures and patterns in heritage objects, the effects of a resistant sociability in heritage sites, and the mechanics and effects of a transfer of agency from performer/intervener to audience/visitor.

2.3

The outcomes of my PaR and a participant observation of their reception are described here in case studies, short descriptions and films. The outcomes are also present in this thesis as ongoing knowledge-producing practice in the form of the three handbooks: *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks, A Counter-Tourism Pocketbook* and *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* and films of counter-tourism tactics. In these I am seeking to answer Peggy Phelan's concerns about the transformational quality upon performance of its description and documentation: '[P]erformance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance' (Phelan, 1993: 146). I seek to change the context of Phelan's 'something other than performance' so that it describes a possible 'documentation' that does not force performance to 'betray and lessen the promise of its own ontology' (146), but is a performance once more, one of Rebecca Schneider's 'other ways of knowing, other ways of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently' (Schneider, 2001: 101). In other words, something that could realise the implied aspiration in Barrett's account of the move between 'personally situated knowledge and new ways of modelling and externalising such knowledge' (Barrett, 2010: 2). The three handbooks are provocations (supported by online presence) to make new performances or performative interventions, seeking a bridging

(through publication, reception and use) between the knowledge generated in my own

interventions and its dissemination through the new 'philosophies in action' of future mis-

guides and counter-tourists now being situated by them in their own contexts.

3

<u>Ethnography</u>

3.1

The second key part of my methodology has been ethnographic study, a participant

observation (recorded in field notes and photographs) of users of heritage sites and of the

participants in my interventions at them. These interventions/observations have centred on

journeys, visits and tours, responding to Hannam's advocacy of

> mobile methodologies in order to "capture" the fluid
> (dis)order and (dis)embeddedness of contemporary
> (de)territorialised social life…. [M]obile
> ethnographies offer the best way of doing this
> research… [as] more "flexible, informal and context
> dependent, partly mimicking mobile subjects being
> studied in their own suppleness". (Hannam, 2009:
> 110)

Rather than assuming that people (visitors, tourists, interveners, performers) are the fluid

aspect moving through fixed entities (heritages sites) my focus has been equally on the

dynamism of the sites and their objects, and on finding out the relations of motion between

all factors:

> [R]ather than the circulation of people around fixed
> places we need to notice the mobilisation of places
> through objects – be they souvenirs... tourist
> commodities, folk products, or the material images
> circulating in postcards, brochures and cameras...
> the dissemination of place. Alongside this instability
> there goes an instability in the tourist in a regime of
> pathic, part objects and knowledges rather than

totalisable, symbolisable systems. (Coleman &
Crang, 2002: 11)

In adopting this approach I follow David Crouch's assertion that '(I)n encountering place in tourism our bodies are important mediators of... what we comprehend to be "there"' (Crouch, 2002: 207). Complementary to this, I follow Hannam in connecting 'the recentring of the corporeal body as an affective vehicle through which we sense place and movement, and construct emotional geographies' (Hannam, 2009: 109) with engagement in a mobile ethnography (see Figure 2.i).

3.2

I chose an ethnographic approach partly because it allows me to be responsive to quotidian elements in the context of the research, to the local specificities of the interventions, and to a general research field that is susceptible to change. It is also an approach that is at least partly about developing a strategy for change:

[E]thnography is particularly suited for micro-level
analysis especially in teasing out the complexities in
localised forms of practice and knowledge, and
contextualising these in terms of transformation.
(Meethan, 2001: 172)

To qualify what I mean by 'quotidian': it is not to deny that there is an exotic remnant in heritage-tourism places, but for the purposes of ethnography these are sites of people's ordinary lives rather than experimental set ups. The sites of my research are not only places of work and habitation as well as leisure, but they have been increasingly 'quotidianized' while everyday space has been increasingly 'spectacularized'. Given this attitude to the sites, part of the motivation for choosing an ethnographic approach is that its methods are appropriately quotidian:

> as a set of methods, ethnography is not far removed
> from the means that we all use in everyday life to
> make sense of our surroundings. (Hammersley &
> Atkinson, 2007: 4)

This therefore offers opportunities for the sometimes disruptive qualities of my PaR to be balanced by a more subtle interventional presence, more appropriate to the evolving of practices of exploration and intervention intended for wider distribution in a form accessible to those with access only to everyday means.

3.3

My participative study of the preparations and production of interventions, the 'everyday' contexts of the research, the participation with (as well as observation of) a panel group and its wider periphery, the collection of a heterogeneous range of data in an unstructured manner focusing on the small-scale, the production of verbal descriptions, analysis and theory rather than quantitative and statistical analysis, and the evolution of elements of my research design while in process all match the affordances of ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 3-5).

3.4

Early on in this doctoral research process I recruited a 60-strong panel of volunteers for participation in the interventions; these volunteers receive questionnaires whenever they attend interventions, and invitations to annual meetings for discussions of the research. My impressions of visits to official and less formal heritage sites, of the reception of interventions, and of 'forays' to heritage sites with panel members, are triangulated with panel members' responses to questionnaires and other forms of feedback (mostly by email,

but also occasionally in person) from panel members and others (including short face-to-face interviews with over a hundred visitors to the Cockington estate and an online questionnaire about a late draft of *Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook* with 49 respondents).

Many of the panel members are not only extremely helpful (giving up their time on a voluntary basis to travel to events and feed back upon them) but also warm in their involvement (see Figure 2.ii); the discussions at the annual panel meetings are often passionate and committed, while some members deploy elements of my practice work in their own work, art and leisure time. A small number of the panel members attend discussions and presentations and most of the interventions, engage with my writing and 'read around' the subject. Given this warmth, involvement and intellectual engagement, I am careful to assess the responses of the panel while taking into account 'the extent to which the subjects of the research are knowledgeable about, and interested in, the researcher's objectives' (Shaffir, 1998: 48) and may be echoing them.

However, I am not characterising such 'warmth' as only problematic. Indeed I encourage sociability among panel members and other participants (arranging for engaging sites and good quality refreshments for annual panel meetings, and I often make eating and drinking together and physical co-operation parts of my interventions); integrate personal chatter, reminiscence and associations as crucial to the explorations of, and interventions in, sites; and try to make time to talk with those who come to interventions, sometimes sharing some small, related gifts. I am mindful that '[T]he extent to which we are seen as likeable, friendly, dependable and honest bears directly on our ability to collect rich and deep data with which to better comprehend and analyse the social world under study' (Saffir, 1998: 48). Equally such sociability is feeding back into my PaR as the interests of participants are transformed

into suggestions for more deeply participative interventions and even joint projects: 'intimate involvements that are a part of field research mitigate against viewing those who share their world and their lives with us simply as respondents, informants, or case studies... these same folks may also become our friends, business partners, sponsors, and coauthors' (Grills, 1998: 13). I am aware of these responses not simply as acts of generosity, but as 'complex trade-offs... endemic in most field relations but because they smack of the market place there is very little reference to them' (Hey, 2002: 74). Time, presence, openness, experience, money (for publications), hospitality and performance are variously exchanged.

3.5

I do not find any un-navigable contradiction between my wish to change perceptions of, and behaviour in, heritage spaces and the ethnographic nature of my observation and its assessment. I acknowledge that mine is always an involved, applicable, disruptive and participative observation. I also recognise that this necessarily involves me in making loaded choices about what interventions I create, what sites I choose, what kinds of information I am particularly sensitized to and what kinds of outcomes (particularly those that seem to have provoked changes of perception or changed use of heritage sites) I might prioritize as the starting points for new experiments. I believe that this is consistent with other committed ethnographies:

> [R]esearchers... may attend to one "set" of questions
> more fully than another... or treat such questions as
> useful only insofar as they produce some form of
> social change or desired political end (eg.,
> participatory action research combining more
> traditional scholarship with an interest in applied
> social science). (Grills, 1998: 9)

3.6

While my engagement with sites of heritage raises issues around the nature of the historical record and the multiple characterisations of 'the past' at work in the heritage industry, the purpose of my research has not been to produce a new theory of history or historiography, but to intervene in and disrupt dominant perceptions and discourses about heritage on the basis of an understanding of how the past and historiography are perceived and used in heritage sites. This meshes with an approach to ethnography which emphasises and privileges the subjective materials to which an ethnographic approach gives the researcher access, rather than their re-organisation in theoretical form:

> [Q]uibbles over the ontological status of the truly
> true and debates over the primacy of one discourse
> over another serve no useful purpose... Our concern
> is finding ways for individual consciousness to join
> the intersubjective, ways to report experience to
> others and ourselves. (Mitchell, 1998: 243)

Affirming, without ignoring questions of legitimation and representation, 'it is possible to accept that our perceptions and understanding of the world are mediated but still to operate with knowledge which is less than certain' (Taylor, 2002: 4).


3.7

To sum up the use of dual approaches in my methodology: rather than applying the ethnographic and PaR approaches alternately, or designating one or the other to particular interventions, this methodology involves intertwining the two approaches. Differing emphases emerge from differently developing interventions, and the two approaches develop at different rates, fulfilling the assertion that 'practice as research in the performing arts pursues hybrid enquiries combining creative doing with reflexive being, thus fashioning freshly critical interaction between current epistemologies and ontologies' (Kershaw, *et al.*, 2011: 64). In my case, ethnography is one of those 'epistemologies'.

An example of this interweaving (or what Hannam, above, calls 'partly mimicking') is the limited theatricality of my mobile, performative interventions from which organising narrative, character and psychology have been mostly bleached out and, in place of which, Practice-as-Research and performance-ethnography are co-present, embodied, and, in the case of each pairing, the one 'partly mimicking' the other. My (and Simon Persighetti's) methodology on Queen Street for *Relics and Processions/A Tour of Sardine Street* (as discussed in Chapter Three) was to create a de-characterised performer's presence, releasing our corporeality as performer-researchers (behind the guise of quotidian, if eccentric, personae) to engage reflexively rather than contemplatively with a fabricated and living site. Such a researching-body, that Hannam (thinking of an ideal tourist) describes 'as an affective vehicle through which we sense place and movement, and construct emotional geographies' (Hannam, 2009: 109), reflects and expresses these emotional geographies through a bleached, translucent, post-dramatic performance. Through this performance, embodied knowledges are disseminated in immersive tours and less formal interactions with other people on the street, seeking to initiate our audience/participants/passersby into methods and tactics of exploration and intervention and into the 'limited myths'[8] and patterns of the street that we have detected (see Figure 2.iii). According to Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock, who reflected upon our methodology for this project, in performing ethnography and acting as ethnographic performers we were sharing our 'fieldwork' both in our everyday encounters and our aesthetic constructions (Parker-Starbuck & Mock, 2011: 20-22).

These kinds of interweaving have meant learning through practising and practising in order to research, while simultaneously applying certain research tools from the social sciences not

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[8] By 'limited myth' I refer to myth-like accounts that while capable of staging or representing, though never becoming, patterns of social or other powers, material forces or cultural paradigms, they are always rendered particular, contextualised and questionable by their explicit contradictions and contingencies.

only as checks or instruments of assessment, but also *as part of* the PaR; so, panel members' responses to interventions feed not only my assessment of the interventions, but also contribute to the development of the interventions themselves, a 'doubled reflexivity' (Kershaw & Nicholson, 2011: 7) of mediation and creative decision-taking.

3.8

Given the hybrid nature of my methodology, this research is not a case of the, perhaps, usual application of 'practical creative processes as research methods (and methodologies) in their own right' (Kershaw, *et al*., 2011: 64) – although it does nothing to contradict the validity of that – but rather a variation upon PaR in which creative processes as research methods feed and are fed by various ethnographic practices. This feeding/fed continues (and seeks to break from the potential aridity of a formalistic oscillation between the two discourses) when the three handbooks and films included as part of this thesis (or rather their future users) 'complete' a fluid model of praxis. This is a looser version of Robin Nelson's triangular model of practitioner knowledge, critical reflection and conceptual framework around a mixed mode methodology 'in a multi-vocal approach to a dialogic process' (Nelson, 2006: 113), which opens the tacit or embodied knowledges generated (and continuing to be generated) in my performances and performative interventions to critical analysis. An analysis of their reception by their audiences/participants and their placing in and influence by existing practices and theoretical frameworks, ensure that the feeding/fed (feedback) can work in any direction, from and to any of the elements.

My model here follows Nelson's emphasis on the play between the critical, creative and other outcomes of the various modes employed and how

its totality yields new understandings through the interplay of perspectives drawn from evidence produced in each element proposed, where one data-set might be insufficient to make the insight manifest. In sum, praxis (theory imbricated within practice) may thus better be articulated in *both* the product *and* related documentation. (Nelson, 2006: 115, original emphases)

However, I aim to push the '*both... and*' a little further so that my Practice-as-Research, through dissemination, feeds an ongoing research-as-practice; that is, of future readers/users of the three handbooks acting, at least partly, as lay-ethnographers.

4

The mythogeographical lenses

4.1

The theoretical framework for my analyses of interventions is drawn from both Tourism Studies (the agentive tourist, post-tourism, tourism as performance, reflexive consumption-production, the space of tourism, the mobilities paradigm) and from Performance Studies (anti-acting, site-specificity, repertoire, performativity, ritual).

4.2

Influenced by the play of these concepts, I identified the following key mythogeographical lenses, each of them an entanglement of theories and tactics, to serve as critical means, conceptualisations and tools for praxis for the case studies that follow:

**Layering**:  an investigative and questioning lens, it adopts Tim Ingold's anti-'global' model of knowledge. According to Ingold, one learns more by an ever closer familiarity and deeper entry into the layers and textures of the world, rather than by uninvolved, cool and elevated examination or distant spectatorship (Ingold, 1993). It seeks to expose the hidden, and to liberate the repressed as if these were especially meaningful; it assumes that there has been organisation rather than coincidence, until proven otherwise. It seeks to illuminate or point to ironies. Its characteristic sites are the archaeological dig, the crime scene (it utilises the links between the investigation of these and performance as articulated by Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, [2001]) and the palimpsest (Turner, 2004). It seeks to encourage hypersensitivity to the hidden or ignored meanings of the everyday, and to detect evidence for structures through the further dis-assemblage of already fragmenting evidence, seeking meaning in texture, grain, minutiae, details, marginalia and etiquette.

**Rhizomatic interweaving**: this lens takes from Doreen Massey the idea that space is made up of trajectories rather than boundaries (Massey, 2005: 9-15). Its re-assembling of disparate elements and journeys is complementary to the inquisitive dismantling of the Layering lens. Its key tactics include détournement (the re-use of moribund art forms and media through adaptation, juxtaposition and disruption to new ends) and assemblage. The latter, as described by Deleuze and Guattari refers to the collection of

divergent forms, practices and objects in ways that continue to maintain their differences within their collectivity (1987: 289-90). From Deleuze and Gautarri this lens also takes its resistance to roots and identity, rather seeking 'being' in the weaving of connections between small groups led by their margins and through spiral distributions and disseminations of small but non-localised behaviours, tasks and provocations.

**The making of 'anywheres'**: despite the resistance of mythogeography to bounded space and identity, it has a constructive agenda for the making of 'anywheres'. These are heterotopias – 'of crisis' rather than 'of deviation', to use Foucault's terms (1986) – rather than utopias. These are places of interconnectivity and diversity, irony and bricolage rather than conformity to principles. 'anywheres' are domains that are characterised by hybridity and unboundedness and do not conform to state or local boundaries, nor to national, local or sectarian identities (though they are not necessarily always local, small scale or 'human-sized'). They are places where many sites co-exist within a single site (like the 'ambient hubs' of situationist psychogeography [Debord, 1955:10]). Tim Edensor adds to this another aspect: the fluid chaos of numerous parallel behaviours, characters, compartments in one space, in unordered flux. He sees the potential (or affordance) for this where there are problems in tourism's ordering of space: 'weakly classified space… not under the sway of some overarching convention of ordering… have the potential to facilitate imaginings, epistemological dislocations and memories better than others' (Edensor, 1998: 44). Such spaces are a socialisation of the idea of

'cosmopolitanism', seeking to transfer the cosmopolitan capacity and ethics –

and, in particular, Kwame Anthony Appia's ethics of strangers (Appia, 2006),

which revolve around our responsibility to those beyond any co-identity –

from the trajectory of privileged individual to common, public spaces.

**The self-mythologising of the activist**: mythogeography applies the same

principles to persons as to spaces. Through this lens mythogeography seeks a

breaking down of identities, social roles and functions while avoiding the

development of alternative milieus, adopting the critique of such milieus by

The Invisible Committee (2009). Mythogeographers disrupt themselves; then,

in turn, disrupts this disruption. So mythogeography's self-mythologisation is

a limited one; temporary and transferable (it is not unique). This is similar to

the adoption by anti-artists of shared pseudonyms such as 'Karen Eliot' or

'Luther Blissett'. The adoption of a limited self-mythologisation attempts to

transfer the playfulness of a subversive identity from the mythogeographer to

their 'myth'; in performance, for example, this transfer would be from the

performer and their interiority (character, psychology, motivation) to the site

of their performance.

4.3

In each of the three case studies, I identify key thematic elements that are explored or

exposed by the particular intervention and by its subsequent analysis, and the particular

lenses or other theoretical tools used to analyse and discuss these themes. Research materials

(field notes and panel feedback, for example) are summarised and assessed against my research aims through the chosen theories and lenses.

4.4

The somewhat schematic approach of the internal ordering of the case studies is partly a measure taken to defer mythogeography's tendency towards an escalating hybridity of critical and performative practices which, unhindered, within the context of a research project may lead to dissipation rather than critical application. It is also intended to facilitate the identification of assessable materials, in line with mythogeography's deferral of synthesis (adapted from Homi Bhahba [1990: 211]) as a means to preserving multiplicity against a return to homogeneity in a new guise.

5

Case studies

5.1

I have chosen to make three case studies a key part of this thesis; the conventions of the case study allow me to address the fine detail of my interventions and to test it against the evidence of participant observations and the feedback from participants, before explicitly applying certain theoretical lenses, and *only then* to turn the findings to the work of addressing my research questions. During the interventions (which are to some extent driven by attempts to answer these questions in the affirmative) it is tempting to make instantaneous judgements in the field which the disciplines of researching and writing a case study help to identify, isolate and slow down (even negate), so that it is possible to return to my research

questions with such immersed responses ranged alongside other, more reflective data and analysis.

5.2

A somewhat schematic approach, as well as forestalling those potential problems stated above, is also intended to address another: as well as the fundamental partiality of any participant observer – 'we are all "positional subjects"... every social location that we occupy brings with it a mixture of insight and blindness' (Grills, 1998: 10) – some special factors add to the partiality and slipperiness of my interventions as objects of assessment. Improvisation, spontaneity and adaptation are all crucial elements in them. Issues of self-esteem, embarrassment, satisfaction, and status can also accrue around performance. Adaptations of memory to suit the needs of a creative process pose problems for the assessment of creative outcomes. So, in order to respond to the potential for such hyper-flexibilities in my PaR I deploy rather rigorous, even repetitive, assessment structures for my case studies, not as the means to privileging quantitative data or as part of a general 'turn' to positivism, but rather as a way to prioritise and protect the divergence of the responses of panel members and other respondents (and the extent of it) from my own reflections.

5.3

In line with mythogeography's hyper-empiricism at the local level and relativism at the general level, within a general context of 'contesting disciplinarity' (Kershaw & Nicholson, 2011: 2-5) I apply this formal discipline in a very localised way; temporarily sacrificing the space for my own intuitive speculations in favour of allowing the divergent responses of the panel to emerge alongside them. This schematism also facilitates the identification of

assessable materials in line with a deferral of synthesis as a means to preserving multiplicity against a return to homogeneity in a new guise. This aims to allow disparate findings to assume their own importance without (or, at least, before) being rationalised or narrated by analysis after their event.

5.4

In line with other general approaches, the case studies here pose 'how' and 'why' questions rather than seek quantitative outcomes, investigating my interventions within real life contexts 'where there will be many more variables of interest than data points' (Yin, 1994:13). As Yin suggests, I draw upon multiple sources of evidence, favouring 'data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion' and 'the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis' (1994:13). I identify the key thematic elements being explored or exposed by a particular intervention and the particular mythogeographical 'lenses' and other theoretical tools I am using to analyse and discuss these themes. Research materials are summarised and assessed against my research aims through these chosen theories and lenses. The multiple sources of data, including notes of artists' discussions, field notes, performance scores, films, recordings, songs, texts, photo records, panel feedback, memories of participant observation, responses from local and visiting participants and local media reports, are used in processes of triangulation to address the effectiveness of the research propositions. Emerging findings influence the refinement of the methodology, producing 'an *emergent* design … characteristic of (a naturalistic) style along with *inductive* thinking, i.e. making sense of what you find after you've found it' (Gillham, 2000: 6-7).

5.5

According to Robert K. Yin, the key aim of a case study is to be able to make what he calls

'Level Two Inferences', whereby

> a previously developed theory is used as a template
> with which to compare the empirical results of the
> case study. If two or more cases are shown to
> support the same theory, replication can be claimed.
> The empirical results may be considered yet more
> potent if two or more cases support the same theory
> but do not support an equally plausible, rival theory.
> (Yin, 1994: 31)

The multiplicity of elements in each of the subjects of the three case studies facilitates these

kinds of comparisons, within and between the three (the formalist discipline described above

seeks to maintain some stability of approach against which to judge any divergence of

outcomes revealed across the case studies). Wherever findings contradict my original

propositions, I revise the propositions for re-testing. Where the propositions are supported by

the evidence of the findings, I shift and widen the research focus from devising exemplary

tactical practices to the testing of broader strategies; for example, for the dissemination of

these tested tactics as part of a more general strategy for a '*performing tourism*' that might be

accessible and practicable for the general tourist/visitor.

6

<u>Theatre and Performance</u>

6.1

In this study I attempt to avoid romanticised assumptions about the necessary or inevitable

radicalism of performance, acknowledging that the concept 'performance' does not 'sit still'

and that its 'essential contestedness' (Carlson, 2002: 147) should not be mistaken for an innate agitational quality.

6.2

At first, my approach to the 'audiences' (participants, spectators and 'actors') at my early interventions was to consider them as 'small battalions'.[9] For my engagement with these groups I adopted a variety of presences, intentionally resistant to psychological or representational characterisation; for example, drawing on the functionalities of the mainstream tour guide or other features of a conventional heritage site visit, speaking with a range of voices (including the subjective, irrational, authoritative, excessively cited), each distinctive telling overwhelmed by the others. Such performances are consistent with the tendencies described by Hans-Thies Lehmann as 'post-dramatic' (see Introduction, above).

However, during the research process I began to seek the 'absent community' evoked by Elinor Fuchs, as my initial orientation to 'small battalions' created problems (of authoritarian organisation) for a dispersive strategy. According to Fuchs:

> the community that is theater's special province...
> [that] now floats behind the play through multiple
> absences – of the speakers, of the full sense of their
> speech, of the location where such speech might take
> place. (Fuchs, 1996:4)

6.3

In response, my orientation has shifted away from a live, theatrically-inflected performance and back towards informal networks moderated by challenge, to 'the joy of an encounter that

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[9] This was informed not by Performance Studies' conceptualising of audience, but by a conflation of Edmund Burke's communitarian 'small platoons', Irish nationalist Pádraig Pearse's radical-pessimist détournement of them as rebellious minorities, and with the guided tour parties and kinship and/or friendship groups common to heritage sites. I had previously identified these in cell-like, dériviste and other forms (Smith, 2010a, Smith 2011c).

survives its expected end' (Invisible Committee, 2009: 101). I, however, continue to use the terms 'theatre' and 'theatricality'; in the case of 'theatricality' or 'theatrical' to denote fragments of technique from explicitly bounded aesthetic performance (for example, character, mimesis, objectives and super-objectives, dramaturgy, resolution) that I am able to reference or deploy beyond a bounded performance, in order to forefront the heritage industry's (analogous to a bounded theatre's) assumptions about its capacity to reproduce universally understood historical character.

6.4

My use of 'theatre' is more complicated; beginning from (and in reaction to) Michael Kirby's definition of theatre (in the context of the challenge of formalist performances to 'mainstream' Western narrative theatre) as differentiated from other performances by an intention to affect an audience: '[T]heatre does not occur in nature… Intent is a necessary and crucial element. People make something... with the intent of having it affect an audience' (Kirby, 1987: x). I am less interested in the validity of Kirby's bounding definition than by the usefulness of this bounding itself,[10] its exclusion of certain events revealing something about them. For example, Kirby excluded certain public events from the category of performance – such as rocket launches, and, presumably, restorations of heritage sites – on the grounds that, though they were staged they were not primarily staged to affect their audiences: '[I]t is the intent and not the event itself or its impact on us that makes something theatre' (Kirby, 1987: xi).

I am drawn to Kirby's exclusion of 'the event itself' and of the potency of its occluded and supposedly non-primary intentions to affect its audiences. I also noted the implicit, formalist

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[10] Kirby qualifies it by turning it into a continuum along which events are identified as more or less like theatre, rather than theatre/not-theatre .

assumption of an 'empty space' (Brook, 1990) as the site of theatre. By turning Kirby's

definition on itself I seek to explore what occurs when the 'event itself' is made theatrical,

when secondary and hidden (even from themselves, in ideological forms) intentions of non-

theatre events are subject to a projection of theatrical intentionality and when the material

processes of vibrant, 'full' rather than neutral, 'empty' spaces are animated with the primary

intention (that is, as 'theatre') of affecting their audiences/visitors.

7

Tourism and Performance

7.1

I conceptualise my experimental live performance and performative interventions as ones that

are made for, and often made in, sites that are continually reproducing and performing

themselves in complex dramaturgies that incorporate actors, scripts, signs and objects. I seek

to avoid conceptualising these sites as inert representations of the dominant discourses of

heritage or as sites representing their fixed pasts that any dynamic intervention will

necessarily disrupt:

> instead of seeing places as relatively fixed entities,
> to be juxtaposed in analytical terms with more
> dynamic flows of tourists, images and cultures... to
> see them as fluid and created through performance.
> (Coleman & Crang, 2002: 1)

I engage with these places as 'events... [not] fixed, if ambient, container[s]' (Coleman &

Crang, 2002: 10), assuming that it is this eventness of place, and the performances which are

constituting parts of it, that provide affordant means to change their qualities.

The tensions and choices that I negotiate during my use (and re-use) of performance around heritage are far from unique and, if not universally, at least widely encountered in heritage tourism space. The contradictions around issues of locality, authenticity and contiguity that Paola Filippucci's describes (2002: 75-91) as arising from the heritage-based performances of a historical re-enactment group and the prankster-like processing of a masque group at 'Carnevale' in Bassano, Northern Italy, are not only analogous to those that I have confronted, but pose similar challenges to the analysis of live performance in tourism space. The masque group's disruptive 'messing around' (Filippucci, 2002: 79), indifference to authenticity and historical continuity, wandering trajectories like a boisterous, psychogeographical 'going *a zonzo*' (Careri, 2002: 185-9), their use of extravagant costumes and make-up for identity and gender inversion, imitation of 'living' objects, teasing of bystanders and 'act(ing) crazy' (Filippucci, 2002: 80), appear at first as range of tactics directly deployable in my interventions.


7.2

I am, however (despite carnival's qualities of a 'spectacle without a stage' in which the roles of both actor and spectator collapse [Vice,1997:149]) mindful of carnival's tendency towards restorative catharsis within the demarcations of official and unofficial cultures (Bakhtin, 1984: 165-6). Against 'the emphasis on an "orgiastic future"' I give more weight to 'Bakhtin's clear-eyed insistence on the more disturbing implications of being *fated* to the condition of dialogue... frequently... ignored in the service of... a toothless "carnivalism"' (Holquist, 1990: 181, emphasis in original). While the Bassano masque group's performances are 'a means for displaying otherness... mak[ing] familiar relations strange' (Holquist, 1990: 89) they also reproduce a local (anti-Venetian) identity, incorporate their boisterousness into

a narrative of continuous tradition through kinship, and add to the general difficulty of breaking ideological circuits by reproducing them through spontaneity and improvisation (Filippucci, 2002).

7.3

I therefore deploy carnivalesque elements only very cautiously, in 'hollowed out', framed or fragmentary manners; the quotation of the ceremony of the Burial of the Sardine in *A Tour of Sardine Street* (Chapter Three below), for example, is significantly the liminal ritual that marks *the end of carnival* and the return to the quotidian. Rather, for my interventional performance structures and styles, I have turned to restrained, 'official' and mainstream heritage performances such as the guided tour, the tourist information film and historical re-enactment (such as at Bassano), utilising their tensions and pitching my interventions within their registers.

7.4

Filippucci's account of the re-enactment group at Bassano is also illustrative of the contradictions that deliver material for détournement from mainstream performances. For example, the group proposes its performances of street trades and 'Carnevale' milieu as 'the continuation of an "old tradition of the town"' (Filippucci, 2002: 78); yet 'Carnevale' in Bassano has been repeatedly disrupted and re-invented since its initiation as the democratising of an aristocratic festival, as a fascist-sponsored 'return to traditions', as a children's event and as a tourist bureau initiative. When radically dislocated from their authenticating authority ('unbroken tradition') by a performance intervention, elements such as the 'idealised image of the urban past' (Filippucci, 2002: 83) or the reception by audiences of 'an unbroken connection to the past even where there isn't one' (85) can be floated free

and folded parodically and poetically in on themselves. This opens out the absurdity of their

contradictions, exposing the fractures in tradition and the political silencing of some of its

parts at the same time as they are made into something else (including a performance of the

performance of the past). Rather than imposing or inserting a superior narrative or a

destructive provocation into such spaces of heritage tourism performance, I seek to engage

with their existing signs, narratives, rituals, actors and objects, attempting to animate them as

parts of my own performances, empowering novel ends, reliant upon their (mostly) latent

contradictions as the material for my interventions.


7.5

One of the problems for discussing and describing performance in relation to tourism space is

the necessary negotiating around what remains of the influential front/back stage metaphor

adopted by Dean MacCannell (1976) from Goffman (1971: 114-40), with its referencing of a

very limited range of theatre and performances practice (mostly restricted to proscenium arch

theatre). This excludes the metaphorical potential of live art, site-specific performance,

procession, durational performance, invisible theatre and others (none of which necessarily

have any 'front' or 'back stage'). In some cases the characterisation has been moderated and

sophisticated, as here in this consideration of embodied practice (an important element in my

interventions):

> [P]laces and their contents are seen from numerous
> angles and are apprehended as fractured but
> recomposed in mental processes... not recomposed
> as 'set pieces', as theatre in relation to horizon and
> ordered importance... it is through rather than "in
> front of" spaces that we experience where we are.
> (Crouch, 2002: 212)

Still, where there is a metaphorical residue of stage architecture (tableaux, stage scenery, on-

stage and off-stage), I distinguish this use of the theatre/performance metaphor from that

which I am using, and for which I assume an immersive performance, specific to site. It is

one in which actor and audience are potentially interchangeable and for which the stage is

unbounded (unless otherwise qualified). This metaphorical space of performance is consistent

with that evoked by Fraser MacDonald when he deploys the idea of spectacle to broaden the

terrain of performance in the context of a mutable dramaturgy:

> [T]he dissolution of popular categories of
> investigation such as "hosts" and "guests"... can
> actually be taken a step further. "In a world that
> *really* has been turned on its head" what were
> previously thought of as "guests" do indeed become
> hosts in the landscape of spectacle; the tourist
> implores the islander to "visit" and partake in the
> fantasy, to be guest "star" in this scripted Scottish
> Eden. (MacDonald, 2002: 71)

8

Agentive tourists and post-post-tourists

8.1

A key idea from Tourism Studies informing the development of my research, particularly as

it shapes the trajectory towards 'counter-tourism', is the idea of 'agentive tourists': that is,

that tourists make their own tourism through their practice of it.

8.2

This idea marked a reaction against an influential Marxian-miserablist strain in 1960s and

1970s Tourism Studies which tended to portray a passive, often duped, tourist at 'the centre

of his strictly circumscribed world... [his] sensuality and aesthetic sense... as contained and

restricted as they are in his home country' (Turner & Ash, 1975: 90-1) and engaged in a neo-

colonialist practice that destroyed the very places it claimed to celebrate (Mishan, 1969: 141-2). The same tone occasionally re-emerges in more recent critical discourses, for example, concerning subjects who in the face of 'sites... heaving with meaning... turn into gringos, zombies, tourists kept under house arrest in the country's natural beauty spots' (Baudrillard, 1988: 126).


8.3

Rather than generalising about tourism worlds as 'strictly circumscribed' I adopted theorisations that described tourism space as subject to volatility and difficult to contain, in which

> dominant tourist conventions are open to challenge
> and are contingent upon historical and geographical
> contexts, and the spatio-temporal organisation of
> tours and itineraries. (Edensor, 1998: 61)

They are, moreover,

> arena[s] in which the meanings are contested not just
> at an abstract level, but through the active
> involvement of the consumer as a reflexive agent.
> (Meethan, Anderson & Miles, 2006: xiii)


In such space, 'at least in part... constructed and signified by the tourist' (Crouch, Aronsson & Wahlström, 2001: 254), the agentive tourist chooses from a 'plethora of tourist roles, experiences and meanings, and attitudes' (McCabe, 2009: 34).


Rather than passively consuming and reproducing representations, these tourists can take up 'reflexive and ironic positions in relation to signs and the significance of the non-visual means of [their] … engagement with space' (Crouch, Aronsson & Wahlström, 2001: 255). They engage in 'an active construction of a personal narrative' (Wearing, Stevenson, &

Young, 2009: 49), and in relation to

> narratives that are created around specific sites and
> specific forms of tourist activity... created, picked
> up, modified and incorporated into the narratives of
> self-hood that we all weave around our lives.
> (Meethan, *et al.*, 2006: xiii)

Arguing for agency, the authors cited here have all been careful to avoid a solipsist voluntarism, emphasising (to varying degrees) the sociality, site specificity and corporeal embodiment of the tourist encounter in space, at the point of the creation and production of selves and places 'mapped around and between the three poles of self, others and environment' (Gustafson, 2001: 5). The agentive tourist is not simply responsive to these sites (however conceptualized), but actively exploratory and self-reflexive:

> Visitors to historic sites are looking for an
> experience, a new reality based on the tangible
> remains of the past... a discovery tour... that will tell
> them as much about themselves as it will about
> history. (Schouten, 1995: 21-22)

According to Boissevin 'some seek authentic nature, culture, exotic others, amusement, or the discovery of self. The motives are legion' (Boissevin, 2002: x). This proactive practice of tourism 'provides means to disrupt sign-orientated meaning... and offers gaps for the individual to negotiate the world in a more plural way' (Crouch, Aronsson & Wahlström, 2001: 259). In the process the individual (often in groups) generates a lay knowledge 'different from expert and learned knowledge', 'made in the doing' (Crouch, 2002: 211 & 216) in an 'expressive, inter-subjective and poetic encounter mediated through the way the body is engaged actively in space… produc[ing] the individual's own sense of things... in terms of space, a lay geography' (Crouch, Aronsson & Wahlström, 2001: 254).

8.4

The experimental interventions I create for this research are attempts to recruit, encourage, intensify and make self-conscious this lay geography, 'made in the doing', with its active, reflexive construction of experience (see Figure 2.iv). The interventions seek to engage those necessary 'means' and 'gaps' already present in the visitor's existing practice. They are not actions bearing upon passive behaviour, but variations on, or intensifications of existing, agentive, reflexive touristic agency. The model for the intervener is not an anti-tourist disdainful of passive dupes, nor a post-tourist standing back from or above the practice of tourism, but a hyper-tourist, sensitized to the affordances of tourism space, immersed in them, and practicing an accelerated touristic-reflexivity.

8.5

This hyper-tourist should be a post-post tourist rather than an anti-post-tourist. There are certain features of the post-tourist that are essential if my praxis is to have any purchase, including the self-consciousness of tourist practice:

> the post-tourist knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience. (Urry, 1990: 100)

Its de-differentiation is

> close to the post-modern equalisation of high and low, elitist and popular... Post-modern tourists are sophisticated individuals, who choose not to discern... the consequence of rational penetration of all criteria as socially constructed... a kind of "Aufhebung" of modern distinctions, which endows them with a newly won freedom. (Cohen, 1995: 25)

It also relies on a disruptive reflexivity that 'transforms processes' (Urry, 1990: 101).

8.6

The problem in such formulations of post-tourism is that not everyone is let in on 'the game'. The 'newly won freedom' of the post-tourist is, by implication, gained at the expense of the less 'sophisticated', and while the 'equalisation of high and low' may be enacted in a technical sense the enactors are pejoratively differentiated. However, this negative characterisation partly arises from the identifying of the knowingness of the post-tourist as the same as the 'gaze' of an academic minority who have read the postmodernists 'looking down on such places… and only passing through, to view them as a voyeur would' (Urry, 1990: 94). It is just as likely to be a component of a common lay practice that is intercut with elements of collective and romantic 'gazes' (the versatile lay geographer adjusting their subjectivity to enjoy the different affordances). So, with the proviso that it is brought down from any hierarchical or patronising viewpoint, I retain post-tourism's qualities of self-consciousness, de-differentiation, and disruptive reflexivity in my praxis.

9

Walking, dérive, mobilities and limited nomadism

9.1

A key part of my research context is its negotiations with the 'mobilities' paradigm. The ambulatory practice from which mythogeography came, and which continues to inform it, draws on a range of precedents (including pilgrimage, grand tour, deambulation, dérive and Fluxus anti-tour) that place mythogeography, both historically and contemporaneously, in an ambiguous relation to the 'mobilities paradigm', to that 'turn' in the social sciences away from 'the sedentary logic of state, science and civilisation' (D'Andrea, 2006: 107), and towards increased if uneven global mobilities, and to their influence in 'constellations of power, the creation of identities and the microgeographies of everyday life' (Cresswell, 2010: 551).

9.2

The elements I have drawn from these precedents, particularly the dérive, are not only physical, but also metaphorical and critical: the following of atmospheres and the resistance to destinations, as well as a way of moving, is also a way of thinking in a context where "(M)otion, movement and mobility have become integrated parts of late modern identity, practice and thought" (Thomsen, Nielsen, & Gudmunsson, 2005: 1). However, I do not uncritically celebrate the 'mobilities' paradigm; while I have followed Doreen Massey in defining space as always under construction and always incomplete, characterised more by trajectory and interaction than by boundary or containment (Massey, 2005: 9), I have also embraced the tensions created by counter-qualities in site-specificity and vibrant materialism (Bennett, 2010: 1-2), proposing the torque placed upon trajectories by the 'drag' of recalcitrant, resistant and active things as illuminating. In broad narrative terms, the 'mobilities' paradigm is attractive to a mythogeographical approach; it generalises walking in a broader framework of motion, and is consistent with mythogeographical principles where it addresses trajectory and change rather than stasis, boundary or hierarchy – that is 'the ways in which walking conjures up other times and places that disrupt any linear flow' (Edensor, 2008: 137). Mythogeographical practice privileges becoming over repeatable structures or ontology, resisting reductive, identity-based or universalist concepts, and, in the specific context of my research, offsetting any tendency towards 'ethnocentric, functionalist and over-generalised concepts present in most theories of tourism' (Edensor, 1998: 200). It draws on what Tim Cresswell (in a highly critical appraisal) has characterised as the 'metaphors of mobility... bring(ing) into question the apparent fixities of older forms of understanding… hand in hand with the move against foundationalism and towards anti-essentialism' (Creswell, 2001a: 9).

9.3

These dynamic and disruptive metaphors, rhizomic rather than 'arborified' (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1988: 15) or hierarchical, set both a critical subject and any object of their study

loose from tendencies to reductiveness, putting them in motion in relation to each other,

neither one of them central to their critical universe.[11] However, I concur with Tim

Cresswell's rejection of the idea 'that mobility has a privileged relationship to resistance'

(Cresswell, 2001b: 15) or that a 'mobilities' paradigm, by counterposing friction-free

ambulatory interventions to static and reactionary touristic space, provides a template for

objective correlatives to, say, the ideal nomadism through 'smooth space' proposed by

Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Gurattari, 1987: 419-23) or to the protean 'logic' of Manuel

Castells's 'space of flows' (Castells, 1989, 1996). Rather than being inevitably disruptive,

'mobilities' are part of the construction and reproduction of heritage space itself:

> Tourist places are produced, not only by the actual
> performance of tourists… but also by the stabilizing
> and intersecting flows of people, objects, memories
> and images… networks and flows… (Baerenholdt,
> *et al*., 2004: 8).

Mobilities' subversive, disruptive, liberating or multiplicitous qualities might, then,

themselves be part of a production of ideology, in which the paradigm becomes a 'hegemon',

commanding the qualities that it proposes to set free:

> a rich terrain from which narrative – and, indeed,
> ideologies – can be, and have been, constructed…
> conveyed through various modes of representation –
> film, photography, literature, philosophy and law….
> Here, mobility "becomes synonymous with freedom,
> with transgression, with creativity, with life itself".
> (Cresswell, 2006: 1-3)

Mythogeographical aims are unlikely to be achieved by an ideal mobility, but rather by

creating specific trajectories for specific places, cognisant of those trajectories as always

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[11] This is an idea that I had explored in some detail (Smith, 2003) before encountering the literature on 'mobilities'.

realised in relation to equally mobile place-making and ideology-production, and of the resistant qualities of the specificity and vibrant materiality of the sites traversed.

9.4

My choice of the heritage industry as the focus of this research was made on the basis that it is partly a network that I could exploit, cohering with Castells' notion of a 'space of flows' where 'the network of communication is the fundamental configuration' and in which 'places do not disappear but their logic and their meaning become absorbed in the network' (Castells, 1996: 443). Such a privileging of communication hubs and localised nodes over their hinterlands contradicts other mythogeographical qualities of vibrant materiality and site-specificity (qualities of sites that are very often marginalised in relation to dominant cultural networks), whose 'logic and meaning' mythogeography does not welcome being 'absorbed in the network', while the destinationless wanders of my dérives are far closer to 'interwoven lines, not a network, but a meshwork' (Ingold, 2007: 80) than a network's lines connecting *a* to *b*. However, the negotiation of different aspects of the 'mobilities' paradigm is not simply a case of placing mythogeography at a distance to, but rather in selective engagement with, it. For example, Marc Augé's definition of 'non-places' (Augé, 1995) and his depiction of their smooth traversal insufficiently acknowledges the inequalities of space and time experienced by those who work in, service and live around those places, failing to sufficiently acknowledge that 'different social groups do not move equally smoothly through geographic space' (Manderscheid, 2009: 29-30; also Massey, 1994). Nor does it take sufficient account of the striated experience of those for whom 'mobilities are often also about duties, about the obligation to see the other, to return the call' (Urry, 2007:11). Nevertheless, Auge's account usefully categorises a common experience of a particular kind of space that, for example, illuminates the Visitor Centres of heritage sites, with their nationally sourced materials and

architects, tenuous connections to local heritage properties and nationally franchised retail outlets.

9.5

So, for my research, mobility is not a 'machine' of efficacious disruption in itself, but one that requires its own disruption. I use or discard its specific categories, analyses and invocations of space and practice, accepting or rejecting them on the basis of their consistency with their own logic and in relation to mythogeographical principles. Coherent with this, the mythogeographical interventionist acts as a 'disrupted' or 'limited nomad', wandering in an exploratory manner *as if* they had no home (often 'inappropriately' treating the terrain of their wandering as if it were their home, assuming a disruptive familiarity with, and proprietorship of, policed and public spaces) but then disrupting this by returning to home as if they did not wander: responding in turn to 'mobilities, immobilities and moorings" (Hannam, 2009: 106).

9.6

This approach is a rejection of the 'continuous dérive' proposed (and sometimes lived) by Gilles Ivain (1953: 17) as a utopian realisation of the psychogeographic 'drift', both as being psychologically unsustainable (Wark, 2011: 61) and with a tendency towards immersion in sub-cultural milieu. While my limited "as if/as if not" version of nomadism could be characterised as a romantic narrative (in the sense of an outsider's resistance to, and denial of, the everyday) it is not far from a description of some mainstream touristic and holiday behaviour (Andrews, 2011: 14). In other words it is a potentially recognisable model that might be dispersed relatively widely in line with my research aims; a limited nomadism with transformative qualities that is identifiable as an affordance within the everyday. Such a

model interweaves my 'limited nomadism' with critical thinking, while challenging the apparent qualities of the different terrains (everyday/holiday) either side of its own disruption; just as the opposition in Deleuze and Guattari's writings between smooth (nomadic) space and striated (ordered, anchored, sedentary) space can be mediated subjectively (and presumably inter-subjectively): 'it is possible to live striated on the deserts… to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 481-2). The analogy I use to describe this quality in interventions is that of areas of anomalous polarity within the domains of magnetic fields; the anomalies accumulate until the polarity of the whole field becomes unstable (Smith 2010a: 166-7).

9.7

This interweaving of thinking, behaviour and terrain requires the multiplicities of mythogeography as a discipline (here in the sense of a learned mental and physical practice) grounded (made questionable and accessible in its sites) by route-specific performance across a research landscape that is partly metaphorical, partly geographical. It is 'designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions or locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence' (Marcus, 1998: 90), to which should be added some form of subjective presence.

10

Détournement and Psychogeography

10.1

'Détournement' is a tactic developed and deployed by the artists, anti-artists and political activists of the International Lettristes of the 1950s, and more widely popularised by their successors, the situationists (Marcus, 1989/2001: 300-400, Jappe, 1999: 43-98, Home, 1999: 113-7, Careri, 2002: 88-118, Hussey, 2002, Merrifield, 2002: 93-112, Mension, 2002, Kaufmann, 2006, Wark, 2010). It seeks to detour or divert practices and objects, turning them aside from their intended or common functions to serve others, in a way that not only disrupts their original functions, but is (at least part of) a process of negation for them:

> [T]he integration of present or past artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu. In this sense there can be no situationist painting or music, but only a situationist use of these means. In a more primitive sense, détournement within the old cultural spheres is a method of propaganda, a method which testifies to the wearing out and loss of importance of those spheres. (Anonymous, 1958: 14)

The tactic mostly bears upon materials that are of little exchange value (cheap, popular-cultural publications, for example), thus (though not inevitably) avoiding the problem that its novelty accrues a market value (anti-art becoming art being less an inevitable formal process than an actual interwoven cultural and economic value-production). Those tourism performances and objects that struggle to generate surplus value are therefore ideal for détournment.

10.2

The tactic of détournement not only informs many of the individual tactics that I develop and test through my interventions, but in a generalised way informs part of the 'politics' of a mythogeography concerned with dispersing control over the production of space. This can mean a corporeal power (having the right to be somewhere, to have access to places or views and vistas, to choose distance and/or closeness), but also having the rights and resources to

re-make the meanings of such spaces; to re-name, or to re-define a place by one's 'everyday' use of it by 'multiform, resistance [*sic*], tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised' (de Certeau, 1984: 96).

10.3

If (to assume an egalitarian tendency from situationist practice) the right to pleasure in the making of space and its meanings is made general, among the results would be a challenge to those who control space through their charges, fees and rents, including most parts of the tourism and heritage industries. As the situationists once imagined putting routes across the rooftops of Paris, so, in the idea of a counter-tourism, there is an implicit demand for the extension of the 'right to roam' through private and reserve collections, library stacks and protected heritage 'wildernesses'– a lay geographer's version of the Syndicalist demand to 'open the books!' – an extension of public space (and the public's free, active, exploratory meaning-making presence) into controlled, restricted or rented space.

10.4

Such tactics follow, in 'spirit' at least, the surrealists, the International Letrristes/situationists and Michel de Certeau in agitating for such an extension of public space from within the everyday (in my case, of the heritage visit), rather than lobbying policy makers or heritage property owners and managers for changes of practice or new reforming legislation.[12] To give détournement real effect I have sought to apply it by the principle of asymmetry, (as part of mythogeography's general conceptualisation of patterns 'out there'), exemplified by the tactic of 'satellite capture', where moments of precarious 'balance' or tension between large forces or bodies are tipped or recruited to a new trajectory by the intervention of much

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[12] However, in the model of 'open infiltration' developed towards the end of my research there is the option to respond positively to the invitation to contribute to reform.

smaller ones (Smith, 2009a: 92-3). Such changes involve very small transfers of energy, their effects magnified by utilising patterns of information, and it is mostly this understanding that 'causes' change; *understanding as a force in itself*. In order for social patterns and trajectories to be successfully 'turned aside' from their conventional paths, it requires artists (or anti-artists in the Dadaist tradition) who are 'informed' in, or capable of intuiting, the non-empirical patterns of attraction in their sites and who are able to appropriately deploy small transfers of energy necessary to provoke the 'sinking' of a basin[13] or a tunnelling to an existing basin that triggers the site's dynamics into change. According to this model, this is particularly effective where the tunnelling is to an attraction that cannot be easily satisfied. In keeping with a situationist strategy for art, artists are not seen as producers of beautiful products, but super-sensitised agents détourning existing products and processes in order to goad the everyday into performing itself when 'itself' is its unsatisfied desires.

10.5

Consistent with the principle of asymmetrical actions, my interventions target Tourism and Heritage industries on the basis that they occupy spaces where significant forces of production and distribution meet in unstable relations. Not only are these industries central to national and world economies,[14] but they are increasingly influential in the production of public space, the qualities of the tourist site being transferred widely: 'almost everywhere has become a centre of "spectacle and display"… resorts now have relatively little to distinguish themselves from elsewhere' (Urry, 1990: 93). This is part of a growing, viral spectacle: 'more (UK) residents and tourists visit museums, galleries and heritage buildings than the cinema or

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[13]Drawing on applied mathematics for the metaphor here, a 'basin of attraction' is a set of initial conditions or points of an attractor that provoke behaviours in materials or actors within a particular dynamic system that draw them to that attractor.

[14] The World Travel and Tourism Council assess that travel and tourism would contribute directly and indirectly $6.5 trillion to the world economy in 2012, employing around 260 million workers, which would account for one in twelve jobs worldwide (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2012).

theatre, suggesting that the seventeenth century disease of nostalgia has become an epidemic'

(Dann, 1996: 220). John Urry connects this tendency to something like Guy Debord's

description of a 'Society of the Spectacle', of power manifest less through restrictive control

and more through the preventative satisfaction of desires (the pre-emptive infilling of basins

of attraction) and a demobilising ideology of 'change' (Lowenthal, 1985): 'societies are

developing less on the basis of surveillance and the normalisation of individuals, and more on

the basis of the democratisation of the tourist gaze and the spectacle-isation of place' (Urry,

1990: 156).


10.6

I attempt to do more than cursorily reference the more well known parts of Debord's analysis

of a Society of the Spectacle – the predominance of the image over the commodity, the

dominance of the visual. I seek to take seriously the problems posed for any resistant or

transformational activity by a Spectacle that is more than the accumulation of, or an

obfuscation by, images, but is 'a social relationship between people that is mediated by

images' (Debord, 1994: 12) with complex, resilient and reproductive qualities: 'both the

outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production... the omnipresent celebration of a

choice already made... a total justification for the conditions and aims of the existing system...

[that] ensures the permanent presence of that justification, for it governs almost all the time

spent outside the production process itself' (Debord, 1994: 13).


This understanding of the Spectacle allows for insufficient *free* space, outside its ken, on or in

which to build an alternative, counter or even significantly anomalous culture. In relation to

this monopolisation, the tactic of détournement has to be a kind of guerrilla practice acting

*within* the Spectacle that draws upon and redeploys the resources of the Spectacle (as a

guerrilla army lives off and equips itself from the supply routes of its enemies), détourning the Spectacle's mediating images as a means to disrupting the dominant spectacular social relationship, seeking out those spaces where the Spectacle's monopoly appears most powerful. So, Debord's description of the Spectacle's 'management of travel to different places [that] suffices... to ensure those places' interchangeability' (Debord, 1994: 120) is resonant not only of tourist enclaves (Edensor, 1998), but also of the 'national chains' of gift shops, cafés and visitors centres at heritage sites; identifying generic spaces that can be set in motion as active, absurd and humorous contradictions of heritage narratives of uniqueness.


10.7

In order for me to devise suitable tactics of détournement, I have moved away from those accounts of Guy Debord and the International Letteriste/Situationist International (IL/SI) that privilege their theoretical output (with perhaps a reference to the dérive, speculative architecture or détourned cinema as the extent and limitedness of their practice) and which, without a tradition of praxis, loop Debord's critique back on itself in a way that pushes it towards pessimism. For example, Fraser MacDonald's avowedly Debordist paper 'The Scottish Highlands as Spectacle', given this theoretic bias, is able to make little of the affordances for détournement that it identifies in the Highlands vistas (such as the role of 'trash') and falls back on something similar to earlier Marxian-miserablist criticisms of tourism: 'the historical interest or meaning... displaced by the image itself' (MacDonald, 2002: 64). Against this tendency (one exacerbated by Debord's distancing himself, his actions and his ideas, from the 1970s onwards, from other situationist artists/activists), I read the critique of the Spectacle through the early centrality to the IL/SI of a broad range of art-anti-art practices, including the importance of play and the influence of Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938), the détourning of mass produced art in Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio's

industrial paintings, Asgar Jorn's 'refacing' of paintings produced for the tourist market and Constant Nieuwenhuys's architecture of trajectories (Wark, 2011: 45-6, Merrifield, 2005: 149-153). I try to understand the disruption of images, objects and processes for an effective détournement of spectacular heritage space as a complex manoeuvre that is not simply a place-making by aesthetic intervention (such as those practised by some of the artists and dérivistes of the IL/SI and their allies), but also a self-making (not dissimilar to their acts of dérive). This is effected by manipulating the contradictions of self and place during touristic visits chosen to allow tourists to experience idealised self-images at odds with their actual self-image (Beeton, 2005: 52) or experience 'extra-authenticity, that which is better than reality... stimulation, through simulation of life ways as we would wish them to be, or to have been in the past' (Boniface & Fowler, 1993: 7). I also seek to exploit more general contradictions between the democratisation of the tourist gaze and the anachronistic policing of monolithic, homogenous meanings, attempting to take advantage of a shift in the terrain of the production of heritage tourism space from control to use, reflected in the emergence of the agency of tourists themselves, 'the means through which tourism is constructed by the tourist' (Crouch, Aronsson & Wahlström, 2001: 253).


10.8

Psychogeography is a more problematical concept for me to deploy, as over the last two decades it has, in a UK context, been most closely associated with the literary production of certain London authors (Sinclair, 2002 & 2003, Ackroyd, 1995 & 2002) more influenced by 'earth mysteries' than situationist political practice,[15] with journalism (Self, 2007 & 2009) and with the high pranksterism of Stewart Home and Fabian Tompsett under the guise of a 'London Psychogeographical Association' (Coverley, 2006: 128-33).

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[15] Although it should be acknowledged that some situationists, Asgar Jorn in particular, were willing to draw, at least playfully, on occultism.

10.9


Despite (and because of) these developments, I persist in drawing on the idea of

psychogeography, for, better than any other, it describes and informs a particular approach to

space and place that is part of my orientation to the sites of my interventions. This is not only

in respect of a sensitivity to the ambient and connective specificities of these sites, but also of

my use of ambulatory and embodied research and 'mapping' of these sites as the fieldwork

for speculative situation-making, and a particular and fore-fronted privileging of certain

remnants over others. Given that the sum of these qualities (and their interweaving)  are not

present in the original IL/SI practices and descriptions, and rarely in the more dominant of

recent manifestations, I avoid either simply following on from contemporary developments or

attempting to go back to an 'original' psychogeography. Instead, I seek to appropriate some

of the recent developments, following Phil Baker's distilling and interweaving of them, in

such a way that the original pre-situation preparatory intentions are re-emphasised, including

surveying the:

> emotional and behavioural effects of the
> environment, and its ambience; 'cognitive mapping"
> (the city in our heads, with the places that have
> special meaning for us); and what might be
> prosaically called "local history"... a city made up of
> distinct psychic micro-climates; places attract and
> repel us, or feel psychically warmer and colder, in a
> way that can be mapped. This emotional effect of
> place can be extended to single buildings, or even
> rooms. In different hands it can be supernatural... or
> entirely materialistic. (Baker, 2003: 323)


I follow this emphasis on hyper-sensitized emotional exploring and mapping, the use of

personal associations as a seeking out and recording of ambience, and the use of transitory

and non-expert means to intuit meaning and express it, but entangle these with an apparently

'prosaic' (though often uneven and excessive) historiography and localism, which this version of psychogeography détourns and deploys against expert historical narratives: 'Jack the Ripper and John Dee are of psychogeographical interest... whereas Cromwell and Pitt the Younger are not' (Baker, 2003: 325). In this incorporation of the excessive from local historiography, and the use of an occult ambience (whether ironic or invested with belief) that breaks the bounds of the local, the psycho-geographer is both an 'antiquarian' in historiography and a lay-geographer in activity, taking from both, with the lay element (the immersed corporeality and emotional mapping) dominant; and with a distinct use of a site's remnants to resist dominant narratives and to engage with their presence, presentness and vibrancy:

> [I]t is more fully psychogeographical if there is a sense that history affects ambience, and that the character of places inheres and affects feeling and behaviour, or if it challenges the mainstream reading of a place... an alienated and recalcitrant form of history, and one that resists being recuperated into "heritage". (Baker, 2003: 325)

So, my use of the term 'psychogeography' refers not only to the experiential or subjective effect of the landscape (though that is an important part of it), but to a complementary mapping of that ambience for the constructing of geographic praxes of affects, in which the city (predominantly, but not exclusively) can be used as a means to reinterpreting itself (a praxis that runs forwards and backwards and which counter-tourism adopts, less ambitiously, for heritage sites).

10.10

There is an important proviso to be made here. While a sense of 'occult continuity' might be useful as a means to break from localist specificity or specialist positivism, it should be deployed with irony; bounding and conservative in its proposal of 'timeless truths' and the

privileging of the past over the present. Contemporary literary and occult psychogeographers have, for example, been troubled by pseudo-modern and postmodern architectures; partly as the terrain of alienation, but also because these spaces (apparently) lack roots in a local history. I have sought (and this is part of the motivation to distinguish a mythogeographical approach from some contemporary psychogeographical practice) to avoid such bounding, seizing on the lacunae of pseudo-modern and postmodern spaces as fruitful terrain for spectral historical re-enactment; a self-parodying 'empty space' (Brook, 1990) of performance, against which the trailing and dislocated 'roots' of heritage can be highlighted. Rather than avoid, I have aimed to satirise, détourn and confront conservative tendencies to occult continuity; so, for example, against an assertion such as Phil Baker's that '(N)obody would walk for pleasure through a McDonald's landscape of proliferating estate agents, Kwik Foto developers, American college London programs... and endless plate-glass catering' (2003: 332) I have, in my mis-guided tour practice (*Mobile Machinoeki*, 2007) cited the latent excess of exactly such spaces (see Figure 2.v), including fast-photo outlets as evoked by director Mark Romanek in *One Hour Photo* (2002).

With these serious provisos, I am using a psychogeographical definition of history as key to my understanding of part of what I am addressing in heritage sites: remnants, particularly revenant atmospheres, that affect contemporary behaviour in particular sites, and which, by the nature of their excessive character, upset mainstream, official and localist historiographies; not a past, but a place's performance of 'past' now. The aim of such a psychogeographical historiography is not to discover the truth about 'what happened here', but rather the affordance and potency of what, explicit or not, remains: its narrative, emotional, atmospheric and psychic (as much as physical) remnant. The broader modus operandi of this psychogeography is to invoke the active, explicit, hidden, occulted, material

and non-material revenant through the trajectories of the hypersensitized body of the dériviste, through play, through fanciful mapping (such as Christian Nold's emotion-maps), through self-dramatization and through improvisation. This breaks from characterisations of psychogeography as a re-invention of the reverie of the flâneur (Solnit, 2000: 212-3) or as a predominantly literary activity (Coverley, 2006), emphasising instead the recording and aestheticising of the experiential as preparation for the creation of situations.

11

Site-specificity and vibrant materialism

11.1

 I continue to use the idea of 'site-specificity' in this research within an academic and critical context that has become increasingly resistant to it. This resistance arises partly as a reaction against the mis-use of the term 'site-specific' to mis-describe any kind of performance or art outside designated theatre buildings or galleries, and partly as a paradigmatic shift towards a 'mobilities' or 'flows' sensibility, perhaps most importantly represented in the fields of art and performance by Miwon Kwon (2004). My use of the term refers to those practices, most particularly performance, that are, predominantly, prepared, made and researched in, and are mostly about, a specific site. My purpose in retaining the term is not to resist or ignore the mobilities paradigm, but to use elements that resist it in particular instances in order to generate a torque between specific things and general mobilities. At another level, this emerges in the idea of counter-tourism, towards the end of my research, as a form of

resistance (through 'heritage') to certain libertarian, neo-conservative ideas around catastrophe capitalism: the loss of collective narrative and 'wiping the slate clean'.

11.2

This entanglement of limited mobilities with recalcitrant and active things draws on Jane Bennett's 'vibrant materialism' (Bennett, 2010) and from the idea, from a marginal and minority position within contemporary anthropology 'that things might be treated as sui generis meanings… [M]eanings are not "carried" by things but just are identical to them' (Henare, *et al*., 2007: 3-4), rather than removing or transferring meaning from the thing by interpretation. The 'torque' that results from this interweaving of trajectories and vibrant 'things-meanings' occurs in the context of the variegation of Hannam's 'mobilities, immobilities and moorings' (2009: 106), consistent with 'a methodology where the "things" themselves may dictate a plurality of ontologies' (Henare, *et al*., 2007: 7).

11.3

With its predisposition to multiplicity, mythogeography might be expected to favour mobilities over 'things'. But just as it asks for rigour and integrity within the terms of its own parts, and as it places itself on foot and firmly in the anachronistic drag of a slowed down pedestrianism (braking its own theoretical tendency to a nomadic thinking), so the 'thing-meaning' or 'thinking through things' and its attending to the specificity of site puts further barbs into that acceleration. Like the *verfremdungseffekt* of Bertolt Brecht's theatre practice, where disruption 'mis-shapes' the smooth trajectory of naturalistic-psychological presence, so the intention here is that the 'thing-meaning' and the sites' other specificities, by their apparent immobility or pulling away, drag the discourse of mobilities, networks and globalism 'out of shape' in order to *reveal* shapes that are too easily taken to be self-evident.

By making them unfamiliar, the drag and torque provoked by the 'thing' tends to reveal overfamiliar processes in their lumpy and uneven social relations rather than in a fluid, abstract or ideal narrative. Having said that, it is important to note that this material-specificity is, to repeat Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2007), one in which things "*might be treated as* sui-generis meanings" (my emphasis). This, then, is to act an *as if*, in the same terms as my interventions, as part of a ludic action, provoking recalcitrance rather than reifying it. This is something quite distinct from (but intended to be complementary to) my regard for the vibrant materiality of things.

11.4

In order to interpret the effects of the torques produced by such ludic actions, particularly in relation to the power in these sites negotiated through images and narratives made and told about them and their objects (and, I hope, to answer the criticism that a specificity-approach might tend to encourage stasis or conservatism), I adopt a general approach similar to that advocated by Laurajane Smith

> which acknowledges that things exist independently
> of our knowledge of them, or indeed, discourses
> about them, but that "we can only know them under
> particular descriptions"… [and] stresses the concrete
> social relations that underlie and generate
> discourses… identifying and understanding how
> people organize themselves and act through
> particular discourses… that constrain and constitute
> the various relationships between people. (Smith,
> 2006: 15)

Although on the one hand a mythogeographical approach is not conducive to the terms (albeit flexible) of the linguistics-based Critical Discourse Analysis that underlies Smith's approach, on the other hand it *is* conducive to the kind of mobile-layering of Smith's description, with a discrete and independent ontology of things, discourses in the process of generation, social

relations that 'underlie', human agents that 'act through', and the articulation of constraints and constitutions. This is an important formulation for my research, because while a mythogeographical intervention might include the setting in motion of various discourses (including aesthetic, unrespectable and marginal ones) around the 'particular descriptions' through which we 'know' things, this does not mean that it seeks by these means a postmodernist carnival of relativism. Rather, these interventions are attempts to set the sites themselves, in their vibrant materiality and independent being, in motion (what in my practice I refer to as the aspiration to 'provoke the site to perform itself') and in relation to those 'particular descriptions' and discourses; a complex dynamic that a mythogeography attempts to draw into its centre-less 'orrery'[16] and make problematical.

12

Hypersensitization, weaving and myth

12.1

Concepts of hypersensitization, interweaving and limited myth, discussed prior to this research in both *Mythogeography* (2010) and in my essay 'Crab Walking and Mythogeography' in *Walking, Writing and Performance* (Mock, 2009), are used in this thesis as terms in and by which to discuss the heightening and re-focusing of attention during interventions, juxtaposing and re-assembling from fragmented objects, details, subjectivities and experiences, and the narratives and dramaturgies not only of individual interventions but also of the overall research project. Over-explaining events and perceiving organised patterns

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[16] An orrery is a mechanical device used to demonstrate the motions and relations of the planets and their moons around the Sun; mythogeography changes the model by removing the Sun.

in fragmentary phenomena are means to accumulating multiple meanings for a place, through a super-sensitivity to textures, signs, details and symbols. These are purposely over-interpreted (for example, allocating them complex origins where there are already simpler, generally accepted explanations, or crediting them with the effects of 'spooky action at a distance') in order to counter a dominant ideological tendency towards under-explanation and fragmentation, and the efficiency of the human filtering of visual and other information (Smith, 2010a: 165).

12.2

In order to sustain and develop that multiplicity without it recycling itself as a style or milieu of fragmentation or accumulation, I draw upon Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's ideas about weaving and healing (2003: 123-51). Sedgwick contests a dominant paranoid epistemology among modern intellectuals. I do so to sustain the products of hypersensitization as something more than a reproduction of itself (Smith, 2010a: 165-6), resisting holism, and deploying simulated, faked, plagiarised and mistaken models and maps of connection. There is a utopian aspiration here – 'weaving the future' out of the ruins of the past, a theme that first surfaced in my contribution to Wrights & Sites' *An Exeter Mis-Guide* (Wrights & Sites, 2003: 14). Starting again without a past, or from an ideal bounding of future space (the no-place of "utopia"), implies a violent clearing of space. Instead, I propose a knitting together or re-assemblage of existing, abject social elements (such as those found in tourism and heritage).

12.3

Part of the general mythogeographical modus operandi is to give attention to patterns (as well as to fragments), chiming with Roger Penrose's assertion that 'the mathematics are out there',

assuming (provisionally) that such patterns are an emergent meaning in themselves (Cartwright, *et al*., 2000). Part of that attention to patterns in respect of narrative and dramaturgy results in a careful positioning in respect of 'myth' (Smith, 2010a: 131-7). Seeking to avoid mystical tropes, obscurantism, reactionary traditionalism and redemptive social dramaturgy, I have attempted to use 'limited myth': myth-like accounts which are capable of symbolically representing and staging (but not becoming) patterns of social and political power, physical forces, or cultural paradigms, and that are rendered questionable by their popular-cultural exploitation, blatant fiction, absurdity or openly unresolved contradictions.

13

<u>A note on writing</u>

13.1

Acts of writing constitute significant parts of my Practice-as-Research (PaR) for this project, serving 'as another part of my practice, not something that occurred when I stopped practising' (Ellis, *et al*., 2011: 180-1) as well as instrumentally servicing its documentation, description and analysis. For these varying purposes, I deploy different ways of writing and different 'voices' (including my self-mythologised 'Crab Man' persona for publications) within the variegated modes. The evidence of my field notebooks suggests that these different processes and voices have often been juxtaposed, if not become entangled. I had intended to use three series of field notebooks: for the production of interventions, for participant observations, and for 'hunches'. Forgetfulness led me to begin my note-taking in a single book. My repeatedly putting off of the 'chore' of copying out large sections of notes exacerbated the problem as an increasing jumble of voices and modes filled up further

books (see Figure 2.vi). When I came to draw upon these notes – for performance-making, or reflective and analytical writing – the juxtaposition of these different types of note-taking informed my writing across the various modes. Analytical notes alerted me to certain research trajectories which I could test in performance interventions; quotidian documentation was at times suggestive of a theoretical or analytical development: for example, notes of conversations with the owner and assistant at the Jenniflower shop on Queen Street, Exeter for *Relics and Processions* led to theoretical and practical outcomes around everyday rituals in the *Water Walk* and its case study which I will discuss in Chapter Four.

13.2

In creating the performance interventions for this thesis I have, repeatedly deployed some process of dramaturgical assemblage, stitching together fragments drawn from the explorations of a site, from found texts, from excerpts from novels, from local history websites, from biographical or spiritual writings related to a site, from descriptions of personal associations and observations noted in field notes *in situ* and from transcriptions of stories told by others in (and about) the site. To put these together I have often used and upset a given form (guided tour, information board) as an unstable framework around which to drape hybrid texts. This stitching I have generally done seated at my computer, transcribing from notebooks, cutting and pasting sections of text, rearranging and interposing various (interpreters', quasi-guiding, and subjective-associational) voices with notes for 'hollowed-out' rituals; while qualitative or structural shifts in the dramaturgy (a narrative arc, a linking persona, a folding back) have often occurred to me during train travel, while out walking or provoked by other media and been noted at the time for later application at the computer and later again on site.

Having assembled, sometimes semi-memorised, these texts I would then try them out on site, re-arranging the order, cutting and adding according to the affordances of the site. At some point in its rewriting the partly composed text would be literally 'laid aside' (left at home) – an abject, abandoned thing, sometimes lacking a 'final act', often left uncorrected, often scribbled on and scored through with corrections already superceded by others and 'damaged' by its use on site (as I moved on to adapting its *langue* to the *parole* of more comfortable ways of speaking, impersonation, aesthetic or formal dynamics, to the acoustic and symbolic affordances of the site, to performance rhythms and guesses about audience reception).

13.3

Another, equally consequential 'act of writing' was that which I practiced on my *Sebald Walk* (discussed in Chapter Five), a looping 200 mile (mostly) ambulatory journey in East Anglia, starting at Norwich and ending in Halesworth between 28 September and 13 October 2011, during which I (mostly) followed the route of a walk described by W. G. Sebald in his book *The Rings of Saturn*. I used this literary prompt as a catalyst for, among other things, a series of visits to heritage sites and landscapes, improvising and devising various 'tactics' for the counter-tourism handbooks at which this thesis arrives.

Rather than 'jot down' ideas at the moment of imagining them (though this would usually have been feasible) I mostly chose to wait until I found a place to comfortably and concentratedly write for a while (at a pub table, in a B & B room, on the shingle at Orford Ness) and then write for between ten minutes and an hour and a half. Rather than organise my notes according to their function (devising tactics, keeping diary, evolving critical

theory) or mode (fragments from found books, descriptions of places and sensations), I

would interweave the different strands around each other. For the most part I avoided any

immediate synthesis, with the intention of monitoring those moments when ideas jumped

across the function designations, or where separate strands lay suggestively alongside each

other:

> Last night I caught a taxi back from The Five Bells
> Inn at Wrentham – The Mist at times made a ceiling
> just above the car, as if we were driving through a
> narrow tunnel. At Gunton Hall there was a photo of
> local people gathered in front of their bomb
> damaged houses from a Zeppelin attack – Machen's
> cloud of sparks took real form. The sky as a secret
> tunnel. A problem of individuals and history –
> Nelson, Wellington, etc. was exemplified by Ivan's
> struggle to have the Ipswich civic authorities
> contextualise their enthusiasm for Cardinal Wolsey,
> a Catholic anomaly in a largely Protestant city. Is
> there a way to swamp iconic individuals in
> numbers? COUNTER TOURISM TACTIC: use the
> model of the church at Coverhithe – it's the same at
> A la Ronde – buildings have often been rationalised
> to match their use rather than their symbolic
> intendedness. (*Sebald Walk notebook*).

At times the qualities of the site I chose to write in would explicitly inflect the act of

writing; I would describe events in, observations about or sensations arising from being and

writing in that place, and  the act of writing in the site would assume a certain 'eventness':

> I am in the Sailors' Reading Room at Southwold
> looking at the photographs and paintings of various
> fishermen, pilots, etc. – they are working men, but
> not proletarian, they are individualists, cultivating
> eccentricity as a mark of their invisible treasure
> (skills, experiences). Framed photograph of the
> Queen Mother in one of the display cases. This is
> Sole Bay. COUNTER YOURISM [sic] TACTIC: by
> disrupting your normal journeys and normal
> utilitarian perceptions – eg. look at the tops of
> buildings, slow right down and attend to very close,
> fine detail, find viewpoints where you can see the
> general shapes of things (*Sebald Walk notebook*).

13.4

The notebooks I kept on my only previous comparable walk (in 2007 following the route described in Charles Hurst's *The Book of the English Oak* [1911]), later became the materials for a one-person performance, *In Search of Pontiflunk* (2008), and form part of the text of *Mythogeography* (2010). The writing of the *Sebald Walk* notebooks was triply framed, then, as containing possible scores for future performances, as a performance itself and, given the turn towards dispersal in my research, as a first draft of a text for generative experimental interventions. Tim Edensor has challenged tendencies in this kind of walking-writing. While acknowledging the valid role played in multiplying the meanings of sites, he has noted an inclination in 'surrealist modes of walking, and the psychogeographic accounts of [Iain] Sinclair... [to] decentre corporeal, sensual interaction with the material world', while 'narratives of walking typically create the illusion of linear progress through sequential time: this or that feature is passed, discussed, and then the next, and so on' (Edensor, 2008: 136). In the script for *In Search of Pontiflunk* and, before it, in that for the 2003 performance *The Crab Walks* (Mock, 2009: 59-80, Heddon, 2008: 105-11) I had sought to avoid, through the use of layered timelines, the foldings-in on themselves of their narratives and embodied performance, such subjugations of their multiplicity to linearity or literary a-materiality. The *Sebald Walk* notebooks take this further; they are jerky, cut-up texts, continually leaping forward to future embodied forays, their disturbed prose reflecting my walking of often manicured and tidied heritage sites *as if* they were ruins, seeking those disruptions of the linear and the regulated journey that Edensor describes as characteristic of walking in ruins: 'shocking reminders of long-forgotten phrases and popular cultural icons, abrupt alarms and surprises, a sudden grasp of the demise of a particular industrial future, pangs of hunger, temporal rates of decay and natural growth' (Edensor, 2008: 137).

13.5

In each of these different acts of writing, I have been self-consciously (if not always, effectively) 'performing writing', aware of the opportunities and looped traps of a textuality that 'seems increasingly to fold in on itself, to turn back on the very act of writing, making it difficult if not impossible to make sense' (Pollock, 1998: 71). However, rather than seeking possibilities in margins increasingly squeezed by this loss of meaning, I have sought them in the multiplicity of produced sense's dispersed fragments, in the resulting affordance for détournement (chasing and rounding them up), and in the (privileged) *jouissance*[17] of increasingly subjective and driven, rather than obliged, acts of 'writing on the road' (winding through joys of discovery and esoteric contentedness, physical painfulness and hypersensitized anxieties). This pleasure in the act has fed back to pleasure in the principle that drives the final phase of my research-writing: the elevation of pleasure in counter-tourism's interrogation of heritage. Della Pollock has sought to describe acts of 'performing writing' that could 'dissolve the dichotomies... dividing the historian and artist, and what are conventionally considered their respectively common and uncommon discourses' (Pollock, 1998: 78), realigning the flattened communicability of the de-subjectivized monograph and the difficulty and difference of self-reflexive voices. The general arc of my research – beginning with the détournement of the flattened discourse of the mainstream guided tour as the means to provoke sites to speak themselves in multiple ways – follows a similar dissolving and reconstituting of discourses, and in Chapter Five below I will address its attempted traversal of the spaces between historian and artist and tourist, drawing upon qualities generalised out from my performance of writing.

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[17] The idea that pleasure is a kind of limit on enjoyment, experienced through structures of signification that are parts of how a subject knows themselves to be a subject, and that in transgressing the boundaries of pleasure such structures are also transgressed and the excess of pleasure then can pass over into pain.

Figure 2.i  Using the body as an instrument of site exploration, Somerleyton Hall, Suffolk, 2011. Photo: Lorraine Sutherland.

Figure 2.ii  Panel members on *Filmed Walk* (2012). Photo: Kris Darby.



Figure 2.iii  Walking the shape of pavement slabs, *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010). Photo: Tamany Baker.

Figure 2.iv  A panel member circumambulates a Hovercraft monument on a counter-tourism foray (2011). Photo: Phil Smith

Figure 2.v  Using anonymous space, *A Yarn Around the West End* (2011).  Photo: Ruth Mitchell.

Figure 2.vi   Pages from notebooks.

Chapter Two

*GeoQuest*:  a case study in rhizomatic interweaving and self-mythologization


1.1

The *GeoQuest* was chosen for case study because it provides an instance where certain

mythogeographical principles (uses of space as multiplicitous and constituted by trajectories)

and the tactics for realising them (creating limited myths, use of popular forms, close

attention to material texture, and the collectivity and subversive qualities of the ambulatory

group) were attempted or applied in practice to an intervention in a relevant context (a

touristic and, in parts, heritage terrain) in contact mostly with the general public rather than

with specialised audiences.


1.2

**Please watch the film entitled *GeoQuest* (extended version) now**. It is available on the

DVD titled *GeoQuest* enclosed in the thesis box as Appendix 4.


1.3

The case study draws upon two of the key mythogeographical lenses; the first is the

rhizomatic interweaving of numerous modes, narratives and journeys; the second is self-

mythologisation. On broader theoretical ground, the *GeoQuest* case study draws on

theoretical developments in tourism studies: particularly the tourist as 'reflexive agent'

(Meethan, *et al.*, 2006: xiii) rather than as a passive or gullible consumer (this, particularly, in

relation to the project's 'mis-guided tours'), and the interface between the consumption-

production of touristic space and narratives of place and heritage. It also draws from

performance studies in relation to acting and anti-acting (Fuchs, 1996, Soule, 2000, Lehman,

2006) in the assemblage of different performances by the GeoQuestors, and to specificity in relation to the *GeoQuest*'s various sites.

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1.4

As the criterion for material used to support an argument, I am applying a principle of cross-checking; any hypothesis (however provisional) must be supported by complementary information from at least two source-types. If there is contradictory information, a hypothesis must be supported by complementary information from at least two source types exceeding by 2:1 any contradictory information (which will also be described). This methodology is common to all three of my case studies.

1.5

My methodology for data collection the *GeoQuest* was:

i/ participant observation. I was a member of the 'Geotrio', involved from the earliest discussions, present at most organisational meetings and all artistic meetings and throughout the performance-devising and the journey.

I recorded observations in (dated) field notes during the preparations and during the journey itself (and continued for subsequent de-briefing and future planning meetings.)

I wrote a set of "reflections" a few days after the completion of the 2010 *GeoQuest*; at times the *GeoQuest* was physically gruelling and this was an attempt to recall observations/hunches not recorded at the time due to tiredness or lack of opportunity.

These records are inflected both by my participative experience of the *GeoQuest* and by thesis-related theoretical reading (including a literature review) that I had already begun.

ii/ documentation. I have retained copies of all significant email traffic and attachments, project outlines, publicity texts, scenarios, early drafts of scripts, notes, etc. I have some records of press coverage. I am drawing on the two versions of the *GeoQuest* film (10 minutes and 20 minutes) made by Siobhan Mckeown. I refer to two photograph collections: my own and that taken by Mel Border of the English Riviera Global Geopark (English Riviera Global Geopark, 2010: online).

iii/ Panel responses and questionnaires: my research panel members were all invited to *GeoQuest*. I identified 9 panel members as attending, all were emailed questionnaires and 6 returned completed questionnaires.

2

What happened

2.1

The *English Riviera Global Geopark GeoQuest 2010* was a seven day journey in 2010 taken on foot by Tony Lidington, Hugh Nankivell and myself, from the Valley of Rocks (Watcombe) to Brixham returning to Torquay by boat (all South Devon). The project was funded by Torbay Council, managed by Arts at Dartington and supported by the English Riviera Global Geopark. The formal object of the Quest was to encourage a wider

understanding of the geology of Torbay (see Figure 3.i). Each day the 'Geotrio' ran workshops in the morning, prepared a walk during the afternoon (based on prior research) and between 6pm and 10pm led a mis-guided tour (each tour accompanied by an 'expert'), followed by a performance and meal at an indoor venue (see Appendix 15 for further details).

The origins of the *GeoQuest* were in a series of informal walks taken together by Tony Lidington, Hugh Nankivell and myself in 2007/8 during which we explored through conversation ways in which we might work together. The immediate impulse for a 'Quest' came from the Cultural Olympiad and its regional concept of 'Quest' and 'Questors'. Our initial questing idea was a musical storytelling journey called *Ballads On The Move* (later *Song Circles*), involving the collection of stories and narrative-based songs, and the transportation of organ pipes. Mischa Eligoloff (an officer at Torbay Council) secured local government funding to stage the journey in Torbay and proposed a connection with the English Riviera Global Geopark which gave a geological content and geographical boundary for the Quest: a single, seven day, roughly circular, ambulatory journey around Torbay taking in key geological sites. Arts at Dartington became the project managers.

2.2

The journey aspect of the *GeoQuest* was always a key aspect. New elements (sleeping in Kents Cavern and on Berry Head) were adopted. It was always intended that this was a seven day performance and that while on the road the GeoQuestors were to be clearly identifiable and ready to engage with passersby; distinctive costumes were commissioned.

The structure for the journey-day changed during the planning stage. Initially, a series of pre-Quest preparatory workshops with different community groups were planned to introduce the

theme of the local geology and encourage the groups to devise their own responses, which would then be shown as part of an evening performance, but the ACE application to fund these workshops was unsuccessful, so the workshops were reduced to one-off introductions to the geology as part of the week's journey.

2.3

The formal live performance part of the evening now became its main focus (the only element in the daily structure that was ticketed and charged for), and for which the preceding walks were something like an introduction. Initially intended as informal walks for the audience to get, rather functionally, from the workshop sites to the performance venues:

> the public walks will be very low key in terms of our
> trio performances and much more about encouraging
> walking and observing and occasionally throwing
> something into the situation in order to provoke
> (Nankivell, email, 1.4.10)

these walks were developed into something much closer to 'mis-guided tours' (see Figure 3.ii). The routes were selected and the walks were prepared in advance; we walked/researched the routes prior to the week of the *GeoQuest* and spent much of each afternoon of the journey 'rehearsing' or collecting items for them.

2.4

For the two months prior to the *GeoQuest*, Tony, Hugh and myself were individually researching in any spare time between other projects. Preparation time together was very short: three days exploring and devising and two days of rehearsal. In February 2010 I had written a document proposing a basic geological narrative for the journey, and in April, almost two months prior to the final devising period, I suggested a dramatic structure that was subsequently adopted:

> how we searched for the petrified forest but the tide
> was too high… each of our failures added a different
> stone to a strange conglomeration, a golem[18]… a
> person of sand and stone… who we brought alive to
> be our geologist… tearing up Fleet Walk and
> dragging down the clouds to turn it into a river
> again… straightening out the folds in the limestone
> and then re-folding them even tighter. (Unpublished
> document, 9.4.10)

During the devising period this was de-literalised:

> Uncle: …we have ended up conjuring the Torbay
> Golem, accidentally laying open secrets of landscape
> and murky shifts of time… if you listen at the
> manhole where the Fleet still runs, or if you stand in
> the rain, you can hear him in the thump of the waves
> against Shoalstone Pool…
>
> ALL: (sing) We went looking for geology
> But we found a monster's soul,
> We went looking for geology,
> We found a whole monsterology!  (Unpublished
> rehearsal draft, 13.5.10)

This reiteration of the geology's monstrous return allowed us to escape a tight dramatic

narrative and, instead, in an episodic structure, to present songs, including lyrics about the

heartbeat of the seasons at Occombe Farm and about remnants of dead sea creatures that make

up much of the local limestone (sampling Monk's setting of the locally written hymn lyric

'Abide With Me'), a satirical solo character piece metaphorically connecting the racial

insecurities of a holidaymaker with the instability of the local ecology, but mostly scenes (the

majority in a storytelling form) about our searches for Torbay's geology.[19] Throughout the

performance, the audience was periodically reminded of the geology's (Golem's) imminent

return; when it did return the large, custom-designed and printed map of the bay (used in the

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[18] A  figure appropriated from the myth of an aberrant medieval protector-monster made from the silt of the Vlatava River in Prague by Rabbi Loew.

[19] Re-enacting the process of making a performance is a familiar strategy when devising against the clock; effective in generating material rapidly, but tending to reproduce method as content. In our case this was sometimes a theatrical re-cycling rather than always an engagement with our geological narrative.

performance to illustrate the basic geological narrative of limestone seas and red deserts) was cut with knives and torn to pieces.

2.5

During our final rehearsal period we dropped the scripted micro-performance element from our workshops and elected to improvise each workshop from other materials: songs composed by Hugh, an introduction, with samples, to the main rocks of Torbay, a mini-'field trip' around the immediate terrain, and a resource of participatory exercises. This move to improvisation and immediacy affected the *GeoQuest* as a whole; stories or lyrics that were generated spontaneously during the workshops re-appeared as part of 'Parish Notices' (a moment during the evening meal with the audience when we would recount the events of the day). While this improvisatory element created problems at times (parts of the first two guided walks were faltering and long-winded) it also opened up the possibility for a Quest that was spontaneous and immediate in its relations with place and audience and whose different parts could be adapted to meet new situations, whose experiences and events could be recounted or reconstructed and perhaps dispersed; from very early on in the project there was the intention to make this an experimental model for rolling out beyond Torbay.

2.6

The overall structure of each day – morning journey and workshops, afternoon tour preparation (sometimes with a second workshop), 6pm mis-guided tour, 8pm meal and performance – remained the same throughout the week. Each of the 6pm walks was accompanied by a geologist, a local historian or a horticulturalist – who gave a prepared talk on our arrival at the performance venue or spontaneous commentaries during the walk itself.

2.7

The field notes and panel feedback record concerns about problems both *within* parts of the structure and the relation between the different parts after 6pm. The latter were responded to through a moment of 'break' on the third day that changed the internal content and approach of *some* of the post-6pm parts and their relation to each other.

2.8

Each day was a psycho-physical journey for the 'Geotrio'. As well as the structured transitions from journey to workshop to preparation to walk to performance to accommodation, there were numerous and often abrupt changes of experience: difficult and moving encounters in care homes and with support groups, the to and fro of improvised street encounter, urgent research, half-relaxed chatting over the shared evening meal, rushing to get to a workshop in time, relief at the end of an under-rehearsed performance, weariness, negotiating B & B owners spooked by our arrival in costume.

2.9

Two statistical phenomena that do not show up in the attendance figures are the lack of carry-over of workshop and street contactees into evening attendance, and the repeat attendances for the evening sessions. In the case of the former, I can witness to only one instance. In the case of repeat attendees, a small number of audience members, stewards and producers (between 10 and 15 in total) returned repeatedly to the 6-10 pm sessions. Some also came to join us for a part of our daily journeys. Some brought companions to later evenings:

> we made sure to take more family and friends with
> us... to share this unique celebration. (letter, Diana
> and Craig Brewer, Herald Express, no date)

> There was a sense of community amongst the audience group – perhaps unusual for an event like this… It was lovely the audience and performers eating together. It kind of pulled us into the daily routine of your walking week. (Panel questionnaire D)

One effect of this was an incremental sense of community and 'memory' at the evening sessions, with repeat-attendees recognising each other from previous evenings and speaking to the group in general or to their immediate neighbours to make comparisons or draw connections with events or themes from previous evenings.

2.10

Following the *GeoQuest* in 2010 an attempt to fund a further journey in 2011 through a partnership with the Hong Kong Global Geopark was unsuccessful, though a smaller intervention (without my participation) at the 5th International UNESCO Conference on GeoParks at the Unzen Volcanic Area Global Geopark in 2012 has rekindled this project. The 'Geotrio' were invited to make two further mis-guided tours at Cockington Court and I contributed to both, though only performed in one (due to family illness): these tours were very similar in style to the later tours of the *GeoQuest*. We also performed a shortened version of our evening performance inside the caves at Kents Cavern for the Global Geoparks' inspectorate (as part of the, successful, bid by the local Geopark for revalidation of its Geopark status).

3

Reflection and Evaluation

3.1

Using the lenses described above, I am addressing five key thematic issues that I identified in the documentation of this experiment:

3.2/ the affordance and problems of narratives of geological time in relation to a perception of multiplicitous space,

3.3/ problems of personae,

3.4/ interwoven-ness and the possibilities for intervention of a limited nomadic 'art of living'

3.5/ lack of interwoven-ness and the problem of live performance

3.6/ lack of a model for dissemination

3.2

When 'local' geology became the narrative of the Quest project, it offered certain affordances for a mythogeographical intervention. 'Geological time' posed a potentially radical challenge to normative discourses of local, even national, history, heritage and identity, simply by virtue of its scale. Concepts such as 'the English Riviera' (adopted into its title by the local Geopark) are potentially rendered absurd by contemplation of oceans 400 million year ago and deserts 300 million years ago, both sites in a 'here' that was 'elsewhere'. 'Geological time' challenges the phantasmic perception (identified in my field notes) of landscape as 'scenery' suspended in a spectacular 'perpetual present' (Lowenthal, 1985: xvi-xvii, Clark, 2003: 2, Schofield, 2009: 99).

The geological narrative also posed a threat to the 'heritagization of memory', contesting a process described by Tim Edensor:

> [A]t tourist sites, memory is increasingly organised
> according to a commodified 'heritage' which 'fixes
> history' and thereby limits the interpretative and
> performative scope of tourists. (Edensor, 1998: 141)

Given the scale of 'geological time', there is always a past, a context and a genealogy that is uncontainable by 'fixed history' or 'timeless truth'. Deploying the geological narrative as a militant 'past' fitted closely with the mythogeographical lens of 'layers' (a coincidentally geological metaphor) with its inquisitorial tendency, seeking out 'back stories' and contextualised causes. While this complementarity did inform our process on the *GeoQuest*, it was almost always combined through the lens of 'rhizomatic interweaving'. For example, at Berry Head House there is the 'fixed history' of a pre-Darwinian faith in the 'unchanging' nature of all origins. Two decades after MacEnery's excavations across the bay at Kents Cavern had challenged 'biblical time', it was here that in 1847 Reverend Henry Lyte composed the lyrics of the hymn 'Abide With Me',

> Change and decay in all around I see;
> O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

This event is re-articulated romantically on various tourism websites, Lyte spurred to restate his belief by approaching death: '(F)eeling that he had one more important task' (Devon Perspectives: Brixham, 2010: online), another demonstrating the transference of the hymn's theme of divine unchangeableness to a stoic 'national spirit':

> The hymn has become a British institution, sung at
> FA Cup Finals since 1927; and reputedly played by
> the Titanic's Band as the ship sank beneath the
> waves – Edith Cavell too is said to have sung it as
> her German firing squad took aim. (Information
> Britain, 2010: online)

Our means of challenging such a 'fixed history' and 'unchanging spirit' was initially layered: outside Berry Head House (now Hotel) Hugh related the contexts of Lyte's respiratory illness and the developing crisis for 'biblical time', then used a balloon filled with one breath to play a few bars of the most famous setting for 'Abide With Me' on his (water-soaked) melodica,

until the air ran out and the tune faded away to silence. Then, this 'change and decay' of

Lyte's own hymn was 'rhizomatically interwoven' with a number of other ongoing and

related strands: the audience had just seen the melodica played underwater at Shoalstone

Pool (a place almost constantly subjected to the erosive force of the waves), while later, in

the performance that ended the evening event, they would hear (sampling Lyte's words and

Monk's melody):

> All:  Limestone bones
> Buried in Berry Head
> Limestone bones
> Bones of the dead...
>
>
> All: Change and decay in all around I see;
> All those old limestone bones, abide with me.

We were able to take advantage of the *temporal* qualities of the geological narrative to

combine different narratives (applying the principle of 'rhizomatic interweaving') in order to

create a performance of multiplicitous space (archaeological-geological-(anti)theological-

physiological). We sought to resist any overarching description or narrative: 'a rhizome or

multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded, never has available a supplementary

dimension over and above its number of lines' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 9), but rather

'attain[s] an irreducible disparity' (Rajchman, 2000: 51).

However, the *spatial* qualities of the geological narrative were more problematic. Geology's

temporal scale is matched by a spatial ubiquity that is potent for sustained interweaving. We

seized on the idea of the mutability of geological space and this is reflected by changes in our

audience's perceptions of geological landscape: 'A connection to the real shape and feel of

the landscape... storytelling referring to what we saw and where we were (physically and

allegorically)' (Panel questionnaire A); '[M]y walks forever changed' (Panel questionnaire

C); 'the cliffs are not just physical; they can represent something more personal… knowing more about it [the geology], and me being able to draw parallels with my own experiences' (Panel questionnaire F); '"you [the 'Geotrio'] see differently"'(Field notes, 28.5.10).[20]

The words that recurred in these responses to describe changed viewing – 'thinking', 'saw', 'allegorical', 'interested', 'noticing', 'looking for', 'represent', 'think' – suggest a looking that is active in reflecting upon things and perceptions, but not necessarily a 'questing' or active seeking out of change. The emphasis in the responses is on the change of viewpoint or way of looking almost to the exclusion of any other change of behaviour, though for some there is a further transformation of the landscape to one that can be subjectively understood, as holding associations and emotions.

This limitation reflected (and was perhaps a result of) our backing away from the implications for our own narrative of geology's spatiality. Very early on we had woven the notion of the Quest's mobility with that of the local geology. A 'project description' dated 20.1.10 reads:

> The Geoquest is a celebration of this geological
> mobility here in the English Riviera... a celebration
> on the move of a geology on the move.

A scriptwriting note, written some time before the *GeoQuest* journey, develops this idea:

> the Geo-Quest feast performances – are based on a
> mobilities/nomadologies aesthetic – … the geology
> as itself a series of journeys without a fixed,
> sustained 'place'… there is only space… there is no
> Devon/Torbay 400 million years ago… (Hunches,
> undated)

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[20] References to 'Field notes', 'Hunches', 'Reflections' or 'Scriptwriting notes' indicate quotations taken from my own notebooks

However, this challenge did not appear in performances, walks or workshops (it was part of the scripted workshop micro-performance that we abandoned), avoided in order to secure the accessible concept of 'Torbay 400 million years ago', a narrative in tune with that promoted by the English Riviera Global Geopark (a key supporting organisation), which acknowledges the shift of Torbay's part of the geological crust from south of the Equator, but persists in imposing a localized identity upon its multiplicitous origins. We suppressed the extreme narrative of geological mobility, achieving this manoeuvre by fore-fronting our subjective responses to the landscape as sublime:

> we 'pander' to the idea of a geological identity,
> sustained or sustainable for 100s [of] millions of
> years – when what there has been are multiple
> 'identities'… Torbay is only what we call a group of
> converging factors which then diverge from the
> point of their naming – so identity is always eroding.
> (Field notes, 29.5.10)

This suppression seriously undermined the effectiveness, in mythogeographical terms, of the narrative of the *GeoQuest*, allowing an 'overcoding' to settle upon its different parts, allowing our audiences an 'escape route' from multiplicity to 'a supplementary dimension' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 10). While there might have been an interweaving of means of communication, interaction, immersion, aesthetics, perspectives and themes, the need for a rational and quickly graspable connection with the geology led us to add a new bounding of geological narrative. Although I wrote:

> it was not the mass, the sublimity [sic] of the cliff
> face, the height of the dune that was
> 'overwhelming', but rather the complete lack of
> stability… (Scriptwriting notes, undated)

in fact it was exactly such a 'terror sublime'[21] that reappeared in our performance:

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[21] The idea of an experience of disorder, of events or things beyond reason, before which logical thinking fails and the senses are overwhelmed.

Crab: ...that wasn't the big moment for me… that came just before, as Uncle and I clambered over the rocks and came under a great lens of sandstone dune, 300 million years old… and I had that geological feeling again… I didn't feel I had a personal universe to set in motion… and if I did, its only motion was that of disappearing…

The speech shifts the radical mobility of the geological to a problem of subjectivity.

When the concept of the mobility of the geology was introduced at a meeting of representatives of institutions supporting the *GeoQuest* (15.12.09) a tourism official laughed openly and derisively at the idea; his extreme reaction suggested that we were moving into 'unthinkable' discourse for a tourism based partly on an idea of fixed things such as 'nature' and 'landscape'. By aestheticizing and subjectivizing this 'unthinkable' shift we missed an opportunity for a far more significant de-stabilising of dominant heritage and tourism narratives.

The journey of the landscape *was* used in relation (sometimes metaphorically, sometimes materially) to historical and cultural narratives, and was repeatedly interwoven with a layered 'hidden history' (for example, the narrative of the recent flooding of the now culverted Fleet in central Torquay was interwoven with that of mid-nineteenth century [1847 and 1867] bread rioters streaming down its course).

Before the *GeoQuest* journey, I attempted to immerse myself in the qualities of a popular location in Torbay that combined a tourist space and a geological-touristic feature, for an afternoon positioned among the cafes, theatre, pier and promenade that abut Rock Walk in Torquay. I sensed 'the "special" quality' of this space, 'its ease, its informality… the space is an easer, a context, an instrumental enabler – which turns the tourists/visitors back upon

themselves… they "exercise" their relationships, they practice their friendships' (Field notes, 14.3.10). I noticed that tourists' sociability rarely extended beyond immediate family/friendship groups, reflecting the overbearing obligations of such apparently 'carefree' trajectories (Urry, 2007:11), and that a lack of a wider connection (I observed little interaction between strangers) also applied to the surrounding environment. Rather than favouring the more utopian aspects of the 'agentive tourist' (Crouch, *et al*., 2001: 254, McCabe, 2009: 34) or de Certeau's re-making of the streets by pedestrian speech acts (de Certeau, 1984: 97-102), my observations, informed by Massey's criticisms of de Certeau (Massey, 2005: 46-7), suggested to me that 'they [tourists] can only 'erode', add (litter)… gather, exchange, pass through – their focus is tight, driven (non-productive)… there is no narrative, only service, purchase, margin' (Field notes, 14.3.10).

This impression of places characterised by an intense but highly localised and bounded sociability was strengthened during the *GeoQuest* journey itself. Any wider connectivity was only ever 'phantasmic' – an occasional contemplation of the vista of the bay, but little in the way of attending closely to the non-commercial or architectural terrain: 'I am repeatedly struck by the general lack of knowing the close-to-hand' (Field notes, 29.5.10) – a connection to the *ideas* of 'holiday-place' and 'natural(beautiful)-place' that was mostly an engagement with an abstraction.

What seems implicit in my field notes and scriptwriting notes is an intention to find ways to destabilise these ideal or abstract spaces of 'holiday-place' and 'natural(beautiful)-place', as phantasmic (utopian, supernatural or magical) spaces, by interweaving them (according to a rhizomatic model) with physical narratives of geological transformation and mobility. This never became explicit in the *GeoQuest*. The omission deprived our project of a dispersal

model that was tourist-based (drawing on tourists' perceptions) rather than institution-based (following the Geopark's narrative). The lack of crossover between those who we engaged with during the day and the post-6pm attendees, and my impression (born out by the *GeoQuest* film) that we were indistinguishable, for example, in the streets and on the harbour in Brixham, from street entertainers, suggests that the *GeoQuest* lacked a dynamic by which to sufficiently engage or challenge the limited sociality of tourists and thus we were 'overcoded' by the script of their usual practice.

3.3

A 'mythic' quality was part of the original 'Quest for stories' idea. Once linked with the English Riviera Global Geopark, we developed our idea of pilgrim story-collectors into travelling warrior-monk-geologists. The Geopark's policy of discouraging sample collection made this untenable. This early crisis of personae was never fully resolved. In a first (undated) draft of the 'project description' the 'Geotrio' are called:

> warrior-monks, but instead of blades these geo-
> warriors will carry hammers and chisels and pouches
> to collect samples… templates and inks to record
> their findings.

On my hard copy of this draft I wrote (during the meeting when the problem of sample collection was raised) in the margins: 'metaphorical… change… notebooks, sketch pads and cameras to record' and 'map these findings'. These were the phrases used in the final project description. However, as late as April 2010, we were still struggling with the consequences of this change:

> I think we have been rather massively tripped up by
> something… when we were told not to bring picks
> and hammers and shovels. Suddenly, we weren't
> really "geologist-personae" at all… I suggest that we
> get those *things* back! (attachment sent by email,
> 9.4.10)

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Although we experimented with taking shovel and trowels on exploratory walks, we found few ways to use them. We might have read some geology, but we didn't know how to 'do' geology; any 'excavating geologist' part of our personae was dropped. Costumes intended to make us 'walking rocks' (the mobile geology again), instead made us 'wandering minstrels'. Two of the three ultimate personae (the pierrot and Aeolian Hugh) were performance-oriented; a formalistic turning in on ourselves.

In order to engage with the geological narrative we talked geology (as best we could), but we did not enter or do it. In the panel responses there is criticism of us for being too academic: '[S]ome of the monologues are a bit "erudite" too much so' (Panel questionnaire B); 'a bit wordy... Could have done with less history, less story, less academia' (Panel questionnaire C). Trapped in the roles of *geologists who cannot do geology* or *experts without expertise*, (unable, for example, to respond adequately to spontaneous finds by workshoppers), we encouraged an 'engaged passivity' rather than an active engagement/group exploration within a mobilities paradigm. One undated page of notes lists possible actions for the journey (carrying large stones, raising a menhir), but this was unrealised.

The 'Geotrio' (in matching costumes), deployed prostheses (claw, conical hat, musical instrument) to evoke different strands of a multiplicitous group narrative. The lens of 'self-mythologisation' tests such personae by their capacity 'to transfer the playfulness of a subversive identity from the mythogeographer to their "myth"'. The myth of our *GeoQuest* was the instability of the geology, personified in our performance (and contextualised, briefly, on three of our 6pm 'walks') by the 'Torbay Golem'. Prior to the *GeoQuest* week I

had argued for the use of the Golem myth as a means to collapse and disintegrate a

monolithic and bounded local identity into a profusion of multiplicitous narratives:

> And at the same time as the golem collapses time, he
> also collapses space… there was no single area that
> would become Torbay… and in the future theses
> [*sic*] many things will move apart or fuse or sink
> until … it has disappeared into so many other
> stories. (attachment to email, sent 9.4.10)

This mythogeographical principle of the mutability and instability of place, identity and

heritage was never fully applied on the *GeoQuest*. Until the tearing of the map at the very end

of each evening's performance, we failed to enact any part of such a 'myth' of subversive

mobility. We referenced other monsters like the giant 'worms' deduced from fossilised

burrows at Goodrington, and at Brixham we referenced 'Project Kraken' (a police campaign

for coastline vigilance against crime and terrorism), we collectively enacted with walk

participants the folding and faulting of mountains and the collision of Gondwana and

Laurentia (constituent parts of Pangea), yet we failed to make these parts of a myth of

challenge to fixed spatial identity. In the evening performance we declared that 'we (humans)

are a new geological force', yet this narrative of 'superhuman' power and responsibility was

not enacted at any other time. Not allowed to be geologist-monks invading the texture of the

landscape, we became something like conventional tour guides on our first two walks,

encouraging an engaged passivity. Our failure to animate the disruptive Golem-persona as the

myth of our journey (instead deploying it as dramatic structure for a bounded performance)

contradicted a key aspect of a mythogeographical lens and signalled our lack of models for

dispersal.

3.4

The above problems operated *within* the parts of our performing, but across the whole Quest, for those audiences who were able to participate in a sufficient range of it, the total of the parts and their relations (and distances) contributed to a different performativity. In contrast to our problems with localised and homogenised narrative, our performance modes and voices were variegated, limited in comparison with Gómez-Peña's model of a 'cultural, political, aesthetic, and sexual hybrid', but with a broadly similar motor: 'the hybrid expropriates elements from all sides to create more open and fluid systems... community-based yet experimental, radical but not static or dogmatic. It fuses "low" and "high" art, primitive and high-tech' (Gómez-Peña, 1996; 12). Our indifference to making a synthesis of the various performance modes (lecture, seaside pierrot, hybrid man-crab, distressing of musical instruments, tour guide, site-specificity, agit-prop, storytelling, character-acting), was both de-stabilising, but also quotidian: '[S]ynthesis is cancelled. It is explicitly combated... the abundance of simultaneous signs presents itself like a doubling of reality: it seemingly mimics the chaos of real everyday experience' (Lehman, 2006: 82-3). Within the forms of the parts there was often reflexivity, a 'consciousness of the process of representation within the represented' (Lehman, 2006: 33): when Tony played a holidaymaker caking his face with white sun-cream what began as naturalistic mimesis looped back to the white-faced pierrot clown. This deferral of synthesis played a role in a sustaining of multiplicity across the Quest as a whole that I came to identify as a kind of 'art of living'.

The interweavings of metaphorical and material trajectories were in line both with the lens of rhizomatic interweaving – '[E]very rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 10) – and with a reparative aesthetics mitigating debilitating anxieties around climate change. It was also an

effect of our encouraging a hypersensitivity to perilous ideological narratives (part-objects in

the sense of primitive fantasies 'that one defensively projects into... and ingests from the

world around' [Sedgwick, 2003: 128]) in order

> to assemble or "repair" the murderous part-objects
> into something like a whole – though... *not*
> *necessarily like any pre-existing whole*.... available
> both to be identified with and to offer nourishment
> and comfort in turn... Reparative motives... are about
> pleasure... are frankly ameliorative. (Sedgwick,
> 2003: 128, 144)

This was a confluence of pleasure, interweaving and limited nomadic grouping that would

reappear in the later turn to counter-tourism.

The questionnaires and field notes record the communality of the physical and participative

daily journey of the *GeoQuest*; one that participants (while often over-estimating how

nomadic it was) felt able to join for a while and then leave (disrupting their disruption of non-

nomadic lives) and then return to (as return attendees).

The intensity of the Geotrio's psycho-physical daily journey arose partly from our almost

always being 'in the Quest', in costume throughout, sharing in the feast, in informal

encounters on the road, our experiences recounted in 'Parish Notices'. The different parts of

the daily structure became increasingly inter-linked but not synthesised, in accord with the

're-assembling of disparate elements and journeys' of the rhizomatic interweaving lens. This

re-assemblage was arrived at through a controversial and unstable response to a crisis; the

deferral of synthesis and the contingent re-assemblage accorded with the need to construct

from disparate elements which, as in a Foucauldian heterotopia[22] (Foucault, 1986: 24-7) or an

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[22] Spaces that sustain the co-existence of multiple layers of difference under non-hegemonic conditions.

assemblage[23] (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 554-6), retain their disparities within the collectivity.

Confronted at the end of the second day of the Quest with a complaint about the 'extreme length' (four hours) of the evening's events, during our preparation time for the third day's walk at Occombe Farm we sought to establish a new approach for that evening. Our options were to break up the four hours (without discussion I had already begun to do this, on the second evening I had eaten my meal away from the audience, to 'give them a rest' from us) or to embrace the length and intensity of the engagement as virtues and for us to more tightly weave together the different parts of the evening. We had 'a rather difficult discussion between the three of us – around the issue of saying "you're with us for 4 hours" at 6pm… & linking it all together… Tony is v. resistant to much of this' (Field notes, 28.5.10). We were unable to reach an agreement. However, the experience of the conviviality, immersion and interwoveness of that third evening's performance-walk affected us and after a very brief chat we each ate our meal with a different table of guests and, without us ever concluding the debate over 'longer breaks' or 'linking it all', it was settled in the latter's favour through practice:

> we moved… not by principled discussion (we
> couldn't resolve the difference in principle) but in
> the practical working on the walk… eating together,
> chatting together on the walk, participating in
> 'rituals' together – 'kissing' at the gates, cutting the
> neck of corn… our performance of the way we were
> affected by our engagement with the geological
> environment received an empathic response from the
> audience. (Reflections, undated)

From Occombe Farm onwards, we adopted more immersive tactics and these, in turn, challenged the elements of our general passivity: I used dry red soil to colour my face, Hugh

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[23] The construction and maintenance of heterogeneous elements in co-existence and inter-penetration.

dived into the water at Shoalstone Pool with a wind instrument to subject our 'theme tune' to the vibration of the waves, Tony physically restrained the audience from passing until they had solved riddles at the stone sphinxes at Oldway Mansion, Hugh led the audience in collecting stones to make a rhythmic accompaniment, the three of us pelted each other with flour as a nod to mid-nineteenth century bread riots. We also performed collective actions with the audiences (see Figure 3.iii): carrying inflatables, physicalising shapes for an imaginary frieze, tickling each other with feathers, making paper boats, wearing paper bags as 'protection' against nuclear blast, danced a representation of continental drift and performed a 'historical re-enactment' in the ruined fortifications on Berry Head: 'the set up and format (walk/talk/meal/performance) was so engaging' (Panel questionnaire A). There were, variously, immersions in the materiality, history and art history of the landscape, but also in its narration and commodification as sites of heritage and tourism. Co-incidentally, on the fourth evening, our invited 'expert', a local historian, began to offer a commentary at moments during the 6pm walk (rather than, as arranged, wait until the performance venue) and subsequently we invited our 'experts' to follow suit.

After the 'break' on the third evening my field notes record walks that are more reflexive and 'fold back' (themes introduced early on reappear, unexpectedly – a rhizomatic process in itself) and that are more physically immersive, participatory and embodied, with audiences carrying objects, tasting and drinking, creating ritual-like actions: 'they informed us, entertained us, encouraged our creativity and love of fun and silliness, while at the same time reminding us of the seriousness of our global ecology' (letter, Diana and Craig Brewer, *Herald Express*, no date). Photographs taken during the first two days show audiences on the walks mostly passively watching, standing back from 'the action', but in the film (shot on days 5 and 6) and in stills taken during days 3 to 7 the audience are mostly shown

participating, close up, gathered around, involved, crawling in the grass to find toy dinosaurs, donning rosy-tinted spectacles, dancing continental drift, and lying in the road to listen for the sound of the River Fleet under drain covers. The field notes and panel responses (it is possible to deduce from the comments which walks were attended) suggest that from the Occombe Farm performance-walk onwards, the walks contributed to changed attitudes to the landscape. (In the four questionnaires covering these later walks, there are only positive comments about the walks.)

The intensity of the interweaving of the different aspects of the *GeoQuest* after the second day (performance, journey, exploration, socialisation, improvisation, pedagogy) generated a qualitative change in the nature of the project; from an aesthetic intervention to a pre-figurative, heterotopian 'art of living, evidenced in the *GeoQuest* film made (in two versions) by Siobhan Mckeown which portrays a journey with both deeply immersive and closely interwoven qualities. The film shows the close attention given to the stories of residents at a care home, informal and relaxed chatting with people about geology on a quayside, pedagogical singing and gesturing with children and their parents on a ferry, a moving encounter (this moment often evoking a vocalised "ah" at showings of the film) with a family on the Goodrington promenade, tour ushers 'kissing' at a gate, participants making music with the pebbles from a beach and Tony dancing with the tourist crowds in Brixham to songs about rocks. None of these actions were complex, high-art, or inaccessibly skilled. They were an assemblage of simple, populist, personalised, eccentric and often quotidian actions; something like an exemplary model for limited nomadic, interventionist and performative behaviour transferable to other small groups.

The audience feedback suggests that those attending were aware of a reflected multiplicity in their own responses: '[A]mused. Bemused. Intrigued. Delighted' (Panel questionnaire A); 'conducive to introspection and interaction' (Panel questionnaire B); '[I]ntrigued, engaged, open-minded, a sense of discovery' (Panel questionnaire F); '[L]ots of different emotions, feelings, thoughts and different intensities... intrigued, curious, receptive, energetic, holidayish, awed by nature, views, appreciative, memorable, pleased… seemed like you tried to do everything' (Panel questionnaire C) .

The film intercuts variously focused, spontaneous or intense encounters, showing these feeding the prepared performances and walks, and suggesting that there was a shift from an aesthetic mode to a 'heightened everyday', an 'art of living' – a living that 'frees time from its binary form of work time and leisure time. The dérive then becomes the practice of lived time, time not divided and accorded a function in advance' (Wark, 2011: 25) – generated by the intensity of the interweaving of planned and unplanned parts of the journey.

3.5

When the development workshops had to be abandoned, the different parts of the daily structure of the *GeoQuest* were, initially, rendered more compartmentalised; the workshops no longer directly contributed to the evening performances (though Parish Notes partially reconnected them), and the ticketed evening live performances took on a more conventional profile. This separateness was exacerbated by our deciding to play to a seated audience, usually in an 'end-on' configuration, despite the fact that we were performing in non-theatre spaces. We fell back on familiar, 'dependable' forms, partly perhaps due to the extreme brevity of our devising and rehearsal time. After the immersive and participative experience

of the tours, the audience were seated in a bounded space and asked to be sedentary spectators. Of the six panel respondents who remarked on their changed view of the landscape, no one referenced the performances.

Our capitulation to the institutional-geological narrative was never enforced on us, but was a falling back on a narrative (to fill the vacuum left by our failure to recount geology's instability) that fitted the needs of the Geopark and the touristic and heritage institutions for a specifically *local* identity. This meant that the interwoven narratives of our mis-guided tours were conceptually bounded when they re-emerged in the end-of-evening live performance: '[O]nce a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it's all over, no desire stirs' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 15). Rather than the mobility-narrative which disturbed all local identity, our opportunistic narrative was more like a dispensing to our audiences of a 'cultural capital' rooted in the area, an 'ability to "understand"… which will predispose them to value and interpret certain forms of culture above others' (Busby & Meethan, 2008: 146), likely to predispose them to local chauvinism, to the 'uniqueness' of the local narrative, and showing deference to the authority of certain institutions to name and define the landscape, delivering multiplicitous and volatile spaces conceptually bounded, returning them to an essentialism (the 'local geology') through the flexible and apparently unbounded Geopark whose defined area has no physical portal and whose limits are not physically marked or signed in any way.

On the first two days of the *GeoQuest* my notes reflect worries prompted by one of the panel members attending the first 6pm walk, who 'made a series of criticisms of the walk (as we are on it) – it's all driven by funding, the heinous nature of the Geo-Park (defining and bordering) – our subservience, then, to a geological (touristic) agenda… and also to the privileged, wealthy strata of Torquay through which we are passing' (Field notes, 26.5.10). I

came to think of these remarks as a reminder of *the very grounds of my interventions*. In my field notes I interpret the comments as identifying a neutralisation of fundamental principles of mythogeography:

> This does open up the whole question of the relation with organising/commercial/municipal authorities – and the neutralisation of the work … taking on board/'accepting'/giving credence & obedience to certain policings and characterisations of space & meanings. (Field notes, 26.5.10)

While this was not an inevitable reterritorialization – for '[T]here exist tree or root structures in rhizomes; conversely, a tree branch or root division may begin to burgeon into a rhizome' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 16) – when assembling and editing my *GeoQuest* field notes, I noticed a pronounced lacuna that made it far more likely. The notes, bound up with the immediacy of dramaturgical and collaborative challenges, almost entirely omit discussion of the *sites* of the intervention (let alone their specificities) once the *GeoQuest* journey is underway. It is as if the 'empty space' metaphor of the architectural live theatre (Brook, 1990) is somehow unfolded as a translucent bounding of the *GeoQuest*'s interventions through our live performance-making; the dominating trajectory ejecting any recalcitrant site-specificity. In the field notes there is much repetitive discussion (lightly represented here) of dramaturgical issues around the evening performance, but there is no mention of our problematical engagement with tourist crowds in Brixham. While the evidence from panel respondents is that there was a strong, and sometimes transforming, engagement with place, particularly on the evening walks – and informed and infused by certain interwoven qualities of the whole evening event – the field notes are evidence that our engagement with the various overlappings of touristic, heritage and geological spaces was ambivalent; at certain times immersive and interwoven, at other times capitulating to a dominant touristic discourse or smothered by the demands of bounded performance.

3.6

The *GeoQuest* journey failed (beyond its formal performances to ticket-buying audiences) to engage with tourists in anything very different from street entertainment. Yet, the lesson of the break to the later more entangled and mis-guided tours from the earlier more stilted ones was not that of a radical dismissal of tour-guiding or tourism practice as such. The ploys, techniques and tactics borrowed or adapted for these tours (either side of the decision/break on the third day) could easily be identified as drawn from mainstream touristic practice, such as the changes of tense in tour-guiding discourse critiqued by Dann as appropriating historic places and artefacts to the present and recruiting past or alternative cultures to ornament dominant discourse (Dann,1996), or the use of minimal resources to create a disproportionate sense of wonder (the 'magic' of tourism): 'the production of results which are quite disproportionate to the effort applied… misrepresent(ing) time in space and vice versa' (Dann, 1996: 54).

Just as the 'art of living' developed by the project as a whole was a re-assemblage of everydayness (a panel member identifying 'the daily routine of your walking week' [Panel questionnaire E]) and popular performance, so the touristic element of the *GeoQuest* did not depart from the vocabulary of tourism, but rather from its use of grammar. The tours used changes of tense (walk participants encountering toy dinosaurs in a car park verge or donning pink spectacles to hear a story of a 1960s childhood), but the grammatical constructions of these tours were explicitly and purposely 'inadequate'; an articulation of an approaching *but never arriving* touristic self-in-the-(quotidian-exotic)other, the audience might see familiar landscapes in unfamiliar ways, but there was no simple synthesis of participant with

everyday-exotic. Instead, these tours played on a sense of inevitable disappointment (in place of a dominant discourse), celebrating an inevitably thwarted pilgrim-tourist ('an interesting characteristic of the tourist world that the tourists themselves believe that it has no end' [MacCannell, 1976: 186]) as an ambiguous figure of creative frustration, holding on to a sense of being 'conned' (the mechanics not matching the 'magic' of the effect) in relation to a 'post-touristic' pleasure in the mechanics of the 'con' (artificiality, inauthenticity, the inevitably distorted touristic 'other'). A sense that such affordances within tourism had not been sufficiently engaged by the *GeoQuest* journey, and the resistance/indifference of the *GeoQuest*'s supporting institutions to its 'art of living' model, would inform my overall research trajectory in a re-engagement with the theory and practice of the 'agentive tourist' beyond the boundaries of the invited audience.

4

Conclusions and Findings

4.1

The controversies around personae (for example, why did the 'Geotrio' not play the role of 'Golem', instead playing non-*mytho-geological* figures?), and the relinquishing of the persona of 'warrior-monk-geologist' in favour of aesthetic characters, led to a project that encouraged and provoked a multiplicitous looking at the sites in question, but lacked a (dissemination) model of active, interventionist group exploration to pass on to its audiences, and lacked a 'lay geology' equivalent to an 'expressive, inter-subjective and poetic encounter mediated through the way the body is engaged actively in space… produc(ing) the individual's own sense of things' [Crouch, *et al*., 2001: 254]).

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4.2

The timescale and instability (mobility) of the geological narrative (as well as posing an alternative identity for holiday terrain) were particularly effective means of challenging the two-dimensional, atemporal 'scenery' of the touristic site. However, they were not sufficiently engaged to such effect, partly as a result of stepping back from the radical geological mobility of 'there is *no* Torbay 400 million years ago' and avoiding the perhaps necessary conflict with support partners designated as 'Torbay' or 'English Riviera'. This dismantled the radical affordance for intervention in heritage identity (and limited touristic sociality) that the narrative of geological time offered. At the same time there was a similar failure to engage with what I identified as potentially 'utopian', abstract and phantasmic qualities in tourism space, lacking at that time a language to do so; this failure would re-emerge and be engaged in my subsequent case study of the *Water Walk*.

4.3

The *GeoQuest* model had proposed a kind of compromised 'hyper-tourism' through its formation of hyper-sensitized audiences and walking groups (Figure 3.iv). The geological subject matter legitimised a distance from the touristic layer (while crucial questions about the local-geological space of the *GeoQuest* journey were left unasked). The Geotrio were able (opportunistically) to access the dynamic consumption of the agentive tourist and the multi-agency (and continuous) process of producing and reproducing touristic space, using the quotidian tactics of tourism (for example, tense-changing), but to their own, often aesthetic, ends. The problems of personae, bounded performance and the inhibition of institutional backing, similar to problems I have identified around the use of models of 'post-tourism' (distance from the majority of tourists, self-appointed superiority, obstacles to repetition),

suggested the need for a new hypothesis: that the mythogeographical interventionist could be a kind of *hyper-tourist*, a consumer-producer either independent of institutions or engaged in *a war simultaneously on two fronts* within and without them, immersed in the tourist layer rather than above it (or too closely associated or embedded with its management), using the materials of tourism as a repertoire-resource and seeking (through numerous small accumulations) to move from additions of quantity to a change of quality.

4.4

The contradictions in the *GeoQuest*, and its assimilation into tourism-producers' priorities, suggest a further hypothesis: that in order to achieve the overall research project's aims it cannot be content to work in peaceful co-existence with other (heritage or touristic) discourses, but is part of a material attempt to upset and destabilise those discourses in order to serve its own interests, by materially changing the perceptions and behaviours of people in sites of tourism and heritage.

4.5

The multiplicity of subject matters and the variety of 'experts' accompanying the events of the *GeoQuest* signalled an exemplary post-disciplinarity – when things 'cease to be determined by fixed "qualities", but rather tied together through many bits or blocks in a logic of what happens' (Rajchman, 2000: 57), that, mirroring the lens of rhizomatic interweaving, achieved some degree of the flatness of a 'plane of consistency' that 'overcom[es] habitual patterns of hierarchizing agents... to enable the formation of heterogeneity-preserving emergent structures' (Bonta & Protevi, 2004: 124). In some respects

there was here a reflexive setting in motion (rather than a simple re-ordering) of the different disciplines involved (something that divided the 'experts' who participated in the walks – some enthusiastic, some defensive). This went some way to meeting Kevin Hannam's advocacy of post-disciplinarity (Hannam, 2009) as a general rhizomatic approach (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 5-8) enacted through journey and the paradigm of 'mobilities' (in a limited way) and Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's description of a 'provisional coalescence on the move' (2002: 2).

4.6

The interweaving of practices and forms (of art and the everyday, of social practices, improvised rituals, of feasting and washing and shaving, sleeping in hotels and caves, of prepared and improvised performance, of streets arts and autobiography) in which 'any point... can be connected to any other' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 7), while masking a certain ineffectiveness and passivity in the *GeoQuest* model, was complementary to the hypersensitization of layering and reconstituting lenses of mythogeography. It began to move the *GeoQuest* model away from an aesthetic or educational function towards an 'art of living' (both everyday and transformational). This reconnected with the politics of 'situations' in mythogeography's deep background. It also suggested that such an 'art of living' might represent the political-aesthetics necessary to bridge the gap between an attractive multiplicitous looking and a more active (consuming-producing) multiplicitous re-making of the bounded and homogenised production of meanings of particular heritage and touristic sites through sociable, limited nomadic, hyper-touristic visits.

Figure 3.i  Hugh Nankivell and Tony Lidington on the limestone of Hope's Nose, Torbay, *GeoQuest* (2010). Photo: Phil Smith.



Figure 3.ii  Final walk, *GeoQuest* (2010). Photo: Mel Border.

Figure 3.iii  Modelling faulting and folding, *GeoQuest* (2010). Photo: Phil Smith.



Figure 3.iv  Audience modelling new images for eroded murals, *GeoQuest* (2010). Photo: Phil Smith.

<u>Chapter Three</u>

<u>*A Tour of Sardine Street*: a case study in layering and the making of 'anywheres'</u>

1.1

*A Tour of Sardine Street* was chosen for case study as it provides an extended example of the making of a mis-guided tour in what is partly a heritage tourism site: its route, in Exeter, Devon, visited by the city's Red Coat guided tours. The mis-guided tour is a key starting point for my research, with 17 tours made during my doctoral research (*Water Walk*, *A Tour of Sardine Street*, the seven walks for the *GeoQuest*, *Outlands Walk*, two versions of *Cockington Quest*, *Exe-pedition*, *Aldwych Walk*, *A Yarn Around The West End, Filmed Walk, Spaces* and *Signs & Wonders*) plus a film made with Siobhan Mckeown of my (2008-9) mis-guided tour of Royal William Yard, Plymouth: *A Mis-Guided Tour: Beer, Beef and Royal Steps* (2009).

1.2

*A Tour of Sardine Street* drew on techniques similar to other tours (with the exception of *Water Walk* [replicated for *Signs & Wonders*], for which a case study follows), deploying mythogeographical principles (multiplicity of the meanings of a place, space as trajectory, privileging subjectivity, immersion, improvisation, reflexivity and the use of 'limited myth'), but with a longer process of preparation (the culmination of a three year project – *Relics and Processions*). It resulted in the publication of a handbook constituting a significant model of dispersal.

1.3

This case study focuses upon two mythogeographical lenses: layering and the making of 'anywheres'. In terms of broader theoretical background, it draws on reading around the agentive tourist and seeks to develop the post-tourism described by McCabe (2009) and Urry (1990). It draws upon readings around the mobilities paradigm (Urry, 2007), a critique of the construction of a heritage narrative (particularly Smith, 2006), spatial theory and the everyday (de Certeau, 1984), specto-situationist theory (the later Debord [1994, 1998]), an anthropology-based 'thinking through things' (Henare, *et al*., 2007) and a poststructuralist advocacy for 'limited myth' as a pseudo-narrative detour (Guattari, 1998).

1.4

My methodology for data collection concerning *A Tour of Sardine Street* was:

i/ participant observation. With Simon Persighetti, a fellow member of Wrights & Sites, I was involved in the initiation of, research and organisation for, and performances of the project. With the exception of Simon's solo explorations of the street (I made these also) I was present at all times.

I recorded observations in dated field notes for the last few months of preparations for the tour and for the performances of the tour. I have all my notes (made at the time, and in reflection) during explorations of the street between 2007 and 2010, although these are not strictly field notes. My notes and reflections are informed both by my participative experience, by interventions conducted around the same time and by my thesis-related reading begun during the latter stages of this project.

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Since the performances I presented one conference paper and published another "Mythogeography works: performing multiplicity on Queen Street" in *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* in 2011 (see Appendix 13), both reflecting on the project. Simon and I produced a self-published account/guide to making street tours, *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* (2011), which was re-published in 2012 by Triarchy Press and is submitted as part of this thesis.

ii/ documentation. I have archived all significant email traffic and attachments, project outlines, scenarios and early drafts of scripts and notes.

iii/ panel responses and questionnaires: my research panel members were invited to *A Tour of Sardine Street*. I identified 12 panel members as attending, all were emailed questionnaires and 5 returned completed questionnaires. I also received emails from panel members who did not wish to submit questionnaires, and spontaneous emails from non-panel members who attended the tours, and one long and detailed response by a panel member sent by email attachment. I have also drawn from panellists' responses recorded in the *Research Panel Members Annual Feedback Meeting (report and summary of responses*; this was held at Exeter Central Library, 11.12.10.

2

What happened

2.1

As part of our *Relics and Processions* (2007-10) project, for 32 months (from November 2007 to July 2010) Simon and I repeatedly walked Queen Street in Exeter (UK), conducting performative research on and about the street, initially, on my part, in my capacity as Senior Research Fellow at the University of Plymouth. Sometimes these walks were conducted once a fortnight, sometimes once a month (usually for half a day) with a hiatus between autumn 2009 and spring 2010. This ambulatory research, combined with desk-based research about the street and scriptwriting, culminated in 8 twice-daily performances of a two hour long mis-guided tour of the street on 9th, 10th, 15th and 16th of July 2010, for which Simon assumed the persona of 'Signpost', while I adopted that of 'Crab Man'.  Subsequently, we produced a handbook, *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks*, for making a mis-guided tour, referencing the tour and research process.

2.2

In October 2007 Simon Persighetti and I began *Relics and Processions*, with the intention of creating a small processional, object-oriented performance in the city of Exeter each week for a year and 'to… make photographic or other kinds of records of each event… showing these records, relics and souvenirs to the public as the project unfolds' (Persighetti, email, 6.10.07). The 'relics' element persisted throughout the project and in the performances a gold-coloured wooden box of quotidian 'relics' was carried by the audience as a 'burden of pilgrimage', a processional element.

Early on, I listed a set of aims, which included an impulse towards dissemination:

> through exemplary, relational performance to
> provoke the centre of Exeter to explicitly perform
> itself…  To document these performances in an
> accessible way so that others can apply them in other

sites. ('Outlines for 50 Relics and P', 30.10.07,
unpublished)

On our first day of exploration (23.11.07), we were struck by the 'life and variety' and the intensity of our encounters on Queen Street and decided to make all our interventions there: '[A]doption of Queen Street as the artery of the project (as long as it continues to yield) but option to branch off at any time' (Persighetti, email, 30.11.07).

Over the following two and a half years, we walked (usually together), exploring the terrain of the street, observing events both quotidian and extraordinary, and triggering encounters. We adopted different roles – customers, researchers, first-aiders, trespassers; we visited the eighteenth century prison cells under the Rougemont Hotel at the invitation of kitchen staff and attended an impromptu Bach concert in the music shop.

2.3

Our mode of research was to participate in the street's everyday life (shopping, people watching, visiting the museum) and to obsessively explore its material objects (buildings, street furniture, plant life, detritus). By introducing provisional costumes and props from the beginning (insignia, ceremonial sticks, red and white striped specimen boxes, black 'relics case') our exploring of the street, which we characterised as a kind of progress or procession, generated encounters with passers-by, residents and retailers, and we became part of 'the life of the street' for some who used it regularly (see Figure 4.i) We were participant observers of the street, we kept field notes and gathered materials, making performance from almost the very start of our exploration. To this we later added desk-based research about the site; its nineteenth century fabrication as well as more anomalous phenomena (for example, a Monty Python filming location). From January 2008 onwards we invited guests to walk with us,

while also attracting passers-by (both strangers and acquaintances) as temporary companions. By working like this for more than two years we recorded, became subject to, and sometimes precipitated, small changes on the street. We observed an erosion of personalised and custom-made signage; eccentric window displays and street objects were removed. Our project coincided with a period of global economic downturn and there were a number of business failures. We became aware of the severe depredation on the street's most distinctive monument, the Miles Clock Tower. We witnessed new personalities, objects and forces emerge; for a while the proprietors' daughter became a place-redefining personality at the Dinosaur Cafe, a Big Issue seller established a pitch near the station where he repeatedly told a (consistent) story of persecution by the medical establishment. A part of our research was to set ourselves at the mercy of these changes. We found it necessary to repeatedly modify our route, abandon assumptions corrected by passers-by or invited experts, change or deepen focus (the removal of shop fittings revealed a hidden railway ticket office, for example) and to learn to allow incongruities in our commentary to remain when left stranded by the erosion of their referents.

2.4

We attempted to deploy a tactic of 'actor as signpost' (Smith, 2009a); by which performance or performative research always turns the focus back on the site itself (see Figure 4.ii). During exchanges with passers-by and guests we were told stories, sung songs, had our names turned into musical phrases and were given suggestions which we folded back into our performed-research. Our conversations with the owner and her assistant at 'Jenniflower' led us to celebrating these florists as key servicers of the city's rituals and they became 'performers' in the tours.

2.5

Simon suggested, in early November 2007, that we draw on the imagery of the 'Burial of the

Sardine', a continuing carnival ritual described by a 2005 spectator: 'the sardine is not buried,

but set on fire... after it has been paraded through the streets' (Sunny Fuerteventura, 2005:

online). This burning of an image or model of a sardine signals the end of carnival:

> THE FIRST PROCESSION WAS FRAMED
> AROUND The Burial of the Sardine. I first came
> across this as a painting by Goya. So we had a kind
> of flagpole or fishing rod of sardine labels to
> celebrate and signify this first journey. (Persighetti,
> email, 30.11.07)

In an email (2.12.07) I suggested that we dress as guides and by early 2008 we had begun to

make our research-walkings of the street more like improvised mis-guided tours. A draft text

(14.1.08) covered a provisional performance structure for the first part of the route (around

the Miles Clock Tower), a later one (1.4.08) covered two thirds of the street and then listed

ten further possible stopping points; only two of these figured later, a mark of the

dramaturgical change we introduced for the final section of the route. Our provisional

attempts at guiding along the street often 'foundered' as we became immersed in new details,

or distracted by a new tangent. For some months we had a provisional 'tour' that repeatedly

lost momentum about halfway along the route, on which we showed hidden spaces, re-named

the street, described the geology, turned pavements into bookshelves and hopscotch patterns,

pointed out a 1970s building with machine gun posts and revealed the military uses of

Exeter's streets; with our guests we drank Carling Special Brew (defying the prohibition

sign), played Roman hopscotch, licked salt, circumambulated and clambered onto the Miles

Clock Tower roundabout, descended steps to view the road from a lower level, walked in a

serpentine line through concrete bollards and ran in imitation of a local military *parcours*

club (locally-based commandos covertly use the streets of Exeter for 'free running'

exercises). There was a general privileging and enchanting of the everyday of the street – for example, a zebra crossing was made into an alchemical pattern:

> *([Crab Man] [L]eads the walkers across the zebra crossing.)*
> Signpost: Nigredo / Albedo / Nigredo / Albedo /Nigredo / Albedo / Nigredo / Albedo.

This sought to bring the audience into a sensual and immersive connection with its objects: 'sensory elements – salt, beer, dodging traffic, sipping tea – become very significant and are also very evocative' (Turner, email, 20.1.08).

Until late in 2009 the final 'form' of the performance was still elusive. Cathy Turner, our first guest, commented: "Is it a kind of fantasy voyage? …it is hard to know whether we're on a guided tour, part of some strange game, being urban explorers or what" (Turner, email, 20.1.08). On a hard copy of this email I have scribbled: 'this is the assembling of a mobile "museum" – a meta-toolkit'.

In March 2008 we returned to the question of coherence raised by Cathy Turner:

> Dear Phil, I have finally read through the R&P draft. Oh dear I really do not know where this is going. It seems so full of oblique references ranging from Baudrillard to the recent and sudden appearance of *Fireball XL5* … when things have a direct link to the street such as Hopscotch and Roman Occupation being layered with the current activities by the Marines, I can see how the mythogeography really detonates. But where we constantly introduce other fictions that are only very tenuously linked to the street, I cannot see how people can readily connect with the material or the lived experience… discomfort with the redcoat guide imposing a particular or generalist creed... should not, I feel, be replaced with another set of dominant voices even if

such voices are deliberately enigmatic, maverick or
playful. (Persighetti, email, 15.3.08)

Following Cathy's response, and responding to Simon's concerns, we persisted with a form

of variegated assemblage, but thinned it out, creating more space for the audience to make

their own connections, rebalanced the material so that fictions were complemented by

'objective correlatives' in the street, prioritising action over text ('we identify the actions and

sequence of events and then add the texts or liturgy of the journey' [Persighetti, email,

15.3.08]) while fore-fronting the difficult, almost chaotic multiplicity of impressions

('rubbish stirring, alchemical, wizardry staff, incantations, portals, space-time, conjuring,

borders, entering, gateways, passages, chants, murmurs, invocations' [audience member's

notes, received 20.11.10]) as part of our explicit intention:

> Signpost:  Step into the nigredo!!...
>
> Crab Man:  *(Encouraging the walkers as they cross
> the road.)* Step into the ocean! Leap into the waves!!

2.6

In May 2008, after taking composer Hugh Nankivell and writer/seaside-performer Tony

Lidington on the street, we acknowledged that the assemblage form was not sufficient:

> a feeling I picked up from Uncle T's email of a lack
> of the overall – like we're now at 2/3rds of the route
> covered – and soon things maybe should come back
> from start/the whole thing maybe should begin to
> reveal "itself". (Smith, email, 11.5.08)

At this point the tour was framed by our personae of co-operative 'guides' ('the character's

[sic] as superheroes Crabman and Signpost [are] exceptionally playful, likeable, loveable,

childlike' [Notes received from panel member, 20.11.10]), and by repeated physical gestures

(hands open with painted eyes in the palm, audience putting hands on a stick inserted into a

radiating drain pattern) and by accumulated and compartmentalised texts.

The problem of structural coherence was addressed by a detour (both from Queen Street and from our PaR); the assembling of a 'limited myth' of the street, put together – my writing more like playwriting than assemblage – from the biographies of the eighteenth century prophetess Joanna Southcott and Victorian/Edwardian 'big game hunter' C. V. A. Peel, in order to give an overarching sense of the tour (see Figure 4.iii).  This move mirrored Felix Guattari's proposal that in order to articulate both 'the apprehension (*la saisie*) of the object and the apprehension of the subject' what is necessary is:

> a *pseudo-narrative* detour through the annals of
> myth and ritual… which have as their ultimate goal
> a *dis-positional mise en scène*, a bringing in to
> existence, that authorizes, "secondarily", a
> discursive intelligibility. … this pseudo-narrative
> detour deploys repetitions that function, through an
> infinite variety of rhythms and refrains, as the very
> supports of existence. (Guattari, 2008: 25-6)

The work of our 'limited myth', arrived at through our detour, is similar to that of 'a *dis-positional mise en scène*' (a *mise en scène* driven by its own internal characteristics); both Peel and Southcott created meta-narratives (one of the feminisation and de-naturing of culture by industrial society, the other of a declining religious and political establishment in need of saving from itself) by which outrageous and transgressive acts (racist mass murder, attempted occult regicide) were justified internally. If Guattari's 'incorporeal Universes of reference' can be taken as similar to mythogeography's unhinged 'orrery', then the missing elements in our detour were those 'repetitions that function, through an infinite variety of rhythms and refrains'. In other words we lacked a convincing ritual such as that emerging in *Water Walk* (addressed in Chapter Four) and in earlier parts of *A Tour of Sardine Street*. As late as April of 2011, Simon was reflecting on this failure:

> On reflection It (sic) would have been great to
> involve participants more in the final wedding scene

either as guests or as bride and groom. This might
have allowed the last journey of the tour to the Guild
Hall to have taken on the form of a wedding
procession carrying the gift of the relics to the
reception.  (Simon Persighetti, email, 19.4.11)

This scripting was followed by a break in our site work, but it was this November 2009 draft that we used for our tours of the full length of Queen Street and Gandy Street in July 2010. These performances concluded, after the detour, with the processing of the 'relics case' by the audience through Marks and Spencer, and its opening outside the Guildhall.

2.7

In the months after the tour I worked slowly on the text for a handbook based on the experiences of making the tour. Simon designed the book on the Blurb website and we printed 140 copies for distribution through my research panel, to professional contacts and through the Mytho Geography Facebook page. We printed a further 60, with University of Plymouth funding and these were similarly distributed. In February 2012, in response to the book's use (I recorded 28 uses in the six months following its publication) on a range of projects (audio street tours, therapeutic walks, artist walks), the handbook was re-published by Triarchy Press.

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* is much more closely geared to dispersal than previous documents such as the pamphlet given to participants in the *Water Walk*: 'I think that... [a] "toolkit"/"handbook" format is key… and will suggest to Simon Persighetti that we spend our Exeter Arts Council money on something closer to a 'how to' pamphlet rather than a simple accompanying souvenir' (field notes, 27.8.10).  One motivation was a question raised by a research panel member at the panel's group meeting in 2010 around the issue of the dispersal of skills: 'What do you actually do to construct a walk?' (field notes, 14.12.10)

2.8

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* acts simultaneously as the documentation of performance

practice and as Practice as Research in its own right. In terms of the latter, it contributed to

my understanding of the development of a proto-toolkit through and as writing for non-

academic audiences. Addressed to specialists in performance making, it is intended to

communicate simply and directly as a manual for the making of live performance and it

prefigures my later turn to a more general dispersal amongst non-specialist audiences (that is,

'general readers' and 'tourists'). More important, however, than its symptomatic qualities, is

that it is an exploratory practice that generated knowledge for my thesis. It was never a

simple product-oriented task (to create a documentation, manual or memento), but was

always also an exploration in writing. Provoked both by my dissatisfaction with the *Water*

*Walk* pamphlet in the context of my developing research narrative and by my inability to

imagine a comprehensive alternative form for a pamphlet, I attempted to work my way to

something different and consistent with an emergent or dispersive theme in my research

through writing and re-writing. Only after a number of 'false starts' and re-draftings did the

*Box of Tricks* finally assume its toolkit form with a variety of 'voices': rhetoric,

documentation, script extracts, contextualization, instruction manual. While containing

elements of a documentation of process, and addressed as a whole to a non-academic (or not

wholly academic) audience of practitioners, it does also include elements – similar to written

elements of this thesis – that reflect analytically on process and contextualize practice in

relation to traditions of practice. Most importantly, however, is that is more than a

representation of a process, it *is* a process (or what remains of it) of Practice as Research in

written/writing form.

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* **– please read this book publication now** (it is submitted as a part of the thesis and is enclosed in the thesis box).

3

Reflection and Evaluation

3.1

In the sections that follow, I address four key thematic issues related to the

mythogeographical 'lenses' of layering and the making of anywheres which emerge from my

documentation of this experiment:

3.2/ making a multiplicitous dramaturgy (layers and compartmentalisation) and the

dissolution of heritage narrative

3.3/ changes in ways of looking (viewpoints, immersion and mobilities)

3.4/ the use of détourned tourism and the guided tour; the tourist group as a 'utopian' form

3.5/ spontaneity (in research and performance) – the 'leap of faith'

3.2

A key element of the July 2010 tours of Queen Street, noted by panel members and in my

own field notes, was their accumulative dramaturgy arrived at, mostly, through a

performance-based, site-specific research, and resulting in a layered structure. In my notes

(undated) made during the research for the tours, I quote John Rajchman to reflect this

dramaturgical connectivity:

> those without qualities are no longer able to tell
> straight narratives in which to "recognise

> themselves"; they start to move in another temporality given rather through juxtaposition or superposition of different blocks. (Rajchman, 2000: 92).

Our layers had the characteristics of Rajchman's 'blocks'. They were compartmentalised, but associated, materials connected by juxtaposition and allusion rather than synthesis, narrative or timeline:

> Geological layers: Crackington formation – Permian ocean – "explosion" in the evolution of sharks… Time layer: deer park (hunting: Peel, Sophie Calle and Aconci [sic] stalking walking artworks, valley … The terraces of houses (up near clocktower) – are the middle classes fleeing the cholera of the inner city in the 1830s… (the terrace on Queen Street taken over by business by the late 19th century) Layer of myth – the lizard of Tyranny and Wrong on the war memorial… ('a first draft of text for cards and street strip R & P', unpublished)

We sought to signal to our audiences that we wanted them, in the manner of Mike Pearson's and Michael Shanks's conflation of archaeology and theatre, to 'regard the dramatic structure of devised performance as constituting a kind of stratigraphy of layers: of text, physical action, music and/or soundtrack, scenography and/or architecture' (Pearson & Shanks, 2001: 24), and signalled this through a running joke in the tour about its accumulation of layers: '[W]hat we've been doing is mapping just a few of the 365 layers of illusion on the street – so far we have uncovered only 27'.

A number of respondents, unprompted, used 'layers' (or an equivalent) to describe their experience of the tour: 'a learning of place with successive layers of experience, rumours and events built up to accompany our linear passage along the route… There are geological and daily layers present which are constantly unravelled' (Notes received 20.11.10); '[T]he tour took me through the ordinary into the extraordinary' (Questionnaire C); 'insights into the accumulations of the layers of history in that particular place – peeling them off in a

participatory and enjoyable way' (email received 25.7.10); '[T]he process of sprinkling

perspectives, angles, facts, suggestions and possibilities which settle like sedimentary layers

of meaning means that intimacy with the street emerges and grows rather than a single

interpretation being imposed' (Questionnaire B). In the latter comment multiplicity,

perception, layering and the materiality of the street are all referenced together: a 'complex

seeing'.


In *A Tour of Sardine Street* there was never any suggestion (as, problematically, in

*GeoQuest*) of 'Queen Street 400 million years ago'. Instead, before referencing the street's

Silesian rocks, we had made fun of historical and geological layers/eras on the Dinosaur Cafe

steps, while maintaining a fragile thread of 'sense':

> Like these steps, the terrain here is made up of a
> series of layers. These four steps represent the four
> key eras: volcanic eruption, the building of
> causeways, the rising of the oceans and the birth of
> language. We are about here. (Points to any step.)

Historical or geological narratives did not shape the performance, but served as

compartmentalised strands (blocks) within it, the position of one block in the tour no more

authoritative than others (see Figure 4.iv).


Rather than planning or anticipating a coherent performance text we first accumulated actions

and texts by setting ourselves tasks, such as '(B)ook readings in curious cultural corners'

(Persighetti, email, 29.11.07). In an email describing our second visit to Queen Street

(Persighetti, email, 30.11.07), Simon recorded us deciphering heraldry, exploring hidden

spaces, identifying voids and buffer zones, observing a well dressed man losing the sole of a

shoe, spotting an exposed tramline under a kerb. The notes (pre-texts for performance) that

we accumulated from these visits were a mixture of the affordances of material structures,

sketchy but verbatim notes of encounters, fragments of 'official' information, and proposals

for discrete moments of performance. The actions performed and the stories told, the books

quoted from, the objects tasted and passed around for touching were linked by word play,

poetic allusion, pattern, colour or texture. While we did address historical and geological

timelines (that part of the site had been a deer park gifted to the city by King Athelstan and

the site's Crackington Formation rocks were accumulated in Silesian seas), we also enacted

the instability of these narratives rather than adopting or proposing them as organising

structures. In notes taken at that time I wrote:

> I had hoped that our walk might serve as a kind of
> 'art of memory', in which we attached philosophical
> ideas to particular buildings and objects... But the
> street will not sit still for long enough. The lifesize
> wooden bear has gone and so has the beer shop...

Thus the street's material heritage (in this case, the material referents for ideas in an art of

memory [Yates, 1969, Hancox, 1997]) was shown to be as much in flux as any ideas that

might be allotted to them. This conceit dominated the central section of the final tour.

This layering and destabilising presented problems of comprehension and accessibility for

some of our audience: '[M]y experience was that of passive enjoyment. This is possibly due

to the amount of information I needed/was asked to think about' (Questionnaire A); 'I

thought about  length, duration, and stamina – being able to keep up with the pace of

information... what are you asking of the audience?... At the end of the walk someone

commented that it was for an in-crowd… how many people can do this – walking about for

three hours following tangents?' (Notes received 20.11.10). Our collection and animation of a

'multiplicity... to escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape

dialectics' (Delueze & Guattari, 1998: 36), constructed according to the 'mantra of the

rhizome... "and... and... and"' (Bonta & Protevi, 2004: 137), were parts of an attempt to

inoculate the performance against any relapse into essentialism, and to hold off any effort the audience might make to synthesise the various parts into a single concept of heritage or local identity. The blocks or layers also retained connectivity (and its creative opposite: 'unravelling', 'peeling off'); associational connections between found materials rather than narrative links. This meant that we created a dramaturgy for each section rather than to serve an overarching dramaturgy. We applied this compartmentalised approach, borrowed from the dramaturgy of Happenings (Kirby, 1965), to our *process*. In April 2009 I suggested, at a moment of doubt and stasis:

> I think we will be forever refining and changing
> each other's work because there will always be some
> extra thing to add or some new balance to make, so
> why don't we move forward now in a double way -
> some parts we do together, but some sections are
> individual preparations (in which parts we
> have autonomy, so we can get on and develop the
> detail on our own), and then weave them together.
> (Smith, email, 16.4.09)

First separation, then weaving together. Simon responded positively, identifying a possible dramaturgical structure within the process itself: 'think of the street in terms of a relay with us providing individual episodes.' (Persighetti, email, 16.4.09).

Research panel respondents remarked on the multiple registers and stylistic layers of the tour and their interweaving: 'departing... circumnavigating, being seen in the distance enacting something, measuring, marking... mumbling, singing on the side, doubling another' (Notes received 20.11.10), '(I)t's hard to imagine other tours or readings giving equal value to textbook history, anecdote, myth and lived experience of the street previously and on the day of the walk' (Questionnaire B); '(T)here were connections to historical fact – monuments, stones, place names and real texts, as well as fictional characters and text and dialogue. The interweaving of these things...' (Questionnaire C); '[T]here is an infinite diversity of material

appearing by chance all the time to be filtered by, noticed or not noticed by the guides as they gather dense layers, ideas, memories, facts and fictions… This meandering, this noticing, this dilly dallying, this marking, naming, producing meaning, asserting significance. This comical, real, fictional, truthful, absurd, essential, layering' (Notes received 20.11.10).

Our strategy throughout the project (whether we compartmentalised or collectivised our own process) was to valorise found spaces and actions according to a range of unconventional criteria (affordance for multiple interpretations, instability of identity, abjection, ironies) while addressing and collecting physical objects with or without (at least, apparently) historically or culturally valorised significances. By enacting and pointing to (in tour guide style) layers and blocks, by their compartmentalisation, allusive connectivity and juxtaposition, we sought to resist both an exclusionary heritage or touristic narrative that would include the neo-Gothic Museum in the 'historic street', but exclude the stained paving slabs by the Co-op; we were seeking to engage and entangle with that self-authorising heritage that is 'a multi-layered performance... visiting, managing, interpretation or conservation… [which] validate[s] the very idea of "heritage" that forms and frames these performances in the first place' (Smith, 2006: 3) and which generates an 'authorized heritage discourse' (11) reproducing grand narratives of nation and class through the expertise and aesthetic judgement that naturalises assumptions about the existence of heritage and its equivalence to old things. While Laurajane Smith proposes that these old 'things' of tourism be replaced by 'values and meanings' (11), I sought to make them 'things-meanings', objects whose meanings and materiality were inseparable, as conceptualised by the anthropologists Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2007: 3-4), hence the centrality of objects (the relics and their box, for example) to the tour. By celebrating auratic and abject, thing and meaning, I attempted to realise a key spatial principle of mythogeography, by resisting that

'separateness' that Guy Debord had identified as key to driving the inflected rupture between reality and image at the heart of social relations:

> [T]he phenomenon of separation is … a global social praxis that has split up into reality on the one hand and image on the other… So deep is the rift in this totality (of social practice)… that the spectacle is able to emerge as its apparent goal. (Debord, 1994: 13)

The tour sought to transform (if only for a while, exemplarily, and for a small audience) Queen Street's partly quotidian, partly auratic space into a utopian one, an 'anywhere' – a heterotopian place of interconnectivity and diversity, irony and *bricolage* characterised by hybridity and unboundedness.

3.3

Panel members' responses supported the idea that the tours, including *Sardine Street*, were effective in producing, in a limited and subjective way, multiplicitous space ('anywheres') due to their capacity to provoke a (persisting) changed way of looking/perceiving. This included heightened perception and both new and increased multiplicity of viewpoints (complementary to the multiplicity of immersive elements): 'I was transported to a place of difference in a space I thought I knew pretty well' (email received 19.7.10); 'I was mis-guided in such a way that I saw things that would not normally have attracted my attention' (Questionnaire C); 'I felt... delighted that there are other people out there who are prepared to really LOOK at things' (email, received 25.7.10); '[W]e were swinging backwards and forwards in history, echoed by our moving to different vantage points in the street... the landscape... is in a constant state of flux' (email, received 25.7.10); 'I could... just gurgle in the bath of new perspectives, angles, facts, suggestions and possibilities... I became rather enchanted by the street… Just as getting to know a client in psychotherapy through the

moments of their life that they choose to share with you almost invariably makes them lovable' (Questionnaire B).

One respondent suggested that their change of perception had lasted beyond the performance: 'what I have come away with is a different way of looking at familiar places… I have started thinking more creatively about my surroundings' (Questionnaire D), while others responded in the multiplicitous mode of the tour itself: "(M)ost enlightening. I now know that there's a door in the clock-tower by the primordial soup where sharks circle. That stars and gylphs dot the pavement by the Dolphin fish bar. That the telephone exchange had occult military functions' (email, received 10.7.10).

 The panel's responses repeatedly identify one of our tactics as encouraging this change of perspective: the immersion of the participants in embodied and site-specific experiences, sights, and information: 'the key connection to the stories/information was the street' (Questionnaire A); 'it's a question of intimacy. I became more intimate with Queen Street' (Questionnaire B); 'by looking up, down and around physical objects and making connections from the past to the present... allowed me to immerse myself in the experience, while always being mindful of people going about their ordinary business' (Questionnaire C); '(T)his tour was designed not just to tell us about a place, but to performatively experience aspects… this felt like it took us to (and *into*) a place' (Questionnaire E). The respondents described a sensual and corporeal immersion that some identified as neither 'innocent' nor 'simple': 'one was being seduced by the now and never thinking about what was coming next' (Questionnaire A); '[E]ven though we know the game there is a sense of a pre-cognition, a placement of events and figures' (Notes received 20.11.10). The physical

immediacy of such immersions seemed to discourage non-specific, universalist or non-constructed 'natural' imaginative states.

A sense that such changes of perception might constitute a gentle radicalisation in relation to the walking and the everyday is hinted at by two respondents: '[F]or the future I hope from time to time I will observe the mundane and allow myself to drift into making connections with the extra-ordinary' (Questionnaire C); 'I think in the future I'll be more open to the theatre that is constantly going on in the cityscape around me' (Questionnaire E); another wished to re-create the tour with friends, while another was provoked to express a militant attitude to walking and art: 'last weekend at Ways With Words I caused a minor sensation by challenging Richard Long… He didn't like it one bit… Thank you for your inspiration!' (email received 25.7.10)

Within *A Tour of Sardine Street* were parts of a dynamic that attempted to shift the tour from a changing of looking/perception to a more heterotopian aspiration, consistent with an ambivalence towards the everyday. I have written, above, of the privileging of the everyday as the primary source of immersive experiences for the *Sardine Street* participants, valorising equally everyday and auratic heritage objects as parts of:

> a "concrete utopia" that addresses a possible future
> within the real… connected with... a strand of
> French utopian thought concerned with everyday life
> and its transformation, a "counter-tradition" that
> includes… the surrealists and Michel de Certeau.
> (Pinder, 2005: 246)

However, this scooping up of radical influences is not unproblematic. Doreen Massey has pointed out a false tension in de Certeau's work on everyday life:

> central bloc versus little tactics of resistance… the
> city structure versus the street… [A]gainst the "city

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> as system", the implacable presence of stabilised
> legibility, is romanticised as a mobile "resistance" of
> tactics, the everyday, the little people... (Massey,
> 2005: 46)

and that this, at the theoretical level, separates strategies (as de Certeau's already-constructed)

from tactics (everyday practices that engage with and resist within what exists).

*A Tour of Sardine Street* represents an attempt to make a structured response to these

contradictions. It was an attempt to recruit an ambiguity in the contemporary everyday; to

take advantage of a meshing of the qualities of the tourist site with those of the everyday –

'almost everywhere has become a centre of "spectacle and display"… resorts now have

relatively little to distinguish themselves from elsewhere' (Urry, 1990: 93). Through a

détourned form of tourism (the mis-guided tour) we addressed a street that was both everyday

and ordered (challenging the dichotomy identified by Massey). From the very beginning of

the walk, the quotidian of the street was framed in our first addresses to the audience within a

narrative of utopias:

> for right here two dreadful utopias were conceived.
> One, for an Ideal Island far away. And another, for
> the salvation of this island under threat... Every
> pilgrimage has its burden: utopia is ours. We'd like
> you to help us carry it.

In notes made after the July 2010 tours, I characterised our use of the everyday on Queen

Street as:

> a turn against the quotidian… an assault upon the
> "everyday", including its en-mything by de Certeau,
> using the materials of the everyday, but to "pull the
> rug from under it" (→ rendering the everyday
> "eccentric" [outstanding] and then showing the
> violence and inadequacy of that) … end of "Sardine
> Street" – the "wonder" of the everyday becomes

> dystopian, its everyday relics compared to
> Athelstan's. (field notes, 14.9.10)

So at the end of the tour we open the golden relics box, implicitly identified as our utopian burden, to reveal our everyday relics (cheap commodities, a dropped headband, discarded shopping lists) as the quotidian equivalents of the huge collection of religious relics assembled at Exeter Cathedral by the emissaries of King/Saint Athelstan in the tenth century. Then a final relic is revealed, a sandstone horse's foot (fallen from the Miles Clock Tower visited earlier) that is handed around the audience with the intention of reminding them of the (temporary and exceptional) synthesis of the everyday and the 'magical' (alchemy, chaos, initiation) attempted during the first part of the tour: a coincidence (William Miles, for whom the Tower is a memorial, wrote the standard nineteenth century text on the equine foot) makes this a poetic object, a quintessential thing-meaning, an auratic object that 'trumps' the story of Athelstan's relics and puts the quotidian of our street back into utopian affordance, resisting both an en-mything of ordinariness leading towards an accommodation with commodification and any occult significance somehow *lying behind* these things. In doing so we were seeking to displace utopian qualities to the utopian pedestrian and democratic exploratory mobility of the participant group itself – acknowledged by one participant as 'the democratic process of everyone contributing and a feeling that all the shared insights from participants were valued' (email, received 25.7.10) – and challenging the participants to accept roles as idealistic agents for making an 'anywhere' of this, or some other, street in fulfilment of a promise made at the beginning of the tour (to make their own walk/performance for somewhere, and someone, else). This was described by one participant as '[W]alks as utopias – for making something better – from a pilgrimage to Santiago De Compostela to a walk to the corner shop to get some sardines… an expedition we are going on together' (Notes received 20.11.10).

3.4

The responses of panel members clearly indicate that *A Tour of Sardine Street* was perceived
not simply as at odds with the standard guided tour, but as in a dialogue with its form; a play
upon its conventions rather than an anti-tour set upon negating them. While our tour retained
elements of an initiation (the audience making a mark in salt on the table at the Dinosaur
Café [see Figure 4.v]), a ritual procession (carrying the relics box) and an exploratory 'drift'
(even in the final tour 'performances' we were always clear that at any time the script could
be, and was, departed from to respond spontaneously to events) it also assumed something
close to the guiding voice of a mainstream tour.

While the standard guided tour has its own inherent message-forming qualities (for example,
the expert voice exposing only the tip of an iceberg of knowledge so that most is hidden from
criticism), it is not necessarily a stable form: 'the frame of the guided tour has an open format
which allows for a playful performance with improvisations' (Meged, 212). The following
passage by Mikael Jonasson attempts to characterise, from a poststructuralist point of view,
the generic contents of a mainstream guided tour and their potential for adaptation, adoption
and détournement:

> a situated performance of playful, yet serious
> animations of known and unknown elements from
> now and then, here and there, inside and outside
> and… creative compositions of times-spaces. … a
> mobile production and performance of places
> through co-optive making in moments of shared
> group experience… A skilled guide… will see to [it]
> that we are being mythologisized [sic] through the
> walk and participate in histories… When we are at
> the same place as the king was, we are part of the
> myth… The guide produces… connections between

> different places, joints and intersections of places, juxtaposing of elements and complete time-spaces. He or she can change scales, convert materialities to symbols, and interfoliate the past to present time-spaces… speed up or slow down temporalities and spatialities… displace them from their trajectories, and shuffle them around in creative and multiple contexts in order to produce new ways of being… to create cosmo-topological hybrids… guiding is the embodied affordance of new ways of being in the world. (Jonasson, 2009: 31, 42)

On a mis-guided tour, the elements proposed here, mostly latent in the 'mainstream' tour, can be deployed explicitly, fore-fronted, détourned and re-enacted with the participants' consent and awareness. Drawing on the turn in Tourism Studies literature in favour of an active tourist we attempted to mythologize our audience, as, like a tourist group, intent not only on observation of and entertainment in, the tour's sites, but also on re-making them. We sought to make them a utopian grouping; potential makers of 'anywheres' by their exemplary and prefigurative behaviour. So when we all processed together through Marks & Spencer or collectively opened the relics box and passed around the relics under the stone canopy of the Guildhall we were multiplying the possibilities of those spaces not only for the group, but also for those passersby whose attention we attracted.

In line with the multiplicity-principle of mythogeographical praxis, we encouraged our audiences to knowingly 'mis-recognise' abject spaces as if they were valued heritage sites, destabilising the meaning of conventional spatial relations, homing in on the 'empty places' of conventional tours identified by Hallin and Dobers:

> certain places, statues or buildings… the building block in pin-point sightseeing… between these pin-point places of touristic interest you will find spaces of mere transportation in which guide providers choose to talk about completely different things. (Hallin & Dobers, 2009: 178)

We took advantage of the hierarchy of spaces in this (mostly underhand) compartmentalisation (distracting the participants by 'choos(ing) to talk about completely different things') by explicitly maintaining and pointing up such divisions, while draining them of value. This created humour and surprise as well as a disruption of ideological assumptions about space. This tactic approximated, in its self-awareness, to a kind of post-tourism, but advanced this double-seeing by adding other gazes (collective, romantic, etc) just as we added other spaces, encouraging the audience to adjust or slide between gazes in order to enjoy the different ironies or affordances on offer.

Scott McCabe has defined such a multiplicitous gaze as part of

> an "anti-tourist" attitude… an expected or perceived
> shallowness of experience of place within traditional
> tourism… individuals who… distance themselves
> from the identity that accompanies it (tourism).
> (McCabe 2009, 34-5)

We took advantage of that distance, by inviting our audiences not only to partly behave like tourists but also to self-consciously observe the way that the sites of their 'tourism' are produced at least partly by them – when they all stare through the window of an empty shop to the newly-exposed 1950s ticket office they attract others to look – a production that is more likely to be understood as reversible, changeable and contingent when actually (and self-consciously) participated in.

We sought to generate an anti-touristic distance by conforming to some conventions of the guided tour (matching blazers) while contravening others (carrying ritual objects, encouraging the audience to physically change a space), and moving back and forth between mimetic characterisations, subjective and documentary narratives and spontaneous

reflections, drawing upon formal flexibilities in performance that had been available since at least the 1970s:

> a flow of fragments, incompletions, new beginnings
> and shifts in logic... references to character,
> narrative, symbol and discourse... conflicting
> elements and categories one upon the other in such a
> way a way as to defeat any sense of unity. (Kaye,
> 1994: 49)

In this way, we aimed to produce our tour groups as something beyond post-tourism; as hyper-tourists. From the very beginning of the tour, when we asked the participants to pledge themselves to making a tour for someone else, we established a porosity between the roles of guide and guided and suggested a role for the audience as future performers of place. By encouraging their participation, and giving collective value to their responses and initiative (including sending the group off on their own for a tangential journey), we were able to take advantage of the associative and communal qualities of the tour group (guiding them through intense experiences, often in the company of strangers, without them 'being led around like pigs on strings' as one audience member described their experience of mainstream tours); our intention being to transfer the utopian aspiration in the content of the tour to the heterotopian form of the hyper-touristic tour group itself, dispersing our self-mythologising to the audience, (and later with the aid of the *Box Of Tricks* handbook beyond), détourning freemasonry's 'turning strangers into brothers' to turning strangers into makers of 'anywheres'.

3.5

Spontaneous elements in the tour – such as might better be addressed by a confident mainstream guide than a closely scripted performance – were highly valued by respondents to *A Tour of Sardine Street:* 'there is eventfulness everywhere… I wonder; how scripted is all

this?' (Notes received 20.11.10), '[W]e were opportunists, playing in an urban landscape... guided, but spontaneous' (email, received 25.7.10).  Panel members at the annual meeting in December 2010 remarked on '[T]he virtues and strengths of the incidental and accidental… on the effectiveness of spontaneous responses to both unplanned and unadvertised situations… When it was suggested that these spontaneous moments are "often a more powerful effect than what is planned or anticipated" there were murmurs of agreement… "combination of incidental/accidental and passionately conveyed information"' (notes from the annual meeting recorded in 'Research Panel Members Annual Feedback Meeting  [report and summary of responses], Exeter Central Library, 11.12.10').

One aspect of spontaneity differentiated the making of *A Tour of Sardine Street* from that of other tours: the very early adoption of imagery from *The Burial of the Sardine* prior to the exploration of the site. This was an apparently contrary act of spontaneity at odds with the principle of site-specificity. Later, we did find some incidental connections between sardines and Queen Street, but an explanation of the significance and efficacy of this apparently 'unfounded' approach (which I remember being disturbed by at the time) lies elsewhere than in such allusive associations. In Lacanian terms (contextualised here spatially) this was a 'leap of faith'. Approaching Queen Street, as we approached space in general, with no expectation of finding a foundational principle and seeking an arbitrarily accumulative diversity by drawing on Deleuze's idea of multiplicity as a quality ('earth', 'life') of things seen without or before distinction and individualisation, we always courted the danger that our repeated accumulations might unexpectedly reach a dialectical synthesis. An apparently unremarkable change of quantity might suddenly effect a profound change of quality, and a 'meaning' arrive abruptly and authoritatively. By beginning absurdly, however, we (at the time, accidentally) built in to our approach an irrational irritant that repeatedly resisted our

later attempts to 'make sense' of our materials and was itself incapable of offering that 'sense'. The absurd 'sardine' defined a limit to the street's intelligibility. It seemed to operate similarly to how Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift have described a Lacanian 'master signifier'; it

> guarantee(d) the interchangeability of…other elements, and the limit of its applicability… both boundedness and perforation…although internally relational, it could not use its internal logic to explain itself… a leap of faith, an irrational move that, once taken, enables the other rules to apply perfectly logically – offering internal coherence but also an edge to the system… After entering the symbolic realm the ladder is, as it were, kicked away. (Crang & Thrift, 2000: 5)

This quality allowed us to resist and defer any synthesis of the parts of our materials, while allowing the 'rules' of our constructing (mythogeographical ones) to 'apply perfectly logically'. However, when the 'ladder [wa]s… kicked away', the relation of our performance to its 'outside' (our myth of the street) was far more dauntingly complex than in *The Devil's Footprints* film's relation to its technological chain along the South Devon coast or *A Yarn Around The West End*'s portrayed conflict between the architectural visions of Abercrombie and Foulston in Plymouth (UK). As explained in b/ above, we were unable to resolve or satisfactorily (re)deploy this complexity; however, elements of a motor – multiplicity, spontaneity, détournement, limited myth – for the making of heterotopias were being, if partially, assembled.

4

Conclusions and Findings

4.1

Rather than planning or anticipating a coherent performance text we accumulated actions and texts by setting ourselves tasks and from the very beginning, made performance-based, site-specific, ambulatory, Practice-as-Research (on two levels – for the tour, and for this research) on the street (later followed by desk-based research), making a performance text that was not shaped by historical, geological or other narratives (thus challenging restrictive heritage narrative), but one in which these served, with other elements, as compartmentalised layers or blocks, in an accumulation or assemblage rather than a vector-like structure. Our participants perceived the tour as a series of layers.

4.2

The compartmentalisation was not part of a general separateness. Notes and observations repeatedly assert connectivity; the multiple registers and stylistic layers of the tour were interwoven, interleaving the blocks – which were subject to both sedimentation and unravelling/peeling. These layers sometimes surfaced as an allusion or tension or metaphor. This structure resisted the seamless narrative and generalised separateness of the dominant production of heritage discourse.

4.3

Although creating problems of comprehension for a minority of our audience, the diverse multiplicity of elements was crucial to inoculating the performance against any relapse into essentialism or universal discourses.

4.4

By beginning our process with an absurdity, we did, by this 'leap of faith', fortuitously, build into our intervention an irrational irritant than repeatedly resisted our later attempts to 'make

sense' of our materials, or fill the empty space left by our resistance to a heritage narrative with a beguiling narrative of our own.

4.5

An ambivalent approach to the everyday meant that we could initially privilege it, with a temporary (and exceptional) synthesis of the everyday and the 'magical' and then 'pull the rug from under it'. By resisting the collapsing of everyday things of the street into either an en-mythed ordinariness or an occultism of 'something other or hidden', the resulting tension (between, on the one hand, a non-mythic everyday that is incapable of transforming itself and on the other hand an explicit and recalcitrant social structure) on the one hand de-romanticised the everydayness of a 'mobile "resistance" of tactics' as proposed by de Certeau, while seeking to re-introduce the potential transformational quality of such tactics through a limited (and de-romanticised) privileging of the everyday.

4.6

The tour provoked a changing quality or mode or heightening of perception for most participants, or provoked them to new or multiplied perspective: a development or finessing of post-tourism's double-seeing by adding other gazes (collective, romantic, etcetera), that encouraged a hyper-touristic adjusting or sliding between gazes. This changing of perception seemed to persist; a first step on the path to making 'anywheres' (spaces of explicitly, celebrated, multiplicity).

4.7

Rather than an anti-tour, A Tour of Sardine Street suggested that the standard guided tour has the potential for adaptation, adoption and détournement for mythogeographical purposes

(without necessarily an extreme or aggressive détournment, but rather an insidious 'mis-use').

By fulfilling some of the conventions of a tour, we were able to take advantage of (expectations of) a hierarchy of spaces at work in exclusionary heritage narratives; maintaining the divisions of such spatial hierarchy for the purposes of our compartmentalisation – and there *was* a conventional guiding walk/stop/walk/stop spatial rhythm to our tour – we drained the spaces of any comparative or differential value, democratising the meaning of the street. In such ways, multiplicity operates as both the method and aim of mythogeography and this affords tours a certain reflexivity; in this case relativising (as open to criticism and challenge) and idealising (as 'the embodied affordance of new ways of being in the world') guiding. We should advance this characterization of 'guiding' as an affordant behaviour, and constituent or suggestive of other interventionist tactics.

4.8

When confronted by the problem of the overall structure of the *Sardine Street* tour we sought to address it by a 'detour', creating a 'limited myth' of the street as a counter to a narrative of reactionary nostalgia and invented tradition. Although this 'limited myth' failed to address the overall meaning of the tour and its sites, it suggested the potential of a dramaturgy of 'limited myth' to animate an ideological heritage-narrative in mutual relation with an 'ideal' subject (our tour groups) – enacting a transference of the heterotopian content of the tour to the tour group, 'mythologisizing' our audience as an agentive tourist group – agents and site-specific 'manifesto' for a heterotopian making of place.

4.9

The idea of creating something to disperse the work was embedded at the very start of, and

fundamental to, the *Relics and Processions* project:

> The intention is that this documentation will
> encourage others to create their performances – and
> perhaps any accompany[ing documentation] should
> take the form of a provocation rather than a
> description. ('Outlines for 50 Relics and P',
> unpublished, last modified 30. 10. 07)

Turning the initial relation of intervention to dispersal around, my interventions (including

this tour) could be seen as parts, some more effective than others, of a wider process of

dispersal that becomes increasing crucial to my research trajectory and is consistent with

mythogeography's proselytising quality. The tour itself was never the final or primary

realisation of the project, but part of wider process: a gentle and continuing radicalisation of

participants in relation to their experience of the everyday and the distribution of the means to

making place and traversals through it. This was 'more than just a journey – this is the

assembling of a mobile "museum" – a meta-toolkit'.

Figure 4.i: Performance-like exploration of Queen Street, (2009 &2010). Photos: Phil Smith & Carolyn Purslow.

Figure 4.ii  Turning the performance towards the street, *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010).
Photo: Tamany Baker.

Figure 4.iii  'Imitating' hunter C. V. A. Peel, *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010). Photo: Julie Penfold.



Figure 4.iv  Layers of costume and narrative, *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010). Photo: Tamany Baker.

Figure 4.v  Ritual at the start of *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010). Photo: Tamany Baker.

Chapter Four

*Water Walk*:  a case study in the making of 'anywheres' and the self-mythologizing of the

activist


1.1

My decision to make *Water Walk* the subject of a case study came some time after its

performance. My subjective reaction as practitioner-researcher to the event of *Water Walk*

was that it seemed well received, but its reliance on previous work in the site, its single

performance and its stripped down form made it neither a significant nor distinctive part of

my research. However, on re-reading the panel questionnaire responses, and then listening at

the 2010 annual panel members meeting to the many direct and implied references to *Water*

*Walk* as an event of particular effectiveness in mythogeographical terms (with tactics that

were identified as responsible for that effectiveness), I decided to make it the subject of  its

own case study. I now believe that *Water Walk* represented a significant variation in the form

of the mis-guided tour (my primary form of intervention) with a shifting of the tour's relation

to its sites (see Figure 5.i), and necessitated my reconsideration of the sharp distinction made

previously between the 'standard tour' and the mis-guided tour (Smith, 2009c).


1.2

This case study draws upon two of the key mythogeographical lenses: the making of

'anywheres' (partially overlapping with layering) and the self-mythologizing of the activist. I

had drawn upon each of these to focus and interrogate the subjects of my two previous case

studies and those processes were changing and refining my use of these lenses for this third

study, with consequences for it. In the case of self-mythologizing, my understanding had

moved on from privileging the simple adoption of personae to a growing understanding of

how the layers of personae might inform and interweave with crucial themes and meanings in the sites. At the same time, the importance of the role of the makers of 'anywheres' had come to the fore; as crucial as imagining what might be made, and how, was who, and in what shifting layers of identities, might make it.

On broader theoretical ground, the case study draws on the conceptualisation of 'chora' developed by Grosz (1995) and later by Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2009). In relation to ideology the case study draws upon the concept of 'structures of feeling' articulated by Raymond Williams (1997). It also draws on academic literature around the mainstream guided tour – Holloway (1981), Pearce (1984), Geva & Goldman (1991), Pond (1993), Dahles (2001), Zhang & Chow (2004), Adolfsson, Dobers & Jonasson (2009) and Meged (2010) – in order to address the use of affordances for mis-guidance within the mainstream tour.

1.3
Methodology for data collection:

i/ participant observation. I created the walk with Simon Persighetti and was involved from the point where Simon made an initial proposal for making the walk and its possible content. I was present during exploration of the site, co-wrote text and co-performed the final walk. I wrote and retained (undated) notes made during the devising process and reflections made after the walk. As part of the devising process, I wrote a 'position paper' for Simon and for my critical notebook, describing my previous work in the West Quarter in Exeter and the legacy that I had retained from that work.

ii/ documentation. I have retained copies of all significant email traffic and attachments, project outlines, publicity texts and early drafts of scripts and pamphlet text (for pamphlet see Appendix 14). I have a copy of the pamphlet that was handed out to participants at the end of the walk. I have a small number of photographs taken during the *Water Walk* and others taken by Simon for the pamphlet.

iii/ Panel responses and questionnaires: all members of my research panel were invited to *Water Walk*. I identified nine panel members as attending the walk. I emailed each of these with questionnaires and received seven completed ones, two detailed responses by email and a short blog post.

2

What happened

2.1

*Water Walk* was a mis-guided tour led by Simon Persighetti and myself for a single performance around the West Quarter and Quayside of Exeter (UK) on the evening of 28 April 2010. The tour addressed various water-related themes, particularly the role of water in the social and industrial history of the area. The tour lasted approximately 90 minutes. It was created at the invitation of Exeter's Spacex Gallery to accompany their *Random Acts of Art* residency and exhibition (6.3.10 to 1.5.10). The invitation, by email, was addressed to Simon Persighetti (as 'you/ Wrights & Sites'). While there was never any close connection (offered or sought) between *Random Acts of Arts* and *Water Walk*, the emphasis in that residency on

relational aesthetics, collaborative art practices and co-authorship chimed with Wrights &

Sites' aim to provoke active public engagements with place.


2.2

Simon passed on the invitation at a meeting of Wrights & Sites. On 20 January 2010, Simon

sent Spacex by attachment my *Studies in Theatre and Performance* paper on street

performance in nineteenth and early twentieth century Exeter. On 1 February, Simon then

emailed the members of Wrights & Sites with a reminder about the invitation. I was the only

other member to take it up. To this reminder Simon had appended a provisional suggestion

for the event:

> The walk begins with the filling of a bucket with
> water at the White Hart and carrying it with the help
> of participant/walkers around the locality eventually
> pouring it down Stepcote Hill. The walk would then
> continue down to the river through the missing
> Watergate to collect a bucket of Exe River water.
> The river water would then be carried back through
> the quarter to the White Hart. (Persighetti, email,
> 1.2.10)

Simon's suggestion was similar to certain self-cancelling reciprocated processes that I had

previously criticised, specifically in relation to Richard Long's work *Crossing Stones* (1987)

(Smith, 2010b: 108). Nevertheless, I responded positively to the invitation, explaining that I

had recently created a walk tracing water sources and routes around the West Quarter and

Harbour for Exeter families of mixed heritage (*Exe-Pedition* project, Blazing Tales, 2009).

Simon was also experienced in making site-specific work in the West Quarter, including *The

Quay Thing* (Wrights & Sites, 1998), *Lost Tours* (Wrights & Sites, 2003) and, more recently,

exploratory 'drifts' with Wrights & Sites for a slow burning project on fragile architectures.

In my email response I shared some of the research for the 'Exe-Pedition' walk as possible

source material for a new walk:

> 13th/14th centuries – residents of the upper West
> Quarter – around Smithen Street were allowed to
> throw water over certain church processions...
> During the cholera (water born) outbreak in 1832 the
> people of the West Quarter rioted on a number of
> occasions to prevent bodies from being carried away
> – (some believed that people were being buried
> alive). (Smith, email, 1.2.10)

Despite my enthusiasm I left Simon space in which to negotiate the extent of my

involvement: 'I've put the date in my diary and I'm happy for you to commandeer these ideas

or for me to do bits along the way as required'. When Simon responded positively to this

email, he emphasised simplicity, picking up on content suggestions: '[B]ecause of time

restraints I am thinking of keeping it pretty simple but indeed framing the walk/action around

the various watery histories of West Quarter makes sense' (Persighetti, email, 1.2.10).

Simon did not take up the option to make me a 'service actor'. Instead, we co-participated

without any formal difference of role. At the earliest stage we were actively considering

providing 'walker participants with a souvenir of the walk in the form of a pamphlet or

postcard or multiple object' (email attachment, Persighetti, email, 2.2.10). Towards the end of

March, Simon reiterated the need for simplicity:

> In terms of info during the walk I AM STILL
> VEERING TOWARDS A FAIRLY SIMPLE
> RITUALISED WALK (Sprinkling and Pouring
> water) with minimal commentary. Perhaps we need
> to go for a walk to work out a route. WQ zones and
> down to the Quay and Back. (Persighetti, email,
> 21.3.10)

2.3

The following week we met and for a day walked possible routes around the West Quarter.

Given our general practice of 'drifting', our explorations were characterised more by

tangential exploration than 'there and back again'. I listed in an email (Smith, email, 8.4.10) the spaces I had responded positively to: a redundant public clothes drying area, a maze, the bricked up former water gate in the city wall, a swan mural, the Exe Bridges (remains of a medieval bridge), a leat and the drainage channel in the centre of the steep cobbled surface of Stepcote Hill. I also listed a set of 'ritual' actions: washing some cloth and hanging it up to dry, making a tableau on Stepcote Hill to recreate an engraving from Thomas Shapter's 1849 book on the 1832 cholera epidemic, cutting up onions to make ourselves cry, walking the maze, pouring something off the suspension bridge, drinking tea, collecting urine from a house (common in the area during the cloth trade, for use as an astringent), baptising/not baptising, having water thrown at us.

On our exploratory drift of the West Quarter we came up with the idea of prefacing the walk with a lecture that would convey any necessary historical information about the route *before* we began the walk; avoiding contextualising any 'ritualistic' actions in the sites themselves (at the expense of the audience's direct experience), emphasising sensual rather than intellectual engagement, while giving enough information to convey something of the site's specificities and the specificity of the actions. In an email after the exploratory walk I suggested we

> give a list of the things we will not be
> acknowledging: the fire-brigade's faucets in the
> White Hart car park, the seahorses that went to
> Plymouth, the Onedin Line... (T)he lecture feels like
> an action for "getting rid of" the notion of "tour
> guide" so that we can do something else this time:
> perhaps we should wear our blazers and
> accoutrements for the lecture and then leave them
> behind. (Smith, email, 8.4.10)

2.4

Around this time I began to write and compile text for the pamphlet and Simon took photos on a solo visit to the West Quarter. The text consisted of a contextual description of *Random Acts of Art,* an amicable email exchange with a manager at The White Hart Hotel and a main essay section mostly of excerpts from my 'position paper'. This paper was written before I began work on a first draft of the pre-walk lecture text. It described my work on Wrights & Sites' *The Quay Thing* festival of site-specific theatre (1998), on the play *A Spirit In the Quarter* (2000) for the West Quarter-based amateur company Exeter Little Theatre, and the walk for Blazing Tales' *Exe-Pedition* (2009). Where the latter two projects provided documentary resources for *Water Walk*, I described in my pamphlet text how the former

> encouraged a paranoid sense of the area, a
> hypersensitivity (with a sensual overload), an insight
> into the darkness and violence that seemed to
> pervade the place: of property development and
> unspoken plans, of violent leisure, homelessness and
> anger...

and suggested, rhetorically, that site-specific work in such a place did not simply produce an external aesthetic product, but also (with a visceral turn of phrase) a new set of site-specific senses:

> the intensity of engagement in a walk (and in its
> preparation) provoking a remaking of the walking
> body, generating a new, mutant strain of organs
> specific to the West Quarter.

2.5

Following our focused 'drift' in the West Quarter, Simon recorded the route we had teased out, pointing out that its shape on the ground was now similar to a sinusoidal wave and listed ten stopping places and short actions that might be performed there: filling buckets at the White Hart, soaking cloth at the leat, pouring water into the river from the pedestrian

suspension bridge, a water pistol fight at the water gate, and so on. He suggested that '10

water actions' should be matched by

> a maximum of 10 X one-minute sections for the
> lecture... Each section of lecture to directly or
> indirectly reference each action/location so that there
> is some recognition at each action site. (Persighetti,
> email, 8.4.10)

Three days later I elaborated on how this functional text might serve a mis-guided tour.

Describing its construction – off-site contemplation, dramaturgy and writing with on-site

exploration and improvisation – and expressing a sense (soon forgotten) that *Water Walk* was

developing into a new kind of tour:

> I think the mis-guided tour has been a really exciting
> development, bridging resistant art practice (usually
> confined to fairly narrow interest groups and social
> strata) and far more accessed and accessible
> touristic, heritage and sometimes quotidian spaces.
>
> The fundamental construct of the mis-guided tour is
> very simple; it rests on the multiplicity of place in
> tension with the mono-vocality of the traditional tour
> guide (and the subversion of the tradition[al] guiding
> voice, or at least fore-fronting in the form of the mis-
> guide).
>
> But there is a danger that both elements become too
> separated and sustain each other (rather than one eat
> into the other). I thought that that happened a little
> on the walk I did for Blazing Tales. I was getting too
> close to an authoritative guide.
>
> I think there was something very strong in your
> initial idea for Water Walk that was getting away
> from this: it was a move away from the guide's
> narrative and towards a set of actions. But more than
> that, I wonder if it is a move towards something
> which the 'mis-guided tour' implicitly aspires to and
> yet has only (mostly) gestured towards as yet...
> dispersal of action among all those on the tour.
>
> Can we use your basic, initiating idea and its anti-
> authoritative quality? So that we all – us and the
> walkers – make the actions together?

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In that way, the preparatory 'lecture' isn't really a
lecture, but a briefing – giving people the
information they need to make the performing of the
actions meaningful. So they understand their
multiple resonances. Then we all carry the water, we
all drink tea, we all throw water at some image of
authority, we all help to hang the wet cloth up to
dry?

That way there are still the basic parts of a guided
tour, with the guide's narrative and the walk around
a pre-selected route, but by dividing up the elements
we create a new, informed space where we all
'make' the actual tour together.

Have we got here a new kind of mis-guided tour?
(Smith, email, 11.4.10)

2.6

In my undated notes there is a hastily drawn page of diagrams, in which different guiding

tactics are each placed in their own box, headed 'other compartmentalisations'. This

references a strategy from the first Happenings of the 1960s, in which the time and space of

the performance were divided up into compartments and handed over to artists to create what

they wished, autonomously, within their compartments, without reference to whatever else

was created. The intention here (as in the Happenings) was to fore-front the different

aesthetics and tactics (listing and briefly describing them) and then allowing them their own

autonomous momentum so that they, openly and explicitly, created unforeseen combinations.

Our self-conscious application of this process is confirmed in an undated note:

the "structure" partially reveals itself (producedness
by us)... often "fortuitously" – the different elements
are set in motion & their instability creates certain
reactions in other parts.

Simon responded on the same day to my suggestions, referencing the idea of the 'actor as signpost',[24] the carrying of a door through streets, homes and gardens for his *Walking Newtown: A Mis-guided Tour of Newtown* (2003) and our audience sharing the burden of the 'relics box' in *A Tour of Sardine Street* (2010): 'in terms of PARTICIPATION YES I AGREE. This harks back to the SIGNPOST discussion and the carrying of the Door in Newtown as well as our more recent thoughts about the carrying of RELICS' (Persighetti, email, 11.4.10). Three days before the *Water Walk* I had completed a first draft of my parts of the lecture, anxious that the text should not pre-empt the actions:

> I don't think we should describe the actions we are
> going to make at the different places, just name the
> place and give the historical (or other) information
> that connects to it... so there is some narrative
> tension in the walk – not just a list to cross off?
> (Smith, email, 26.4.10)

By the following day Simon and I had agreed some minor cuts and changes to my part of the text and he completed his part on the same day. I suggested that we should wear cream trousers and white shirts and then replace our blazers with cream jackets '(sort of white-ing ourselves out?)' (Smith, email 26.4.10).  Simon countered:

> I prefer the removal of the formal blazers as a sign
> of removing corporate uniform and then us just
> being WOTEVER in everyday clothing with know
> [sic] pre-ordained uniformity... (Persighetti, email,
> 26.4.10)

and I agreed (see Figure 5.ii).

2.7

The *Water Walk* was attended by approximately twenty people who gathered first in the bars of The White Hart Hotel, where we chatted informally with them and then gathered them

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[24] The idea that an actor in site-specific performance should point the audience/participants to their own engagement with site rather to or through the actor's inner psychology or an outer spectacle (Smith 2009a).

together in the Bacchus Bar where we performed the lecture. We began the lecture dressed in our matching blazers, holding folders like those carried by Exeter's municipal Red Coat Guides. The text of the lecture was in the folders and we (unapologetically) read from this text. Simon sang from *The Water-Seller's Song in the Rain,* lyrics by Bertolt Brecht, and then we formally welcomed the audience, thanked our host organisation, and contextualised our own involvement:

> (T)he West Quarter is a special place for us. We
> made some of our earliest site-specific performances
> here. And we want to be specific to the Quarter
> tonight. Specific to some terrible things.

We briefly introduced the histories of industrial exploitation, poverty and loss in, and displacement from, the West Quarter:

> (S)ome of that suffering – like the cholera epidemics
> – we will be tracing in water... To mark [the]
> absence (of the West Quarter's residents)... we are
> going to remove many of the usual accoutrements of
> our Mis-Guided Tours.

We then listed those elements and actions we would be excluding: pointing, blazers, funny stories, personal anecdotes and associations, jokes about Health and Safety, historical information, folders, instructions and the folding of any early offhand remarks back into the tour at a later point.

We listed nineteen places we would not be pointing to, though by the manner of our listing we were, of course, conveying information about them: 'the flayed corpse of Bishop Blaize, Romany Rye, the secret tunnel to the Bishop's Palace, Artful Thomas and the nuclear bunker'. Then we physically demonstrated the pointing we would not be doing. When removing our blazers, Simon spoke of the disposal of clothes during the cholera outbreaks. To exorcise funny stories, I told a 'funny story' about the collapse of houses in the West

Quarter. Exorcising associations, Simon told the story of the asphyxiation of two men in the well of the White Hart Hotel reputedly by 'a Cockatrice' and tied it to our referencing of disreputable narratives. We similarly dealt with the Health and Safety announcement, the history of water sellers, leats, mills and conduits, our guiding folders and our debt to local historians.

When disposing of instruction-giving, we contradicted ourselves (again):

> we do actually have an instruction – or at least a request – we'd like you all to walk in silence – because although things have been written about the people of the West Quarter, and they were often witnessed for, to and against, very little... of their own voices was ever recorded. And so perhaps if we could be silent as we walk although we can't pretend that brings back their voices, at least we might honour their silence with ours, and protest their silencing. And then, after a while, we'll get rid of that instruction too.

Simon then led the audience through the Hotel's so-called 'Secret Garden' where a number of buckets were filled with water and handed to the audience. I took our blazers and props to the Hotel reception for safekeeping and took up a framed engraving of a scene on Stepcote Hill during the 1832 cholera epidemic as if processing an icon. I improvised this on the day (see Figure 5.iii). We then processed through the West Quarter. From the City Wall on Western Way we viewed, from above, a maze in the locked grounds of Cricklepit Mill. At Cricklepit Leat we washed some purple material in a bucket and then handed the wet material to the participants to carry. In a disused collective drying area we hung up the dripping purple cloth. The walkers were given the option of talking while walking, but many chose to stay silent. There was some conversation between members of the walking group and picnickers on the river bank.

At the pedestrian suspension bridge over the River Exe the group split in two, half to empty

purple dye-stained water into the river (from the bridge), the other half to a pier by the former

Fishmarket to recapture the discoloured water from the river. Then the two groups met up

again and went to the remnants of the Water Gate in the City Wall where Simon broke ice

from a mould, inside which was a toy car, which he left in a recess to melt. We processed to

Exe Bridges where all were invited to wash their faces in the water from the buckets. Then to

a cul-de-sac where a bucket of water was sold to an unsuspecting resident for one penny. On

Stepcote Hill we together recreated the image from the carried engraving, including throwing

water down the central drainage channel. Outside the Buffet City Chinese Restaurant, in view

of the restaurant's waterfall, the group drank rice wine and crossed to the former site of a

medieval close where, breaking our rule against contextualising sites while in them, we

explained that residents had once had the right to douse religious processions on certain feast

days. The audience threw water over me as I processed the engraving among them. After the

event I registered contradictory feelings, noting my

> discomfort in 'leading' – the 'icon'... this was a
> relatively late 'decision', but it felt important and
> without too imposing a characterisation of the
> walkers, it gave a significance to the order/ordering
> of the walk... which was "climaxed" & fore-fronted
> in the water-throwing action/commentary...
> significant that Simon, who had been keen to re-
> establish & hold on to the actions (without
> commentary) suggested that we break this "role"
> here (at the site for water-throwing)... otherwise the
> action could have become prankish...

and I added a later note: 'so we explained it... disrupt the disruption'. What water

remained in the buckets was thrown down Coombe Street, the route of a now culverted

stream, and after the pamphlets describing the making of the walk were distributed, all

were invited to join us for a drink in The White Hart.

3

Reflection and Evaluation

3.1

In the sections that follow, I address four key thematic issues related to the

mythogeographical lenses of the making of 'anywheres' and the self-mythologizing of the

activist which emerge from my documentation of this experiment:

3.2/ the relation of standard guided tours to a mis-guided tour

3.3/ the role and effects of 'transparent' guiding

3.4/ 'chora'

3.5/ models for dissemination

3.2

I came to re-consider the relation between standard and mis-guided tours as a result of my

concern at the extent to which elements I had previously identified as standard guiding

(Smith 2009c) had returned in my *Exe-Pedition* walk (2009) and *Aldwych Walk* (2011), and

my reading in mid-2011 of Jane Widtfeldt Meged's PhD Thesis *The Guided Tour – a Co-*

*Produced Tourism Performance* (2010) in which Meged concludes her thesis by directly

challenging my

> sharp dichotomy between a "standard tour" and a
> "Mis-guided Tour". I have observed critical guides
> on "standard tours" reflecting with tourists on
> sensitive subjects, and other guides who immersed
> the tourists in the performance and even made them
> sing. (Meged, 2010: 217)

Meged's PhD thesis draws attention to other crossover points such as improvisation, the recruitment of accidents to the meaning of a tour, the use of secondary actors and the referencing of subjective associations and personal reflections.

While I have expended a great deal of energy in attempting to subvert, détourn, disrupt and redeploy the 'standard' tour, I was increasingly struck by how often to apparently 'mis-guided' use I have been able to put seemingly conventional tactics of the pedestrian tour. Such elements included starting and stopping, the structure of a walk that is interrupted at numerous points, the segmentation of static commentary and ambulatory silence, the use of other actors in 'walk-on' roles, 'seductive strategies' (rhetorical strategy, a strategy of intimacy) (Meged, 2010: 109-110), and the re-channelling of 'standard' tour group behaviours. These behaviours included what Meged describes as a '*participatory tactic*', in which a tourist 'would start discussions with the guide, and... offer alternative explanations' (61), 'a *partial tactic*... sharing their attention between the guide and something else' (61-2), an '*alternative tactic*... performing the guided tour by themselves or in interaction with other actors' (62) and the 'switch between... tactics constantly... the tourists *log on to and off from the guiding* while simultaneously engaging in multiple activities' (62).

Some academic accounts of the guided tour have emphasised the authority and freedom of the tour guide. Aviva Geva and Arieh Goldman, following J. Christopher Holloway who asserted in 1981 that 'the guiding role is not yet institutionalized, and remains open to interpretation by guides and passengers alike' (Holloway, 1981: 377), argue that tour guides continue to operate with authority in a privileged 'gap' between tourists and sponsoring institutions, often to the disadvantage of the latter (Geva & Goldman, 1991: 177-9). Hanquin Q. Zhang and Ivy Chow privilege guides as 'front line staff who provide the "moment of

truth' for tourists' (Zhang, Hanquin & Ivy Chow, 2004: 81). Heidi Dahles suggests that, even in the heavily policed context of mid-1990s Indonesia, guides were 'entrusted with the public relations missions to encapsulate the essence of a place and to be a window onto a site, region, or country' (Dahles, 2001: 783-4). However, Mikael Jonasson has more recently emphasised, like Meged, that any such authority and agency needs to be negotiated by the guide with their tour parties, who may read their tour differently from the guide's script, lag behind to engage with spaces to which they give values at variance to the guide's, and jointly make a tour 'a mobile production… through co-optive making' (Jonasson, 2009: 31). Jonasson describes an emerging tour that can 'handle visible and invisible, past and present' (35), address 'missing pieces' and 'representational silences' (36), speeding up and slowing down to make a 'rhythmic landscape' (45). All of which offer the mis-guide existing affordances from within the 'standard tour', but also suggest a greater challenge to disrupt an, apparently, increasingly flexible guided tour that can no longer count on a simple deployment of 'dramaturgical skills to de-routinize the excursion' (Holloway, 1981: 388) and an increasingly self-reflexive tourist.

In *Water Walk* we were both more conventional and at the same time more radically depredated the standard tour's conventions. We used the conventional stop and start, but cut out the static commentary (condensing it into the preliminary lecture), we over-exaggerated the segmentation (compartmentalisation) of the different tactics and engaged with picnickers on the river bank and a resident to whom we sold a bucketful of water as 'other actors'. We employed rhetorical strategies such as '*Logos*... the appeal to reason and logic' (Meged, 2010: 113) (we explained the reasoning behind our stripping away of tactics), '*Pathos*... the appeal to the feelings and emotions of the audience' (113) (we evoked suffering and loss in the historic West Quarter), and '*Ethos*... the appeal to ethics and morality' (113-114) (we

narrated the immorality of those brewers and mill owners who profited by the industry of the West Quarter yet did little to alleviate its poverty and insanitary conditions). We asked the tour group to participate in carrying, washing, tipping and collecting, to simultaneously pay attention to us and something else, and gave space for them to interact with each other rather than us. We sought to move them between different tactical states of engagement; for example, first standing back to allow the group to interact with picnickers, then drawing them with the icon to the bridge for the next action.

A number of my mis-guided tours have been given an 'organic' dramaturgical structure in which early, apparently offhand or tangential elements are drawn back into an overarching set of themes: tourism, geometry and violence at the Royal William Yard; utopias on Queen Street; apocalypse and landscape design at A la Ronde. *Water Walk*, however, was far closer to the structural qualities of a standard tour that I had previously criticised (2009c): a segmented, non-narrative structure, with a vulnerability to the thematic unevenness of the route. There was discrimination in the choice of what actions were performed and what themes evoked, but little attempt to braid them together for the participants.

The suggestion here is not that a 'standard tour' and a 'mis-guided tour' are similar in intention or in their use of tactics – there are some 'standard' tactics such as the nationalistically-orientated 'intercultural tactic' (described by Meged), or inclinations such as the dominance of information transfer, that are antithetical to 'mis-guidance' – but rather that the *Water Walk* acknowledged the use of certain standard tactics, set some ironical distance between itself and them (so there was a post-touristic element) and then redeployed them selectively – for example, the revealing of a special artefact (toy in ice), use of a view (down onto the maze), illustrating a point with a period engraving (on Stepcote Hill) – as part of a

'transparent' site-specific performance (Smith, 2009b: 162-4). We incorporated an analytical framework – 'a configuration of elements [functional items, spaces, barriers, and props] which are arranged so that one may read the goals, rules, potential roles and expectations for social interaction in that setting' (Pearce, 1984: 138-40) – into the structuring of the walk's elements. This is a double movement, more complex than fragmentation or the accumulation of multiplicity. In this manoeuvre, tour guiding is evoked, traduced, exorcised and returned to in a ghostly and transparent manner. This movement seeks to create room for the agency of the participants – an outcome reflected in questionnaire responses: 'I didn't feel as if [I] was being guided on this walk in fact we all walked as guides... Ideas floated between us' (Panel Questionnaire B); 'participating was like a form of foraging, collecting fragments of knowledge and experience' (Panel Questionnaire D); '[W]e gain a sense of place from your interpretation but also from the freedom you give to feel it for ourselves' (Panel Questionnaire I). This agency was offered through the making of 'ground' for the participants to become themselves place-makers first through self-making and then performance and re-performance:

> [M]aking gaps for people to find their own experiences. Water Walk was given as example: silence, gave room for association (gaps – "the space just to be") as well as re-enactment. (*Research Panel Members Annual Feedback Meeting (report and summary of responses, 2010*)

In a note made shortly after *Water Walk* I struggled to give critical shape to a 'feel[ing]':

> how is the embodied performance...our adoption of the abject-guide? (climaxed by the water throwing) related to the "production of knowledge" (p. xix of 'The Archive, etc....Taylor) of the site/route of the performance & how is that knowledge <u>transferable</u>? → not so much the transfer of particular multiplicities, but the practice of multiplicity itself... ↑ through embodiment (thru' a 'memetic discipline'? is such a thing possible? → memes =

> "the reiterative acts that I have been calling
> performance" Taylor p 4 'The Archive, etc.".

I seem to be trying to link the abject, hollowed-out guiding personae of *Water Walk* –
stripped of uniforms, gestures of pointing and commentary – to the practice of multiplicity
(or, given the reference to 'memes', to some anxiety about the dispersal of its practice)
through a production of knowledge by embodied and reiterative acts as described by Diana
Taylor when she argues for the 'central role (of embodied performances) in conserving
memory and consolidating identities' (Taylor, 2003: xviii). However, what I have described
in this case study is a disruption of *both* archive and repertoire. The conserving of memories
and the consolidation of identities are what the multiplicity of mythogeography *challenges*;
its counter-proposal in *Water Walk* is not for better, more progressive alternatives, but a
continuously reiterated destabilisation of memories and identities in a place of nomadic,
multi-vector centreless-orrery-like motions for the re-imagination and re-presentation of
history: in mythogeographical terms, the making of an 'anywhere'. In the aftermath of *Water
Walk*, this remained a confused and quickly forgotten feeling; only on assessing participants'
feedback through the prism of certain (to me new) theoretical ideas, was I able to explain
some of the mechanics of this exemplary process.

3.3

Where there was a stripping away of tour guide tactics and artefacts one of the effects was to
fore-front and compartmentalise what remained:

> The studied putting down and leaving behind...
> make me doubly aware of the vestiges of guiding
> that remained... As the guide's voice fades away, or
> is concealed, I find myself listening harder and
> harder for any echoes or whispers of it. (Panel
> Questionnaire F)

In theatricalising and fore-fronting the props and script of guiding we chimed with Philip L. Pearce's assertion that '(I)t is in the acting out of the roles of the situation that the dramatic quality of much tourist-guide interaction emerges' (Pearce, 1984: 133).

There were a number of responses that indicated that while the 'exorcism' of the guiding role was understood and enjoyed,  we had not removed, but rather remained in a variation of the role: '[Y]ou are still our guides'  (Panel Questionnaire I). There was a double-movement of exorcism and retention of role. Having said that, a number of the participants described a significant change effected by the 'exorcism':

> One of the reasons I think that the walk really allowed me to meet each experience on offer at that moment in time rather than hold onto one in particular and allow that to colour the rest of the walk, is the subtle framing that happened in the pub introduction. (Panel Questionnaire D)

> The decision to read the information beforehand gives the opportunity for the place to tease itself out. This allows the overall sensory perception of the place to become less distracted and therefore reduces the sense of dislocation. (Panel Questionnaire B)

> ...the shedding of the Rotary Club style jackets, and the emphasis on for example not thanking Todd Grey [sic](!)... prepared us for the transition from audience to participants. (Panel Questionnaire G)

The contradiction between, on the one hand seeking site-specificity, multiplicity and a fore-fronted partiality, while, on the other, choosing the apparently retrograde, but ironical, form of a lecture provoked the more radical idea of transforming the lecture into an exorcism-like 'getting rid of'. We could not leap straight to simplicity, given the site's multiplicity of layers, meanings, textures, patterns and narratives, as this would have led to a univocal tour guide narrative, so we enacted the exorcism of *some* of the tactics of both guidance *and* mis-

guidance, while retaining others, using humour and irony to nod to the audience that we were

aware of the incompleteness of the exorcism, that there was a double movement of exorcism

and immediate if partial and spectral return. This reflexivity referenced a longstanding

tradition of Brechtian and post-Brechtian performance practice, in which 'the supreme task...

is to give expression to the relationship between the action being staged and everything that is

involved in the staging *per se*' (Benjamin, 1973: 11), including performers whose narrating

and display of it 'must not coincide in such a way that the difference between the two tasks is

lost' (21). In the case of *Water Walk* this was pushed towards a dissonance similar to that in

the performance making of Richard Foreman, described by Nick Kaye as:

> a stream of elements that refer to one or more...
> narratives but which remain a flow of fragments,
> incompletions, new beginnings and shifts in logic.
> Employing references to character, narrative, symbol
> and discourse, the performance rapidly and overtly
> collages conflicting elements and categories one
> upon the other in such a way as to defeat any sense
> of unity. (Kaye, 1994: 49)

Richard Foreman expressed a preference for the kind of (at least partial) self-negation (as

well as reflexivity and multiplicity) that characterised the *Water Walk*:

> what seems most interesting to me is to dissolve the
> art-work as self-consciously as possible... to build it
> into the object... in such a way that my actual
> making of the work is a being-there with the
> dissolving process. (Foreman, 1985: 199)

So, with the *Water Walk*: the dismantling of guiding was built into a dismantled performance.

What remained was made soluble, transferable to its participants, an action of 'transparency'

in a specialised sense:

> "transparency"... privileges the site over, even
> against, the performer. Transparent performance is
> analogous to a domestic slideshow, where
> photographic images are projected onto the most
> convenient wall, revealing both the images and the

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> cracks in the surface onto which they are projected.
> (unpublished report to Devon Arts In Schools
> Initiative, 2001)[25]

The double movement (exorcism and return) to create a guide/non-guide/transparent-guide

persona – transferable in part to its guided participants – can be understood through the lens

of mythogeography's *self-mythologising of the activist* which 'seeks a breaking down of

identities, social roles and functions while avoiding the development of alternative milieus...

The mythogeographer disrupts themselves; then, in turn, disrupts this disruption' (see

Chapter One, 4.2, above). Viewed through this lens the *Water Walk's* hollowed guiding gives

briefing and spare direction for its participants at the same time as it 'break[s] down' the

'identities, social roles and functions' of the walk, allowing is participants, within a

particularly kind of 'transparent' space, to self-consciously begin to appropriate the guides'

role as meaning makers and place makers (see 3.4 below) without the distraction of guides'

monologues or dramaturgical developments.

3.4

During the making of *Water Walk* I asked Simon in an email '[H]ave we got here a new kind

of mis-guided tour?' (See this chapter 2.5, above.) To address this suggestion, forgotten after

the walk in favour of anxieties about control and dreaminess, I propose to use the idea of

'chora' in order to try to understand what was happening in the walk's lecture and how it

affected the spaces of interaction for mis-guides, audience/participants and place/site during

the walk. I want to tentatively propose that the lecture served as a portal to the 'chora' of the

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[25] This quotation is taken from a 2001 report made for the Devon Arts In Schools Initiative, Exeter (UK), after I had created, by their commission, a site-specific performance in a deconsecrated church with 13 and 14 year of school students. I later developed the arguments about 'transparency' and 'camouflage' in set-specific performance elsewhere (2009b: 162-4).

heritage space of the West Quarter. This means that in trying to develop an understanding of an active agent in heritage, I am moving away from an understanding of tourist space as based on constrictions and misrepresentations alone, towards something more like Wearing, Stevenson and Young's description of heritage sites as 'chorastic' spaces of 'movement, destination, experience, memory and representation... also... of desires, fantasy, creativity, liminality, reordering and enchantment' (2009: 10), 'realms' which they synthesised in a version of the Platonic *chora* that puts tourists and tourism in a space of instability, a kind of pre-place, a space of apprehension.

I am here using the term 'chora' as introduced in *Tourist Cultures: Identity, Place and Traveller* by Wearing, Stevenson and Young as their corrective to the contemplative passivity and dominant visuality of the 'flâneur' metaphor for tourism space and the tourist in it. Taken from Plato, via Elizabeth Grosz, Wearing, Stevenson and Young's 'chora' is an intermediary space between existence and becoming, characterised by Grosz as:

> the space that engenders without possessing, that nurtures without requirements of its own, that receives without giving, and that gives without receiving, a space that evades all characterisation including the disconcerting logic of identity, of hierarchy, of being, the regulation of order. (Grosz, 1995: 51)

This does sound rather mystical, and both Grosz and Wearing, Stevenson and Young point to the danger of a feminist/feminine-essentialism replacing the dislocated, dispassionate and authoritative essentialism of the gaze of the 'flâneur'; so the term needs to be used within this qualifying awareness. What attracts me to it, as it is defined by Grosz, is that it encompasses a kind of gentleness comparable to 'transparency', a space of transformation, a resistance to exchange (in the sense of a refusal of both commerce and the obligation of 'the gift', a refusal of reciprocity) and the *evasion* (rather than absolute or violent dissolution) of identities and

hierarchy. The notion of evasion, and the idea of 'chora' as suspended between two states, suggests that it is a transitory, temporary space.

'Chora' not only has implications for space, but also for individual subjects. It offers a potential mediating space between a passive consumer (an individualised former member of the 'golden hordes' [see Turner & Ash, 1975] of package tourists) and an aggressive agentive-tourist. What 'chora' adds to the turn away from a Marxian-miserablist characterisation towards 'the agentive tourist' is a concept of a agency more immersed and engaged than either the flâneur's passive gazing or an agentive tourist's acting upon passive place and meaning: a 'conceptual space for imagining the traveller as being fully engaged with, and in, the travel experience and traveller space' (Wearing, *et al*.' 2010: 131).

Informed by responses from research panel members at the Annual Panel Meeting that coincide with (and imply that my interventions coincide with) its 'gentle' and non-exchange characteristics, I suggest two applications of the concept of 'chora' to the *Water Walk*:

> 1/ while 'chora' does not describe the material sites of the walk, or even what the *Water Walk* seeks to provoke its sites into becoming, it is the precondition for such a becoming. This presence and effect was registered by the *Water Walk*'s audience as a fecund instability – '(I)deas floated between us' (Panel Questionnaire B); 'the rhythm of the walk was fluid like water' (Panel Questionnaire A); 'permitted and encouraged space for the shifting of meaning' (Panel questionnaire D) – and as an invitation to feel, flagged by numerous comments about the walk as one of feelings: 'great sadness' (Panel Questionnaire G); '[F]eeling of sadness and melancholy'

(Panel Questionnaire H); '[Y]ou allow feelings to be felt. You allow us to touch, and be touched by, the past... the freedom you give to feel it for ourselves' (Panel Questionnaire I); '[W]e are not just learning facts but FEELINGS of places' (Panel Questionnaire I). The respondents report a sense of embodiment rather than information transfer (another exchange avoided or deferred): 'the overall sensory perception of the place' (Panel Questionnaire B); '[M]y sense[s] were heightened throughout the walk' (Panel Questionnaire A); '[S]enses are heightened and you return to a child like curiosity' (Panel questionnaire I).

2/ the above 'chorastic' precondition is not realised simply as a space of participants' assemblages of multiple meanings, but also of their self-conscious reconstitution of themselves as makers of heritage meaning, including for some participants their self-conscious reconstitution of their touristic selves (hence the significance of performativity here, of actions constituting subjects): '[T]he mechanics of the process were not only on show, but we were actually part of it and constructing it through our actions' (Panel Questionnaire D).

The evidence of the questionnaire responses suggests that many participants were not simply charmed by the defamiliarised heritage site, but – despite, or perhaps because of, the highly charged emotional and sensory nature of the walk – observed their own production of place and history. Although there was some of the setting loose of multiple narratives ('I saw places I

had never seen before... made me feel how limited my habitual pathways are through the town' [Panel Questionnaire A], 'there were corners we visited that I'd never entered before' [Panel Questionnaire E]) similar to that which characterised other mis-guided tours, more pronounced on *Water Walk* was a sustained and deferred 'chora' that spatialised the disruption of its own disruption, by sustaining a guided tour seemingly now free of its own tactics. This guiding without tactics suggested, and fore-fronted to its audience, that the guided tour is sustained just as much, if not more, by the assumptions and work of its participants as by the enactment and production of its guides, and indeed allowed a self-mythologization of the walkers – that 'limited self-mythologisation [that] attempts to transfer the playfulness of a subversive identity from the mythogeographer to their "myth"' (see Chapter One, 4.2, above) – which allowed them to transfer the disruption of the tour and its space to the disruption of themselves :

> my understanding of the West Quarter is not formed
> solely by what *you* chose to tell/show us, but rather,
> has been informed/changed/morphed by my re-
> walking, re-telling and re-membering. (Panel
> Questionnaire D)

> History still has great importance but the
> performance allows us to be engaged in a deeper
> way that allows for our own interpretation in quieter
> ways that engage our curiosity and make us think in
> new ways. (Panel Questionnaire I)

The walk 'made nonsense of time, made history feel like the present' (Panel Questionnaire G), while other respondents were conscious of change and feeling in their way of making meaning: '[Y]ou see and feel in a different way... You read your own thoughts about a place' (Panel Questionnaire I),

'made me question our understanding of site and history in a much larger

way which is not restricted to Exeter... not a case of swapping one mode of

perception for another, rather that my understanding and engagement with

places of heritage will be plural and far more open to changing, rather than

trying to "fix" a particular understanding' (Panel Questionnaire D).

My contention here is that the *Water Walk's* engagement with a space of 'chora' provoked,

offered and enabled an opportunity for its participants to engage, at least partly self-

consciously (with subjective variations), with their structures of feeling[26] and their ongoing

formative processes of meaning production. 'Chora' is an 'antecedent space'[27] that allows

mis-guide and participant equally to do 'ideological work' upon their 'structures of feeling',

upon the production of their feelings and ideas, while alerted and sensitised to the process in

operation.

In this self-conscious self-construction there is a connection to the mythogeographical

aspiration for a 'making of anywheres'. In mythogeography, heterotopic 'anywheres' are

characterised as places of interconnectivity and diversity, irony and *bricolage* rather than

conformity to principles. 'anywheres' are domains that are characterised by hybridity and

unboundeness and do not conform to state or local boundaries, nor to national, local or

sectarian identities. Such hybrid qualities and the evasion of ordering (bounding or otherwise)

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[26] I am using Raymond Williams' term 'structures of feeling' (1997: 133-4) here to distinguish between, on the one hand, 'ideology' which describes the productions and reproductions of developed structures and practices of meaning that presume popular legitimacy and shared currency [though in some interpretations of the term, including that which I am using, these structures and practices serve the interests of dominant minority groups] and, on the other hand, what Williams describes as the 'formative processes' of any shared values and experience, processes that generate the organisation of a common contemporary emotion and experience, processes of ideological becoming that have not yet reached their expressions in works of art, institutions, publications or architecture, and yet do have structure and are capable of repetition and distribution, reproduction and inheritance through an engagement of the senses.

[27] A space of anticipation, not unlike the space of Kierkegaardian 'dread' previously identified by me as a key aspect of the freedom and agency of the 'drift' (Smith, 2002).

in 'anywheres' are also qualities of 'chora'; but 'chora' is not a place, rather it is a 'pre-place' of unrealised emergence or transition, a pre-condition or probability. So, while the *Water Walk* does not make the West Quarter 'a chora', by registering, acknowledging and triggering that 'chora' inherent in it as a touristic space, it reveals the pre-condition for the emergence of its 'anywhere' qualities, the pre-condition for it as a place of hybrids, assemblages and evaded orders; where time can be made a non-sense of, where a visitor for once stops trying to make things fit a narrative, where '(T)he layered and fragmented nature of the walk, along with your choice of texts, permitted and encouraged space for the shifting of meaning' (Panel Questionnaire D).

3.5

One aspect of the relation to 'chora' (and its connection to the mythogeographical aspiration for heterotopic 'anywheres') proposed here, is that it suggests that the *Water Walk* represents a sustainable and 'returnable to' space. Its participants could return to this instability by themselves or with others as a space of agency, not simply as a space of structured feelings, but of an anterior to the structuring of feelings, a pre-condition for their changing. There is evidence for this in a panel member's questionnaire response (D) about returning to the site with friends, and in another's comment about only being able to return to the Quarter in a 'space' of ritual: '[I]t is now a part of Exeter that for me can only be visited for specific reasons. I suppose it is because of the ritualistic nature of the walk' (Panel Questionnaire B) and in the referencing of the *Water Walk* as exemplary at the annual panel members meeting eight months later. There is evidence, paradoxically but consistently, in the antithetical ways

these two panel members describe this same phenomenon: one describing a 'shared understanding that cannot be reiterated by myself, only with others who experienced it' (Panel Questionnaire B) while the second describes the 'connecting (of) all the experiences... seemed to happen in the days following and as I re-walked some of those routes and described it to others... informed/changed/morphed by my re-walking, re-telling' (Panel Questionnaire D). In both cases this is not the replacement of one information or form of contemplation with another, but a social process dependent upon (but differing in) a particular social space inflected by the antecedence of 'chora'. This is important for the question of dispersal, as it suggests the need to create provocations for social (perhaps convivial) actions rather than vehicles for ideas.

I am extrapolating from the above, that there may be a repeatability (and stretching) of the deferral of synthesis (mythogeography's deferral of synthesis, adapted from the work of Homi Bhahba, as a means to preserving multiplicity against a return to homogeneity appears here in a new guise) through the tactics of the *Water Walk*, thus holding open the process of meaning-formation for re-walking and re-telling:

> What... is exciting about this delayed connecting is that my understanding of the West Quarter is not formed solely by what *you* chose to tell/show us, but rather, has been informed/changed/morphed by my re-walking, re-telling and re-membering. (Panel Questionnaire D)

So, rather than simply a shock of revelation or juxtaposition, the walk invokes (and is) an instability between being and becoming that can be repeated or sustained as a way of seeing/being – 'I no longer separated its (the West Quarter's) function as a "lived" space from that of a "living" space' (Panel Questionnaire B). This might be similar to how a touristic space (often coruscated as being, similarly to the 'transparency' of *Water Walk*,

'hollow', 'banal' or 'mindless') is repeatedly available to its visitors: so the motor for dispersal and development is not primarily a particular motor of performance, but one of particular (antecedent) space. For this there is a repeatable site-based strategy: 'chora' is approached through mythogeographical intervention by upset, unfamiliarity and juxtaposition and then, by the disrupting of those disruptions, continuing to work through their spectral remnant to a sustained 'chorastic' space.

The pamphlet distributed at the end of *Water Walk* seems a missed opportunity. Its effect was more that of a souvenir or guide for the constraining of experience: 'useful in illustrating some of the processes that went into creating the walk' (Panel Questionnaire B), '[I]t addressed lots of my anxieties and let me put things in pigeon holes... I might have continued to experience more vivid affect if I had been left in a state of uncertainty and mild panic' (Panel Questionnaire J). In contrast, a set of notes I had made for the pamphlet, never followed up on, were for something less like a memento and more like a handbook in four sections – '1/ where the practice – mythogeography – comes from, 2/ about the West Quarter and walk itself, 3/ how to make a mis-guided tour, 4/ why?' – which, in a different order, would finally appear in *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* (2011, republished 2012).

4

Conclusions and Findings

4.1

This was a qualitatively different kind of tour, and constitutes a model that can be both repeated and disseminated. Rather than the dominant multiplicity of the mis-guided tour,

*Water Walk* was a transparent and spectral tour characterised by a double movement: first a compartmentalisation and ironic exorcism of mis-guided and standard tour tactics, then their return in a ghostly form which fore-fronted the work of the tour audience as co-makers or dominant makers of the tour during an emotional, secular-ritualistic walk.

4.2

 The affect of the *Water Walk* was, for most of its (responding) participants, a strongly emotional one, and part of this was to provoke for some a realignment of their intuitive making of heritage meaning and a fore-fronting of their 'structures of feeling', their process of aligning with common or ideological images and values. This capacity to provoke such a realignment (based on a repeatable tactics) constitutes an important strategic property for future mythogeographical interventions. One panel member remarked after attending *Water Walk* that there were many more transformations of the guided tour to come.

4.3

The idea of 'chora' enabled the beginnings of a theorising of a 'ground' of tourism distinct from that of either a voluntaristic, wholly manipulated or dreaming-gazing tourism. 'Chora', instead, is a space between being and becoming, evasive of commerce or obligations of exchange, accessed by the 'gentleness' (deferred or fragmented authority) of a 'transparent' tour. The double movement (described above) prepared this 'ground' for spectral sited actions: by the lecture's *evasion* of guiding tactics, by embodied and immersive participation, and by the sustained deferral of any new synthesis of doubly disrupted or emptied elements (as a potential new way of seeing/space of living).

4.4

The self-mythologizing of the activist took on a lighter, potentially re-applicable quality during *Water Walk*. Rather than the thick layering of contesting personae more (*Sardine Street*) or less (*GeoQuest*) successfully assembled for previous tours, the double-movement of exorcism and spectral return as applied to the guiding persona in *Water Walk* suggested a means to becoming something more like a signpost to the sites of heritage rather than a complex character within them.

4.5

Moving on to the 'ground' of 'chora' is a precondition for the remaking of heritage space as an 'anywhere'. Rather than planning heterotopias, my future performative interventions and my broader research project will aim to disperse the means to 'prepare the ground ('chora')'. This challenges specialisation within my practice and its dispersal. It suggests that any distinction within the dispersal of tactics between tourists and artists (or activists) may be a false one and that any dispersal should supply all of these with tools for the preparation of 'chora' rather than introducing distinctions between art and life that many from whom mythogeography has drawn (for example, Alan Kaprow, Stewart Home, Dada, Lettristes and International Lettristes) have fought to dispel.

Figure 5.i  Without commentary explanation the audience view a closed maze from above. *Water Walk* (2010). Random Acts of Art, 2010, online http://randomactsofart-residencies.blogspot.co.uk/



Figure 5.ii  In blazers prior to the 'exorcism'-lecture, *Water Walk* (2010). Random Acts of Art, 2010, online http://randomactsofart-residencies.blogspot.co.uk/

Figure 5.iii  Carrying the engraving at the head of the walk. *Water Walk* (2010). Random Acts of Art, 2010, online http://randomactsofart-residencies.blogspot.co.uk/

Chapter Five

The shift from interventions to dispersal


Introduction

In this chapter I describe the development of my research as it pushes off from the findings of the case studies (chapters 2 – 4) towards key moments of praxis. This trajectory takes place against a shift in my overall research design, away from the testing of variations on existing, but not systematically interrogated practice, through the evolving innovations of my experimental interventions and my analyses of them, to something much more like Practice-as-Research (PaR). This change is manifest in sallies into heritage sites, an exploratory form of infiltration, and then in a move away from work reliant on my physical presence. In the resulting praxes, theory and practice are simultaneously in question, tested against and subsequently adapted to unsettling and un-accommodated experiences as I increasingly return to the dérive-like exploration of unfamiliar heritage spaces.


Parts of the practical outcomes of these various turns to PaR are the publication of a book of counter-tourism tactics, the making of 31 micro-films explaining and demonstrating various tactics for dissemination online, and a handbook of extended and explained tactics that also includes an introduction to the ideas informing the counter-tourism project. These publications – *Counter-tourism: a pocketbook*, *Tactics for counter-tourism* and *Counter-tourism: the handbook* – are submitted as part of this thesis. The books are published by a commercial publishers, Triarchy Press; the films are uploaded online for public viewing on Youtube.

1

From praxes to a proposal for a model of counter-tourism

1.1

The *GeoQuest, Sardine Street* and *Water Walk* case studies had affirmed the efficacy of certain, in some cases refined, mythogeographical tactics in the making of interventions: ambulatory drift, the privileging of the everyday, limited nomadism, limited myth, multiplicity and interweaving. On moving tentatively to testing tactics for the wider dispersal of my interventions, I began to interweave such affirmed tactics with the, at least for me, novel findings emerging from my case studies: these included the effects of a 'leap of faith', the uses of 'hollowed out' rituals and refrains, taking advantage of the instability of materials to show heritage space in flux, and a growing awareness of the possible affordances of a 'chorastic' ground within mainstream heritage tourism.

The case studies also revealed the way in which my conceptual 'landscape' was changing as I adopted, co-opted and adapted new (again, at least, to me) ideas for the mythogeographical 'orrery': these included a post-tourism adjusted to hypermodernity (Lipovetsky, 2005: 38-45), the interweaving of practices in an 'art of living' reconnecting the research with the situationist politics in mythogeography's deep background, and the principle of double movement (exorcism and spectral or excessive return) for the opening of the ground of 'chora'.

1.2

The accumulation (according to a default 'and and and' [Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 108-9]) of my tactics and ideas, rather than refining the trajectory of my research was qualitatively disrupting it. Accumulation reiterated the limitations of any specialist-centred dispersal of the emerging tactics. Ideas oriented to dispersal (art of living, handbook/toolkit, double movement to 'chora') seemed to arise from either the peripheries of the interventions, from delayed reactions to them, or as a result of the unintended spreading of their reception; a tendency was emerging from, and beginning to reorient, the overall research trajectory, moving beyond the bounded spatial and temporal restrictions of live performance towards the performance of everyday life.

Emerging ideas (for signage, films and handbooks) rather than moving in orrery-like motion about each other, as narratives had in my performance-centred interventions like *Water Walk*, *A Tour of Sardine Street* and others (which for all my assertions about centre-less orreries still seem to require *someone* at their heart), are now more like movements across a plane or through a layer. They slide through or across different 'flattened' forms of experiment and terrain [Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 13-5]. Rather than testing these newly emerging practices against existing mythogeographical formulations, they increasingly developed as simultaneous experiments in both practice and theory: praxes.[28]

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[28] I am using the term 'praxes' here to indicate the enacting, realizing or practicing of ideas and hypotheses that carry out a material social change rather than simply serving or illuminating (for example as an 'objective correlative') an idea's validity or otherwise. Zygmunt Bauman's critique of positivism and his opposing praxis, drawing on Marx, is apposite to my engagement with the recalcitrant and reproductive qualities of heritage. Against similar ideologies Bauman proposes, warily, that 'struggle... should be waged in terms of "illusions", "myths", "hypostases", "false consciousness" – and their repudiation' but then describes the peril of choosing a philosophical 'ground': 'positivism reaches its most spectacular heights in the efficiency with which it serves as a lightning rod intercepting the thunderbolts aimed at the social world it has only described' (Bauman, 1999: 131). So I am using the term 'praxes' to describe those of my interventions that seek, however inadequately, to go beyond an engagement (détournement, disruption) with the ideas, signs, symbols and narratives of heritage, and change the heritage industry's social practices by which it produces and reproduces its ideology.

The proposal which I expressed speculatively in *Mythogeography* – that the associative qualities of guided tour groups (in common with other more obviously subversive groupings) might spontaneously disperse interventional practices (Smith, 2010a: 163-5, 209-15) – was not supported by the findings of the case studies. Models for dispersal were, instead, appearing across a more variegated set of interventions including signage, exhibition, films, handbooks and forays in heritage sites. By January 2012 I had logged 28 instances (referenced online or by direct communication) of the use of *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* in the making of performances or interventions by others. Although in 2010 I continued to speculate hopefully about groups' dispersive qualities in an online essay (Smith, 2010c) describing them as 'industrial disorganisers' distinct from tourists, now, as a result of working through the implications of my case studies, rather than identifying the groups as emergent in themselves, I pointed to an affordant 'space' within mainstream heritage tourism as the ground for change fuelled by escalating quotidianization (Debord, 1994: 12, Urry, 1990: 93) and a growing emphasis on experientiality and agency. In the praxes discussed below I increasingly theorise the  ideal user or participant for newly emerging tactics as someone closer to an agentive hyper-tourist than an alternative guide or tour group, immersed in the tourist layer rather than distanced from it by post-tourism or the fore-fronting of live performance and spectatorship.

2

Praxes

2.1

The ground of mainstream tourism

In May 2011, I prepared a 'demonstration' mis-guided tour of the Aldwych, London (see Figure 6.ia and Figure 6.ib) for members of the AHRC network project 'Reflecting on Environmental Change through Site-Based Performance'.[29] Informed by Jane Widtfeldt Meged's challenge to my sharp distinction between 'standard' and 'mis-guided' tours (see Chapter Four, 3.2 above), I came to appreciate, during the tour's preparation, how many of the key de-familiarising properties of the mis-guided tour are latent in the mainstream model of tour-guiding. This includes guides following the physical 'logics' of their routes rather than a historiographically meaningful narrative sequence (Edensor, 1998), the combination of compartmentalisation (manifested in stops and starts, and the tour's 'rhythmic landscape' [Jonasson, 2009: 45]) and the adoption of site-specificity at a loss for any other organising strategy, generating an opportunistic flexibility that 'tangles' with the production of ideology when, at a loss for a non-topographical logic, narratives are arbitrarily juxtaposed by the exigencies of the route and mimic the mechanics of ideology's reproduction (its adaptations to an existing logic), and the various 'seductive strategies' of the guides such as rhetorical strategy and strategy of intimacy (Meged, 2010: 109-110).

During the *Aldwych Walk* performance, I made explicit to the audience that the defamiliarising affordances of the mainstream tour are crucial parts of a détourned tour. The understanding of such reflexivity as a means to accessing the mainstream tour's latent 'chora' now becomes significant to the overall development of this research project: rather than mis-guidance being restricted by necessity to specialised, resistant events practised by a few committed alternative guides and their audiences, it signals that the whole field of guided

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[29] 'Reflecting on Environmental Change Through Site-Based Performance' was one of thirteen research networks supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) during 2010-11 as part of the AHRC's wider 'Landscape and Environment' agenda. The network examined the potential of site-based performance as the means to investigate and represent the dynamics of climate change. Network members: Stephen Bottoms, Anthony Jackson, Baz Kershaw, Paula Kramer, Sally Mackey, Helen Nicholson, Tim Nunn, Alison Parfitt, Mike Pearson, Alan Read & Phil Smith.

tours might be open to détournement (with a hypothetical extension to heritage tourism in general). This conclusion now prioritises an immersed reflexive hybrid practice rather than a subversive disruption from the outside.


2.2

Fanciful maps

*The Devil's Footprints* (2010), a film made with Siobhan Mckeown in South Devon (see Appendix 3), draws on an impulsive car journey with my improvised commentary around material from performances, mappings and drifts of the area to make a 'limitedly mythic'[30] account, hinged around the homes of various nineteenth century technological (often military) innovators lying along the same route as a set of 'devil's footprints' that appeared in snow in 1855.[31] It succeeds where *A Tour of Sardine Street* failed (see Chapter Three above). It did so by adding to its multiplicity of narratives a representation of a repeatable and dispersible limited myth of its site, while subjecting this and its other narratives to a de-stabilising uncertainty. I acknowledged this in my field notes at the time (10.8.10):

> Siobhan has been very astute in the way she has
> created a 'mythology' of the film itself – being
> abandoned by me at the end, Rachel's role,[32] the
> conversations in the car… my own role is unstable –
> laughing at Iain Sinclair, mis-leading the
> supermarket manager, National Trust sticker in the
> car, access to the Institution, telling the narrative of
> colonialism… both implicated (or at, least,
> 'benefiting') & resistant… → the narrative is
> 'floated free' from me? I may be deluding myself
> here, but it feels to me that Siobhan's editorial
> tactics (which are often abstractly poetic &
> juxtapositional – montage – as well) serve to
> separate the mythogeographical narrative from my
> narrating of it… I'm as caught up in it as the dancing
> puppets…

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[30] See Chapter One 12.3 (above).

[31] This is a regularly re-cycled Fortean mystery; whatever its actual origins, it at least partly owed its original public impact to tensions between 'high church' and 'low church' Christians in the area.

[32] Rachel, my daughter (then 12) appears in the film.

I have described elsewhere such an equivalent combination of volatile performance content and its pseudo-empirical representation as 'fanciful mapping',[33] drawing on hoax forms, dream formats and other representations that are capable of allusively, contrarily or perversely sustaining a relation to a subject that they are openly 'mis'-representing or abstrusely avoiding. Such 'fanciful maps' as *The Devil's Footprints* can sustain the performative remnant of a past performance. They can move from description to provocation; their 'fancy' spilling over into an unstable legibility that obliges their 'reader' to act on them if they wish to access what they represent. These are documentations that appear to simply (mis)represent events or terrains, but which the 'map' reader needs to explore (using the 'map') in order to read at all.

2.3

Rather than an exemplary representation of a particular mythogeographical performance, *The Devil's Footprints* is a provocation to perform mythogeography. This is not a case of performance's 'becom[ing] itself through disappearance' (Phelan, 1993: 146), but rather that it becomes some *other* performance; and as such both a possible model of, and a possible means for, creating a dispersible repertoire of repeatable performative actions, such as visits to heritage sites. So, rather than documentations of exemplary practice – which both *A Mis-Guided Tour* and the *GeoQuest* films do, to some extent (following the aspiration to exemplariness of the interventions they document) aspire to be – *The Devil's Footprints* suggests that such provocations are more likely to be successful if they take apart what they

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[33] In a paper, "An Argument for the Uses of Fanciful Maps In the Making and Remembering of Site-Based Performances", at the 'Sites of Performance: Mapping/Theatre/History' conference at the University of Nottingham, April 2009.

wish to exemplify and disperse, allowing others to reassemble them performatively as something else.


2.4

Abject materials and things-meanings

*Outlands Walk* was a one-off mis-guided walk I performed on the 8th September 2010 in the Outlands district of Plymouth, an area of residential housing built on the site of the (subsequently bombed and demolished) estate on which Robert Falcon Scott (Scott of the Antarctic) grew up. I was helped by Jason Hirons who was conducting ambulatory postgraduate research (also at the University of Plymouth) about this area and had introduced me to it.


For a 'characterisation' of Scott I dress in a rough, clearly anachronistic approximation to clothes worn on his expeditions (see Figure 6.ii). I make no attempt to impersonate Scott or give any insight into his personality. I speak as myself-as-mis-guide. I use a rope to tether myself to some of the spectators as if to a sled, but do not pull them. I give close attention on the tour to the detail of the present site, including (but not privileging) a few abject physical remnants from Scott's time: a wall hidden by rubbish, the mansion's driveway overgrown, a stream culverted. I relate these mostly inaccessible, unsigned, eroded or trashed remnants to the apparent depth and detail of the historical record of Scott's final expedition in Antarctica as an explicit negotiation with a difficult, minimal, enigmatic and depredated revenant. I treat the few 'authentic' physical remains from Scott's childhood as equivalent to modern objects in the site with metaphorical connections to the Antarctic narrative, including a children's play tent we  unexpectedly encounter on the tour just prior to a prepared section on the

position of Scott's corpse in his tent, and the missing sign for Oates Road. According to one participant, it was:

> a real adventure of the mind. The tent and rocks at
> the end especially! Was a great way to explore
> Scott's life and connections to the city. (anonymous,
> email, 15.9.10).

On the tour I deploy a quite different set of objects designed by artist Polly Macpherson and called by us 'things-meanings'. These were to be carried by the spectators (see Figure 6.iiia and Figure 6.iiib). These objects were created in response to different, even clashing, ideas about the 'life' or 'vibrancy' of things drawn from a variety of sources, following mythogeographical multiplicity, from phenomenology through ethnographic anthropology to fiction, including Heidegger (1962), Sofer (2003), Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2007), Miller (2008), *Performance Research*'s special edition 'On Objects' (2008) and Shapton (2009). The objects are attempts to mobilise what Jane Bennett has called 'thing-power' – '[T]he notion of thing-power aims... to attend to it as actant... the moment of independence (from subjectivity) possessed by things... an active, earthy, not-quite-human capaciousness (vibrant matter)' (2010: 2). The 'things-meanings' were produced with particular attention to the sensual affordance of their materials and shapes and their aptitude to express some general idea. They sought to forefront their material 'thing-power', while resisting any separation of what they are from what they represent; their meaning intended as a para-subjective part of their 'thing-power' (Henare, *et al*., 2007: 3-4).[34]

2.5

In responses after the walk, it is clear that some objects did have a resonance for participants:

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[34] I have discussed this at length in an article at http://www.mythogeography.com/2010/02/what-is-this-mythogeography-site-i-am.html

> they seemed to add further layers to the history, to
> lurch me for a moment from the oscillation between
> Scott and the present to memories and to a much
> much older time and even perhaps the future – this
> sense that we'll all be dead, fossilised, that we're all
> momentary. (email, anonymous participant, 9.9.10)

Despite this walk being performed only once, it points me towards a developing performance mode that becomes significant beyond this single performance: forefronting anachronism, highlighting the depredation of remnants while emphasising their vibrancy as objects, contrasting this lively dereliction with the apparent depth and detail of commonly accepted narratives. By evoking 'a haunted landscape' (Panel Member Questionnaire Response) I move onto mainstream heritage tourism's 'chorastic' ground *as if* onto a revenant. Apparently imitating Scott and adopting the mode of mainstream museum theatre's 'interpretation' (anticipating in practice what becomes explicit for me later in the *Aldwych Walk*), in effect I am conceding my initial experiments in subversive intervention from outside the mainstream in favour of an immersed, ironic hybridity within it. For this I extract or enforce an imbalance: I treat the space of heritage tourism as a heritage-tourism-of-heritage-tourism, consistent with the way that mis-guided tours have used museums as museums-of-museums (see Smith, 2011b). The means of presentation thus assume as great, if not greater, prominence as/than the contents, as an already abject space, *as if* heritage tourism were its own object, a 'comingling of... hauntings' as one participant described the *Aldwych Walk* (Site, Performance and Environmental Change, 2011b: online) or, *as if* they are models that have drifted free of their originals.


2.6

<u>The war on two fronts</u>

On the basis of preparatory work for the *GeoQuest*, in early 2010 I was recommended to Ginkgo Productions to write information plaques for a viewing platform on the renovated Royal Terrace Gardens, Torquay (known locally as Rock Walk). This coincided with a similar, unconnected opportunity in Weston-super-Mare with Wrights & Sites entitled *Everything You Need To Build A Town Is Here*, 2010 (see Hodge, 2012). For the viewing platform plaques, I wrote texts that sought to move the visitor questioningly between them and the vista, drawing on unremarkable documentary sources which I sought to detour (see Figure 6.iva and Figure 6.ivb). When a decision was taken to extend the plaques around the site, I attempted to use the whole of Rock Walk as a performative site by recruiting its different elements and conventions as affordances for visitors to use critically and self-consciously; I was attempting to disrupt expectations of tourist information signage itself and generate both a physical and intellectual mobility about the site.

The gardens were re-opened on 2 October 2010 and were a popular success. My observations (two visits each of two hours duration) revealed that most visitors to Rock Walk quickly spot the plaques and where the initial reading is sustained beyond 20 seconds (approximately half of cases), the reading usually generates focus, laughter, expressions of curiosity and surprise, and discussion. A minority (perhaps one in ten of adult visitors) read all the plaques on their route (see Figure 6.v). A response to the plaques by one of my research panel members (anonymous, email, 1.10.10), before knowing that they were my texts, describes this member's perception of a departure from standard signage, a disruption of an expected narrative and, finally, the emergence of an alternative logic. There is a perfomative quality to the signs, they seek an 'as if' dialogue. By creating a disjuncture between their way of citing and that of mainstream heritage signing, they seek to alert their readers to a gap in their codes, deploying 'the structural break between one citation and the

next as the locus for transformation' (Shepherd & Wallis, 2004: 221). Utilising the materials of mainstream tourism against itself, the signs on Rock Walk are an attempt to prompt their readers to perform (without the need for my physical presence as animator) by exposing the unevenness, gaps and breaks in such signs (and in the dominant discourse in general); in other words, to make their citational structural-breaks performative and affordant to re-constitution by general tourists.

2.7

I was offered further work by Ginkgo on signage for the Cockington Estate (near Torquay). The subsequent experience of working at Cockington contrasted sharply with that at Rock Walk; the following comparison reveals key differences that from this point on informed my general research trajectory. On Rock Walk I was arriving at the end of a long project. I worked with prescribed sites and materials. In a conventional sense my role was marginal. However, from the perspective (one that this experience was enabling me to form) of an 'infiltrator', marginality allowed for real leverage. I was able to take advantage of an operation with a budget of £3 million and, asymmetrically, attempt to change perception of its outcome by the tactical placing of a few words:

> You are standing on the face of a giant fault in the
> earth's surface! ...(Y)ou are standing on a giant rip
> in time.

I was largely free to détourn the site to mythogeographical ends.

However, for the Legible Cockington project, developing new signage (map monoliths, fingerposts and an Interpretation Room inside Cockington Court), I arrived comparatively early to the project. Rather than in a marginal role, I accrued some organisational responsibilities and was drawn into negotiations around physical and textual aspects of

the signage. The results, assessed over three visits to Cockington in mid-2011, were disappointing: visitors' uses of the map monoliths and the fingerposts are mostly functional, and various innovative ideas for the 'Interpretation Room' have been abandoned on the grounds of either cost or health and safety, so that what remains is a room used mostly as a decorated corridor (see Figures 6.via and Figure 6.vib). By generating texts *before* the map monoliths were designed I was unable to respond to or intervene in their final design; by allowing myself to become a part of negotiations, I surrendered specificity (my texts became part of the general negotiations about the Interpretation Room rather than an intervention in it). Comparatively centrally positioned, apparently more influential (writing a report [alerting those in the sponsoring institution to my broader purpose], having some say in the selection of partners, spending a budget, participating in negotiations around the design and siting of signs and rooms), I lost asymmetrical purchase.

2.8

The signage projects are emergent ones (expanding without any agency of mine) rather than simply (and limitedly) tactical and exemplary, as the case studies have found my live performance interventions to be. These projects reach a wider, general public, generating an 'attractive' vehicle (the signs) for something else: a kind of countering of heritage tourism within the materials of mainstream heritage tourism itself. Although I failed to draw upon it, at the time of the Cockington project I already had, to hand, a general model of a 'war on two fronts' which in the context of heritage tourism means, on the one hand, working on limited projects within the industry and making temporary alliances within it while, on the other, working to undo dominant narratives of heritage tourism. The challenge to, and necessity for, such a model are evident in the problem of

representing 'Torbay 400 million years ago' (discussed in Chapter Two) and in the 'negotiation' round my texts at Cockington, tied as they are to issues of funding and employment, but which the Rock Walk example suggests can be successfully negotiated given the right strategy. Such an apparently 'two-faced' model as a 'war on two fronts' raises questions about deception and dishonesty, so it is important to be clear that this doubleness should be openly expressed: offering 'alternative' narratives (consistent with mythogeographical ideas of multiplicity) to mainstream institutions, acting *as if* (but only *as if*) for a covert practice, not attempting to offer mythogeography's overall project to mainstream institutions, but not concealing it from them either. Consistent with the idea of the 'chora' of the heritage-tourism mainstream, such an 'infiltration' strategy does not seek to destroy or openly confront that mainstream, but rather to make limited, asymmetrical contributions to it that move its consumers onto the 'chorastic' grounds within it.

2.9

From my reflecting on these praxes emerges a different kind of practice from that participatively observed for the case studies (though in some cases the forms or genres are similar). This emerging practice is more closely engaged with mainstream tourism and its consumers and producers, but that relation is complex: seeking to animate a 'chorastic' ground within it, characterising its objects as abject, and making provocative documentations of it that become comprehensible to heritage's users only by their enacting of them. Together, these tendencies were leading me away from a focus on limited interventions and towards some, more general, more accessible engagement with heritage tourism: a 'counter-tourism'.

3

Theoretical shifts

3.1

Thus far, I have given a mostly linear description of the emergence of a new model of practice through individual praxes. What it does not account for is the uneven shifting of ideas within and across that practice. The sporadic re-reading of field notes and 'hunches', re-writing of case studies and the repeated viewing of films shot months earlier are among the circumstances by which ideas have 'stood still', re-emerged or looped ahead to divert new flows of thought. The following sections seek to identify this unfolding of ideas in the formation of a model for a 'counter-tourism'.

3.2

Pastness and heritage

My earliest thoughts about a toolkit for a general counter-tourism included a perceived need for conceptualisations of 'the past' and 'heritage': what was it that counter-tourism was countering? Where should counter-tourism position itself in relation to varied discourses around 'the fever of the present' (Lipovetsky, 2005: 39) and concerns that 'our sense of history has disappeared... our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past' (Jameson, 1997: 204)? Or to contrasting anxieties about living in an 'age... awash in a surfeit of heritage' (Lowenthal, 2009: 29)? Should counter-tourism conceptualise the past as entirely constructed – '[T]he past is merely our

conception of it' (Schouten, 1995: 23) – or as a waning phenomenon subject to historically specific depredation: 'the separation between past and present has been eroded... and the past become present' (Schofield, 2009: 99)? Is heritage detached from the past – 'heritage conservation is creation and not preservation of what already exists' (Ashworth, 1992: 97) – or a rising social currency predating upon it: '[H]eritage is gradually effacing History, by substituting an image of the past for its reality' (Hewison, 1987: 21)? Symptomatic of the instabilities of such basic elements, the same heritage organisation (in this case, English Heritage) can be criticised on the one hand because it 'treats the past (all pasts) as still present' (Fairclough, 2006: 63) while on the other hand being castigated for giving too inert an account of the 'historic environment' by referring to it in documents 'as a canvas' (Gibson, 2009: 71).

3.3

Rather than settling on definitions of past and heritage, I draw on the conflicts and contradictions of existing accounts as signifying ideological affordances for counter-tourism to exploit. For example, while acknowledging elements of construction I am avoiding the idea of a wholly constructed past as one tending to a crude and absolute relativism; any one telling of the past as being as legitimate as any other. Equally, I am avoiding miserablist positions like Hewison's (above) or Schouten's that 'scientific evidence has lost its case, for "heritage" creates its own reality' (1995: 22) as they tend to assume an inert, authentic and accessible, if traduced, past. I have been wary of apparently materialist-critical approaches which, as here with Lowenthal, abruptly re-introduce an essentialist past: '[A]s with memory, we reinterpret relics... to justify present attitudes and actions... [T]he unadulterated past is seldom sufficiently ancient or glorious' (1985: 325). Instead I have tended more towards conceptualisations of constructing subjects like that of Elizabeth Tomkin who 'write[s] of

"representations of pastness" instead of "history" because that is what all histories must be'
for 'it is not that "history cannot be true"... [R]ather that... history must have a face: it cannot
exist without a form' (Tomkin, 1990: 27, 34). To give a face to representations is something
that counter-tourism can do. Rather than favouring or mourning either past or present,
counter-tourism dramatises their interplay as a touristic consumption-production in which
past or 'pastness' is

> discursively produced through a series of
> oppositions between the present and the past, which
> nevertheless fail to be held apart as oppositions... the
> tourist is invited to step back into the past, to relive
> it, but the form of this reliving is consumption.
> (Game, 1991: 163)

3.4

The formulation on which the above discriminations are based – that through rigorous
empirical study it is possible to construct *locally* meaningful historical narratives, but that
they break down at a certain spatiotemporal or conceptual scale – comes not from any
consideration of theories of historiography, but from my performance experiences on
*GeoQues*t and *Filmed Walk* (May 2012)[35] in which coherent narratives of desert formation
and floods are extrapolated from pieces of sandstone breccias, that in turn become
meaningless at the scale (and generalisation) of 'Torbay 400 million years ago' (see Figure
6.vii). So, while sceptical about an 'authentic past' made accessible by empirical study,
analysis of structure or Hegelian ideal, this is not a wholly pessimistic approach, valorising
accounts that intuit gaps, margins, boundings, silences, silencing or guise in heritage industry
narratives – for example, its exclusion of excess from versions of the past as 'fun... pleasure
and entertainment... a past... without violence or oppression, difference or discontinuity'

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[35] A performance walk along Exeter's Quay and Ship Canal with an audience of mostly research panel
members. With the knowledge of the audience, the walk was filmed by a hidden camera crew, directed by
Clive Austin, who, at the conclusion of the walk, confronted me in a fictional role of 'Anton Vargus'; the
footage will be used in a film, *The Great Walk* (forthcoming). During the walk I tried out a number of counter-
tourism tactics and performatively 'explained' a number of the ideas developed during my doctoral research.

(Game, 1991: 164). At the same time, I attempt to avoid the temptation to fill in these gaps with a subaltern, alternative or minority account. This is not only for fear of consigning such radical narratives, by insertion into a practice of conservation, to the past, but because such an infilling disguises instances where the heritage industry replaces the past with something quite different, such as the comfort afforded by a space where visitors 'expect[ed] to encounter... people socially like themselves' (Smith, 2009: 41 & 42) or 'a way of demonstrating and affirming social status and position... to identify with some activities and groups; and to distinguish themselves from others' (Light, 1995: 126). In the case of Laurajane Smith's country house research, the motor of authentication informing and producing such identification lies not in historical narrative, but is the *visit* itself, that is identified by visitors 'as "authentic", as it provoked feelings and emotions that were seen as "real" or genuine and that helped people feel "comfortable" about their social experiences, social position and values and their sense of community' (Smith, 2009: 41). Rather than denouncing such crass negations of empirical knowledge, I am seeking to recruit such privileging of *the visit itself* by encouraging the excessive performance of such visits as a means to forefront and address the silencing of the historical narrative. I seek to create a shifting ground such as Raymond Williams identifies between the personal (experiential) and the social:

> changes of presence... emergent or pre-emergent,
> they do not have to await definition... before they
> exert palpable pressures and set effective limits on
> experience and on action... elements of impulse,
> restrain and tone... affective elements of
> consciousness and relationships: not feeling against
> thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought.
> (Williams, 1977: 131-2)

In counter-tourism this might mean engagement with people's feelings of 'peace and quiet', security and homogenisation, sitedness, awe, acquisitiveness, luxuriation, image-

bathing and immersion; in order to engage with the moments when such feelings assume the condition of structures (coherent sets of relations with their various parts) to produce ideological relations in the sites of heritage (such as subservience, compliance, passivity, imagined-integration, commodification, homogenisation or identity formation), and to defer and deter that formation of (precipitation of 'structures of feeling' as) ideological relations. This is an attempt to create a model of affective deferral as a kind of 'plateau',[36] an excitement that is neither resolved nor punctured but sustained so that the visitor is challenged by her or his own pleasure, appetite, humility or peace; an agitation by emotional means.

3.5

The underlying thinking here (following mythogeographical principles of multiplicity, spatialisation of thought and centreless orrery) is a limited, anti-recursive one (setting in motion multiple trajectories, none of which are expected to explain their relations with the others). The approach demands a consistency of argument and evidence in local contexts, but it does not expect, welcome or invite the reproduction or accommodation of those patterns at a more general level. Nor does it encourage an alternative totalising account, no matter how radical, nor a move towards positivism. Rather, it follows Tim Edensor's prescription for openly fictional additions to a multiplicity of existing narratives:

> to supplement commodified, official and expert
> memories and interrogate the principles which
> underpin their construction, and to imagine beyond
> these limits backwards and forwards... not merely...
> through the fabrication of subaltern accounts which
> rely on similar principles of 'historical truth' and
> 'evidence'; it also requires that we 'make things up'
> in the interstices of the factual and the fabulous, the

---

[36] A 'region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation towards a culmination point or external end' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 24).

place where the shadow and the act converge.
(Edensor, 2005: 164)

So, counter-tourism sets existing aspirant-totalising narratives of heritage in motion about each other, along with their mis-takes, excesses, out-speakings, errors and silencing, even when at their most excessive in the simulacra of the 'ploughman's lunch' in the cafe, say, or the children's crusader costumes in the gift shop (see Figure 6.viii). According to Baudrillard these are 'models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map... it is the map that precedes the territory' (1988a:166). The proposed use of such models and maps is not to romanticize, legitimise or ignore their negations, sanitisations and exclusions, but to commandeer them as raw material for détournement. This use is not to express a generalised 'all is illusion', but rather that local illusions when framed are revealing; so counter-tourism would seek to encourage these illusions to become excessive, to outspeak themselves, to over-produce, so that the ideological machine is forced to emerge in order to impose some order. This strategy is similar to Slavoj Žižek's when, in a commentary on *The Matrix* (as a pre-text to a discussion about illusion and reality), he complains about the constrained choice offered the film's hero: a red pill that reveals the truth of 'the Matrix' and a blue pill that returns him to its illusions. Žižek demands a third pill 'that would enable me to perceive not the reality behind the illusion but the reality in illusion itself' (Fiennes, 2006: *The Pervert's Guide To Cinema*).

3.6

Abjection, apocalypse and revelation

Parallel to the development of these historiographically-linked ideas, I have been seeking to create a moment of shock to shake tourists' senses from perceptual norms, equivalent to the

impact of a 'catapult' (a brief tangential journey taken spontaneously) plunging a dériviste abruptly into the flow of a drift. My proposal is that 'there is no history': that there is no such thing as the coherent, accessible, objective narrative of the past which seems widely imagined to inform the narratives of heritage sites, and, that the intensity of this absence is historically specific rather than universal. This is difficult ground and easily misunderstood as a nihilistic, relativistic pessimism, a concern voiced here by Andrew Carey of Triarchy Press during his editing of *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook*:

> Is this the point? I accept that heritage is a fraud and history a contrivance, but I think most people (including me) are too literal to understand 'there isn't any history'. Just like the Daily Mail mocks Baudrillard for saying the Gulf war [sic] didn't happen. (Carey, email, 31.10.11)

Though Carey references Baudrillard's 'desert of the real' (1988a:166), my impulse is not critical-theoretical, but intuitive and affective. I have come to *feel* that working or intervening in heritage sites is as if to be among the ruins of a meaning. This is fuelled by numerous experiences: discovering an early nineteenth century obelisk plaque tucked, in three pieces and forgotten, under a heritage site gardener's workbench, being warned off mentioning the mass grave on a picturesque site, discovering (for *Filmed Walk*) that Exeter Ship Canal's hosted a courtesy visit by X-craft midget-subs in 1956 as a rehearsal for planting nuclear devices in Soviet ports.

3.7

These feelings are not a response limited to material 'ruins' like those, say, of a Dissolution monastery, but rather that no matter how well signed, interpreted or managed, or how recently constructed, heritage sites are places predominantly of waste, remains, horror and

disgrace, bodies from which life and coherence are gone and which are kept 'unnaturally'

propped up, or, perhaps, in motion as 'living history':

> [L]iving heritage... is an oxymoron... [T]he reason
> that living must be specified is because the very term
> 'heritage' signifies death, whether actual or
> imminent. 'Heritage', the term and concept, endows
> the dead and the dying with a second life, an
> afterlife, through the instrumentalities of exhibition
> and performance. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1997: 4)

When projected through the prism of Kristeva's notions of 'abjection' these morbid heritage

objects become part of something 'ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the

thinkable' (Kristeva, 1982: 1), their expulsion 'draws [that something] toward the place

where meaning collapses' (2) and where it performs 'literally beside [it]self' (1). Whether as

the hidden choices of preservation, obliterations under the auspices of conservation or the

discards of counter-factuality ('all historical episodes have prehistories... of many things

which might have happened as well as of the fewer... which did' [Clark, 2003: 29]), such

'refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live' (Kristeva, 1982:

3, emphasis in original).

I experience heritage as doomed attempts to suspend rot and ooze, placing these sites under

the constant threat of their bursting out disgustingly (Figure 6.ixa and Figure 6.ixb). My

hunch is that by leading visitors to confront such abjection through playfulness and

performance the heritage narrative 'collapses'. By attacking boundedness in the sites (like

attacking a skin) '[T]he body's inside... shows up in order to compensate for the collapse of

the border between inside and outside' (Kristeva, 1982: 53). What is 'thrust aside' in order to

sustain the heritage narrative returns as something contemptible but rebellious (it should be

one thing, but is another), and the visitor 'strays instead of getting his bearings... Situationist

in a sense, and not without laughter... For it is out of such straying on excluded ground that he

draws his *jouissance*' (Kristeva, 1982: 8). Thus an 'ecstatic tourism' emerges driven by painful pleasures rather than lies about truth, turning incidental disorientations like Freeman Tilden's in historical society museums, where the juxtaposition of 'a letter from Napoleon ... reposing beside a stuffed albino squirrel' left him 'dazed and dizzy' (Tilden, 2008: 173), into a chosen journey into meaningful and recreational inchoateness (Smithson, 1996: 15, 33).

3.8

My attempts to place these intuitions within a social dynamic are not done in the terms of Baudrillard's 'desert', but rather Debord's formulation that 'the globalisation of the false was also the falsification of the globe' (1998: 10). It is not that there is no longer a real, but rather that there is not a real that can serve as an authoritative alternative to contemporary relations of falseness. Given the velocity of information exchange, there is no longer a 'reality at rest' as a popular ideological frame from which empirical criticism can launch itself or find leverage (this is the conceptual equivalent of my practical difficulty with 'Torbay 400 million years ago'). Debord claimed, with an ambition comparable to Baudrillard's, that the society of the spectacle 'erases the dividing line between self and the world... likewise... between true and false, repressing all directly lived truth beneath the *real presence* of the falsehood maintained by the organisation of appearances' (1995: 153, emphasis in original). He positions subjectivity in a place of power, but then undermines it by crowning 'spectacular government' as 'absolute master of memories' (1998: 10). This counters Baudrillard's darkly sentimental idea that we all share equally in obfuscation, offering any counter-agent a heroic role in combat with 'spectacular government'. If we temporarily follow Debord's argument, the ground of our problem ('no history') shifts from an epistemological to a cultural-political one. Rather than a general question about knowledge, it becomes a problem arising from a particular, sustained, agented and at least partly planned moment, when technology and

culture, developing as separate tendencies, are formed into a dominant monopolistic agency

without a need for a past:

> [H]istory's domain was the memorable, the totality
> of events whose consequences would be lastingly
> apparent. And thus, inseparably, history was
> knowledge that should endure and aid in
> understanding, at least in part, what was to come:
> 'an everlasting possession', according to
> Thucydides. In this way history was the measure of
> genuine novelty. It is in the interests of those who
> sell novelty at any price to eradicate the means of
> measuring it... [W]ith the destruction of history,
> contemporary events themselves retreat into a
> remote and fabulous realm. (Debord, 1998: 15-16)

While we might be wary of Debord's nostalgia for classical historiography, echoed for

example in Lowenthal's mourning a 'well nigh universal tradition of the educated' now

destroyed by mass media (1985: 377), his general point chimes with more radical complaints

like Fredric Jameson's about a frictionless past, and with analyses, most famously stated by

Naomi Klein, of a 'catastrophe capitalism' (Klein, 2008: 6-8) which seizes on natural and

man-made disasters to wipe clean space and memory. This is a tendency which in its turn has

been appropriated *in extremis* (and stood on its head), in a way that chimes with my

experiences of the abject space of heritage, as an 'apocalypse'.


3.9

According to Evan Calder Williams there is distinction to be made between a capitalist

apocalypse and crisis or catastrophe. An apocalypse is something which generates revelation.

Not an end of days, but an end of the ordering of days by particular powers: 'this doesn't

mean total destruction but rather a destruction of totalizing structures' (Williams, 2011: 5).

What are revealed by such an apocalypse are

> those things that cannot be  included in the realm of
> the openly visible without rupturing the very

> oppositions that make the whole enterprise move
> forward…. [things] that we know very well yet
> regard as exceptional nightmares or accidents.
> (Williams, 2011: 7-8).

Williams' apocalypse is not a simple clearing of the ground. Instead he advocates mending, recovering and re-weaving, which he calls '*salvagepunk*':

> a model of construction… the work of salvage and
> montage… a radical principle of recuperation and
> construction… a return of the repressed idiosyncrasy
> of outmoded things. (Williams, 2011: 30-1)

He cites montage, collage, détournement and farce (for his is a comedic apocalypse) in ways which echo mythogeographical multiplicity. I am drawing upon Williams' ideas in order to formulate counter-tourism as an 'as if apocalypse'; not one that is approaching, but one that has (as if) already happened (or already happens [see Figure 6.x]), and in the developing ruination of which counter-tourists can engage with the ideological narratives of 'shock capitalism', mediated through heritage's self-revealing and recalcitrant ruins (a repeated theme and instrument of my counter-touristic publications, films and website), as they seek to wipe memory clean.

By making the spectacle agentive, Debord (long withdrawn from activism or dérive) conjured a monster, against which he mobilised a hero from classical historiography; his nostalgia brings the monster back in the form of its negation, as the 'measure of genuine novelty', re-presenting historiography as the validation of an authentic wiping clean, anticipating what is now a general tendency in 'shock capitalism' as analysed by Wolf and others. Evan Calder Williams' achievement is to take this perceived tendency (permanent crisis, erasure and novelty) and to seek its negation not from something raised from the stately tomb of classical historiography, but in the revelation, often citing examples from popular culture, of the

present in the future that the present is making; redeploying the anticipated smears and fragments of repeated wipings clean of the slate. In *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* I have attempted to turn Williams' 'revelation' into tactics such as treating malls as post-apocalyptic museums and taking a 'zombie walk'.

3.10

In terms of practical counter-touristic interventions in heritage sites this means bringing agentive tourists into an engagement with the permanent present of a procession of novelties: interactivities, ghost hunts, re-enactments, costumed guides, treasure hunts, simulations, 'responsibly sourced' cafes, site-brandings, 4D cinemas, 'Jurassic Theatres' and so on. These are not marginal irritations behind which lies the authentic revenant, but obfuscations that have reached such a point of accumulation that rather than framing the past, they repeatedly abolish it. This is the particular sense in which 'there is no history' in the heritage industry. Counter-tourism's response is not to restore authenticity, but to take literally Turner and Ash's miserablist assertion that tourism is 'a device for the systematic destruction of everything that is beautiful in the world' (Turner & Ash, 1975: 15) and to finish the job in an 'as if apocalypse now' of heritage. What counter-tourism aims to do is to challenge visitors to imagine how abject heritage spaces might re-emerge from the complete ruin *of their totalizing structures*, reconnecting with an idea I first floated on my Reverse Archaeology page in *An Exeter Mis-Guide*: '[L]ook for ruins on which the future can be built' (Wrights & Sites, 2003: 14), gently inviting tourists towards this ruining first by tactics already tested and user-friendly and then through more speculative or extreme tactics inspired by fringe or oppositional practices, such as the rituals devised by Gyrus, whose

> research is not strictly 'scholarly'. Dreams, drugs,
> sex, conversations with truckers who give me lifts,
> synchronicity-laden trails that lead me to books...

> trashy movies, walks in the countryside, emotional
> breakdowns, lazy days (Gyrus, 2007: 12)

or Stewart Home's eroto-psychogeographical (and possibly imaginary) exploits around

Scottish Neolithic sites (Home, 1999: 23-6). Here lies the key tactic of counter-tourism

(uncovered during *Water Walk*): the familiar forms of heritage tourism are exorcised (as if

apocalyptically) and then spectrally or excessively re-enacted in order to trigger the

'chorastic' transformative potential in heritage sites. This informs the counter-tourism

publications, short films and online presence; dispersing tactics that first parody and then

resurrect (in ecstatic form) the etiquette of the heritage visit in a double movement that

attempts to open 'chorastic' space to the everyday tourist and reciprocally open the tourist to

their 'chorastic' potential.

4

Developing a model of counter-tourism

4.1

In my field notes of August 2010, written before the outcomes of my case studies, I am

looking to move away from what I perceive as too narrow a range of interventions and

propose to myself that:

> perhaps I should concentrate on a/other types of
> intervention and b/devising the means to spread &
> popularise the tactics... I think that this
> "toolkit"/"handbook" format is key. (field notes,
> 27.8.10)

A few days later (1.9.10) I met with Andrew Carey of Triarchy Press and he agreed to

Triarchy Press publishing a counter-tourism handbook integrated with an online presence for

the broader dispersal of my ideas for interventions in heritage tourism in general.

4.2

Undated notes show that I was still imagining some kind of formal organisation for counter-tourism: 'how is this organised[?] – a "World Brain" – anachronistically – small groups – cells and tight associations'. However, during the first half of 2011, in a manifesto compiled 'to see if there is a practical basis to this idea' (undated field note) I described a 'counter-tourist' more consistent with an agentive tourist:

> The counter-tourist is very close to the tourist, they have no superior [*sic*] one over the other. The counter-tourist... [is] an ultra-tourist who immerses themselves and then sneaks to one side of tourism.

4.3

Once made, this formulation allowed counter-tourism to accrue and redeploy the existing lay skills of assemblage and narration common to tourist visits, 'whereby the individual may engage in potential interventions and interruptions in prevailing (and multiple) discourses of tourism' (Crouch, 2007: 45). The hypersensibility and serious playfulness of mis-guided tours could be added through tactics in a handbook or online. By making tourists, rather than guides, the primary agents, prefigured in the *Relics and Processions* project when we researched as something like proto-counter-tourists, I 'add value' to my tactics (many of them taken from the marginal practice of mis-guiding) by broadening the market for them. Visitor groups of friends and families provide existing cells and tight associations. The potential for sites is increased, from spaces affordant to or tolerant of mis-guided tours and similar interventions, to *any* heritage space. Rather than addressing the question of how to disseminate exemplary interventions for others to repeat, counter-tourism could instead draw upon the more general project of my research as both a source of individual tactics, and as the

momentum towards an emergent 'art of living' or 'spatial reading' that both hyper-sensitized and dispersed itself,  in order:

> to pry open the vacant spaces that would enable you
> to build your life and those of the people around you
> into a plateau of intensity that would leave an
> afterimages of its dynamism that could be reinjected
> into still other lives. (Massumi, 1987: xv)

4.4

The unfinished and unpublished manifesto was influenced by my ongoing desk-based research; the idea of a special affordance in tourist space ('chora'), the turn in Tourism Studies to an agentive tourist, my reading around Bataille's idea of 'the accursed share' – an excess or waste that can either be spent knowingly, erotically and aesthetically or in the catastrophic production of divisive identity (Bataille, 1989: 19-26) – and the anachronistic residue of pilgrimage in tourism (counter-tourism enacts an integrated personal journey).

4.5

At the same time I was collating tactics from previous and ongoing interventions; in June 2011 I sent out an invitation to my panel members to join me on visits to heritage sites 'with a view to developing different "counter-tourism" tactics – actions and approaches that can reveal and engage with the mythogeography (the multiple meanings and associations) of these places'. This led to 'counter-tourism forays' to Buckfastleigh steam railway, the notional site of a pre-Christian sacred wood (the Nymptons in central Devon), the town of Sherborne, the fossil beach at Charmouth, Somerleyton Hall in Suffolk, Dawlish Warren nature reserve, RAF Poltimore and Killerton House, while eight panel members together tested out tactics in and around the Cathedral Yard in Exeter (see Figure 6.xia & Figure 6.xib).

On each 'foray' we tested tactics – for example, at the steam railway we sought a utopian past and in Sherborne we scouted the outer edges of the official heritage sites – or devised new ones. I sent questionnaires to the participants and received five replies, which rendered seven main themes:

a/ a heightened sociability and conviviality provoking greater openness (three responses);

b/ heightened perception (four responses): from intensification of spectatorship to a quite profound if temporary change in their state of being: 'a slight sideways shift in ways of seeing' (response B questionnaire); 'the sense of desolation you would associate with nuclear annihilation' (Response C email); 'extraordinarily vivid... I can bring to mind more or less the whole day in sequence' (Response E questionnaire);

c/ a disruption of everyday life (two responses): 'an almost surreal, romantic, nostalgic event in my life' (Response B questionnaire); 'I came back looking at my journey home differently... like that guy from the Bourne Identity films... I even continued wearing my mac when it was not necessary' (Response D email);

d/ a feeling of being like detectives (two responses);

e/ an impression of intense accumulation and interweaving of details (three responses);

f/ spontaneously disseminating narratives from the foray (three responses);

g/ a personal change (two responses): "(T)his kind of work has the potential to bring me closer to living life more fully" (Response B questionnaire).

The responses confirmed that a profound change of relation to the sites was possible deploying simple tactics and leading to some spontaneous dispersal. Of the one exception to this pattern, a respondent cites 'chit chat' as defusing the foray, suggesting that both the disruption of everyday life, mentioned by two respondents but implied by others, and a *serious* conviviality focused on the site, were equally necessary to enter the 'chorastic' space of change. This necessity for particular behaviours chimed with my desk-based research and I sought to renew the balance between poetic subjectivity and sociability in the tactics I was devising and assembling. Rather than being an inevitably normalising relation, I began to see how sociability, in the context of particular embodied encounters with place, might be recruited as part of disruption:

> [K]nowledge of the space is constituted through
> social encounter... includ(ing) lay artistic production,
> ritualistic practices... and a range of human feelings
> including love, care and friendship. (Crouch, 2002:
> 214)

The responses also suggested two omissions from the test 'forays' that a Handbook should address: the need for suggestions for how to record and disperse mythogeographies of particular sites, and for tactics for dispersing the counter-touristic visit to others.

4.6

In September/October 2011, I made a 16 day journey following the notional 'walk' described in W. G. Sebald's *The Rings Of Saturn* (1995/8): an elusive account of the writer's supposedly autobiographical negotiation with feelings of philosophical melancholia while visiting heritage sites in East Anglia. Documentary or pseudo-documentary accounts and

illustrations of the sites accompany Sebald's narrative. By walking this route I placed myself in a heritage landscape, devising, improvising and testing out counter-touristic tactics at various sites including the Greyfriars ruins at Dunwich, the decommissioned Sizewell A reactor, Bentwaters Cold War Museum, the Saxon burial ground at Sutton Hoo and the former Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Orford Ness. Walking in relation to the philosophical journey of *The Rings of Saturn* I attempted to walk-think a critical account of counter-tourism, keeping a 50,000 word notebook: descriptions of places, new tactics devised, and speculative passages recording and extending my walking-thinking. This was informed before and since by some familiarity with the uses of walking as part of a research methodology, through conversations with other practitioners: for example, Tim Edensor, Sarah Pink, James A. Sidaway, Karen Smith (including being one of her research subjects) and John Wylie. Taking the *Mythogeography* publication (Smith, 2010a) on the journey, I would read sections before (and while) walking and exploring, in order to attempt to walk-think from these ideas to ideas of counter-tourism; recording and extending the 'journey' of my thoughts in my notebook.

4.7

The functional fruitfulness of the journey (many new tactics generated, long periods of reflection) confirmed the continuing importance of walking to my project. I explored 'heritage' in relation to the 'eternal present' of Sebald's prose in *The Rings Of Saturn*:

> he has managed to... relate his story in what his
> much-admired literary ancestor, the 17th-century
> philosopher Sir Thomas Browne, called the Eternal
> Present... by giving such contemporaneous weight to
> the events and people he describes. (In Praise of
> Words, 2011: online)

For Sebald, the melancholic Browne sees the world as 'no more than a shadow image of another' over which 'lies already the shadow of annihilation', examining it 'with the eye of an outsider' and describing it in long sentences 'resembl[ing] processions' ((Sebald, 1998: 18, 23-4, 19). Browne draws significance from forms that occur across nature, culture and time, such as the quincunx. This besideness[37], ambulatory prose and plane of connectivity complemented by a synchronic, morbid temporality all parallel the connective impulse of mythogeography's 'and and and' of primitive accumulations and its dynamic patterns, while chiming disturbingly with narratives of frictionless flow and novelty characteristic of globalisation and spectacle, which Debord describes as:

> a paralyzed memory... an abandonment of any
> history founded in historical time... lacks any critical
> access to its own antecedents... forgotten to the
> benefit of the spectacle's false memory of the
> unmemorable. (Debord, 1994: 114)

On the walk I repeatedly engaged with such connections and contradictions, as means to address (from 'beside') what I meant by 'past', 'memory', 'heritage' and 'history'. I borrowed and traduced something from Sebald's style, writing each day's notes in long sentences; attempting to extend my thinking. At first these notes characterise 'eternal present' as simulacrum-like, then as I become more subject to the walk the concept more relates to remnants of an absent past:

> [T]he melancholy – of the erosion from the
> landscape of the extraordinary pasts of 'ordinary'
> people, of the 'eternal' present of total obliteration –
> what is latent here is the landscape of wonders, of
> terror, of collapse and erosion, of unreliable
> surfaces, of missing things... Little Moscow, the man
> escaping his troubles in Saxemunden.

I see this obliteration as affordance:

---

[37] Something I had adopted as a principle of performance from Mike Pearson, after hearing him speak on a number of occasions of performance as 'ablative' and 'to the side'.

> none of these detract (from), but with more study
> can add to[,] construction of an ecstatic 'heritage' –
> what is that? An anti-heritage and a counter-heritage
> – one which is the same for insider or outsider,
> based not on birth or any other kind of identity, but
> on a willingness to quest and narrate.

Influenced by anticipatory history's orientation to the future (DeSilvey, Naylor and Sackett,

2011: 9-18), Hayden White's proposal that

> [W]e study history not in order to find out what
> really happened there... but to find out what it takes
> to face a future we should like to inherit...
> (Domanska, 2008)

and John Schofield's 'symmetrical practices', of which he writes

> [T]he past is not always past – we constantly
> change, re-use and adjust our surroundings in a way
> that allows us to realize the relevance of continuity
> of change, and to therefore juxtapose old and new...
> (2009: 100)

I began to read Browne's timeless present as a liberating negation of itself. I began to see it as

a positive shadow of revelatory apocalypse; not a permanent present, but the future's present.

I described this revised view in my notebook:

> [T]aking pleasure in the future (in an abstraction)
> while passing on pleasure now, not so much deferred
> gratification as the deferral of apocalypse – so, is
> this aesthetic? No – for pleasure in the future as an
> 'eternal present' against the mortality of an addictive
> present which is forever negating what it has against
> the need to have it again and again.

4.8

Beginning from Sebald, I walk-thought to two key reflections. The first is that an 'ecstatic' heritage (a reconstruction of heritage based on the pleasurable pain-thrill, the *jouissance*, of encountering its remnant under 'the shadow of annihilation' [as Sebald imagined Browne might]) could be made by quest rather than rooted in a subaltern, subversive or alternative narrative. The second is that this heritage could be a work of making a future resistant to an 'addictive' present and against a fabricated past that 'transport[s] people to distant places or back in time by means of restorations and re-enactments' (Schechner, 2002: 235). Such a 'future's present' is similar to those 'social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been precipitated' (Williams, 1977: 133-4, emphasis in original) which Raymond Williams calls 'structures of feeling', an active, changing presence preceding and contesting ideological formations. Just as Williams resists criticism's tendency to address art as something in the past tense, so counter-tourism's interventional intentions seek a resistance to the same tendency in the heritage industry's addressing of 'history'.


4.9

Between September and November 2011 I sketched out a general outline for the publication content of a handbook and website and the key themes for eventual promotion and publicity by Triarchy Press. In my initial, hyperbolic outline the emphases are on latent ground for transformation, hypersensitization, the ablative, disruption and self-transformation:

> The four basic kinds of tactics:
>
> 1/  To change, intensify and transform your senses
> and your perceptions of site and heritage
>
> 2/  Step to one side – what's behind the scenes,
> what's just outside the site, what's just offstage,
> what's in the margins of the paintings and on the
> backs of the plinths...

> 3/ Blow the bullshit homogenous heritage story
> apart and then set the multiplicity of fragments into
> orbit around each other!
>
> 4/ Changing who you are - combining the 'agentive
> tourist' who makes the meaning of the places they
> visit and the 'spectral tourist' who with a subtle
> emptying of your role and then allowing it to return
> in spectral form allows you to self-consciously enter
> the process of the making of you own heritage.
>  (Smith, email, 26.09.11)

4.10

After the take up of the *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* pamphlet, I considered splitting the

Handbook into a series of small pamphlets, but the *Sebald Walk*, with its associations to a

kind of pilgrimage, led me to think again of these as parts (given variable scaling) of a single

journey for a counter-tourist. I wrote to Triarchy:

> splitting up hyper-sensitization, intervention and
> infiltration... was a mistaken idea – they are all part
> of what goes to make up counter-tourism – the trick
> is to keep the map of the counter-tourist's journey
> simple enough so that pretty much anyone can
> follow it.

Even if the counter-tourist only ever accepted the offer of the basic visitor-tactics, they would

do so aware that theirs are the same first steps as for those on a longer journey; while no

matter how specialised that journey becomes, key to everything are the dérive-based visitor

tactics with which everyone begins (so everyone shares those fundamental tactics in common

no matter where they are on the journey).

In November 2011, the final draft of the outline formulates a project that begins from visitor

experience, transformed through an 'innovative-consuming' aimed at radically affecting the

heritage tourism industry. The online presence – Facebook page, website at

[www.countertourism.net](http://www.countertourism.net) – are planned as resources of tactics, as networks for those using the

tactics to share any reflections or documentations of their visits and for sharing new tactics.

The main intended trajectory, however, is an outwards dispersal directly from tourist to

tourist, mostly bypassing these 'returns'.


 4.11

In my *Sebald Walk* notebook, drawing on the *The devil's footprints*, I wrote a 'limited myth'

of missing, hidden and sunken things around Dunwich, Sizewell, Shingle Street and Orford

(see Figure 6.xii). I used this as the starting point for filming with Siobhan Mckeown in

Suffolk over three days in January 2012 for a series of very short films intended for

YouTube, each one covering a counter-tourism tactic. As with filming *The devil's footprints*

only a provisional route was set, and I improvised around a repertoire of tactics. 35 tactics

were filmed and 31 mini-films made and uploaded to YouTube. These films, like *The devil's*

*footprints*, are intended to be both exemplary and fanciful. What differs from *The devil's*

*footprints* is the format of the films. I had noted, during its first year available on YouTube,

that while over 500 online viewers had watched the first 9 minute segment of *The devil's*

*footprints*, barely 100 had made it through the third and final part. Rather than create an

overarching journey narrative within which to contain various tactics, the films present

themselves as self-contained demonstration films; while fanciful narratives and themes may

briefly appear and reappear across the micro-films. The number and length of the *Tactics for*

*counter-tourism* micro-movies was geared to the potential attention span of net-surfers. The

films are intended to serve not only as portals to the more sophisticated but popular content of

the counter-tourism website (advertised at the end of each film) but also as a self-contained

resource in themselves; hence their number.

4.12

In early 2012 it became clear that Triarchy could not afford a sufficiently large print run of the handbook (given its size) to set a popularly affordable price. I proposed, and the suggestion was accepted, that an additional pocketbook version of the handbook be published, consisting of visitor tactics with a few short sections on counter-tourism and with pointers to the more expensive handbook. The integrated handbook was to stay as before. Mostly the tactics are unique to either pocketbook or handbook; in a few cases a short tactic in the former is expanded in the latter. *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook*, at least initially, is published 'print-on-demand'. There is tension here between an intended popularisation through the agency of tourists and the preparation of interventions/infiltrations. The final draft of the 'project outline' prioritises the agentive tourist over the specialist. The prioritisation of *Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook* (likely to sell at a far higher rate than the handbook) signals an ambition to radically affect the use of heritage sites by an emergent practice of counter-touristic visiting. I am making a 'leap of faith' in hoping that the behaviour in heritage sites is virally conditioned (communicated mostly by the performance of others) rather than taught or guided, supported by performance theorists such as Diana Taylor:

> we learn and transmit knowledge through embodied
> action, through cultural agency, and by making
> choices. Performance... functions as an episteme, a
> way of knowing, not simply an object of analysis.
> (Taylor, 2003: xvi)

I am also hoping that those using the handbook will not only be immersed in the performative encounter with their sites but will also transfer what they learn by re-performing that encounter with and to others. So counter-tourism becomes a repertoire of democratic site-performing that ideally

persists, transmitted through a nonarchival system of transfer... the repertoire... if performance did not transmit knowledge, only the literate and powerful could claim social memory and identity. (Taylor, 2003: xvii)

4.13

Given this speculative territory, Triarchy Press placed a roughly designed version of the pocketbook online with a short questionnaire, inviting mostly people unfamiliar with my work to comment. Although Triarchy drafted the questions to gain information for their marketing, the results are of relevance here. Of 45 responses 32 were strongly positive (including 14 who mentioned laughter or amusement) and 5 were negative (including 4 mentioning anger or irritation). These contrasts suggested that the publication might provoke strong and divergent reactions. As to provoking activity, the questionnaire asked: '[D]id it change – or could you imagine it changing – the way you visit tourists sites? If so, how?' To this there were 33 unequivocally positive responses and 5 negative (2 from respondents who felt they were already counter-tourists). The response to 'how' included general playfulness, adopting specific characters, greater criticality, writing, hunting for codes, and seeking out marginal spaces. Asked who they might give the book to, the answers included: friends (14), family (11), friends with children (7), guests (3), children (3), artists (2), rebels (1), travellers (1), walkers (1), heritage managers (1).

The responses suggest that kinship and conviviality may be crucial motors for counter-tourism, though whether the enthusiasm of these respondents translates into an emergent visitor practice of 'imaginative and embodied sociality' (Crouch, 2002: 214) remains another leap of faith; a gamble that a behaviour usually associated by non-specialists as passive and manipulated can be a vehicle for disrupting expectations and changing ideological narratives

and that the 'irrational move... once taken, enables the other rules to apply perfectly logically' (Crang and Thrift, 2000: 5); in other words, that the 'chora' will not be destroyed by its occupation. By investing in this 'leap', I moved my doctoral research from the testing and assembling of a potentially stable archive of exemplary interventions for specialists to a hopefully dispersive repertoire performed by tourists.

Figure 6.ia & 6ib *Aldwych Walk* (2011). Photos: Stephen Bottoms.

Figure 6.ii  An approximate costume, *Outlands Walk* (2010). Photo: Mark James.

Figure 6.iiia  Using 'things-meanings', *Outlands Walk* (2010). Photo: Mark James.
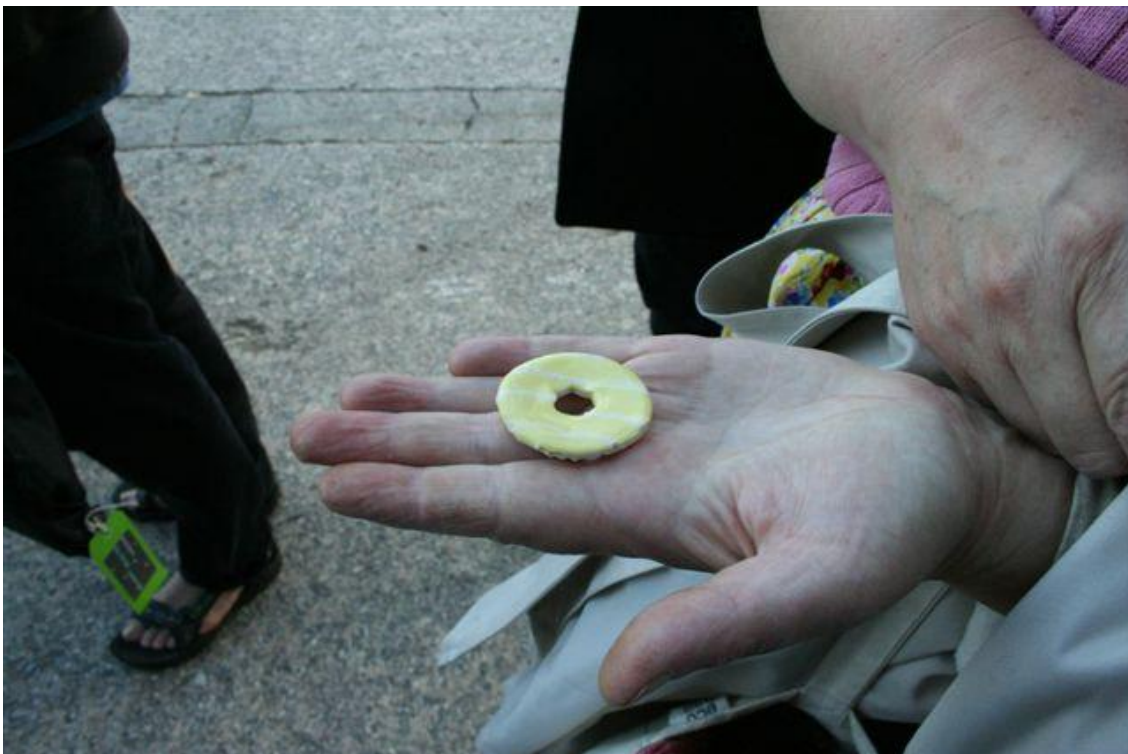


Figure 6.iiib  A ceramic Party Ring, one of the 'things-meanings', *Outlands Walk* (2010). Photo: Mark James.
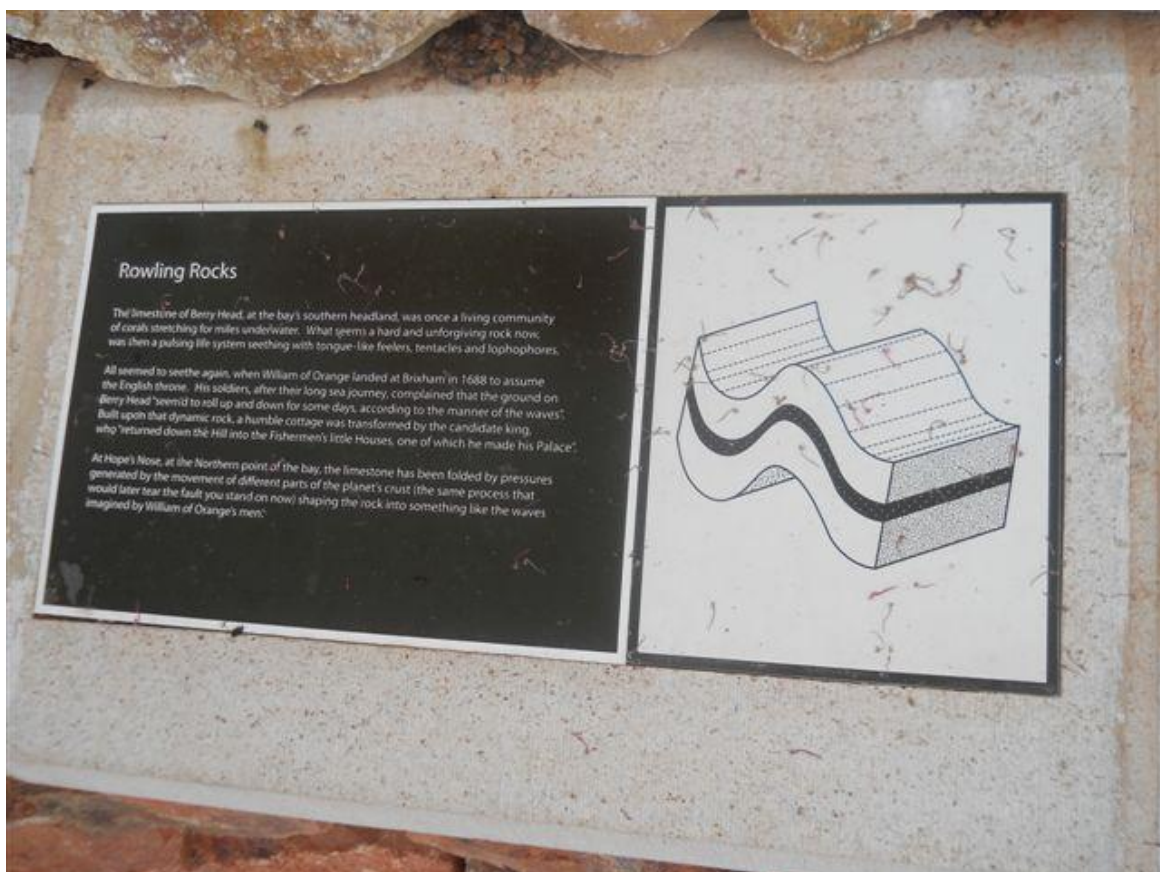
Figures 6.iva & 6ivb. Plaques on Rock Walk, Torquay. Photos: Phil Smith.

Figure 6.v  Visitors to Rock Walk, Torquay, pause in the rain to read plaque texts. Photo: Phil Smith.

Figure 6.via  A map monolith, Cockington Estate. Photo: Phil Smith.



Figure 6vib  The lacklustre Interpretation Room, Cockington Court. Photo: Phil Smith.

Figure 6.vii  Narrating deep geological time, *Filmed Walk* (2012). Photo: Kris Darby.

Figure 6.viii  Children's crusader costume, Castle Drogo, Devon, Photo: Phil Smith.

Figures 6.ixa & 6.ixb  Abjection and catastrophe in heritage, Bungay and Dunwich. Photos: Phil Smith.

Figure 6.x  Apocalyptic heritage site; former Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Orford Ness. Photo: Phil Smith.

Figures 6.xia & 6.xib  Counter-tourism forays with panel members (2011). Photos: Phil Smith.

Figure 6.xii   Engulfed tree trunk, Suffolk coast, 2011. Photo: Phil Smith.

Chapter Six: The practice of counter-tourism

**Please now read and view the following** – each is included as part of this thesis and is

enclosed in the thesis box:

*Counter-tourism: a pocketbook* (book);

*Counter-tourism: the handbook* (book);

*Tactics for counter-tourism* (DVD).


6.1

*Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook*, *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* and *Tactics For Counter-*

*Tourism* (dvd) are Practice as Research in that all are, to some degree, scores for future

performances. Each is a carefully considered scripted presentation of 'tactics' in written or

performed forms. They are attempts to translate this doctoral research into forms in which it

can be performed by others; they prepare the possibility for the emergence of the research in

performance form by those who encounter the books and videos. The two publications and

the 31 micro-films are not simply representations of, or extraneous products from, the

research (though they can be read and viewed as such), but, more significantly, they are

detailed proposals for the performance of the research, and as such they are intended as tests

of the validity of the research itself against a real or imagined performance of it. *Counter-*

*Tourism: The Handbook*, contains in its 'Afterword' a summation of the research findings in

popular form; the *Handbook* can be read as a manual of tactics from which any number,

small or large, might be taken and enacted, with the 'Afterword' serving as their theoretical

underpinning. However, the *Handbook* can also be read as a narrative whole; a score for a

partial 'life-quest', an extension of the idea of an 'art of living' (encountered on the

*GeoQuest*) to a trajectory through heritage spaces and institutions. It offers the reader the option not simply for limited counter-touristic visits, but for something more like an extended performance journey (metaphorically and literally). The development of these particular technique and methods of communication with a range of audiences is a reflexive Practice as Research process of 'know how' through which critical and theoretical 'know that' is expressed. Robin Nelson describes such an 'action research' as a 'conscious strategy to reflect upon established practice as well as to bring out "tacit knowledge".... in the first instance, a process of making the tacit more explicit' (Nelson, 2009: 127-8). Whatever the scale of its deployment, however, and in common with the *Pocketbook* and the 31 micro-films, the *Handbook* is first and foremost a notional performance of the research and a score for a literal one.

Conclusions:  Turning Tourists Into Performers

1

The overarching research trajectory

1.1

In 2009 I began this doctoral research with a series of specialist performances and

performative interventions in designated heritage sites. The choice of these sites arose partly

from previous developments in my performance practice and partly from an intuition that

these were sites with strong social and personal resonance for their visitors, with a tendency

to act as fanciful and nostalgic utopias, even temporary heterotopias. My initial interventions

were mostly performance walks, diversifying as I was able to place myself (or was invited)

into various interpretational narratives; creating texts for information signs and boards and

making with Siobhan Mckeown a subverted version of the tourist information film: *Wish you

were here?* (2009).[38]


1.2

Initially I tested out the effectiveness (or otherwise) of ideas I had developed as

'mythogeography' for the making of these interventions; principally, privileging a

multiplicity of meanings against the homogenization of sites and the importance of

trajectories against the bounding of place. I also deployed dramaturgical, textual and

pedagogical techniques and approaches which, given their specialized nature, were

sometimes in tension with the more expansive and democratic qualities of 'mythogeography'.

At the same time, through desk-based research, I identified and drew upon ideas from both

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[38] This film was first produced as a multi-screen film for 360 degrees projection and in that form was premiered in Plymouth in 2010. Subsequently, Siobhan Mckeown re-edited and re-formatted the film for a single screen. *Wish you were here?* was filmed and edited by Siobhan Mckeown, written by Phil Smith, performed by Jamie Lewis Hadley, Agni Haloulou and Phil Smith. It was supported by Innovation for the Creative and Cultural Industries, University of Plymouth. The single screen version is available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaWJfstB9jY&list=PLFF4166EB23C30ECA&index=1&feature=plpp_video

Tourism Studies and Performance Studies to inform and refine these interventions. I also drew on these disciplines to assess the effectiveness of ideas from 'mythogeography' in enabling the development and transformation of the interventions.

My intention was to test the interventions' ability to set visitors/audiences in disrupted and self-conscious motion through heritage tourism sites, hyper-sensitizing them to their fine textures, their conflicting and multiple narratives and to the accidental ironies of these places, and provoking the visitors to make their own performance-like interrogations of them. Together, the responses of research-panel members to their participation in the interventions, the evidence from field notes and the conclusions of my three case studies suggest that such interventions are generally effective in achieving these aims.

1.3

It was my assumption that the eventual 'audience' for the outcomes of my research (reports on practical findings, any effective theoretical approaches, invented or discovered techniques) would be found among specialists in performance practice, Performances Studies and Tourism Studies academics and heritage professionals, and that the findings would inform specialized professional, institutional or academic tactical, strategic and theoretical practices. What, however, became increasingly clear over the first eighteen months of the research, from panel members' responses by questionnaire, email and personal conversation, and from discussions at the two collective panel members' gatherings, was that despite their wide range of work backgrounds, often far from any specialization in heritage, tourism or performance, the panel members not only felt able and free to challenge and suggest refinements to the principles and details of the interventions but were also adopting and refashioning these

tactics for their own uses (for example, on visits to heritage sites with family or friends, in some cases re-walking my own performance routes on their own or with others).

At the same time as this was emerging from panel responses, the theoretical tools I was taking from Tourism Studies and Performance Studies, when added to that strain of 'nomadic thinking' from critical theory upon which I was drawing and certain tendencies within my own technical practice focused by what I have called the 'lenses' of mythogeography, were collectively challenging my assumptions about specialization. Rather than aspiring to add to or hone existing skills in, and tactics for, specialized performance and performative intervention my research took a general turn towards a broader dispersive practice of tactics within an increasingly relational aesthetics (Bourriard, 2002: 14-21). This was expressed in an intensified Practice-as-Research (PaR), leading to my research's concluding manifestation: a multifarious 'toolkit' in the form of publications and films and online presence, for the turning of tourists into performers.

1.4

This 'general turn' had begun during the phase of preparing and writing my case studies, when the findings from my early interventions were assessed through the 'lenses' of layering, rhizomatic interweaving, the making of 'anywheres' and the self-mythologising of the activist. From these interrogations came ideas about accessing a 'chorastic' space of tourism, a space between being and becoming, about making the 'agentive tourist' a self-reflexive performer and about the effectiveness of a double motion of, first, stripping away behaviours and, then, their return in a spectral form – all of which began to inform the democratic 'turn' in the research project. These trajectories were not simply changes or additions to content, but

reflected qualitative methodological change as developments in my research methods were

interwoven with novel findings, conclusions and new praxes.


2

The methodological narrative


2.1

Initially I deployed a multi-modal, practice-based research methodology with an emphasis on

participant observation. Although a mythogeographical research project was always likely to

be theoretically and methodologically eclectic, I consciously sought to avoid the pitfall that

Kevin Meethan had identified in work of:

> theoretical, as much as methodological,
> eclecticism… One possible outcome… is… a form
> of relativism, where all that can be said is that some
> theories are different from others – without
> attempting to say what utility they may have or may
> not have… the purpose of theory [being]… to
> synthesise and explain and generalise. (Meethan,
> 2001: 2-3)

For this I drew, preventatively, on a distinction I had previously made between diversity at

theoretical and empirical levels (Smith, 2010a: 113-6), according to which theories

(academic, speculative, non-respectable) within a multiplicity are each tested against

evidence gathered in their own generalised fields and according to their own terms and

valorised according to their ability to 'synthesise and explain and generalise' that empirical

material. At the same time any such theory is tested against their relations with other theories

with a view to exposing the activity of an 'offstage' of ideological meaning-making

expressed through these relations over, above and through the limits of their apparently

discrete disciplines. Thus, guiding my initial research methodology was an approach to

evidence and ideas that emphasized multiplicity of sources and methods, while avoiding

relativism by giving equal emphasis to the testing of any theory against the evidence gathered

in its own field (and on its own terms), and by privileging relations between (rather than

syntheses of) different theories and criticisms as part of the material production of ideas. This

was intended to stave off the synthesis of information into theory, keeping different

'informations' in motion about each other (making their relations explicit) and treating

nascent theories as organising narratives open to question.

This approach has enabled me to explore and engage with geologists, local historians,

National Trust conservators, geographers, gardeners, ecologists, hydrologists, zoologists,

architects, public art consultants and County Archaeologists, among others, in discussions

and projects crossing and interweaving their different disciplines. (A similarly disciplined

limited eclecticism has guided my interweaving of ideas from Performance Studies and

Tourism Studies.) Many of these interdisciplinary encounters have been literally mobile ones,

including meetings on the GeoQuest, numerous site meetings and visits, a walk guided

spontaneously by a local historian at Weston-super-Mare and on, or for, various 'mis-guided

tours'. This created shifting contexts where specialists have been challenged to respond to a

flow of spaces and meanings.

2.2

In the first phase of my research, consisting of the making and participant observation of

twelve performance interventions or performance-like interventions, I was often both

performer and participant-observer. My initial assessments in mid-2010 were focused on

identifying my research panel members' experiences of and engagements with these events

and with the performedness and producedness of the touristic/heritage sites in which they took place, and any moves on their part towards or away from an agentive and performative site-making behaviour in these sites. I was guided towards what I might expect, or hope, to find through these assessments by Michel de Certeau's model of tactics by which, in everyday life, a person:

> creates for himself a space in which he finds *ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation. (1984: 30, emphases in original)

My preliminary assessments suggested that the interventions successfully encouraged event participants to experience sites in multiple ways and as places of multiple meanings (and to perceive this experiencing as in some way to be both novel and resistant to or subversive of the control of these sites and their meanings). Furthermore, there was some acknowledgement that for some participants this had opened up an ongoing 'way of seeing' rather than a single experience or series of separate and bounded novel experiences.

2.3

Less clear at this time was whether these interventions were triggering anything more emergent than a series of subjective, mostly unshared changes in 'ways of seeing'. However, the unfolding qualities of 'interweaving' and an 'art of living' during *A Tour of Sardine Street* and *GeoQuest* and the evolving of a disparate 'project community' made up of those engaging directly, distantly or virtually with the interventions, including panelists, other audiences, collaborating artists, those participating in or engaging with publications, films, signs and exhibitions, Mytho Geography Facebook friends (2160 in November 2010, 2423 in

January 2012) and those using the Mythogeography website (www.mythogeography.com),
provided enough evidence of the potential for emergent dispersal to challenge the limitation,
central to my original research methodology, of predominantly assessing serial individual
receptions.

2.4

Driven by the above factors, from around the time of the writing of the first case study
onwards I increasingly shifted from testing for exemplary tactical practices by participant
observation towards the teasing out, through an experimental PaR, of a strategy for the
dissemination of these tactics for intervention as part of a general testable strategy for
'performing tourism' that could be accessible and practicable for the general tourist/visitor.
That broad aspiration was realized by the end of the research period, but the content of what
was to be disseminated had, by that time, changed significantly; broadly from the
dissemination of materials necessary for specialized live performance (for the provoking of
de Certeau's model tactics) to the direct dissemination of everyday tactics for a performance-
like or performative tourism. The motor for that change was a complex one. It was driven
partly by a broad, formal methodological evolution as part of the methodology itself : '[A]n
emergent design... characteristic of... inductive thinking, i.e. making sense of what you find
after you've found it' (Gillham, 2000: 6-7). It was also shaped by the interweaving of that
change with smaller-scale tensions and resolutions emerging within the range of live
performance and performative interventions deployed in my first participant-observed
experiments and then evolving under the pressures of experiments in dispersal and
dissemination.

3

From methodology to outcomes, a process of interweaving

3.1

Given that heritage tourism is not only informed by, but at least partly produces, national, local and communal identities (Hunter, 1996: 1-2; Mandler, 1996: 109), and that this production is entangled with a self-making that is, as a revenant of the 'pilgrim's progress', present within modern tourism (Dunkley, *et al*., 2011: 861-2), there is a tension between these processes and mythogeography's antipathy to totalizing, bounding, or homogenizing identity (with, at worst, an advocacy for a multiplicity of identities). Consistent with mythogeography's tendency, I adopted for my mis-guided tours/performance walks a hybrid presence resistant to psychological or representational characterisation, drawing on the functionalism of the mainstream tour guide. In these performances, in an approach comparable to Allison Smith's co-option of, and entanglement with, the antiquarian tics and reactionary memorializing of Civil War reenactment (Schneider, 2011: 167-71), I not only spoke in a partly autobiographical, partly irrational voice, but also recruited the very voices from traditional guiding – the authoritative guiding voice, storytelling, moments of characterization – that I had explicitly set myself against or in distinction to, only for each one of these to then break down or become swamped by the other parts.

3.2

A mis-guided tour seeks to move between different theatrical, performance or performative registers – these might include everyday informality, an explicit fabrication of everyday informality and hypersensivity to context (at large and micro scales). There are forefronted

shifts into character, quoted character, immersed character, authoritative lecture, lying and confessing, irony, over-stating and back-peddling, autobiographical and affective personal reflection and 'sharing', moves between confiding and 'withdrawn' description, blatant gimmicks, and then the 'owning up' to the use of such a variety of techniques (see Figure 7.ia and Figure 7.ib). Making explicit these movements between registers is intended to forefront how each of the registers has a different ideological-reproductive function (and how they might function as different parts of various ideological productions). The intention is not to produce a 'pure' non-ideological truth, but to allow the audience to sense the movement of different discourses about and around each other, allowing the audience to make observations and judgments about the origins (forces and relations of production and reproduction) of certain ideological narratives (for example, heritage), and to resist any redemption of the community of the tour though their empathic identification with those represented by it.


3.3

These performances sit within the context of tendencies within contemporary performance described by Hans-Thies Lehmann as 'postdramatic', characterized by 'disintegration, dismantling and deconstruction' (2006: 44) , 'de-hierarchization of theatrical means' (79), and an 'experience of simultaneity' (87) sited on a plane of synchronicity and myth: 'not a story read from... beginning to end, but a thing held full in-view the whole time... a landscape' (Fuchs, 1996: 93). All of this matched the content and dynamics of my interventions in heritage, tendencies identified by Paul Johnson as 'in theory' suitable for performance in engagement with heritage and potentially serving 'a postdramatic museum theatre, which does not operate through dramatic representation but which subverts or substitutes the component parts of dramatic theatre' (Johnson, 2011: 54). However, such a

characterisation did not match my attempts to imagine how such postdramatic tactics of intervention might be passed on to others. One specialist talking to others clearly bounds and reinforces a closed identity rather than opening it up to de-hierarchization or dismantling. When I sought speculative models for dispersal these were of 'cells' and 'tight associations' drawn from political activism (Smith 2010a: 163-5, Smith 2010c). When I attempted to deploy, or simply advocate, them to my disparate 'project community', they were ignored; in the context of heritage and tourism sites they were (and presented themselves as) prescriptive, limiting, abstract and impractical, unconnected to the everyday uses of the sites.

3.4

In Autumn 2010 I attempted to develop some of the nascent interweaving aspects I had identified in the 'project community', characterized by its overlapping lines of connection rather than formal organization. My first initiative was to loosely centralize it, attempting to create a model for discussion and dissemination based first around the research panel and its periphery; a web-based discussion group was set up with an online 'chatroom', but this was barely used and I soon abandoned it as inappropriate. Trying to progress beyond this impasse, I returned to a paradigmatic concept in Tourism Studies that I had encountered very early on in the desk-based part of my research: the agentive tourist (Crouch *et al.*, 2001: 254, Meethan, *et al.*, 2006: xiii, Wearing, *et al.*, 2009: 49). The emergence of this term had reflected a growing awareness among those conducting ethnographic study among actual tourists that, rather than the passive dupes described by a Marxian-miserablist strand of criticism, tourists play key roles in the production of tourism. 'Agentive tourists' construct

variations, assemblages and sociability from the attractions they are offered, subjecting the sites they visit to their own narratives, relations, associations and reconstructions.

In one sense this was enormously encouraging to my research: the kind of multiplicity of viewpoint and assemblage of meanings from many things that I was seeking to encourage among audiences for my interventions was, apparently, regularly observed among ordinary tourists, if not always in a self-reflective or self-reflexive manner. In another sense, however, when it came to dispersal there was a profound and debilitating disconnection between such agency on the part of  ordinary tourists and the package of specialist skills within a complex performance and textual practice that I was preparing to pass on to them. The way beyond this problem first emerged at a small scale and in a practical mode – the production of *A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* – but in a form that I was able to 'roll out' across the project as a whole.

3.5

*A Sardine Street Box of Tricks* was produced through numerous false starts and re-writings, practicing Matthew Barney's model of delaying product and returning obsessively to one's starting point until something unplanned emerges (Spector, 2002: 5-6). What did finally emerge was a 'leap' from the souvenir pamphlet produced to accompany the *Water Walk* to a handbook/toolkit designed for audiences/readers that had an unexpectedly vivacious 'afterlife'. The development of 'counter-tourism' was the result of the combination of the principle of the 'agentive tourist' with the practical model of the toolkit, engaging existing popular, 'lay' skills of assemblage and narration while offering to the counter-tourist the self-reflexivity and self-awareness of mis-guide-performers.

3.6

In making this change I was partly deploying (and partly being deployed by) what Jenny

Hughes, Jenny Kidd and Catherine McNamara have called 'decomposition' in a research

process:

> moments when designed and improvised research
> processes deteriorate in confrontation with
> experiences that confound expectations of an
> orderly, rule-bound, habitable universe… moments
> of practice and research which disintegrate or are
> unmade as part of an encounter with exceptional
> experience, and positions these moments as a
> troubling and potentially enriching part of a research
> process. (Hughes, *et al*., 2011: 188)

In my case, the 'decomposition', partly the result of a series of disappointing dispersal

attempts, eventually worked to the advantage of the research when I was able to acknowledge

that the 'exceptional experience' I was encountering was the effect of the 'chorastic' terrain,

rather than my interventions across it, freeing me from the burden of repetition and dispersal

accreting around intervention and revealing the grounds for a more quotidian means by which

to 'confound expectations'; a potential disintegration and de-composition (with some element

of abjection in this un-making) of the existing discourse of heritage, at the same time

subjecting my research to a similar process. This combination of unraveling and interweaving

is expressed in *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook* which is, to some extent, my research thesis

in a popular form, including a concluding essay in which the research trajectory and the key

theoretical themes described here are summarized and which makes clear the moments of

'decomposition' involved in the making of the 'counter-tourism' idea.

3.7

By making tourists rather than guides the primary agents of intervention, I 'added value' to

my tactics; broadening the potential market for them. Visitor groups of friends and families

constituted existing 'cells' and 'tights associations' rather than my having to try to speculate or hector them into being. This was partly a looping back to mythogeographical aspirations for participative 'lay-geographers', but now with a workable model. The potential site of my practice was itself dispersed: from space affordant to and tolerant of (mis)guided tours, to any place of heritage tourism. Extraordinary heritage spaces are not required, but, in tune with a general situationist principle, '[T]he surest chances of liberation lie in what is most familiar' (Vaneigem, 2003: 23), any 'everyday' heritage space is sufficiently potent. This turn to a more general space of heritage tourism was complemented, theoretically, by the concept of 'chora', as a characteristic of tourism spaces in general, providing the theoretical grounds for describing a mediated agency through a space somewhere between being and becoming, temporarily resistant to obligations of exchange and commerce, a temporary evasion of identities and hierarchy, a potential space of transformation, a transitory space that a particular kind of performance or performativity might be able to provoke and sustain for a while (see Figure 7.iia and Figure 7.iib). This formulation matched my earliest hunch about the particular resonance of heritage spaces, while taking account of the ideological codes of tourism and heritage by placing (through the double movement of exorcism, then spectral resurrection) the instability of such codes in a kind of pre-ideological space, where they might, albeit briefly, be subjected to an active poetics of subjectivity: '[T]he museum, the trail, the pamphlet are structured spaces, texts... but it is possible that the constructed order of these is punched and torn open' (Game, 1991: 217). Rather than planning heterotopias, a counter-tourism project could disperse the means to prepare the ground ('chora') as a precondition for the remaking of heritage space as an 'anywhere' (Hodge, *et al*., 2006: 110-1). This challenges specialization within counter-tourism, disrupting any distinction within the dispersal of tactics between tourists and artists, or between art and life. The underlying strategy of counter-tourism, and its democratized grounds, is that the familiar forms of

heritage tourism can be exorcised and then spectrally re-enacted, to trigger the 'chorastic'

qualities of transformative potential in heritage sites. And this informs *Counter-Tourism: The*

*Handbook* and *Counter-Tourism: A Pocketbook* written under the pseudonym 'Crab Man'[39]

(having a separate *Pocketbook* is designed to serve as a simple gateway to counter-tourism,

while everything in the *Handbook* returns to the *Pocketbook*'s tactics as the building blocks

of its broader strategies and less informal initiatives), the dvd guide to counter-tourism tactics

made with Siobhan Mckeown which, while supplies last, is to be distributed with copies of

the *Handbook* and is also available online in the form of a series of 31 short films, and the

website at [www.countertourism.net](www.countertourism.net). Each, and together, seek to pass on tactics that first

parody and then resurrect in an excessive (exaggerated or drained) manner the etiquette of the

heritage visit in a double movement:

> [A]cts become sedimented precisely through the
> orbit of their historical repetition and desedimented
> through… exorbitant variations on such repetitions,
> variations which, however, also involve repetition,
> citation, rehearsal, and parody. (McKenzie, 2001:
> 168)

This attempts to open or de-stratify 'chorastic' space while opening the tourist to their

'chorastic' potential.


3.8

The tactics passed on in the toolkit of handbooks, films and website are intended to make

visits performance-like. They are tools for a visitor to produce a visit knowingly, to

'experience the world as enchanted. As creatures in transition... apprehending themselves in

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[39] Writing, and performing in the films, under the pseudonym 'Crab Man' is an attempt to dispossess myself as far as possible of ownership of the tactics, to set the performance tone encouraging the reader/viewer to accept the invitations to perform or adopt loose personae, and to make clear that the criticisms of the heritage industry are pranksterish-political ones aimed at its ideological productions and social relations rather than personal ones aimed by me at specific individuals who work within it.

the process of transformation' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 207). Visitors can deploy fragments of touristic behaviour and post-dramatic theatricality, testing the sites through pleasure, excess and sensual, even sexual, engagement, through moments of play and pretending; remaking these sites through their use of them. No longer a visit *to* artefacts or *to* heritage objects; the 'thing' of the visit is its own eventness. Starting from simple provocations, the toolkit of books and films also offers the more enthusiastic of counter-tourists the tactics for preparing more considered dramaturgical interventions; for the most engaged there is the invitation to 'infiltrate' the production of heritage within heritage institutions, though even in the most complex and far-reaching of such personal journeys, the simple ambulatory exploration ('drift' or dérive) is always the primary and underpinning tactic.

3.9

I have been mindful of, and sought to avoid, the dangers inherent in work such as this that might be seen to be part of the 'social turn' to participatory art and relational aesthetics (Bishop, 2012: 11-40), such as manufacturing 'vehicle[s] for training citizens to seek "individual solutions"… offer[ing] therapeutic rehabilitation, temporary pride, or imaginative escape' (Jackson, 2011: 27) or in my own privileging of pleasure as a criterion for enacting the tactics as, potentially, 'practices that seek to create a harmonious space of inter-subjective encounter – ie., those that "feel good" – [that] risk neutralizing the capacity of critical reflection' (Jackson, 2011: 47). As well as presenting a continuum of variable practice along which counter-tourists can move, refining, developing and challenging their involvement, I have also included 'impossible', excessive tactics which, for almost all counter-touristic visitors and heritage spaces will only ever be feasible as fantasies[40]; tactics that, drawing on 'a reassertion of art's inventive forms of negation' (Bishop, 2012: 284), are intended to be as

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[40] Such as the suggestion that counter-tourists might produce real-size 2D cut-outs of the silhouettes of iconic buildings and place them in unlikely landscapes (see page 31 of *Counter-tourism: the handbook).*

antagonistic and disturbing to a complacent, self-satisfied counter-tourism (in which 'the system counters resistance... with the pleasure of resistance itself' [William Bogard, cited McKenzie, 2001: 188]) as to any heritage site in which they are deployed.

3.10

Within the turn to dispersal, an impetus towards utopian performance remains. The nature of this has changed, however, from a seeking for an exemplary and pre-figurative communitarianism in the 'cell' of the drifting or tour group:

> the potential… of feeling myself part of a public newly-constituted, held together in the moment of performance by a filament of faith. (Dolan, 2005: 99)

Instead, the aims have shifted to a playful re-enactment of fragmentary exemplariness in the chorastic ground of touristic heritage, sensitizing participants to what Rebecca Schneider has called 'fugitive moments' in heritage,

> (M)oments when the past flashes up *now* to present us with its own alternative futures – futures we might choose to realize differently… leaky, syncopated, and errant moments… Might the past's fugitive moments not only remind us of yesterday's sense of tomorrow, but also compose the sense again and offer, without expiration date, a politic of possibility? (Schneider, 2012: 180, emphasis in the original).

It is such moments and possibilities that counter-tourism encourages tourists to re-re-enact. Rather than the constitution of an alternative totalized heritage, creating a conflict between radical and mainstream heritage, or an attempt 'terroristically' to wholly subvert or undermine the heritage industry, the tactics of 'counter-tourism' resonate with those tactics of counter-terrorism that involve the infiltration, distraction and redirection of insurgents or potential insurgents, redeploying these tactics to accumulative rather than suppressive ends:

> it's a matter of increasing the density of ... circulation, and of solidarities to the point that the territory becomes unreadable, opaque to all authority… Every practice brings a territory into existence… The rule is simple: the more territories there are superimposed on a given zone, the more circulation there is between them, the harder it will be for power to get a handle on them. (The Invisible Committee, 2009: 108)

3.11

The arch of this research has not left 'mythogeography' untouched. The accessibility of the counter-tourism project is very different to the 'education-by-ordeal' posed by *Mythogeography* (2010). Rather than the complex and enigmatic framing of that book, the publications and films of counter-tourism are framed to be welcoming and understandable. However, what has been retained is the idea of quest, and *Counter-tourism: the handbook* does offer a personal and potentially transforming journey to its reader and an engagement with ideas as complex, though never as arcane, as those in *Mythogeography*. This is mirrored in my practice: where Cathy Turner found it 'hard to know' what kind of event *A Tour of Sardine Street* might be (see Chapter Three, 2.5 above), the primary engagement of counter-tourism is a visit to a heritage site that is meaningful to any tourist.

During the course of this research, new ideas – such as abjection, 'chora' and the revelation of apocalypse – were added to the 'centreless orrery' of mythogeography without the overall idea of the revealing motion of ideas about each other being qualitatively changed or challenged. The 'lenses' chosen for this research were affected, if unevenly: while 'layering' and 'interweaving' were not fundamentally altered, 'self-mythologizing' became much less about the accumulation of limited-mythic personae and far more concerned with a hollowing out of such roles and devising ways of operating in spectral and 'transparent' ways, while the

ground for making 'anywheres' shifted from streets and urban voids to places far closer to the engines of official ideological production. Most profound, however, was the change in practical strategies for the dissemination of mythogeographical ideas and practices: in place of an (often disappointed) aspiration to create new 'cells' or 'tight associations' of activists, counter-tourism generated a model for using existing (social, friendship and family) groups as such agents.

3.12

In the final experimental phase of my research I began to hand over, in what is modeled to be an accessible form, the tactics of hypersensitization, self-disruption, interrogation of site and assemblage of a performance-like tourism (including a conscious re-making of the meanings of heritage sites). Within this dispersing and democratizing the various concluding outputs of the research are attempts to realize and disseminate the limited nomadic in thinking and action, and the postdramatic and transformative in performance. It is hoped that, taken together, the various toolkits might lead agentive tourists on their own social and personal pilgrimage from consumer-producers of tourism to performer-producers, invoking the 'chorastic' qualities of heritage sites as grounds for turning themselves from tourists into performers (self-conscious producers of their tourism).

Throughout this project, driving this research has been the principle of multiplicity. I have moved from exploring the application of that principle within the more contained and limited contexts of live performance and performative interventions, for which a crude accumulation could form the basis of effective multiplicity, to a broader dispersal (for which the containment of performance became an inhibition to multiplicity). As my research has opened out, establishing and increasing multiplicity has required more complex and

paradoxical forms of accumulation, comparable to rhizomatic interweaving, and a different

placing of myself in relation to it:

> not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather
> in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the
> number of dimensions one already has available –
> always $n - 1$ – (the only way the one belongs to the
> multiple: always subtracted). Subtract the unique
> from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at $n - 1$
> dimensions. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 7)

In this case, *n* is the practice of intervention and *1* is myself: $n - 1 = $ *counter tourism*.
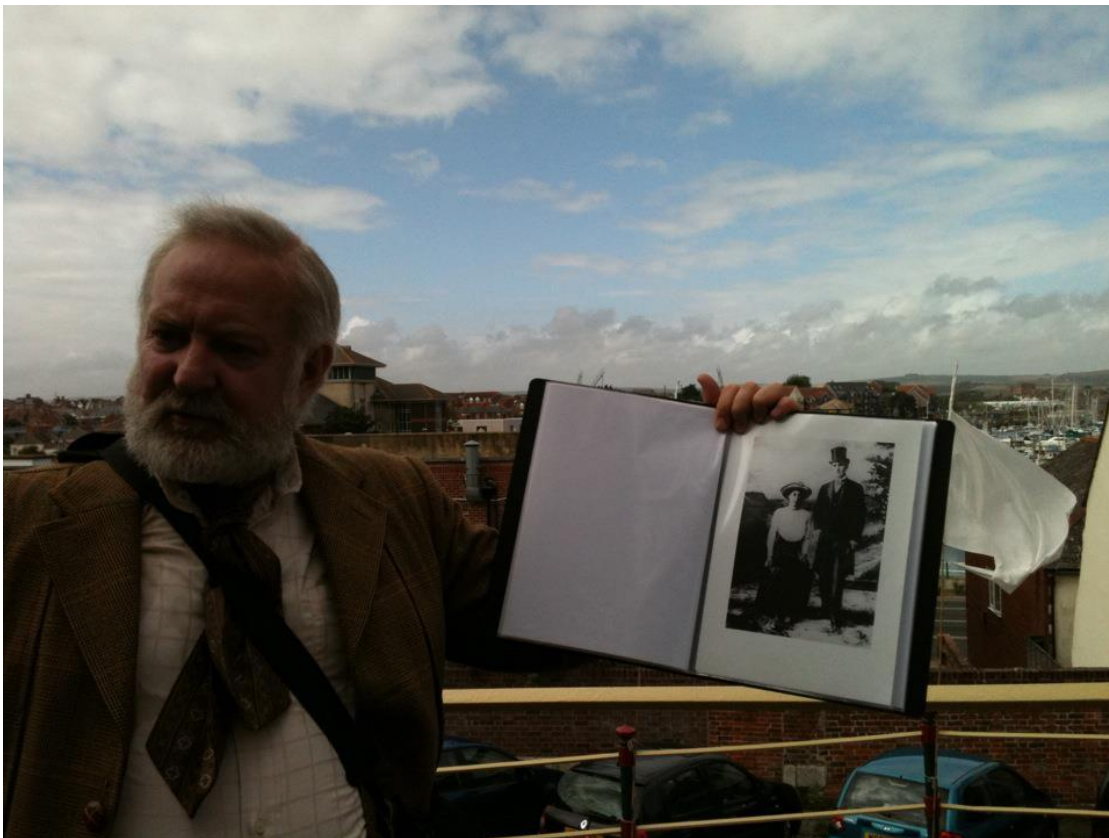
Figures 7.ia & 7.ib  Playing with personae, *Shapes*, b-side Festival, Weymouth. Photos: Jaydee Swarbrick.
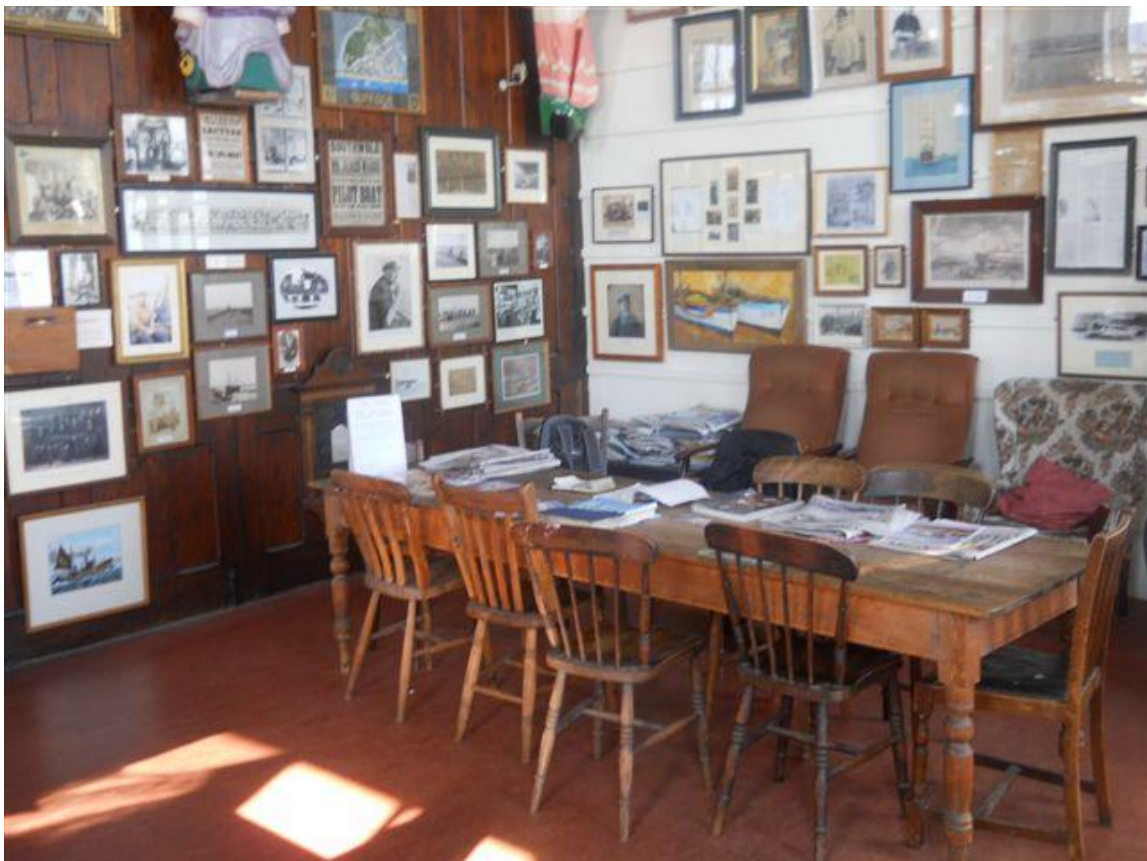
7.iia & 7iib. Resonant heritage spaces; a church built within and from the ruins of another at Coverthithe, and the Sailors Reading Room, Southwold. Photos: Phil Smith

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Appendices

Appendices 1-4 are enclosed in the thesis box. Appendices 6-18 follow this list of appendices
in the order as listed below.

1/ *Mythogeography*, 2010. Axminster: Triarchy. (Published book, enclosed in thesis box).

2/ Mckeown, Siobhan, 2009. *A mis-guided tour: beer, beef and royal steps*. (DVD, enclosed
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3/ Mckeown, Siobhan, 2010. *The devil's footprints.* (DVD, enclosed in thesis box.)

4/Mckeown, Siobhan, 2010 *GeoQuest*.  (DVD, enclosed in thesis box.)

5/ 'Crab walking and mythogeography' in *Walking, writing and performance:
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6/ The mis-guide tour and the standard tour – a study of contrasting tour-guiding practices in
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14/ *WEST QUARTER WATERwalk*, 2010.  (Scanned copy of pamphlet distributed to those attending Water Walk, 2010.)

15/ *GeoQuest* details

16/ Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending *GeoQuest*

17/Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending *A Tour of Sardine Street*

18/Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending the *Water Walk*

# CRAB WALKING AND MYTHOGEOGRAPHY

## Phil Smith

### Story

A few years ago I 'chose' to walk. Before then walking had been a function of something else: getting to work, to the cinema, collecting the children from nursery. Walking outside of this functionality was to enter others in disguise: health, leisure. 'Strolling' was tiresome.

Even as I moved from making plays for theatre-designated spaces to site-specific performances – working with Wrights & Sites from 1997 – travel to, from and about their sites remained stubbornly functional.[1] I might have made the leap to 'site', but I had dragged the limitations of the theatre with me. Landscape as backdrop. Unexpected events and appearances barely acknowledged. I sought familiarity in sites analogous to studios and theatres. Upsets and alarms while working on the *Pilot Navigation* part of Wrights & Sites' *The Quay Thing* (1998) sent me running for cover.[2] I had yet to understand that a site might – and might be encouraged to – perform.

In discussions about *The Quay Thing* within Wrights & Sites, our enjoyment of the initial explorations of our sites began to stand out from the performances in them. A site's own performativity was something I began to take seriously. We debated how a process – in which porous sites had begun to close up and people who had welcomed us had backed off – might be reversible. The theatricality onto which I had clung in anxiety began to show itself as a distraction. I began to generalize about the opportunities of site-specificity rather than make particular excuses for having missed them. Without Wrights & Sites I doubt if I would have followed through the implications of these reactions.

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The result was an aesthetic practice of walking. This walking began as an anti-theatrical act, and while elements of theatricality have resurfaced in its practice, that tension remains. And interdependency too: for the site-based performances of Wrights & Sites revealed places to be as performed as the performances in them. This understanding – at first as a problem to be removed – would eventually inform the development of walking into something more tactical.

Preparing for *The Quay Thing* had been gruelling, overfull with surprises: quiet canal banks would suddenly erupt with drunken Land Rovers, local soldiers would become enthused and want to see 'the whole film', the roar of passing express trains would overwhelm text, the stink from a pet food factory would infiltrate everything synaesthetically – these were moments when the sites would perform at the expense of and despite the performance. It took a long time to realize that this was the performance. This was the specificity. And that the site-artist's work was simply to provoke these specificities, to accelerate their decay, to destabilize their poise. And that we should only make the performances that 'performed us', not importing themes or fictions, but at most our associations, memories, misunderstandings: our mythogeographies just like those of our sites.

After *The Quay Thing* my first response was to retreat from these challenges, hiding from public spaces in more controllable private ones, creating *Bubbleworld* (1999) for my back garden. Parallel to my own retreat, Wrights & Sites were working out the consequences of these difficult experiences and part of this, crucially, was the organizing of a 'drift', an exploratory wander partly inspired by the situationist journeying theorized by Guy Debord. The first suggestion for this seems to have come from Simon Persighetti during a highly fractious meeting. My retreat from public sites and the neo-Symbolist theatrical qualities of the pieces I was presenting as Wrights & Sites satellite performances had created disquiet. In the debris of an alcohol-fuelled debate about site-specificity the positive suggestion for some sort of non-performance-based exploration, a reassertion of site, had been made.

> Could we not really derive, i.e. drift?
> Could that not include a fairly spontaneous mix of buses and walking?
> ...I don't want to do a performance as such – not in an overt way, anyway.
> Could we carry things like chalk, bread crumbs, icing sugar and leave trails?
> (Email from Cathy Turner, 21 November 1999)

It was necessary, certainly for me, to be forced to move further from theatre before I could begin to grasp the theatricality of sites themselves.

## Granule

19th December was also a chance to test out some of the thinking that had developed from my earlier, opportunistic (mis)use of the word 'mythogeography' – this had led us, via 'psychogeography', the writing of Iain Sinclair, the work of Mike Pearson and his

Re:bus Drift, Exeter, UK, Wrights & Sites (2000). Photo: Phil Smith.

walks/performances, and much much else, to the situationists' 'dérive' or 'drift' – a spontaneous and playful travelling and research through cities, seeking out those spaces where ambience resists the imperatives and spectacle of capital; seeking through a process of détournement (the redeployment of sclerotic art forms) to make 'situations', locations where people can make experiments in new ways of urban living. At least that's what I thought I was partly trying to do. It was almost certainly very different for everyone else.

(from Phil Smith, Re:Bus, document distributed privately, 2002)

Re:Bus was the first of many walkings that I began to infuse with the exploratory and contrary qualities that both 'rough' and neo-Symbolist theatres had previously held for me, discovering that at a distance from theatre I could still engage with the performativities of particular aesthetic forms, an aggressive 'détournement' being an effective motor for reclaiming the remnants of these historical forms. I found I was freer, more autobiographical and no longer isolated in the process of making. At the same time, there was a search for generalities: for categories of space, for geometrical forms, for a vocabulary of atmospheres, as much a wander through ideals and ideological motions as an excavation of granular, highly textured, particle-like, component properties and events.

The following passage – from a privately distributed documentation of a series of drifts – suggests just how granular the experience of a drift could be:

Another dread space appears unexpectedly on a diversion from gothic spaces; the tops of Little Haldon, 60 years-disused aerodrome, obsolete sign 'Dangerous Boar Running', deglazed skeletal remains of the 30s Violet industry, St Necton's at Ashcombe dedicated to a decapitated martyr foxgloves growing from his blood, the farm that ate a bishop's palace, the red-eyed black wisht-hounds, heard but never seen, guilty Saxon memories of doing nothing as Athelstan's men came for their Celtic neighbours, a former observatory that houses Hitler's private telephone, an unravelling planet on its lawn, Bishop Grandisson sending a raping, murdering priest to lonely Lidwell Chapel. Now ruined, one standing gloom wall looms like a one-eyed monster ...

(from Phil Smith, *A Year of Walking*, document distributed privately, 2004)

Into this swirl of detail, of something like local history, of rubble and rubbish and of disrupted expectations, the autobiographical and the neo-Platonic 'world' of ideal forms were plunged together, both part of the currents and the navigators of them. The term 'mythogeography' had been embraced by Wrights & Sites as a shorthand for our resistance to the monocular-identity manufactured by Tourist Boards and Local Councils: a pseudo-discipline that equally values unbuilt proposals, murders, victims, lies and rumours, subjective associations, places of intense atmosphere, lost histories, unusual sightings, gossips, ghosts, diaphanous traces of the secret state, reserve collections, library stacks, wormholes, old signage that has become hieroglyphic and the banal details of mass production as much as any official historiography.



Drifting alone, Prangins, Switzerland (2003).

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But I was trying to push the category further, first as a set of general principles and second as an accumulative practice.

I sought out alternatives, complementary or otherwise, to situationist theory – in science and pseudo-science, in esoterica, in arts and literatures, and in other practices of disrupted walking. I found traces of a culturally sensitized, astute walking among early twentieth-century 'trampers', who were using tramping as a conscious disrupting of regular lives ('Tramping is first of all a rebellion against housekeeping … You may escape from the spending mania …') and keen to resist such regularizing of their walks ('Mile averages are a curse. So are definite programmes').[3] In the case of Stephen Graham, there was both an avoidance of the romantic imposition on the landscape ('imagination, though very charming, is nearly always wrong. Knowledge of living detail shows the world to be full of the unexpected, the unanticipated, the unimagined')[4] and an awareness of the possibility of transforming walking itself by taking routes that disrupted the uses of the built environment and the functionality of the walking:

> There is a type of tramping which belongs to the future; a new type, and an even more fascinating one, and that is the taking of cross-sections of the world, the cutting across all roads and tracks, the predispositions of humdrum pedestrians, and making a sort of virginal way across the world.[5]

Graham's description of 'tramps' (walks) in London are similar to accounts of psychogeographic 'drifts'. He is super-democratic, while articulating the materiality of ideological forces at work in geographies: 'Civilisation … is not familiar with its own ground plan.[…] Maps ought to be free for all […]. Wall-maps are busy studying you while you are thinking of other things. You are reading the *Arabian Nights* but Arabia is reading you'. As with maps so with the mapped: '… put no destination label on your rucksack […]. You are not choosing what you shall see in the world, but are giving the world an even chance to see you'.[6] I have been influenced by this displacing of the 'eye' of the walker. In *The Crab Walks*, I give the audience modelling clay to make a head for carrying while walking. Similar to the hindu *Darshana*, looking becomes an active, material force.

Inspired by Graham's urban walking another 'tramper' of the time, Geoffrey Murray, saw the novelty, at least, of a gaze being turned on itself:

> I believe that a new walk, which will develop … is the zoological walk. The great game reserves of the world will shortly be as accessible to an Englishman as Whipsnade is today to anyone living in, say, Southampton … And at the other extreme will come, I predict, the development of walks undertaken in pursuit of the 'Natural History of Streets'. This is a study full of possibilities. There are as many interesting characters to be met in the back-streets of cities as in the tap-rooms of country inns …[7]

While Murray's 'new walk' is deeply compromised, transferring a colonial zoology to an exercise in class similar to 'slumming', what is interesting is an exoticizing of the 'everyday', equally and contemporaneously present in the work of neo-Romantic writer Arthur Machen,

author of *The London Adventure* or *The Art of Wandering* whose work is filled with places dissonant with 'dread', researched through his exploratory walking:

> [H]e who cannot find wonder, mystery, awe, the sense of a new world and an undiscovered realm in the places by the Gray's Inn Road will never find those secrets elsewhere, not in the heart of Africa ... 'The matter of our work is everywhere present' wrote the old alchemists ... All the wonders lie within a stone's throw of King's Cross Station.[8]

These nodes of esoteric abstraction, empirical science deeply compromised by its oppressive involvement in space and place and the complicit empire of the everyday, racked with contradictions of the democratic and the exotic, are the crossed spaces in which I began to sense a tainted and barely self-aware tradition that might be sufficiently diaphanous to claim for mythogeography.

To these phenomena I would subsequently add the landscape paintings of Paul Nash, the colours of Powell and Pressburger, the morbid locations of Romero movies, the Prague/non-Prague of Gustav Meyrink, Alfred Kubin and Paul Leppin, the Budapest/non-Budapest of Géza Csáth, my own Bely-inspired walks down the Nevsky Prospect in 1990 and 1991, and similarly spatialized and desperate attempts to 'catch up' with sciences that I had ignored 25 years earlier. Now, when walking, these sciences began to bathe my field of vision with spectral geometries of optic array, Clifford Algebras, extended organisms, electro-magnetic fields and quantum entanglements.

The drifts and explorations continued (the re-walkings with others of part of our initial Re:Bus drift, three Z Worlds walks in search of micro-worlds), interspersed with performances (*Forest Vague Panic* [2001] in my attic continuing the preoccupations of *Bubbleworld*: that is, autobiography and a neo-Symbolist floating of associations). Emphasis was tipped back towards site in collective work with Wrights & Sites: sound-walks; mis-guided tours; a procession; *The Dig* (2000) around Exeter Archaeology's offices and *Textcavation* (2003) in the underground stacks of Exeter's Central Library; and the planning and mobile research for the publication of *An Exeter Mis-Guide* (2003), a disruption of guidebooks and functional walking of the city, and *A Mis-Guide To Anywhere* (2006). This site-based impetus would lead to my own 'Crab Walking' project (2003–06): four weeks of walking along the South Devon Coast feeding a performance, *The Crab Walks* (2004), followed by *Crab Steps Aside* (2005) which would draw on an eclectic mix of drifts from the Channel Islands, Switzerland, around South Devon villages, in München and San Gimignano.

I became increasingly aware, often through the research of other members of Wrights & Sites, that this was all in the context of an exponentially growing interest in the contradictory attractions of the 'anti-art of walking'/'walking as an art practice': *vide* the Company of Vagabonds in Glasgow, Stalker in Rome, Patrick Keiller's films, Anna Best's *Occasional Sights* book of London walking, the 2003 Pre-Amble festival in Vancouver organized by Kate Armstrong, Glowlab's

The conclusion of Writing On Th

The conclusion of Writing On The City, Exeter, UK. Wrights & Sites for tEXt Festival (2002).

annual events in New York, Reverend John Davies's pastoral walking in Liverpool, Mike Pearson's *Bubbling Tom* and Dee Heddon's re-walking of it, Raimi Gbadamosi's *The Dreamer's Perambulator*, the work of Lone Twin…and on and on. This eclectic practice, as likely to wander in from architecture, social activism or visual arts as from performance, had gathered sufficient mass to attract its own genealogical traditions into orbits about itself – Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust*, Francesco Careri's *Walkscapes* – and to survive happily with its prophets, Long and Fulton, in the wilderness. Rather than to Long's and Fulton's distant adventures, a shakily fulcrum-like position in all this had gone to the situationists whose critiques of tourism and art have both philosophically denied legitimacy to and waved on a self-consciously aesthetic walking.

## Praxis

Though few walking artists are true neo-situationists, many selectively raid situationist terminology. The use of 'drift' or 'dérive' to describe exploratory walks, and of 'psychogeography' for both the subconscious of the landscape and its 'mapping', are commonplace. On the other hand, 'spectacle' and 'the critique of everyday life' are rarely cited. Contemporary 'drifters' – both solitary and in groups – may be sympathetic to much of the situationists' social critique, but are nervous of their coruscating history of exclusionary antics. There is little enthusiasm for the revolutionary 'situation'-making to which 'drifts' were intended to lead, nor for the situationists' wider collective organizational aspirations. Indeed, it is to 'everyday life' as en-mythed by de Certeau that many look for a transforming motor, the urban walker re-making the city every day. My own theoretical project – within a mythogeography – is to attempt to match the vicious monopolization of human possibilities described in the situationists' critique of everyday life with exceptional, détourned, disrupted, increasingly patterned and emergent (rather than everyday) 'tactics' necessary for the diffusion of that monopoly, seeking these within (or not far from) the present range of walking and site-related aesthetic practices.

In addressing the disparity between the theoretical hegemony of the situationists and the actual practices of contemporary walking artists, rather than advocating a more persuasive narrative to replace the situationists' Leftism, I suggest increasing the theoretical and technical ideas in orbit. Not a clarification, but a dynamic/theatrical mapping of the present orbits (predominantly around 'drift' and 'psychogeography') simultaneously occurring with the introduction of new bodies, theoretical and empirical, respectable and non-respectable, into these existing planetary-like motions.

'As above so it is below.' As in theory so in practice. The following passage from a privately distributed documentation of a series of drifts, drawn upon for both *The Crab Walks* and *Crab Steps Aside*, illustrates the ways in which the drift itself involves the same diffusion of authority and planning as in mythogeographical theory and the same setting of different and contradictory elements in motion about each other in order to confront patterns of meaning usually invisible to physically static contemplation. Here, also, is the necessity for autobiography: the artist-walker must set self and route in motion through the shapes and the narratives of the landscape, each threatening the others with dissolution in the acceleration of their interactions. In the practice of

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the 'drift' and, metaphorically, in the motion of mythogeographic theory, the subjective loses its authority, unleashing the everyday from its industrialization into eccentricity (literally 'standing up'), releasing pleasure into a socialized 'whirl'.

Eleanor e-mails me two days after the walk:

> I slept like the proverbial log on Sunday night and didn't dream at all but last night had a kaleidoscopic melange of images from the walk.

> We were all in the chapel and, wherever someone stood, behind them the chapel was complete, presumably as it originally was, and bathed in light, but as I looked around it was decayed, as we saw it, everywhere else. Then when I looked at someone else it was complete behind them, etc. So it was a bit like a trip through time with each of us being the catalyst for making the chapel come back to life – or death – very weird. But it was very light and vibrant ...

But this is not the place, this leads to the place – because I have lost 'control' of the walk there is possibility. This is someone else's map, approaching Lidwell Farm, it's trespass now, I go up to a knee in soft mud, I drop back, I'm expecting a farm dog, the necessary low-level paranoia for exploring is kicking in, a huge arse-up portentous dead sheep rots at the edge of the field. We are all silent. The farmyard is deserted, a piece of the redolent chapel jigsawed mistakenly into a barn wall, cheat, hybrid, things start to swirl, spaces exchange places – and here it is, dread in a barn, sheep listening blank-faced to swing music – everything feels very grey inside my eyes, outside the light at the end of a rainy day is turning the greens and browns of fields into rich dirty 1950s colour, of *Vertigo* and *Marnie*, a dead lamb on the other side of the murky hedge, there is something of the Dionysian mediation of female and male, the gendered leading and led of the drift, the disruption of definitions and identities. More farmhouses all painted in identical Hoare, East India money, gleaming dull like crime scenes as if they had some agency, as early Corman films, appearing to Robert Smithson 'with a "gleaming and ghastly radiance" (Poe) ... seem not to exist at all except as spectral cinematic artifices. The menacing fictions of the terrain engulf the creatures that pass for actors ...',[9] deflecting on us creatures, engulfed by tumultuous rain, 'an ecstatic, godlike freedom from the fixity of character' despite the un-sought desertion and decay; what Lesley Wade (Soule) calls 'a dangerous carnival'.[10] As the last vestige of 'led' walk dissolves, the slipperiness of the memetic complex of 'self' is itself set in slithery motion, its history of risk in the mixing of other personae, characters, masks and, now, place.[11] The worship of Dionysus was associated with remote places; the memetic power 'behind' the mask of the god continuing to exert a mutable, mutating force, even when the last mask is unravelled and there is no beyond.

(from *A Year of Walking*, document privately distributed, 2004)

Then from the text of *The Crab Walks*, the same site and the same issues:

The Monk would lure women here, rob them and throw their bodies down the well. Or he would disguise himself as a traveller and rob the wealthy. Or he was a child-murderer from another place. Or a rapist from Gidley. Or he was a clerk whose ideas were unorthodox. Or was thrown down his own well by a devout sailor who raising his eyes to heaven saw the monk's shadow, knife in hand, on the chapel wall [*Me to mime the shadow, facing the audience, fingers flickering for the gulls' wings*] – flickering like gulls across a pavement. [*Drop hand to side.*] Or he is a jumbled memory of the violence to the chapel itself – by men of puritan religion who hated the voluptuous curve of an image. [*Making curved S with hand. Then, distorting my own voice and body.*] History stretches and distorts him like some kind of monster! The place is pulled and bent in the same way. In 1980 a photograph taken of the ruins, when developed, revealed a complete chapel. The photograph has since disappeared.

In *The Crab Walks* and *Crab Steps Aside*, I set out to place the autobiographical in an instrumental role, as the emotional motor for destabilizing the assumed, as a diffusion, not for its own sake, but one that allowed me to dismantle certain narratives and ideas before an audience, and as a rhetoric for encouraging them to disrupt themselves and diffuse their own dismantling. The performances sought to challenge the authenticity of their own autobiographical voice. In both pieces I often say that I cannot remember things, that strong emotional memories evaporate in the face of their supposed sites, that what I felt most strongly mine came to feel alien and shared.

There are many different 'voices' in the performances. I am conversational sometimes, academic sometimes, friendly, intensely engaged, relaxed; at times I'm story-telling and at other times lecturing, imitating (inventing) the voices of others met on my walks, and when I 'act' myself I already set up a paradox. Many audience members remarked on these different voices. Significantly, after the performances almost no one asked questions about the directly autobiographical elements. I can only remember one: did my fighter pilot/rally driver father mind having an artist for a son? Almost every other conversation would begin with something about people's own walking or some place they had found, a panther and a wallaby sighted in the Midlands, a piece of magical cork from Combeinteignhead that brought good luck at bingo to a relative... it was the mythogeography, rather than the autobiography that was elaborated.

But it was not the silencing of the autobiographical that I was after: rather the mythologizing of it. And not my own in particular, but anyone's. To bring the autobiographical into a play of generalities.

There is a model for this process in the seventeenth-century utopian romance *The Blazing World* written by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. In the romance the Duchess appears as herself in spirit form, and is asked by the fictional Empress of the Blazing World for assistance in devising a Cabbala. Advising the Empress against scriptural, philosophical, moral or political Cabbalas, the Duchess-Spirit proposes: 'rather to make a poetical or romantical Cabbala,

wherein you can use metaphors, allegories, similitudes, etc. and interpret them as you please'. When the Duchess's spirit and the Empress become Platonic lovers, the Duchess longs for her own empire, but is advised by fellow spirits: '[W]e wonder...that you desire to be Empress of a terrestrial world, whereas you can create your self a celestial world if you please?...every human can create an immaterial world'.[12]

'It's the way you link the little things to the big picture,' someone said after a performance.

### Pattern
So what is this 'big picture'?

It is physical in the sense of the discipline of Physics rather than in that of its objects, conceptual, but geometrical more than theoretical. It challenges 'text' as the primary articulation of the 'general'. It is the re-assertion of a sort of haunted super-empiricism. It is linked to a Kantian sublime, to an ecological theory of perception, to an 'evolution' in which forms leap across species and from non-living to living matter as described by Bachelard ('stones that imitate a jaw-bone... Orchis, Diorchis... which imitate the male organs. [...] Here names think and dream... mineralogical [and horticultural] collections are anatomical parts of what man will be when nature learns to make him... form is the habitat of life')[13] and to Roger Penrose's 'feeling that the mathematics to describe these things [the relation of the physical world to mentality, our ability to access mathematic truth] is out there' and to his 'prejudice[s]... that the entire physical world can, in principle, be described in terms of mathematics [...]. Thus, there is a small part of the Platonic World which encompasses our physical world'.[14] More prosaically it is sometimes an interpretation of scale or sequence: Paul Nash's observation that 'there was a peculiar spacing in the dispersal of the trees... which suggested some inner design of very subtle purpose'.[15]

This 'picture' is constructed knowingly and theatrically. The forms and worlds described become characters in the 'picture', players even, houses once seen in a forest that cannot be found again, imaginary islands, the country of Hi-Brazil only ever seen in mirages. This is an idealized conceptualizing of what will later reappear, in a making of 'situations', as the provocation of the city to 'perform itself'.

This is not a simple philosophical formalism, but one haunted by empirically observed, often invisible, physical processes. For example, the human eye is continuously scanning for the extra-sensitivity of its photoreceptors when aligned with the Earth's magnetic field, or the tiny temperature fluctuations in the microwave background. Minute wrinkles from the very early universe that correspond to the great galactic structures, these are maps of the cosmos continually passing through our bodies. These patternings can be walked – spectrally, theatrically – the walker 'carrying' such and similar empirical patterns (satellite capture dynamics, astronomical precession) not as text, not as idea even, but as their own theatrical stage, the walker able to mentally unroll this 'tragic carpet' of patterns wherever s/he needs.[16]

This 'staging' chimes with a growing 'formalist' tendency in the physical (which crosses transgressively, to the social) sciences: the mathematical biology advocated by Evelyn Keller Fox; the organic, inorganic and social patterns in the multi-disciplinary work of Philip Ball; the 'Li' of David Wade, a concept that 'falls between our notions of pattern and principle'. This tendency has become a formalism of forms in the work of J.A. Scott Kelso and others: 'to understand the ways nature has devised to compress billions of (potential) degrees of freedom into a few functionally relevant macroscopic quantities'.[18] A patterning or dynamism of patterns, basic pattern-forming principles that operate whatever the scale, is something Scott Kelso ties explicitly to Penrose's claim of real-world materiality for mathematical concepts: 'This is what I mean when I propose that the linkage across levels of description in complex systems is by virtue of shared dynamical principles'. But when it comes to consciousness Scott Kelso throws his net wider than Penrose's theory of consciousness as a quantum effect in the brain's microtubules: 'globality of thought emerges ... as a conscious, self-organised property of the nervous system coupled, as it is, to the environment'.[19]

Although Scott Kelso has some trouble with will and intention (perhaps because his patterns are informational ones), he does his best to null the off-putting whiff of pre-determinism. While 'fluctuations' continuously probe his systems, simultaneously articulating their stabilities and their options for new patterns, change occurs when order parameters (those patterns governing the relations of the system's different parts) become unsettled. Crucially for our application here, critical fluctuations anticipate upcoming pattern change. So, rather than looking to particular parts of a system, it is to its pattern of relations that we should look for changeability.

But why should 'we'? Isn't this the remnants of my personal trajectory through socially engaged Christianity, grassroots community and council tenants' activism, the Bennite left of the 1980s and the international socialism of the Socialist Workers Party projected onto an imagined 'we', positioned by me on my new playground of space? This questionable conflating is part of the grounds for the necessity of autobiography that I am struggling with, advocating, but not resolving, here. And because this is not a 'one cause-one effect system' the role of the subjective is important here, for the provocation to change can be out of all proportion to its effects.

'In self-organising systems, a small change, say, in the temperature gradient applied to a fluid can produce a huge collective shift'.[20] In a complex, self-organizing system like a city this means that a small provocation, when deployed sensitively, to the ongoing fluctuations in the city can generate a disproportionate response. René Thom uses the *metaphor* of quantum tunnelling (in which particles that lack the energy to 'climb' the brow of a process 'tunnel' through to their objective) to suggest how such a disproportionate mechanics might work, related as if to an organism

> resting in a ground state, a local minimum surrounded by basins of attraction that possess ever deeper minima corresponding to excited states. The perception of a pregnant form (say prey) creates a tunnel effect, switching the animal into an excited state. Once the prey is caught and eaten, satisfaction lifts the basin of attraction.[21]

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The changes here involve very small transfers of energy, because these are patterns of information rather than force, just as off-course satellites with minimal propulsion resources have been successfully transferred from one orbit to another by 'playing' their low 'card' just at the point where the entanglement of extremely powerful gravitational forces will yield a disproportionate effect. It is mostly the *understanding* of the dynamic patterns at work that 'causes' change. In order, then, for equivalent social patterns to be successfully provoked, it requires artists or anti-artists who are 'informed' in the non-empirical patterns (basins) of attraction in their city or society and who are able to appropriately deploy the small transfers of energy to provoke the 'sinking' of a basin or tunnelling to an existing basin necessary to trigger the city/system to change, particularly – to follow this model – when the tunnelling is to an attraction that cannot be easily satisfied. This is the return of a situationist strategy, a provocation of site working itself along the continuum of theatrical site-specificity to its most radical edge: goading the city (or rural system) into 'performing itself'.

Along another continuum it is a movement from Arthur Machen to Homi Bhabha, from an esoteric peeling away of appearance ('even these vile red stones (bricks) may be transmuted into living, philosophical stones')[22] to a political 'daemonic doubling' (Bhabha echoing Wade [Soule]) in which, referencing Conrad,



German Occupation Underground Hospital, Guernsey. Photo: Phil Smith.

Détourned pathway sign, Hoopern Valley Path, Exeter, UK. Photo: Phil Smith.

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the local story of love and its domestic memory can only be told between the lives of history's tragic repressions...the street of tall houses takes on the profile of the tribal skulls on staves; the percussive pounding of a heart echoes the deep beat of drums [...]. Between the silent truth of Africa and the salient lie to the metropolitan woman...the 'chaos' that afflicts the signification of psychic and historical narratives in racialized societies.[23]

There is nothing simple here, no passing from one world to another, but a complex entanglement of history, a cultural version of what Einstein referred to in quantum non-locality as 'spooky action at a distance', the disproportions and silences of which situation-making seeks to use to provoke the city.

Here, if you like, is the meta-narrative of the Crab Walking project – of 'crab walkers' experiencing through their 'drifts' the informational non-linear dynamics of the predominantly self-organizing urban or rural system and its wormholes (these Bhabha-ian gaps between the silence and the lie), in order to provoke radical site-specified performances, not by the 'crab walkers', but by the city of the city, by the town of the town.

### Screen

The theatricality of the cities performing of themselves has a doppelganger on the 'drift': cinema. In the Crab performances, on 'drifts' and in maps, I evoke cinema locations and 'moments' regularly – the dread space of the pier from Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962), the perspective of the gulls in Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) – as a sublime; non-human in scale, with threatening implications for the autobiographical.[24]

So what of human agency in these patterned 'fields' and cinematic bathings? What for the situation-maker rather than the psychogeographer? A cinema-sublime offers a model for a provocative inscrutability that is, ironically, perhaps best referenced in drama: the Khlestakov of Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. Khlestakov creates disproportionate reactions not by intentions, but by absenting them, avoiding them. My repeated references to cinema are an attempt to evoke just such a dual presence of action and inscrutability, the blankness of the screen 'originated as a necessary absence, a condition of erasure, clearing, which makes possible...the maximum mobility of the sign'.[25] In the making of 'situations', a cinematic-Khlestakovian inscrutability is unlikely to be arrived at immediately. Provocation must usually itself be provoked initially (see the tactics of Simon Persighetti below) but then may become inscrutable, 'systematic', emergent.

### Motion

The *motion* of the 'drift' is crucial. The 'drifter' needs a sensitivity both to the motion of the landscape through which they move and to the pattern of their senses in motion. Cultivating such a sensibility enables the 'drifter' to recognize dynamic non-linear patterns in their own perception; patterns indicative of disproportionate change, in the body as in the city.

James J. Gibson's ecological theory of perception was derived from experiments on subjects in motion (pilots, etc.) and is based on the ideas that in the environment 'certain higher-order variables of stimulus energy – ratios and proportions, for example – do not change' and that continuous perception is based on the ability of an individual to detect these invariants.[26] There is no mediation of these invariants in perception – 'the whole system of input and output resonates to the external information' – so the senses operate not so much as receptors but 'analogous to tentacles and feelers',[27] like the active looking of *Darshana*. Perception is a 'loop' that includes the invariants in the ecology and the activity of the whole body. What it 'feels' for is information: 'analysed by forms, not by points',[28] not by energy, but relations.

In Gibson's theory, both subjects and objects are active: 'the optic array... not only provided bare information but also offered possibilities for action on the basis of that information'. These possibilities were called 'affordances' by Gibson: 'neither an objective fact about the environment nor a subjective idea in the mind. It cuts right across the old subjective-objective divide... "both physical and psychical, yet neither" to use Gibson's own words'.[29] Here, in perceptual research, the psychological and the geographical in psychogeography are affirmed as a deferred synthesis: ambience as the deferral of the synthesis of information in the environment with subjective experience of that environment. Atmospheres 'exist' both objectively and subjectively, yet as neither subjects nor objects.

In order to become aware of such deferred patternings in the material environment, Gibson suggested fixating on a single point, then 'pay(ing) attention not to that point... but to the whole range of what you can see, keeping your eyes still fixed. The attitude you should take is that of the perspective draughtsman [...]. This is... the visual field'. When 'drifters' walk with an awareness of this 'visual field', rather than the visual world ('the familiar, ordinary scene of daily life in which solid objects look solid'),[30] they become aware that it is clear only at its centre, that it is curved at its edges and that the curved areas straighten when the eyes are turned towards them, that parts of their face are represented in that field. The visual world is 'unsettled' in the 'visual field'; it becomes liquifacted, its granular, apparently discrete parts are set in flow, put in doubt. Commodity and property become, apparently, malleable.

In the texts of *The Crab Walks* and *Crab Steps Aside* there are evocations of this unsettling patterned or spatial looking: for example, in describing the reported sightings of anomalous big cats in the United Kingdom, I refer to the shape of *Dinofelis*, a generic hunter of humans of 2,500,000 years ago, imprinted on the contemporary mind: 'As far as templates go, one needn't think in terms of something like a silhouette that looks cat-like. There could be, for example, certain kinds of motion cues that trigger the impression of a predator'.[31] Such destabilized patterned looking is implicit in the maps created with Tony Weaver and distributed at *Crab Steps Aside* performances: a distorted grid for the *Angel Drift*, a pseudo-geological cross-section for the Haldon Hills.

The drifter *in motion*, triggered by fixation, self-consciously aware of the 'visual field', can use such perceiving as a means to overcome the commodification of the city in packages of exchange:

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the ability to see from (another) point of view, depends on being oriented in space. Orientation is inseparable from locomotion, for, only because an observer gets a different visual field at every different standpoint, does he perceive a single integrated world.[32]

Thus the conscious use of the visual field restores the city to the imaginary possibility of the situationists' 'unitary urbanism...in which separations such as work/leisure or public/private will finally be dissolved'[33] through a synthesis of 'arts and techniques' in the creation of mutating ambiences. Using the 'visual field' and a grasp of dynamic nonlinearity, the 'drifter' seeks out 'functionally relevant macroscopic' patterns, negotiating the billions of possibilities in the unbounded perceptual world. Using this mix of intellect and intuition the drifter 'feels' for the tipping points in the city and in her/his own perception.

[O]ur brain...is poised on the brink of instability where it can switch flexibly and quickly. By living near criticality, the brain is able to anticipate the future, not simply react to the present.[34]

The sustained motion of the 'drift' enables the dériviste to begin to pattern the city's tipping points, adding to the perception of atmospheres the spectre of dynamic patterns.

But there is a need here, amid all this talk of patterns, to retain something like 'intuition' in order to defer a synthesis of all these elements to a single objective explanation, a need to push to the edge of chaos where change in systems lurks. Only by instability – 'irrationality' – in the system is it possible to anticipate the future effects of small transfers of energy on an open complex system. This is what is acknowledged when the US military call in Hollywood screenwriters to anticipate Al Qaeda's next move: their suspicion that the qualitative leap of 9/11 was informed by *Independence Day*. This is what drives the pop-cultural/esoteric/pseudo-scientific layer of my 'drifting': the belief that the political/economic layer is as likely to be fuelled by fragments of half-believed narratives about 'invasions', 'epidemics' and 'devils' as by 'rational' discourses about economics and politics.

### Site

As my concern grew with an 'anywhere' that was 'both physical and psychical, but neither', the dark, bounded and intimate space of the beach huts in which I had performed *The Crab Walks* (so close to the audience that Anjali Joy, 'outside eye' for *The Crab Walks*, remarked that my body became the map of my journeys) was exchanged for a range of performance sites for *Crab Steps Aside*. The parameters of the beach huts were controllable. The tiny audiences sat with their backs to the door. Occasionally an audience member might turn to simultaneously look at the landscape and listen to the stories. In *Crab Steps Aside* I experimented with giving everyone this option, using outdoor sites (by the side of the Teignmouth Lido, a field overlooking the River Teign, on a viewing platform above Coryton Cove, on a Dawlish tea shop patio open to the sky) and more inscribed, more cluttered indoor ones like Dawlish Museum's 'industrial room' or ones with large views (a bar with a view of bowling green and cliff, a room

looking to sea on one side and disused cinema on the other). I was trying to challenge the primacy of the story-telling text with the play of the sites in which I performed and by silent movement sequences devised with Sue Palmer, who acted as 'outside eye' for Crab Steps Aside. After a performance at Coryton Cove an audience member remarked on the layers of site: the 'real' but absent sites that I described becoming 'present' while the vista behind and around us seemed both present and bathed by the performance's acted-ness.

In Crab Steps Aside I was also pushing my own presence towards a rhetorical, exemplary one: attempting to model the 'drift' in the manner of a story-telling 'in site'. Tim Ingold's description of 'ordinary wayfinding' as 'closely resembl(ing) storytelling' turns this around, while accurately describing my feelings while performing Crab Steps in these open sites:

> the traveller… 'feels his way' towards his goal, continually adjusting his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings… the unfolding of a field of relations established through the immersion of the actor-perceiver within a given environmental context.[35]

I was, in hope, edging toward a variegated practice in which space and generality are not layers 'above' the particular, but specific and sited practices that take their chances with all the others; an encouragement that everyone should be a theorist, take their own ideas seriously, test their generalities against their actions, site their own 'little things' in 'big pictures'.

In this way it is not autobiography making us exceptional and individual, rather it is the 'to', the 'in motion', the 'about' of what is individual that is revealed and practiced: our autobiographical motion. The stories from audience members after the performances – of resonant vistas, routes, seasonal changes, strange beasts half-seen – will only be 'placed' by their own 'drifts', theoretical and practical. (Hence the essentially rhetorical nature of these two shows: to give 'feeling' to the idea of a practice.)

Just as architectural ruins are bathed in the frisson of our own decay still to come, so an enjoyment of the self's destabilization/contortion can be projected, playfully, into a utopia. The ruins of self evoke the possibilities of everything else – autobiography made mythical, made mythogeographical. Space, place, environment, route and way are not passive surfaces for traversal nor blank pages on which the active walker writes nor accomplished texts awaiting reading, but are active: both psychical and physical, but also something that is neither. They are 'characters' that the 'drifter' seeks to provoke into performances of themselves, through the rearrangement of signs, the placing of objects, the carrying of 'burdens', the leaving of messages, the re-constructing of rubbish-heaps: theatricalities that, in turn, theatricalize quotidian behaviours around them, re-performing space into something resistant to the intentions of its planners, designers and controllers.

Another provocation is playfulness. It sets off a political reaction: the a-functionality of play offers no 'real' threat to the functions of the space, but as the antithesis of these functions the

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managers of space often seem 'forced' to 'take it seriously', to shadow the frivolity of the 'player'. In doing so these controllers are forced to 'play' their roles in order to hang onto them; they speak their subtexts, expose their training, their orders, their own psychogeographies: so Wrights & Sites have been allowed to play on artificial ski slopes, been assured that broom cupboards are former prison cells, been informed of 'sensitive documents' and police snipers' positions and ejected for lack of the appropriate logo by various managers of space.

## Edge

Given the emphasis here on patterns, what of the structure of the *Crab Walks* and *Crab Steps* performances?

In *Crab Walks*, a kind of excavation is proposed: to find the sites of childhood holidays. And yet they no longer are where they were. The performance is a failed archaeology. In *Crab Steps*, the resolution (of a humiliating childhood memory) is only reached by a diffusion, an imagined dying. The parts of the performances are often eating at their overall structure, even from one performance to the other: in *Crab Walks*, empty crab shells are revealed not to be the work of predatory herring gulls (a paranoia about herring gulls had been partly driving the extended *Crab Walks* 'drifting'), but the residue of transformations of the crabs themselves. In *Crab Steps*, however, a found empty crab shell is soft, a dead crab caught mid-transformation, resisting a simple, 'natural' hope. This structuring attempts to follow Bhabha, for whom 'the Third Space of enunciation ... makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys the mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code'.[36] Without recourse to abstruseness, the two texts attempt to disrupt the code, and then each other.

There is a similar uneasiness and auto-dismantling in the act of 'drifting' itself. After a walk using peripheral vision as much as possible, Cathy Turner articulated its unhomeliness:

> Because I was, in a sense, frightened, yes, experiencing a slight feeling of panic, feeling that I was in the grip of Pan's natural wilderness (however cultivated and managed it *actually* was). I had the sense that I was being tricked off the path somehow, that the decision to lose myself was not mine.
>
> (Cathy Turner, private communication, 2003)

Eleanor, Cathy Turner, Anna Best, 'lure(d) women', Rebecca Solnit, Kate Armstrong, Marnie, Doreen Massey, Lesley Wade (Soule). Just as women are de-sited by power geometry, can they be provisionally pre-eminent in a de-centred walking that displaces power to the peripheries, one in which the group of walkers, resistant to a manifesto, disposed not to be led, is always fraying at its edges, its boundaries erring to the fractal? Or does the dispersal of the unhomely 'drift' reproduce their disempowerment?

The 'drift' is not a neutral, de-gendered, *tabula rasa* on which all may write equally. But instead, led by its periphery, does the walk become more unpredictable, more edgy? If women are more
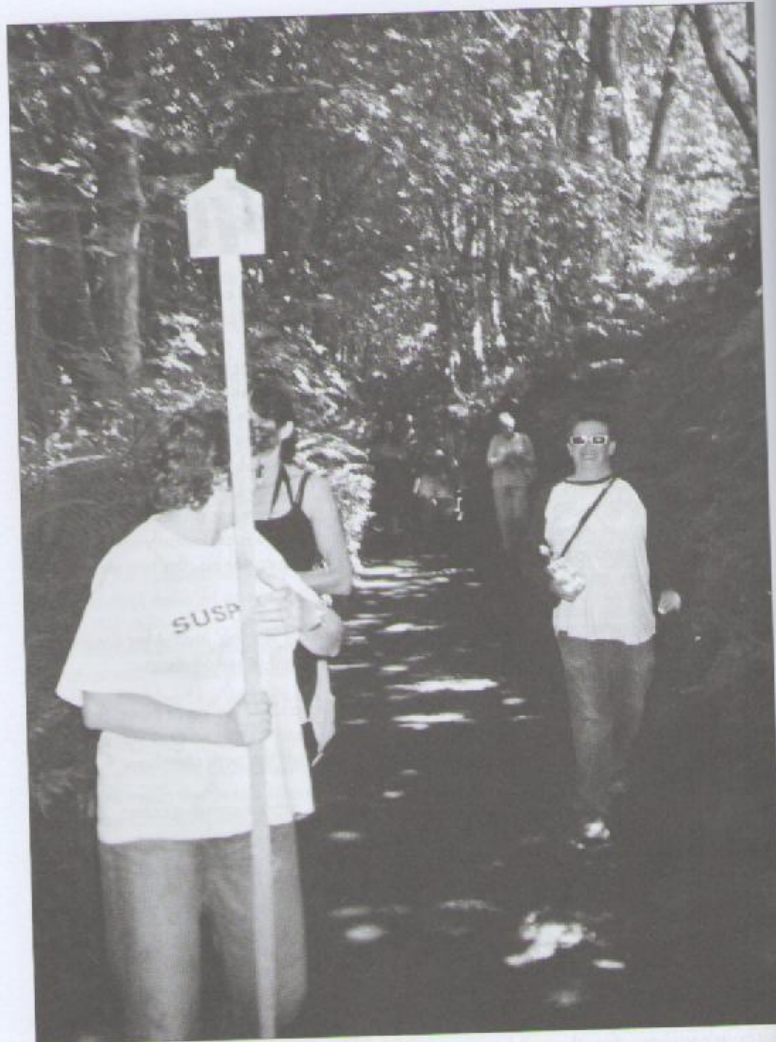
Shed Walk, Welcombe, UK (2003). Photo: Phil Smith.

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sensitive to movement in their peripheral vision, then are 'edgelands' – the land where urban meets rural, meets economic superfluity unclearly, places towards which 'drifts' often gravitate, defined by Marion Shoard as 'the only theatre in which the real desires of real people can be expressed'[37] – places where women can site themselves more powerfully? Does the drifting group have its own edgelands? Is there something providential in the diffuse walking group in such 'superfluous' space?[38] Much has been written and thought about the 'drifter', the flagrant heir to the un-charismatic flâneur, but little about the morphing and eroding of the walking group. A silence that leads – in site-specific performance – to strings of duckling audience trailing after mother-duck performers.

But the periphery can lead. For whatever reasons, women were very active in 'leading' the *Shed Walk* procession: the processing of a one-eighth-sized shed, made from the sawn down parts of a whole shed, an event organized by Wrights & Sites for Annabel Other's *Shed Summit* in 2003. The procession began by passing through the arch of the remaining full-sized shed doorway and was, initially, led by me, the carrier of a roof pole with the shed's diamond nailed to the top. I carried the pole to be visible to the 30 or so processors, to launch the procession under its authority, and I very soon wanted to hand it on – and did. Without dispersing, the procession frayed, globules broke off and then rejoined, and its feminized tentacles felt into the nooks and elbow joints of the route, ripples of narration re-cited the site, personal associations circulated, an S&M b&b was identified, at the gateway to a holiday hut one tassel of the procession swept up to a family in their garden, drawing in the miniature shed and the rest of us, swarming, welcomed, for a few minutes of posing and photographs and a remarkably relaxed address by the surprised shed-owner. None of this occurred in the political economy of the situationist metropolis, but in superfluous spaces.

This fraying of authority becomes, by necessity, exploratory, but is equally necessarily fraught with disturbance. Peripheral vision of a sudden motion prompts rapid signals to an early evolved part of the brain that in turn prompts physical evasive action: a pre-emptive physical sensitivity at the very edge of the visual frame. The linear certainties of the rambler are denied by the peripheral 'drift'. Even a procession like *Shed Walk* becomes literally 'edgy' – even more so the walk cited by Cathy Turner, on an isolated estate wandering for hours. Walking becomes disorienteering, its internal uncertainty offering, at worst, opportunities for a re-development of power geometries.

## Lodge

While working on a joint paper for the 2005 Altered States Conference (Plymouth, United Kingdom), with the mathematician and 'drifter' Matthew Watkins, Matthew responded to an early draft: 'Who is this "we"?' I had recruited an imaginary collective of 'drifters' to a shared impulse for social change. There is no 'we', but there is a set of networks, of individuals and small groups aware of and sometimes in touch with each other. And there is something more: each group drift becomes a challenge to answer Matthew's question: 'Who is this "we"?'

Three 'drifts' were offered and publicly advertised as part of the *Crab Walks* project – *Dead Fox Drift* around Dawlish, a night walk around Newton Abbot, and the *Wormhole Walk* in

and around Combeinteignhead – the latter furnishing the spine narrative for *Crab Steps Aside* –and a further four hybrid presentations/walks jointly organized with Teignbridge Council's Walk This Way project.

The dominant models for group walking are the guided tour and the 'ramble', both of which are most likely to have a leader figure, a destination, a predictable content (views, flora, historic buildings) and a finishing time. Within them there are generally understood roles. Each 'drift' seeks to undermine this: by using the dark (so barely seeing any landscape), by serial structures (walking in groups of diminishing numbers), by its organizer shrugging their shoulders and asking 'Which way?', or by mythogeographical tasks (seeking 'wormholes' to other places or building monuments from discarded rubbish).

Experience uncovers the more obvious ideological traps, but each 'drift' remains to be disrupted, no matter how theoretically astute its walkers. The 'drift' is not a dislocated, pre-existing intellectual or esoteric discipline that can be navigated from level to level of increasing disengagement from or redemption of the fallen world. And yet there are some similarities to the journey of the 'adept'.

The 'drift' group could be compared to a temporary 'lodge', a physical model of an abstracted psyche, like spiritual Freemasonry at its most sincere, engaging with the physicalization of abstractions and their hybridization: 'Geometry, Creation and Travel'. Like Freemasonry, the 'drift' is a rhetorical persuasion – 'the Art by which feeling is introduced into logical and well-structured communication' – and it sees that 'feeling', psychogeographically, as 'hard-wired' into matter:

> the Deity called the relative universe into being so that 'God might behold God' and that the three lower Worlds of Separation were erected...so that Adam Kadman, the Image of God, might experience all things.[39]

This implies pre-existent patterns (which are dynamic) and a hard-wired human sensibility to them, and defines 'choice' as a cooperation with an existing 'Geometry' rather than a personal development or a humanistic imposition of meaningfulness on a dead world of matter:

> The revival of this, the last school of ancient pagan philosophy, fostered a disposition to blur the difference between matter and spirit. Instead of being regarded as an inanimate mass, the earth itself was deemed to be alive.[40]

By spectralizing this 'Geometry', as both a Platonic 'world' (as mathematics that is 'out there') and an historical esoteric practice involved in radicalism, corruption, female exclusion and conspiracy and wrapped in a miasma of secrets and possibly sinister influences, the 'Geometry' becomes active, its contradictions and gaps analogous to those within which the practice of the mythogeographical 'drift' takes place. So the more experienced 'drifters' can walk and explore a landscape increasingly made symbolic, understanding that those symbols are corrupt (historically) and ideal (radically) in equal parts.

What is going on here? While risking a simple collapse into esotericism – and, indeed, the embarrassment of colleagues – this is an attempt to engage a contemporary memetic and ideological complexity (what Erik Davis has called 'TechGnosis', Marc Augé 'supermodernity' and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe 'the techno-sublime') at an earlier, simpler stage, in order to understand its historical nature, but more importantly to be able to use and disseminate a new, re-complexifying of it, rather than allow oneself to be disseminated by it. I am seeking, via a radical nostalgia, in the alchemical beginnings of modern science and the contemporaneous revival of classical ideas, a dynamic model of mind and world. Of such precedents R.J.W. Evans wrote,

> The occult striving was in essence an attempt to penetrate beyond the world of experience to the reality which underlay it, and as such paralleled or overlapped with the artistic use of symbols and emblems. At the same time it belonged in a central way to the whole apprehension of nature.[41]

Here is a contradiction to be treasured: simplistic, manichaeistic, a layering of unreal matter and real spirit, in turn disrupted first by aesthetic symbolism and then drowned by the living nature with which it wrestles.

This cuts against those contemporary social criticisms which seek to reduce the world to passive experience and the dissolution of materiality (including the materiality of that experience), the reduction of place to a supposedly ubiquitous 'non-place', described by Marc Augé as 'a turning back on the self, a simultaneous distancing from the spectator and the spectacle'.[42] The uneven acceleration of Augé's supermodernity in a way lends force to (and changes) Augé's argument, making it more rather than less radical.[43] For this temporal unevenness is symptomatic of a divorce between understanding (and the attempt to understand) and the spectacle: those social relations that timetable the conduct of pleasure, systematically (temporally and spatially) divorcing thought from ecstasy. This is to pose against the romanticized acceleration of supermodernity a super-nostalgia, radical and disrupted.

In a hostile theoretical and social environment, mythogeography needs nostalgia. Nostalgia's destabilizing qualities can be 'read' in the work of Doreen Massey who at times emphasizes its reactionary features (in *For Space*) and at others (in *Space-time and the Politics of Location*) its ambivalences, articulating in that unevenness just the terrain a mythogeography needs (this is rhetoric, remember?): a field in which the unevenness of a patchy supermodernity and an ambiguous nostalgia can agitate both the sceptical 'drifter' and the ideological timelines of esoterica, spitting up modernism's early, sometimes 'uncharacteristic' memes (future, machismo, theosophy, for example) to be re-contested.

## Self

For two years in the mid-1980s I was a paid coordinator for Bristol Broadsides, a community press publishing working-class writers. As a member and coordinator of workshops where autobiographical fragments were regularly presented for discussion and comment, and in
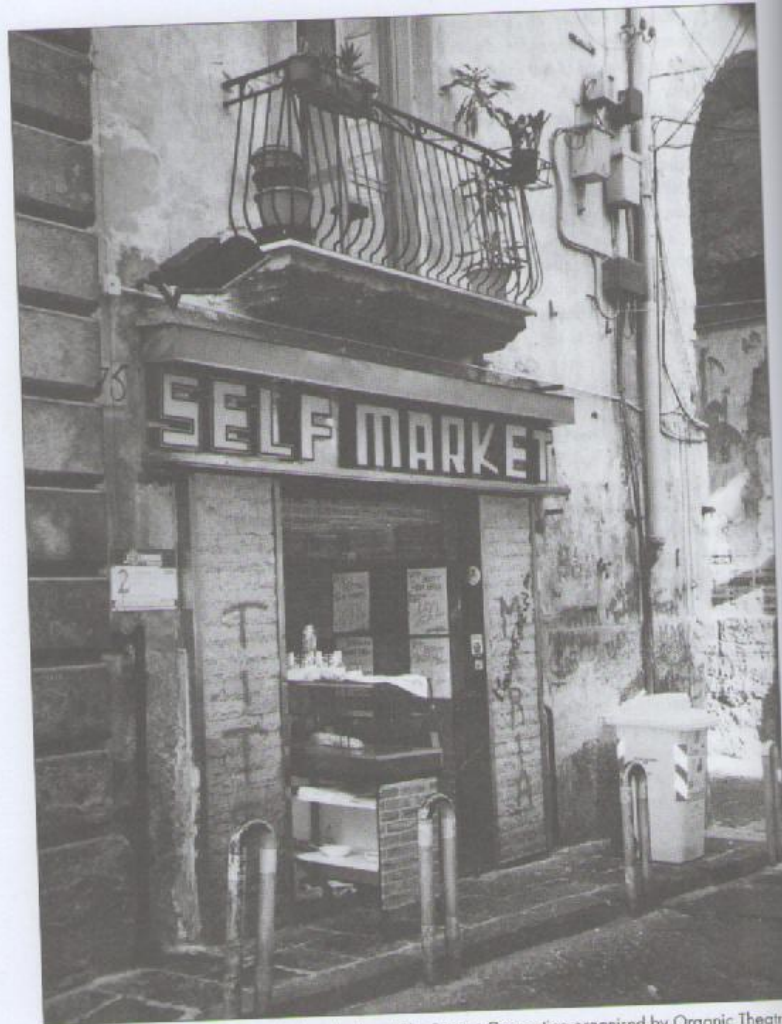
Drifting in Naples, Italy, as a workshop leader at The Present Generation organised by Organic Theatre (2006). Photo: Phil Smith.

regular contact with many of the writers, I became increasingly aware of the 'working' of autobiography, of the sophisticated strategies employed by the most seemingly 'innocent' and 'natural' writer: the editing out of 'disruptive' elements, the creation of organic narrative where there was none, the concentration of narrative into a symbolic language, the arrangement of fragments to create an apparently coherent 'self', the vast silences, the disciplinary narrative embedded in the idea of 'ordinary people with extraordinary stories', the knowing use of certain populist and class 'norms' for the presentation of quite different counter-narratives.

What struck me was not that there were direct untruths (these were generally interchangeable with the facts), but rather the constructedness of any autobiography as well as the intense enjoyment and feelings of release there could be in this re-working of a 'previous life'. The past becomes an alternative incarnation, a 'history' of which the writer becomes the historian, not the authoritative eyewitness of everything and anything, but rather the re-arranger of fragments into quite new patterns. This is radical nostalgia; just as a utopian seeks to make a 'better future' in Nowhere, so the nostalgic returns to the past as if it were Nowhere and rearranges its characters and props in a friction-free non-place where determinations can be re-cast as choices (or mistakes) and accidents as personal qualities (or vices). The I of the autobiography becomes a mythic figure in a mythic landscape.

Coming to the making of my own autobiographical pieces, I was helped by those experiences, spurred to make the structuring and the working as clear as possible, and not to attempt to hide the self-mythologization, but rather to show one element of it (the I/author/walker) openly determined and shaped by another: the geography of its mythicized landscapes. In fact what I made each time was a show about the impossibility of an empirical, mimetic autobiography: 'I' was unfindable and my best shot at myself was imagining my own death, which I then felt, in good taste, I had to deny: 'but that's a lot of nonsense ...' The imaginary landscapes I constructed were 'stages' for the denial of subjective discovery, like those guest-houses where I stayed as a child and to which I was denied access as an autobiographical artist. Nor could the everyday, the landscape of my drifts be directly evoked. This was not a simple tale of subjective alienation in reliable spaces.

The situationist critique of everyday life remains as powerful as ever – that, in late capitalism, behaviour is economic and primitive, that the reaction to the fading of scarcity has not been the development of new, sophisticated behaviours or qualities, but rather a quantitative reproduction of survival. Interestingly, this part of situationist theory is little referenced by those influenced by the idea of the dérive. They are much more likely to be attracted to the heroic 'tactics' of the quotidian city dweller championed in de Certeau's version of 'Everyday Life'. But there are problems here. As Doreen Massey points out, de Certeau's 'political imaginary' is of a 'central bloc versus little tactics of resistance ... [A]gainst the "city as system", the implacable presence of stabilised legibility, is romanticised a mobile "resistance" of tactics, the everyday, the little people',[44] a binary that hides the way that the 'power geometry' is maintained and refined in the everyday, in the iconic 'street'. Romanticizing 'the streets' can easily lead resistant tactics astray, for example into:

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the least politically convincing of situationist capers – getting laddish thrills (one presumes) from rushing about down dark passages, dreaming of labyrinths [...]. (Is this not itself another form of eroticised colonisation of the city?)[45]

Although this is a caricature of urban exploration there is plenty of truth here. Unthinkingly using the everyday as a physicalized virtual home – a 'House of the Dead' without the dead, 'Resident Evil' while the occupants are out – is an escapism explicitly inscribed with all the overproduction of survival long ago fingered in the situationist critique of everyday life. And, as such, urban exploration begs détournement: a potential mythogeographic 'tragic carpet'.

So, there must be a deviation from the quotidian (no matter how exotic or 'underground' that quotidian is), from the return to childhood, from the game playing (which is not to say that any or all these might not be present in a 'drift', but necessarily 'in play' with other critical practices). Equally, any mythogeographical practice is driven, theoretically, to the gaps between respectable and unrespectable, in the consciously navigated flattened banalities of the survival-everyday as disrupted by their own future-filled ruins and accidental wildernesses.

This trajectory is mythical, if nervously so, broadly following the almost theological approach of Hans Jonas:

> [W]ith its invocation of the necessity and desirability of ... a 'tentative myth' ... seeking to show that acceptance of such a theology ... is consistent with ... the apparently godless discoveries of a naturalistic science that conceives reality in terms of contingent, material processes alone.[46]

Where Jonas must have recourse to 'tentative myth' given the weakness of 'god', so both 'drift' and autobiography must have recourse to the same in the face of the weakness of 'self' and 'politics'. The 'tentative myth' is of a semi-heroic, de-Marvelled comic (in both senses) Superwalker that changes what 'e' walks – 'e' because, to borrow from cyberspace at the behest of Sue Thomas,[47] a non-gender, non-known, possibly organic, possibly inanimate, 'e' is the myth/real, collective and imaginary, both psychical and physical, but neither.

This tentatively heroic trajectory is not *through* or *across* the site of the everyday, but a trajectory that is the constituent part of the everyday space: a trajectory in places that are constructed of trajectories. Unlike the blank page of space implied by the reading of the city as text, or the emptiness first created by the Gnostic God before filling it with 'fallen' matter, here space is defined by trajectories, as championed by Doreen Massey in *For Space*. This – i.e. place as trajectories – is a significant refining of Massey's earlier metaphor of a satellite observing place below as a meeting of trajectories. Tim Ingold criticized the reactionary political potential in just this kind of *global* viewpoint,[48] but in *For Space* Massey brings the trajectory of the viewpoint into the matrix, making a space that is neither container nor surface. This neither implicates action in the division of form from content, container from contained, nor in the pseudo-colonialist 'taking' of surface (piercing or overwhelming). Action in a space of trajectories is
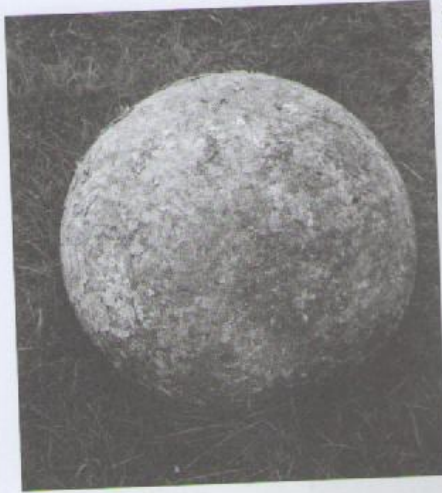
A global Z world. Z World Drift, Exeter, UK (2003). Photo: Phil Smith.

itself a spacing, implicated and engaged, of the same 'organic' and intellectual material as such space itself. The satellite is now just one trajectory in a space that is connected and 'extended', no longer the benignly authoritative eye.

But this is almost intellectually respectable and rapidly heading toward synthesis, so I return to the 'lodge'. In the 'drift', the 'lodge' can be re-configured (and partly reclaimed, in fact) as a nomadic architecture, a trajectory. The earliest Freemasonic lodges were not (held in) permanent, designated spaces but used meetinghouses and tavern backrooms. The ritual layout of the 'lodge' would be drawn in chalk and obliterated at the end of the meeting. Its emblems were produced like props in a travelling show. What was drawn in chalk was a representation of a historic building – the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem – but more, it was the representation of a symbolic idea of this building, what Kevin Hetherington, in making an argument for such 'lodges' as spaces of heterotopia, calls 'an expression of the memory of the Temple'.[49] The ambiguity of this 'memory' is well worth playing with, invoking, as it does, not only a personal association and a semi-public memorial, but also an 'art of memory': an esoteric practice in which the visualization of real or imagined architecture serves as a means to commit to memory arcane and highly elaborate dogmatic thought.

The 'drift' adds motion to this: a moving 'lodge' that need not obliterate its traces. Francesco Careri of Stalker has reclaimed the importance of the nomadic for architecture (divorcing the nomadic from sentimentality); each member of the drift becomes a temporary part-pilgrim/ momentary part-refugee disrupted from the everyday by 'choice', but able/required to return

Exploring the city as if it were a mountain.
Drifting with children, Exeter, UK (2004).
Photo: Phil Smith.



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to the quotidian, by 'choice' at any time, and by 'necessity' eventually. The word 'member' has been chosen firstly because unlike the organized ramble or the guided tour there is no 'consumption' to be had from the 'drift'. It is an action (or improvisation) of production for which organizer/s at most might supply some practical 'toolkit' or structural provocation. Secondly, the 'lodge-like' action of the 'drift' proposes, like Freemasonry, the performance of 'an invented tradition ... symbolized in turning of a stranger into a brother'.[30] The 'drift' obviously has no set ritual for this purpose, but must invent it each time. Some sort of emerging 'geography' and the exchange of détourned 'documentation' (somewhere in between holiday snaps and critical theory) might assist in meeting that task, but would be unlikely to complete it, necessitating some kind of theatrical or performative element in the 'drift'. This turn to performance is, in the context of Freemasonry, a détournement in its turn of Hetherington's account of a move from the secret ritual of the 'lodge' to the bourgeois public space where gentlemen were forced to develop 'a suspension of disbelief in one another as strangers ... done through the reading of signs associated with demeanour, speech patterns and dress codes, in part learned from observing acting at theatres'.[51]

Without ritual and with neither bourgeois 'signs' nor a shared popular radicalism, the 'drift' must improvise its own signs and ritual as it sets its members' ideas and associations in motion in response to the trajectories of the places with which it engages: a rotting fox corpse, half a burned house in small pieces, a confrontation with a manager in a supermarket, a graveyard churned by motorbike tyres and littered with party detritus and torn underwear ... Unlike rambles and tours, where relations are fixed, there are trajectories *within* the 'space' of the 'drifting' group itself, its 'temple' as temporary as chalk, not a container of symbolic walls to be filled with gnosis or agreement. Rather it is those *trajectories themselves*, the changings of the group, that is the space of the 'drift', not in synthesis with a single 'fellowship' or theory but in the explicit playing out of differences, making a 'third space'. According to Bhabha, 'the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the "third space" which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it'.[52]

Crucially, the changings of the drift are not about personal transgression or development, but rather about the diffusion of those identities, their loss of history. The eroticism of the 'drift' is a dispersed one: that is, the eroticizing of space rather than of relations among the drifters. Such unsettling is diffusive in attempting to dissolve the inscriptions on the space of oppressive meanings. To this end Simon Persighetti of Wrights & Sites has developed a whole set of diffusive tactics: the leaving of small figures, tiny wooden villages and dice, chalkings ... diffusions rather than subversions of places, rendering the spaces associative rather than questionable.

### Rhetoric

By sixteen I had preached my first Baptist sermon, by seventeen my first Anglican sermon. In my mid-teens I had, with others, wandered the streets of Coventry spreading the gospel. That was in between all the trespass and forced entry, the gleaning of porn, the anatomical investigations in cool bunkers, newts discovered in old pits, Peter Maxwell Davies and Roxy

Music concerts, performing the Babylonian Epic of Creation in a band of ex-Hell's Angels, the touching through and under denim and lace, androgynous displays at cathedral parties; centre-forward in the morning and flanker in the afternoon. Flat green bowls. My teen-years girlfriend was the great-granddaughter of the most famous Baptist preacher ever. The instrumental part of the rhetoric of the Crab pieces is their dirty secret: I found something good and I wanted to share it. And that is to be suspected.

The rhetoric of Crab Walking is 'Protestant' in character. Its orality, like Protestant rhetoric, is never simply a performance, but a re-performance. It is questionable and yet seeking to speak meaningfully (authoritatively) while suspicious of all (in the case of Protestantism add 'human') voices; it 'always needs more than one voice, it never stops arguing with itself … this is the form its truth claim takes … this absoluteness demands to be represented in the context of a conversation with what it is not'.[53] This is where the practice described here starts, seeking to resolve the question of authority/reality not by a recourse to a first and eternal voice, nor a return to language (logos), but to space.

It follows the disrupted walker Søren Kierkegaard in placing such an intellectual risk as rhetoric within the emotional, the associative, the autobiographical. In his book on Protestant rhetoric, Theo Hobson attempts to resolve the contradiction in René Girard's special pleading for a violence resolved by redemptive violence, while admitting that some violence remains, rhetorically, in his model of redemption, in 'the assertion of its overcoming'.[54] In mythogeography there is no claim to a single resolution of this problem of strategy, but a set of inadequate and exponential diffusions into space – perhaps most importantly cinematic-Khlestakovianism, the spatializing of 'character'. It resists premature 'universalisms' and embraces the uncomfortable deferral (as well as the de-historicizing hybridity) of Homi Bhabha's 'third space': 'the notion of a politics which is based on unequal, uneven, multiple and potentially antagonistic, political identities'.[55]

The instrumental part of this rhetoric is a kind of shadow of a Gnostic rhetoric as described by Hans Jonas: 'the whole of space … has a malevolently spiritual character, and the "demons" themselves are as much spatial as they are persons. To overcome them is the same thing as to pass through them'.[56] Just as Gnosticism – Christianity's own 'dirty secret' and the motor of much contemporary esoteric activity and narrative weaving – endows 'space' with 'malevolence' so I have sought to endow it with a similar, but amoral energy, a simple performance of itself. 'Place' however is quite different and has all the 365 heavens, un-numbered spaces, mysteries and aeons of fallen matter that any Gnostic nightmare has. It is only spectral patterning – the reduction of these innumerables to a few basic macroscopic patterns – that can 'save' me before I am involuntarily 'born again' in reverse.

The rhetorical aim of the Crab project is to give feeling to an idea, to pass on an invitation to explore. The performances were intended to convey the impetus of a journey, the leaps of a dream; the granular texture was intended to provoke the audience's own picaresque reveries. The mixing of science and esoterica, popular culture and seriousness, nostalgia and utopia

was a rhetorical device intended as exemplary: as an encouragement to 'drift' (physically and theoretically), to overcome the obstacles (explicitly confronted in Crab Steps Aside) and lures of functionalism and passive spectatorship, finding ways to transform these problems into mythogeographical detail.

## Velocity

Sexual and postcolonial granularity can freeze the 'drifters' as much as their landscapes. Capital roams, accumulatively, in a way that its subjects cannot. 'Society' has no 'at rest' default mode, no fairness to reference. And like all the other signs in the superfluous landscape, the self is in motion, its geometry easily rumpled by the grit of violence, anxiety or panic. In Wanderlust, Rebecca Solnit is appropriately graphic in describing the way that, for women walkers, public places and private parts are crushed against each other. This begs an expansive, spatial, de-centred 'politics of mobility'.

In making An Exeter Mis-Guide with Wrights & Sites I was the guest of Exeter Shopmobility, 'an organization helping to provide transport solutions for less mobile people'. Navigating the city with one of its members on motorized wheelchairs we mutually disrupted each other's 'normal' routes. I attempted unwise kerb-leaping, while Colin led me on a convoluted weave around a Georgian 'Hay', lack of dropped kerbs forcing me to examine the pavements and lower walls. I came away with a far subtler understanding of the grains and textures of the city's surface ('You may come to distrust tarmac...') and an unexpected meshing with a different set of exclusions:

> marks, boundaries, lumps and slopes on the city's surface are psychosomatic signs of razing, uprooting and re-laying, the patterns at the very heart of the city bear witness to the borders of a former British minority community living 'at peace, but without mixture; like oil and water in a glass' with a Saxon majority, until ethnically cleansed by 'saint' Athelstan and Edward the Confessor...disruptions that show up in the pavements; tapping at the spines of wheelchair and scooter users.[57]

## Vision

On the Peripheral Vision drift, we were warned – 'don't get caught up in the deer cull' – and later we found a 'keep out' sign, fallen on its face. Returning it to its silence we walked into the artificial forest, for Moyra Doorly an artificiality that has regenerated an anachronism:

> [T]he Forestry Commission has created something wonderful without realising it. Deep within its plantations lie secret wonderlands where nature spirits have been given a free hand since the trees were planted thirty years ago. Because no one goes there...[58]

Gibson suggests accessing the 'visual field' by fixating on a point; Doorly recommends un-focusing the eyes when looking for fairies. Mythogeographical practice might be to oscillate the techniques, varying the frequency of the oscillation until something, neither physiology nor fairy, resonates.

Similarly, mythogeography's pre-hybridic principle – deferring the synthesis of unlikes – can graft information technology onto archaic esoterica, and vice versa, a cross-breeding that Erik Davis describes in his book TechGnosis as implicit in the development of new technology.[59] But there is no place for political credulity, for seeing what we want to. Doreen Massey's modernist metaphorical satellite circling Earth offered materialist means to imagine the motion of social relations about place ('... what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history, but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus'),[60] contesting the superficial unconventionality of angels by this placing of a technological avatar in the sky. But Massey then dissolves her satellite, outflanking the 'eye' of New Age angelology which is 'beyond' and – unlike the eye in Hindu Darshana – only receptive: 'Imagine there is a giant radio station out there in space, beyond the stars, a receiving station, and all you have to do is to beam your thought, your longing to that station'.[61] Not only is binocular vision monocularized here by angelology, but space-time linearized: a 'beyond the stars' wilfully ignorant of a universe receding in all directions.

The point, for mythogeography, is in the suspended relation of the metaphors – satellite, eye, light, array and angel – all part of a drifter's tentative mytho-GPS system. In memetic terms, an element of nostalgia is essential. At these hubs, astronomical access to earlier, simpler memes (sometimes preserved or reconstructed in esoterica) by a kind of ideological red shift is possible. History and pseudo-history are both required for the return of a repressed simplicity. But never the collapse into the welcoming arms of either.

This is the way of Crab Walking: not going on a ramble, but taking the ramble on a ramble. It is lazier than a walk with the Ramblers' Association, led by its periphery, making 'strangers' – science and pseudo-science, critical theory and esoterica, movies and theatricality – into 'brothers', de-centredly seeking the opportunity of crisis expeditiously.

## Notes

1. Phil Smith is one of the four core members of Wrights & Sites, along with Stephen Hodge, Simon Persighetti and Cathy Turner. For more information about Wrights & Sites, see [online] http://www.mis-guide.com.
2. See Site-Specific: The Quay Thing Documented, Studies In Theatre and Performance Supplement 5, August 2000. Also accessible [online] http://www.mis-guide.com/ws/documents/tqt.html.
3. Stephen Graham, The Gentle Art of Tramping (London: Ernest Benn, 1929), pp. 38, 17.
4. ibid., p. 51.
5. ibid., pp. 51–52.
6. ibid., p. 220.
7. Geoffrey Murray, The Gentle Art of Walking (London: Blackie & Son, 1939), pp. 305–06.
8. Arthur Machen, Things Near and Far (London: Martin Secker, 1923), p. 29.
9. Robert Smithson, 'Establishment', in Jack Flam (ed.), Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 90.
10. Lesley Wade Soule, The Actor as Anti-Character: Dionysus, the Devil and the Boy Rosalind (Westport, USA: Greenwood Press, 2000), pp. 28–29.

11. See
12. Mar
13. Gas
14. Rog
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15. Poul
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17. Dav
18. J.A.
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19. ibid
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21. Kel
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32. G
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11. See Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
12. Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 183, 189.
13. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 113–14.
14. Roger Penrose, *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 96–97.
15. Paul Nash quoted in James King, *Interior Landscapes: A Life of Paul Nash* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p. 1.
16. A tragic carpet was a cloth unrolled for tragic deaths on the eighteenth-century English stage for the purpose of protecting the tragedians' costumes.
17. David Wade, *Li: Dynamic Form in Nature* (New York: Walker & Co, 2003), p. 1.
18. J.A. Scott Kelso, *Dynamic Patterns: The Self-Organisation of Brain and Behaviour* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), p. 189–90.
19. ibid., p. 25.
20. ibid., p. 11.
21. Kelso, *Dynamic Patterns*, p. 156.
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# The Mis-Guided Tour and the Standard Tour
# – a study of contrasting tour-guiding practices
# in the city of Exeter (UK)

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## Introduction

This paper proposes that certain patterns of discourse can be detected in 'official', 'civic' contemporary touring-guiding within the city of Exeter (UK), and that these patterns create certain problematical relations with, and problematical representations of, the sites of these tours. As a result, these guided tours (or, generically, the 'standard' Exeter tour) miss many of the opportunities afforded by their sites for critical, embodied, revelatory and investigative engagements. The paper develops this critique to suggest that an alternative model might better accept these opportunities and provisionally proposes the practice of 'mis-guiding', developed in the city of Exeter, as a constructive move towards such a model. .

What is referred to here by 'standard' is a tour led either by amateur Red Coat guides, with a serious, enthusiastic and committed attitude to their tours, or by municipal employees working from a provided text. Although the guides at the city's Underground Passages hold degrees in Archaeology or related subjects, they use a generic script prepared for them, and to which they can add only marginal remarks and a flavour of their own 'voice'. There may, of course, be 'official' Exeter tours (or moments within them) that differ from the 'standard' model proposed here, but all the tours visited conformed to all or most of the principles of the model. Indeed, one of the questions that this paper begs, but does not fully address, is what genealogical or causal lineage, or synchronic 'machine' that "unites disparate elements in the material, and transposes the parameters from one formula to another" (Delueze & Guattari, 2004, p.378) is capable of producing such homogeneity.

In detailing the ruling conventions of Exeter's 'standard' guided tour, I will draw from a critique of three tours in the city's Underground Passages (each time by a different guide, one in 2008 and two in 2009)

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and of a number of tours (all 2008-9) led by volunteer Red Coat guides, including 'Exeter Old and New', 'Exeter Catacombs', 'Murder and Mayhem', 'Forgotten Exeter and Tuckers' Hall', 'Forgotten Exeter' (different guide and script) and 'The Medieval Treasures of Exeter' ('Treasures'). In order to give some idea of the emergent pattern of a tour I will illustrate most extensively from the 'Treasures' tour.

I will then move on to argue for an alternative mode of guided tour – a 'mis-guided tour' – one created in an unstable dialogue with the 'standard tour'. This model emerged in the late 1990s from the site-specific performances of artists' collective Wrights & Sites, based in Exeter, but also draws upon critical theory and an orrery of disciplines (and practitioners). I will argue that the 'mis-guided' tour is a potentially better model than the 'standard tour' for seizing opportunities for interpretation offered by multiplicitous sites and that it encourages the development of a new kind of audience: one with a paranoid sensitivity.

## The Standard Tour

So, what are the problems with the 'standard guided tour' model, as practised in the official tours at Exeter, that inhibit it as an investigation and explication of multiplicitous spaces?

It is segmented, incoherent in narrative structure, often evokes the notion of 'mystery' but rarely delivers the revelation it promises, it under-explains, it ignores the significance of the accidental, it immerses its audience in their own preconceptions, it operates and sustains certain reactionary binaries, if it name-checks ideas it rarely goes on to explain them in detail or demonstrate their application, it is insufficiently aware of itself as a performance, it is modest about its own constructedness, and careless of the significance of its routes, gestures and costumes.

A disjointed assemblage of segments characterises these tours. Individual parts of the tours may be consistent with historiographical narratives, but each tour as an entity rarely develops its themes, a consistent interrogation of materials or a coherent narrative plotline. It is often disrupted by the thematic unevenness of its physical route. No sooner has a theme been established than a corner is turned and a new feature trips up the development. Where a guide tries to reiterate previously established themes, they often find themselves fighting a geographical route with a hierarchy of affects at odds with their attempts at coherence.

When an overarching narrative is established it is rarely satisfactorily resolved. This is exceptionally blatant in 'Exeter Old and New': there is no 'New'! Commonly, a narrative is introduced at the beginning of a tour

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as a 'way in' for the audience, but decays as the tour progresses. The audience is distracted from this erosion by the segmented procession of themes.

If 'mystery' is mentioned on a tour – usually to capture an audience's attention – its resolution (if it comes at all) disappoints. Some guides hint at the possibility of supernatural or conspiratorial explanations for certain events to add frisson to their commentary, only to laugh such explanations aside later. At the beginning of one tour of the Underground Passages – through the medieval underground passages that once contained pipes for carrying clean water from springs outside the city walls - the guide promises to resolve a "mystery" for us. This turns out to be a simple explanation for the absence of the pipes: stolen by workmen in the 1950s. The evocation of "mystery" betrays the fragmentation of tour narratives and briefly promises to substitute for a coherent historiography (a promise which is quickly broken in the interests of empiricism.).

The 'standard tour' Exeter guide rarely draws attention to their own part in the tour, whether as the performer of an existing script or as the maker and originator of a tour. With the exception of an occasional anecdote about gathering information, or correcting past mistakes, the tour guide is mostly silent about the forces and means of their tour's production, and of their own relation to it. The 'standard tour' is rarely forefronted as the product of numerous decisions, or as a work of personal enquiry, let alone opened up for an examination of its subliminal, structural or ideological influences.

These guides' relations to their site's performativity is problematical. In order to retain their authority, they must take something of the 'authenticity' of their site. The guide, apparently, knows part of (or maybe more than) that which the site 'knows' of itself (that which the site makes explicit). When the guide then proposes themselves to their group as an excessive authority, with more knowledge than they can dispense in the tour's limited time, it is in denial of themselves as a questionable explorer of the site, and of the group as its potential explorers. The guide not only obscures their own research-journey, but places themselves between the site and the group, implying that interpretation is the end rather than part of the ongoing process of sited enquiry.

Sometimes, in order to 'lighten' the material, a guide will make a personal comment, reflection or joke. The content of these interventions ranges from the inappropriate (unintentionally misleading the 'audience'), through the tangential and unrelated, to the effectively allusive. Regardless of their quality, however, these interventions are almost never folded back into the development of the tour's content. At best, they illuminate an empirical moment. They work essentially by

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disparity, light-heartedness contrasts with 'heavy' historical content, subjectivity is set against an 'objective' narrative. Very rarely does a guide use the dissonant quality of these asides to show the fabric of the tour as stylistically complex or emotionally ambivalent.

Despite the segmentation of content, there is often a disarming evenness of tone in the presentation of Exeter's 'standard tours'; this does not imply a monotonous delivery, but rather a comforting equanimity: even in a tour titled 'Murder and Mayhem'. Indeed, the superficial style of the same discourse can change very quickly, driven by circumstance: in an increasingly crowded Exeter Guildhall, our guide for 'Exeter Old and New' *literally* huffed and puffed and began to move his arms in slow, exaggeratedly operatic gestures. However, these histrionics were instrumentalist, attracting and retaining our attention for the same evenly toned narrative (our guide's histrionics carried no emotional affect or relevance to the tour's narrative). Very rarely, if at all, does an informality or a heightened, emotional delivery fold back into a *historiography* of high emotions, exorbitant displays, excessive politics or histrionic action. Murder, siege, blitz, social and political mayhem may be name-checked, but, at least in the relative stability of Exeter, the 'standard tour', quickly and comfortingly, restores these to a default level of ordinariness. This is not necessarily a product of conservative guides. Alternative, leftist, community-based and working class historical tours can adopt similar tones. These tones seem to originate in a discourse of "guided tour" rather than in the particular content of these tours. These tones imply a complementary ideological stasis: human nature never changes, and if the past declines into modernity then nostalgia is sufficient compensation. Even when such universality suggests an inconvenient super-connectedness (for example, in the case of globalisation) the default tone suggests that even this is a repetition of former colonial connectivities, more of the same, history as an orderly procession of compartmentalised connectivities, consistent with the segmentation of the tour.

There is one exception to this evenness – issues of gender. The two female guides I walked with both passionately denounced various historic exclusions of women from public life and space. Twice on this subject I was directly addressed as if I was personally part of the history and content of the tour, and in some way responsible for them. These were the only moments on the nine tours referenced for this paper that I was personally and emotionally engaged and felt as if something was at stake in the real time of the tour.

Any Exeter 'standard tour' will convey many atomised facts about the city, while mostly having very little to say *about* those facts or the way in which they construct the meaning of "Exeter". Little is done to

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challenge the tour groups' spontaneous 'reading' of the city. Where popular misconceptions are corrected, this is as part of the completing or refining of an existing (but not delineated) dominant narrative, rather than establishing a discourse of the questionable. The 'standard tour', at its worst, is an immersion in its audience's preconceptions, a pleasurable bathing for its participants in the familiarity of their own opinions in an unfamiliar place; it renders the 'other' of both the site and the past (space and time) tamed and adopted. Comfortingly, the visitor discovers that within the unfamiliar there is a narrative that they knew all along.

A publication used in UK schools to teach teenagers the basics of the leisure and tourism industry revealingly sets the following exercise for creating an interpretation of a heritage site: "make your own visit to this place... and list the things visitors would like to know about it." (Ward, 2000, p.112.) Students of tourism are here encouraged to prioritise appetite satisfaction, inserting an anticipated desire: what do the 'audience' *want* to find, what would they *like* to know? Site, history and historiographical narrative are subordinated to reception. In this model, the customer drives the producer; interpretation and guiding become service functions, the content of the tour is a mirroring of consumer demand.

The problems identified above - of segmentation, of lack of reflexivity, of equanimity as an ideological discourse – are not a result of the historiographical shortcomings of the guides, but lie in the nature of a performance which the 'standard tour' seeks to silence and deny. It is a mark of the evolutionary success (and memetic complexity) of the 'standard tour' that any critique of it will struggle to escape the segmented, un-reflexive, list-full and listless qualities of its discourse: its negation requires praxis.


## Examples from the Exeter 'Standard Tour'

The Red Coat guides are volunteers, organised by the local authority: Exeter City Council. Their tours are widely advertised, well attended both by Exonians and visitors to the city and their red blazers are a familiar sight in the centre of the city.

On one level the blazers of the guides are functional, easy to follow in crowded areas. On another, they convey a double-meaning, (at least for UK audiences), associating the guides on the one hand with the famously red-coated entertainers of a popular string of working class UK holiday camps, and, on the other, with the 'red coat' uniform of nineteenth century British infantry, particularly associated with the 93rd (Highland) Regiment at the Battle of Balaclava (the "thin red line"): symbols of entertainment and patriotic militarism.

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Most Red Coat tours are outdoors, all are free of charge and most last between 90 minutes and two hours. One of the fifteen or so tours in the guides' repertoire is 'The Medieval Treasures of Exeter'. "Treasures" suggests a particularly 'digestible' discourse of history – discrete objects in transit between past and present auras as a sort of exchange of value – but in fact the tour is made up of visits to sites of fortification, sanitary and water facilities, gates, mills, pubs, graveyards and former routes for the collection of urine (once used as an astringent in the cloth-making industry). There are no jewels or silverware. Yet the guide makes no comment on this intriguing re-casting of "treasures"; a (convenient, but 'innocent') lack of awareness of what is communicated by the frames, conventions, discourses, languages, dictions and muted histrionics of tour strategy, another case of the promise of 'mystery' unfulfilled.

Disappointment is built into the 'standard' tours, a symptom of the denial of performativity, evoking the proximity of History, but denying Its presence. In those rare moments when the 'standard tour' accidentally speaks its truth about History, it reveals too much about itself. On the 'Catacomb Tour', the guide was asked if the earthen floor of the Exeter Catacomb had ever been paved. "No," replied the guide, bending to tap the hard-trodden earth surface, "that's real history, that is." Such moments are rare, though such a clumsy essentialism is never far away and, if a performance-based critic is disappointed by the lack of such explicitness, then such disappointment plays an important role in holding back the crowd from the essentialist, irrationalist and a-cultural "Real" that lurks, mostly unspoken, on these tours.

One such disappointment on the 'Treasures' tour occurs when the guide pauses *outside* three sites where treasures, as conventionally understood, are stored. None of these buildings is accessible. Yet nothing is made of our exclusion (a spectral remnant of previous exclusions). Such poignant parallels and contrasts are repeatedly ignored on these tours: on 'Exeter Old and New' the guide points out the medieval tracery on the cathedral exterior, but walks the group past the same tracery patterns, in six large glass artworks by the artist Katayoun Pasban Dowlatshahi, without comment.

As attendees of an Exeter 'standard tour', we are guided by the instructions of our guide and we follow in a co-operative manner. The pleasurable release from responsibility for our trajectory is wedded to our curiosity about the unfolding route. But there is no attempt to use the process of making our way to inform the content of the tour. At each site, after the talk, the guide announces our setting off, at best with some hint of what is to come, and we follow. Between stopping points we are given no role to play, no task to complete. I observed that members of the tour groups rarely looked around them between stopping points,

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hardly ever asked questions about a site that had not already been pointed out, and between stopping points often talked to each other or looked at the pavement, waiting to re-engage their enquiry at the next 'historic' punctum. Tour groups were never actively sensitised to the city or given a participative function. This complemented and reinforced the segmentation of the guide's text. It is as if the discourse of history is re-started from its beginning at each stop, almost nothing is carried over. Any reference to a previous site is one of simple comparison. There is no sense of a matrix of meanings with which the group members must struggle, visualise and arrange for themselves, nor any indication of the gaps in the discourse. There are only segments which float in the intervals of the route's traversal.

Consistent with other tours, the 'Treasures' tour communicates engaging and illuminating segments and effective visual moments (showing today's plain stone figures on the Cathedral's West Front brightly decorated with vegetable pigments as in the medieval period), but there is no acknowledgement of the structural or metaphorical web that the guide is weaving, nor the criteria for the selection of the tour's many parts. This is a deeply inscribed and ideologically potent narrative strategy.

Just as nothing on 'Exeter Old and New' acknowledges its denial of a "New" Exeter, so the 'Treasures' tour ignores its subject's connections to, and disconnections from, the quotidian events of the contemporary city. On our tour, the guide seemed insensible to the many ways in which modern Exeter contrasts, transcends, parallels and reproduces aspects and traces of its medieval past. As the audience stood listening to the guide, a young woman begged among passers-by, there was public drunkenness, piles of rubbish on pavements, and two homeless men walked by carrying their worldly belongings in bags on their backs. Yet none of this – some of it with clear parallels to what the guide had described of medieval Exeter – was acknowledged. It was as if we were asked to walk in a protective, transparent tube. When a passer-by loudly and rudely heckled the guide, he feigned not to hear.

This heckle is significant. The heckler – a young man, dressed in dishevelled clothes – shouted, in a local accent: "I don't know why you're bothering - Exeter's crap!" The heckler assumed that the tour expressed the status and prestige of the city, part of a narrative of municipal pride that the heckler clearly felt he had no part in. A moment similar to this occurred during Johan Dahnberg's short tour of the old city of Halmstad for the First International Forum on Guided Tours (2009). A passer-by sarcastically shouted: "Hallelujah! God bless Sweden!" In this case, the heckler perceived the tour as part of a nationalistic narrative. There is nothing neutral in the form of the guided tour. Before guide meets

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audience, before a word is spoken or a step taken, there is already a baggage of assumptions about history, identity and politics. Tourist guide Edwin Lerner rather 'blurts out' the post-colonialist subtext of many a 'standard tour' when he declares that "every tour is a conquest in miniature, the invader staking out a new piece of territory for his empire". (Lerner, 2005, p.70). The argument of this paper with regard to the Exeter guides' lack of critical engagement with the sited and performative qualities of their tours is not motivated by a theatre-professional's frustration at any lack of performance skills among the guides, but rather by the facility with which they adopt, magnify and distribute with aplomb this baggage.

Our 'Treasures' guide expressed no overt nationalist agenda, nor even much in the way of a promotion of civic status. He began brightly with "welcome to Exeter!", but later slipped into a narrative of the city's architectural decline, noting the disappearance of key public buildings over the last two centuries and their replacement by structures he regarded as inferior, reminiscing nostalgically about the lost buildings of his childhood. (Antipathy or, at best, indifference to modernism is universal to the sample of tours discussed here. Even the young Passages guide who gave the most impressive and responsive tour of those studied here referred to an impressive modernist building as "that concrete monstrosity".) Thus, through the authority of his personal reminiscence, the 'Treasures' guide evoked a 'lost Exeter', rooting the city's status in the absence of what it was, rather than in what it is. Yet, while his 'authentic' Exeter lies, architecturally and dolefully, in the past, the guide displays precious little empathy with the *people* of that past. Indeed, indifference to the people of the city is a common trait of the Exeter 'standard tour'.

Despite past technological, industrial and commercial pre-eminence (for example, during the seventeenth century Exeter was a very significant commercial and industrial city, among the top five highest producing and most influential cities in the UK) neither the producing masses nor the technologists and intellectuals of Exeter make any appearance in these tours as agents of the city's making. Agency is abandoned to invading armies and regime change. The intellectual life of the city is ignored, while a handful of the county's grandee families – pre-eminently the Drakes and the Raleighs – are discussed. On 'Exeter Old and New', the guide points out the Devon & Exeter Institution as a former home of one of these grandee families, the Courteneys, but he fails to mention that in 1813 the city's intellectuals purchased it as the premises for what would now be called "inter-disciplinary" seminars and lectures (and it is still functioning). Local politicians (mayors, clerical powerbrokers, councillors) are almost universally characterised as self serving, and while this may often have been true, there is little in the way of explanation for the serious work of reform in areas like public housing, sanitation and health. When it comes

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to business and commerce otherwise empiricist tours become suddenly mystical; companies, trades, banks and commerce rise and fall without no hint of human agency, only the exigencies of technological change.

The city's majorities figure passively or disconnectedly. Workers are medieval craftsmen, never nineteenth or twentieth century proletarians. The city's rich history of religious and social street mobilisations (see Smith (2004)) goes unremarked. Populations figure as passive sufferers of insanitary conditions (such as the cholera epidemics of the 19th century). Even then, the guides often demonstrate a callous indifference to this suffering; speaking a division between us-now/ them-then. The 'Treasures' guide provoked laughter when describing dogs digging up bones in the cathedral burial ground and presented poverty and squalor as a form of exotica: the excrement in the streets, the blood running from the slaughterhouses. He made a joke of the collapse of buildings in the precipitous West Quarter of the city – something which claimed the lives of many poorer families as former merchants' homes declined into slum properties – glossing his comments with an apocryphal story about a couple floating down the river in their bed: "so the story goes". He mentions the bonfires held on the Cathedral Green, but not their anti-Catholic nature. Empathy and controversy are absented, the even tone of the presentation is matched by the highly-moderated nature of the content.

To the locally or culturally informed attendee, unintentional ironies and absences come thick and fast. After describing the arrival of St Boniface in Exeter in 680 the guide says "we had religion from that period", a bizarre comment that betrays a crude denial of local pre-Christian and Roman worship in the city (an exclusion with the echo of a racial tinge). He displays a photographic summer view of a courtyard interior that is richly bathed every year in blue flowers, and yet he shows us this in monochrome, as if emphasising our exclusion from a site still occupied by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. When he refers to the city's medieval Guildhall as "wrapped in plastic" he unknowingly quotes David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, a TV narrative of a town's spiritual corruption. But none of these ironies is redeployed as an addition to, or interrogator of, the content or the argument of the tour.

Not all of the 'Treasures' guide's manoeuvres were as subtle as those recounted above. He referred to eleventh century Exonians as acting "like true Brits" (smuggling the besieged Queen Githa from the city), missing the irony that the "British" of that period were a minority in the city and were shortly afterwards driven out by the 'Saint-King' Athelstan. When questioned, the guides for both 'Exeter Old and New' and 'Forgotten Exeter' were simply unable to account for the disappearance of the remnants of the pre-Roman Invasion Dumnonii tribe, and when the young Passages

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guide repeated the local myth (there is no reliable documentation) of St Sidwella (Christian martyr beheaded with a scythe, a spring appearing where her blood fell) he describes the saint as a "wealthy Saxon heiress", possibly reproducing a very old appropriation of a "British" pre-Christian religious narrative by a dominant Saxon culture.

Fragmentation of materials, indifference to the tour's surface narrative, the opposing of old/new, us/them, the reiteration and active finessing of dominant, negative attitudes about civil society, and the absence of ironical self-consciousness are all expressed at a particular and general level of discourse in all the examples of the 'standard tour' sampled. The pattern that emerges from these tours is of a coherent, ideological universe that is revealed explicitly only at moments when the empirical and segmented tour 'breaks down', when the guide over-interprets, improvises, or responds too enthusiastically to a question. What is present as an absence then makes itself openly known. This outspoken 'universe' is relatively coherent: it is anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois in the sense that it celebrates little of the mercantile, industrial, administrative and dynamic historical city, nothing of its nineteenth century middle-class intellectual hybridisation, nothing of its longstanding connectedness to international commerce in ideas and materials. Instead it celebrates the absence today of the small, pre-modern, conservative 'county town' that it never was, of a lost 'innocence' it never had to lose (just as the tour of "Forgotten" Exeter reveals one or two often unobserved details, but mostly, *disappoint*ingly – see above – it overlaps with the repeatedly visited territory of other tours); this nostalgia is delivered with a narrative of medieval craftsmanship, of the post-political, ceremonial guilds, accounts of the visits of royalty and grandees, and of medieval and pseudo-medieval ceremonies (the Lammas glove displayed on the Guildhall, the Sword of Honour touched by the monarch on each royal visit to signify its continuing entrustment to the city). The authentic city is always "past" and change is always loss; on the 'Old and New' tour the removal in 1825 of the protective and exclusionary gates around the Cathedral Close are described as a form of vandalism rather than as a democratisation of space or a symptom of an increasingly peaceable city.

The sub-textual narrative of a "lost Exeter", occasionally speaking itself explicitly, is it itself a supra-text of its own 'spectacular' relations, partly in the sense that they are not what they seem to be (materialist, empirical and disconnected), but also in their modern, even postmodern, commerce in images, playing fast and loose with material sites and objective correlatives. They are also 'spectacular' in their dynamic circulation of images, floating these free from historical narrative, creating "a pseudo world apart" (Debord, 1995, p.12), "a weltanschauung that has been

actualized, translated into the material realm" (Debord, 1995, p.13); this is a process that conforms to the relations of an economy of 'spectacle' as described by Guy Debord: "proclaim(ing) the predominance of appearances... a negation of life that has *invented a visual form for itself*." (Debord, 1995, p.14)

The apparent modesty and archaism of the 'standard tour' neatly hides *and* expresses these relations. It visits material and historic sites, it references them directly and 'to their face'. However, the spinal narrative of the tour, segmented like vertebrae, is able to switch form for content and content for form, so that what becomes the content of the tour is not the materiality of these sites, but the processes of segmentation and separation themselves, while the form of the tour is a poignant, modest and coherent longing for a (never-existing) coherence (the 'county town').

## The Mis-Guided Tour As A Détourned 'Standard Tour'

It is against the 'standard tour' that 'the mis-guided tour' is poised to strike, not in a simple confrontation, but as one proposed alternative among many that might emerge in response to the 'standard' tour's dominance. It is certainly a refutation of kinds, but also a détournment (in its manifold senses, including a travestying and revivifying of materials) and as one side of a dialogue. The 'mis-guided' tour, then, is not a simple opposition to, dismissal of, or competitor with the 'standard tour', but seeks to re-use the parts of the 'standard tour' to create one of many possible alternatives.

The idea of a 'mis-guided tour' first arose in 1998 when the site-specific artists and performance-makers Wrights & Sites were working in an unusually sensitive heritage, leisure and economic development site in Exeter. The local authority's initial animosity towards any theatrical or performative representation of this site led to the group's growing awareness of the monolithic, restrictive and monocular narrating of this and other similarly contested sites in the city by political, commercial and cultural interests (including tour-guiding).

However, the group also began to discuss the ways in which the very multiplicitous nature of space itself, "as always under construction... always in the process of being made... never finished; never closed" (Massey, 2005, p.9), resisted such attempts to restrict its meanings. And not only did it resist the municipal attempts, but also it resisted the group's own deployments of 'standard' (theatre building-based) performance practices. I was at the time, and remain today, a member of this group. As I worked with my colleagues to create a joint response to

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this site (and subsequently in similarly disputed and controlled spaces) I became increasingly aware of a rich assembly of traps, convulsions, gaps, aggressions, pitfalls, paradoxes, discomforts and disputes in these multiplicitous spaces and how they were often left unaddressed by official discourse and were uncontainable by the 'standard' theatrical means at our disposal.

I came to realise that I could utilise these volatilities, initially by inventing an unreliable and yet insightful tour guide persona that might speak the double-inauthenticities and double-inhibitions of these sites. This persona might voice, through irony, the external restrictions placed on meaning in such a site, while also acting as a subversive *restriction on that restriction*, thus releasing the volatility of multiplicitous space into the performance. The intention here was that by embodying and voicing a double failure of truth, the "Mis-Guide", as we named this persona, might express an ironical truth, a kind of dislocated, displaced truth that chimed with a tradition of critical theory founded in German idealism, rooted in the idea that the truth of a thing lies outside of itself.

Seeking the means to animate such double-inhibitions, and to save what I could of my own immediate performance practice, I moved away from a drama of character, mimesis and psychology, and adopted the guided tour and the guide persona. These served as a non-theatrical (or "post-dramatic") means by which to engage ironically and personally (and, in a self-defeating way, autobiographically) with the perilous multiplicities of the heritage site, bringing together the fragments (or segments) of a failed theatricality and a restrictive touristic narrative into a new kind of assemblage for the Wrights & Sites performance *Pilot Navigation* (1998). Another member of the group, Cathy Turner, also created her own guide/character for this performance. Where the "Mis-Guide" was poetic and louche, Turner's guide was a bright, uniformed and entertaining commentator who used the fictional narrative of a local painter to encourage the audience (to whom small, empty picture frames were distributed) to re-interpret the familiar landscape as an artificial, painted construction.

In creating these characters for *Pilot Navigation*, Wrights & Sites found that elements of what I have called the 'standard guided tour' - its tics and tricks and qualities, its segmented narratives, its empirical research, its ironies, its recycling of old tropes, its binaries of expert and audience, local and foreign, old and new – could be redeployed and détourned (travestied and transformed) in the form of 'mis-guided' tours.

Wrights & Sites have since made a number of these 'mis-guided' tours, including *The Shed Walk* (2003) for Annabel Other's Shed Summit at Welcombe Barton (UK), *Misguided in Zürich – Mind the MAP* for the 2005 Walk 21 Conference in Zürich and two 'seasons' of tours in Exeter

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– the *Lost Tours* (2003) and the *Blue Boy Walks* (2004, for Spacex Gallery). In a curatorial capacity the group have enabled other artists to create such tours, including KagranKollectiv's *Suburban Safari* and Karl Bruckschwaiger's *Die Zonen* (both Vienna, 2007) and Alexander Hana's *Tschou-Tschou* (2008, Fribourg, Switzerland). Some of these tours have been made for heritage sites, others for quotidian spaces; Wrights & Sites' member Simon Persighetti created a tour-performance, *Passage* (2001), for Exeter's Underground Passages and another for his local neighbourhood: *Walking Newtown* (2003). My own 'mis-guided' tours have included those for the UK's National Trust at A la Ronde (2006-9) and Morte Point (2009), for the Chiaia area of Naples (2006) and for events like the Hidden City Festival, (2008, Plymouth, UK). In 'The Gap' (2005) I worked with the mathematician Matthew Watkins to make a tour, for the British Association's Science Festival, to illustrate the geometry and philosophy of the mathematician William Clifford using modern, quotidian spaces such as car parks, stairwells and department stores in the Exeter streets where Clifford had played as a child in the mid-nineteenth century.

I have also introduced a number of other artists to the 'mis-guide' concept, encouraging them in making their own performative-tours. These have included scenographer Anoushka Athique and live artist Katie Etheridge (*Mobile Machinoeki*, 2007) and dancer Rachel Sweeney, movement artist Fumiaki Tanaka and singer Nicola Singh (*Fabulous Walks*, 2008).

In making - and observing others make - 'mis-guided' tours, I have gleaned various tactics that both distinguish the 'mis-guided' from the 'standard tour', but also connect them, sometimes dynamically and sometimes antagonistically. It has been useful to discuss these tactics through the concept of détournement, particularly in explaining the double nature of the relationship of 'mis-guided' to 'standard', for the term applies not only to the critique and re-use of the parts of the 'standard tour', but also to the means of constructing the 'mis-guiding' process in general.

"Détournement" is the name given to a praxis developed by the Parisian International Lettristes, (who later generated the Situationist International), as part of a strategy, mostly devised in the 1950s, combining a utopian urbanism, ambulatory city exploration and an antipathy to the dominance of the visual and the appropriating gaze of the spectator. Disappointed by the decreasing impact of each successive avant-garde and the creeping conservatism of an aged Surrealism, the International Lettristes developed détournement as a tactic for reclaiming the materials of art without capitulating to what they saw as its inextricable complicity in the production of saleable commodities and

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an increasingly monstrous spectacle of social relations reduced to the competition between, and exchange of, images.

Examples of détournement by International Lettristes and situationists included creating political tracts from popular comics by replacing the text of the speech bubbles with leftist theory. To make maps of ambience they cut up conventional maps of Paris, rearranging only those parts representing the city's most intensely atmospheric spaces. The painter Asgar Jorn, briefly a situationist member, bought up stereotypical landscape paintings from street artists and combined them with his own drips and strokes so that the original images, not quite destroyed, took on a spectral half-life, simultaneously a satire upon and a transfiguration of their banality.

Similarly, the 'mis-guided tour' takes from the 'standard tour'; not in the sense that it plagiarises its content (as a 'pirate' tour might copy the text of a competitor), but rather that it defiles and then transfigures its form. Not surprisingly, given its animosity to spectacle, there is an aspect of disappearance in détournement, a certain modesty, a withdrawal of the artist from originality and an indifference to authenticity, and this is expressed, in the 'mis-guided tour', in the undermining of the guide's authoritative role, the eroding of the reliability of the tour's text, and the diminishing of the presence of the 'Mis-Guides' themselves. However this corrosion is not the key to the process. Détournement certainly "contains elements of game playing and warfare" (Kaufmann, 2006, p.37) and there is an aggression in the tactic, a negation of its target, but it also practices a dialectical 'negation of the negation' and, so, the tour returns, its form intact but displaced, 'détourned' in the sense of taking a *detour;* in order to transform the problems of the 'standard tour' it is necessary to step critically and satirically to one side of it.

In this way, the 'mis-guided tour' retains the abstracted shell of the 'standard tour' – a route, a guide, a crowd, a progress, a text – and yet transforms its content and intention. This is the key function of détournement: "an extreme form of the redistribution of cultural value". (Ford, 2005, p.37)

## 1/ The détournment of segmentation

An example of this process of détournement is the use made in 'mis-guided tours' of the segmented qualities of the 'standard tour'. In the 'standard tour' the arbitrary or utilitarian segmenting of information leads to a mixture of localised coherence and generalised incoherence, inhibiting an audience from a critical engagement with the tour's materials. However, this very problem can be transformed into a cultural 'weapon' for the Mis-Guide. Re-writing the guided tour, anyone familiar

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with the use of segmentation in the making of a coherent dramaturgy, for example in the work of theatre artists like Bertolt Brecht or Eugenio Barba, can redeploy the disconnections, interruptions and gaps, deferring the synthesis of the tour's parts, so as to produce an episodic narrative which, on the one hand, signals how it is made up from its various parts and, on the other hand, is sufficiently coherent to make itself open to an audience's questioning.

## The following four key tactics can be added to that of the transfiguration of segments, within the praxis of détournement:

### 2/ The immersion of the guide

The Mis-Guide immerses themselves, bodily and autobiographically, in the narrative of the tour. The Mis-Guide does not stand above the materials of the tour, but inserts their body and their biography among them. The Mis-Guide shares with the audience the circumstances of their research and explains the personal significance of the site. In 2008 Simon Persighetti was due to create a 'mis-guided' tour with the Zimbabwean mbira player Chartwell Dutiro as part of *The Fabulous Walks* season, but after a single working day Dutiro was hospitalised with a serious illness. In the tour itself Dutiro became a present absence for the audience, with Persighetti drawing on telephone calls made by Dutiro from his hospital bed, playing his music on a mobile cd player and interweaving Persighetti's own African associations with the Devon route of the tour. At first the effect was to foreground the artist, recruiting the site (partly industrial estate, partly edge of town riverside) to tell his own and his work-partner's story, but as the tour progressed and instrumental engagement with the route receded, so did the autonomy of this autobiography; both the site and then the selves reappearing in a more complex entanglement.

### 3/ Folding back

A Mis-Guide can make offhand comments just like a 'standard tour' guide – personal reflections, reminiscences, jokes – but rather than delivering them and then forgetting them, the Mis-Guide returns to these apparently arbitrary comments and folds them back into the themes of the tour, helping the Mis-Guide to construct a complex matrix of meanings. Throwaway remarks are later revealed as having a poetic connection with or

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making a cryptic allusion to a key theme. Every part of the tour serves the web of the tour. Jokes, mis-speakings, puns, apparent coincidences are all eventually revealed as part of a created pattern. (Though not always possible, the Mis-Guide should attempt to weave extraneous and unexpected events – heckles, dogs running up, etc. – into the thematic web of the tour.) This encourages the audience to adopt a paranoid sensitivity – reading significance into every connection - a tendency to over-explain every detail that counters the dominant under-explanation of the 'standard tour' guide style.

Opportunities for this connectedness occur as often in a 'standard' as a 'mis-guided' tour. On a 'standard tour' of the caves at Kent's Cavern, Torquay (UK, 2003), the guide showed models of various animal skulls found in the Cavern, and then, playfully, produced the 'skull' of an alien grey! There was a moment of incongruous humour and then the alien 'skull' was quickly put away and forgotten. However, this light hearted jest on the guide's part could have been used to engage with the myth of alien interference in human prehistory which arises from a reactionary assumption that 'primitive' humans were incapable of making the leap to civilisation without the help of 'superiors' (a structural myth that has a racist equivalent in the interpretation of ancient African civilisations, such as the Great Zimbabwe, as beyond the capability of ancient black societies and therefore the result of a lost white society.) The alien intervention myth has particular pertinence at Kent's Cavern for it was here that an inversion (and a structural equivalent) of this myth was challenged when the archaeologist William Pengelly reported the layering of human and animal remains at Kent's Cavern in a configuration that challenged the timeline of the biblical account of creation. Humanity's biblical role as Creation's steward, a myth of *humans* as galactic superiors, was broken. But no such connection, or folding back, was made on the Kent's Cavern tour.

## 4/ Respecable and non-respectable

In my own 'mis-guided' tour of the Royal William Yard (2008-9) (an immense nineteenth century Royal Naval stores yard) in the city of Plymouth, UK, I combine respectable and non-respectable information. I cite respected historiographical sources, and academically cogent theories of space and matter. But I also quote from ghost-hunting websites and when addressing the apparently gridded and symmetrical shape of the Yard, introduce what at first seems to be an irrelevant and exotic digression into the "trapezoidal philosophy" of Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan – a set of ideas that includes the belief that non-symmetrical trapezoidal shapes operate as portals for extreme, chaotic

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and irrational forces. I then fold this apparent digression back into the tour as the Yard itself begins to reveal that its apparently symmetrical form actually masks trapezoidal features and I use these to evoke the Yard's more extreme and absurd qualities and histories: the possibly sinister implications of the Yard's designation on a Nazi invasion map, the massive storage of biscuits that once sustained blood-soaked colonial adventures and the bitter irony of my own Uncle Clarence in 1939 being issued tropical kit from the Yard before being sent to the freezing waters of the Orkney Islands, where he died aboard HMS Royal Oak, his ship sunk at anchor in Scapa Flow by a U boat. As I reference the bodies of the dead sailors in the waters of Scapa Flow, including my Uncle's, I refer to my own mortal body, my bones damaged by a fall on the granite of the yard, and with the audience's assistance (shielding me from the eyes of the residents of the flats in the Yard) I remove my trousers and put on white Royal Navy tropical shorts for the final fifteen minutes of the tour – first making myself laughable, and then addressing the most serious and personal content of the tour.

Such assistance from the audience is a key part of the final element.

## 5/ The immersion of the audience

The audience on a mis-guided tour will eat, drink, carry, sing, assist the guide, be questioned. At the Royal William Yard they listen for the sounds of ghostly cattle, and must choose from bottles labelled 'Mediterranean Sea' or 'North Sea' to water their tot of rum. On a 'mis-guided tour' at A la Ronde – *A Man About The House* (2008) - with Simon Persighetti, the tour group are asked to make their own procession. The intention of these participations is for the audience to become alert to the possible demands about to be made upon them by their guide/s, by the site, by the histories to which they are being introduced – there is an active, ethical role for them. Not only are the participants invited, by the coherence of the tour, to critically and objectively question it, but are encouraged, by the sheer density (and yet coherence) of the fragments, to paranoiacally over-explain it. Theirs is an active, intellectual, experiential and participative spectatorship.

There is an underlying strategy behind the tactics of the 'mis-guided' tour. This is an approach to place and space developed by Wrights & Sites over a series of projects; one that the company have come to call "mythogeography" (see Smith, 2009).

This approach builds upon (and adopts aspects of) some of the common tactics of postmodern performance – self-reflexivity and intertextuality, for example – but it also brings less common, less academically familiar elements, extending the definition of mythogeography as "the personal,

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mythical, fictional and fanciful mappings that intertwine or subvert the official, municipal identities and histories of a place" (Wrights & Sites, 2010) to embrace discourses, in my own work, such as that of the work of Charles Fort, an unrespectable enquirer into unexplained phenomena who privileged anomaly over conformity as the criterion for assessing data. In the 'mis-guided' tour this folds back irrelevance and anomaly as the keys to historiographical enquiry, privileging the marginalised, discarded, degraded, inconvenient and the clues to the yet-to-be-detected, what Fort described as "damned data".

This enhanced mythogeographic approach has two main features: firstly in opposition to restrictive monolithic conceptions of sites, it sets multiple narratives in motion about any site. Secondly, it empowers and mythologizes people, especially explorers in the city (protean avatars of the tour group), setting their biographies and their sensual presence on an equal footing with the historic forces active upon the sites they engage with, re-conceiving them as agons, heroes, interventionists, re-makers of meaning, détourners, actors in history, rather than the passive receptors of existing meanings.

It is these two mythogeographical missions that the 'mis-guided' tour – in association with other walking, interventionist and situational practices – seeks to serve.

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# Burning the Box Office
## Locating the relics of theatricality in a dramaturgy of the everyday

PHIL SMITH

In blue, wintry light, the air full of falling flour for snow, a 'businessman' rises from his knees, seizes the fairy-tale backdrop and drags it to the floor, plucks up a bag containing (apparently) the evening's box-office takings, counted earlier in front of the audience, draws out the notes, tosses them into a tin bath and sets fires to them. He is joined by his two fellow actors. As the stage lights dim, the three gather around the bath, illuminated by the combustion of their earnings.

On the outskirts of a city, a small group of visitors, accompanied by a mountain guide and city officials, descends from the highest point of a pyramidal waste-dump, crowned by the sanitation workers' own safari-style party hut, and enter a levelled area. Among salvaged remnants of the city's collapsed nineteenth-century bridge, the group observes a herd of



• Kagran Kollectivi's
*Suburban Safari* (2007).

KagranKollectivi's
*Suburban Safari* (2007).

• Paul Stebbings and Carlton Bunce in TNT's *1945* (1981-2006).

series of interventionist 'tours' made for Wrights & Sites' *Stadtverführungen in Wien* and co-produced with Tanzquartier Wien and Wiener Festwochen.

In a recent essay (Smith 2007) I recounted the personal trajectory that took me from working as a company dramaturg for TNT's touring theatre – its roots in para-theatre and popular performance – within which I had the brief 'to enhance theatricality' that rested on a semi-fictional notion of nineteenth-century German dramaturgs adapting the conceptual plays of poets for the practical stage, to engaging with a dispersed performance of journey, site and 'walking as art' with artist group Wrights & Sites. But there has always been a complementary motion to this trajectory, a plane of activity on which a different kind of dispersive action began in the theatricality of a 'rough' dramaturgy. Through a spacing and thinning out of that theatricality, this dramaturgy has returned, in certain kinds of performative intervention, as remnant, revenant and trace: assemblage and weaving, vernacular intervention, character in myth, separatedness (the 'ands'), sitedness (acting machine and theatre building as media not containers), the simultaneous dissimilarities of the grotesque, folding back and framing. The usefulness of these spectral remains of theatricality to the growing practice of non-theatrical relational interventions in the fields of site and journey is what I want to explore here.

## ASSEMBLAGE

large mountain goats, an endangered species, and is then ushered to a 'shop' peddling mementoes: goat-emblazoned badges, tea-towels and thongs.

The first description is of the final moments of theatre company TNT's *The Mystery / Funny Money* (1981-7), a show developing Peter Brook's 'rough theatre' concept to address economic orthodoxies through a travesty of pantomime and fairy tales. The second describes Viennese KagranKollectiv's *Suburb Safari* (2007) at Vienna's Donaustadt Rubbish Dump, one of a

Formed in 1980 in England, by former members of the Grotowski-influenced Triple Action Theatre (Mansfield, UK), Munich-based TNT makes dramaturgical constructions from existing texts by means of adaptation, montage and assemblage. Rehearsal text is nothing more than a pretext for performance. Even productions of existing play texts have involved significant dramaturgical interventions, the insertion of new scenes, songs, collaging with related texts and ur-versions, new framing devices and

somewhat 'edgy' relations with copyright-holders.

The script of TNT's second piece, for example, entitled *1945! / English Tea Party / Hitler Killed My Canary* (1981–2006), from an initial draft by Paul Stebbings, took its narrative structure from Gombrowicz and texts from war poet Keith Douglas, government public education literature and variety artists like Robb Wilton and Nellie Wallace. *Cabaret Faust* (1984–6) borrowed from Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* and István Szabó's movie adaptation, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and the routines of 1930s English Northern comics like Frank Randle. It was performed on a medieval 'hell mouth' that transformed into the face of Adolf Hitler.

It is significant that my first involvement in pre-rehearsal dramaturgy with TNT took place in Cardiff during the 1980 workshops and performances given by Odin Teatret and hosted by Cardiff Laboratory Theatre. Such assembling from multiple sources was directly influenced by the dramaturgical procedures of Grotowski and Barba, particularly Barba's dramaturgical 'weaving' (Barba 1994: 160), in which the integrity of single strands or segments allows for a meaningful, but autonomous, pattern to emerge. Aesthetically, however, the dominant influence was Vsevolod Meyerhold's *Doctor Dapertutto* period, characterized by its abrupt and excessive switches of mood and its syntheses of extreme dissimilarities in a 'grotesque' style. Anti-naturalistic, the style refutes an assumed common experience expressible in appearances and then animates the void left by this refutation as something like a quantum vacuum: its displaced particles – characters, plots, symbols, super-objectives – popping in and out of existence by borrowing from and paying back to a fund of theatrical energy rather than any 'real life' authority.

This combination of dramaturgical assemblage, generative theatricality and 'Dapertutto' aesthetics retains the diaphanous power necessary to haunt beyond theatre and studio. In 2008, I found myself working, very like a TNT dramaturg, with Alexander Hana on the text for his *Tachou-Tachou*, part of Wrights & Sites' *Mis-Guided* for the Belluard Bollwerk International at Fribourg (Switzerland). *Tachou-Tachou* was a 45-minute 'de-tour' aboard Fribourg's official tourist 'train', a road vehicle shaped like a steam locomotive used for pulling tourist-filled carriages around Fribourg's 'heritage sites'.

Hana's *détournement* re-routed this 'train', through suburbia and industrial estate, to excessive sites of waste and disposal, entering the grounds of the city's abattoir, turning into a remote cul-de-sac, becoming 'trapped' in multiple circuits of the casino roundabout. This re-routing allowed Hana to disrupt expectations, reassemble the city's public narratives, make new connections, highlighting the strangely limited sources of Fribourg's apparently diverse contemporary architecture.

The multiple voices of the recorded commentary and its woven text of varied strands – historical, fanciful, investigative, conspiratorial – facilitated sudden changes of tone. The 'de-tour' became increasingly grotesque, combining trivia with tragedy, the circlings of the roundabout, at first amusing, becoming unnerving. But most akin to the dramaturgical strategies employed by TNT was the folding of the tour's commentary back in upon itself, the voices beginning to argue with each other, the text becoming un-containable within its own conventions.

Reflecting on the dramaturgy of *Tachou-Tachou* – its performance architecture and my own role in it – I began to consider the connections between interventions of this kind and a dramaturgy I had previously only imagined as theatrical.

## FOLDING BACK AND FRAMING

The folding of themes, actions, performance and narrative back into their own circumstances before seeking a reference to, or permission from, an exterior authority, or a signified for its signifiers, is characteristic of the architecture of

TNT's productions. In advocating the architectural conceptualization of dramaturgy, Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt extend it to the 'situating' of performances 'within the context of a community, society and the world' (Turner and Behrndt 2008: 35). To this an interventional dramaturgy, thinning out its theatricality, adds, in a complementary shifting of the ground, the 'situating' of the performance back in itself, just as the early structure of a TNT performance is later excavated, reconstructed and interrogated, folding the intervention into the process of its own siting, a spectral return of specificity.

In TNT productions this folding back appears as the reintroduction of the box-office takings in *The Mystery / Funny Money* and the collapse of the final 'trial' scene of 1945! under the weight of its music hall gags – content defeated by its style. Sometimes the framing of the action takes on a life of its own, such as the entanglement of parallel murder investigations, one in a staged 'crime drama', the other among its brothel performers, in *The Murder of Sherlock Holmes* (1993-2003).

In interventional performance this 'life of its own' takes on a greater, sometimes gnostic, sometimes socialistic, autonomy. Floated free from fiction and art, an interventional framing – for example in Piero Manzoni's signing of persons as permanent artworks or in Yves Klein's appropriation of the universe for his 'Theatre of The Void' – trumps Turner and Behrndt's formula by claiming the situation as its own work. This was an impulse that characterized the early, more political, manifestations of Fluxus or of the situationists before the aestheticization of psychogeography, and re-emerges in 'events' like Wrights & Sites' *Exeter Everyday* (2006), where the company did little more than announce and advertise a week of daily quotidian themes ('Waiting', 'Feet and Shoes', 'Glints In Eyes'), or in the hollowing out of extreme acts that leaves an everyday made special, such as Marcus Coates's *Journey to the Lower World* (2003), where a barely grasped shamanic journey to ask a question of

the animal world on behalf of the tenants of a Liverpool tower block reveals to the audience what they already know.

CHARACTER AND MYTH

Marcus Coates's gentle appropriation of shamanism spoofs the dominant use of myth by two generations of performance artists. Rooted in Mircea Eliade's advocacy of the renewal of forms through a return to '"chaos" (on the cosmic plane), to "orgy" (on the social plane), to "darkness" (for seed), to "water" (baptism on the human plane ...)' (Eliade 1971: 88), artists and performers like Paul McCarthy, Carolee Schneemann and those of the Wiener Aktionismus, and a subsequent generation of Body Artists, created a viscerally immersive, transcendent, self-sacrificial trope. This impressive practice, characterizing artists as exceptional and comparable to 'the yogic seeker of dishonour' (McEvilley 2005: 246), continues to pose a challenge of rigour and integrity. Theatre, with the notable exception of 'third theatre', has mostly backed off from this challenge into realism or the hyper-control of space, image, character and costume, protective of a threatened body. However, performers with a lighter touch like Coates or Bobby Baker found an alternative integrity within a more quotidian or autobiographical self-exposure, which still references a mythic level.

Anti-psychological in their conception, more democratic than shamanic, TNT characters are made to be thrown on like found costumes, just as Coates unceremoniously dons his deer skin in the 'offstage' kitchen off audience member Rosie's dining room where the shamanic ritual of *Journey To The Lower World* takes place. Both stand in the tradition of Luther's 'priesthood of all believers', of everyone as artist, traceable from Beuys and Klein via Oskar Schlemmer to the 'rough' cabaret of Emmy Hennings and Hugo Ball. In TNT's *Moby Dick* (1995-2000) the character of Ahab is constructed from a drunk who is hauled from the floor of a bar whose

wooden boards become the deck and walls of the Pequod. Characters and 'set' are the same, more like quotations than human or local referents. On one tour of *1945!* the third character was played by quickly briefed volunteers from the touring venues. Fore-fronted construction often folds back into itself as characters are dismantled by their own narratives. In *The Murder of Sherlock Holmes* the character Jack Claw, a brothel 'bouncer', acting reluctantly in the play within the play, performs the part of Doctor Watson boating to East London disguised as Sherlock Holmes. Hailed by a disembodied voice, these layers of character separate out in 'an Afghanistan in the heart of London' (*The Murder of Sherlock Holmes*). The clearing away of identity opens up a viral space and its 'situating', and makes room for the repetitions of myth.

Dragging down the innocent and the powerful into ecstatic, inebriated, failing projects with their imploding plays within plays and collapsing frames, this is a dramaturgy of exemplary failure shared with the generously vulnerable agitations of performers like the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, Richard Dedomenici, The Vacuum Cleaner and My Dads Strip Club.

John Rudlin has criticized TNT for '[I]n the escape from the authority of authorship willingly sacrific[ing] anything (even the form on which they claim to be basing their performance) to the immediacy of theatrical effect' and, in place of the 'absolutes' of a particular form, basing character 'types' on a stereotypical casting of the company's actors: 'organizer/ interlocutor ... victimized woman / child ... chameleon' (Rudlin 1994: 223). While the specific performers referred to by Rudlin have now moved on, the TNT 'types', however, remain: the failing organizer (Sweller in Holmes, the Hausmeister in *Amerika! Amerika! / The Charlie Chaplin Putsch* [1987 and 1992] and *Lear* [2005-6]), the victimized object of desire (Russia in *Harlequin / Glasnost Harlequin* [1980-92], Rose of Sharon in *Grapes of Wrath* [1999] and Clarisse in *Fahrenheit 451* [2007-8]) and the

transformed and doomed 'hero' (Neil Down in *1945!*, the Al Jolson impersonator in *Wizard of Jazz* [1987-2001], Montag in *Fahrenheit 451*). These are the 'parts' of a 'tragedy with a smile on its lips' (to use Meyerhold's slogan), which end, in their different narratives, in a nascent fascism, the disposal of dissidents, despair, suicide, return to war, execution and racist murder, and for which 'chaos' the plots pay back the characters with lynching, burning, eye-gouging, humiliation and abjection. The challenge of the grotesque to the audience (to empathize with the 'dishonoured' objects of comic extremity in their worst and most absurd suffering, to sorrow *with* those they have laughed at) displaces the onus of redemptive action from the elite performer towards the auditorium.

## MEDIUM, NOT CONTAINER

TNT actors are often in the audience, interrogating (*Funny Money*), flirting (*Canterville Ghost*, 1997-2008), eliciting information (*Holmes*), debt-collecting (*Christmas Carol*, 1996-2009), taking hair samples (*Frankenstein*, 2005-7). Audiences are regularly called upon to enable the action, often in ways that they may question: for example, holding up interleaved Union Flag and Nazi Swastika bunting for the Munich meeting of Hitler and Chamberlain (*Cabaret Faust*). The relations with the audience are a part of the permanent architecture of TNT performances, placing the dramatic focus in the gap between actor and audience, creating a virtual vacuum, a questionable and eruptive 'void'.

In TNT's dramaturgy, the physical and social architecture of the theatre building figures not as a frame containing a privileged stage within which the essential action takes place, but rather as the medium of performance. Box-office, aisles, seats, boxes, bars and foyers, ushering, cleaning and stage management are all as much aesthetic as bureaucratic materials; stage objects function first as machines for

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acting, last as decor. In *Amerika! Amerika!* the interval was hijacked by impoverished entertainers and the foyer invaded by the dregs of Hitler's defeated 1923 Beer Hall Putsch rushing in from the street.

The dispersal of the privileged space of the stage is key to any move from (and between) theatrical and relational interventions. It is this impetus that dissolves the aesthetic parts of the 'theatrical-architectural' montage one step further, in a move that makes the parts less important than their connections, their 'and and and', somewhat in the way that architect Jan Gehl (1987) privileges the space between buildings over the buildings themselves, or as Tom Nielsen (2002) of the Aarhus School of Architecture imagines 'voids' or 'superfluous spaces' (potent 'empty' places of waste, surplus and excess created in urban space by unplanned economic pressures and planning failures) as possible and powerful social 'theatres' akin to

those of Marion Shoard's 'edgelands' (2002). Rather than an organic use of building, stage, text and presence, an 'architectural dramaturgy' requires a fragmenting and dispersive practice, reaching towards something spectral: a presence of trace, not in occult or sentimental form, but in the diaphanous, ideologically-powerful inscribing of the space of the streets (while at an ideological level engaging the spatialization of theory). It is this that moves intervention from a theatrical irony to a more efficacious and self-conscious double-inauthenticity in works like Christian Hasucha's *Die Insel* – first created for *Okkupation*, (Berlin, 2006), and then for *Stadtverführungen in Wien* – a grass island raised three metres above the city streets, open to any use by anyone willing to book an hour; or the spatial *détournements* of the Office of Subversive Architecture and the Barsky Brothers, inserting 'playgrounds' and 'stages' into wasted, surplus urban spaces; or Mierle

▪ Christian Hasucha's *Die Insel* (2008).

Laderman Ukeles's *Touch Sanitation* (1978–80), shaking hands with all of New York's sanitation workers, independent of gallery and theatre and yet both formally and theatrically structured; or the more explicitly performed 'safaris' of KagranKollectiv or Karl Bruckschwaiger's *Die Zonen* (2007), where an audience were led by an architect-guide (as if into 'the Zone' of Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*) into the exotically overgrown wasteland of a former railway yard in central Vienna prior to its re-development under the architect Sir Norman Foster, to confront not dreams and desires but history.

The spectral revenant of theatricality, knowingly fed by these social artists, solves the problem of means and ends embedded in Yves Klein's exemplary appropriation of everything for art when art is not all things. In such over-leaping of itself, the aesthetic becomes cornered, by its limits, into a return to some sort of representation or mimesis. But by a nod to a dismantled theatre, interventionists are able to double their irony by taking advantage of the limitations of their practice. They access a

wasted theatricality in a wasted space: on the day I attended Bruckschwaiger's *Die Zonen*, the 'tour' included our unnerving confrontation with a guard dog, an unwelcomed visit to hidden camps of the homeless and a magical trespass in a laboratory where an eerily geometrical shadow world had been laid out for hydro-experiments. Like the failing-father/organizer-interlocutor in TNT's dramaturgy, Bruckschwaiger, at the edge of chaos, lured us, without self-sacrifice or miserabilism, onto an abject landscape, salvaging for us an intense moment of our participation in a threatened excess, just before disappearance.

While the 'audience-centric' dramaturgy of TNT has attempted to turn theatricality into a relationship of audience with actors rather than characters, there is a limit to this socialization (a limit I may have underemphasized here by favouring connectivities) placed upon it by the fiction of its forms (a folding in, rather than opening out), which does not necessarily apply to other performances. For Coates, for Bruckschwaiger and for many of the others cited here, what Rudlin, pejoratively, identifies in TNT characterization (the refusal of absolutes and the reliance on quotidian selves and restrictive, oppressive stereotypes) is but a beginning of a process, which they have continued, hollowing out even further these vacated personae. Modest and self-possessed, interventional and relational, such artists displace the chaos of the ritual to their audience, as Francis Alys, walking unannounced through Mexico City with a loaded Beretta carried nonchalantly at his side like a shopping bag, displaced the threat to his audience in Re-enactments (2000). Rather than choosing sacred victimhood or immersion in a ritualized chaos, Alys makes the chaos quotidian and the identity of the mythic scapegoat (artist or audience) ambivalent. *Re-enactments* generates a social witness through its mythic act asking 'who must pay for this?' Slinkachu goes further by dispersing his dramaturgy to tiny hand-painted model figures, arranged in complex tableaux, left to fend for themselves.

In his street *manoeuvres* Tim Brennan inhabits a similarly ambiguous persona. The manoeuvres are woven from art historical or political-historical themes, significant walking routes and the recitation of fragments of quoted text, read from a notebook. Isolated moments of the most rudimentary theatricalization occur. On his *Luddite Manoeuvre* (2008) for the ROAM festival of 'art walking' at Loughborough (UK), Brennan opened his coat to reveal a woman's floral dress worn over his jeans, a reference to the female disguises used by Luddites. This moment was triggered by an unexpected and excessive space: a vandalized telecom unit, a mess of twisted metal and wires that wormholed Brennan and his audience to the nineteenth-century Luddites' machine-breaking. Although Brennan's *manoeuvres* might seem almost 'stagily' over-prepared, in fact they are more dispersive than might appear from a single attendance. On Brennan's *manoeuvre* for the Spacex Gallery in Exeter (UK) in 2007, he declaimed his texts, passionately and boomingly, to a large, mostly passive crowd. At Loughborough, on the other hand, the manoeuvre was nearer to a dialogue between Brennan and the audience, with lengthy interventions from audience members, recounting experiences and giving opinions. Like a character in TNT's works, Brennan's persona is constructed from quotations, making him both vulnerable and able to respond to the affordances of both the streets and his audiences.

## SEPARATEDNESS (AND AND AND)

What ties 'rough' theatricality and interventional performance together is the fore-fronting of limitation, fragmentation, segments, quotations, 'parts' and the deferral and delay of their re-unification to allow the creation of voids, gaps and 'ands' in order to generate a different order of connectivity. In the account I have given here, this connectivity begins in the dramaturgy of Grotowski and Barba with the use of discreet segments woven

together, then reappears, travestied, in the montage of 'rough theatre', the folding back into theatricality and the use of the units of the theatre building as the material of the medium itself, and is then further displaced, emptied and made self-reflexive and socially connective in the performative interventions of guerrilla architects and the performances of interventional artist/performers like Alys, Brennan and many others for whom there is insufficient space here to do justice: Hayley Newman, Bob and Roberta Smith, walkwalkwalk, Kinga Araya et al.

What drives this renewed connectivity is the aesthetics of a kind of separatedness. Not a separation of the object or performance from 'life', but rather as a realization of objects or performances as limited things, as a work of spacing, as a making of gaps, voids and 'ands', resistant to climactic concentration (or the sacrificial 'scapegoat' role of the actor or artist). Addressing the separatedness at the heart of a society, of the spectacle, of an economy fuelled by the exchange of commodity-images, these resistant practices seek to separate the separatedness once more, eschewing a quick reunification in favour of subjecting it to itself, folding it back on its own separatedness – an initial irony that gives way to a production of gaps.

What ties together the artists cited here is this move beyond irony to a connectivity that preserves the integrity of parts, maintaining voids in the weave. All these artists, from Grotowski onwards and back to Meyerhold, have revolted against an art of representation, displacing the ground of their work to 'energy' or 'theatricality' or 'relation', on a journey from image and mimesis to material relations and human geographies.

## FINALLY, TROUBLING EXAMPLES

The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) is a loose alliance of individuals who – rather like Marcus Coates and his barely-competent shamanism – lightly wear the role of clown in order to create a 'soft' army, a pacifistic militancy. On their Clown Army operations they do not directly confront militarism's machine, but – as clowns – attempt to help and assist the military. They turn up *en masse* at recruitment offices to volunteer.

By not opposing but by incompetently 'assisting' the military, CIRCA disconnect and fragment the conflict and tension necessary to sustain a military within a mostly civil society. They remove the generative narrative of what makes the army the army, they make an empty space into which the army is invited to either fall or speak itself truthfully in order to reconstitute itself as 'whatever it is'. By forgoing a primitive theatrical irony, CIRCA establishes a corrosive 'and' with the military.

By enacting the dramaturgy of failure within the military 'theatre', CIRCA take the first tentative step towards a reconstitutive dramaturgy, a prefiguring and ideal role that looks forward, envisions, imagines the future and how it acts, which like all utopian projects carries a boundedness, a leap into specialized terrain: that of the 'dramaturg (who) could be a city planner ... ' (Turner and Behrndt 2008: 102).

In *Tumbleweeds* (2006–9) Claire Blundell Jones uses an industrial leaf-blower to steer an Internet-purchased tumbleweed across the incongruous setting of European and Scandinavian streets; charmingly eccentric, evoking a hazy movie image, but also suggestive of some future decline. Where CIRCA's actions are overtly pre-utopian, *Tumbleweeds* is light and transient, literally passing its observers by. To follow the performance feels intrusive. And yet its very unobtrusiveness, the lightness of its allusiveness, its transience, is the sternest challenge to the ideas here. And that may also be their point.

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## 1.6 A Manifesto for a New Walking Culture: 'Dealing with the City'

*Wrights and Sites*

This manifesto was performed at a plenary session of a conference for urban planners, architects, activists and others interested in walking. Consistent with the site-specificity of our work at that time, it was created with the conference's Zürich venue, Kasino, in mind: it makes reference not only to the idea of the casino, but also to Zürich Dada and to Bertolt Brecht's brief period of exile in the city.

The idea of casino provided the structure of the manifesto, which is divided into four suits (as in a deck of playing cards). Each 'suit' was written by a different member of Wrights & Sites. For the 'court cards' (Jack, Queen, King) of each of these four suits, guest artists were invited to create short manifesto provocations. Fiona Templeton and Richard Layzell contributed short video statements, stills from which are presented here, while texts by Bess Lovejoy (with Damon Morris) and contemporaries of the Dada movement were projected.

The order of presentation was guided by a shuffle of a deck of cards by a croupier.

We had always liked the idea of writing a manifesto, though previous attempts to do so had spiralled into chaotic, lengthy documents or been forgotten, lost amid a plethora of other projects. The invitation to Zürich seemed an opportunity to realise this ambition, with a nod towards Dada's manifestos (or anti-manifestos). The structuring device of the deck of cards provided us with a formal strategy for layering the multiple perspectives in the manifesto.

The context of the manifesto was the making of site-specific performance and art projects, with a particular emphasis on cities, carried out by Wrights & Sites since its formation in 1997. In 2003, we had produced *An Exeter Mis-Guide*, which encouraged new ways of exploring the city, making it strange and seeking out its 'mythogeography' (the personal, mythical, fictional and fanciful mappings that intertwine or subvert the official, municipal identities and histories of a place). Despite being made for a small city in the South-West of England, we were surprised by the interest in the book by people in other cities, countries and even continents. People were using *An Exeter Mis-Guide*, a book written for a city they would probably never even visit, in order to gather ideas for exploring their own localities. In response to this, and disrupting the specificity of our own practice, we created a new publication, published shortly after this manifesto was

written, but very much part of the same collection of work: *A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*, which plays with the absurd ambitions of its title and invites the reader to use it 'anywhere', thereby encouraging comparisons and imaginative links between diverse places. Alongside these publications and others (for example, *A Courtauld Mis-Guide*, created for the East Wing Collection at London's Courtauld Institute) we have worked with the 'drift' or 'dérive', the guided tour and other site-specific performance not only in Exeter but in other cities, islands and open spaces (Manchester, Münich, Herm, Bilbao, Paris, Naples, Winchester, Little Wittenham, New York, Milton Keynes, Ndola and Welcombe Barton to name a few).

Drawing on our urban exploratory work, this is a manifesto for the *active and creative* pedestrian. It envisions a walking that is neither a functional necessity (to shops, to work) nor a passive appreciation of (or complaint about) the urban environment. Instead this is a manifesto for a walking that engages with and changes the city, it recruits the arts not as passive expressions or appreciations of the city, but as the active changings of it.

Wrights & Sites would like to acknowledge support from the Centre for Creative Enterprise & Participation, Dartington College of Arts (now merged with University College Falmouth), the University of Exeter and the University of Winchester.

Q♦
'Our intent is to show walking not only as a directed movement from one place to another, but a wandering, an odyssey of sight and sound, a quest for knowledge and stimulation, a grand roaming expedition, and a living breathing work of art in its own right.' (Lovejoy & Morris 2005)
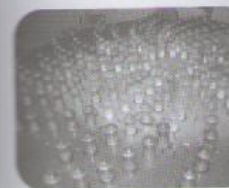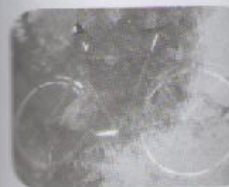
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**4♣**

WALK: Attempt to redress, in a small way, the overabundance of hierarchical road signs established by our public servants.[1] 'They may, for example, tell you that there is only "one way" to navigate a particular area. Find other ways of walking, mapping and signing routes through these public spaces.' (Wrights & Sites 2003: 46)

**3♣**

To combat the functionalism of walking by having no particular place to go. To pick up on other walkers' varied paces from speedy to slow. To invent small or secret dances at bus stops and on railway platforms. To invite people to go for walks with you as a gift to be unwrapped with your feet. To use walking as an opportunity to greet neighbours and to break long-established silences. To write the city with your relationships.
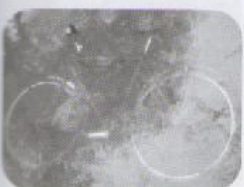
**8♣**

WALK: Abolish weather forecasts,[2] and consign the umbrella to the dissecting table.[3] Don't physically or mentally 'wrap yourself up against all weathers'. Unlike most municipal tour guides and their followers, be prepared to enjoy 'getting wet' along the way.
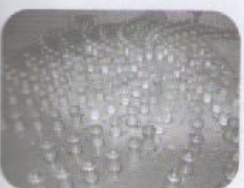
**5♥**

Guy Debord writes of the Situationist 'dérive' or 'drift', 'Written descriptions can be no more than passports to this great game.' (Debord 1995 [1958]: 53) We described our first Mis-Guide as 'a forged passport to your "other" city.' (Wrights & Sites 2003: back cover)

The passport gets us across a threshold, raises the curtain. The text of a misguide designates the city as a real, yet imaginary, space of play.

Brecht wrote that the only passport needed by theatre was fun: the invitation to a game. (Brecht 1964 [1949]: 180)

Our suggestions for walking make things strange, make the city 'other', as if the lighting state has suddenly altered. This is the half light, the 'candlelight' which, in the children's rhyme, gets us to Babylon and back.[4]
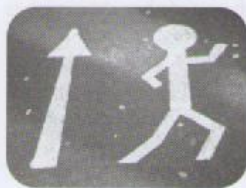
**A♦**

Is there any point in making walking safe if it only gets us to the hospice more efficiently?

**J♦**

'Most daily life in the westernized world involves pod-based living, from the home "pod" to the train or car "pod" to the work "pod", creating a closed-in sensorium that becomes one's sole experience. This is the antithesis of walking culture.' (Lovejoy & Morris 2005)

**6♠**

To go shopping without the intention to buy and to view shopping malls as hyper-real museums to consumerism. To travel the world in a supermarket making atlases from imported food placed in your basket or trolley. To write the city with conscious choices.

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**9♦**

Hail the new citizen-octopus! – discovering sensations in the textures and secrets of their city, a city disrupted to meet the needs and desires of an evolving, mutating walking. Until the planners mutate we cannot submit our dreams to their permission, until then our plans will have momentum outside of legislation.

**K♠**

'This is a bus. They've only had buses in Tbilisi for three weeks. And I haven't taken one because nobody's quite sure where they go. It's much safer to walk.'[5]

**K♦**

'Different languages and moods float by, intermingling with sounds of industry, business, music, laughter, and the crying of children and seagulls. As the walker is drawn in by a friendly face, a startling art exhibit, or a secret path into strange lush grottos, we follow their experiences and are drawn in as well.' (Lovejoy & Morris 2005)

**Q♣**

'...to be a Dadaist means to let oneself be thrown by things, to oppose all sedimentation; to sit in a chair for a single moment is to risk one's life ...' (Huelsenbeck 1989 [1920]: 246)

**4♥**

We aspire to games that are open to everyone, to the sky.

In Monte Carlo, I walked around the Grand Casino, fascinated by its doorways, its steps and arches. Security guards quietly hovered in the entrances. 'Members only' were invited up ornate steps. In the entrance hall there were photographs of Salvador Dali, kissing Princess Grace and speeding across the bay in a boat with Walt Disney.

I felt more at home with the herd of decorated cattle wandering the city centre: the *Cow Parade*, last seen in Manchester. Inelegant tourists, dressed in hearts and daisies, they seemed to look curiously at the casino, but remained sceptical.

**A♠**

Step on the cracks and find the gaps and make new tracks. Extend your walking territory becoming more aware of the restrictions being imposed upon you by signs and surfaces and the aggressive armoured invasion of the car. Extend your experience by habitually eroding the controls of speed and commerce. Walk a new walking culture to write the city with your bodies.
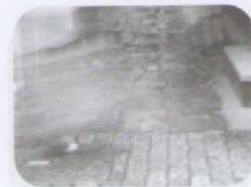
**7♠**

To give a word to each footstep so that a walk becomes a story or poem. To re-enact particular walks and styles of walking that you have found in books, plays and films and to write the city with your own associations.

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**J♠**

'Somewhere here, six years ago, I broke
my foot. But, when you break your foot,
the hole is not the thing you remember.
And it was dark. And I said I can walk in
the dark, but I wasn't bargaining on the
holes in the streets of Tbilisi.'[6]

**6♣**

'WALK: Abolish habitual walking
patterns',[7] such as the home-to-work-and-
back routine: those head-down journeys
when the mind is focused elsewhere and
'elsewhen'. Walking artists, Lone Twin,
for example, disrupted the byways of
Colchester by carrying a telegraph pole in
a straight line across the city, right through
houses and shops, in their piece *Totem*
(1998). 'I think we should get into the river
… and walk from one side to the other', he
said, Gary to Gregg. (Lone Twin 2001: 2)

**4♠**

To insist upon the rights of the pedestrian
over the car. To dream of the day when
you do not have to say 'Mind the road' to
children. To continue laying flowers at the
sites of pedestrian road accident fatalities.
To regard wheelchair users as walkers not
separate from ped-estrians. Take a chair
into the Shopping Mall to see this point
of view / this viewpoint. Break the taboo
and travel by wheelchair for a day. To
write the city with Human Rights.
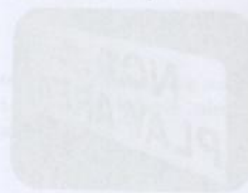
**2♦**
Every walk is a potential planning – we can be planners or we can be artist's impressions.

**7♥**
Babylon is a dangerous place. Walking is the exercise of a freedom that does not exist everywhere or at all times or for all people. It is the exercise of a freedom to re-make the space by the ways in which we live it, perform it, play it.

**10♥**
We demand the right to linger. We are loiterers without intent. We are children taking the long way home from school.

**J♥**
'I think walking as part of my practice crept up on me: it was happening before I realised it.'[8]

**10♠**
To re-value public space with an eye more akin to the musings and perceptions of children so that we might gain a deeper insight into the 'poetics of space', inviting children's participation in the planning of their environments. To hold meetings,

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islands or to make decisions on foot and
on the streets instead of in airless com-
mittee meeting rooms. To write minutes,
musings and decisions on paving stones.

### K♣

'Leave everything. Leave Dada. Leave
your wife. Leave your mistress. Leave
your hopes and fears. Leave your children
in the woods. Leave the substance for the
shadow. Leave your easy life, leave what
you are given for the future. Set off on the
roads.' (Breton 1978 [1922]: 166)

### 5♦

We might change the meaning of 'excess' –
from 'rubbish tip' to moving without a
destination' – every seventh sign in our
city will be a mystery, a metaphor or an
absurdity.

### 10♦

In every city we will set up a Tourist
Misinformation Office – to tell the truth
about the city... to invite our visitors to
re-make the city rather than consume
it – we will stop tidying ruins and lighting
the night sky, we will encourage public
art to be made by the public – this will
be funded by a subsidy equivalent to the
city's spending on tranquilisers, weapons
and automobiles.

### K♥

'Now it's integrated into designing major
events for 150 people to walk silently
through a major city.'⁹

410

**3♦**

One architect-walker dreams of a city as delicate as flesh – where bodies are respected as pillars of stone once were. This architect will design the next landscapes as extended human organs.



**Q♥**

'Walking was becoming an art-form without really intending it to be.'[10]



**9♠**

Amble, ramble and de-ramble the city in search of wildlife, ancient tracks, sacred signs and paths of desire and fill abandoned roadside cars with earth and turn them into immobile gardens. To celebrate the growth of weeds, plants, flowers in the most hostile urban zones. To follow the journeys of insects as your guides. To write the city with cobwebs, tendrils and minute flora and fauna.



Zürich GPS map [detail]
Daniel Belasco Rogers

**7♣**

WALK: Abolish industrially-produced maps.[11] Walking can facilitate the construction of new, more personalised maps, as in the case of Daniel Belasco Rogers' *The daily practice of map making*. He's been using a handheld GPS device to record all of his journeys since April 2003.[12] 'If at the end of your life, you could look at the shapes your wanderings over

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the earth have made, what patterns would you see? What words may be formed that take a human lifetime to write?' he said in his piece *Unfallen* (2003).

**5♣**

To invite town planners on practical courses exploring trespass and paths of desire. To adopt public places for sitting as if they are an extension of your home and to recognise and respect the people whose furniture is the street. To write the city with your presence.

**Q♠**

'This is another dangerous spot to walk because usually there's water coming out of this spout here – because they don't really have gutters. It just pours out onto the street. So, I'm going to walk under it for safety – behind it.'13

**8♥**

Communists of international distinction have no business in our country any longer. Just because it is more comfortable to live in ... bourgeois Switzerland is no reason to let such foreigners take root here.

(Zürich foreign police, cited in Honegger 2005: 109)

And so the Zürich police refused a residence permit to Bertolt Brecht: his games were shifted elsewhere, his letters left in a forgotten suitcase, like so many others all over Europe. In spite of paranoid reactions to international terrorism, we propose to keep on welcoming strangers.

**10⚜**

WALK: Believe absolutely that every walker is a potential mis-guide, every walk leads to anywhere.[14]

**6◆**

Another architect-walker will design a city of ideas where beliefs and differences of opinion blow the flags on an invisible town hall – yet another lets nature in, leaves spaces for miniature wildernesses, designs a monument to the glacier, wave or asteroid that will one day destroy us.

**9⚜**

WALK: Abolish ETAs, predetermined destinations and thoughts of artistic outcomes.[15] Forget the future as you walk. Leave your watch at home. Drift for three or four months at a time as the psychogeographer, Ivan Chtcheglov, claimed to do. Like the artist, Richard Long, let the walk become the work. 'To walk a line is the easiest thing a human being can do to put his [or her] mark on a place,' he said. (Long 1991: 27)

**8◆**

Playfulness, disruption, gifts left for strangers, the sharing of visions, intelligent flash-mobbing, provocations at the tipping points of cities, making a scene so that the city performs itself, mis-guided tours, wireless on-line technology – combining phone, movie, digital design, camera, editing desk and ipod – sending routes, signs

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and stories in waves across spreading networks of uncontrollable walking, maps of atmospheres and basins of attraction, and festivals celebrating the reflections in windows and the glints in pedestrians' eyes – these are the instruments of the architect-walker – extraordinary changes will begin with disruptions in the ordinary.

**A ♥**

Between one thing and another there hangs a curtain: let us draw it up!
(Brecht 1964 [1949]: 189)
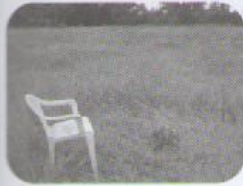
**J ♣**

'If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again – if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man – then you are ready to go for a walk.' (Thoreau 1994 [1862]: 4)

**6 ♥**

A 9 year old is quoted as saying: 'The most favourite game played in school is "Schools".' (Opie and Opie 1984: 333) As we walk the city, we like to play a game of 'cities'.

**4♦**

The pavements are our *színház*, our *stadt-theater*, our Institute of Contemporary Arts.

**9♥**

Wir wollen in den Garten gehn,
Wenn nur der böse Geist nicht wär!
(German children's rhyme,
cited in Opie and Opie 1984: 109)

**A♣**

WALK: Protest with your feet.[16]

**2♣**

WALK: Acquaint yourself with methods of urban exploration rejected by the good manners of the heritage and tourism industries.[17] 'What happens if you overlay a map of Moscow onto your own city? What do you find where the Kremlin should be? Look for coincidences or references to Russia. Stop in bars and drink vodka. What about Baghdad? ...'
(Wrights & Sites 2006: 17)

**3♥**

On 9th November, 1947, the exiled Bertolt Brecht was in Zürich and drafted, with others, a manifesto for peace. While here, he also wrote his 'A Short Organum for the Theatre' (Brecht 1964 [1949]) in which he wished for a theatre that could help to change the world. We share Brecht's impulse to make the familiar strange, to engage in the movement of the world, to be flexible, to be open. However, in our work together, we have drawn different conclusions, finding it necessary to abandon the theatre space, however makeshift and temporary, and to walk with people, rather than perform in front of them. The acquisition of a theatre (as Brecht knew, or was to find out) is enmeshed in the conquest of territory. We wanted none of it.

**3♣**

*Pas à Pas (Step by Step)*

WALK: Abolish the Desk, home to scratching nibs and physical and mental stasis.[18] Erik Satie, for example, the only musician permitted access to the Dada 'club', used to compose during his daily walks to and from the centre of Paris, pausing under lamp-posts at night to write down his thoughts. Listen to his music and you will hear his footsteps. 'Before I compose a piece, I walk round it several times, accompanied by myself,' he said. (Satie 1980 [1913]: 79)
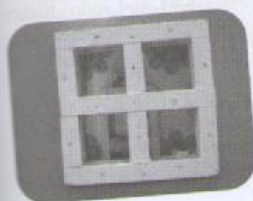
**2♥**

On Iona and Peter Opie's map (Opie and Opie 1984: 67), our city, Exeter, is replaced with the word 'Hit', while Dartmoor becomes 'Catchers'. North Devon is marked 'TIG'; Plymouth and Helston are

both 'It' and Penzance becomes 'Hits'. This map of children's words for chasing games transforms the territory into the space of play we know it to be. We sneak into the grown-up spaces and steal our fun from under municipal noses:

> König, ich bin in deinem
> Land Ich stehl dir Gold und Silbersand.
> (German chasing rhyme,
> cited in Opie and Opie 1984: 86)

**8♣**

To reclaim the nights in the city. Walking through the streets at the dead of night is not a criminal offence. Insomniacs should not be made to feel guilty for being up and about. Walk where streets have become ghost corridors for somnambulists.

**7♦**

Anyone, anywhere can be an architect-walker – begin by mapping atmospheres and feelings – they are our foundations as we build from ideas and emotions outwards ...

**2♣**

To walk with a sense of not knowing anything about the city.

To walk as a constant experiment to discover the intricacies and individuality of your walk that is as distinctive as your handwriting.

Now the city would move like a map you were drawing; now you would begin to live your life like a book you were writing.

Penzance becomes 'Hits'.
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    (German chasing rhyme,
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book you were writing.

Called forth by a street or a building, an ensemble of gestures might imply that a different street had to be found, that a building could be redesigned by the gestures performed within it, that new gestures had to be made, even that an unknown city had to be built or an old one overthrown ...

(Marcus 1990: 166)



5♣

WALK: Know that every object, all objects, feelings and obscurities, every apparition and the precise shock of parallel lines, are potential material for an artwork.[18] As you walk, gather found material, record the stories of the people that you encounter, encourage personal associations, generate mythogeographies, look for the extra-ordinary in the seemingly ordinal ...

## Notes

1. See Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifesto 1918*, originally read in the Salle Meise, Zürich, 23 March 1918 (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; every hierarchy and social equation established for values by our valets'.
2. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; the abolition of prophets'.
3. A reference to Lautréamont's oft-quoted, pre-Surrealist statement from *Maldoror* (1868-1869): 'As beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.'
4. The rhyme goes as follows: 'How many miles to Babylon? / Three score and ten. / Can I get there by candlelight? / Yes, and back again.'
5. This text by Fiona Templeton was accompanied by a video extract of a research walk around Tbilisi (2005).
6. This text by Fiona Templeton was accompanied by a video extract of a research walk around Tbilisi (2005).
7. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; the abolition of memory'.
8. This text by Richard Layzell was accompanied by a video extract of *Walking in Circles* (research in Wargrave, UK, 1999).
9. This text by Richard Layzell was accompanied by a video extract of *Sense Walk* (Project IS, Bristol, UK, 2005).
10. This text by Richard Layzell was accompanied by a video extract of *Talking to Tania 1* (Skyros, Greece, 2004).
11. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; the abolition of archaeology'.
12. See http://www.planbperformance.net/dan/mapping.htm for further information.
13. This text by Fiona Templeton was accompanied by a video extract of a research walk around Tbilisi (2005).

14. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; the absolute and indisputable belief in every god that is an immediate product of spontaneity'.
15. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; the abolition of the future'.
16. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; protest with the fists of one's whole being in destructive action'.
17. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; acquaintance with all the means hitherto rejected by the sexual prudishness of easy compromise and good manners'.
18. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; abolition of logic, dance of those who are incapable of creation'.
19. See Tzara (1992 [1918]: 13): 'DADA; every object, all objects, feelings and obscurities, every apparition and the precise shock of parallel lines, are means for the battle of'.

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—— (2006), *A Mis-Guide To Anywhere*, Exeter (UK): Arts Council England/Centre for Creative Enterprise & Participation.

# Part

## Driftir

Text sour

21  Carl L
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22  Andrew
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23  Richar
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# The contemporary dérive: a partial review of issues concerning the contemporary practice of psychogeography

**Phil Smith**
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## Abstract
This article assesses aspects of the troubled and disputed practice of the dérive some half a century after its Lettriste inception. Rather than seeking to draw a 'virtuous' layer from the multiplicity of practices presently grouped around the category of 'derive', the article identifies generative properties in their contradictions and variegated connections. Particular attention is given to the spatial question, to the politics of the everyday and 'anywhere', to the limitations of aesthetic and occult psychogeographies – suggesting their dispersed and hybrid redeployment – and to the dérive as a socialized rather than individual practice. The article addresses the relationship of the dérive to relational aesthetic practices as a means to renew a connection with a critique of the spectacle, with the distributive trajectories of labour and capital, and with the creation of 'situations' in a society that has, for some time, accommodated them.

## The corpse

In 1972 the body of the situationist project lay in a Paris gutter beneath the fading graffiti of 1969: 'Same Again This Year'. The body was lifeless, its latest wound self-inflicted.

The Paris 'événements' of 1968 had propelled the situationists to somewhere close to the leadership of a pre-revolutionary movement, popularizing their ideas on the back of a wave of discussion, fighting, slogan-production and leaflet-printing. They had pointed to the free landscape that lay beneath the pavements – 'sous les pavés, la plage' – and students and workers had ripped up those pavements, deploying the surplus as ammunition. Utopian thinking and street-fighting briefly went hand in hand. So far, so generally assumed.

Opportunities are things from which revolutionaries have much to fear. What the situationists gained in breadth of distribution, they lost in temporality: their critique of everyday life and their analysis of the society of the spectacle were floated free from the deep structures they aspired to explain and change, and were, for a brief time, nailed to a superficial eventness. Turbulence exposed the stasis at the heart of situationist elitism. The danger of making half a revolution was

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expressed, this time, not in executions and punishments, but in nostalgia and instant history. Refusing, heroically, to participate in their heritage, the situationists dissolved their organization.

When Guy Debord pulled the trigger in 1972 it was to wound what he clearly regarded as already a corpse. He would remark later that the significant work of the group had been done by the late 1950s, the key tactics already in place: the 'drift' or dérive, an exploratory, destinationless wander through city streets, detecting and mapping ambiences; psychogeography, the mapping and describing of what would usually be taken for 'subjective' associations and emotions ingrained in the urban structure and texture and their effect upon people in those spaces; the making of 'situations', playful creations of an active life prefigurative of a utopian remaking of social relations; détournement, the transforming of dead art into a vivid social force by its disassembling and mis-re-application; and, in a complementary manoeuvre, unitary urbanism, the re-sculpting of the city for coherent and self-willed trajectories in resistance to the city's consumption in fragments.

All this lay dead in the gutter. Then, in 1994, Debord shot the corpse again, spectacularly, flattening it into a representation. Of himself. But if it was already twice dead by then, who were the original killers? And are they still at large? The prime (and usual) suspects are 'Art' and 'Architecture' (meander and straight line, rhizome and linearity; interchangeable *künstler namen*). Agencies apparently without agents; suitable assassins for a body without the characteristics of an organism.

What the situationists *had* added to their tactics after the 1950s was a grammatically conscientious and elegant prose account of their foundational critique of social relations, the spectacle: a re-territorializing of capital in which ideology, in the Marxist sense of images and ideas in the last instance serving and reproducing the interests of a capital-owning class, became itself the very substance and mechanics of the production of surplus value. Revolutionaries no longer had an enemy 'elsewhere', in officers' quarters, ministries, parliaments, company boardrooms, vestries. Instead the motion of exchange and communication had become agented. Not producers alienated from their products, but acts of production subjected to their representations, a spectacle in which what was most powerful was what showed itself. The practice of revolutionary art had become an irrelevance to revolution, and the only refuge for life.

The situationists' tactics were not sufficient to protect them from the spectacle. Nevertheless, these tactics have been widely rifled and appropriated; the most popular objects of selective desire: dérive and psychogeography. The other side of appropriation is exclusionary citation, a recent example being Merlin Coverley's *Psychogeography* (2006),[1] which attempts to wrench psychogeography from its theoretical frame in the critique of the spectacle. Coverley follows Rebecca Solnit's lead in *Wanderlust*,[2] contemptuously dismisses Debord as a comic neo-flâneur,[3] detaching psychogeography from politics and origins; the situationist project a backdrop for a neo-romantic literature. Coverley is not alone, his tone echoed in Geoff Nicholson's *The Lost Art of Walking* (2008); even Andy Merrifield, a sympathetic biographer of Debord, perpetuates this flâneurizing of the situationists, describing the dérive as 'a dreamy trek'.[4]

*Psychogeography* ends, 'exemplarily', with a chapter on some of the 'names' of contemporary anglo-psychogeographical art; exchanging motion for text, dispersed geography for a capitalized cultural property value.

Such is the state of the contemporary dérive within spectacular cultural relations; at the mercy of the subject of its own critique, in need of something more than a 'return' to the corpse in the gutter or to nostalgic Parisian 'drifts'. However, it benefits by such returns, even by the ascendancy of contemporary psychogeographical heroes. More importantly, by the sheer cheek of their plundering of situationist tactics and their shaking free from (and, thus, setting free of) theory, these luminaries set things in motion. A motion which, nostalgic or iconoclastic, other contemporary

**Figure 1.** Blue Boy Walks, Wrights & Sites for Spacex Gallery, Exeter, UK, 2004.

dérivistes should resist the temptation to repudiate, but rather to add to with new masses and new orbits, attracting, unashamed, both spectres and activisms. For the one without its many others is resource-less within the matrix of spectacular relations.

## The petard

This article attempts to make a path through the tangled landscape of varied contemporary practices inspired by and reactive to the dérive. Although the number of practices cited is limited, the intention is to make an exemplary critical journey that reflects, not least in its cul-de-sacs and spaghetti junctions, a problematic and contradictory terrain.

While the arguments of the situationists are fundamental to the article, the task is not to measure proximity to the original, but relate the contradictions in contemporary practices to the contradictions in the original, charting the two sets of motions about each other.

A key contradiction in the original dérive was that between its destination-less, a-functional route – 'the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground)' – and its instrumental search for 'the variety of possible combinations of ambiences, analogous to the blending of pure chemicals in an infinite number of mixtures'.[5] Such a tension between an 'aimless stroll' and an instrument of urban transformation is not a problem within the dérive, it is *the work of it*, just as the imbalance between the situationists' bold ecological aspiration to 'domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities' and their uncertain, accompanying gesture towards playful-constructive behaviour'[6] gives an inclination to the grounds for the dérive, a sloping between the 'constant currents, fixed points and vortexes'[7] of the city and their transformation into

a unified psychogeographic playground, a site for a permanent dérive across quarters of bold, contrasting ambiences; crudely, a discrepancy between ends and means. The dérive appeared to turn back on itself and bite its own tail.

If '[S]eparation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle',[8] then it would seem logical for the urbanism of the situationist resistance to be a unitary one. However, to then add to that unitary urbanism the upgrading of the functional dérive to a permanent 'way of life' (a posture first adopted by Gilles Ivain, on the fringes of Lettrism) is to crowd the playful utopianism of ambient mixtures. Hence this critical journey resumes with a delicate manoeuvre of re-separation (of the head from the tail), with the identification of an affordance for the dérive to wander from its theoretical roots and to find in the trajectory of 'walking as art' an escape clause from its self-negation. Then, with so much of Debord's critique now accommodated as a default mode for the spectacle, and with the project of site-specificity questioned, a double-seeing, mobile and provisional, is necessary in the subsequent parts of the article, to find some purchase on the spaces of the 'drift'; in the periphery of the group dérive, in the voids of superfluous places, in the deferral between reconciliation and antagonism (with 'and and and' rather than sharp difference as a response to shortcomings) and in an asymmetrical strategy with a continuing role for a ludic psychogeography.

## The killers

The answer to the question 'who killed the situationists?' is only important because there is a living, stumbling heritage to fight over, part of which is 'the contemporary dérive'. The corpse walks. Indeed, it is an increasingly vivid and disputed cadaver, greeted, in decentralized spaces, as a miraculous fulcrum around which all sorts of contemporary art practices and social activisms might wind, lever and brace themselves. Questions of assassination and definition quickly become of importance to these new dérivistes, themselves soon under suspicion of resurrectionism. This is a doubly grave charge, for not only does their victim walk, a cannibalistic death on legs, but the value of their precious spoils, separated from the corpse of revolutionary politics, is always subject to the excessive appetites of others.

And yet, it seems that almost because of, rather than despite, the sclerosis and fragmented demise of the situationists, the dérive has a new 'permission' – an 'affordance' – to wander from its theoretical, anti-aesthetic roots.

A distinctive anglo-psychogeographical literature, in part characterized by its neo-romancing of the occult, has emerged from dérive-like walking. Unfortunately, the bulkiness of Iain Sinclair's later prose and his referential convenience has obscured the range of this literature, which includes the sonic 'workings' of the committedly magickal Alan Moore and Tim Perkins,[9] Grant Morrison's Gnostic graphic novel series *The invisibles* explicitly referencing the dérive in *You say you want a revolution* (1996), the quotidian 'found' texts in the work of the poet Will Morris,[10] and the vernacular posters and chip-papers of Gale Burton, Serena Korda and Clare Qualmann of walkwalkwalk. Once the occult frame is, at least, tilted, a more geographically and generically diverse set of preoccupations emerge. There are festivals of urban exploratory walking like the annual *Conflux* in New York or the ROAM symposium and festival of walking at Loughborough, UK in 2008. Psychogeographical influence is explicit in contemporary music-making, evident in albums like The Future Sound of London's *Dead cities*[11] or John Foxx's *Tiny colour movies*.[12] There has long been a momentum in site-specific theatre and performance, within which contradictory currents emphasize the spectacular and the ambient qualities of site. Site-based performance modules are taught at UK universities and colleges such as those at Plymouth, Dartington, Aberystwyth, Lancaster and Exeter, and site-based performative visual art in the Arts In Context module at The New School in New York; all with reference to the dérive. There are anti-architectural projects driven by the dérive, like those of the Stalker group based
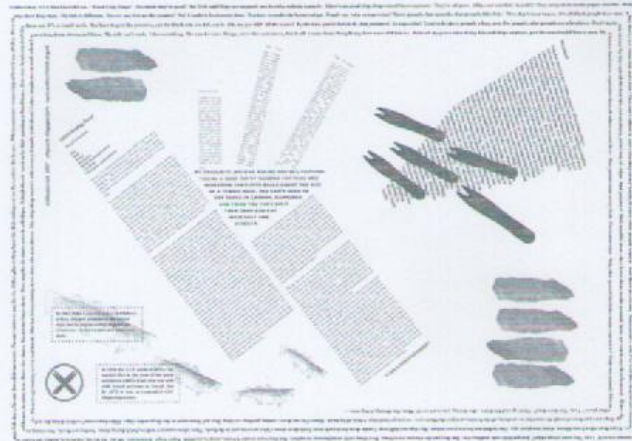
**Figure 2.** Limited edition litho printed chip paper, 42 x 59 cm © walkwalkwalk, Gail Burton, Serena Korda & Clare Qualmann, 2007.

in Rome, seizing on space for the temporary use of marginalized groups. Walking in the city has once more become a political activism, expressed in the tensions at annual Walk 21 conferences. In Liverpool, UK, an Anglican priest, John Davies, explicitly uses dérive-like wanders to minister to his parish. In Paris, planner Frédéric Dufaux takes his students on 'drifts' to understand the unseens of local communities. Kinga Araya uses prostheses to re-insert body into landscape in her pedestrian practice, a dialogue with exile. A counterpoint to the ordered tourist gaze becomes explicit in détourned guide-books like Anna Best's *Occasional sights – a London guidebook of missed opportunities and things that aren't always there*,[13] the Wrights & Sites '*Mis-guides*' to Exeter and Anywhere,[14] and Kate Pocrass's *Mundane journeys* in San Francisco.

These activists, artists and architects represent a sliver of the total under suspicion. The ranks of the Situationist International harboured their ancestral agents: Asger Jorn and Constant Nieuwenhuys, artist of détournement and architect of trajectory, occultist meanderer and trafficker of traffic. This article *charges* their descendents with acts of value-less re-murdering; a forensic excuse to interrogate the divisive and paternalistic question: 'what *should* the contemporary dérive be?' A revival of the situationist project? A repeated and excessive murdering of it? Or a more ambitious anti-totalizing strategy in which individual tactics may become unrecognizable, unlocatable in the history of the dérive? A strategy that would carry this practice far from its origins, bearing 'marks' of its early, simple, changeable memetic qualities, but floated free from its 'tradition'?

## The plot line

The straight line has long been deployed by aesthetic walkers. Rather than following contours or increasingly institutionalized pathways like the official Coastal Paths in the UK or the ersatz,

scallop-marked 'pilgrims' ways' in Europe (their symbols more likely to lead 'pilgrims' to local hotels than sacred places), the disruptively-applied straight line interrupts passivity and crosses boundaries, beating back at the beaten track. The straight line evokes an earlier, holier walk, like the non-representational lines on the Nazca Plains of Peru, or the 'Old Straight Track' first detected/imagined in the English landscape by Alfred Watkins in the 1910s.[15] The straight line, impossible on the Earth's curved surface, a geometrical intervention in a world of texture, is the route of an idea, a magic that can walk the power of ideas into the body of the walker. Or it is a slice through borderlines of property and identity.

The early 20th century English 'tramper' Stephen Graham[16] would draw an arbitrary straight route on his map in order to enjoy the negotiations with, and hospitalities of, tenants and landowners whose property he crossed. Graham's *ur-psychogeography*, 'walking abreast' with fellow English, middle class 'trampers' like Geoffrey Murray or Charles Hurst, is useful strategically as an alternative to the dominant lineage (at least within literary anglo-psychogeography) of Blake, De Quincey, the romantics and Machen. The tramper's ordinariness and a-mysticism offers a different trajectory of disruption; one based as much in re-weaving social relations as in modernist abstraction and fragmentation. It is a permission to engage different traditions as disruptions of disrupted walking itself.

In 1987 'walking artist' Richard Long carried a stone from Aldeburgh beach on the east coast of England to Aberystwyth beach on the west coast of Wales, then carried another stone back to his starting point (*Crossing Stones*, 1987); a banal kind of balance, an absolute reciprocity, reifying the walk as a settling of accounts in a dead economy, a parody of barter or exchange. Long's work has been an explicit attempt to work outside the economy of everyday accumulation, dematerializing industrialized sculpture, deploying the anachronism of walking as a self-consciously 'primal' art. He has declared that the unrecoverable walk itself is his art. The walks may be archaic disruptions, but their documentation in high resolution, super-textured photographs and elegant texts, is retailed through the gallery system. The exchange value of these prints is raised by the inimitable strictures of the walks. While not exactly reclusive, Long is a distant figure. His is a spectral, enigmatic pressure upon the dérive and a patrician, pre-historic negation of it, subtle and masterly.

The asceticism of Long, and of the similarly inclined Hamish Fulton, exerts a canonical, exceptionalist, anti-quotidian force on the contemporary dérive, a pull towards a formalistic, ideal walk, minimalist rather than ambient. Long and Fulton's texts are so smoothed and unspecific that they float a light-headed and mystical walking, resisting the specific by serial processes. Like the Fluxus instruction 'draw a straight line and follow it' (La Monte Young, *Composition 1960 #10 to Bob Morris*) their product seems less about the act than its uncapturable conceptualization. When Nam June Paik performed Young's instruction for his *Zen For Head* (1962) he became stuck in its circularity, using his head as a paintbrush, dipped in a bucket of red 'goo'. This rough theatricality, so bitterly complained about by Michael Fried, protector of a formally consistent, and de-textured, modernism, is never far away in the work of ascetics like Long and Fulton. Huge landscapes are manipulated like film locations, there is always the sense that a ritual has taken place or is about to.

Spectral theatricality and dispersed hybridity characterize the contemporary dérive; qualities forefronted in works such as Forced Entertainment's *The Travels* (2002): its actors, sent to explore evocatively named but otherwise unknown roads, perform their stumbling across the uneasy textures of these places. In Simon Whitehead's *Walks To Illuminate* (2006)[17] the energy for illuminated shoes for night-time walkers in Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK, is gathered by daytime pedestrians wearing solar panels. The piece is as didactic as a Morality Play, but playful and quotidian too, as lovers, couples, friends use the walk through the darkness as a means to re-engage their relationships.

**Figure 3.** Lake Guitar, Simon Whitehead, as part of Marcheurs des Bois, an ointment / Boreal Project (ointment.org.uk), Quebec, 2005.

Nicolas Bourriard, in *Relational aesthetics*[18] distinguishes 'relational aesthetics' from 'constructed situations' with the word 'and', dividing constructed situations as a 'theatre that does not necessarily involve a relationship with the Other' from relational practice which 'is always a relationship with the other'. But a relational art like Whitehead's is also a constructed situation, a provocation to the uses of a park. The multiplicity of *Walks To Illuminate* is companion to the 'not necessarily' of the constructed situation's solipsism. To invert it again, rather than as a contradiction of situationist ideas, the relational trend that Bourriard detects in contemporary art practice can be reconfigured as the exception to the situationists' iconoclasm, the escape clause that defers the neo-situationists' self-immolation. Where, in spectacular relations, art's representations are re-represented as cultural currency, in relational art there is no representation; theatre 'returns' as an ideal spectre.

In dérive-related relational art the conceptual straight line is détourned as a meander, but does not entirely lose its geometry, retaining a spectral quality, a 'pattern of patterns' or 'Li' (something between pattern and dynamic principle), a Deleuzian 'working' in the gaps, in the 'and and and'.

There are very few accounts of actual Lettrist or situationist 'drifts', those that survive are mostly unimpressive and rarely cited, evidencing only passing interest in 'ambience' or the potential for 'situation'-making. Ralph Rumney, expelled from the situationists, dismissed these 'drifts' as 'just wandering about and perhaps keeping your eyes open a bit'.[19] In comparison, the variegation and sophistication of contemporary dérive-related art bodes rather better for its future than might be deduced from the often self-deprecating humour of those who seek to support the practice theoretically: 'Psychogeography had become a kind of expanded tradition. Any ideas regarding its potential "radicalism" could be forgotten. Psychogeography is now a tradition in the sense of, say, Morris Dancing'.[20]

Although 'événements' caught up with them in the end, the situationist preference for distance (and inactivity) has floated an *ideal* 'drift', utopian and enjoyable, a disconnected asymmetry of effortless insouciance and fabulous prospects, a wind-born betterworld. Dérivistes less fond or ignorant of the situationists have made or adopted their own mobile Cockaynes: aboriginal song-lines, mazes of uncertain authorship, the Wild Hunt. The détourning of détournement reinvigorates the philosophical motion around and about dérive. These ideal walks are, when self-consciously adopted, part social animal, part idea; walks capable of taking a prowl around themselves.

The presence in psychogeography of occult arts, whether in actual practice or (more usually) metaphor, might have reduced some neo-situationist practice to airy, even reactionary, nostalgia, but it is disingenuous to suggest that that is its only effect. The occultist stratum, peaking in the 1990s, includes works and events as diverse as the London Psychogeographical Association's Winchester walk and pamphlet *The great conjunction* (1992), Manchester Area Psychogeographic's levitation of the Manchester Corn Exchange (1996) and *The Highbury working: a beat séance* (1997), a mystical and poetic conjuring of local esoterica within an original soundscape by Alan Moore and Tim Perkins. Such acts/events fall comfortably within a British neo-romantic tradition almost personified by Arthur Machen, author not only of *The great god pan*, but also of *The London adventure or the art of wandering*, but also within a wider European magical-literary tradition combining occult practice, walking and a fascination with place, alongside writers like Gustav Meyrink, Paul Leppin, Arthur Kubin and Géza Csáth.

In both its continental European and British forms this occult-literary tradition saw a revival and a popularization in the 1960s. Magic and conspiracy narratives were adopted by a counter-cultural left (and then by a wider section of society) in response to problems of power and hegemony that materialist politics were failing to resolve, and was accompanied by the adoption of a 'paranoid style' more usually associated with the political right. *The great conjunction* makes detailed reference to magic practices such as ritual slaughter among ruling elites and while at one level the pamphlet can be read as an enthusiast's arcane thesis there are hints of a resistance to a continuing elite geomancy. Such works may frustrate materialist neo-situationists, but they also serve as a tricky caricature of the situationists' own magical disconnections; revolutionary ends and inadequate means resolved by the sleight of an authorial hand.

One dériviste who has extrovertly engaged with the occult is Jim Colquhoun. There is a torque upon his rascally, portentous themes, a straining of contradictory impetuses that bends his walks against the contours of the ground. His walks are archaeological and aerial, tunnelling while mapping the trajectories of sea birds. But they also cut straight lines through time. No nostalgia here. Colquhoun's accounts splice unreliable press reports of extraordinary manifestations with doubtful accusations against himself. He attacks the narrative of the 'drift', the post-walk rationalization and simplistic illustration. In his texts eccentric local histories disrupt, and local fauna intrude upon, the anthropocentric dérive.

In *The black drop or once and future cathures*, a set of pamphlets produced in 2003, Colquhoun combines anachronistic illustration and typeface, ancient and contemporary opium use, press reports of an uncovered temple and the revelatory demolition of a maternity hospital. Into this he pours the subjective for a dérive-like exploration of itself. Tunnels stretch beyond expectations, the dérive travels beneath the streets of the city, the drifter experiences the fear of 'the millions of tons of rubble overhead', a fear of the city itself – Glasgow, formerly Cathures – imagined from below.

Colquhoun's rich documentations are a necessary corrective to the situationists' coy, linear, low-life accounts of the dérive and to the bias to literature in summaries of exploratory walking like those of Solnit's and Coverley's. Florid and tectonic, layers of meaning shift at each paragraph

break, well-being and liberty are threatened. The local textures – geological, architectural and anecdotal – liquifact. Utopia is a plot hatched by clowns. Colquhoun's drifters, A Company of Vagabonds, like the Stalker group's navigations by the 'lights' of urban voids, 'will identify those spaces which have slid below the ken of planners, developers, councillors and others'. Their ambitions are experiential and anti-architectural: 'spreading the message of the pleasurable negation of grids, fences, private property, danger zones, one way systems, reality tunnels, etc.' They set in motion their theoretical space 'based on such principles as amusement, drunkenness, derangement, chance, telepathy, beauty and concupiscence'.[21]

Where Colquhoun's deferral of a synthesis of critical exploratory wandering and ecstatic reverie is part of a double-walking that re-forms the tactics of the dérive, Solnit and Coverley's summary conflation of flâneur and psychogeographer is part of a project to return the dérive to a single romantic root (an exhumation of Debord's enthusiasm for George Borrow, re-animator of gypsy tales). In order to achieve this, their project restricts the dérive to the mental de-familiarizing of the city, and ignores the floating of theoretical space or the relational and tactical flexibility exampled by activist-artists like Hilary Ramsden and Erika Block of Walk & Squawk whose *The Walking Project* (2006) connects people using 'desire lines' in the fields of South Africa with those who traverse similar paths across vacant lots in Detroit.

The failure and demise of the Situationist International was a very minor symptom of the 20th century crisis of revolution, the defeat of the Leninist project and the mid-century victories of state capitalism. In the society of the spectacle, the Leninist ordering of time disintegrated. The exchange of nationalisms, libertarianisms, liberalities and heavens is 'now' conducted at hyper-speed. Any attempt to build 'the party' as an elite, a shadow of the state's centralization, awaiting the pre-revolutionary phase before opening the doors to the masses, is to make a museum. And in miniature that is what Debord did, in the form of a model of a museum of a museum. A cabinet of cautionary curiosity. Endlessly re-visitable.

The straight line of the situationists' narrative is blurred by the stuttering repetition of co-option. Revolution-in-the-revolution is the default mode of the intensified spectacle of Debord's *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (1988). Everything is 'pre', is imagined, is anticipated. In contrast, the stately dialectic of Leninism is like an exchange of stones from one shore to another. It is only in the disruption of this dialectic, the deferral of synthesis, that the contemporary dérive can map its theoretical courses. Yet the Debordian amputation, cutting short the life of the situationists, models a modus operandi. In amputation, Debord cauterized the museum, froze it in time, removed its accidental irony. Inadequate as a dynamic model, the narrative has survived, perversely un-wandering; a useful way marker. But that is all it is.

## The dialectic deferred – zombie environments and the suspension of economy

The divorce of 'psychogeography' from 'situation' and 'spectacle' has partly reappeared as a tendency towards solo walking and the spectacular pilgrimage. The dériviste is redefined as long distance flâneur, a dreamer with books for sale. Or as a voluntary vagrant, setting out without a penny in their pocket to test the 'kindness of strangers', on a short cut to community.

Where the dérive continues to be practised as a collective act, documentation is often anonymous, freely distributed, gifts rather than commodities, and participation is gender-balanced, where solo walking is mostly male. The group dérive is a necessarily democratized event; it cannot sustain a leader for long. It tends, at its best, to be led by its periphery. Wrights & Sites' *Shed Walk* for Annabel Other's *Shed Summit*, (UK, 2003) was such a planned relinquishing of leadership to the

**Figure 4.** A Walk in Elandskop, KwaZulu-Natal: Walk & Squawk's The Walking Project, 2003–6.

group, soon led by its edges, diverting into gardens, through private gates, reversing and meeting unexpected hospitality from those encountered by its fringes.

The 'classical' dérive, still practised – destinationless, leaderless, themeless – is in tension (and close proximity) with much that passes for contemporary psychogeographical practice. But such a binary is destructive of the future of the dérive, siting it in the past, the division of activism from art (completing the project for literary-minded critics) among its effects. For such tactical issues, as also for their theorization, the contemporary dérive will do best when it resists the drift towards reconciliation or antagonism; when it defers such syntheses in favour of dispersal and diffusion.

In spatial terms it should seek those 'voids' where economy, for reasons of development, is suspended or diffused: on the fringes of academia, publicly-funded art and social developments, in and around redundant and incomplete properties, spaces locked by legal disputes, economically doomed and ecologically illiterate projects, particularly where such spaces are woven most tightly to the flows of capital and information. For the Stalker group of Rome these voids are 'increasingly the protagonist of the urban landscape … open spaces that had not been inserted in the system … spaces that inhabit the city in a nomadic way … a parallel city with its own dynamics …'.[22] For the architect Tom Nielsen they are 'superfluous spaces' that 'haunt(s) not only the planners but the city itself'.[23] They hold no prefigurative ideal for a utopian city, but in their dispersive, unforeseen consequences they are a model of excess in the landscape. Like absurdly large versions of Kinga Araya's prostheses, such 'ruins' (pre and post utility) are characterized by certain 'affordances' that destabilize not only the functionalist body but the anti-functionalist also.

The dystopian accumulation of such landscapes is evoked in movies of geographical catastrophe, such as George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) or Umberto Lenzi's *Nightmare City*

(1980). The appeal of these micro-apocalypses to the dériviste is that they do not require an antag-onistic or antithetical trajectory, but rather a zombie-like meander, 'the idea here is to voluntarily let oneself get overrun by the developments ... that lead to the unforeseen spaces and situations that these ... result in'.[24]

The dispersed authority of the dérive, a tactical passivity, is often reciprocated by concierges, guards and owners anxious to tell their secrets and display their goods. The ideas of the dérive are not incarnate in a leader or guide, but are argued out differently on each 'drift'. Robert Kirkman's serialized graphic novel *The walking dead*[25] describes the tactics and dynamics of a dérive in a world of superfluous spaces, a world in which the collective nature of the appetite of the living dead disciplines the 'drifting' survivors; nomadic arbitrators for and witnesses to their world. The banal encounters of zombie and survivor are overshadowed by lulls when the zombies and the living walk in relation to each other – straight line of appetite, weaving meander of wariness, a model for dérivistes walking in relation to an idea of walking, a 'drift' become symbolic, presumptious and political by its deferral of synthesis.

## Spatial rigours

The straight line and the meander are not merely concepts of journey, they are constituents of space. Doreen Massey has persuasively argued that space *is* its trajectories: '... as the product of interrelations ... as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of con-temporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist ... as always under construction'.[26] This mobility and provisionality, even in the theorization of space, has made work with the local and site-specific more problematic than before.

The cure-all of site-specificity has proved to be mostly side-effect, the term is now regularly purloined for 'Shakespeare in the Park'. Even open and sophisticated constructions of locus have failed to stem an incremental shift away from site-specificity. Just as the ideal space of the gallery had been replaced by the 'real' and the 'natural', so unease about an 'authentic' real or a 'primal' nature, has led to different, more mobile practices of sitedness: 'the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-oriented art is the way in which the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both subordinate to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate'.[27] Describing the trajectory of artists who have made or responded to this change, Claire Doherty speculates that '[t]hough this may not always reveal itself as a pro-cess of dérive ... [the artists] maintain that their status as artists allows them to circumnavigate predictability'.[28]

The disruption is disrupted, the détournement détourned, the abolition of art by dérive is ghosted by those who are 'allowed' by their status as artists to 'circumnavigate predictability' – colonial and complex. The art work becomes a setting of things in motion, including the status of the art and the artist, but there is no simple redemption of dérive in mobility or dispersal: as a character in George Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2008) complains: 'the more voices there are, the more spin there is'. Mark Dion's improvisations with the appearance of archaeological digs and exhibitions,[29] irritating archaeologists and provoking discussion about the authority and authenticity of their practice, or the interfacing with Reclaim The Streets activism in the situationist-influenced Interdimensional Pixie Broadcast Network's détournement of road signs,[30] supplementing func-tional symbols with squids, blobs, fairies and punctuation marks, inserting fantastic nature into the driver's gaze, making traffic flow grammatical, are instances of sited works of *trajectory*, studi-ously indifferent to aesthetics despite the care and craft in their execution.

**Figure 5.** The Eye of Horus, The Interdimensional Pixie Broadcast Network, Exeter, UK, 2001.

These spatial rigours, with no easy redemption in either trajectory or specificity, have prepared the contemporary dériviste for the challenges of problematic, spectacular space, infected and compromised not simply in narrative, but in spatialization itself. Disruption and détournement have a rather different impact in spectacular spaces that are, by definition, in constant disruption and détournement, co-opting and accommodating, hybridic and dispersive, and that defer authority and authenticity. In an echo of the old 'revolution in the revolution', situationist practice needs to address the contradictions of its own spectacular qualities.

The layered and striated spaces of late capitalism have presented opportunities for rhizomic eruptions, spiking the planes by temporal or spatial accidents and deceptions, but when the social space is so enfolded, such rhizomic interventions are merely interventions among interventions. When companies can set up their own trading floors (Enron Corporation) then layering becomes increasingly hard to sustain, space becomes slippery, institutions self-organizing, but not self-regulating. In spectacular space, companies advertise their own failings, graffiti their product names, set out to erode the very idea of 'public'. In political space, agency retreats to more complex folds: 'the State and the transnational corporation long ago learned every trick of the autonomous rhizome ... seemingly unguessable geopolitical agendas and alliances masked by multiple and purposefully multivalent levels of secrecy and deception [that] are bound to fool any linear, cause and effect theoretical or investigative approach. Geopolitical forensics ... needs to employ a nonlinear approach that would, for example, seek to map the attractors and black holes, established pathways, and solidly supportable and predictable plans, actions and reactions, while also emphasizing contingency, creativity, "irrationality", and psychopathy'.[31] Mark Bonta is describing here an intellectual discipline for the contemporary dériviste. Low level paranoia, dispersive relativity, the scouring of dreams for evidence of agency, an open cosmology connecting all things; the mental meander necessary to successfully practice anachronistic, collective, exploratory walking is, by chance, enmeshing with enigmatic opportunities afforded by political voids, just as architectural voids afford it geographical stages.

Despite the dérive's antipathy to the super-sitedness of theatre (once exemplified by Peter Brook as a universalized 'empty space'), the half-life of theatrical presence on the 'drift' is so openly marginal and manifestly diminishing, its very willingness to so publicly and unashamedly *decay* grants it a diffusive quality, in 'direct, physical, celebrative interaction with spectators, acting out her/his [its] own performative functions with them through the text, as well as behind it and beside it'[32] – the performative text of the dérive is space. What Lesley Wade Soule has perceived in the actor who plays in the border between mimesis and its dispersal is what, when the spectator is abolished and made an actor in the art of walking, the collective dériviste can be:

> *celebrative*, inviting (and inciting) ... to playful response and/or carnival participation, and ... *liminal/liminoid*, namely, free from sociocultural associations (often including gender), as well as from fixity of mimetic character. As an intense and liberated celebrant, the actor is ... *demonic*, that is, perceived to possess potentially dangerous charisma ... in the interaction between her/his celebrative and mimetic activities, the actor is ... *ironic*, playing – in collusion ... – with oppositions between reality and fiction, identity and disguise, ignorance and knowledge.[33]

But this is not the return of theatre that Buci-Glucksmann, in the context of painting, calls 'the height of modernity ... the great angelic utopia of the baroque ... a pure apparition that ma[kes] appearance appear, from a position just on its edges ... the theatre of a painted visible where the eye would be at once in the wings and on stage'.[34] The contemporary dérive retains this binocularity of vision through space not art, through the exploration of the wings as parts of the machine for theatrical product, i.e. representation, through an anti-mimetic floating free of theory, images and ideas: a mythogeography, developed in the practice of Wrights & Sites, emphasizing the multiplicity of Massey's trajectories and, following her argument in *World City* (2007), asserting that any sited specificity (identity, collective or communal 'ownership', or performance) is only ever (temporarily) acquired by taking responsibility for a site's history of resources and crimes.

Theatre has recently sought to revivify itself in the specificities of site. Live art, similarly, in the specificities of body. The contemporary dérive can place itself between these two revivals, resisting a synthesis with either; placing itself in the wings, angelic and architectural. But any settling or settlement rests on a taking responsibility for the projects of unknown others, on 'random' acts of kindness.

## Everyday problems

Thomas Struck's film *Walk Don't Walk* (2005) is, on a first viewing, a documentary about the everyday walking life of Manhattan from the 'fussperspektive', filmed mostly at ankle level. However, this everyday walking is disrupted by the extraordinary – foot fetishism, parades, amputation – before the film returns these to banality; a model photo shoot, the detritus of the parade, prostheses.

De Certeau has argued for the everyday, including walking, as the key tactical practice of a resistant urban life. Yet in the circularity of *Walk Don't Walk* there are excessive hints of problems with the practice of everyday life as a form of resistance; crystal moments instantaneously exaggerated and mutually accommodating. Doreen Massey has challenged De Certeau's social critique as flattering the stasis of authority and misleading the weak into reproducing the conditions of their weakness. Massey identifies unequal binaries: the association of space with the strategy of the powerful, and time with the tactics of the everyday; the fixed versus the transitory, the system

opposed by the margins: '[A]t its worst it can resolve into the least politically convincing of situationist capers – getting laddish thrills (one presumes) from rushing about down dark passages, dreaming of labyrinths and so forth. (Is this not another form of eroticized colonialization of the city?)'[35] Putting aside Massey's conflation of the situationist dérive with a parody of 'urban exploration', she does appropriately identify the objectification of the female body in some psychogeographical mappings, but equally significantly she echoes, coincidentally, and in playful terms, Mark Bonta's spatial riposte to the problems of an enfolded and enfolding, a-agented, emergent spectacle with extraordinary capacities to displace responsibility and to co-opt its enemies in 'false flag operations'. Bonta proposes 'holey spaces' as the field of operations for subterranean dérivistes and rogue states, in defiance of the wilful openness of oppositional organizations like the Global Justice Movement.

## Back to trajectory

It would be easy to allow the straight line and the meander, the functional everyday and the exploratory extraordinary, or the textural and the geometrical, to become spatialized in a simple binary tension. Instead we should rather suspend both their attracting and repulsing tendencies, deferring synthesis or conflict and, instead, adopt a manoeuvre pioneered by Mallarmé and inadequately developed in Symbolist Theatre; dissolving character first into the text of site (Axel's castle) and then into the landscape of stage (Robert Wilson), to float these differences free from their origins, allowing an ahistorical engagement (such as taking responsibility for the actions of others from which we have benefited), a tracing of ideological trajectories and forces. This astronautical metaphor has one further useful application – in the similarity of satellite capture to the process of détournement. In satellite capture, space agencies use the complex interplay of massive gravitational forces (of sun, moon and earth) to radically change the trajectory of a satellite by using tiny amounts of energy from the satellite's weak motors. For, at certain moments, the satellite will move under the influence of forces in very close balance with each other so that the slightest additional energy, the slightest change in location, can alter the trajectory radically through its transformed relations with the various forces of attraction. It is this asymmetrical effect, this engaging or riding of massive forces by the application of small (often 'merely' intellectual) resources that a political-scale détournement can achieve.

Such an attempt was *Exeter Everyday*, a 'festival' in the small city of Exeter, UK, in 2006, encouraging the acknowledgement of the role of the everyday in the continual re-making and re-ordering of the city by its citizens. Nothing was organized except the publicizing of the festival by Wrights & Sites. Different quotidian themes were announced for each day: feet and shoes (walking), beaks and paws (animals in the city), waiting, reflections in windows and glints in eyes, horizons and crowd scenes. Announcements and interviews with the organizers were carried in the local media and posters were displayed. For those citizens reached by this publicity the everyday events of the city became briefly imbued with an apparent premeditation. But the interface with the 'everyday' was not simple. Challenging the narrative powers in the city was uncomfortable. In the High Street Wrights & Sites members carried posters advertising the day's theme. For early morning workers the posters often afforded a moment of rueful or amused recognition of the dominance of the economic, its momentary defiance by the reference to animals or accidental reflections. For the shoppers grazing the retail sector, however, the posters seemed to make uneasy reading, a satire at their expense, demeaning rather than re-arming, at best irrational and unsettling. The smooth space of the High Street with its wide pavements, frontages dominated by glass, and the almost visible decay and obsolescence of the commodities on offer – mobile phones, holidays, summer clothes – was quite capable of out-everyday-ing any group of disruptive artists.

What worried Doreen Massey about De Certeau's division of strategy and tactics was not its incoherence, but its 'dichotomization between space and time, which posits space both as the opposite of time and, equally problematically, as immobility, power, coherence, representation'.[36] Which brings us back to the Situationist International murder scene. For the crime is not an attack upon a body, but upon a site. Not Paris, but the contradiction between local textures and the swooping vectors of Asger Jorn and Guy Debord's utopian maps, utilitarian, political contradictions where blueprints and satellite captures are activated to change the trajectories of huge numbers of people.

## Alien versus Predator, anywhere versus everyday

There was a telling encounter between Jacques Derrida and Daniel Libeskind at the 1992 *Anywhere* conference in Japan.

In an opening speech Derrida attempts to address the notion of 'anywhere': 'the point of view of this *anywhere,* of this indefinition of 'where,' of place, or space, of this sort of principle of indetermination that seems made to open space in space. The *where* is *any where.* The possibility of geometrical abstraction immediately affects "natural" place. It homogenizes it. It is as if place floated in space ... as soon as there is "where" there is "any," a possibility of substitution and repetition...'[37]

Libeskind counters this quotidianization of anywhere in the first conference panel:

I feel a certain domestication of the fantastic nature of anywhere has taken place. I actually wrote a little rejoinder ... 'Anywhere is not once, for if it were, it would crumple the "where" like the fully compressed bellows of an accordion in order to move more freely within it. There is no possibility of discourse, in my opinion, by saying anywhere ... it isn't anywhere ... leave it to its non-restitutive, non-replaceable greed ...' I would ask the question: Anywhere anywhere? But certainly not here.[38]

To general laughter, Derrida responds to Libeskind's hostile generalizing, indeed dark-utopianizing, of anywhere by expressing his agreement.

Unlike the colonially-aspirational everywhere, anywhere is capable – as in the 'general laughter' – of sustaining an everydayness and an ideal, of mobilizing both Derrida's subjectivity and Libeskind's 'not here'.[39]

## Mythogeography

In July 2008 a conference and mini-festival of performances and artworks related to psychogeography – Territories Re-Imagined, International Perspectives (TRIP) – was held at Manchester's Metropolitan University, co-ordinated with a parallel set of events organized by the 'get lost' collective. While mostly self-selecting and unrepresentative, (absent were most, but not all, of the activists and practitioners referenced here), the event was nevertheless as revealing as any other gathering of moths around psychogeography's beacon: non-representativeness being a characteristic of the contemporary dérive, along with a detachment from political organization and a repeated re-founding on the basis of highly variegated trajectories. The pseudo-Leninist theoretical rigours, immersive lifestyle, disciplines and expulsions of the SI no longer apply.

The academics, academic-practitioners, mental-mappers, therapeutic psychogeographers, artists, urban naturalists, dissidents from New York's Conflux, teachers, and activists from Manchester's

anarchist and squatting scene brought together by TRIP exchanged information and descriptions of their multiple (and sometimes contradictory) interventional, aesthetic and critical practices. Given the lack of plenary sessions – significant in itself – there was no forum for coherent themes or extended, detailed debate to emerge. Instead, informal connections were made, networks strengthened and widened, and most of the papers given followed suit by adding to the layers of discourse.

Exceptional, in the sense of its potential effect on this loose movement's 'thinking', was Anna Powell's paper in which she attempted to layer elements of Deleuze's writings on cinema across Debord's writing on the spectacle, acknowledging and then actively and consciously ignoring/ incorporating contradictions. Tentatively, here was a possible beginning for a more rigorous theorization of the sometimes accidental, sometimes pragmatic 'and and and' of contemporary psychogeography's associations and networks, without any reductive attempt to return to situationist history. Such a return *was* implicit in Steve Hanson's criticism of a psychogeography of the streets that restricted itself to the ironizing of appearance. Hanson called for a sharper intervention against trajectories of production and distribution (somewhat anticipated by Mark Bonta (above)); a call for some recognition of psychogeography's roots in a form of classical Marxism, in tune with Doreen Massey's intervention in spatial theory in favour of space as trajectory, and an addressing of the wilful amnesia of those for whom not only the SI's organizational excesses, but also their intellectual legacy, are an inconvenience to street pranks and polite 'temporary uses of space'.

In Powell and Hanson's contributions, a necessary and hopeful, critical manoeuvring was perhaps prefigured: able to inform an anti-spectacular strategy of multiplicity, while engaging with the contradictions of the situationist theoretical tradition.

The touchstone of that strategy remains the dérive, practiced as both exploratory and experimental roaming. Anselm Jappe, like Andy Merrifield in *Metromarxism* and *Guy Debord*, chimes with Steve Hanson's criticisms and seeks to recover the strands of Marx's and Lukacs's theories within Debord's (as the completion of the victory of exchange value over use value and the consequent destruction of direct human community) counterposing to the spectacle a '(G)enuine community and genuine dialogue (that) can only exist when each person has access to a direct experience of reality, when everyone has at their disposal the practical and intellectual means needed to solve problems.'[40] This demands a dérive rather different from the formalist, algorithmic events that sometimes pass for 'drift', or those textural attempts that stumble into whimsical occultism or local historiography. It is not that any of these tics and tricks are 'wrong', but rather that they are insufficient.

Part of the problematic of the contemporary dérive is a lack of an accumulative discussion of the details of its practice. Non-literary accounts of 'drifts' are often less than engaging, failing to communicate atmospheres, intensities and re-arrangements. The temptation has been to treat the dérive at a general level. Without detailed discussion the catapults, community, democracy, provocations and tricks of the dérive are not passed on, are not developed incrementally. What passes for 'drifting' too often turns out to be a one-idea disruption, leaving its participants in solo reverie or subject to the banalities of the spectacularized street. Instead, the idea of a mutating 'tool kit', conceptual if not material, offers something more than this repeated starting over. Mark A. James's project/exhibition at the Reg Vardy Gallery in Sunderland, The Itinerant Toolkit (2008) – in which the artist tested out on a journey ideas and objects suggested by psychogeographers and walking artists – perhaps signals the beginning of a more serious, accumulative approach to complement the multi-layering exemplified by Anna Powell's paper at TRIP.

## Affordance

Unlike classical Marxism's motor of contradictions, Debord's analysis of the society of the spectacle is far less generous: 'The modern spectacle … depicts what society *can deliver*, but within

**Figure 6.** Mark A. James, The Itinerant Toolkit, Reg Vardy Gallery, Sunderland, UK. (2008).

this depiction what is permitted is rigidly distinguished from what is possible'.[41] Where fiction, myth, fantasy or religion once exposed those things that materiality or society could not deliver, the spectacle limits them to celebrating what it can. Despite Debord's orientation to the proletariat's self-organization, in his critique of the spectacle there is no equivalent to Marx's evocation of capital's contradictions.

Here is the problem re-conjured by Steve Hanson: how to reconnect with political dynamism, based on a Marxian critique of commodity-fetishism, but without reliance on fundamental social contradictions. Instead (and this is where Hanson's painful awareness of the limitations of an ironical détournement might itself be a limitation) psychogeography proceeds asymmetrically. Unable to ride the energy of fundamental social contradictions, psychogeography *is* the seeking out of the ironies that so worries Hanson. Given the almost total 'apparent' power of the spectacle, reinforced in Debord's *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, the construction of situations must rest upon a psychogeography that seeks out those ironies that allow small subversive actions to guide or reconfigure (détourn) far greater spectacular forces.

Wrights & Sites, influenced by the situationists among others, have deployed such a strategy in order to resist the monocular meaning of certain spaces, where the hegemony of local history, the heritage industry or tourist trade commands its own constructions of the city. Wrights & Sites have developed means of re-making these meanings based on multiple and variegated narratives: personal associations, histories of signage, geology, crime statistics, dreams, mistakes, micropalaeontology and misspelling, calling this a 'mythogeography'. This combination of the respectable and the unrespectable, the setting in motion of contrasting and sometimes contradictory narratives, ideas and images, has developed into a model for acting as well as thinking, and uses the devices of the monocular spectacle (guides, tours, walks, festivals, information centres) in détourned forms in order to deploy the spectacle's own energies against it. As with the 'researchers' of ufology, mythogeography mimics the nomenclatures of sciences, deploying its 'findings' in a strategic game of peaceful conspiracy, attempting to place itself within a self-organizing enthusiasm *for*

self-organization, conscious of the ambiguities of dynamic forms for which (both for forms and ambiguities) David Wade has borrowed the Chinese term 'Li' because 'it falls between our notions of pattern and principle'.[42] Crucially 'simple' in using a small number of invariants by which to navigate ideological flows, and materially at work in the capture of satellites, (at present cultural, but perhaps, eventually, economic), this is an approach that might, one day, meet Hanson's demands.

Instead of a spatially defined, ordered utopia, mythogeography proceeds by trajectory rather than architecture and art or anti-art and anti-architecture. Where useful to its asymmetrical projects it adds what it needs, from any discipline, to its conceptual and material orreries ('itinerant tool-kits'), curating artists' and activists' interventions in the streets, rubbish tips, sewers and monumental squares of the city (*misguided STADTverFÜHRUNGEN*, Wien Festwochen, Vienna, 2007, *mis-guided*, BBI, Fribourg, 2008). Asymmetrical 'satellite capture' is used to remove mediations and to engineer provocations and 'offers'; its 'unitary' mission not the reintegration of the fragmented city, but rather that of the citizen with their own experience.

Mythogeographical walking – a detailed and accumulative practice of dérive – is about a meshing of geographical spaces, and their ghostly bathing in cultural motion pictures, about the geometrical connectivity of a fragmented self, the integrity of which is constantly modulated by neurological research, critical theory, and speculations about consciousness and transmission, and about direct experience of the unplanned route. Mythogeography's 'softness', comparable to the 'soft places' in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* graphic novels, welcomes in the academically unrespectable while refusing to collapse itself into any single branch of small-business esoterica. Another way of describing this 'softness' is used by Tim Edensor in relation to the body in ruined space 'coerced and stimulated to perform in unfamiliar ways',[43] drawing on the research of James J. Gibson into human perception and environmental 'affordance': '... visitors may clamber over old production lines and on top of obsolete machines ... dance upon the boardroom table or spin round in the manager's chair ... Besides this liberating of the body's movement, other spaces can seem strange and disruptive ... This sensual unfamiliarity contrasts with the frequently desensualized outside world ... that effectively insulate(s) the body'.[44] The challenge is to accept the 'affordances' in the ruins of the spectacle itself, its wastes and excesses.

The key lies not in reproducing romantic urban nomadism (although that is, as Andy Merrifield has usefully re-emphasized, part of Debord's legacy[45]), but in generating 'anywheres',[46] not as an alternative meta-theory with a new narrative of origins, but as a conceptual (and mutable) tool kit for a widening affordance to be added to and subtracted from, according to practical *and* theoretical needs, both an art of memory and an actual, physical, memorialized landscape; both the assassination of the situationist corpse and the survival kit for avoiding its fate, the 'head shot' that finally puts not the corpse but the necessity to keep murdering it to sleep, that repeatedly defers our meeting with it, a training for more portentous and more perilous trajectories.

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# Tourists/Terrorists – Useful Ambiguities in a Search for Models
# Phil Smith

[1] A discussion about models of 'ideal', resistant, small group organisation is generally pre-empted by an argument about intentions. What is the group for?

[2] The principle seems obvious – there must be an 'end' of some kind that drives and determines the means, however that relation works itself out.

[3] Yet, so often, the histories of group organisation, whether philanthropic, political or recreational, are of empirical specificities turning out to be far more rich and potent than mere means; that it is in their details that the larger structures of what they become first emerge: the Provisional IRA become custodians of a peace agreement, the crusading Knights Hospitaller of St John metamorphose into first-aiders at sports events.

[4] This potential for convenient, utilitarian tactics to turn suddenly (and often stay turned) towards a qualitatively new strategic end is sometimes spotted early on and snuffed out. In the 1920s a rag-tag, barely coherent orrery of proletarian UK-based Marxist philosophers, already beginning to establish their own eccentric, vernacular tradition, was halted by their recruitment to the Communist Party of Great Britain. In the Second World War, the first manifestation of a UK 'Home Guard' (an official civilian defence force raised to fight Nazi invasion), was dismantled; initially trained by Spanish anarchist miners, refugees from Franco, it was developing an insurgent, revolutionary structure among its base of early members.

[5] So, rather than establish an 'end', and then seek a model for the group structure most likely to achieve it, I propose to present here the details of various existing and historic small group practices with resistant, covert or disruptive qualities, flagging up different fragments, slivers, signatures, eccentricities and tics, with the intention of whirling these around the meandering practice of the International Lettriste/situationist *dérive* (or *drift*), or at least around an 'ideal' version of the practices of contemporary *dériviste* groups, some modelled precisely and others imprecisely on the *dérive*. (My account of some of these is here.)

[6] The context for this speculative modelling is an ongoing series of experiments with various forms of exploratory and 'disrupted' walking: these began with *drifts*, but have moved on to subversions of the guided tour, the making and placing of détourned signage, collective pilgrimages interweaving multiple-practices and improvisations and the distributions of guides, handbooks, maps and toolkits as provocations for others to make their own resistant walking.

[7] While I have attempted elsewhere - online and in *Mythgeography* (2010, Axminster, UK: Triarchy Press) – to document these experiments and those conducted by others and to tentatively build a critical scaffold around them, it is the historical *dérive* that remains the dominant example of the 'ideal' collective walk (despite other models from urban exploration, deep mapping, live art and pedestrian activism). By attaching a plethora of variegated practices and other models of small group intervention to this 'ideal' I hope, here, to shift the *dérive* a little from the centre of the orrery of these multiplicitous practices; to set in motion other bodies of attraction.

[8] Given the benefit to these small group practices of the deferral of ends – including the deferral of even discussing ends for as long as possible - a key dynamic of such '*drifting* groups without destinations' can be understood through a creative system identified (in stark corporeal terms well suited to an immersed walking group) by the artist Matthew Barney. In this system 'Situation' (no relation) is the raw energy and drive of undirected intentionality, 'Condition' is the direction and digestion of this energy, and 'Production' is its oral/anal expression in the form of excretions of art, political actions, etc. Barney's creative method is to disrupt this sequence, deferring 'Production' again and again and repeatedly folding 'Condition' back into 'Situation', whirling the latter's energy again and again in a violent short circuiting through the funnel of 'Condition' until the organic structure of the process cannot sustain itself as its accelerates, at which

[9] Similarly, a drifting group (with neither end nor destination) bounces back and forth between different theoretical positions in the course of a single *drift* – between (a more or less understood) Debord, Bachelard and Baudrillard, for example – drawing, opportunistically, from different theories as they are required; contesting the dominance of visuality one moment, drawing pseudo-evolutionary allusions or tracing a string of voids the next. Ideally (because, for the sake of this argument, they are an 'ideal'), such a group would extend their versatile inconsistency until it becomes an unsustainable contradiction; when unexpected, unplannable, inconvenient praxes are hurled off.

[10] What Barney's model seeks to do is pre-empt reproduction, to disrupt the tendency of 'creative' or disruptive action to follow a course of least resistance to a product, to find its way too quickly, efficiently and conveniently to an outcome (when production takes on the quality of an organism's excretion).

[11] Among *drifting* groups certain productive scenarios recur, such as the play of childhood, attraction to ruins and the morbid, the seeking out of the 'hidden', the identification of occulted and occult iconographies or ironical and accidental signage, and trespass. While these may constitute the parts of a resistant walk, because they are familiar products of many *drifts* they can also pre-empt its destinationless engagement by a premature gratification (a powerful tool of the Spectacle) through the manifestation of what might already have been expected (or at least predicted). The result can be an immersion in a milieu (occult, anecdotal, historiographical); momentum is lost and a subtle bounding of space is imposed or adopted.

[12] However, by deferring the gratification (for example, by disrupting an action to maintain it in simultaneous development with others) territorialisation can be suspended to allow more and more layering of activities, one upon another: play upon vandalism upon mapping upon sculpting trash upon booby-trapping upon poetry upon dance… until the group itself cannot cope with the multiplicity of its own processes and, in that crisis, can retreat to a milieu or crash on to something or somewhere that is unexpected, unplanned and (this is the key political and reproducible aspect) uncontainable.

[13] This is not unlike the strategy of communes that is proposed by The Invisible Committee as a part of social insurrection:

it's not about possessing territory. Rather it's a matter of increasing the density of the communes, of circulation, and of solidarities to the point that the territory becomes unreadable, opaque to all authority… Every practice brings a territory into existence – a dealing territory, or a hunting territory; a territory of child's play, of lovers… or *flaneurs*. The rule is simple: the more territories there are superimposed on a given zone, the more circulation there is between them, the harder it will be for power to get a handle on them… (The Invisible Committee, 2009:108)

and the greater the likelihood that outcomes are unplannable and uncontainable, not only for those who seek to control them, but (more importantly for a situationist politics) for those who seek to create them, for, according to a situationist critique of the Spectacle, it is by such creators (who are the subjects of this essay, and I include my own culpability) that some of the most effective policing of geographical power is carried out.

[14] A charged *drift*, capable of resisting the rush to produce and folding back its own energies upon itself, may serve as a disruption of everyday life, but it is not a substitute or replacement for it; the disruptiveness of the *drifting* group is neither the portal to a lifestyle choice, nor a day pass to a new milieu. While it may disrupt the quotidian, it, in turn, needs to be disrupted by an episodic return to it. (I will argue in the conclusion to this paper that, due to the spectacularisation of everyday life, the charged 'drift' can best re-enter the everyday through intense, but banal spaces such as those of tourism.)

[15] Attentive readers will have noticed that I have already done some violence to the concept and history of the *dérive*. The situationists *did* have a purpose (and in that sense a destination) for their *drifts*; they were opportunities for the collection of psychogeographical data for use (less than well defined) in the construction of exemplary *situations* (limited actions prefiguring transformed social relations). While the *dérive* remains the polar influence for exploratory walking, I have detached it from

its task (as have so many other 'psychogeographers', though for other reasons, predominantly literary and occult) in order to render its dominant influence over my own purpose relative rather than absolute.

[16] This ambiguity around the tactics of psychogeography is not the weakness it is generally cracked up to be. Certainly, the failure of the situationists to explain *situations* in a way that links such praxis to the gathering of psychogeographic data, and the plundering of the situationists' lexicon by occultists, tourism consultants, authors, film-makers and literary critics has led to a disconnection of psychogeographical tactics from strategies. However, in the context of an actual *drift* that distinction, and the dynamic of 'what is serving what', is revealed as a symptom of terrain rather than political programme. The ambiguity of psychogeographical politics, while compromising the individual *dériviste*, delivers in that very abjectness a return to site specificity as the 'grounds' of the ambiguous group traversing its sites; these 'grounds' then are 'particularity of terrain' (rather than theory) and 'flexibility of tactics'.

[17] The internal relations of the ideal *drifting* group are equally ambiguous; toying with their own dissolution. Its fictional model comes from G. K. Chesterton's novel *The Man Who Was Thursday*, in which an atheistic, anarchist group turns out to have consisted (almost) entirely of infiltrators from a variety of secret services. In non-fictional (but queasy) reality, the Bolsheviks discovered a similar situation among their Duma representatives; the October revolution in 1917 exposed their most conscientious and effective representatives as Tsarist agents.

[18] Such negation and 'disguise' can be turned inside out and adopted explicitly. The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, a UK-based coalition of left-leaning and anarchist clowns, reverses the model of infiltration. Openly 'in disguise' (in clown costume), they 'infiltrate' reactionary groups (police managing demonstrations, army recruitment centres) and offer their services. Not only does their clownish incompetence impede the authorities, but by taking these authorities 'at their word' and applying that 'word' literally and 'ad absurdam' (as with the immersion of the drift, taking affordances as offers) they expose contradictions implicit in the 'democratic' remits of these arms of the state.

[19] Then there are the walking memes, like The Charlie Circle in Adipur, a devotional group who venerate the art of Charlie Chaplin through imitation, procession and monument.

[20] Like amateur actors, the members of such 'ideal' groups of clowns and walking icons are uncomfortable in their roles. Superficial in their disguise, equivocal about psychological objectives and super-objectives (switching back and forth between different ends), they are characterless (in that they have no sub-text). Their masks do not disappear (as they do in psychological acting) but fall from them. They are clumsy in their use of 'props' and instruments. They are not traceless like 'special forces', but are like spear-carriers who upstage the instruments of scripting, incapable of blending into crowd scenes, they generate awkward pauses and put a spotlight on unsuspected voids.

[21] Such ideal *drifting* groups, despite their eccentricities, are often (and best) led by their peripheries, by the fraying of their purpose when thrown up against the everyday, by edges that catch upon the textures of the places passed through creating a generalised 'torque' that becomes the 'gestus' or 'idea' of the walk. While the group may play with disguise, even hiding in plain sight, it is engaged and sympathetic (at moments, even bound) to its sites. It is not traceless.

[22] The variability of the levels of seriousness, activity, violence and organisation among these 'ideal' groups is entirely down to their accidental and particular circumstances; the levels bear no relation to strategy, ethics, principle, or even to a task (when there is one). Take, for example, The 43 Group: it was made up mostly of Jewish ex-servicemen who had served in the British Armed Forces (43 at their founding meeting in 1945, rising to over 300 over the next five years). They organised themselves after the end of hostilities in Europe to oppose a nascent far-right movement in parts of London that included Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists and the British League of Ex-Servicemen. The 43 Group broke up fascist meetings, violently confronted fascist newspaper sellers (sometimes forcing the sellers to eat their own newspapers), they infiltrated their members into these organisations to gather intelligence, and they went as far as using injected drugs to disable sentries and burgle fascist headquarters.

Through all this they succeeded in retaining discipline among their members, operating beneath the legal radar without falling into criminality; they tapped the resources of sympathetic benefactors and deployed a violence limited within strict (if sometimes extreme) parameters. Without the shared and circumstantial organisational experience drawn from their military service, it is unlikely that such 'extreme' actions would either have been adopted (other Jewish organisations preferred to lobby the authorities) or have been containable and directable. Their tactics were not determined by a theoretical or strategic analysis of their enemy nor by a clear understanding of their own 'aims', but by what was 'to hand', by their circumstantial, tactical possessions, by their familiarity with military operations with limited and specific objectives. Given this inherited discipline, the group (its job done) was able to voluntarily disband in 1950 without generating splinter groups (unlike, say, the so-called "dissident republicans" operating presently in the North of Ireland) and then effectively 'disappear' (until their story was published by one of their leading former members in the1990s).

[23] It is the principle of 'to hand' and the raising of contingency to a principle (through immediate judgements about *which* tactics to apply to *what* affordances) that can be drawn from these group narratives (even of those as end-oriented as The 43 Group). But there is nothing to be drawn and reapplied from the narratives themselves. The 'ideal' *dériviste* group does not imitate any other group, but has a memory-map of the circumstances-tactics-strategy relations of a range of groups, drawing on those relations (but not on their constituent parts, for which each new group must find or learn their own).

[24] The history of considered self-abolition, common among resistant groups, and companion to their capacity for abrupt change, is a useful one when balanced against a tendency to become ends in themselves. At a micro-level, specific *drifts* are often characterised by a re-negotiation of connections, an abandonment of loyalty, for the limited period of the *drift*, to anything other than the group and the landscape it passes through. Often without maps, and on unfamiliar ground, without any destination, the group develops a mutual reliance appropriate to more extreme circumstances. To know what resources can be drawn up, openness is necessary. For the past ten years I have fielded the responses of participants after their first drifts; those (a small minority) who found the experience uncomfortable often had a commitment to walking alone or to the reverie of *flânerie*and baulked at the *drift*'s requirement for utilitarian self-revelation.

[25] While this openness and assemblage of variable skills, predilections and preoccupations tend towards an inter-weaving of the group, this does not necessitate boundedness. Dependent on the tightness or looseness of the 'meshing' of the space, the group can make ground by splitting up into groupuscules, sometimes even proceeding as individuals and then reforming further on down the track. This process, almost a pulse of diffusion and concentration, happens all the time within a *drifting* group, but it can also be consciously deployed by the group as a whole when circumstances afford or require.

[26] There are guerrilla groups, some very different from those serious, task-oriented organisations like The 43 Group, which, although set up under the guise of self-indulgence, have operated politically, financially and benevolently; moving 'beneath the radar' *by virtue of* their apparent lack of seriousness: The Society of Dilettanti, for example. Established in 1732 as a male-only London dining club (in 1734 one of their dinners ended in street fires, fights and the arrival of guards from St James' Palace) the members of the Society attempted to recreate the license to outrage that they had enjoyed on the 'Grand Tour' while seeking to diffuse 'good taste' among the general public. Society members channelled large sums of money into the development of opera in Britain and into numerous archaeological projects (without ever getting their hands dirty), concluding their activities in 1786 with the publication of Richard Payne Knight's *A Disquisition on the Worship of Priapus*. The Dilettanti pre-empted the situationists by describing their activities as "seria ludo" (serious play).

[27] The activities of an equally well-heeled (but this time all female) group formed in 1930 also match the description of "seria ludo": Ferguson's Gang. Individual members adopted semi-mythic pseudonyms that included "The Bloody Bishop", "Bill Stickers", "Red Biddy" (named for her leftist sympathies), "Erb the Smasher", "Silent O'Moyle", "Black Maria", "the Lord Beershop of the Gladstone Islands & Mercator's Projection" (a former student of the Slade) and "The Nark". Their aims were culturally conservative: to 'preserve' the English countryside (mainly by supporting the work of the National Trust), a contradictory

and self-negating task. And yet, perhaps to compensate, they adopted a radical behaviour; communicating their aims and recording the minutes of their meetings (in their 'Minute Boo') in mock-cockney dialect, delivering donations in the cadaver of a goose, trespassing on derelict properties where they would hold secret meetings before endowing large sums for their renovation, and turning up for interview at the BBC in full face mask. They maintained a discipline of anonymity similar to The 43 Group's; only one of the Gang has ever been identified by

[28] While the specific tactics of these different groups will remain mostly untransferable to other circumstances, there are specific dynamics that are retrievable from their histories: distraction, hiding in plain sight, the use of whatever the circumstances of the group and its terrain provide, internal openness, asymmetrical engagement with institutions, serious play, the exaggerated use of spectacular icons, self-narration and the group's control of its own historiography (or anonymity) and ontology. The latter quality in particular presents a challenge to communications between these groups, let alone co-ordinated or collectively provoked activities; but this 'problem' is part of a temptation to assume that, after assembling such a chaotic tool kit of uneven practices, that the next challenge for the drifting group would be one of coordination and action (how to increase their influence), that over those who have the temerity to 'do' – to rearrange, to deterritorialise, to push through and re-assemble – hangs an obligation to site these actions on an ever grander scale.

[29] Where "doing" accrues an obligation to define principles and to explain oneself in terms of wider ambitions, greater changes, broader programmes and more complex arguments, the problem lies not with the trajectory, but its pre-emptive velocity. For at this point, the least useful thing to do is to begin a discussion of ends and means; for this is the moment when a deferral of these questions is possible and consequential, allowing the groups to understand themselves in their own terms (rather than comparing themselves to previous or exterior models), and to generate and accumulate actions and experiences and 'Condition' (by repeated deferral of the question of strategy), plugging these back into the group's initial 'Situation' (its impulse to *drift*), and creating the virtuous cycle that can hurl out unplanned-for and unplannable strategic possibilities for *drifting* in general.

[30] This is the key moment for the small group. When, in order to resist the tendency to reproduction, it must repeat itself and find the courage to accept criticisms of unoriginality, derivativeness, lack of imagination and conservatism in order to delay innovation until it becomes not a possibility, but impossible to avoid. One example of such a moment when by conservatism, and through repetition, the centre of a group's activity was destabilised was the transition between the publications *An Exeter Mis-Guide* and *A Mis-Guide To Anywhere* by the Exeter*drifters* Wrights & Sites. The warm reception of *A Mis-Guide To Anywhere* led the group to first explore and then recoil from the idea of producing *Mis-Guides* for other cities, uneasy about just how site-specific they could be to cities they did not know intimately. And yet the return to specificity on the familiar terrain of their own city precipitated the group's leap from the specific to the generic (of an only partly ironical *Anywhere*). The move to generalise on a terrain of connectedness and generic provocation came initially from a *retreat* from just such an aspiration to spread their practice; it was only when their repetition of specificities refused to remain within their own terrain that the group were robbed of their 'centre' (site-specificity) and spiralled outwards towards an unexpectedly wide elsewhere.

## Personae

[31] At the end of David Mamet's movie 'The Spanish Prisoner' (1997), the key narrative agents are revealed as a group of camera-toting Japanese tourists (in fact Japanese-American FBI agents working undercover) who, despite repeated appearances in the movie, have been ignored by both the characters *and* the audience. In 2007 the organiser of a series of training camps for potential suicide bombers in the UK was apprehended by the authorities and jailed. The training he had arranged was conducted under the guise of walking holidays, hiking expeditions and paintballing sessions in popular UK beauty-spots. No one who saw his groups could distinguish them from adventure tourists.

[32] What is proposed here is that these are examples of something more than instrumental disguise. Rather, that there is a flexibility here that a *dérive*-oriented (but increasingly de-centred) orrery of groups can take advantage of; that there is in the ambiguous terrain between tourism and covert

operations (whether terroristic or counter-terroristic) a model for the deferral of a move from experimental tactics to the adoption of strategy, leaving the way open for less predictable and more emergent dispersals and deterritorialisations.

[33] Like a covert group, an 'ideal' *drifting* group moves in holey-space; sometimes 'burrowing' into the hidden, subterranean corridors of a location (seeking out the reserve collections, the space beneath the stage where the bust of a fallen dictator is stored 'just in case', the places of maintenance and offices of surveillance and coordination), but also moving through crowds *as if* through corridors. A *drifting* group can become so disconnected from spectacular relations of consumption that it is almost invisible to consumers and is irrelevant to (and ignored by) retailers. (The anti-functionality of a *drift* means that dérivistes usually avoid retail relationships, except when they are taking an establishment 'at its word' and enacting levels of generosity, concern or hospitality through helpfulness, conviviality and conversation that are implicit, but too rarely explicit; for example in café or restaurants.) Such a group may adapt quantum-tunnelling or mole-like behaviours; in the first case borrowing information from the landscape to make connections (apparently spooky "actions at a distance") to commercial and information trajectories, or, in the latter case, burrowing through space in a way comparable with attack-helicopters engaging fixed-wing aircraft, seeking to make advantageous, asymmetrical connections with a more powerful enemy.

[34] Because the *drifting* group differs from the covert group by its deferral of narrative denouement or violent outrage (or a violent arrest of it), it can be open and straightforward about its operations, just as tourists (as understood by contemporary Tourism Studies) might be about their tourism: they are here to re-make the meaning of a place by their participation in, use of and journey through it. Even at its most extreme and performative (something like the invasions of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army or the actions of the live artist The Vacuum Cleaner whose prayers of thanksgiving for consumer items are recited in chain stores) the *drifting* group's actions seek to subvert a space by over-obeying its rules; by détournement on a social scale. The drifting group defers the violence of its resistance (and the articulation of its strategic opposition) to

[35] In some contexts, however, even relatively dampened behaviour can bring *drifting* groups to the attention of security professionals, drawn perhaps by a group's lack of retail involvement or the intensity of a group's observation of the non-signalled parts of a site. The drifting group is not a truly covert group; in the context of Western bourgeois democracies it has no need to be. Its activities may appear to state and private security operatives as unconventional, irrational or eccentric, but hard to identify as criminal. But what the *drifting* group does share with terrorism (in its individualist, nationalist and particularly its state versions) is an attempt to create (for very different purposes) a 'state of anxiety and tension', a dread or hyper-sensitivity like a low-level paranoia in which the default state of public life shifts from a base assumption that what we see and experience is mostly accidental, meaningless, providential and innocent to one that what we see is mostly organised, meaningful, exploitative and dangerous. What the security operative responds to when she or he interrupts a static *drift* in the shopping mall or an obsessive group investigating iconography in a 'sensitive' national heritage site is a prefiguring of a paranoid public:

Freeman & Freeman have described a "sliding scale" of paranoia, a key indicator of which is "how much the thoughts *interfere with everyday life*". But what if that interference could be mapped and controlled, as a chosen means to "*interfere with everyday life*"? Freeman & Freeman concede that paranoia can be chosen by society (they explain how the objects of paranoid fears in Vienna are very different from those in Tokyo) and yet they do not allow it to be 'chosen' by an individual. But what if we can? Then we have a tool. (Smith, 2010: 165, citing Freeman & Freeman, 2008.)

It is no accident (to fold the low level paranoia of this essay back upon itself) that the ambiguous figure of the tourist has been gently emerging as a shadow model here. Given the accelerating transfer of many qualities of the tourist site to the urban everyday - "almost everywhere has become a centre of 'spectacle and display'… resorts now have relatively little to distinguish themselves from elsewhere" (Urry, 1990: 93) - and the tourist's agentive role emerging from the Tourism Studies of the last two decades, 'the tourist' will increasingly serve as a useful persona for dérivistes able to sustain the ambiguity of the "golden horde" and the reflexive "post-tourist".

[36] Given the provisional starting point of this argument in the practice of a passage through space with hyper-attentiveness to texture and detail, certain possibilities in the practice of the "post-tourist" (for example, their enjoyment, self-consciously, of the artificiality and ironical 'mis-speakings' of the leisure space) and the "anti-tourist" (who resists the consumption of the space's ideological productions) begin to look like 'ideal' personae for the members of an 'ideal' group. This, and the mistaking of terrorists for tourists (a symptom of the break up of mass tourism and the decline of the passive consumer), signals a space within the tourism, leisure and heritage industries and their sites in which to develop *dérive*-centred, 'ideal', resistant groups operating as 'industrial' dis-organisers and re-routers, bridging these intense sites back to a lived critique of everyday life.

## Gallery

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## 11

# A la Ronde: eccentricity, interpretation and the end of the world

*Phil Smith*

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter, Devon (UK) was closed in 2007 for refurbishment. At the time of writing (2009), I am waiting with some trepidation to see what this means for its Natural History Collection, in which a moose stood hoof deep in ornamental chippings and a bison was presented on a bath mat, examples of what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls the 'tourist surreal – the foreignness of what is presented to its context of presentation' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 152).

Photographs in a corner of the Natural History Room hinted at the Collection's moves and dismantlings over the previous century; dramatic 'nature red in tooth and claw' tableaux of warring animals gradually broken up into discrete pieces, educational and ecological agendas draining reflexivity from its displays, a rational aesthetic (plus children's drawing desks and treasure box games) replacing the mix of grotesque and terror sublime. The collection had lost much of its brazen performativity, but not all. It still retained something of the nature of 'a museum of a museum'. What remained in the absurdity of groupings and in the incongruity of backdrops forefronted an ambiguous ideological manoeuvre: partly what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has identified as a Brechtian estrangement characteristic of museum displays (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 157) and partly an immersion in a dreamy otherness. Made redundant by mass travel and changes in zoological science the exhibits had taken on a different function: 'long after their scientific usefulness has expired, they become almost cultural landmarks' (Thomson 2002: 75).

In the sole illustration of things to come in RAMM's brochure 'Our Renaissance', there is some hint of what to expect from refurbishment: in a brightly lit room, the image of a simulated dinosaur plays across a suspended screen, around a doorway there is a grid of discrete rocks, and in the centre a single 'interactive' specimen is displayed on a stand. The airbrushed 'artist's impression' conveys a translucency, a cool, digital reduction to a smooth, monocular narrative of scientific abstraction.

Such a flattening of space and discourse, while generating its own

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vulnerabilities, supports Tim Edensor's argument that there is a 'necessity to supplement . . . expert memories . . . and to imagine beyond these limits backwards and forwards . . . not merely . . . through the fabrication of sub-altern accounts which rely on similar principles of 'historical truth' [but] that we "make things up in the interstices of the factual and the fabulous"' (Edensor 2005: 164).

In 2000 I wrote and directed a performance piece, *Cancelled Menagerie*, in the Natural History Room of RAMM, seeking to work in the kinds of inter-stitial spaces that Edensor identifies, drawing attention to the performative absurdities of the displays as a kind of visual-poetic performance language, invoking some of the melancholies of the site. A performer drew attention to a large crack in the museum wall below the sign: 'Geology At Work'. Three of the performers lay head to foot beside part of the skeleton of a mature river crocodile, modelling a maximum length unlikely to be reached again due to interdictions upon natural habitat. 'After' the performance, audience members were stalked through surrounding streets by 'hunter-collectors'.

Six years later I received an invitation from the National Trust to create a performance for Father's Day, 2007, at their A la Ronde property near Exmouth, Devon (UK). I was surprised to find a comparable politics of space and narrative to those at RAMM, and the same necessity to 'make things up'.

Where the Natural History Room was a shadowy, often hushed and eerie place, a few steps from a bustling street, A la Ronde is a four-storey, late eighteenth-century house, set in its own grounds, with panoramic views of the Exe estuary. The house was originally built to serve two wealthy cousins, Jane and Mary Parminter, as home and private museum for their Grand Tour mementoes (many of which remain in the house).

On first acquaintance, A la Ronde is intriguing: sixteen-sided on the exterior, built around an eight-sided inner room that reaches up to the roof, topped by a gallery of intricate sea-shell designs. The outer rooms were originally designated so the bedrooms caught the first light of day, after which the cousins would move clockwise from room to room following the sun. This daily circumambulation of the house was amplified in a 'constitutional' walk around the borders of their land, echoing the doubleness of the house's architecture.

'Eccentric' is the favoured description on tourism websites. The National Trust's handbook and website for A la Ronde eschew the word, but quote accounts of the house as 'curious looking' and having 'a magical strange-ness'. Deploying low-level paranoia as a routine part of my research for such a performance, I wondered who might benefit from such tamed otherness. However, I had no evidence that there were other significant meanings.

I was frustrated in my search for primary materials. The Parminter family records were destroyed, along with much else, by the bombing of the Devon

Records Office during the Second World War. However, working from secondary sources like older guidebooks, a transcription of Jane Parminter's fragmentary Grand Tour diary, and local histories, I began to gather various narratives that suggested an added purpose for A la Ronde: it was a symbolic machine for expediting the end of the world, partly by racial means.

One story regularly told about A la Ronde is that the Parminter cousins had ordered the oaks in their grounds to be left untouched until such time as the wood could be used to make ships for the return of the Jewish Diaspora to Israel; a key requirement, for some Christians, for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

This apocalyptic motive is consistent with the cousins' commissioning of an adjunct to A la Ronde: a complex of buildings built in 1810, including an oddly shaped, low-roofed chapel which the cousins named 'Point-In-View'. This name is sometimes interpreted as a reference to Langstone Rock, a sandstone point at the mouth of the River Exe visible from the door of the chapel. However, the chapel's motto – 'Some point in view, we all pursue' – makes little sense in relation to Langstone Rock. The text of elder cousin Jane's memorial in the chapel suggests an eschatological meaning, anticipating Mary's joining Jane in glory at the sound of 'the last trump', implying that this was expected during Mary's lifetime; a 'point' *already* 'in view'.

Part of the devout machinery for bringing on this 'last trump' is the chapel complex itself, including diminutive dwellings and a schoolroom. Consistent with the tale of the oak trees, first choice of accommodation at the complex was offered to converted Jewesses, with places at the school reserved for the Christian re-education of their children. This narrative took on a more sinister hue when I began to interrogate the origins and possible significance of the design of the house itself.

Neither the architect nor the significance of the design of A la Ronde is known. The case for the cousins as pioneer women architects has been taken up, particularly by some feminist historians, while the case *against* the women seems to rest wholly on their gender. There is no primary evidence either way, although the cousins' descendant, Reverend Oswald Reichel, a church historian and writer on canon law, born a year before Mary's death, attributes the house's design to Jane. As to the nature of the design itself, the best we can do is 'family tradition' (Reichel, again, is probably the source), repeated (sometimes guardedly) in guidebooks and pamphlets: that the eight-sided domed core of the building is a reference to the eight-sided basilica of the cathedral of St Vitale at Ravenna, visited by the cousins on their Grand Tour. Indeed, there are similarities. The shell gallery at A la Ronde echoes the sumptuous mosaics at the cathedral and both domes have ambulatories (one at St Vitale is reserved for women, echoing a similar restriction on residency at A la Ronde imposed by the cousins).

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It was not difficult to find religio-ideological connections between St Vitale and A la Ronde. The key shared narrative is the conversion of the Jews. St Vitale's construction was instituted by, and its décor prominently celebrates, the Emperor Justinian, author of a set of notoriously draconian laws against Jews, including a sentence of execution for any Jew denying the authenticity of the resurrection of Christ or (perhaps significant to this narrative) the Last Judgement. It was possible that A la Ronde was at least referencing, at worst condoning or joining in, a celebration of the forced conversion of the Jews.

I had not 'made this up' in the sense of manufacturing a fiction, but rather (and perhaps closer to Edensor's meaning) I was stitching things together: making metaphorical connections, drawing together symbolic similarities. To not address these supplements to the official 'memories' at the A la Ronde site would have been to capitulate to the same combination of fragmentation of materials and cool withdrawal to a modest overview (an overview, all the same) that seemed about to encroach on the performativity at RAMM. At the same time I had no wish to launch a conspiracy fiction, nor to disguise the speculative, paranoid and playful qualities of my enquiry.

My method of enquiry drew on the practice of 'mythogeography' as developed by site-specific artists Wrights & Sites, initially in response to monocular heritage sites. 'Mythogeography' is an experimental approach to site as a place of performance, a space of multiple layers, including ambience and psychogeographical effects, geological, archaeological and historiographical data, myths, rumours and lies, unrealised architectures and collectively expressed desires, autobiographical associations, incongruities and accidental hybrids.

'Mythogeography' has not developed in a vacuum, but as part of a growing and changing practice of disrupted and exploratory walking, drawing from the situationists, Fluxus, various land artists and psychogeographers. It borrows and invents techniques of collection, trespass, observation, kinds of mapping that upset functional walking, means of heightening or changing perception, performativity, embodiment and subversions of official tour-guide discourse. 'Mythogeography' offers a model which aspires to subject each layer of meaning to a rigorous historiographical, or alternative and appropriate, interrogation, connecting those diverse layers and exploiting the gaps between them, while avoiding a scientific withdrawal, a collapse into a monocular satire or a capitulation to safe and policed forms of eccentricity.

Informed by this practice, my performance walk at A la Ronde (Figure 11.1) – *A Father's Day Foray* – was multilayered, a double-walking, echoing the daily trajectory of the Parminter cousins, both intimate and boundary-testing. Dressed in a cream suit, I greeted my audience from behind dark glasses, affecting the questionable aplomb of a Jonathan Meades-like commentator, saddling audience members with my suitcases. I began by setting a number of stories in motion, rippling outwards from the site – including my own 'Grand

**11.1** A la Ronde, Exmouth (UK), The National Trust

Tour' of walking performances in Europe and a sixteen-day walk looking for oak trees – and linked the wartime loss of all primary materials on the house to the absence of Devonian souls in Mormon heaven (the Mormon Church conducts services of post-mortem conversion based on online county records). The narrative of Jewish conversion, its bloody precedent in Ravenna and the notion of the A la Ronde/Point-In-View complex as some sort of apocalyptic machine sat within these layers, some well evidenced and clearly sincere, others speculative, comic, mischievous or fantastical.

This multilayered mythogeographical account contested some of the established narratives of the A la Ronde site, including the privileging of the *cultural* prism of the Grand Tour as the dominant influence at the site, and the, at least partly consumer-imported, narrative of gentility. Performance and journey sought to add to, rather than to resolve, any instability: in lieu of a millenarian 'milk and honey' chocolates were offered, the audience were invited to step onto an empty plinth to model whatever they thought was missing, and I disrupted historical narratives to break into autobiographical reminiscence. Absences were highlighted rather than abolished; apparently evocative broken statue feet were revealed as the disappointing trace of an inappropriate 1960s addition, recently stolen. The performance was superempirical, factoid piled upon factoid, but, by deploying the primacy of 'and

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The journey was labyrinthine. Following the route of the cousins' 'constitutionals' meant picking a way along paths that, while maintained, were not part of most tourists' itinerary, or subject to the usual '"rules": expectations and conventions of behaviour' of the site (Wilkie 2002a: 244). A usually inaccessible 'back stage' to the house's garden was opened for the performance. The audience braved traffic on a narrow road to the little-known Point-In-View complex; the connection between chapel and house coming as a surprise to most. Both performance and walk were self-reflexive, setting in entangled doubt not only the veracity of the established narratives but also my own tales of A la Ronde. Lumbered with suitcases, the audience were invited to question the validity of our eccentric visit, the significance of the Parminters' Grand Tour, and the meaning of the contemporary site's 'rules' of touristic ambulation. However, the aim was not fragmentation, but to raise the possibility of an alternative, empirically well-founded historical narrative and make a principled resistance to official relativism.

*Cancelled Menagerie* and *A Father's Day Foray* are part of a series of performance-based walks and 'mis-guided tours' that I have played a role in creating since 1998, often for marginalised and disdained sites, sometimes made independently, very often with others (including Wrights & Sites, scenographer Anoushka Athique, visual artist Tony Weaver, singer Nicola Singh and performance artist Katie Etheridge). Often collaborative, invariably a *bricolage*, these walks and tours are an accumulation and disruption of influences, sometimes from the work of other artists (Mike Pearson, Kinga Araya and Simon Whitehead, for example), sometimes from the detailed responses of academics and artists (Fiona Wilkie, Dee Heddon (Heddon 2008: 102–11) and Emma Bush of Propeller, for example). Given a decentred intention and a 'community' of interest, it is perhaps not surprising that variations on both common dynamic patterns and shared aesthetics of space characterise these works.

This making geographical of the work, in concept and embodiment, drew on site-specific performance, theories of space and, perhaps most significantly, their complement: the spatialisation of theory. The museum and the heritage site have been key, and unexpectedly fruitful, loci for these entanglements; the relationship between performance, theory and museum has been more associative, more compromised and more reciprocal than expected.

It has been necessary to 're-read' heritage loci in the context of more general changes in social space: the weakening and shrinking of civil society and public space, the dominance of visuality and of relations driven by image rather than commodity, new economies of display and taxonomies of gaze

(virtual and mobile, cinematic and transported). In this 're-reading' the new-found fluidity of site-specific theatre (repeatedly 'newly found' by artists and critics since the late 1960s), freed – not always comfortably – from black boxes and fourth walls, encountered museums and heritage sites experiencing a similar liquifaction. Fiona Wilkie's 2000-01 survey of site-specific performance in Britain found 'Museums and Grounds' was one of the six key generic sites for this work (Wilkie 2002b: 144).

Performance empathises with the struggle of these sites to engage with sliding planes: of the presentness of super-valued visitors to whom they must market the past, and of the insubstantiality of that past (upon which they rely for the validation of their fabrics and artefacts) as it loses its value (aura, presence) in a 'contemporary social system . . . (which has) begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past . . . begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions' (Jameson 1997: 205). Fredric Jameson characterises the museum's dilemma; its necessary renewal repeats the conditions of its crisis: 'a vision of futurity . . . where the museum speaks of itself and not of the collection it aspires to represent' (Message 2006: 74). This is not unlike performance's own problems with liveness within a visual economy whose predilection is for digitised, exchangeable records of performance. There is an irony in the orbital dance of these sites and performances about each other.

The authority, orderliness, experimentation and near-monopoly on a multiplicity of experience that accrued to museums in the nineteenth century came when they sprang collection and display from the hands of entertainers. But the cultural currency of these values has declined. Multiple saturations by mass media, and more recently mass transportation, and the spectacularisation of everyday life have eroded the impact of the museum artefact, flattening the auratic presence of rocks, vases, arrowheads, coins and skins. Such reduced traces are attractive 'properties' for a performance seeking to escape from the spectacular aura of reanimated, mass-produced drama. Unfortunately, museums and heritage sites, forced to address a market demand for 'to order' experiences and competing with the fluid imagery of adventure tourism, documentary television and cgi, are largely passing this 'modest' performance by. The museum misses the terrain of theatricality in an under-confident, often brusque shift 'from Flemish tapestries and Churchill porcelain to the human stories . . . people want to hear about people from people' (Pearson 2008).

Beaten to the regenerating rigours of the freakshow by contemporary visual art, any return to theatricality has been wary and mostly disappointed in advance. For (the aforementioned irony) theatre has suffered as much as, though differently from the heritage site, at the hands of a Spectacle that has jilted collection and favours displays without pasts. ('The Spectacle' is a

change in social relations from ones mediated
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The dominant discourse in contemporar
and museum institutions now turn is a 'late
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change in social relations from ones mediated by commodities to ones mediated by images, famously articulated by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle*.)

The dominant discourse in contemporary theatricality to which heritage and museum institutions now turn is a 'late' mimetics. Originally a radical nineteenth-century embrace of the realist, scientifically serious, commodification of appearance (the idea that appearance has both use and exchange value in itself), this mimetics has been reanimated, devoid of psychology and seriousness, to satisfy the Spectacle's visual flatness (screens). When performed in a museum or heritage site, this behaviourist theatre competes directly over scarce expressive surface space with the very artefacts and historic fabrics that its performance is supposedly illuminating. Realism, even when conscientiously done, tends to *mask* the site, not only in the sense of obscuring it, but also in making it subservient to the immediate conditions of its re-presentation.

I played a culpable role in just such a masking in 1992 when I worked as a writer on a project for Theatr Clwyd Outreach: *Gwyr Y Goron / All The King's Men* at Chirk Castle, a play about events in Wales during the 'English' Civil War. Unfamiliar with questions of site-specificity or the spatiality of non-theatre-designated contexts, I wrote a series of studio-sized scenes for studio-sized spaces in the Castle, naturalistic in characterisation, imagistic in texture and structure. The parts of the Castle were used like substitute theatres, effectively functionalised to serve the performance. Material traces of the Castle surfaced through the blizzard of image and character at moments of contradiction, when seventeenth-century costume rubbed up against modern signage and explanatory texts for visitors. Rather than engage with these disjunctures, the performance feigned ignorance of them, anxious to forefront its production of its own inconsistent consistency over that of the Castle's. In its own terms the script of *Gwyr Y Goron / All The King's Men* is hyper-fabricated – historiographical research fragmented and rearranged to serve the image-pattern of a play – but rather than set that inconsistency in orbit about the inconsistencies of the Castle the play (its dramatic virtues and vices apart) masked the site in order to sustain its own 'logic'. In doing so it followed the dominant mode of theatrical interpretation of heritage sites, combining an anxiety about the potent deceptiveness of un-interpreted 'site itself' with a fear of not engaging the audience with its own means of production.

The work I make today offers no resolution to these problems. It is not a model for a better kind of interpretation. It is part of the same decline, operating by the weaving of shared losses, attempting to leave open and make visible the poignancy of the flattened artefact, and using the Spectacle's foregrounding of its relations as a new narrative content. It draws from elements of (longstanding) surreality in the museum and heritage site; accidental

and sedimentary juxtapositions of fragments celebrated by Robert Smithson: 'mixing the time states of "1984" and One Million B.C. . . . the "cave-man" and the "space-man" . . . under one roof . . . all "nature" . . . stuffed and interchangeable' (Smithson 1966a: 15), these juxtapositions not seen as aberrant, but as 'vital to the production of the museum . . . bring[ing] together specimens and artifacts never found in the same place at the same time and show[ing] relationships that cannot otherwise be seen' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 3). Smithson widens the gaps in these attempts on totality: 'the blanks and void regions or settings that we never look at' (Smithson 1996b: 44) foregrounding an intensifying tendency: – 'from Flemish tapestries' towards the diaphanous and the elusive in the very idea of the museum itself.

In contrast to the impositions upon Chirk Castle in 1992, in a 2008 'Twalk' performance at the Royal William Victualling Yard, as part of the Hidden City Festival in Plymouth (UK), I allowed the Yard to impose on me. I invited the audience to feel the chipped bone in my arm where I had fallen on its granite steps (making myself a relic of the Yard), gathered the audience around me so I could change into tropical naval shorts (as issued at the Yard in 1939 to my father's half-brother on his way, incongruously, to Scapa Flow and his death aboard the Royal Oak), carried beef for the cattle slaughtered in the Yard and consumed rum, beer and biscuits for the supplies once produced there. By portraying, as with my cream-suited 'guide' at A la Ronde, an unravelling, uncertain (and increasingly tipsy) performing self I could evoke a similar unpicking of the Yard's totality, articulating its sliding planes: its almost immediate redundancy upon opening in 1835, its unrealised re-designation as a death camp ('made up' by me from the evidence of a German invasion map from the Second World War and the huge Yard's escape unscathed from Plymouth's bombing) and the spectral revenant of its architect's anti-revolutionary grid in its recent 're-development'. Avoiding an 'organic' portrayal of either self or site, a text of accidents, misrepresentations, banalities, disappearances, failures, losses and removals set the grander narratives of an epic site (and my marginal part in them) in motion about both each other and the transparent theatricality of their representation.

Challenged by the self-reflexive 'being there' of the spectacularised mass audience, museums and heritage institutions have begun to realise the potential of the elusive, the absent and the everyday in both their sites and their audiences. Exhibitions of personal ephemera (spectral traces from the deluge of commodities), once ironical or hyper-empirical, are now part of a generalised democratisation. Trails, games, fictive investigations and treasure hunts are de rigeur. The use of ghosts as promotional tools is an acknowledgement, in a predominantly materialist and secular society, of the elusive and hyper-alienated condition of artefacts and properties in a visual economy. But this is not all about surrender to the Spectacle. For this thinness – fragile, depthless

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and anti-psychological – is exactly what mythogeographical performance aspires to: pretexts, possibilities and Deleuzian 'experiments' rather than authentic subtexts (none of which precludes the success of the 'experiments').

In Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* an apparently deluded character points to rings on a huge tree stump, saying: 'I was born here and died here'. In *The Delirious Museum* Calum Storrie creates a turbulent version of these temporal ripples in a spaghetti-like map that joins places with concepts and artists. Robert Smithson uses an Ad Reinhardt poster *A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala* (1955) as a disrupted map of 'an Art World . . . whose circumference is everywhere but whose center is nowhere' (Smithson 1996c: 88). In these models a multiplicity of differences is presented *as if* in the same naïve plane.

This is a potential model for a new kind of interpretation, where the point is not what lurks beneath or before or organises from above, but is the story of levels themselves, sliding about each other like the geometrical characters of Edwin A. Abbott's *Flatland*. The intention of such a model is not dramatic suspense, but sympathy, its style not only agitated and paranoid, but also depressive and reparative. The 'passages and intersections' (disruptions or information freeways) between these levels are opportunities for re-weaving social meaning from its fading traces; and it is in this sense – a sense of performative light-footedness – that an ambulatory performance has something to offer museums and trusts. Bruce Brown has described how a pre-Columbian culture in Peru, without recourse to writing, used woven and knotted strands, transported along 'superhighways . . . dead straight through the empire' as aide-mémoires (Brown 2000: 48). To contemporary culture's 'ability to externalise knowledge through the fragmentation, freezing, packaging and distribution of our memories' (Brown 2000: 51), Brown counterposes a trajectory model of assemblage and dissemination that first agitates and then repairs the fragmentations of memory. Brown is not alone. Countering the dominance of high paranoid style in critical theory, Eve Kosofsky Sedwick proposes a 'depressive position . . . from which it is possible in turn to use one's own resources to assemble or "repair" the murderous part-objects into something like a whole – though, I would emphasize, *not necessarily like any pre-existing whole*' (Sedgwick 2003: 128).

In this spatialised model of thinking and making, dislocated fragments of narrative thread are re-paired (in unexpected and shocking juxtapositions), deploying tactics from situationist praxis such as détournement or Brechtian disruptions, an 'uncovering of . . . conditions. . . brought about by processes being interrupted' (Benjamin 1973: 18). This repair is not a return to '*any pre-existing whole*', but a re-combining of what is already disparate, if often apparently homogenous (ideological), into threads of narrative in trajectory across Nazca-like theoretical 'planes'. Fiona Wilkie emphasises the porous

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quality of such weaving, 'I like the fact that weaving always leaves gaps, no matter how tight or loose it tries to be' (Wilkie 2001), using the Penelope myth to describe part of the weaving process as 'an unpicking of stable categories of memory' (Wilkie 2007: 11).

Referencing Francis Yates' description of an 'art of memory', an esoteric use of a built environment as a visual mnemonic, John Rajchman proposes a contemporary architectural equivalent to the use of planes or levels; what he calls a 'noniconic diagrammaticity', a 'freer space in which many unexpected things can happen at once, without overarching story . . . a kind of "nonmonumentalizable" time given diagrammatically through passages and intersections rather than iconically through symbols of the myths of holistic communities or already-given peoples' (Rajchman 1999: 153–4). In other words, interpretation is not simply a performed exegesis of the given, expert 'meaning' of a site, but rather the open, explicit, performative *making* of that meaning.

'Mythogeography' operates as an 'art of memory' for Rajchman's postmodern space of 'passages and intersections'. Unable to use such a volatile landscape as an esoteric filing system, the mythogeographer must weave multiple, fluid narrative lines that can respond to the instability of the postmodern plane. For all postmodern sites, however functional, are, by definition, anomalous: most rewardingly articulate when regarded as mysterious, and all as worthy of subjective, associative interpretation as such official oddities as Ferdinand Cheval's Palais Idéal at Hauterives, Bory Var at Székesfehérvár (a castle built in a suburban street during Professor Bory's summer holidays; Figure 11.2) or The Winchester Mystery House at San Jose, where Sarah Winchester, haunted by the angry spirits of Native American and Civil War victims of the products of her family's Rifle Company, kept a team of builders busy for fifty-four years, making daily adjustments to her mansion (guided through a ouija board): 'a mind twisting labyrinth . . . windows in the floor, a set of stairs run up to a blank ceiling and doors (that) open onto sheer drops . . . a cupboard door opens onto a space a half-inch deep . . . the entire place is a massive ghost trap . . . custom made to baffle and frustrate spirits' (Simmons 2003: 50). The role of the mythogeographical interpreter is to 'hunt' such ghosts of meaning that heritage sites seek to thwart, calling up their diaphanous histories and re-animating whatever contradictions we can still take responsibility for.

When silenced histories are re-voiced in heritage properties where narratives of gentility constitute a 'safe haven [for] a troubled history that glorifies colonial adventure and a repudiated anthropology of primitivism' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 136), such histories are more insistent and less resistible when they are part of a general rather than a limited destabilisation of meanings. Troublingly, though, for institutions of both conscience

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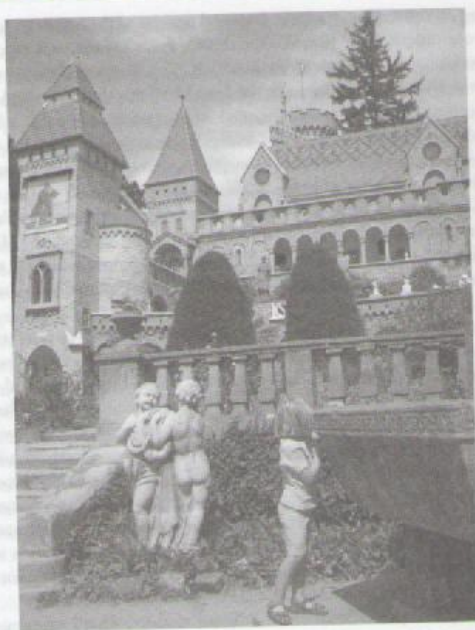
11.2  Bory Var, Székesfehérvár (Hungary)

*and* conservation, it is the dematerialisation of artefacts, buildings and
historiographies which is required for this general effect – a performance
effect – without the comfort of the mimetic conservation of appearance. What
institution would support such a trajectory toward a 'Delirious Museum . . .
aspir(ing) to the condition of the city', setting institutions in a '"semilattice"
of interconnections and overlaps' (Storrie 2006: 2)? Yet such a self-reflexive
de-materialisation has already been at least partly accommodated in official
relativism: 'information presented should be layered, using expert views
*woven* alongside more personal ones' (emphasis added) (National Trust
2004: 2).

*A Father's Day Foray* was perceived at A la Ronde not as a subversion,
but as *adding* elements not present to the existing interpretation: 'the walk
around the meadow with reference to the house, itself being (a) "grand tour",

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drawing on the shapes, symbols, flora and designs of the property, together with your unique style' (Carr-Griffin 2008). I was invited back to create a new performance at the property for 2008. The National Trust's regional curator welcomed the additionality, and explained that the Trust would value a new, even controversial, well-founded interpretation as 'a major addition' even when it constituted 'a subject foreign to most people' (Pearson 2008). There is an enthusiasm for varied viewpoints, accelerating a long-term drift away from authoritative objects towards diverse interpretations (the collection of artefacts replaced by the collection of narratives), made available to the more discerning visitors in information sheets. But, as also at RAMM, the enthusiasm does not extend as far as a fundamental re-telling of these sites as disturbed and disturbing; except as 'commercially' (Pearson 2008) haunted houses, a drained gothic.

The 'and and and' of the institution is a hierarchical one, even in a democratised postmodern form in which hierarchy is now laid on its side, seductively appearing as if a fragmentation across a plane rather than an ordered cross-section. Organisations of conservation, still reproducing bounded identities (national or local) are necessarily cautious and normalising, but in new ways: as 'nuanced cultural institutions with practices that are interdisciplinary, multipurpose, collaborative and cross-cultural . . . within complex processes of decolonization and the multiculturalism that is privileged in many cases by the dominant state' (Message 2006: 201). What suffers in such a 'machine' is historiography's encounter with historical extremes; an encounter which is subjected to a disempowering (and paradoxical) homogenisation and fragmentation within an equalised diversity of accounts.

Rather than a professional or institutional strategy, what I am proposing here is something more like an orrery of ideas and practices, a praxis for a 'guerilla' interpretation, as open to use by a museum visitor as an artist or a heritage professional, a toolkit of aide-mémoires, as much a work of imagination as dramaturgy, a re-gearing to overlapping 'fields' (including 'power-geometry': how 'different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to . . . flows and interconnections' (Massey 1994: 149)), even the idealisation of specific environments as an art of perception.

As eschatology has disappeared at A la Ronde (assuming it was ever there) and is unlikely to return soon as anything more than an additional viewpoint, will there be a similar vanishing at the refurbished RAMM? Or will there be space to engage with extreme elements of its Victorian assemblage, such as the big game hunting and racist fiction of C.V.A. Peel, collector of many of the museum's animal specimens including the iconic 'Gerald the Giraffe'? Will accounts of the murderous fantasies of Peel's colonialist 'utopia' *The Ideal Island* be inscribed in the new exhibits? Or, like the violent drama of animal

tableaux, and antisemitic eschatology at silenced?'

Discussion with RAMM has been con hand, there is a willingness to engage wi lery is [to be] devoted to the early colle the other hand, the intense details and e as 'research material [that] is available an object choices and approach' with public ited to 'a hundred or so words' (Parsons the Natural History Collection 'to displa other collections' could generate heady ju the museum's escape from itself, de-narr in fragmentation.

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tableaux, and antisemitic eschatology at A la Ronde, will they be muted or silenced?'

Discussion with RAMM has been comforting and worrying. On the one hand, there is a willingness to engage with the history of collection: 'A gallery is [to be] devoted to the early collectors like Peel' (Parsons 2008). On the other hand, the intense details and excesses in Peel's story may languish as 'research material [that] is available and informs our choices in storylines, object choices and approach' with public access on a character like Peel limited to 'a hundred or so words' (Parsons 2008). The decision to re-distribute the Natural History Collection 'to display natural history material alongside other collections' could generate heady juxtapositions, but it could also signal the museum's escape from itself, de-narrating and homogenising its artefacts in fragmentation.

In the face of official relativism, Keith S. Thompson proposes that 'museums and their collections should always serve big ideas . . . [N]ow there are as many visions as there are treasures' (Thomson 2002: 103–4). The model of mythogeographical critical practice and performance strategy, however, sets that multiplicity of visions in motion relative to each other, subjecting their relations to a spatialised criticism, resisting both one 'big idea' and multiplicitous relativism, aiming to generate a flattened aesthetic space in which to entertain the possibility of virulent and extreme narratives, even in the histories of collection and display.

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# 'Gardens always mean something else': turning knotty performance and paranoid research on their head at A la Ronde
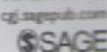
**Phil Smith**
University of Plymouth, UK

Through the prism of A la Ronde (near Exmouth, UK) – an 18th century property owned by a leading UK conservation body, the National Trust – I have been exploring the possibilities of combining paranoid and recuperative approaches to a site of performance. This work of knotting and entanglement occurs within overlapping contexts, including a programme of my own performative interventions in touristic and heritage sites (performed to mixed audiences of those with an interest in interventional ambulatory performance and general visitors to these sites) and a particular development of the situationist practices of dérive and détournement that emphasizes resistance to the commercial and bureaucratic homogenization of space and celebrates the multiple meanings of specific sites ('mythogeography').

## Site

A la Ronde consists of a late 18th century house, smaller outbuildings and gardens. The house is 16 sided on the outside, eight-sided inside. The gardens are dominated by a large meadow with mature trees. There is an annexe to the site; a chapel complex called 'Point In View'.

I have made three ambulatory performances (détourning the conventions of the guided tour) at A la Ronde: *Foray* (2007), *A Man About The House* (2008) and *Gardens Always Mean Something Else* (2009). In the first I examined some unexpectedly millenarian aspects to the site's design[1] and in the second addressed sexual scandal and radical theology through the only male occupancy of the house. The third performance, made in collaboration with Rakeen Silawi and Francesca Falchi-Pereira, is the destination of this article and, like the first two performances, deployed fragments of theatricality, visual performance, narration and ironical use of the conventions of guiding, visitor ambulation and address.

A la Ronde was built for (and possibly designed by) two cousins, Jane and Mary Parminter. Their wealth, inherited from Jane's father, John Parminter, came from wine trading and from glass and concrete factories in Lisbon. In 1785 Jane and Mary began a decade-long Grand Tour across

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**Figure 1.** Audience and performers pass on the boundary path at A la Ronde during 'Gardens Always Mean Something Else' (2009)

an increasingly revolutionary Europe, returning with souvenirs for the cabinets of curiosities in their new home.

The Parminter cousins deployed decorative skills, working long hours to create intricate designs for the many rooms of A la Ronde, using discarded and found objects: feathers, sand, seaweed, glass, shards of china, mirrors, trinkets and shells. Through each day the cousins followed the sunlight, moving around the outer rooms; this possibly explains the property's name. For their central, defining, octagonal room they created a watery green, seaweed-like wallpaper design.

The gardens at A la Ronde are enigmatic. Surrounded by mature trees, the impression is of an enclosed meadow. However, there are clues to a more complex design: a portion of wall, an empty plinth, an inaccessible plot.

My invitation from the National Trust to make a third performance came with a copy of the 1995 survey of the gardens for the Trust made by landscape historian Fridy Duterloo.[2] In this Duterloo describes the gardens as consisting of two historic layers followed by an erosion.

The first layer is the original late 18th century design: then meadow mostly as now, but with shorter orchard trees permitting an unbroken view to Haldon Hills and Channel waters at the River Exe's mouth, sweeping and impressive in a moderate Devonian way with sandstone cliffs and bleak, shrubby flint-topped hills.

Duterloo describes this landscaping as 'picturesque', the daunting sublime mediated by its framing in the beauty of the garden, a ha-ha providing the unhindered view. This is consistent with what we know of the Parminter cousins' preference for natural and picturesque over formal. In an

**Figure 2.** Phil Smith with tour group at the ha-ha (2009)

attenuated Grand Tour diary, Mary remarks of cascades in gardens at St Cloud: 'as a piece of art [it] is much to be admired but I had rather see a natural stream dripp from a natural rock in its own wild meandering gushings'.[3]

Key parts of the first layer are now missing. The orchards – allusive to the Garden of Eden – are gone, as are peripheral elements: two urns, up to four obelisks, a bee garden with specimen trees (fig, walnut, mulberry), a walled kitchen garden with hothouses and orangery and much of the perimeter path designed to lead visitors around the exotic periphery of the property.

Duterloo depicts the Parminter cousins as passive reproducers of cultural and local fashions. But there is something else at A la Ronde: a contradictory and troubled production of ornament that is resistant to categorization, more intensely eccentric than a peculiar domesticity. It is this troubledness which I have sought to articulate *against* an official narrative of privileged women creating an internalized world and in sympathy *with* some parts of a feminist interpretation of the property as a produced space of female independence, adding to that a sense of what has been absented as part of the production of that space.

## Paranoid enquiry

Twentieth century accounts of the Parminter cousins favour a dreamy or domesticated eccentricity. One National Trust website[4] describes the cousins setting up a '*ménage à deux* . . . in fairly obvious emulation of the more famous Ladies of Llangollen', while cultural historian Susan Pearce describes the cousins' travels 'transmuted . . . into the inwardness of the A la Ronde vision'[5] using inexpensive and market-resistant materials to 'transform it from the outside to the inside of their lives by affective effort that turns it into a valued, emotion-carrying category signifying shared

memories and the construction of home.'[6] These narratives of domesticity I subjected to a low-level paranoid research method I have described in some detail in *Mythogeography*.[7]

Such paranoid enquiry involves a default 'over-explaining' of things; Occam's Razor in reverse. Organization, conspiracy, anticipation, intention, systematic iconography and tendentiousness are assumed to be present until proven absent. Accident, coincidence, fashion, ideology, *Real* and *langue* are presumed absent or inoperative unless proven otherwise. It is a means to reignite empirical research where other discourses have privileged fragmentation and structuralized non-intention. It also fuels a 'performance' that inherently privileges narrative, agency, development, super-objectives and character.

Most visitors to A la Ronde do not contextualize the house and gardens as parts of the larger complex that includes chapel, manse, schoolroom and almshouses (all added under the cousins' guidance around 1810). Originally connected by a footpath to the main house, these were initially dedicated to the housing and Christian education of converted Jewesses and their children. This missionary purpose is echoed in the eight-sided dome topping the main house's central room. Oswald Reichel (a relative of the Parminter cousins and only male owner of the house) reports the family tradition that this dome was modelled after the octagonal basilica of the Church of San Vitale at Ravenna, visited by the cousins. Nicole Pohl, pointing to the baptistery under San Vitale's basilica, suggests that A la Ronde was 'not only their own living quarter but also the chief visual focus of a project which was devised for conversion and hence baptism',[8] posing a more complex narrative to the National Trust's dominant (domestic) one.

San Vitale celebrates Emperor Justinian I, who passed laws forcing Jews to convert to Christianity on pain of death. According to Parminter tradition, the oaks in A la Ronde's meadow are only to be cut down for making boats returning converted Jews to Palestine. In some Christian traditions this return is a requirement for the 'end times'. So, at least some part of the first layer at A la Ronde is a machine for expediting the end of the world. This was the theme of my first performance.

The second performance, *A Man About The House* with Simon Persighetti, continued the paranoid re-telling of the site, addressing the only man to live there; a Christian Socialist priest and church geo-historian, Reverend Oswald Reichel, who, the researches of Trevor Adams (a National Trust volunteer) revealed, arrived at A la Ronde under a cloud of sexual scandal. In Susan Pearce's account, Reichel's occupation was antipathetic to the cousins' designs – he 'did his best to turn it into a normal later-19th-century gentleman's residence'.[9] I would suggest that Reichel's motives, at least in respect of the gardens, were less divergent.

Reichel was responsible for Fridy Duterloo's 'second layer', which mostly follows the Parminter design. Reichel's addition of a new orchard is sympathetic. However, he modernizes the house, changing thatch to tile and removing some intricate constructions in the shell gallery, though retaining most of the cousins' decorative work.

One addition, though, is dramatic and performative. Reichel darkens the house's entrance hall, making a shadowy passage to the tall, watery central room, thus emphasizing the light at the top of the room and its shell decor. Outside the main entrance he plants what is later called a 'wild walk', a serpentine pebble path enclosed by large shrubs, small trees and a rockery. Evident from the remains of the rockery, from photographic evidence and from dotted outlines that mark the layout of trees and shrubs on two subsequent maps, this was a walk of twists, turns and restricted views that then opens out on to the views of the original picturesque design. Reichel reinforces outside what the Parminters intended inside, which Susan Pearce describes as: 'preventing any clear line of sight, so creating senses of mystery and surprise'.[10]

Reichel retained the outer band of exotic ornaments, possibly adding an obelisk; seemingly finding common cause with orchards and kitchen garden, they perhaps chiming with his translations

of Epicurean philosophy.[11] From the gardens Reichel regularly took fruit and vegetables for distribution to the poor of St Thomas, Exeter (where he sat on the Board of Guardians). So, Reichel maintains the gardens, while darkening their connection to the house, pointing to something common but less benign, temporarily obscuring the picturesque view as if to suggest that something is absented or suppressed by the property.

In the early 20th century a period of erosion begins. Reichel's widow builds a home which severs the main house from the chapel complex. Then, an impoverished female line is forced to sell off the periphery, surrendering the exotic ornaments, much of the introductory path, the orchards and the kitchen garden: the ideal, Eden-like, symbolic qualities of the site are radically diminished.

While Fridy Duterloo's survey highlights the losses, the National Trust's literature and displays do far less to acknowledge them. The remaining plinth, a fragment of kitchen garden wall and a much changed bee garden are all obscured or inaccessible to visitors. The partiality of today's garden is not clearly explained. Loss is assumed, as if it has always been inscribed on A la Ronde.

This apparent indifference to absence makes questionable Duterloo's comforting model of 'layers', which promises that something essential, though invisible, is buried, that what remains is recoverable and protected, preserved by conservation and inaction within a discourse of 'heritage'.

## Restorative depression

At A la Ronde, low-level paranoia has served me well in helping to uncover alternative, buried, covert narratives (and turning up part of an obelisk in the gardener's shed), adding complexity to sometimes simplistic official narratives and disturbing 'certainties': '[t]he picture that we hung on the wall four years ago . . . goes from being (literally and metaphorically) a part of the furniture to a strange and puzzling addition to our environment. Why is it there?'[12] Over-explanation has led me to narratives of apocalypse, intolerance, disguise, sensuality and private idealism. But in the face of what was genuinely and influentially *not there*, resonant by virtue of its absence, inexpressible and dwelling in the 'beside-itself' of the Lacanian Real, an unspeakable jouissance that escapes symbolization, I found the paranoid approach inadequate. My usual processes of research and performance-making had to be turned on their heads. Where a paranoid enquiry had been mediated by the re-assembling involved in making a dispersive performance, setting newly revealed layers among diverse speakings (autobiographical, tangential, associational and allusive), in the case of *Gardens Always Mean Something Else*, it was necessary to *begin* from such a 'restorative depression', employing mythogeographical performativity *as the means of enquiry*.

Like some Lacanian psychoanalyst seeking a symbolization for a part of the Real, and following Reichel's Epicurus in privileging the senses as the test of truth (with 'view' as the privileged sensing of this site), I was led to multiple 'points of view' and multiple places of seeing within the A la Ronde complex. First, to a raised grass area, above the ha-ha, dismissed by Duterloo as an 'earthen hill'; but identified to me by the present gardener as a 'Regency viewing platform'.

Then to 'Point In View'; the name alluding not only to the sandstone point at the mouth of the estuary but also to the approaching Kingdom of God. Finally, to that green central room, wallpaper symbolizing an underwater scene, leading the eye through abstracted seaweed to a luminescent gallery of shells.

By thinking sideways, weaving rather than uncovering, doing what the performances do (jumping from one subject to another while entangling their traces, checking conspiracy against

**Figure 3.** Instruments of seeing on the viewing platform (2009)

the routes of its dispersal and assuming any connection to be a significant one) and by bringing forward the embodiment of performance into the research process,[13] I began again with 'things'. I physically handled the materials of the women's labour, re-thinking their proscription of men as a form of independence constituted by absenting – sand, seaweed, shells, feathers, lime, glass, mirrors . . . in what sense were these the materials of proscription, of something unspeakable? What if the Parminter cousins' industry was not an eccentric turning-inwards, but a dispersal of some already absent thing?

A la Ronde was once crammed with instruments of seeing. Mary Parminter's will lists 'Telescope Microscope Reflector Magnifying Glass . . . Diagonal Machine and Camera Obscura'. If looking was important, was there significance in what Point in View and the viewing platform looked to? On re-visiting them, I realized that their focus is not to the Haldon Hills, but to the meeting of river and sea; this led me back to the octagonal room at the centre of the house, which draws the visitor's eyes upwards to a view not unlike looking up to the surface through seawater. If the end of the world was coming, A la Ronde seemed to suggest it would be by Deluge, for which even the oaks must come down, a flood that might scatter sea shells, seaweed and sand into even the most select of homes . . .

The next connection was back to something turned up early on in my research and put aside as an isolated and functional detail. This 'return' represented a change of method: from one in which a low-level paranoid enquiry predominated to one in which a 'depressive' weaving, assembling or re-making of alternative meanings and multiple viewpoints for those sites was equally in play. For this, I had drawn upon Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's criticisms of 'paranoid style' and her counter-proposals for a depressive method that could change the products of low level paranoia into something more than a reproduction of itself.[14] The processes of dis-assemblage and re-assemblage

during the making of the various A la Ronde performances had reached a point where the depressive/'healing' interweaving was sufficient to become part of an intervention in, or subversion of, a wider public discourse about the A la Ronde property.

It is characteristic of a depressive, restorative interweaving that elements from the very beginning of a process return, rather as the first parts of a performance are later folded back into its narrative. The 'something' that returned was a tsunami.

## Performance research

John Parminter's factories were in Lisbon. In 1755, a savage earthquake followed by a tsunami levelled the city. The Parminters' wealth was simultaneously lost and renewed. Their glass factory was destroyed, but by switching production to the quick-setting concrete used in Lisbon's reconstruction, profits returned.

Engravings of the aftermath of cataclysm at Lisbon show apocalyptic scenes of ruin, looting, executions. This horror loops through time and folds back into A la Ronde as the 'ruined' materials of the cousins' industry, seaweed and shells swept up by tidal waves, heaped curiosities like miniature earthquake sites, symbols of extinct civilizations (Egyptian obelisks, Piranesi prints of Rome's ruins), broken mirrors (shattered glass factory), sand and lime (concrete) and the feather friezes circling a single, model bird, twig in beak, bringing promise of a new land – as to Noah on the Deluge – that, today as in the Parminters' time, is suspended in the middle of the octagonal room.
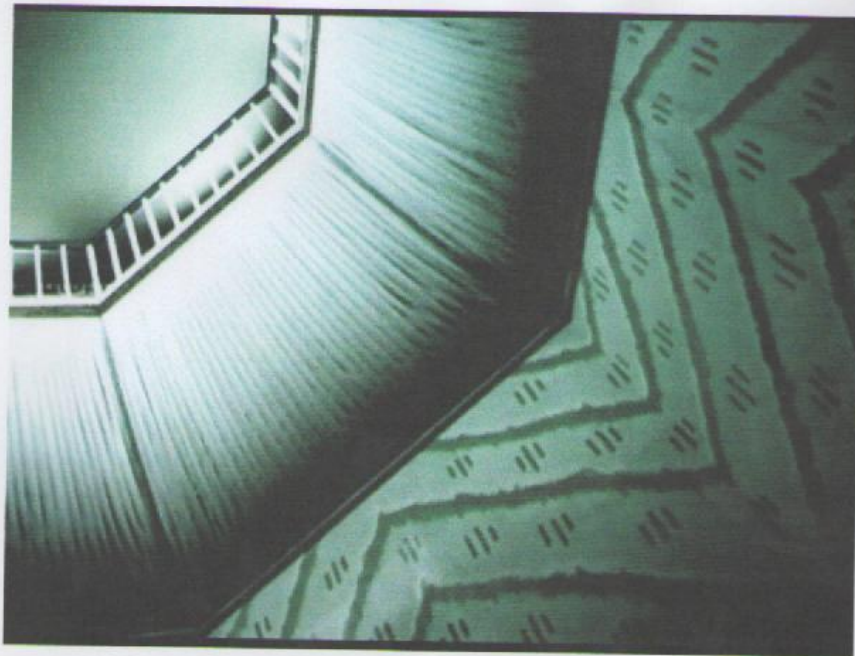


**Figure 4.** The central, octagonal room at A la Ronde, with seaweed wallpaper

**Figure 5.** On the viewing platform at A la Ronde (2009)

Not only in all these, but also in an ideological folding back. For the concept of a Sublime (immersion in impassive wild nature and relentless apocalypse), mediated at A la Ronde by the cousins' picturesque designs and made explicit again by Reichel's darkening, had been theorized by Immanuel Kant when responding directly to the cataclysm at Lisbon in three texts of 1756 (the same year as Burke's *On The Sublime and Beautiful* ). The trauma of unspeakable, meaningless destruction and resurrection – all silenced and beside-itself – returns as landscape theory to A la Ronde, recruited to an absent Real – boundless, and yet withstandable, a 'nature considered in an aesthetic judgment as might that has no dominion over us',[15] a fearfulness 'without [us] being afraid *of* it'[16] – a theory, like Parminter's glass factory, able to reconstitute itself from its fragments in the face of the unspeakable.

In *Gardens Always Mean Something Else* we attempted to provide the materials for the audience to rediscover this Sublime through their own depressive interweaving: 'an anxiety-mitigating achievement . . . from which it is possible to use one's own resources to assemble or 'repair' . . . assembled to one's own specifications, the more satisfying object is available both to be identified with and to offer one nourishment and comfort'.[17] This was done through fragmentary storytelling (through the sketched persona of a male gardener – referencing my own unskilled labour as a council grasscutter – far removed from any portrayal of the Parminters), through the audience's physical immersion in the components of the performance's 'thesis' (they ate exotic fruits at the remnant of kitchen garden wall, drank Portuguese wine, were left to experience on their own a walk through an equivalent to the 'wild walk'), and through a vocabulary of symbols paraded on the periphery of the meadow (bird, mirror, lime and sand, labour, looking). Towards the conclusion of the performance, having heard the narrative of the twin trajectories of Sublime and the *work* of the Parminters, the audience were invited to step into the house for the first time, were taken through the dark hall

to the central 'watery' room to look up for just a few moments. Returned quickly to the entrance they were bid goodbye by 'the gardener' so that, alone, each of them in turn could walk the winding route of the no-longer-existing 'wild walk', imagine the tension of the terror-sublime and then, at best, experience something of its mediation in what remains of the picturesque vista.

## Exclusion

The Parminter cousins were very unusual 'workers'; among other privileges, the motor of their production was its product: independence, the creation of a place of bounded freedom made by their own reparative, non-alienated labour. The very fabric of this endeavour *was* fabric; in fabrication and manufacture, violent forces of nature, production and exploitation were mediated. Bourgeois cousins laboured as skilled workers in a recuperative industry, set among orchards (Eden without Adam) and a hay meadow with two cows and 14 sheep (possibly inspired by the cousins' visit to the *ferme ornée* of Marie Antionette at Versailles), the husbandry of a utopian spinsterhood.

In my first two research processes at A la Ronde, a paranoid method had exposed a machine for a unified Kingdom of God, and then a religion of the people, a Christian Socialism. But to find the inexpressible of A la Ronde, it had been necessary to take a more embodied, more knotty and knotting approach; not only putting *things* (the cousins' materials) together, but also *trajectories* (sight, tsunami, profits).

In 1991 A la Ronde and what remains of the gardens were acquired by the National Trust. Today, administered by a tiny handful of professionals, it is mostly reliant on its volunteer invigilators, cleaners, gardeners, researchers and archivists, and visited by a predominantly middle-class clientele; it represents a kind of 'socialism without workers', an ideal, utopian space with a missing Real. Still absent from A la Ronde is any explicit recognition of drowned Lisbon and its reparative cement factory workers.

## Funding

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## Biographical note

Phil Smith is a writer, performer, researcher and teacher, specializing in making performances based on walking. Author of *Mythogeography* (Triarchy Press, 2010) and co-author of both *The Hidden City Festival Handbook* (University of Plymouth Press, 2010) and *Walking, Writing and Performance* (Intellect, 2009). He is company dramaturg and a founding member (1981) of TNT Theatre (Munich) and a core member of Wrights & Sites (Exeter, UK). He is at present (2011) conducting research into performative interventions in touristic and heritage spaces and the dispersal of their techniques at the University of Plymouth. He has been a visiting lecturer at Dartington College of Arts, University of Exeter, University of Winchester and University of Plymouth.

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# Mythogeography works: performing multiplicity on Queen Street

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This paper considers the exploration of, and performance on, a single street in Exeter, UK, as guided by an idea of 'mythogeography' and a determination to address a place as a multiplicity of meanings, objects, accretions, rhythms and exceptions. It explores the virtues of and obstacles facing a performance made 'on the hoof' in both senses – ambulatory and improvisatory. It draws on the idea of 'mythogeography' originated in the work of Wrights & Sites, sprung from a growing awareness of how the multiple meanings of certain sites, particularly those designated as 'heritage' or 'touristic', are 'closed down' and an aspiration to represent multiple and diverse meanings resistant to such a monocular politics of place. Contrasted with previously 'exemplary' work, enacting only the *possibilities* that a mythogeographical approach to place and space might offer, the paper explores how far a performative 'mis-guided tour' (titled in publicity *A Tour of Sardine Street*) was able to generate a work of 'realised' geography applicable to the street and the city as an analysis as well as an aesthetic provocation.

For 30 months (late 2007 to mid-2010) Simon Persighetti and myself repeatedly walked Queen Street in Exeter, UK. Mostly we walked together, meeting people, observing events both quotidian and extraordinary, and triggering encounters. We explored the street as customers, researchers, trespassers and sometimes as guests; visiting eighteenth-century prison cells under the Rougemont Hotel at the invitation of kitchen staff, attending an impromptu Bach concert in the music shop.

The depth, detail and extent of our immersion in this street have been guided from the start by an idea of 'mythogeography' and an intention to walk in procession; a determination to address a place as a multiplicity of meanings, objects, accretions, rhythms and exceptions and a desire to make performance 'on the hoof' in both senses – ambulatory and improvisatory.

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The idea of 'mythogeography' originated in the work of Wrights & Sites (of which Simon Persighetti and I have been core members since 1997) while making a season of site-specific theatre performances on Exeter's 'historic Quay' (*The Quay Thing*, 1998). It sprang from a growing awareness of how the multiple meanings of certain sites, particularly those designated as 'heritage' or 'touristic', were 'closed down'. The aspiration to represent multiple and diverse meanings resistant to such a monocular politics of place was the purchase from which our work on Queen Street pushed off.

This was not the first such project. Since 1998 we have created performances and other productions (maps, guidebooks, films, exhibitions) both separately and together and as members of Wrights & Sites, with the same starting point. What is different about the project on Queen Street (*Relics and Processions*) is where it has led. Previously such works have been 'exemplary', enacting the *possibilities* that a mythogeographical approach to place and space might offer and demonstrating how such an approach *could* provoke and set in motion multiplicitous meanings (with the intention that others become explorers–researchers–performers). On Queen Street, however, the culmination of the project, which is a performative 'mis-guided tour' (titled in publicity *A Tour of Sardine Street*), the core of which is repeatable and re-stageable with minimal preparation, is a work of 'realised' geography; not in the sense that it presents any reductive or final truth about Queen Street or about Exeter, but that the meanings that it does set in motion can be taken from the work and applied to the street and the city as an analysis as well as an aesthetic provocation.

This change is a qualitative result of quantitative action. We have not developed any new technique nor practised any approach qualitatively different from that of previous projects. However, by repeatedly practising the same techniques over and over, informed by the same mythogeographical approach, the result has been qualitatively different: the multiplicity of meanings and their movements about each other, re-triggered on each tour-performance, have reached a sufficiently coherent density to conjure a ghostly narrative; an openly presented 'limited myth' of the street and the city.

### Research

Our approach has been to participate in the life of the street. We have observed, we have made field notes, but more importantly we have

gathered materials by making a performance *from the very start of the project*. By introducing provisional costumes and props from the beginning – insignia, ceremonial sticks, red and white striped specimen boxes, a black 'relics case' with long handles – our exploring of the street (which we characterised as a kind of progress or procession) and our encounters with passers-by, residents and retailers have always been improvised and performative. One morning our 'progress' coincided with the locking of the Museum's front doors for three years of refurbishment, so we read to the Museum's director an account (brought, fortuitously, by Simon as research material) of the shooting of the African elephant on display in the Museum. 'Is that *our* Peel?' she asked of the hunter's account. This narrative now features in our final performance.

By working over more than two years we have recorded, been subject to and sometimes precipitated changes. Certain erosions have accelerated: personalised signage has disappeared, eccentric window displays have been replaced and we have become aware of the severe depredation on the street's most significant monument, the Miles Clock Tower. But this is not a 'one-way street': we have witnessed new personalities and forces emerge. At the Dinosaur Café the proprietors' daughter has become a place-defining personality, a *Big Issue* seller has established a pitch near the station where he tells the same story (with occasional updates) to each purchaser; his narrative now partly characterises that part of the street.

Part of our research has been to set ourselves at the mercy of these changes. By making the performance over more than two years we have found it necessary to constantly change routes, add new details, remove sections, deepen focus (as when the removal of shop fittings revealed a previously hidden railway ticket office) and to allow incongruities to remain when stranded by the disappearance of signs.

We have often improvised some response to a detail found or an atmosphere perceived. Deploying the tactic of 'actor as signpost' in these encounters, we turn the performance back on the site (see Smith 2009a). During exchanges with passers-by or occasional guests we have received stories, songs and suggestions which have often folded back into the performed-research: one man associated us with a 'Ghost Tour' run by the city's Red Coat Guides and recounted his experience of being pursued along Queen Street by a poltergeist. At 'Jenniflower' we began to understand and celebrate florists as key servicers of the city's rituals.

## Beyond multiplicity

Our performative investigations, wed to a sensitivity to the street's unintended ironies, generated multiplicitous narratives that we amassed and performed. Each walk of the street became a provisional 'misguided tour', often foundering as we became immersed in a particular spot or distracted by a new tangent.

For some time we had a provisional 'tour' that began at the Dinosaur Café at the northern end of the street and would founder just over halfway near the Rougemont Hotel. This provisional tour was sustained by the variety of ways in which we 'told' the street: showed hidden spaces, enacted naming rituals, turned pavements into bookshelves and hopscotch patterns, pointed out machine gun posts and revealed the military uses of the street; together with our guests we drank Carling Special Brew and licked salt, circumambulated the Miles Clock Tower and ran through traffic.

But when it came to sustaining a two-hour performance covering the length of Queen Street, we turned to a structural dramaturgy borrowed from theatre practice. Simply piling up multiplicities had a paradoxical effect: the differences were *united* by their shared fragmentary quality. Difference became monotonous. In order to *sustain* multiplicity rather than repetitive variety we settled on a dramaturgical structure that kept the multiple 'stories' of the street in motion while proposing a diaphanous 'myth' of the street; a symbolic representation *of the particular qualities of the developing motion* of those multiplicities.

## Mythogeography

Since 1998 'mythogeography' has developed (see Smith 2010) as a paranoid, exploratory, detective-like approach to space and place, deploying Tim Ingold's model of hermetic-like excavation of ever-finer layers of geographical texture (see Ingold 1993). It has prioritised anomalies and 'in-betweeness', working in gaps, extolling 'voids', and constructing general ideas from the 'and and and' of the accumulation and assemblage of disparate parts (see Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 554–6).

But it has also given attention to patterns, chiming with Roger Penrose's assertion that 'the mathematics are out there', assuming that such patterns are an emergent meaning in themselves (see Cartwright et al. 2000). Part of that attention to patterns has been a careful positioning in respect of 'myth', attempting to use 'limited myth'; mythic-like accounts which are capable of symbolically representing

patterns (of power, of physical forces, of cultural paradigms) but are rendered questionable by their popular-cultural exploitation, blatant fiction or absurdity and unresolved contradictions.

The parts of the 'limited myth' that we took and reconstructed for the Queen Street performances represented contradictory narratives of the street arising from our repeated physical explorations and our accessing of various local history resources. What emerged was a recent (200-year) narrative of modernity that showed signs of a loss of confidence in itself and even self-negation.

We turned off from the street. Our explorations took a tangent and we stuck to it. In literal terms, we turned left from Queen Street towards Gandy Street, from a modernist, neo-classical and enlightenment narrative of law, transport and rational study to a narrow, medieval and gothic trajectory. From the ironies of modernism – of commandos practising *parcours* and middle-class flight from inner-city cholera – we plunged into the vigorous anti-modernisms of C.V.A. Peel and Joanna Southcott, enacting their nightmarish, fictional, and, thankfully and demonstrably, ineffective 'marriage'.

To understand this choice I must step sideways; to give an account of the understandings of the city and of Queen Street that guided us to our choice of 'limited myth'.

## Exeter

Exeter is one of two cities in the county of Devon. While the other, Plymouth, is larger and more economically significant, Exeter is the county town. This is a residue of Exeter's political, ecclesiastical and administrative status from the medieval period to the Industrial Revolution, when trade and the woollen industry made Exeter the fourth most economically significant city in the UK.

Distant from sources of key fuels, Exeter missed out on nineteenth-century industrial expansion and 'declined' into a provincial conservatism that was comfortable for its better off, horrific for its poor. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the erection of permanent markets, meeting halls and a museum. The city sustained an independent Institution of autodidacts, founded a university and built a public theatre. Economically, it is now dominated by service, administration, tourism and retail industries. For those with resources, Exeter continues to be a comfortable place to live with relatively low levels of crime. The city is unusually 'mono-cultural', the Office for National Statistics' 2005 estimates record a 97.5% white population (though subjective

observation suggests that this has shifted significantly in the last five years).

While Exeter's municipal authorities like to portray the city as one of heritage and culture, many significant properties and features have been destroyed or damaged during the redevelopments of the last century. Despite a large community of artists and performers, there is little sense of their participation in the city's public life: there is no equivalent to the 'identity'-role played by culture in cities like Manchester, Liverpool or Bristol. The vibrant street performances and performativities (both aesthetic and quotidian) of the nineteenth century disappeared in circumstances I have described elsewhere:

> [P]erformative, active space was almost entirely shut down and in its place there was a democratisation and redistribution of closed space — euphemistic, rational, secure, conspiratorial — social discipline was no longer enacted as a public event, but privatised. This de-popularisation and hollowing out of performance forms, rituals and spaces was driven by longer rhythms of economic disappointment as well as shorter-term ruling class inhibitions. This combination undermined confident, progressive action at civic level, but at the same time rendered its conservatism weak; generating not quite a cultural tabula rasa, but rather ... a broken and fragmentary legacy of marginalised and undervalued local history, and older, more translucent, traditions. (Smith 2004, 109–10)

## Queen Street

Queen Street's relation to the rest of Exeter is multi-faceted. It is a long, straight road that runs from an arterial junction on the northern side of the city to a T junction with the city's High Street. Many people assume it is Roman, but it is a nineteenth-century fabrication, and anyone stepping a little way from the street will see that it has been raised up and underpinned. At its halfway mark it straddles the Longbrook Valley (mostly hidden from the street itself) to which a railway line and the culverting of its Longbrook stream have given the appearance of an artificial cutting.

The southern part of Queen Street was made possible by the demolition of inns, alleys and part of the city wall. Here the façade and arcade of a neo-classical nineteenth-century market sit uncomfortably beside the 1970s modernism of Harlequin and Guildhall shopping centres. Today, there is an atmosphere of hollowness at this end of the street as many of the older buildings have lost their original functions (post office, legal chambers, art college). Their anachronistic ornamental symbols hover uneasily over modern retail outlets.

While the adjacent High Street is used for occasional public demonstrations – parades to mark Exeter City Football Club's promotions, anti-war demonstrations, the traditional Lamas Glove ceremony, Queen Street, despite a comparable footfall and generous pavements, sees none of this. In more than two years of the *Relics and Processions* project we recorded only one comparable 'public event': a book signing in W.H. Smith.

In one sense the street has been privatised through the erosion of its public spaces. Where once there were street markets, public meetings at Victoria Hall, public executions, travelling exhibitions (exotic and educational), public lectures, contingents of soldiers processing to and from the Central Station, concerts, discrete but overt prostitution and charity balls, most of this public activity (with the exception of live music at The Angel public house and The Cavern club) has either ceased, moved elsewhere or become statised.

Resistant to a simple 'privatisation' reading, however, are the traces of a more public Queen Street: the flagpole outside the Rougemont Hotel is popularly believed to mark the site of a gibbet. The outer 'skin' of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum is a giant public teaching aid, a conceptual 'map' of the Permian red sandstone, breccias and volcanic rocks of the local geology. These traces of performativity have been reinforced recently by an accelerating 'socialisation' of the street, with new coffee shops opening and established ones increasing their profile by moving their tables on to the pavements.

While it might be easy to narrate a transition to a post-modern street – fragmentation, absence of public dramaturgy, juxtapositions without hierarchy – there is an equally powerful parallel narrative. At about the halfway mark, the large multi-storey modernist buildings of the northern part of the street (the international-style National House, the large telecom exchange) change to a run of neo-classical buildings, including the Central Station, the Rougemont Hotel, a former legal chambers decorated with the carved heads of various classical philosophers and the market façade. This sequence is punctured by the anomalous Gothic-Revival architecture of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum that diverts the gaze (and our performance route) around its periphery to the winding, medieval route of Gandy Street, fictionalised by J.K. Rowling as 'Diagon Alley'.

The interior of the Museum (at the time of writing – 2010 – closed for refurbishment) has long offered the sorts of hallucinatory juxtapositions celebrated by land artist Robert Smithson for 'mixing the time states or ideas of "1984" with "One Million B.C."... under one roof' (Smithson 1996, 15), creating an 'area between events which could be called the

gap. This gap exists in the blank and void regions or settings that we never look at' (Smithson 1996, 44). Around the Museum and Gandy Street exactly such intense juxtapositions and voids are created – like that between the New Age jewellery shop and the Masonic Temple, both using the same five- and six-sided geometrical symbolism.

We took advantage of this architectural 'gothic turn' and drew on research around the Museum's animal collection, particularly the collecting of C.V.A. Peel who moved close to Exeter towards the end of his life and gave numerous animals to the Museum, including the iconic 'Gerald' (a giraffe). Peel's account of his hunts are readily available in books like *Somaliland* (1900) and *Through the Length of Africa* (1927), but what is less well known is the failed anti-modernist utopia of his *The Ideal Island* (1927): a fictional account of 10 unmarried couples' attempts to escape the conventional, industrialised world and establish a utopian island commune off the coast of Africa, fighting local inhabitants with automatic weaponry. After one brutal encounter the main character decapitates a native corpse and cleans the skull of flesh and muscle; a prize for a museum. To make our 'limited myth' we combined this narrative with another failed utopia – that of the island under threat (Britain after the French Revolution) saved by 'the woman clothed with the sun', Joanna Southcott, whose messianic propheteering was launched to a national stage from her servant lodgings at 4 Gandy Street.

Exeter's geographical location (surrounded by farmland, sea and moor) offers it the means to step away from the wounding of its modernist project (marginalisation during the Industrial Revolution, erosion of its nineteenth-century neo-classical public spaces, the mixed success of its twentieth-century modernisations with the National House empty, the telecom exchange ugly and anonymous) and to resort to the provincial, rural, anti-industrial, anti-modern, anti-rational, medieval and 'natural'. To forget its history as a major industrial and political centre and to re-imagine itself as a timeless market town.

We sought to show this retreat as geographical; an abrupt side-tracking down gothic side-streets. For the first time on the walk we began to 'act' in a theatrical sense, characters were adopted and our informal 'tour guide' personae were obscured by pinafores, tea towels, false moustaches, and crude military and rural accents.

## Counter-tourism

The publicised walk-performances that we have now made a number of times on Queen Street are a variation on the standard guided tour.[1]

I have previously discussed the tactics of 'mis-guided tours' at some length (Smith 2009b), but those used on Queen Street included our adoption of loosely worn, 'semi-mythic' characters (Simon being 'Signpost' and myself 'Crab Man') and our use of irrational associations to provoke material connections (on the street we wore sardine imagery taken from Goya's *The Burial of the Sardine*, a painting of festive procession, and this provoked discoveries about 'Exeter Sardines' exported to Nigeria and the sale of sardine lunches, which we ate on our first day of performance-research, just off Queen Street).

The audience for the Queen Street performance walks is seen by us as very like a tourist group, intent not only on observation and entertainment, but also on making their own meanings. This draws on recent Tourism Studies literature that suspends the once dominant miserablist-Marxian characterisation of the tourist self as passive and duped, at 'the centre of his strictly circumscribed world' (Turner and Ash 1975, 90) in favour of an active tourist who at least partly produces their own touristic experience, taking 'an agentive, embodied role' (Crouch, Aronsson, and Wahlström 2001, 253).

This chimes with the praxis of mythogeography, encouraging audiences to knowingly 'mis-use' abject, industrialised touristic spaces as the means to the remaking of their meanings. This approximates to 'post-tourism': '[t]he post-tourist knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game ... that the glossy brochure is a piece of pop culture, that the apparently authentic local entertainment is as socially contrived as the ethnic bar' (Urry 1990, 100). Those participating in this post-touristic 'gaze' are not necessarily academics who have read the postmodernists, but a far wider culturally self-reflective group, many of whom will have taken elements of a post-touristic gaze (garnered through popular culture) and integrated it with elements of collective and romantic gazes, often adjusting their gaze to enjoy the ironies on offer.

Scott McCabe defines this multiplicitous 'gaze' as part of 'an "anti-tourist" attitude ... an expected or perceived shallowness of experience of place within traditional tourism ... individuals who ... distance themselves from the identity that accompanies it [tourism]...' (2009, 34–5). It is in that gap that the 'mis-guide'/performer seeks to create an affordance for their audience, inviting them not only to behave like tourists but also to self-consciously observe the way that the sites of their tourism are produced at least partly by them (a production that can then become reversible or changeable).

We sought to generate this gap by conforming to certain conventions of the guided tour (wearing matching blazers) while contravening others (visiting abject non-touristic/non-heritage spaces, encouraging the audience to physically change a space, engaging the walkers by having them carry burdens), and moving back and forth between mimetic characterisations, subjective and documentary narratives, and spontaneous reflections. In this way, we aimed to reflect back, exemplarily, to our audience, their potential as post- or anti-tourists.

## Mobilities

Early on in its work, Wrights & Sites gave importance to walking as a preparation for performance (and as a performative act in itself). In Queen Street ambulation is most of the performance: we circumambulate a monument, we plunge the audience into traffic, we walk in a serpentine line through a row of concrete bollards, we play a Roman version of hopscotch and we run like a military *parcours* club (locally based commandos covertly use the streets of Exeter for 'free running' exercises).

This emphasis on movement rests on a paradigmatic conceptualisation of 'mobility' as 'provid(ing) a rich terrain from which narrative – and, indeed, ideologies – can be, and have been, constructed ... a kind of blank space that stands as an alternative to place, boundedness, foundation and stability' (Cresswell 2006, 1, 2–3). A mobilities model serves as an invitation to read representation (the iconography and cultural economy of the street) and embodied materiality (our trajectory through other trajectories) together: an interweaving of the mobility of the subject with the mobilities of commodities, information, labour, etc. So, when the tour takes a sudden turn into the narrow gothic lanes, the audience should be prepared to sense that this is not merely a functional, wayfinding turn.

## Utopian and quotidian

While we have been witness to (and involved in) unusual events on Queen Street – a woman's collapse, a businessman losing the sole of his shoe – the remaking of the street we have sought to exemplify is one constructed from its everyday. We have followed the situationist dérive

> aimed more towards a 'concrete utopia' that addresses a possible future within the real ... connected with other contributors to a strand of

French utopian thought concerned with everyday life and its transformation, a 'counter-tradition' that includes . . . the surrealists and Michel de Certeau. (Pinder 2005, 246)

But there is a danger to the utopian in this scooping up of theorists of the everyday into the revolutionary camp. For example, Doreen Massey has pointed out that in de Certeau's work there is a cleft between 'central bloc versus little tactics of resistance . . . the city structure versus the street' (2005, 46) that separates strategies (the already-constructed) from tactics (everyday practices that engage with and resist what exists). For Massey this overestimates 'the seemlessness with which "order" is produced' but 'reduces the potential power of "the weak"' (2005, 45). In *A Tour of Sardine Street* there is a structured response to this problem that takes advantage of the way that many qualities of the tourist site have been transferred to the urban everyday – 'almost everywhere has become a centre of "spectacle and display" . . . resorts now have relatively little to distinguish themselves from elsewhere' (Urry 1990, 93), focusing on the quotidian texture of the street, while holding on to a détourned form of tourism. Within this, there are three processes that challenge an everyday/system dichotomy: attention to tangents and trajectories, a utopian narrative and a strategy for dispersal.

From the very beginning of the tour, the encounter with the quotidian is framed within a narrative of utopias:

> Crab Man: And now we're going to show you some of the secrets of one street, though everything necessary for discovering these secrets is in the street itself.
> Signpost: For there is always another city in the city.
> Crab Man: And a shadow of that city, for right here two dreadful utopias were conceived. (Persighetti and Smith 2010, 2)

The two utopias are those of the late eighteenth-century prophetess Joanna Southcott and the hyper-racist, animal cadaver-collector C.V.A. Peel. Peel's text of a hunt in the African jungle, leading to the display of an elephant skin in Queen Street, is conflated with his *The Ideal Island* narrative of a racist-elitist utopia that breaks down. The Southcott texts are taken from prophecies that were sealed in a box by the prophetess, and carried from Gandy Street across Queen Street to the city's Guildhall for distribution by her 'Seven Stars', her seven leading followers (mostly recruited from among followers of the millenarian Richard Brothers) whose abilities in promotion had garnered 100,000 covenanted followers at the height of Southcott's influence. In Gandy Street we enact the collapse of this movement: dressed in an absurd

costume, pinny stuffed to appear pregnant, our relics case doubling for a (phantom) pregnant belly, and speaking in a high-pitched Devonian accent, I tell of the elderly Southcott lying close to death, anxious to wed, believing she is pregnant with the messianic child Shiloh:

> Crab Man: Although the prophesies of Joanna Southcott contain visions of the street today – the clock, the flying horses, the carousel of light in the clouds, the fearsome bulls, it is not the alchemical wedding missing from the window of Slee Black well Solicitors – the wedding of the sun and moon – that we're going to enact.
>
> Signpost: It is a mythogeographical wedding.
>
> Crab Man: Joanna Southcott longed to marry her Apple King – Pomme Roi – the Reverend Pomeroy – but he refused her – and so we're marrying her not to an Apple but to a Peel.
> (Crab Man, as Southcott, takes Signpost, as Peel, by the hand.)
>
> Signpost: Wedding the eighteenth to the twentieth century.
>
> Crab Man: And the fruit of this union is not, as Joanna hoped, a child 'to rule the nations with a rod of iron', but rather as she herself admitted, as she died, with a mob hammering at her door: *(Like birth cry.)* 'It is all a delusion!' *(Pointing to the relics case/belly.)* This is the 297th delusion of Sardine Street. Only 68 to go. (Persighetti and Smith 2010, 29–30)

The scene is an enactment not of matrimony but of exorcism – the 'running out of town' of the city's ruralised-provincialised self-negation. The gothic diversion is over and the tour returns to Queen Street and a processing of the relics case through the Queen Street branch of Marks and Spencer.

## Transition town

The 'relics case' is carried to the Guildhall by the audience (designated as the performance's 'Seven Stars') where it is opened, like Southcott's box of prophecies, and the audience can look down upon layers of detritus and cheap commodities found or purchased on Queen Street, a bird's eye photographic view of Queen Street lifting the audience above the city as momentarily superior observers, de Certeau-ian voyeur-god-planners.

At our first walk-performances the presentation of these fragments was an ironical one, contrasting their poverty with the huge collection of religious relics assembled at Exeter Cathedral by the emissaries of King/Saint Athelstan in the tenth century. We changed this: the street relics were introduced as the quotidian *equivalents* of Athelstan's

magical fragments of the True Cross and splinters of saints' bones. Then a final relic was revealed, not quotidian: a sandstone horse's foot, fallen from the crumbling statues of the Miles Clock Tower. Noting a coincidence (William Miles, for whom the Tower is a memorial, wrote the standard text on the equine foot) we used this auratic object to place the utopian act back into the pedestrian and the obsessively poetical-in-the-detail, displacing the utopianism of *Relics and Processions* from the anti-modernist utopian texts of Southcott and Peel and the empty modernism of high street shops to the pedestrian and exploratory mobility of the participant group itself, challenging them to accept roles as idealistic agents with responsibility to make their own performances.

**Keywords:** mythogeography; street performance; limited myth; the everyday; heritage; performance as research

## Note

1. Examples of other 'mis-guided tours' are documented at http://www.mythogeography.com/2009/11/a1.html.

## Notes on contributor

Phil Smith is a writer and performer with a particular interest in walking, space and place. He is a member of Wrights & Sites, company dramaturg for TNT Theatre (Munich) and an associate lecturer at the University of Plymouth. He is at present researching the effectiveness of performance interventions in spaces of heritage tourism.

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# WEST QUARTER
## WATERwalk

for SPACEX random acts of art

**Simon Persighetti & Phil Smith
(Wrights & Sites)**

From the Tap Bar, White Hart Hotel,
South Street, Exeter, 28th April, 2010

*With a number of streets sloping sharply down to the river..., rain water certainly played an important part in cleansing the streets, some of which had central drains such as can still be seen in Stepcote Hill (Minchington 1987: 12)*

Life to the City: Exeter's Water Supply before 1832, by Walter Minchington)

layout & photos: Simon Persighetti

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## SPACEX Random Acts of Art

Since the 'relational aesthetics' of the Nineties, a new wave of collaborative art practices has been raising questions about art, community and collective agency. Artists are increasingly seeking to involve audiences in the process of artistic production as well as its reception.

In line with this shift towards process as-art and co-authorship, Spacex has commissioned three UK artists to create new work responding to the independent spirit of Exeter's West Quarter, where the gallery is located. The artists have been facilitating collaborative encounters and conversations beyond the walls of the gallery.

The results of this research and collaboration on display at Spacex between Sat 24th April – Sat 1st May. During this week, a programme of evening events and discussions led by the artists in residence and local artist collectives is also ▶ taking place. This includes

**West Quarter WATERwalk**

Curated By: Martha Crean @ SPACEX

Perhaps
by now
Like
the
flow of
water
we
may
find
ourselves
slipping
down
the
gaps
between
fact
and
fiction

---

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**Simon Persighetti & Phil Smith**

The authors offer their contributions to this book to be used on other West Quarter WALKS

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# WEST QUARTER WATER-walk

**A Mis-Guided exploration** following a water course down to the Quay. Like the flow of water we may find ourselves slipping down the gaps between fact and fiction.

**Health Warning:** Some steep inclines and uneven surfaces. This event may be illuminated by a Full Moon. Participation FREE but bring funds in case you get thirsty. www.mis-guide.com

In 1832, the period which now engages our attention, the City, as regards it social relations, may be said to have consisted of a dense population of 28,242 persons occupying, the older houses which had been built within the walls, and an airy and spreading suburb. The streets for the most part retained their ancient character, being generally narrow, and had leading from them numerous courts, lanes, and alleys. The pavement, except in the great thoroughfares, consisted of rounded pebbles, locally known as "pitching", so arranged as to secure a fall from the sides towards the centre of the road, which thus formed the gutter; this, in very nearly all the streets, was the only means whereby the sewage and nuisances of the City were removed. In some of the principal thoroughfares and districts occupied by the more wealthy inhabitants sewers had been recently constructed, but upon no general nor very perfect principle.
http://www2.plymouth.ac.uk/millbrook/cholera/shapply.htm
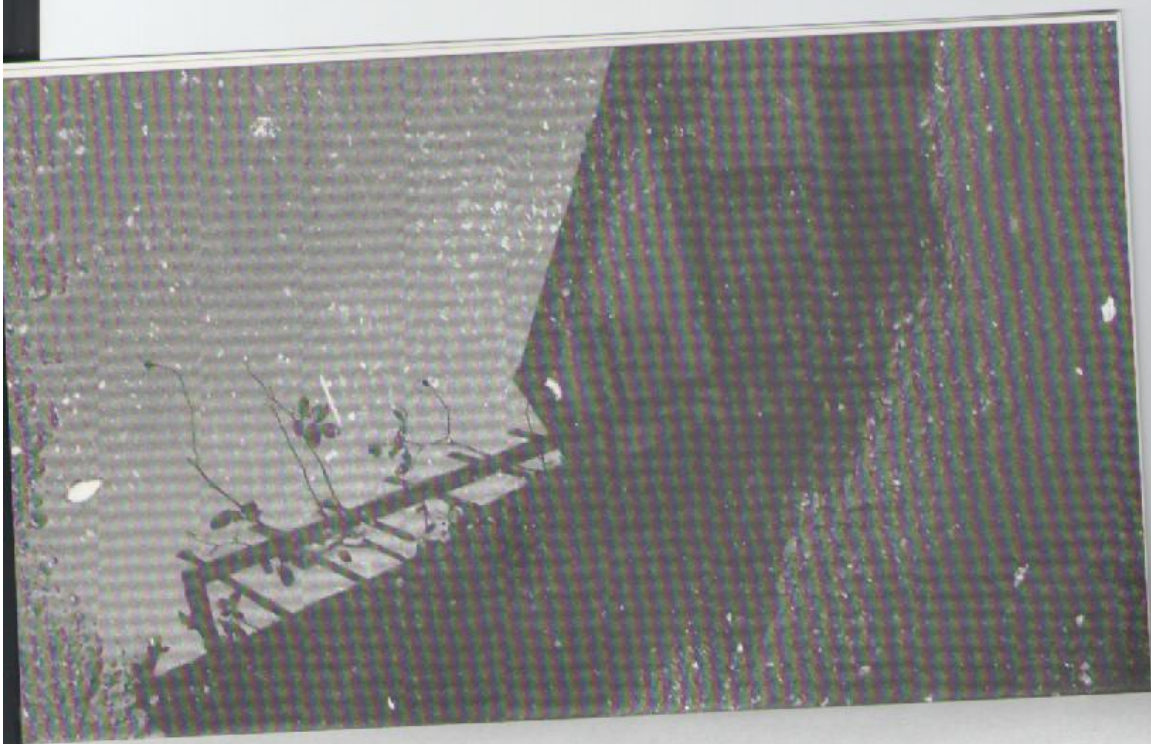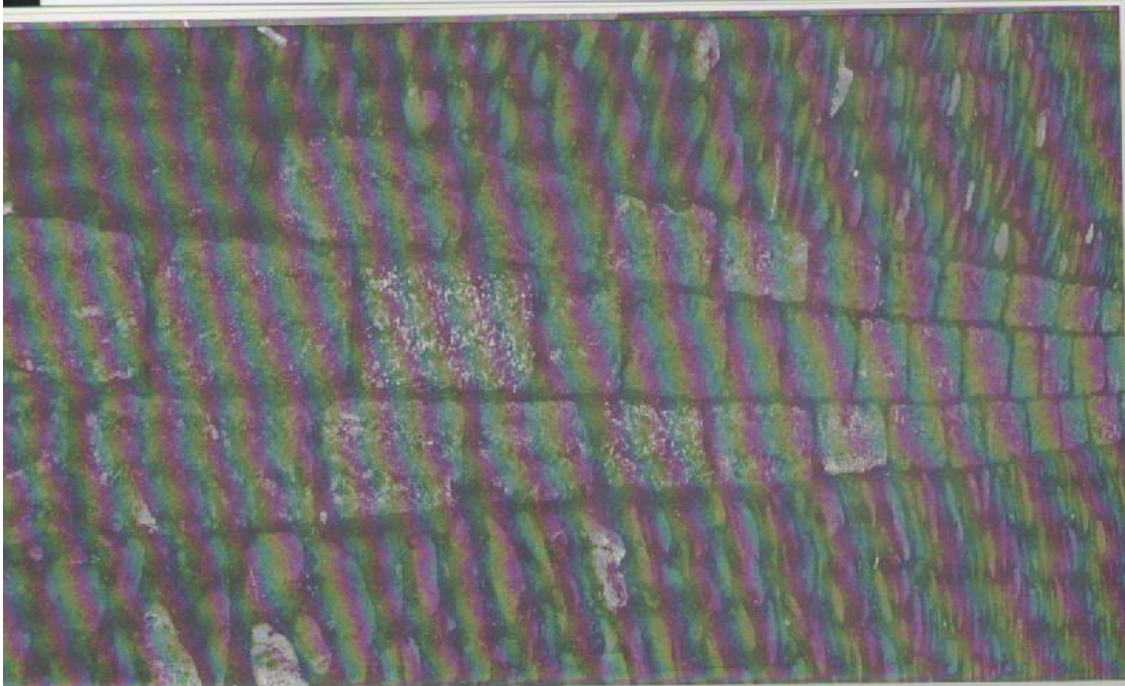
**From:** Simon Persighetti
[mailto:sitespec@blueyonder.co.uk]
**Sent:** Sun 28/02/2010 14:59
**To:** EPOS - White Hart W91380
**Subject:** Mis-Guided Tour request

Dear Manager of the White Hart Hotel, Exeter,

Here is an unusual request. I am part of an Exeter-based arts organisation called Wrights & Sites that specialises in devising walks, talks and performances that introduce people to new ways of exploring towns and cities. As part of "Random Acts of Art" being promoted by SPACEX Gallery, Exeter we have been invited to devise a walking event to explore the West Quarter of this city. Because the theme of the walk is going to be about Water I propose to begin our journey from the White Hart Hotel with people meeting for a drink in the Tap Room and hopefully returning for a drink afterwards.

Here is the request:

a) Permission to meet approx 15 people in the Tap Room before we go on our walk.

b) Permission to fill a bucket of water from the bar or near vicinity. I am aware that there is a historical well in the garden of the hotel. Does this still have water in it and would it be possible (with the proper supervision) to draw the water from it ?

**From:** EPOS - White Hart W91380 [mailto:WhiteHart.Exeter@marstons.co.uk]
**Sent:** 10 March 2010 09:22
**To:** Simon Persighetti
**Subject:** RE: Mis-Guided Tour request

Dear Dr Persighetti,

In response to your email, I would like to confirm that it would be fine to meet in the Tap Bar for drinks for approximately 15 people on the 28th April at 7pm. We would also be able to supply you with water to fill a bucket. I am sorry to say however, that the well in the Secret Garden does not contain any water.

Many thanks for your email.
Kind Regards
Paula Taylor
Deputy Manager
*White Hart Hotel*

**The shape of puddles arc very...**

**...But sometimes the reflections in them arc...**

**...I once saw a jet plane and a seagull in the same pool of rain...**

**Extracts from**
***A corporeal and socio-geographical report on previous work in the West Quarter***
**by Phil Smith**

I am approaching this mis-guided walk through the West Quarter, Exeter following three key interventional experiences there: **The Quay Thing** (1998) with Wrights & Sites, writing **A Spirit In The Quarter** (2000) for Exeter Little Theatre (based in Preston Street in the Quarter) and making a walk there as part of **Blazing Tales' Exe-Pedition** (2009) for local mixed heritage families.

Each of these has given me a different sense (by which I mean a different creation of physical senses) of the West Quarter; the intensity of engagement in a walk (and in its preparation) provoking a remaking of the walking body, generating a new, mutant strain of organs specific to the West Quarter.

**The Quay Thing** encouraged a paranoid sense of the area, a hypersensitivity ... an insight into the darkness and violence that seemed to pervade the place:

of property development and unspoken plans, of violent leisure, homelessness and anger, across the surface sweeps a touristic plane of glancing visit.

... For *A Spirit In The Quarter* I was searching for the forces at work in the Quarter (or rather for 'archaeological' evidence of their former presence). In one sense, the present-day fragmentation and incoherence of the West Quarter assist the researcher; sentimentality and local loyalties seem marginal. They do not exert much pressure on a public artist. Perhaps there is no coherent community to be accountable to? The artist can re-make the former West Quarter in the image of the artist's own associations; in my case the associations were Marxian, a community driven by the forces of industrial capital and policed and ordered by the operations of class: political, cultural, religious, family, communal and personal events were all, in the final instance, determined (though not necessarily pre-determined) by those forces.

The play that resulted is appropriately dispersed; held together by an 'impossible' figure – a child of the early nineteenth century who is present at the levelling of the West Quarter in the early twentieth century. There is no real character coherence in the play, for its dramatic motor lies in the invisible 'Spirit'; while this might be interpreted as referring to an elderly 'child' whose narrative presence is ghostly and 'out of time' or as a resilient "community spirit" – resisting the deprivations, diseases and exploitations inflicted upon the Quarter's population ...

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Whereas *A Spirit in The Quarter* is set during the period of the West Quarter's long industrial and commercial decline (and rough cultural renaissance through reform, associations and self-organisation) from the early nineteenth to the early/mid twentieth century 'slum clearance', when the local repertory Northcott Theatre, through its community company, came to address the history of the West Quarter in ... *Matthew Miller* (2003), co-written by Nick Stimson and Nick Discombe - they chose a period just after the main clearance of housing. The play became a familiar family drama. The clearance of the West Quarter had achieved for the dramatists what they generally had to do for themselves;

the removal of economic and political forces and the stranding (or beaching) of psychology. The West Quarter is still so stark in its effect, because capital has performed its ideology of excision and draining so openly there. (Perhaps) it has "sucked it dry" ...

... The walk for *Blazing Tales* now allowed me to explore narrative trajectories ... through the West Quarter.

Water was a key part of that narrative 'flow' and we stopped to examine or think about a number of key conduits; the well in the Mint that stayed uninfected during (though at the heart of) the 1832 Cholera outbreak, the conduit installed in Mary Arches Road, the site of the Carfax (now gone), the conduit further down South Street (now gone), the pubs where Exeter first trade union meeting/

initiation was interrupted (site demolished) and where Bishop Blaize's martyrdom (flayed with wool combs) is celebrated (drinking house for workers in the woollen trade). Other flows were important – the flow of populations, the segregation (in 'Little Britain' (!) around Bartholomew Street) and then expulsion of the city's British (Celtic) population, the flow of labour, particularly the influx of Irish Catholic workers through the nineteenth century and their relations with a city that at times was militantly Protestant and demonstrated its anti-Papism in November 5th processions that regularly metamorphosed into class (rather than sectarian) riots. ...

... The key moment for me on this walk ...was to walk the maze in the grounds of the Devon Wildlife Trust property at Cricklepit Mill. This was something that I had thought of as a peripheral possibility.

... But as we approached the property, we were to some extent thrown from our 'order' – even the destabilised order of trajectories that I had been suggesting – by passing now beyond the old city walls (with their own instability of volcanic past) – having taken the group to the city walls above Catacombs and now crossed through it by Western Way (symbol of the dividing of the West Quarter). We were 'outside' now. We had mostly engaged with trajectory in an intellectual way. I had conjured less physical participation than usual and there were elements of this walk... that were closer to the Guided Tour than usual in my walks. Suddenly, it became absolutely clear to me that all the fluidity and trajectories were about to be

manifest dramatically, ritually, corporeally if we all walked the maze. ...

... Now, what new plane or motion – or what new organisation of these motions and planes - will be added in the Water Walk? Or will we use an old form for a new set of walkers?

**From:** Phil Smith [mailto:perform.smith@ukgateway.net]
**Sent:** 11 April 2010 16:23
**To:** 'Simon'
**Subject:** Water Walk - idea returned to
**Importance:** High

We went walking on Dartmoor yesterday and it gave me a little time to ponder on WATERwalk. And on the practice of the mis-guided tour in general. I think the mis-guided tour has been a really exciting development, bridging resistant art practice (usually confined to fairly narrow interest groups and social strata) and far more accessed and accessible touristic, heritage and sometimes quotidian spaces.

The fundamental construct of the mis-guided tour is very simple; it rests on the multiplicity of place in tension with the mono-vocality of the traditional tour guide (and the subversion of the tradition guiding voice, or at least fore-fronting in the form of the mis-guide).

But there is a danger that both elements become too separated and sustain each other (rather than one eat into the other). I thought that that happened a little on the walk I did for *Blazing Tales*. I was getting too close to an authoritative guide.

I think there was something very strong in your initial idea for WATERwalk that was getting away from this: it was a move away from the guide's narrative and towards a set of

actions. But more than that, I wonder if it is a move towards something which the 'mis-guided tour' implicitly aspires to and yet has only (mostly) gestured towards as yet – and that is the dispersal of action among all those on the tour... So that we all – us and the walkers – make the actions together?

In that way, the preparatory 'lecture' isn't really a lecture, but a briefing – giving people the information they need to make the performing of the actions meaningful... Then we all carry the water, we all drink tea, we all throw water at some image of authority, we all help to hang the wet cloth up to dry? That way there are still the basic parts of a guided tour, with the guide's narrative and the walk around a pre-selected route, but by dividing up the elements we create a new, informed space where we all 'make' the actual tour together. Have we got here a new kind of mis-guided tour? What do you think?

Phil Smith
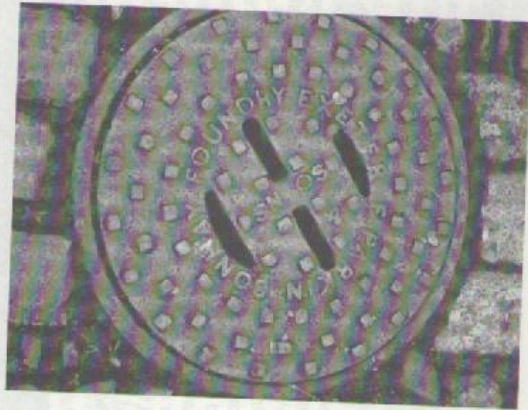
**Simon Persighetti & Phil Smith** are core members of **Wrights & Sites**, a group of four artist-researcher-lecturers with a special relationship to site and landscape. The company makes work across a range of media: site-specific performance, published Mis-Guides & Mis-Guided Tours, themed drifts, mythogeographic mapping, multi-media installations, public presentations & articles.

**www.mis-guide.com**



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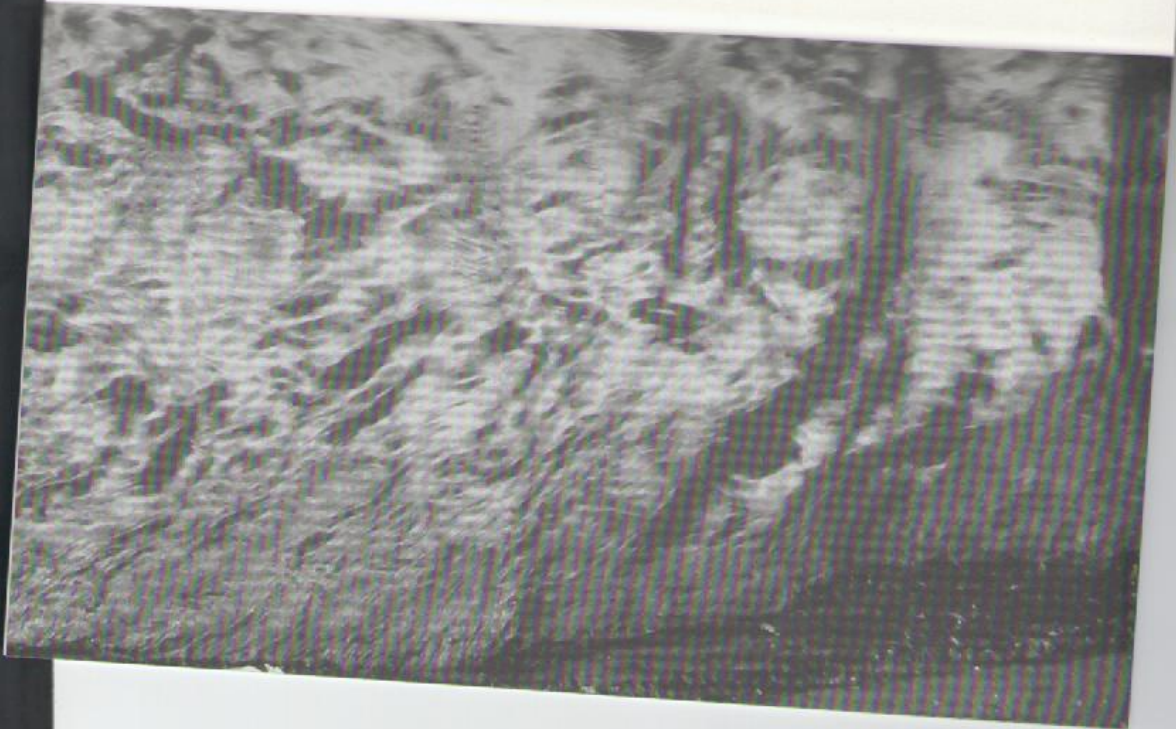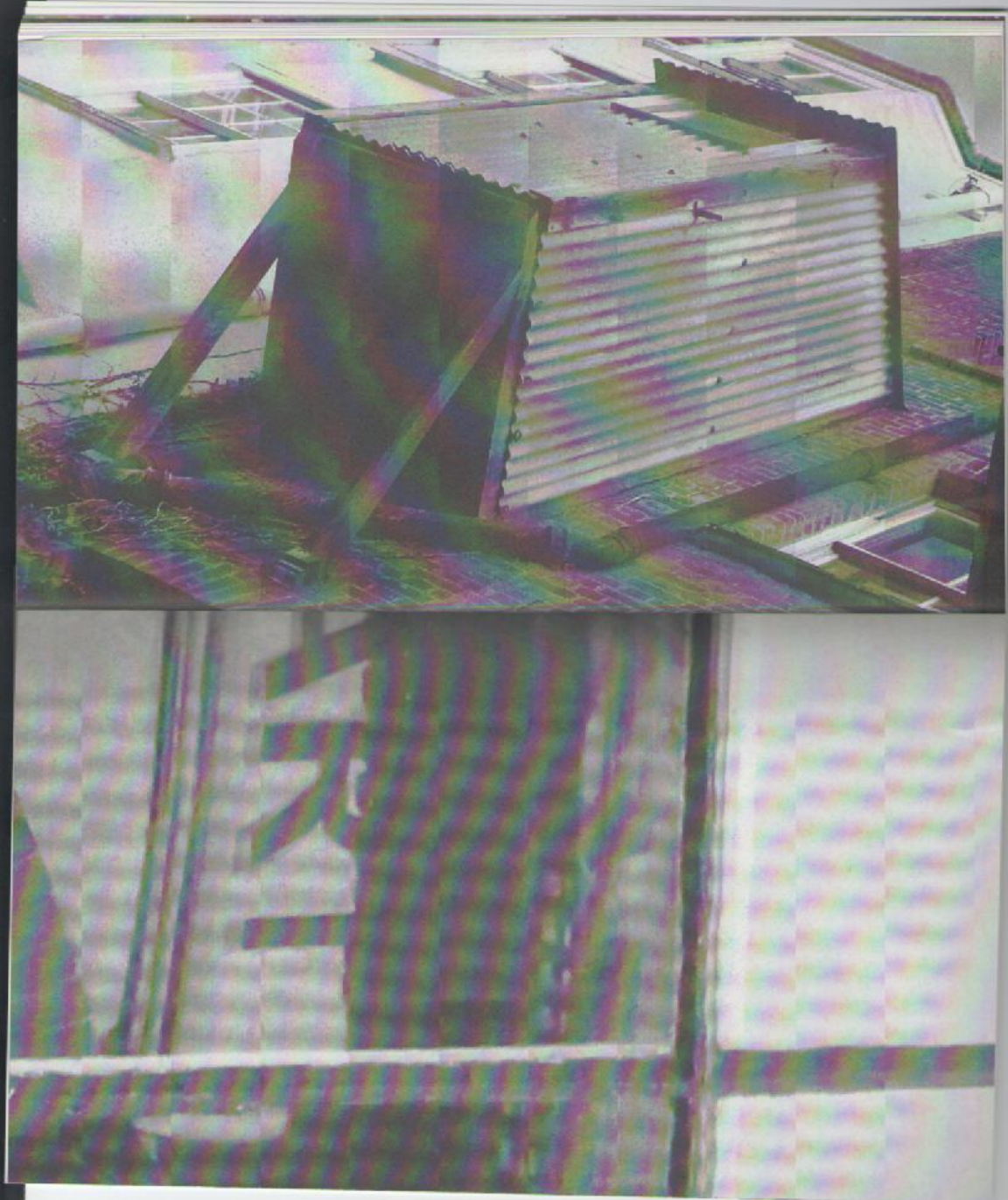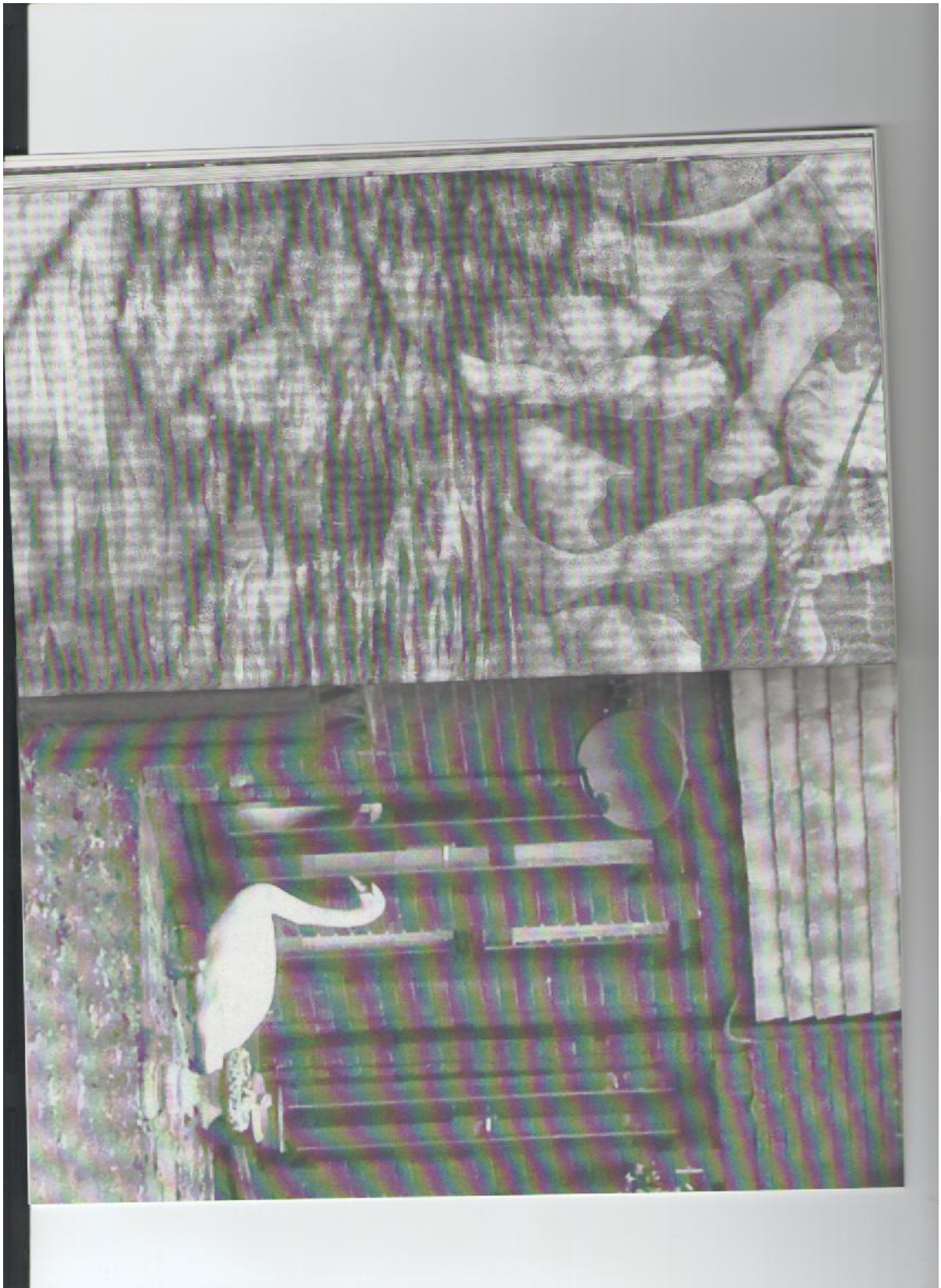
## Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

25

Appendix 15/

*GeoQuest* details


The journey of the *English Riviera Global Geopark GeoQuest* took place between the 25th and the 31st May (inclusive), 2010. Workshops were held at Homelands School Nursery (Torquay), Ilsham Primary School (Torquay), Torquay Young Volunteers (THE STEPS, Torquay), Stay and Play Parent and Toddler Group (Paignton), Oldway Primary School (Paignton), Seashore Centre Mammoth Day Drop In (Goodrington), Three Corners Care Home (Churston Ferrers), Brixham Young Volunteers (Brixham), Frensham Care Home (Brixham), Young Explorers (Torquay Museum).


Starting points for the mis-guided walks were Anstey's Cove Car Park, Daddyhole Plain (Torquay), Occombe Farm, Oldway Mansion (Paignton), Paignton Pier, Breakwater Beach (Brixham), Torquay Tourist Information Centre. The performance/meal venues (and end points of the walks) were Kents Cavern & Restaurant (Torquay), Spanish Barn (Torquay), Occombe Farm Restaurant, a gym/hall area at the Palace Theatre (Paignton), Goodrington YMCA, Berry Head Café (near Brixham), Torquay Museum.


Total performance tickets sold: 211

Total audience for the walks: 179

10 Workshops, participants: 195 (approx)

There were also random interactions each day, so there was a direct engagement with, approximately, another 150 people (some brief, others lengthy), plus many more who observed the 'Geotrio' (from passing cars, or in the crowds at Brixham, for example).

Appendix 16/

Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending *GeoQuest*          1.6.10

1/  can you describe your feelings while participating in or watching the Geo-Quest walk/performance/meal?

2/  What engagement (if any) did you have with the landscape during the walk?

3/  Has going on the walk and/or seeing the performance changed in any way your thinking and feeling about the geological landscape?

4/  How did you feel about the connection of the walk/performances with supporting and sponsoring institutions (English Riviera Geo-Park, Torbay Council, Kent's Cavern, etc.) ?

5/  Have you had any thoughts or feelings about the Geo-Quest event since?

6/  any other thoughts?

<div align="right">Thank you.  Phil Smith</div>

Appendix 17/:

Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending *A Tour of Sardine Street*   July 2010

1/   how would you describe your experience of Queen Street during the tour?

2/ do you think the tour gave you any insights into Queen Street or Exeter that other tours or readings might not have? If yes, what are they?

3/ did you experience any differences, or connections, between the Sardine Street tour and a conventional guided tour? – and if yes, did any of those contrasts or connections play a significant part in your experiencing of the street?

4/ Was your experience of the Sardine Street tour one of passive enjoyment/non-enjoyment, or did (will) it provoke you to any kind of action or

re-action?

5/ Any other comments?


Appendix 18/

Text of questionnaire sent to panel members attending the *Water Walk*   3.5.10


1/ can you describe your experience of participating in the Water Walk?

2/ have you had any thoughts or feelings about the Water Walk since?

3/ did the Walk inform or change your understanding of the West Quarter in any way?

4/ has the Walk affected the way you use and perceive (or might use and perceive) places of heritage in general?

5/ what did you think of the pamphlet you were given at the end of the Walk?

6/ any other thoughts?