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Using Emplaced Ethnography, Mobility, and Listening to Research Memory

Danielle Drozdzewski and Carolyn Birdsall

Introduction

This chapter charts our exploration of doing memory research, differently. Herein, we detail memory research undertaken for our project on war commemoration in Amsterdam on 4 and 5 May 2016. May 4 and 5 are two national, public events in the Netherlands. May 4 is known as Dodenherdenking (Remembrance of the Dead); it is a day of commemoration and reflection, marking the Nazi German occupation of the Netherlands and the remembrance of Dutch civilian and armed forces that have died in wars or on peacekeeping missions since 1945. May 5 is Bevrijdingsdag (Liberation Day), marking the end of the German occupation and the celebration of freedom in the Netherlands. Both days

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comprise coordinated and state-led rituals, where collective remembrance is intimately entwined with projects of nation building. That the two national events are on consecutive days and that they are characterised by very different commemorative atmospheres—4 May by officialdom and solemnity and 5 May by celebration and frivolity—compelled our investigation into the range of enactments, experiences, and staging at these memory-marking events. The *Stille Tocht*, a silent march through the streets of Amsterdam to the city centre held in the evening of 4 May and ahead of the official Two Minutes Silence in the Dam Square at 8 pm (ECT), especially piqued our interest. The use of silence on 4 May juxtaposes the Freedom Festivals (*Bevrijdingspop*) that follow on 5 May, which comprise largely of live music performances.

Sound is a key component of both national days. It is integrated into the commemorative experience to engender collective engagement of the public in the coordinated ritual. While we have written about the representational outcomes of sound commemoration on 4 May elsewhere (see Birdsall and Drozdzewski 2018), here we focus on how the particularities of the commemorative events forced us to think about doing (our) memory research differently, answering our own research questions of how we would/could better understand the purpose and effect of these commemorations if they were silent and noisy. Some of the answers to these questions informed the mixed methodology we employed, and the explication of these methods comprise the body of this chapter. It was clear to us that to undertake this research, we would have to participate in both commemorative events. Emplacement meant we needed to be mobile and silent during the *Stille Tocht*, honing our sensory skills, listening, observing, feeling, and being. Similarly, on Liberation Day, our emplacement meant taking our ethnographic toolkit to the largest Freedom Festival (*Bevrijdingspop*) in Haarlem, outside of Amsterdam. To explain the rationale, implementation and data analysis from these methods, our chapter will be divided into the following sections: ‘emplacement’ as part of a sensory ethnography looking, being, observing and doing, and ‘walking’ and ‘listening’, both as distinct methods trajectories within the wider ethnography. First, however, we briefly situate our methodological discussion in the context of Dutch commemoration.

Dutch War Commemoration

After 1945, the 4 May commemoration events were called for by a former member of the Dutch Resistance, Jan Drop, who argued that not only should the liberation (5 May) be celebrated, but that an additional event should also commemorate the dead (Raaijmakers 2014: 15). From 1946, the 4 May events began to take place, and the 4 May ritual elements—consisting of two minutes' silence, the laying of wreaths and flowers, and the playing of the national anthem, preceded by a silent march—have remained relatively unchanged; part of the success of these rituals elements is that they are flexible enough to allow regional organizers to include local stories and concerns within a national structure (van Ginkel 2011; Duindam 2016: 83). Nonetheless, Raaijmakers (2014: 14–15) has noted an ongoing tension in Remembrance Day events between 'inclusion and exclusion, top-down and bottom-up control, remembering and forgetting, the natural and constructed, tradition and renewal, and between consensus and discussion'. For instance, returned veterans from the controversial decolonisation war in Indonesia (1945–1949) garnered support to broaden the scope of Remembrance Day to include all civilians and military who had died 'since 1940'. In the context of Amsterdam, the local government has tended to support monument building as a means of maintaining harmony, and as a sign of respect to residents and their respective communities. Dewulf (2012: 247) observes how a broader 'diversification' strategy in national commemoration, to include the Roma and others, has prompted controversy among communities which had less direct ties to the war and occupation. In sum, anxieties about inclusion within the scope of Remembrance Day have existed since its inception (after 1945), and are interwoven, with similar uncertainty, into post-colonial national identity narratives. Despite a critical and more nuanced memory discourse since the 1990s, each edition of Remembrance Day prompts discussion and debate, particularly vocal are young people and those with a migrant background, who do not express respect or affinity to this national commemoration (see Drozdowski 2016 for an Australian comparison of remembrance amid multiculturalism).

Following the establishment of the National Committee for 4 and 5 May (Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei) in 1987, the discourse of nationalised memory became further entrenched as a nation building exercise, with the introduction of live national broadcasts of the Dam square events on 4 May, which were now synced to an 8 pm schedule (Duindam 2012: 254). It is this resulting performance at the Dam square as the 'main stage', with the Dutch Royal family and heads of state and military present, which, sets the other programme events, the Stille Tocht in particular, as taking place 'off stage'. The chance to be more-than-an observer participant in the performance of war commemoration and liberation (at the Stille Tocht and Bevrijdingsdag, respectively) drew our attention as opportunities to undertake an emplaced sensory ethnography. Within our methodological approach, we included strategic method components of mobility (allowing us to be mobile and walk with the Stille Tocht and move with the crowds at Bevrijdingsdag) and listening, which cued our aural sensitivities to what soundscapes characterised commemoration at both events. We begin this discussion of method below with consideration of emplaced methods.

Emplaced Methods: Beyond Doing and Observing

To be emplaced is to position oneself. An emplaced method, then, is to position oneself within the context of one's research environment, as we did on May 4 and 5, partaking in the Stille Tocht, Dam Square ceremony and the Bevrijdingsdag. We were compelled by the recent flurry of scholarship focused on emplaced methods, especially within the social sciences and humanities (Degen and Rose 2012; Pink 2009; Kusenbach 2003; O'Neill and Hubbard 2010; Vergunst and Ingold 2008; Waterton and Dittmer 2014). The consensus among these and other authors, is that being part of the event/thing/theme of research opens multiple possibilities for how we understand process, nuance, and context of/in our research. For example, Ingold (2000: 354) has argued that emplacement is the 'practitioners' engagement with the material with which they work',

it is an 'attentive engagement'. Emplacement as method is 'a skilled activity', carried out with 'its own intrinsic intentionality, quite apart from any designs or plans that it may be supposed to implement' (Ingold 2000: 354). In our research, on 4 and 5 May 2016, in Amsterdam, we were as much interested in understanding the (re)production, performance, and enactment of national memory, as we were in understanding what it felt like and the experience of that (re)production, performance, and enactment. As Stevenson (2014: 340) has acknowledged, 'embodied practice incites researchers to regard enactment as a means of knowing', rather than just a data source for subsequent analysis.

This dual conceptual *and* methodological focus necessitates different sets of skills, as Ingold affirmed. Attuning to affect in an emplaced research method means that researchers must learn how 'their own sensory embodied experiences might assist them in learning about other people's worlds' (Pink 2009: 24). It also requires them to qualify and relate the experience of being in place as an integral and discrete part of the research process. As other chapters in this volume demonstrate (Sharick et al., De Nardi, Sumartojo and Gensburger), scholarship focused on emplaced methods within memory research is gaining currency (Drozdowski et al. 2016; Sumartojo 2015, 2016; Stevenson 2014); they also show a diversity of narrative approaches to relating the experience of these emplaced encounters. Our emplaced approach had Human Research Ethics Clearance (UNSW Panel E, No. HC16328). In what follows, we explicate how we conducted our emplaced ethnography during the Stille Tocht and Bevrijdingsdag. We pay attention to how we attuned our senses, how we recorded our encounters and reflected on our research experiences. We are cautious, however, not to characterise the individual method components of this emplaced practice only as participant observation and participation alone. To move beyond 'observing' and 'doing' we take stock in Pink's (2009: 63) call to direct our methodological lenses on the 'embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic', rather than more simply focusing on 'a mix of participation and observation'. We saw emplacement as framing our methodological approach because while in the field we participated in the collective acts of marching and keeping silent during the Stille Tocht and in the festivities of Bevrijdingsdag. Embedded and inseparable from this

approach was the sound walk conducted during the *Stille Tocht*, which necessitated consideration of walking (mobility) and listening as discrete methods (and as discussed in two further sections of this chapter).

Silent Emplacement

Overlaying our emplacement in the field on 4 May was the imposition of silence, though we have argued elsewhere that the *Stille Tocht* was not entirely silent (Birdsall and Drozdowski 2018). Our silent emplacement, and indeed the regulations for silence stated on the official *Stille Tocht* brochure, primed our researcher bodies. The restriction on causal and audible conversation meant that where marchers might have otherwise filled the blank spaces of the two-hour-long march with observations about the activity and/or with chatter, the paucity of that particular soundscape meant that our attention was instead drawn (more effectively) to the purpose of the march, its location and surroundings, and to our fellow marchers. Similarly, and in further example of sensory ethnography, Sumartojo et al. (2017: 95) described how they ‘worked, observed, listened, adjusted and slowly got to know the space with our bodies and through our movements’. In addition to our sensing bodies, we were equipped with other technologies—a GoPro Hero3+, our smartphones, notepads, a digital camera, and a digital voice recorder. Stevenson (2014: 336–337) has suggested that emplaced performances are not only relational but thrive ‘on collaborative encounters with people and technologies’. Our capacity to record and revisit video and audio footage and re-read field notes has been integral to fleshing out such collaborative encounters (Sumartojo and Pink 2017).

Experiencing the *Stille Tocht* also entailed a feeling for and sensing of the performance and staging of collective memory. Indeed, the notions of collectivity and collaboration resonate with our interest in the synchronicity of people marching *en masse*, and in silence, as an act of war commemoration. We partook in the entire march and positioned ourselves roughly in the middle of the column of marchers. This positioning was, in part, to relieve the discomfort often produced by obvious acts of researcher observation (Kearns 2010), but to also open up the

opportunity to perceive the whole group of marchers and what participation in it felt like. For example, towards the completion of the march at the Dam Square, Drozdowski noted: 'It feels like the number of people have grown and I feel a little lost in the crowd' (Field notes, 4 May, 2016). Further, replaying the GoPro footage revealed how the group moved along as a whole and how as individual marchers, we adjusted our stride pace to align with the group. For example, we noticed while walking and watching the recording that often our adjustment of pace coincided with us making a field note or taking a photograph, and hence not paying direct attention to the rhythm of marchers. The tendency to sync pace with the group prevails powerfully when we take pause to consider how we each moved separately as individuals, but together as a column of marchers. The collectively of the group's movement was palpable; that collectively, of marching together for the cause of remembrance created (the desired) atmosphere of unity as Birdsall noted in her field diary: '[the] crowd becomes wider, [there is a] sense of composition (we are the people)' (Field notes, May 4, 2016). As Sumartojo (2015: 279) also found when attending a similar national event of war commemoration, 'the grouping of the crowd also worked to symbolise national collectivity'. This grouping of the collective is a spatial performance in which the local dimension of the *Stille Tocht* (led by the Amsterdam mayor) gradually leads towards and is absorbed within the national gathering at the Dam Square. In this vision of 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991), we and the other marchers are projected as in compliance with the official narrative of national commemoration, in which Amsterdam itself is a metonym for the nation. In marching as co-participants, we submitted to being part of this imagined community formation, regardless of our nationality or personal views on national memory politics.

Emplacement also meant embracing and responding to a fluidity of movements. We had to slow to allow people past who traversed through and dissected the column of marchers. We also had to be mindful of changes in the surfaces on which we were walking. For example, Birdsall's field notes record the intersection of marchers with Amsterdam's ubiquitous cyclists, 'bikes on adjacent path squeaking past, slow pace—set path, others [are] aware of route, [this is a] surprise for me, [I did not

comprehend] how exactly the procession would walk' (Field notes, 4 May, 2016). Later in the march Birdsall commented:

[There is only a] narrow area to walk, people with bikes power walk past so that they can cycle again, teachers push school students to hurry up, [we take a] right turn, Google Street view car next to the procession, walk to the right, ordinary walkers, more cyclists, car horn, police on bike, power-walking cyclists. (Field notes, 4 May, 2016)

In this chapter's section on walking, we expand on the idea that the choice of marching route contributes to the event's politics of memory, but here, we also nod to how the use of video footage reinforces our emplacement in the everyday streetscape. Video created what Sumartojo and Pink (2017: 40) have referred to as a 'video trace'; viewing the footage in combination with our memories of the march, our notes and other data 'generate(s) new knowledge by constituting a particular trace that enables a process of reflection, discussion and understanding'. While the excerpt from Birdsall's field note above provided insight into how she felt at the commencement of the march (of being surprised at the march's trajectory), the footage enabled us to view how we and the group moved. Because we could not ask each other about the direct path of the march as it began, we both noted some uncertainty among the group at the beginning of the march as we criss-crossed the Museumplein, though as we marched towards and then along straight roads and pavement, the formation and sync of the group took shape. The GoPro, positioned towards the ground, recorded what were a multitude of sensory encounters with different pavement surfaces—grass, tram tracks, drains, curbs, animal faeces, rubbish—each requiring different responses with/to this materiality and also bodily responses in terms of tread and pressure. Cumulatively, these encountered materialities are parts of the urban streetscape, they all connect the march and marchers to the urban locale and serve to tangibly link people to place. This theme, of connecting people to place, threads through all methods discussed in this chapter. Buttressing these connections together, as Pink has shown (2009: 25), is that emplacement 'attends to the question of experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds and the materiality and

sensoriality of the environment' (Pink 2009: 25). In the following section, we engage with Pink's notion of the 'sensoriality of the environment' at the Bevrijdingspop (Freedom Festival) in Haarlem on 5 May 2016.

Feeling Freedom

Juxtaposing the more sombre and formal commemorative events of 4 May, on 5 May, a completely different atmosphere was apparent. While the official name for 5 May is Liberation Day, the organised events draw heavily on the theme of freedom. This theme is replicated through:

- the name, Freedom Festival, held around the country that day;
- the repetition of the torch and flame symbol in public spaces;
- the 5 before 5 moment where all festival-goers, at all locations around the Netherlands, are encouraged to stand together for freedom at 5 minutes before 5 pm; and
- the use of the travelling Liberation Fire to symbolise the passing of freedom from Wageningen, where the German capitulation became official, to other towns and cities across the country (Meeuse and Bouhuys 2000: 13–14).

Cumulatively, these constituent parts comprise staged and officially mandated performance of freedom, akin to what Reeves (2017: 3) has described as a scripted 'choreography' where the official theme of freedom is 'pre-defined, rehearsed, sequenced, and generally externally imposed' with the view of being repeated, and we would add, for specific political purposes. The intent of our emplaced ethnography at Haarlem's Bevrijdingspop was to cultivate an 'empathetic viewing' (Sumartojo and Pink 2017: 43) of how the theme freedom was variously engaged with and felt at the festival. While we did not plan to use any form of oral method, our emplacement at the festival drew similarities with Kusenbach's (2003: 463) now renowned go-along method, in that we 'hung out' at the festival 'spending a particular yet comparable slice of ordinary time' with others attending the festival.

In keeping with the emplaced and sensory ethnography we conducted the previous day, we used an assemblage of technologies to help record and capture our experience—GoPro, smartphone for images and note taking. GoPro footage of the crowd and of the live bands reinforced the overwhelmingly positive and party-like atmosphere. Large beach balls with the torch and flame logo inscribed on them traversed the crowds. People mingled and moved between stages, chill out areas and food stalls. Notably, and unlike most large music festivals, a mix of ages and family groups were present. The carefree ambiance was punctuated by the hosts' on-stage announcements; their script was clearly written to maximise the articulation of freedom and stress that it was a quality that the Dutch people are thankful for and should not take for granted.

We felt freedom differently. For Drozdzewski, as a foreigner in the Netherlands who had never attended a Liberation Day festival, this festival was a surreal experience. She was struck by the open, friendly and laid-back attitude of the festival-goers—the atmosphere enthralling. There was an overwhelming sense that the festival goers relished this designated day, that they felt like this day belonged to them, and that it made them proudly Dutch. Sumartojo's (2016: 1) comments regarding the co-creation of atmosphere resonate here; she suggests that: 'people co-create atmosphere through their actions and responses in commemorative moments, but also because of their anticipation and expectations of the events'. The anticipation of having a good time was intense, it was witnessed on people's smiling faces, through carefree dancing, children being held up on their parents' shoulders.

Birdsall's long-term residence and previous attendance at the festival provided a slightly different narrative. Birdsall's noticed a professional security presence (and the new addition of security barriers) and various participatory strategies used to emphasise the festival's central theme 'Pass on freedom! (*Geef vrijheid door!*)', using the beach balls, call and response elements, and the inclusion of a social media 'selfie' feed on the large screens. In one such segment, a video showing the popular Dutch rapper Typhoon started with a visual infographic depicting all the Bevrijdingspop locations across the country, emphasising all of these major towns and cities as having a simultaneous, networked experience of this national event; the audience were then encouraged to collectively sing out the

Morse code for the letter ‘V’ that had been significant during the Second World War as the symbol of ‘freedom’ (*Vrijheid*), with ‘three times short and one time long’ (*drie keer kort en een keer lang*). Birdsall also noted the repeated use of a new cover of the song ‘Iedereen is van de wereld’ (Everyone is from the world).

As researchers, being emplaced while engaging in note-taking and audiovisual recording, allowed us each to register the different collective atmospheres and affects on 4 and 5 May, and how official discourse seeks to draw a meaningful connection between both national events. In what follows we will probe further into the specifics of our methodological engagement with listening and walking.

Listening

Building on the robust scholarship investigating sound and urban space (Bull 2000; Thompson 2002; Back and Bull 2003), research on the relationship between sound, auditory experience, and place-making has gained pace (Smith 2000; Connell and Gibson 2003; Atkinson 2007; O’Connor 2008; Bandt et al. 2009; Pinkerton and Dodds 2009; Kanngieser 2012; Reville 2016; Wilson 2016). While there has been limited engagement with the broader theme of sound in memory studies (Birdsall 2016), cultural geographers, in particular, have reflected on the role of sound, voice, and listening within ethnographic research practice. In recent years, an exploration of methods and approaches to elicit understandings of sound and place have included interviews (Bull 2007), sound diaries (Duffy and Waitt 2011), sound maps (Waldock 2011; Thulin 2018), sound walks (McCartney 2014), audio walks (Butler 2007), and audio drifts (Gallagher 2014).

Keeping in mind the persistent tendency to ‘erase sound’ from the recording and transcription of ethnographic fieldwork (Wilson 2016: 164), we were keen, in our research, to explore the possibilities to examine the aural components contributing to the production of meaning, affect, and atmosphere during the 4 and 5 May commemorative events. So, we listened. We listened as a key component of our emplaced ethnography, where our listening was accompanied by mobility, field diaries,

audio recording, and analysis (as we detailed in the ‘[Emplaced Methods](#)’ section). Along the *Stille Tocht*, our approach shared a strong affinity with McCartney’s (2014: 1) definition of the sound walk, it too involved ‘listening and sometimes recording while moving through a place at a walking pace’.

Our mobile listening was realised in a conscious act of attending to the sounds around us, to concentrating on their acoustic (e.g. loudness and pitch) and spatial and temporal properties (e.g. frequency and rhythm). To register these impressions, we took observation notes on what we heard, felt and saw during our participation in the *Stille Tocht* and commemoration on the Dam Square. To observe this collective practice of being silent, and the role of sound in contributing to a sense of place, we were instructed by R. Murray Schafer’s impulse (1977/1994: 7–12) to interpret the ‘sounds that matter’ in the acoustic environment, by using descriptive categories (silence, keynotes, sound signals, sound marks) and ‘the techniques of modern recording and analysis’. Tuning to these sounds that mattered meant taking extensive notes about our awareness of sounds associated with the march, its immediate surroundings and the urban context of central Amsterdam. While Birdsall has had more experience with sound-based methodologies, for Drozdzewski, trying to decentre her normative visual research focus on/during the commemorative events was challenging. As we noted earlier, because the silence was mandated, we had a less diffuse auditory landscape to work with, and our field notes revealed our heightened awareness to the subtleties of sound, in particular the qualities of voice. For example, on the Museumplein Drozdzewski noted: ‘we can hear the chatter of others not partaking in the silence that are sitting around the park, as well as the noise of the traffic behind’ (Field notes, May 4, 2016). Silence, as Kanngieser (2012: 344) reminds us, ‘does not leave a space to be filled but rather it fills space, it impregnates the room, which vibrates in anticipation’. In turn, our notes reference those moments where non-participants intercede and participants broke their silence, mainly in a whisper, which frequently occurred during moments of uncertainty (e.g. about the direction of the march, or if they were too far at the back to hear the official speeches). For example, Drozdzewski noted: ‘I notice people whispering but no one is talking aloud’ (Field notes, 4 May 2016). On other occasions, the silence was

broken by an unexpected development, such as the sirens of passing fire service trucks; in this moment, Drozdzewski observed a qualitative change: ‘It is almost like I feel that the silence is becoming difficult to maintain’ (Field notes, 4 May 2016). In our notes, we each differentiate the sounds produced by the march itself: participants, organisers, police, and the four, young male drummers in military-style uniform leading the march; as well as by onlookers: pedestrians, cyclists, motorists. We also noted the interplay between voice, music, and other sound cues produced changes in commemorative atmosphere and affect. As the procession approached the Dam square, we each registered the ‘suspense’ (Drozdzewski) and ‘build up’ (Birdsall) as the march ended, but also an audible shift between the discontinuation of the drumming and the amplified sound system at the ‘main stage’. The drumming provided aural clues and cues, reminding marchers as to the official purpose of the march. Anderson (2004: 16) has contended that ‘listening “to remember something” is ... one of a number of “peak” experiences of intensified affect that provide ways of being and living that do not necessarily always form into a “technology of the self”’. Overall, the volume of the drummers, in particular, was crucial for the pace and mood of the march. We flagged earlier in the chapter that once marching on the pavements and streets, a collective steadiness of pace was apparent; we can corroborate this observation with the sound recordings.

Our use of an Olympus digital voice recorder, located in an external pocket of Drozdzewski’s handbag with the microphone positioned outwards, captured the sounds of the *Stille Tocht*. To analyse the recording, we used the Sonic Visualiser (2017) programme to listen to and determine the distribution between sound sources on the recording, according to their type and frequency (according to their hertz). To do so, we used an Excel spreadsheet to count—within each minute of recording—how many times certain sound types were evident. In this case, the sound types that were audible were voices, coughing, drums, echoed drums, footsteps, bells, music, vehicles (distinct), traffic (general), and bicycles. We then plotted these data for the *Stille Tocht* using a stacked area graph, which allowed us to visualise the overall distribution of sound elements across the 30-minute recording (see Birdsall and Drozdzewski (2018: 277) for the graph and discussion of the sound distribution).

In our analysis, we adopted the classifications produced by Mills (2005: 18) for soundscape analysis, categorising sounds in terms of *geophony* (sounds associated with the physical environment), *biophony* (associated with the biological environment) and *anthrophony* (associated with people). The plotting of the data on the graph revealed how anthropic sounds (footsteps, drums, voices) dominated the soundscape of the Stille Tocht, with only 1.5% of the sounds having a nonhuman origin (bird calls). To use Schafer's terminology, the keynote sounds in the background were the traffic and music, which remained a persistent reminder of the urban context, and the usual peak hour period, in which the march took place. The benefit of this chosen mode of analysis is that it allowed us to acknowledge and interpret the different sounds, their affective charge and meanings within the context of the Stille Tocht. The analysis of the recording reinforced the observations made in the field notes that the march is not marked by an absence of sound but is rather replete with auditory cues, both for the participants in the march, and for passersby and onlookers. This finding reinforces our contention that the spectacle of this collective act of remembrance and not necessarily the commemorative silence is key outcome of the march.

The emplaced and mobile quality of this listening exercise meant that we remained persistently attentive to how the soundscape moved with place, and how soundscapes travelled through the column of marchers. For example, we heard the echo of drummers at the front of the column as they first entered the Rijksmuseum passageway, long before we entered the passageway ourselves. Further, the music playing at the various stops on the Museumplein lingered through the marchers as we moved away from the turfed area and onto harder pavement surfaces. In thinking about the mobile quality of the soundscape, we turn now to the final section focused on walking.

Walking to Remember

Given the more static—and normative—form of war remembrance evidenced in the officialdom surrounding the 2-minute silence in the Dam Square, we were particularly compelled by the mobile qualities of the

Stille Tocht as a collaborative and collective memory event. We have argued that the march ‘brings otherwise unknown, diverse, and disparate citizens either physically by gathering in place at an orchestrated event, or figuratively through together temporally organized events that transcend spatial distance’ (Birdsall and Drozdowski 2018: 273–274). To be part of the march, and indeed as researchers investigating these collective commemorations, we needed to be mobile. Mobility, and in the case of our research, walking, was an enabling methodology. Ingold and Vergunst (2008: 5, original emphasis) have contended that ‘walking comprises a suite of bodily performances that include observing, monitoring, remembering, listening, touching, crouching and climbing. And it is through these performances, *along the way*, that their knowledge is forged’. As a method, walking has a capacitive mandate; it connects people to the place(s) they traverse because it engages multiple sensory experiences, simultaneously, and brings attention to where people are located in the present moment as they walk. In thinking through the connections between memory and place, Solnit (2001) provokes us to consider how repetitive movements through the same places function to remind us of our previous passings through that route. She contended:

To walk the same route again can mean to think the same thoughts again, as though thoughts and ideas were indeed fixed objects in a landscape one need only know how to travel through. In this way, walking is reading, even when both the walking and reading are imaginary, and the landscape of the memory becomes a text. (Solnit 2001: 77)

Walking in/with the Stille Tocht was pivotal to the generation of commemorative affect (cf. Sumartojo 2016), because it was designed so people move through places that they will move through again—thus, opening spaces for contemplation on previous movements through those same places. Stevenson (2014: 335) has reasoned that ‘the effect of being in place is heightened by our walking through routes that are coloured with meanings that have been accrued in the past’. Considering that the Stille Tocht forms part of a large-scale commemorative and nation building event, these cognitive links are not only planned and purposeful but embedded in the otherwise everyday and mundane practice of walking.

In 2016, the *Stille Tocht* comprised a two-hour-long walk from Museumplein, which weaved its way through familiar everyday places in central Amsterdam including through the Rijksmuesum passageway, then towards the Dam Square via main thoroughfare of the Vijzelstraat. This choice of marching route allowed the participants to move along a familiar pathway and the opportunity to connect those places in the present to the collective action of remembering the national past. Edensor (2012: 70) has argued that ‘the walking body ... produces contingent notions of place as well as being always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place’. Such characteristics during the march included:

- specific stop points along the march (for example, at Second World War memorials located in Museumplein);
- prompts given to marchers, which included ‘the instruction is to be silent, follow the designated route, and stop at the selected memorial landmarks’ (Birdsall and Drozdzewski 2018: 274); and
- visual prompts along the route of Dutch war commemoration (flags and posters created by the National Committee for 4 and 5 May).

Designated route stops, restrictions on sound, and visual cues provided what Degen and Rose (2012: 3271) have called ‘sensory experiences’; together, during the march, they intimately intertwine ‘with perpetual memories that mediate the present moment of experience in various ways’. Walking put us—the marchers—in touch with our surrounding environment, that is the places of commemoration, the streets and the pathways of Amsterdam. Being part of the *Stille Tocht* event mediated an attunement to place(s), but it also provided the foundation for connecting individuals into a collective of marchers, a theme we mentioned earlier in our section on ‘Silent Emplacement’. Ingold and Vergunst (2008: 1) proffer that ‘walking is a profoundly social activity: that in their timings, rhythms and inflections, the feet respond as much as does the voice to the presence and activity of other’. In binding together a collective of marchers, we could then investigate the reason(s) why they were walking, together, in the first place.

Walking together allowed us to experience what it felt like to be part of the silent march, both as individual researchers and as part of a wider collective project of commemoration. These two positionalities intersected

through the march. At no time did we hide the fact we were conducting research; we were note taking on paper and our smartphones, with the GoProHero3+ and a voice recorder visible, we also both took photos along the route with our smartphones and a digital camera. We were both carrying copies of our ethics application including a Participant Information Statement, should we be asked about the equipment we were carrying (although this never happened). While our emplacement as individual marchers was foremost for research purposes, by default we became part of the collective spectacle; ‘by marching in silence through the city we become the spectacle. We [we]re the ones being watched’ (Drozdewski’s field notes, 4 May 2016). Traffic was stopped for us by policeman on point duty at road intersections, people looked down from their apartment windows at the column of marchers, and on approaching and entering the Dam Square, we were directed down a cordoned-off section of the road and into a designated and reserved section of the already full Dam Square. We were cognisant of these shifting positions as we walked, and mindful too of Edensor’s (2010: 70) assertion that ‘the rhythms of walking allow for a particular experiential flow of successive moments of detachment and attachment, physical immersion and mental wandering, memory, recognition and strangeness’. Edensor’s assertions of attachment, detachment, recognition, and difference refract through our contrasting field notes on our approach to the Dam Square:

Drozdewski’s field note: ‘because I do not know the city, I do not know which street I am in or where I am going. I can’t ask where I am either. I am just moving with the moving line of people’.

Birdsall’s field note: ‘walk past the Carousel cafe—patrons take photos, car horns on right, people with headphones on bikes, given leaflets, some refuse, others accept, tourists talking loudly, move into beginning of the Vijzelstraat’.

These notes serve as reminders of our awareness to being in place, engendered while silently walking. In his experience of walking in coastal England, Wylie (2005: 236) suggested that his encounters were ‘configurations of motion and materiality—of light, colour, morphology and mood—from which distinctive senses of self and landscape, walker and ground, observer and observed, distil[ed] and refract[ed]’.

Our experience of walking during the *Stille Tocht* facilitated our reflection on such intersections of motion and materiality, but also of contemplative remembrance of place, purpose, and self—prompted by the silence. The opportunity to walk—for the most part in silence—also importantly provides an outlet for reflection on the nation, its involvement in conflict and those who died in conflict. ‘There is far more to walking than what is registered on the ground in the monotonous tread of feet’ (Ingold and Vergunst 2008: 10).

Conclusion

Like all the chapters in this collection, taking pause to reflect on, write about, and centre, the chosen methodological approach has reminded us how the doing of our research is so intimately intertwined with the research project as a whole. Rather than situated separately from the conceptual development of empirical data, or as a distinct and often short section at the beginning of a chapter, what we have shown here, especially through our use of an emplaced sensory ethnography, is that knowledge about an event is felt, heard, seen, and smelt in the process of doing the research and as much as it is reflected, refracted, and discussed after the fieldwork. It centred the ‘body as a site of knowing while recognising that we are capable of objectification through intellectual activity’ (Pink 2009: 26).

Emplacement directed our attention to the urban locale. It put us in contact with the places and settings of central Amsterdam; the *Stille Tocht*, for example, seeded connection points between the marchers in the present with thoughts of the Dutch past. The *Bevrijdingspop*’s generation of an atmosphere of freedom connected the past (through the previous day’s commemorative events) to the present day. The decision to listen for and to the sounds of commemoration was a productive exercise in critically attending to the interplay of sonic elements in commemorative rituals, and considering how these sounds are bound up in the contemporary politics and practices of memory. Frith and Kalin (2016: 44) have argued that ‘studies of memory places show how place can become integral to understanding how memories are evoked for and experienced by their visitors’. We certainly would not have gleaned the same under-

standings of the Stille Tocht or Bevrijdingspop had we simply observed them from stationary positions, or, we think, interviewed participants about their experiences post hoc. Rather, our understandings about the (re)production, performance, and stages of 4 and 5 May in Amsterdam were assembled in place, through placing our bodies amid those performances ‘as a constituent of place’ (Pink 2009: 66). The sensory experiences were ‘central for shaping [our and] visitors’ understandings of [the] site-specific historical narrative and its capacity to heighten and nuance empathetic connections’ with Dutch wartime memory (Sumartojo [forthcoming](#)). That the march involved a directive of silence added distinctiveness to its mandate. It meant we, along with fellow marchers, honed our listening skills, were more aware of our contact with the materialities of the route, and felt a sense of contribution to the generation of a commemorative spectacle—a (mostly) silent column of marchers pacing together through the streets of Amsterdam.

Our chosen method assemblage incorporated mobility and listening, while valuing the holistic quality of emplaced research, which recognises that ‘looking, listening and touching ... are not separate activities, they are just different facets of the same activity’ (Ingold 2000: 261). At both events, ‘the interplay of sound and silence within public remembrance [wa]s central in transforming the everyday landscape in which the war memorials are located and ceremonies take place into places set apart from the quotidian’ (Marshall 2004: 41). The streets of Amsterdam became the focus point and path for collective remembrance during the Stille Tocht, and the field in Haarlem became a site where exhibitions of freedom were enacted through a melange of music, visual cues, and devices, and an atmosphere of light-heartedness.

Earlier in our chapter, we noted that an emplaced approach also requires researchers to ‘qualify and relate the experience of being in place’. In understanding our emplaced and sensory ethnography, our reflective practice sought to better understand how ‘our bodies and the bodies of others are central to the practical accomplishment of fieldwork’ (Coffey 1999: 59). To qualify and relate our method meant that much time was spent discussing our experiences to each other, we talked through our notes, what we thought were significant moments, watched the videos, and listened to audio recordings. This reflexive practice was integral not only to sifting through the research material but also to considering how

our bodies responded to the research settings and that those responses provided invaluable knowledge about the events. Telling the story of being part of the commemorative events on 4 and 5 May—of sensing, feeling, and experiencing in place—is perhaps a more complex story to narrate that one focussed solely on the significance of those memory events for the nation.

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