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REWALKING THE CITY

People with Dementia Remember

Andrea Capstick

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY AND DEMENTIA

Do you know what's going on in the past? You don't know, do you? Wait here and see what's going to happen...

- Meg, quoted in Bryce et al, 2010: xxxii

Within the dominant biomedical discourse, late-life dementia is regarded as a pathological condition characterised by short-term memory loss, word finding difficulties and 'problem behaviours' such as 'wandering and 'repetitive questioning'. As its title suggests, one of the main purposes of this chapter is to shift the focus from what people with late-life dementia forget to what they remember, particularly as this relates to places they have known much earlier in life. A central part of my argument is that dementia, often somewhat crudely represented as wholesale memory loss, might better be regarded as a form of spatio-temporal disruption; a disruption which intersects with the theoretical territory of psychogeography.

People with dementia are often regarded as unreliable narrators, and I first became interested in psychogeography when searching for archival and historical evidence that the places people with dementia referred to in stories they told about their lives actually existed. Or, at least, that they once had done, since the changes that have taken place in the outer built environment during a lifetime of 80 or 90 years are often extreme. The first section of the chapter, 'Locating narratives', therefore discusses narrative biographical work carried out with people with dementia as part of the Trebus Projects (trebusprojects.org). Many of the narrators were people whom staff in the care homes where they now lived believed could no longer communicate meaningfully and often their stories were dismissed as mere invention or attention seeking. It was noticeable, however, that very often they appeared to use quite precise geographical markers to 'signpost' memories from earlier life. I found that although many of these places had either disappeared or altered beyond recognition in the intervening decades, the references themselves were almost always accurate and verifiable. In one care home, for example, two women both referred independently in conversation to "black cat" While this could easily have been taken as a reference to a former pet or a superstitious belief, it emerged that in fact both women had worked at the Black Cat cigarette factory in Camden. In working with people with dementia there is often therefore a need to suspend our disbelief, and to resist what Russell Jacoby (1996) has described as "social amnesia"; the societal tendency to undervalue, and therefore to forget, the past. This resistance is, in itself a form of psychogeographical *détournement* (Debord and Wolman 1956) in that an existing concept - that of the amnesiac - is 'liberated' from its usual meaning and relocated in wider society. The destruction of memory lies as much in the outer world with its demolition sites, road-widening schemes, bomb damage, slum clearance and gentrification, as it does in the 'damaged' brain of the person with dementia. The tendency for people with dementia to 'wander', get lost, or become anxious in places that have changed significantly is better

understood when we consider it as a correlate of change in the external world as well as internal cognitive impairment.

The second aspect of my work discussed below is the use of walking interviews to facilitate communication with people who have dementia. This was a method I adopted during a series of participatory film and photography studies. Here the concept of ‘wandering’ – typically viewed as a behavioural symptom of dementia - is also ‘turned’ or liberated to recognise the active agency of the wandering person, in something more akin to the situationist *dérive*. Persisting in autonomous movement may, for example, be one person’s way of subverting the expected sick role of the ‘dementia patient’, or another person’s way of seeking escape from confinement. The walking interviews discussed here were therefore carried out, among other reasons, in order to ascertain what Debord (1958, 22) describes as “the effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of [those] individuals”.

Finally, I became increasingly interested in Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope (or ‘time-space’) and its application to the organisation of spatial and temporal elements in the stories told by people with dementia. The last section of the chapter therefore describes an unaccompanied urban walk that I undertook in Dalston, in North-East London, which had been mapped out using the words of Sid, one of the Trebus contributors, who died with dementia in 2012, having lived there 80 years earlier.

Using a process that David Serlin (2006) refers to as ‘recoding the possibilities of disabled experience’ the chapter therefore draws on a series of real, remembered and virtual walks with people diagnosed with dementia in order to explore their constructions of time, space and place. What follows is not a discussion of walking as a therapeutic activity for people with dementia, a subject that has been written about elsewhere (eg Mapes 2010). It is, rather, an attempt to use some of the theoretical tools provided by psychogeography to analyse their remembered journeys. More in the spirit of Grounded Theory than experimental research, I have drawn on the work of key thinkers in psychogeography including Benjamin, Debord and Ackroyd to suggest and where I think the links between psychogeography and dementia might lie, and to begin to explore them.

LOCATING NARRATIVES: THE TREBUS PROJECTS

Everything that the big city has thrown away,
everything it has lost, everything it has scorned,
everything it has crushed underfoot,
he catalogues and collects

-Walter Benjamin, 1938

Named after Edmund Trebus, a Polish war veteran who became famous for hoarding things other people believed to be rubbish in his Crouch End council flat (*A Life of Grime*, BBC, 20.4.99), the work of the Trebus Projects has been collected in two anthologies, *Ancient Mysteries* (Brown and Clegg 2007) and *Tell Mrs Mill her Husband is Still Dead* (Bryce et al 2010). Part of the founding ethos is that it is important to rescue stories told by people with dementia – stories that might otherwise have been consigned to the ‘dustbin of history’ - and to write them down while there is still time. In his introduction to the first volume, the director David Clegg notes: “Just how close to the edge we came is clear from the fact there are half a dozen stories here that include the last ever spoken words of the contributors” (Brown and Clegg 2007, 9).

To demonstrate, first of all, the regularity with which these narrators foreground geographical markers when invited to talk about themselves: out of 44 contributors to the

most recent volume (Bryce et al 2010) only two make no reference at all to a specific named place whilst more than half refer to a specific area, street or building. This suggests a strong and consistent tendency to locate themselves and their stories in geographical space; as Chaudhury (2008) has also noted, telling about self is telling about where we come from. References to place which come early in a narrative are generally also more precise; eg “Nayland Road...opposite the off-licence” (Nelson, line 1); “17 Alcroft Road” (Mabel, line 2); “a farm called Dungary” (Mrs Mill, line 2); “Heide, Germany” (Eva, line 4).

A further consistent finding is that these were not places where the narrators had lived recently. Rather, they are hometowns and birthplaces often left decades earlier. This is consistent with findings about autobiographical memory in dementia, in which it has been shown that memories of events that take place between around 6 and 30 years of age remain well-preserved, often for a considerable time (Thomsen and Bentsen 2008). Indeed many of the narratives appear to be ‘fastened onto’ geographical markers to such an extent that they appear to have been constructed as remembered journeys through geographical space. For example, within the first paragraph of her story, Meg (Brown and Clegg 2007, 139) says: “Where is this? Is it Harrow Road Nursery? I was brought up in a children’s home on the King’s Road. Bridestone Court? Just off George Street...Central London District School, Hanwell, Middlesex.” Here it seems that Meg is sifting back through a series of internalised images of places around which she might structure her story.

Following these threads often leads to moments of what Walter Benjamin (1929) describes as “profane illumination”; that is, “a materialist, anthropological inspiration”. A little further research tells us, for example, that Central London District School, the children’s home Meg refers to, was originally opened as a pauper school in 1856 and closed down in 1933, when Meg would have been a teenager. One of its earlier alumni was a certain Charles Chaplin. A present day map of a town in County Limerick called Newcastle West, fits exactly with Niamh’s story (Bryce et al 2010, 185-188) of walking up and down Maiden Street and across the “water bridge”. Digging a little deeper reveals that Niamh shares the street of her birth with the noted poet Michael Hartnett (1941-1999), among whose works is “*Maiden Street Ballad*” (1980). One verse of this ballad refers to Hartnett waking up in the morning to the sound of “John Kelly’s forge music...the sparks flying out like thick, golden sleet, from the force of his hammer and anvil”, a strikingly similar image to the following extract from Niamh’s story: “Did you see the forge where they done the horses? The horseshoes, my son, my brother, he used to mend the shoes...oh, and when they put it onto their feet, the smell and the smoke...one of the tallest men...he was a smith putting horseshoes.” By making these connections we become more aware that people with dementia have not just lived in a homogeneous ‘past’, but in real, historical time which intersects with social and national events.

Interesting too, from a psychogeographical perspective, are the connections made by the Trebus narrators between home, place memory, and emotional affect: “I’ve got to remember my road so I can get back”, says Christina, while Janet notes that “All my memories are at home”. Asked to describe his first memory, Aidan says it is “a slight memory only...like a short dream, of the house in Liverpool”. As these extracts indicate, people with dementia often cease to make the distinctions between past and present that are usual in contemporary Western thought, although not in many other world views. We are so accustomed to the idea of time as linear progress that it is easy to pathologize a version of reality in which past and present co-exist and interpenetrate. Psychogeography is, however, at ease with this standpoint, consistent with Benjamin’s notion (cited in Cohen 1993, 10) that: ‘It isn’t that the past casts its light on what is present, or that what is present casts its light on what is past; rather the Then and the Now come together in a constellation like a flash of lightning’

The figurative ‘wandering’ of people with dementia through remembered landscapes is also reminiscent of what has been described as the occultist tendency in psychogeography. Merlyn Coverley (2010, 124) for example draws attention to Peter Ackroyd’s “recognition of zones within the city which display chronological resonance with earlier events, activities and inhabitants.” Cohen (1993, 202) draws attention to the Gothic Marxism of much of Benjamin’s work, including his description of the ‘promenade into the past’, where “the street leads the strolling person into a vanished time”, and the ‘haunting’ of present day places by archaic place names. As demonstrated further below in the section about Sid’s story, ‘Places in the heart’, all of these are also features of the narratives of people with dementia. First, however, I want to explain a little about the use walking interviews with people with dementia as a method for creating research data.

WALKING INSIDE: EXPLORING THE ‘GO-ALONG’

Conducting social research with people who have dementia in ways which enable their active participation in data creation presents specific challenges. Due to the very nature of their disabilities, traditional methods such as ‘sit-down’ interviews are unlikely to be successful and can cause significant distress. For several years now, the focus of much of my research activity has been on methodological innovations which offer alternative ways of participating for people with dementia. Here there is a need to identify, explore and focus on faculties which remain relatively intact in dementia, such as procedural (or embodied) and emotional memory. Film-, music- and photo-elicitation are among these methods, as are walking interviews.

In recent years walking interviews have become popular in studies related to place, community, and the urban environment (Clark and Emmel 2010). As Phil Jones et al (2008, 1) point out, there is likely to be a significant connection between “what people say and where they say it”; there is, however, scant literature on the use of walking interviews with people who have dementia, even though it is a method which seems particularly appropriate for this participant group. Participant-led walking interviews are described by Margarethe Kusenbach (2003) as “the go-along”, because the research participant directs the route and the researcher follows. Kusenbach suggests that this method is particularly suited to five areas of enquiry: exploring environmental perception; spatial practices; biographies; social architecture, and social realms.

The first walking interviews I carried out with people with dementia were during participatory film-making projects carried out in two day centres for people with dementia between 2009 and 2011 (Chatwin and Capstick 2010; Capstick 2011; Capstick and Chatwin 2012). I had noticed that people were often more communicative whilst on the move, and that physical movement seemed to jog memories, promote narrative flow, and reduce anxieties related to what the person ‘ought’ to be doing. For example, Brian, like many people with dementia, had a spontaneous inclination to walk which was connected with his previous career or day-to-day life. In his own case this had been as a member of the Transport Police, and was something he rarely spoke about except when actually on his feet (Kusenbach’s biographies).

In another walking interview, Norma led me straight to a Christmas tree in the window of the lounge (social realm), and pointed out specific decorations, showing that she was aware that it was the focal point of the room (environmental perception). After a few minutes she became concerned that the cameraman was getting left behind and started to look round for him (spatial practices). She then led me out of the lounge into the hallway, turning right to show me a postbox in the shape of a snowman (social architecture), and pointing out the different coloured buttons down his front. This is a small example, but nevertheless

significant. As Norma rarely spoke, it was difficult, for example, to know how much of what was being said she actually understood. From her response to the invitation to show us around, however, it was evident that her comprehension was at a significantly higher level than her expressive language. Walking interviews may therefore be one way of avoiding what has been termed 'excess disability' for people with dementia.

Walking necessarily involves passing by a different range of objects and scenes than can be seen from any static position, and as a result often seems to trigger novel observations. Cyril, for example, voluntarily left a quiz game in the main lounge, where he had been sitting looking abstracted and slightly worried. Walking along the day centre corridor, he stopped to look at some framed pen and ink sketches on the wall, and then told us that he had won a scholarship to art school which he had always regretted not being able to take up. Here we see a move from a static activity involving cognitive skills which Cyril knew were deteriorating, to active walking and engagement with art work which reminded him of a talent he possessed.

Most of the series of walking interviews referred to above were carried out inside the day care environments in question, but for the final one we accompanied Cath back at the end of the day to the inner-city smallholding where she kept goats with her daughter. At the day centre Cath often seemed bored and sleepy, and she had a tendency to be self-deprecating, referring to herself as a "silly old woman". Out in the open, feeding the goats, however, her demeanour was completely different, and this was one of the things that first alerted me to the possibilities of 'walking outside'; that is to say carrying out walking interviews, such as the one outlined in the next section, in places which have particular meaning for the person taking part.

WALKING OUTSIDE: FROM FRENCHGATE MALL TO FISHPOND LANE

to lose one's way in a city,
as one loses one's way in a
forest, requires some schooling.

-Walter Benjamin, 2006

In 2012 John Chatwin and I recorded three film clips with Dennis Jubb, who was born in 1942 and has lived in the same street in Scawthorpe on the outskirts of Doncaster all his life. At the age of 59 Dennis was diagnosed with dementia. A life-long trade union activist, he went on to set up the People Relying on People (PROP) group in Doncaster and in 2010 was awarded a MBE for his work on behalf of people with dementia. The aim of the film was to record a pilot walking interview which contrasted 'static' communication with communication in response to an external environment which had emotional meaning for the person taking part, and which included sensory triggers, such as recovered sights and sounds. Dennis helped us with this pilot work in the role of a co-researcher rather than a research participant (Capstick, Chatwin and Jubb 2012).

When asked to think of a place he would like to re-visit, Dennis chose Castle Hills a place where he used to play as a boy. Located south-east of Adwick-le-Street, just off the Great North Road, Castle Hills is the original site of an 11th century earthwork motte and bailey fortress, founded by Nigel Fossard. Although it was within easy walking distance of his home, Dennis said he hadn't been there for over 60 years.

There first film clip shows Dennis sitting in the porch of his home and answering questions in standard 'sit-down' interview format. His speech is quite hesitant and he pauses and asks whether there is anything else I want him to say. Asked about a place he dislikes, he

talks about the Frenchgate Shopping Centre in Doncaster. He explains that the layout makes him very confused; once inside he found it difficult to get out again and had to ask for help, which he found embarrassing. In his ‘Theory of the Dérive’, Guy Debord (1958, 22) notes that “cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry or exit from certain zones.” Shopping malls have been consciously designed to keep people circling within them for as long as possible, but due to his cognitive disability, Dennis had a heightened, and somewhat ironic, awareness of this form of manipulation.

In the second clip we walk through the housing estate where Dennis lives and pass through a grassed over area which used to be a quarry where he remembers lighting bonfires with his friends and trying to cook things on them: “We’d try to cook anything; even a cabbage or summat.” He starts to become more animated at this point, using hand gestures to explain how the area has changed over time. Later, back at home, he drew us a diagram of how the quarry used to look with its steep stone walls, by comparison with the new landscape-designed contours.

In the final clip we walk down a narrow lane towards Castle Hills (“And this takes you into Castle Hills itself, this does”). The site is now overgrown, and although it doesn’t look quite as Dennis remembered it (“It weren’t overgrown like this, then”) there were other sensory triggers. It had been raining heavily earlier in the day, but brightened up while we were walking. There was an evocative smell of damp foliage, the texture of mud underfoot, a rather steamy atmosphere, and periodic dappled sunlight through the leaves.

What happened at this point was more than we had bargained for. Dennis became enthusiastic about the prospect of finding a stream where he used to catch sticklebacks in a jam-jar as a boy. The film shows him run down a bank ahead of me and begin to plough his way through dense overgrowth, talking excitedly (“Oh, hang on, we’ve got a stream here, look!”). The stream although heavily overgrown was still where Dennis remembered it, in a place that we discovered used to be known locally as Fishpond Lane. Here it seemed that Dennis was not merely “drawn by the attractions of the terrain” (Debord 1958, 22) but almost bodily impelled by them. “So we found the stream, didn’t we? Yeah, yeah” he says, as the film ends.

PLACES IN THE HEART: WALKING WITH CHRONOTOPIC NARRATIVE

there is a place in the heart that will never be filled
and we will wait
and wait
in that space

- Charles Bukowski, 1986

Sid was born in Dalston, London in 1918, and died in November 2012, aged 94, just a few months before the ‘walk in his shoes’ that I am about to describe took place. Sid’s story appears in both Trebus anthologies and was recorded twice four years apart. He was the youngest of seven children, and his upbringing was, as he puts it, “rock-bottom, working class...no money” (Bryce et al 2010, VI). The memories Sid returns to time and again in his final years are those of his childhood and teenage friends, “the Richmond Road Gang” many of whom were later lost during active service in WWII (Capstick and Clegg 2013). He uses the evocative, and distinctly psychogeographical term “street-roving” to describe his loitering around Dalston in the 1930s. His narrative, with its constant return to places thronged with vivid associations from the past, exemplifies Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope (Gr chronos – time; topos – place).

Chronotopes are points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse. Time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people...Chronotopes thus stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members' images of themselves (Bakhtin 1981, 84).

Here, for example, is Sid describing the process of remembering as a physical act of 'rewinding': "When I look back over the years...I sit quietly sometimes...I go right through the whole history of it, and everything goes back to the beginning... It all runs back into a film, and it starts at the beginning with a baker's shop..." (Bryce et al 2010, VII).

The baker's shop and the lamppost outside it on the corner of his street are a constant theme in Sid's story:

I often walk around those houses now, and there's a lamppost on the corner...I often get up at night and go on to the corner, a few yards along near the baker's... Sometimes I sit here and it gives me something to think about, going back over the different times, telling the story to myself over and over and over again. It seems to me like, for some particular reason, the past people are always trying to attract my attention (ibid, VIII-IX).

In Sid's narrative, time-space is noticeably different from linear time; the overall chronotopic organisation is one which figures backwards and forwards, more often by way of allusion and free association than chronological order of events.

As Newland (2005) notes, chronotopes can function as metaphors which condense socio-cultural history within a narrative form. Reflecting that as a child he spent a lot of time in hospital Sid comments, for example, that he was "in and out of hospital like, like... something that goes in and out a lot...a pawnbroker's" (Brown and Clegg 2007, 101). The narrative strands here are multiple and intertwined. Medical treatment wasn't free at the time, and it's possible that Sid's parents did have to pawn their possessions in order to pay for his mastoid operations. The hospital, he has said just prior to this, is in City Road, which brings to mind the nursery rhyme, "Up and down the City Road, In and out of the Eagle, That's the way the money goes, Pop goes the weasel." Putting something 'in pop' is a slang term for pawning it, and 'in hock' refers both to being in hospital, and putting an item in pawn. When Sid later refers to his brothers and sisters as "the daily bakers, in life already" (Bryce et al 2010, VIII) he may mean that some of them literally worked in the bake-house next door. On the other hand the phrase is also reminiscent of the line from the Lord's Prayer 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The imagery used here is therefore over-determined in the sense that Sigmund Freud (1900) used the term to refer to dream images; multi-layered and incapable of determinate analysis.

Sid and his gang were "hanging around the streets together" (Brown and Clegg 2007, 104) at much the same time as Breton and his contemporaries in Paris. The difference, of course, as has always been the case for the mass of the people, is that for Sid and the Richmond Road Gang their *'flanerie'* was a matter of necessity, not an artistic or political gesture. Their homes were small and their families were large, so that staying indoors was not an option. They walked for something to do and often, no doubt, in order to keep warm. Their "street level gaze" - to borrow Coverley's (2010) phrase - is expressed in Sid's narrative through frequent reference to local landmarks they passed along the way: Canal Bridge, Mare Street, Hackney Town Hall, Carbie's Furniture Shop, Hackney Empire, the Wesleyan Church, and 'the (London) Fields'. In all, there are fifteen explicit references in just four

pages of narrative to precise geographical locations which it is possible to check against contemporary maps and archive photographs.

As a Northerner I was not familiar with Dalston, and had to transfer these locations onto a present day map before I could chart out a walking route following Sid's narrative. The area in question was approximately one mile square, bordered by Dalston Lane on the North, Mare Street on the East, Regent's Canal on the South and Kingsland Highway to the East. It took four years from the initial inception of this idea to carry out the walk, but on two occasions in March and June 2013 I walked the grid several times taking photographs as I went. On the first visit, I walked from Regent's Canal Bridge at the Southern border of the grid, up to Hackney Old Town Hall at the Northern extreme. These are the landmarks mentioned first in Sid's account of his old stamping ground, and he describes his home as lying midway between them.

There were three different Hackney Town Hall buildings in Sid's lifetime. Hackney Old Town Hall at the top of Mare Street is now a gambling emporium owned by Coral's. The second building further down the same street and adjacent to Hackney Empire was demolished in 1934 and replaced by the current one on the same site. When I was there in March 2013 it was shrouded in a sort of huge dustsheet bearing a faint image of itself while it underwent further refurbishment; a literal palimpsest.

On the second visit I spent time in the Hackney Archive looking at maps and photographs of the district from the 1920s and 30s. Together with census data they enabled me to identify the house Sid had lived in as 69 Middleton Road, on a junction with Holly Street. The area has undergone a degree of gentrification in recent years, and the house numbering has been altered. Number 69 is no longer on the corner where Sid describes it but further down the street, and the houses on that side of the street have been replaced by low-rise villas. The houses on the opposite side of the street are still intact; narrow, three-storey terraces with a basement window, so it was still possible to see how Sid's house must once have looked. Records show that many houses in the area were demolished due to bombing and post-war slum clearance projects. Prefabs came into use in the late 40s and 50s, followed by tower blocks erected in the 1960s, some of which were themselves demolished in subsequent decades. Currently new tower blocks are once again being built at the North end of Holly Street. Hackney Empire has an almost unchanged front elevation, but from the side an unpleasant new multiplex-style façade looks as though it has somehow forced itself up out of the earth, like a demolition in reverse.

Of other buildings Sid refers to, Hackney Road Children's Hospital closed down in 1998 and is currently derelict, although there are plans to convert it into flats. Like many other areas, Mare Street still has a noticeable profusion of pawnbrokers, cash converters and cash-for-gold shops, a part of the landscape of Sid's childhood that hasn't changed. Shop-fronts are superficially different, but the architecture above ground floor level is largely unchanged in the buildings that remain.



Figure 13.1. Shop front, Mare Street, surviving Victorian building with postwar infill

Many of the shops now sell kebabs and mobile phones rather than furniture, but there is still an independently owned fish shop (perhaps this has always been there, as the ‘Fresh Fish’ sign on the first floor stucco suggests a long history). The planes that Sid describes as coming “all the way from Germany to blow up the fish shop” did not prevail here, then. Elsewhere, however, there are many signs that buildings have been taken down by one or more storeys. The Wesleyan Church was completely demolished in 1949 due to bomb damage. Sid refers to it having taken a “light bombing”, but I suspect this is his term for the “*blitzkrieg*” (or “lightning war”) rather than superficial damage.

A 1993 survey found Mare Street to be a nondescript mixture of low-rise factories, shops, and institutional buildings... London Fields industrial area around London Lane appeared run down: nearly all the railway arches had been blocked up... Victorian terraces were mixed with more prosperous industry in Ellingfort and Richmond Roads.

It is hard to say at what point, if any, Sid would have ceased to recognise his old haunts. What it does seem safe to say is that these changes in the external environment – demolitions, rebuildings, shifting skylines – have as much impact on the ‘disorientation in time and space’ held to characterise dementia as do any lesions in brain tissue. At the time of his death Sid could still rely his own ‘re-wound’ memory to find his way back to the lamp-post on the corner outside 69 Middleton Street where the “past people”, many of them now long dead, were still waiting for him. In the outer world, though, his house no longer existed, and his address now belonged a different building altogether.

CONCLUSION

I’d like to go back to London now
and collect 20, or 30 or 40 people
in a group and talk to them about it.

- Sid, quoted in Bryce et al. 2010: viii

Neurones may die and hemispheres shrink within an ageing brain, but at the same time, in the external world, buildings are demolished, skylines fall and rise again, old slums

are replaced with tower blocks and the tower blocks themselves are pulled down and replaced by something else. The vicissitudes of memory in dementia are therefore not just a matter of individual pathology, but an ongoing negotiation between an internalised psychosocial landscape and the constantly shifting structure of the external world. In this, they are also the vicissitudes of postmodernity, with its many versions of reality, and its deconstruction of the idea of time as linear progress. Thinking psychogeographically, dementia can be decentered from its assumed location within the individual brain, out into a shared social environment.

This chapter has attempted, among other things, to reclaim psychogeography for those for whom walking has been a socially and historically contingent act: of survival, protest or escape. The content is not driven by theory, but instead attempts to use theory to understand the lived experience of dementia. I hope to have shown how psychogeographical concepts help to address some of these challenges.

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