

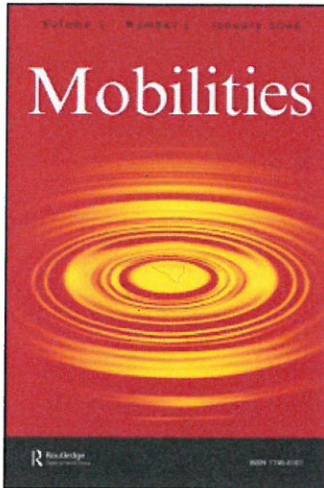
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Walking Again Lively: Towards an Ambulant and Conversive Methodology of Performance and Research

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Walking Again Lively: Towards an Ambulant and Conversive Methodology of Performance and Research

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ABSTRACT *Narrative walking practices, or modes of conversational activity set in motion by the conditions of wayfinding, potentially offer mobile and dialogic methods of engaging with experiences of mobility and of representing those experiences. They also offer alternative ways of intervening in politics and policy impacting on the distribution of mobility or immobility. The artwork way from home employed such practices as a performative, participatory and interventional methodology for eliciting and representing the transnational experiences, affects and significances of place for refugees and asylum seekers across the UK. The various strategies conceived here as homing devices, homing tales and conversive wayfinding, were employed to construct ‘meeting places’ where transnational views, perspectives, experiences and knowledge could be exchanged. This methodology proposes alternatives to hegemonies of communication, representation and authorship in both artistic and scholarly production, through processes that interrelate experiential, analytical and interventional ways of knowing.*

KEY WORDS: Conversive wayfinding; homing tales; homing place; ambulant methods

Introduction

The association of walking with both ethnographic and arts practices is not new (on walking and ethnography see Lee & Ingold, 2006; Vergunst & Ingold, 2008; on walking as arts practice see Solnit, 2001; Careri 2002). Recently, however, walking has been exploited as a strategy for developing innovative approaches to knowledge production and representation (Pink *et al.*, 2010; Myers, 2010), such as in the ‘shared walk’ (Lee & Ingold, 2006), the ‘go-along’ (Kusenbach, 2003), ‘commented walks’ (Winkler, 2002), and others (Jenks & Neves, 2000; Anderson, 2004; Pink 2007, 2008; Vergunst & Ingold, 2008). Walking has been considered as an aesthetic and critical practice (Bassett, 2004) and as a form of urban exploration with particular political

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and critical significance (Pinder, 2005). Attention has been given to alternative methods of research and representation of research in audio walks (Pinder, 2001; Butler, 2006), peripatetic video (Witmore, 2005; Pink, 2007), and experimentation with walking narrative as a performative form of critical writing (Wylie, 2005). Carl Lavery has argued that the language and concerns of ethnographic practices may be more suitable for understanding performance walking practices than the discourse of drama studies (Lavery, 2005, 150). In the social sciences, O'Neill and Hubbard have suggested that there is an increasing turn to work traditionally associated with the performing arts with the search for spatial practices and modes of expression to further explore textures of place (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 47).

The methodology developed through the artwork and performance research project *way from home* (2002–2008) contributes to this circulation across disciplinary boundaries. It does so through experimentation with and close examination of specific processes and conditions that converge to create aesthetic forms of walking events as sensuous and dialogical ways of knowing and presenting transnational knowledge and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. The project also extends questions of migration and belonging in debate across the social sciences and humanities. In particular, it considers how refugees and asylum seekers locate themselves and develop attachments 'in the here-and-now as well as the far-away', which O'Neill and Hubbard argue have not been fully considered (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 46). While the methodology developed through *way from home* emphasised performative and dialogic processes of walking, visual processes were also employed to present emotional experiences of, or associations with, space and place. A parallel research project led by Divya Tolia-Kelly, *Nurturing Ecologies*, also employed visual processes involving painting of the landscape together with walking, to record and consider the value of rural landscapes to mobile and translocal communities (Tolia-Kelly, 2008). As Tolia-Kelly usefully demonstrated, such processes potentially problematise ethnocentric accounts and move beyond the delimitations of language and/or language barriers to give tangible expression and articulation to more abstract experiences of motion and emotion (Tolia-Kelly, 2008, pp. 124–125). The methodological concerns of *way from home* are also aligned to recent debates in Participatory Design. For example, how can participation be enabled through new information and communications technologies, and how do these technologies potentially enhance communication within diasporic communities (Srinivasan & Shilton, 2006)? Given the way in which knowledge moves or may be immobilised by certain modes of knowledge production and representation, walking practices were employed in *way from home* as both participatory and interventional performance research, and indeed as arts practices that involve transcultural communication and exchange of diverse perspectives. Particular challenges and opportunities emerge with the combination of the different modes of knowing, presentation and action. The confrontation of hegemonies of communication, representation and authorship will be explored in the discussion that follows on the links between aesthetics and knowledge production.

The methodological strategy employed in *way from home* involved a participant's response to an artist/researcher's proposition as the structure and condition of both the production and reception of the artwork and as a non-hierarchical mode of discourse. Regarding the role of communicative action in 'social practice art', Wallace Heim suggests: 'The artist navigates, rather than conducts, the flow of the conversation. The

artist asks the instigating question, listens, sets a context for action, creates an aesthetic milieu in which an event is mutually created' (Heim, 2005, p. 203). The methodology proposed in *way from home* becomes possible with artistic/research mechanisms, forms, milieus or questions that allow for and invite reinvention by participants with that process of innovation operating as the locus and direction of the work/research and of knowledge production itself.

Background of Way from Home

Way from home began in 2002 with a set of instructions for a walk that was initially designed as a strategy for reflecting on my own experience as a US immigrant to the UK. These instructions involved making a map of a journey from a place I considered 'home' to a special place. I then took a walk following that map in my present location. These instructions were later developed as a way to engage in dialogue with refugees and asylum seekers inhabiting the nearby city of Plymouth, UK. I invited refugee support workers from the grassroots organisation Refugees First, also themselves refugees, to make their own map and then take a wander in Plymouth superimposing the landmarks of the city over their map of 'home'. While I began this dialogue without any preconceived or predetermined research or artistic outcomes or goals in mind, specific concerns emerged from this dialogic and peripatetic process about how spatial representations produced through it are interrelated with original home memories and home identity making. Particular questions and goals arose about how these spatial narrative practices might offer innovative methods of evocation and presentation of transnational perspectives, experiences, and knowledge that are simultaneously aesthetical, collaborative, analytical and interventional. These methods were explored through various events and modes of public presentation as alternatives to highly authored or authoritative representations, and indeed, as embodied and dialogical ways of revealing structural factors affecting migrants to public officials.

Between 2002 and 2004, I conducted exploratory wanders, research and dialogue with inhabitants and refugee support organisations. Participants were invited to create an impromptu hand-drawn sketch map of a route from a place they consider home to a special place with significant landmarks marked along the way. Following this map as a guide, an improvised walk was then taken elsewhere. The landmarks encountered in the present environment were transposed and re-named with those coinciding remembered landmarks of the map.

The first step of the *way from home* instructions invited the participant to identify a place called home. This sometimes presented an unsettling contradiction for the presumption it makes that 'home' could be represented as a precisely determined and fixed mark (Myers, 2006c). A conversation began with a discussion of what 'home' meant to the walker as they made a decision of where that would be for them and then marked it on the page. Next, they drew a sketch map of a journey from that place to a special place nearby (see Figure 1). The conversation continued as the map was drawn with the witness asking questions to help the mapmaker remember significant landmarks along the way. The sketch map then became the stimulus for another conversation that took to the streets and wandered. The route taken in the present was improvised and discovered as the walker made choices about scale and direction

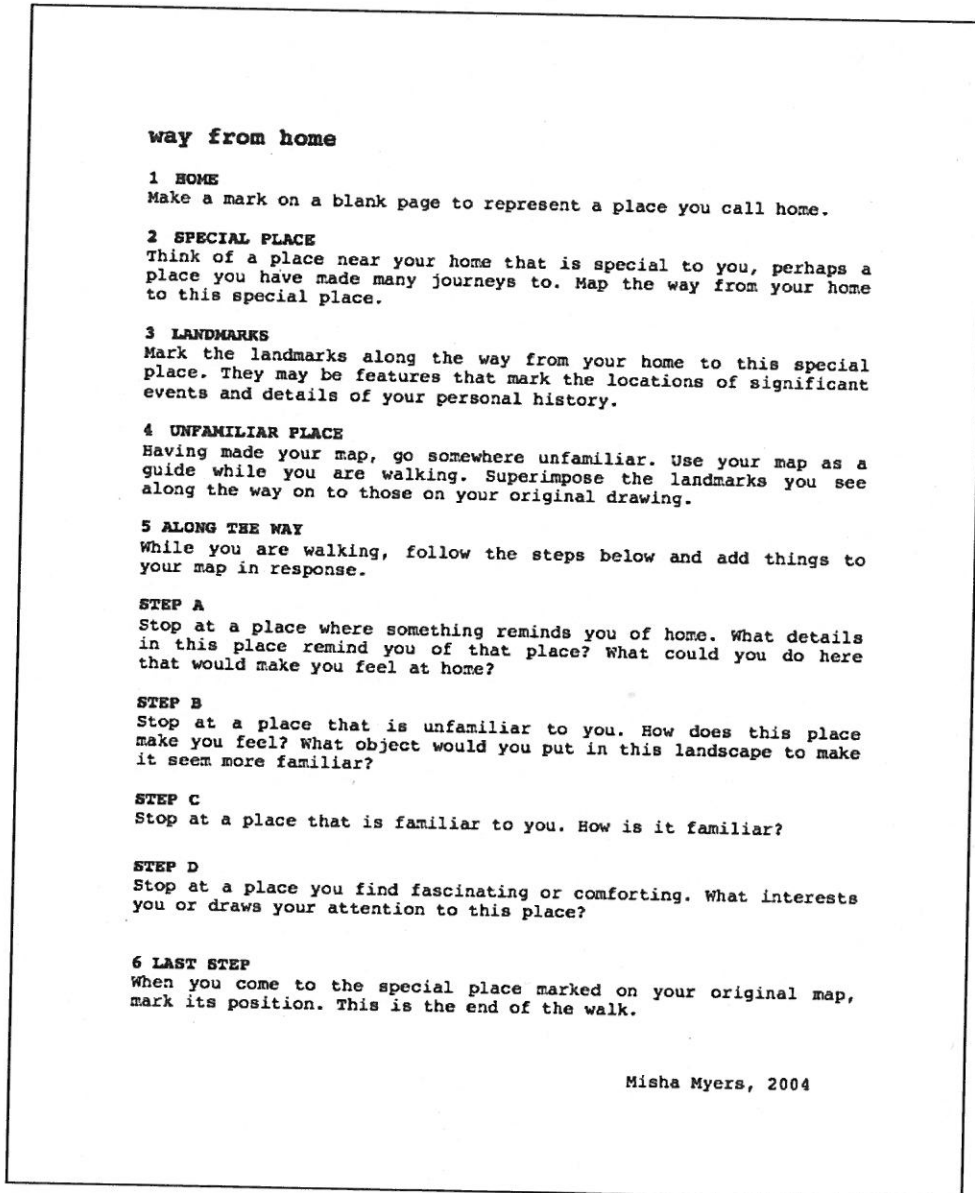


Figure 1. Instructions from *way from home* (2004).

based on the memory of a route taken in the past. They looked for landmarks in the actual environment to transpose and re-name with those on their map. Instead of asking a series of pre-determined and direct questions about the everyday life of individuals experiencing forced migration, or their journeys, arrivals, reasons for leaving, etc., the instructions allowed the walker to determine what details or stories they wanted to share, if any. The landmarks became potential openings and headings for conversation to follow. An extended version of the instructions invited the walker to

stop at places where something reminded them of home, or that was unfamiliar, familiar or comforting.

There were various outcomes and moments of presenting this work in the public domain that involved interventional action and developed over several years, both in partnership with refugee support organisations, such as Refugees First, and in direct response to their particular needs or goals. A multi-media digital artwork was developed from a set of responses to the instructions for the walk and published online (available at www.wayfromhome.org).¹ This online presentation of the project was first conceived to attract an AOL Innovation in the Community Award for Refugees First, which gave the support organisation direct capital to acquire computers and Internet access they required to better deliver services to their clients. Additionally, Refugees First invited the BBC's involvement in the project as a strategy to counter negative attention refugees were receiving in the media. This association resulted in a radio broadcast of audio recordings of the set of walks included in the digital artwork. Further workshops facilitated walks with refugee and asylum seeker inhabitants and public officials. As a consultant on the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Knowledge Transfer project *Trans-national Communities: Towards a Sense of Belonging* (conducted in 2008),² the methods developed through the *way from home* project were further adapted and explored to initiate a process of participatory research through creative practice involving four arts and refugee and asylum seeker organisations in the English East Midlands.

In the discussion that follows, I will first consider how knowledge is exchanged through the mobile and dialogical methods employed in *way from home* to enable collaborative modes of knowledge production. In turn, the propositional structure of these methods will be examined in further detail. Following on from the questions of authority and authorship raised by such structures, debates on participation will also be examined and lead to a consideration of the politics and ethics of aesthetics, knowledge production and mobility. Thereafter, I will present *way from home* in a digital context and explore the potential for collective and public scholarship together with the recollection of memory arising from the digitization process. The relationship between the narrativising of home and home-identity-making is then considered in relation to different progressive theorisations of home and nostalgia. This is followed by a discussion of the critical capacities and opportunities that exist within the non-linear or disorderly structures of transnational narratives, in particular how the exchange of such 'disorderly tellings' offers effective modes of transcultural communication and knowledge production. Finally, I will conclude by analysing the principles of propositional modes of social interaction employed in *way from home* and which effectively enable innovative modes of producing and presenting heterogeneous forms of knowledge.

Discussion

Making Conversation: The Sociability of Walking

Way from home involves a spatial practice of walking that activates encounters within and with particular contexts through ambulant, kinaesthetic and communicative movement and interaction, or what I have referred to as *conversive wayfinding*

(Myers, 2010). This notion is informed by a relational sense of space as proposed by Doreen Massey's definition of the spatial as a sphere of intersected, juxtaposed and co-existent narratives, and as the product of power-filled social relations (Massey, 2005). The sociability and conversive activity initiated through this practice is not limited to human focused verbal exchange and relation. Rather, an embodied multi-sensorial and multi-directional sense of communication and motion is involved that includes various dimensions of connection with the materiality of the world the walkers move within. Indeed, wayfinding is thereby understood in this practice not only as a practice of orientation, but also as an action of identity and place-making. As suggested by Edward Casey, 'dwelling is accomplished not by residing but by wandering' (Casey, 1993, p. 115). Where Ingold conceives of ordinary practices of *wayfinding* as processes that are more like storytelling than map-making (Ingold, 2007), wayfinding may be understood as a more temporal, embodied, and sensorial relation within the world. With this mode of engagement the map may be considered a by-product of the more primary activity of orientation. According to Ingold, those maps that are created as part of the process of wayfaring are 'not so much representations of space as condensed histories' (Ingold, 2000, p. 220). Therefore, conversive wayfinding may be considered to be both constructing place and senses of identification through communicative interaction, as well as the exchange and expression of co-existent paths of movement and narrative.

While conversation has been recognised as an aesthetic event (Heim, 2003; Kester, 2004), conversive wayfinding occurs in the conversational activity set in motion by the conditions of wayfinding. This form of conversation is particular to that of movement with another within the world as articulated in Lee and Ingold's study of the 'shared walk' (Lee & Ingold, 2006). They suggest: 'During a shared walk, people very often talk to each other, yet the talking usually involves very little direct eye contact' (Lee & Ingold, 2006, p. 79) as the walkers' focus and attention is also directed at and within the world through which they move. They argue this mode of conversation may seem to be less socially interactive than that of face-to-face conversation where 'one sees the other person's eyes, [but] does not see what he or she sees' (Lee & Ingold, 2006, p. 80). However, walking with another involves different dimensions of conviviality, including both social and environmental connection. This was indicated by one of the participants involved in the *way from home* digital artwork when he described his experience of the walk:

It was a relaxed way. You feel as if you are telling a story to someone. Through that walk coming to relate certain places that are kind of the same way that they used to be back home. It gives you another way of looking at things ... it gave me a time off, which was a relaxed time. Time to know people ... time to get to socialise with people. And another one was definitely at the time when we met, I really hadn't been around Plymouth, so [it] gave me the opportunity of knowing other areas around Plymouth.

As suggested by this participant, an added dimension of the sociability of the *way from home* walk was becoming familiar with unknown places or re-familiar with previously known ones. This was an experience shared by other walkers. One Zimbabwean woman who walked as part of a group along the banks of the River Trent in

Nottingham as part of the *way from home* walks that launched the *Trans-national Communities* project suggested, 'This is my first time since I came here to be near the water like this; I have never been near to it' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 53). Much of the conversation on this walk along the river focused on descriptions of similarities and differences between the textures of this river environment and a remembered one in Africa, including contrasts between movement and sounds of water, air temperatures, types of birds, vegetation and human activities:

The river is nice but to me looks artificial very artificial. Even the flow looks very artificial. [*laughs*] Cos our rivers have got rocks and stuff, some places noisy, some quiet, bubbles because water is going down then up. Activity in the river. But this one is quiet, looks artificial to me. Looks like tamed water. Our rivers would be more natural more life, might be a tree growing in the middle, growing fruit and people would swim to get edible fruits and sometimes you find lots of roots in the river because of the trees by the banks and sometimes lots of rocks and sand. And sometimes people washing by the water and when you approach. (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 53)

For some walkers in the group in Nottingham a relationship was developed with the River Trent as much as with the other walkers, with some participants deciding to return there for future walks together or alone. Similarly, a walker in Plymouth developed an affinity with a particular place or environment, evidenced when he said in his walk towards the sea, 'This is a nice thing. I better come here again'. Another dimension of sociability in walking was the sharing of knowledge about facilities and resources that have been subsequently useful to refugee and asylum seeker participants. This emphasises 'the reciprocity and sharing of knowledge inherent in practices of walking' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 52).

While walking does not necessarily involve embodiment or participation (Lee & Ingold, 2006, p. 81) a corporeal experience was shared with the *way from home* walks. This was noted by O'Neill and Hubbard in their analysis of transcripts from the walks taken as part of the *Trans-national Communities* walks and post-walk workshop reflections. They suggest, 'the act of walking allowed participants to engage in the routes and mobilities of others. For those co-walkers from the 'host' community, this meant that they contrasted their pace and styles of walking the city with the walks remembered by the refugee walkers' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 50). This contrasting of paces and styles also co-exists alongside a mutual adjustment to, or convergence of, a shared pace in order for the walking together to occur.

This aspect of ambulant conversation generates potential opportunities for empathetic witnessing and collaborative knowledge production, making it particularly conducive as an alternative methodology to participant observation that enables 'co-present immersion' (Büscher & Urry, 2009, p. 105), or what Dwight Conquergood referred to as 'coperformative witnessing' of a 'participatory epistemology' (Conquergood, 2002, p. 142), a proposition of performance as a way of moving between different domains of knowledge, between action and analysis, to become a mode of radical research. Through performance he suggested three different and interwoven ways of knowing: first, artistic processes and forms of performance are understood as experiential and participatory modes of engagement and understanding;

secondly, both model and method, performance is a way of critical reflection, of contextualisation of 'collaborative dimensions of human communication'; and thirdly, this knowledge is applied beyond the academic institution through social engagement, in connection and collaboration with a community (Conquergood, 2002, p. 142). Put simply in the comments of a Plymouth police officer on his walk with a young refugee as part of *way from home*, 'We walked, we talked, we understood more'. The young refugee commented on how he noticed other passersby looking at them walking together with expressions of surprise. 'When I walk in the street people often think I'm a criminal because I'm black. So it was probably a surprise for them to see us walking together smiling and talking instead of me being in handcuffs'.³ These different ways of knowing – experiential, analytical and interventional – were all interrelated and directly performed in the processes employed in *way from home*.

Negotiating and Navigating Conversation

The notion of 'wayfinding' is used here to describe a negotiation and navigation of an undetermined and changeable path according to the relations between the knowledge of previous journeys and what is experienced and encountered along the way. As with wayfinding, there is flexibility and unpredictability built into the methodology employed in *way from home*. The processes involved depended upon situational and unstable conditions, such as group dynamics and an unpredictable response, a precondition that was inherent to its propositional or conversational structure. There must be both fluid and fixed dynamics involved in conversational structures to enable them to take their course. The rules of conversation 'are not overt, but situationally co-determined' (Goldenberg & Reed, 2008).

In *way from home*, place played a significant part in those situational conditions that exerted situational authority in the conversation. There was both choice and improvisation involved in the temporal displacement process of tracing a route from elsewhere and when through to a location in the present. As the walker determined the scale and dimension of the relationship between their map and the city by encountering obstacles, the walker had to make decisions and negotiate their own way. 'Conversations were had about which way looked most promising, with the city exercising an intuitive pull over the body at various times that often contradicted the logic of the map' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 51). A walker in Plymouth was pulled along in this way by these affecting 'haptic sensations associated with the remembered walk' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 51). The actual smell of the sea both reminded him of Lake Tanganyika, the special place at the end of his mapped route, and led him to it. Similarly, a walker in the *Trans-national Communities* walks decided to take a street that gently sloped downwards as he remembered that he used to go down a hill at some point along his route. With another walker, the city seemed to reject rather than summon the re-enactment of embodied feelings. While following his remembered route from Arbil to Akra to a sacred landscape of mountain caves and waterfalls where his family spent Ramadan and enjoyed summer picnics, he walked through the commercial city centre of Plymouth in a cold rain. When a surfing accessories store 'Just Add Water' with a fake waterfall inside aligned with a remembered waterfall on his map, the stark disparity between the haptic sensations of weather and cultural practices reminded him of the different values and customs that alienated him

from feeling any sense of belonging in this environment. This contrast between these worlds literally immobilised him, and he refused associations or associations moved him in a different way. He stopped walking at some point and within his immobilisation, his verbal articulation and analysis of the cultural differences that he found so difficult to navigate in this artificial and commercial landscape of the city became more critically and emotionally impassioned. Finally, at the end of his oratorical movement, the percipient offered that if we had been walking along Plymouth's Hoe, a park bordering the sea, he would have felt more at home. This revealed just how specific, localised and ephemeral the conditions that constitute feelings of alienation and belonging can be. The dynamics of movement involved in the propositional structures and conditions of *way from home* are not simply or literally those of spatial or territorial motion, but also those of the gradual and incremental adjustments and responses the partners in the conversation make to the obstacles, questions, challenges, desires and directions that emerge through the conversation as it goes along.

Politics and Ethics of Knowledge Production and Mobility

Elsewhere I have employed the term *percipient* to both refer to a particular participant and mode of participation that is involved through this mobile and dialogic process in *way from home* and to also describe the role of the artist/researcher (Myers, 2006a, 2008). Where in its common usage a *percipient* refers to a person who perceives the world through their senses, I have employed this term to refer to a participant as a locus of place and knowledge production who alters and determines a process and its outcomes through their skilful, embodied and sensorial engagement (Myers, 2006a, 2008). Previously, I have distinguished this mode of participation from a more passive, pre-determined and/or pre-directed mode.

Corporeal practices, such as walking, involve percipients in kinaesthetic, dialogic, mobile and multi-sensory modes of knowing, communicating and engaging with lived experience. Knowledge is produced and presented beyond the conventional boundaries, senses, roles and rules of the stages and pages of performance and discourse. In *way from home* a proposition set a process of walking and talking in motion that could also be described as associating and dissociating, of storytelling and translating. Rather than those processes happening as isolated activities, they take place through direct communication and interactivity, through a collective production and exchange of knowledge.

While it is clear that interactivity, or the transformation of spectatorship into collective activity or of representation into presence, does not necessarily result in non-hierarchical modes of knowledge production or presentation, innovations in such modes of performance and knowledge production raise questions about how the movement of knowledge is controlled and circulated in scholarly discourse. To whom and where is it circulated? Where geographical mobility is often emphasised in mobility studies, it is worth considering the mobility and 'motility' (Hannam *et al.*, 2006, p. 3) of ideas in scholarly discourse. Whose ideas have scholarly significance, or the potential for entry into academic discourse, or scholarly motility? How does the privilege and emphasis given to discursive and written forms of representation as products of research in the research economy limit the mobility of other forms of knowledge production or its destinations? These questions connect back to issues

raised in the introduction of this paper about how knowledge moves or is arrested by certain modes of knowledge production and representation.

The conditions and effects of making art and doing research are interrelated with conventions of legitimisation that also involve the artist or researcher's own mobility. As Miwon Kwon has observed, artists' and academics' success, viability and sense of self-worth is more often 'measured by the accumulation of frequent flyer miles' and predicated on a suffering through the aggravations of 'not being at home (or not having a home), of always travelling through elsewhere' (Kwon, 2004, p. 156). Already entangled in these affects of living and working in an elsewhere, with *way from home* I engaged with somewhere that was both closer to home and elsewhere, and with a group of individuals who shared this transnational perspective, albeit one predicated on incommensurate distributions of and access to mobilities. The proximity of my fieldsite allowed me to develop the project incrementally and gradually over time as a methodological strategy that resisted 'professional itinerancy' for more sustained collaborations and commitments (Kester, 2004, p. 171). Artists' capacities to understand and work effectively with the nuances of a given context, and to preserve its critical autonomy, can be compromised by the common practice in art production to commission artists to work in contexts where they have no prior connection and for brief durations of time (Kester, 2004, p. 172). While such an involvement may involve abiding within a context, it is not necessarily static or stationary. As discussed above, the negotiation of the conditions of the research and arts practice also requires a kind of movement, i.e. processes of on-going and cumulative adjustment and adaptation to the needs and desires of the context and its inhabitants. Indeed, the methodological strategies developed and proposed in *way from home* involve movement in multiple ways and directions simultaneously, not just through walking territorially, but also digitally and in the imagination. While these are modes of mobility that are often neglected with the emphasis on geographical mobility, Fay has argued that 'one's physical location is no longer the only reference point for belonging, nor for interaction. That is to say, one can be in any one place physically, while simultaneously dwelling elsewhere via the use of communication technology' (Fay 2008, p. 74). With *way from home* there is an opportunity for an online user to 'take a walk' online and/or in the imagination through the digital interface developed as part of the project. As suggested by Urry, cyberspace and 'real' space are inter-connected and related spaces and digital and imaginative space might trigger physical movement in or alteration of real space (Urry in Fay, 2008, p. 74). In *way from home* the act of recollection (of memory) also interrelates and alters present experiences of place. Tolia-Kelly proposes that there is a *triadic* inter-relationship in the geographical coordinates of past, present and utopian landscapes, where past and present landscapes are constitutive of each other and of 'ideal landscapes of home' (Tolia-Kelly, 2006, p. 351).

Collaborative Public Scholarship and Recollection

While many of the conversations performed in response to the *way from home* instructions remain as ephemeral and intimate interactions that were only 'recorded' through the sketch maps produced by percipients, the digital artwork served as a mode of presenting the results of a collaborative process of knowledge production as a kind of 'public scholarship' (Pink *et al.*, 2010, p. 4), creating more permeable boundaries

between academic and public contexts in what has come to be known as ‘knowledge transfer’ activity. In addition, the digital artwork instigates further modes of communicative activity that offer not only modes of collective knowledge production and representation, but also of collective formation of memory.

Through the interface of the *way from home* digital artwork (see Figure 2), an audience is taken on a virtual walk along a walker’s route by following and/or manipulating a three-dimensional video of the walker’s sketch map, while listening to an audio recording of the walker describing their remembered landmarks in relation to landmarks or mundane details encountered in Plymouth. Memories, associations or experiences triggered by these landmarks or dialogue with the walking partner are also sometimes heard. As the audience’s mouse moves around the map, photographs of landmarks appearing at the corresponding places in Plymouth appear in a window of the interface. One participant described their experience of seeing their map in the interface:

That is really the map ... From what I have seen with the picture that you’ve put on the side that relates to all the buildings and the places that we did the walk, it

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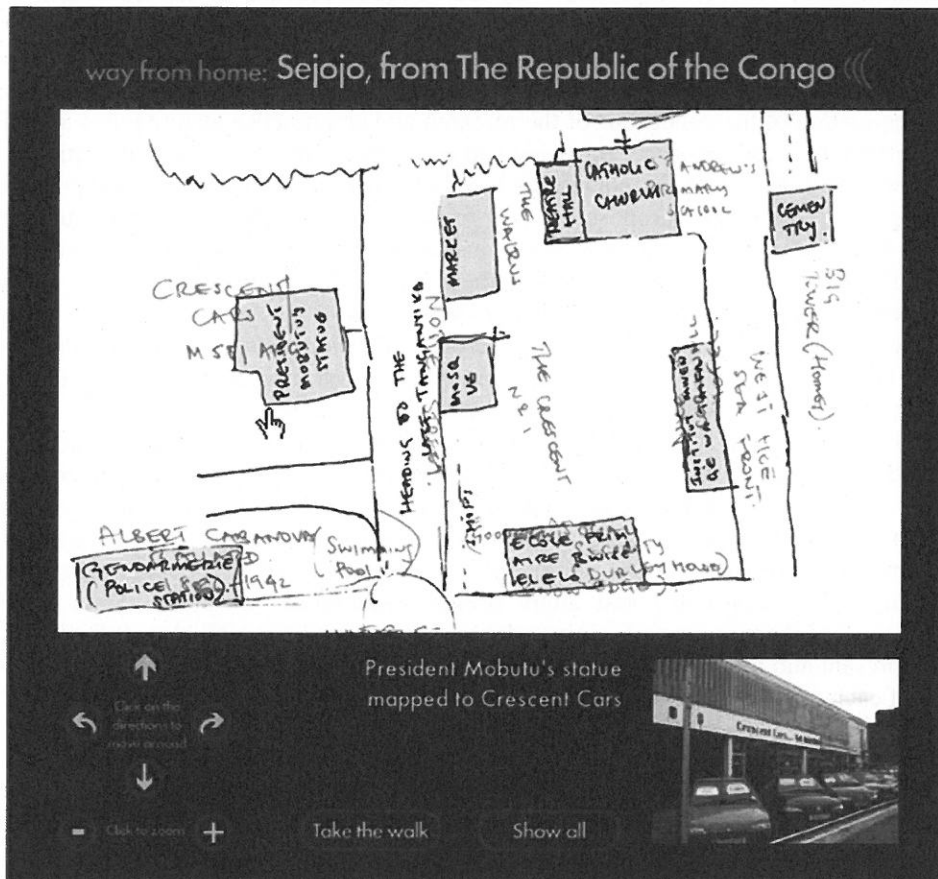


Figure 2. Digital artwork interface, *way from home* (2004).
Source: Author’s photograph.

really is kind of now something physical instead of only relying ... on the sketch of the map. It's a reality really. It definitely depicts my main routes that I would always be seeing. It brought me back home again ... That's what I felt. And again living the same way as I used to be back home ... it's like I was walking again lively.

The online audience of the work can also download the audio files and attempt to follow the journeys in Plymouth and through their own imagination. The invitation is also extended to the online audience to make a map and walk themselves.

Where new forms of digitization of memories are increasingly being innovated and employed by transnational families and communities to share their daily lives with displaced or distant relatives, friends and/or communities, the digital artwork *way from home* potentially contributes to such activity and to the discourse exploring the changes to how cultural memory is processed and transmitted by digitization (van Dijck, 2007, p. 42). Maurice Halbwachs argues that memories are recalled, recognized and localized through intersubjective communication or what he refers to as a 'social framework' (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992, p. 38). It is possible to conceive of the dialogic processes involved in both the territorialized and digitized walks of *way from home* in these terms. One group of percipients in Nottingham, including members of the organisation Artists in Exile, created a Flickr webpage combining photographs with the life narratives shared along their walk (Pervilaris, 2008). This is evidence of how *way from home* fosters multiplications and the seeding of new forms for presenting collective knowledge and recollected memories. Digital technologies provide useful tools and contexts where this can happen. Further, if one accepts the view that the past is 'reconstructed on the basis of the present' (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992, p. 40), then it is possible to understand that the aim of the digitization of these memories is not necessarily to preserve them, but to provide a form through which memories may be recollected and made lively again.

Tellings that Make the World: Narratives of Home

Autobiographical material specific to a time and place and dependent upon individual circumstances and sensitivities of percipients was generated through the processes the *way from home* instructions involved. The walker was invited to respond to the detail and events of a particular moment in time in the present, 'just this body in just this place' (Casey, 1996, p. 22) as they intersected with what Toby Butler refers to as 'memoryscapes' (Butler & Miller, 2005, p. 87), the events and details that occurred in the past of just this body in just *that* remembered place and time. The places of the past and present became interrelated and together they described a transnational landscape that exceeds localised boundaries, revealing details of experiences on scales of both the individual and the wider structural factors. Like the cross-pollination of bees, senses of belonging are produced through the association or dissociation of memories from one place to another as place and identity-making practices that are a part of everyday experiences.

These spatial narrative practices exploit nostalgic intimations and feelings of being at home to construct a sense of home that exists in multiple locations, accommodates multiple dimensions of the self and enables communicative encounters along paths of

contiguous relationship and habitation. In this sense, I refer to these practices as *homing tales*. With understandings of 'home' not as location or fixed point of origin, but as places constructed through a meshwork of journeys and situated through knowledge and memories of previous journeys, 'home' takes on this sense of 'homing' (Ahmed *et al.*, 2003; Fortier, 2003). The making of meaningful relationships and connections along the way through these *homing tales* potentially moves the teller on, as in progress, self-growth, advancement, 'self-prospecting' (Battaglia, 1995). These tales are tellings that make the world and the tellers place in the world in their telling. The re-framing of such practices as mechanisms of performance research is what I have referred to as *homing devices* (Myers, 2006b), or strategies of constructing *homing places*, contexts or situations where spatial narratives or *homing tales* may be shared.

Ghassen Hage defines home-building as '*the building of the feeling of being "at home"*' (Hage, 1997, p. 102, emphasis orig.). Comments made by one of the percipients in the *way from home* digital artwork suggest that this was, indeed, an affect of the walk for him: 'it gave me a flash back home ... And getting the sense of the feeling as if you are home ... All the memories started coming back and you see where you used to live and the places where you used to go all the time'. These nostalgic feelings are triggered by direct experience and can be negative or positive 'intimations' (Hage 1997, p. 105). Indeed, not all memories flourish comfortably in places that do not belong to them. Likewise, not all of the experiences triggered by the *way from home* instructions resulted in positive associations that could be exploited for building a sense of belonging or emplacement, as was seen with the walker immobilised and displaced by the commercial landscape in Plymouth. In this case, the memoryscape and the actual landscape clashed and revealed an unstable tension. His was an experience of a 'lack of feeling of familiarity (lack of practical and spatial knowledge) and lack of communality (lack of recognition and the non-availability of help)' (Hage, 1997, p. 106). In such cases, Hage suggests depressive feelings can accumulate to produce states of homesickness.

Disorderly Temporalities in Transnational Narrative

As the walker in Plymouth described his remembered route from Arbil to his special place in Akra, the war in Iraq had already significantly transformed the actual present geography of Akra from that of his memoryscape. His route was blocked and controlled by Saddam Hussein's government, which made the way to Arbil a much longer and convoluted journey. Since he had last travelled this way, the more direct route had been reopened with Hussein's removal from power and it was this route that he walked. The attachments to the past enacted in his homing tale were expressed as a vehicle of knowledge and a critique of the *conditions that constitute* an impossible present. If narrative is understood as an 'orderly telling', an ordering or plotting of temporal events through a sequence that gives meaning and coherence in time, Rapport and Dawson suggest the telling of a story is 'both to speak of movement and to engage in movement' (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p. 28). However, with the homing tales of *way from home*, the narratives are not always plotted in orderly linear sequence. The walker in Plymouth described and followed a route that was simultaneously both a memory and a path of desire:

From Arbil is nearly two hours driving. Before we have a problem about the way for driving. We have to drive nearly four hour from Arbil ... to Akra. But before we had problems with Saddam Hussein's government ... But now, no, it is only one and a half hour drive and it's better than before.

He chose to take the path that he hadn't been allowed to take before, acting out a critical intervention.

Through his tracing and remembering of his own past, the first walker in Plymouth actively asserted his skill as a storyteller, founding a critical and poetic narrative in the landscape of his life journey, a weaving of two narratives that seemed to create bridges between these different places and times of home-identity-making. Along his wander, he recalled a place in the Bantu village where he grew up in what was then known as the Republic of Zaire, where his career as a businessman could be said to have emerged selling peanuts in a football stadium. He passed a building in Plymouth where he recalled a training programme he had attended for setting up his two businesses, a hair salon and a food store. He became animated and more engaged in the walk as he discovered poetic juxtapositions between the landmarks of these two places and actively sought out these relations, intrigued to see where he would find associations and where the walk would take him. Finally reaching the sea at an overlook towards Plymouth Sound, in the place where the outlook from the shore of Lake Tanganyika would be according to his map, he described the view across a border of water to Bujumbura, Burundi, where lights at night were a sign of the development that was taking place there. He described the remembered geography of this place in the 1980's when he was last there: 'At that time it wasn't easy because politically and with all the geographical problems we had with the Burundi, it wasn't easy for the Zaireans, by that time as we were called, the Congolese, to move, to go into Burundi'. As we looked out towards the open sea, he described what he saw for the future:

So, I'd be very willing to go back and see my country again once more ... I'd like to take back what is not there and what I have gained so far from here and what I wanted to gain by the time when I was back home ... But due to wars and tribal conflicts ... no one wants to see how things can be, can be improved. And that's what I'd like to see sometime.

Through the walk he articulated and noted his achievements and contributions to the economic and cultural life of Plymouth and a desire to contribute and intervene in the conditions that led to his own displacement. This 'homing desire' could be understood as inscribed in the discourse of 'home', as Brah suggests, '*while simultaneously critiquing the discourses of fixed origin*' (Brah, 1996, p. 193; emphasis orig.). Ahmed *et al.* suggest that this critical aspect of homing 'depends on the reclaiming and reprocessing of habits, objects, names and histories that have been uprooted—in migration, displacement or colonization' (Ahmed *et al.*, 2003, p. 9). This walker did not express a desire to return to the past home, but to return to build a future. These narrative structures reflect transnational experiences that extend beyond boundaries of location and time in multiple directions that loop back around and interweave past, present and future paths of memory and desire.

Sharing Transnational Perspectives and Knowledge

Karen Fog Olwig argues that, 'Whereas home may become a fairly abstract space of self-knowledge in narratives, it is a very concrete place of mutual relations of exchange, usually involving concrete rights and obligations, in the social life of the narrators' (Olwig, 1998, p. 235). Olwig suspects that the narrativising of home is specifically a middle-class western perspective coming from the experience of a world in movement where social relations are not localised and where narratives of home are the most significant form of expressing places of belonging (Olwig, 1998, p. 236). Indeed, this may account for the influence of my own motivations in determining the methodological strategies employed in *way from home*. However, that experience of living in a transitional world of dispersed social relations was shared by the refugees and asylum seekers that took part in *way from home*, as expressed by a walker in Nottingham, 'I am from here, I am from there, we are exactly nowhere, we are from nowhere' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 54). The spatial narrative practices employed in *way from home* were found to be relevant modes for telling complex life narratives or abstract experiences of places and spaces of home in a form that enabled transnational perspectives. 'Being asked to walk, look and think simultaneously across a spatial distance ... allowed peoples of different backgrounds, ethnicities and origins to connect in meaningful ways, learning reciprocally across cultural divides' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010, p. 54). A *way from home* workshop that took place in Plymouth as part of Refugee Week (in 2006) involved a diverse group of percipients who were immigrants from various cultures, generations and circumstances. A group of three co-percipients from UK, Cuba and China expressed their different perspectives on the experience of walking together in written comments following the walk: '[We] talked a lot about Cuba. This is a great experience to share different viewpoint about home, things that we think that we are familiar with and realize how much we are in common'. Another co-percipient wrote, 'It felt very lovely thinking internationally whilst walking nationally'. The third co-percipient commented, 'I found very interesting the conversation about China ... influence in Cuba historia'.

Rapport and Dawson took up Olwig's words of warning to suggest the need for anthropologists studying home 'to emphasize the diversity of the different "identity spaces" that their informants may call home, and how, through movement, informants may manifest their awareness of this diversity and also their variable abilities to assert and select a home of their choice' (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p. 17). The mechanism of the *way from home* instructions operated in such a way that it allowed this difference and particularity of responses and pluralities of forms of place to be expressed. Through mechanisms instigating both movement and a future orientated nostalgia, the narratives enabled by *way from home* sometimes challenge the presumptions identified by Ahmed et al. that suggest 'movement involves freedom from grounds, or that grounded homes are not sites of change, relocation and uprooting' (Ahmed et al., 2003, p. 1). Those experiences of immobility reveal multiple and contradictory perspectives, a recognition of different ways of perceiving and understanding places, an encounter with the paradoxes of the politics of emplacement and mobility. With each individual that followed the steps of the *way from home* instructions, the original instructions were reinterpreted and changed, instances where my

own cultural perspectives, proclivities, motivations, authority and control were dispersed. The propositional structure of the narrative process worked to keep the artist/researcher's influence constantly in check. The response to the proposition may be a re-vision of the proposition itself and reveal the percipients own unspoken desires or immobilities of their situational positions.

Heterogeneous Forms of Social Interaction and Knowledge

The mobile mechanism of *way from home* highlighted some percipients' immobilisation, such as one asylum seeker percipient, who could not identify anywhere he considered home and drew a question mark as his map. While his application for asylum had been refused and he had not been deported, he was denied access to any financial support. Therefore, his only option was to sleep rough on the street. At first it appeared that his question mark signalled the failure of the proposition to generate conversation. However, the question mark led to a walk in Plymouth's Public Library, which was the only place the percipient said he found some sense of personal space. It was a place where he could use the Internet to connect with what was happening in the world and in the place where he had come from. Interestingly, other percipients indicated this connection with the library. Through his walk, his walking partner, his support worker, gained a better insight into his dilemma and others like him who fall trap to the unequal relations and distributions of power in mobility, where an enhanced mobility of some peoples and places results in an increased immobility for others (Hannam, *et al.*, 2006, p. 3).

Drawing the question mark questioned the beliefs and thoughts inherent in the structure or conditions of the proposition. These were openly critiqued as part of the process. This created a place for the hegemonies of social interaction to be challenged and for conflicting positions and differential mobilities to be articulated within and through the work. Indeed as Uteng and Cresswell suggest, 'Mobilities are experienced and practiced differently' (Uteng & Cresswell, 2008, p. 2).

One of the refugee organisations involved in the *Trans-national Communities* walks decided not to follow the instructions by taking individual walks with partners, but to take a walk together as a group in pairs following one of their member's favourite walks along Nottingham's Victoria Embankment. Given that the organisation was concerned with the empowerment of women, the structure for their walk was more appropriate to the desires, needs and intentions of this group. Women's participation in *way from home* was sometimes compromised or excluded where the structures of the walking event did not always accommodate their particular circumstances or differential mobilities, for instance, where it may not be comfortable or customary for a woman to walk with a stranger in public. Therefore, the structure of the walk in Nottingham provided a convivial and safe context for women to walk together in public space. This particular walk demonstrated how the significance given to mobility is clearly differentiated by gender and how narratives of mobility and immobility contribute to the constitution of gender as a social and cultural construct (Uteng & Cresswell, 2008, p. 2). There was an additional dimension of conviviality to the walk with the presence of a group and not just a one-to-one exchange. While it provided an opportunity for more intimate dialogue, the walk also became a social event of a group walking together, combining two different

forms of conversive walking and enabling the presentation of heterogeneous forms of knowledge.

Conclusion

It has been shown here how spatial narrative practices have offered methods for engaging in the mobilities or immobilities of others, and for evoking and presenting transnational perspectives, experiences, and knowledge that are simultaneously aesthetical, collaborative, analytical and interventional. A micro-level approach is suggested that might open up macro-level issues of transnational movement and differential distributions of power and mobility. A particular innovation occurs in the breaks, bends or openings in the conversations of *way from home* to reveal critical and interventional responses to structural factors affecting mobilities and immobilities. Considered here, as the locus of a collective knowledge production and its presentation, these moments of innovation also suggest a set of principles of the methodology that might be transferable. First, these were instances where inhabitant knowledge asserted itself and challenged subtle assertions of hegemony through a preliminary questioning of the beliefs and thoughts inherent in the proposition itself as part of the conversation. Secondly, there was a bending and breaking of the unwritten rules of the conversation to respond to the needs and desires of the percipients' own situational position. Thirdly, there was a seeding of new aesthetic forms through creative critical response to the experience of the conversation. These extensions, alterations, re-revisions of the original proposition engendered further multiplicity and complexity without the need to resolve tensions or moments of dispute into consensus or common ground. In this way, what is transferable from this work as a mobile methodology is more an approach, a proposition, an approximation, a way of dealing with a specific situation, a lead into a conversation or the coming towards an unknown path emerging from intersections with other paths. That is to say, it is a homing device for homing place.

Notes

1. The *way from home* digital artwork was conceived by Misha Myers and designed with a technical team, including Dan Harris with Adam Child of limbomedia. It was commissioned by *Performance Research*, Vol. 9 (2) as a contribution to the DVD 'Bodiescapes' (Eds, Peter Boenisch & Ric Allsopp) and exhibited at the Millais Gallery, Southampton, as part of the exhibition *Art in the Age of Terrorism* (11 November 2004–29 January 2005).
2. *Trans-national Communities: Towards a Sense of Belonging* was led by Maggie O'Neill (Department of Sociology, University of Loughborough) and Phil Hubbard (Department of Geography, University of Loughborough).
3. Throughout *way from home*, many participants shared experiences of racial hostility directed at them in the UK, such as an incident of bricks being thrown in one of the partner refugee support organisations windows or of dog faeces put in the mail box of an asylum seeker's home. Beyond these anecdotal accounts, numerous articles related to this subject may be found in the Press Archive section of the North of England Refugee Service available at http://www.refugee.org.uk/press_archive.htm. In addition, ample literature may be found on racial hostility and violence towards asylum seekers in the UK, such as the Dummet (2001), Yuval-Davis (2002), Schuster, (2003), McGhee (2005) and Dumper (2002).

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