PERVASIVE MEDIA ARTS: PARTICIPATION, PRACTICE AND WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the potential of pervasive media arts as a means of enhancing well-being.

We discuss two case studies of arts-based action research projects from the Southwest of England which the author has worked on.

Soundlines, led by Strata Collective with primary and secondary students, explores individual creative interpretation of the North Somerset coastal site of special scientific interest, Sand Point.

Living Voices is a portable woodland walk sharing personal narratives recorded with people living with the diagnosis of dementia.

Both projects invite public engagement and use mobile technology to deliver audio in response to the walker's location.

Keywords
Pervasive media, art walk, landscape, dementia, education

Conference Theme
Supporting the individual – art based, performance and other innovative practice

INTRODUCTION

Outline

This paper will introduce two arts-based action research projects that facilitate shared personal narratives discovered by walking in the landscape. Collaborations involved in each project build on the author's established community arts practice - as facilitator, media producer and creative director - placed within the context of practice-led doctoral research.

Soundlines, 2010, was a site-specific project with primary and secondary students exploring the dramatic coast of North Somerset using music, animation and global positioning system (GPS) satellite tracking. The work was shared at a community event and through a website featuring fifty-six walks with fifty-six unique musical compositions played back as real-time animation.

Living Voices, 2011, is a portable woodland walk featuring narratives from people in the South Wiltshire area who are living with the diagnosis of dementia. Introducing the therapeutic approach of Clean Language within the recording process, use of metaphor elicits another layer of narrative, rich in textual imagery: each individual's story is represented by a specific tree.

Live experience is an essential element of pervasive media arts projects such as these; experience which does not readily lend itself to two-dimensional documentation. Hence a descriptive narrative will be introduced to attempt to convey something of the flavor and texture at the heart of each project: the experiential walk.

The paper will then go on to outline the different collaborations, aims, objectives and methods used in each project. We will consider the experience for participants and the wider community, examining the potential of pervasive media to encourage creative participation, agency and wellbeing; to bridge the personal, social and the heritage of the landscape.

The tone of the paper moves through different voices and positions, reflecting the multiple perspectives and approaches that contribute to the making of such projects.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

'Location sensitive media leads us to 'scrawling' on our physical environment as a way of articulating and sharing itineraries and spatial stories that might otherwise be invisible within that public space.' [1]

Technical Terms

Pervasive media is sometimes described as 'the right media in the right place at the right time'[2] and refers to audio, video, text, image or graphic media experienced on location, commonly in response to movement or interaction by the user. Pervasive media is often delivered through the use of mobile devices such as mobile phones, hand-held computers (the personal digital assistant, or PDA) combined with sensors such as GPS, radio transmission or scannable barcodes. Pervasive media can bring stories and themes to life by bringing them outside of the cinema and away from the desktop, into the everyday 'real world' environment. When successfully designed and placed, 'magic moments'[3] can occur in which the media experience and the exterior environment appear to synchronise, for example hearing the sounds of a steam train whist walking alongside disued railway tracks, or hearing birdsong and not being sure whether it is from the soundtrack in the headphones or the trees around.

Clean Language is a questioning technique refined to minimise the imposition of any pre-conceptions or interpretation that the facilitator may have. Characteristically the technique produces a state of 'exquisite listening'[4] in which the conversation is focused to an unusually high degree on the experience and world-view of the client or interviewee. Clients develop an awareness of their own 'metaphor landscape' – the images or symbols and juxtapositions that hold a subtle yet profound personal significance for them. This in turn facilitates new levels of creative problem-solving, clarity of communication and sense of self, with both agency and ownership resting almost entirely with the client or interviewee. The term 'Clean' is used to refer to the methods and methodology arising from the body of work instigated by New Zealand psychotherapist David Grove from the 1980's until his death in 2008 and subsequently modelled into a replicable system by psychotherapist and coaching partners Penny Tompkins and James Lawley.[5] The work has a therapeutic background and utilises the understanding that human thought processes are constructed in metaphor, as explored by Lakoff and Johnson[6] and as is currently the subject of groundbreaking research in neuro-linguistic and cognitive science.[7] 'Clean' is also used as a tool for spatialising attributes of an outcome or issue, through a process known as 'Clean Space'.[8]

Pervasive Media: Common Experience, Unique to the Individual?

As a media artist, this paper's author Jackie Calderwood's doctoral research seeks to understand the multiple factors that may contribute to an authentic experience of self, position and place as elicited or shared through the use of pervasive media: on location, re-located, and online. As we walk in a landscape, is it possible to offer a designed media interaction that engages multiple senses and offers the individual the space, physically and internally, for their own holistic exchange, noticing, awareness, to interplay with the environment simultaneously? When the person or group who become the users (such as walkers, interacting with the work) have been involved in creating the content to be played, does this effect their experience, sense of agency or wellbeing? Can experience of the work be affectively shared beyond these participants and away from the time or space of the walk?

The theoretical context underpinning these research questions draws on the philosophy of tehnicity and relationship of individual to society,[9] anthropology of human movement,[10] creativity and improvisation[11] and the potential of digital media to enhance a sense of place.[12] However, for the purposes of this paper the focus will rest on the two projects as case studies of experiential practice, within the discussion of wellbeing.

TWO WALKS

The experience, a taste

A group of fifteen primary school students with wellington boots, on a windy hilltop looking out into the Bristol Channel. The trajectories they make as they explore the topography (the surface of the land), weaving through the narrow grassy paths, climbing the hummock of an earthwork, an old motte-and-bailey, remnant of a thousand year history. Circling the highest trig point marking the view across the estuary to Wales. And with every step they take a different sound plays through the headphones they wear, telling the story of this place in music – the monks who lived here, the pigs they farmed, Viking marauders. The volcano that erupted in the Channel millennia ago forming the black rock of the beach down below. The song of birds, the whooshing of the waves. The sounds of imagination and history combined. Each walk traces a path and through that path a composition is formed. One student likes the place with the scary music, running back to play those sounds again. Another climbs the motte to find a Viking chant 'Alaho!' whilst two others skip hand in hand to the lyrical melody of the open space. As each pace triggers site-specific sound, so each pace (and sound) is part of that individual's journey. A composition in time and space. A soundline. Created in the moment. From pre-recorded music, 'mixed' by moving in the moment, in the place. A soundline. Recorded (for posterity?) to play again, a month later, sitting in the familiar classroom and re-visiting their walk as part of a web gallery. Forty different walkers. Sixty different walks.

Figure 1. Sand Point, North Somerset

Notes: Primary students with headphones and PDA's are the first to brave the weather. Finding the musical sounds they helped to create, mapped into the landscape and triggered by GPS. Walking, they compose soundlines as they explore this finger of the Mendip Hills, protruding into the Bristol Channel. When the secondary students arrive, the hail will start!

To begin again[13]

Move forwards a year in time, a county to the east, and imagine walking through an easy, grassy park with beautiful trees lining your pathway. As you approach the first tree (a mighty oak) a voice peaks gently through your headphones… "*The English oak, durable, strong, a long lifetime, and when it's gone you can make a good chest of drawers with the wood! ….. I've had a good life, seen many things, I love working the land, the farm I worked on had many oak trees…* "

The voice fades away as you walk on towards a slender flowering cherry "*petite, perfectly formed… such a rich red colour the cherry, yes, I'd be a cherry tree… I used to be very competitive… the fruit tastes so good, nothing with it, just cherries! Seeing a family grow up, those memories stay with you for life…… apples, they're useful – you can make a lot with them, a functional tree…. Communication's the most important thing in a strong relationship… I make lists that help me remember, caring for her my life is different, our life is different, make the most of every day….we find ways to go on….*"

As you walk towards the largest tree in the park, a confident strong voice announces "*A Secoa – the Great Red woods – you can drive a car through the middle! A sense of humour – that's the most important thing in life. I have Alzheimer's disease.*" A moment passes… "*He got me, now I'm back – it's a fight, every morning I get up and I think 'I'm gonna beat him today.'*"

Figure 2. The English Oak

Notes: Judge Wyndham's Oak on the borders of Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset is named after the seventeenth century judge, Sir Hugh Wyndham, who lived nearby. The tree is believed to be about a thousand years old.

To relate

So we've been for two walks, listened to sounds and words exploring the boundaries of history and imagination: heard stories of life, metaphor and sustainability. Both projects use mobile technology to deliver audio in response to the walker's location.

In Soundlines the music is mapped to the topography and marks of the land. Music was improvised in response to place; movement is made in response to music. The walks are recorded, catching the moment with a GPS trace and a soundline re-compiled. Individual choices make unique patterns, triggering an original sequence of imagery as the creation of the hilltop map is drawn out through the web gallery in an iterative collation of collective layers of experience and reflection over time.

Living Voices attaches narratives to significant trees in the area of the walk. Weaving words for the telling with envisioning of the teller. The trees become an invitation to meet, listen, exchange, take a moment to feel the presence as of another, to stand under, to understand. The intention is for the walk to be movable – positioned in different forests, parks and city-spaces. To move inside with images as placeholders for trees.

In both projects the walker is free to choose their own route: pausing, returning, stopping to listen at leisure, finding their own direction and pace of engagement. An open exploration, within a common physical space, for an undetermined amount of time. Multiple approaches endeavor to give form to these stories that will ripple deep into the listener in a way beyond the words or rhythms that are heard.

Where then

And what if these two could feed back and combine – students exploring the walks and stories of the elder population by navigating trajectories on an interactive multimedia installation or online. Would that raise discussion? Convey feeling? Give a sense of positioning in the community and in the individual's journey through life? Or is the magic in the moment of sharing the story for the first time (recording)? In the experience as walker? In discussions prompted? In reflection at a later time and place?

SOUNDLINES

Background

Collaboration

Soundlines was a publicly funded project with aspirations to address community cohesion and bridge age groups, subject areas and technologies, working with an innovative model for participatory arts education.

Led by Strata Collective[14], the project was funded through the National Lottery by Awards for All and with RIFE Investment from Southwest Screen and the UK Film Council. Strata Collective are a Somerset group of experienced community-based artists who seek to find new ways of telling stories, connecting people with the living landscape, uncovering shared and personal journeys through familiar places. Soundlines Partners included Creative Media Diploma students from Worle Community School and Priory College,

Locking Primary School (a feeder primary for Worle), North Somerset museum services, the Pervasive Media Studio and eShed Bristol's young documentary team.

Project Structure

Through a series of introductory sessions, specialist workshops and field trips, students were engaged in developing their own creative response to the layered landscape of Sand Point whilst also learning and sharing skills in video, animation, music and mediascape (with software enabling media to be mapped onto the landscape). Rather than working with the existing sounds of the landscape - as in other forms of soundwalk practice – interpretation and creative expression were encouraged through participatory, improvisational musical content.

Figure 3. Workshops during the project

Notes: Working with pervasive media, drama, music, storytelling, history, site visits, event planning, photography, video and animation involved all the participants from primary and secondary schools working together with visiting artists to create and participate at every stage of the project.

Soundlines culminated in a celebratory community event in April 2010, launching films, portable mediascape and the website: collating the learning experience through interactive walk-traces, compositions, animations and student feedback.

Strata Collective is committed to transparency of practice and creative, accessible documentation of our work. As such we maintained a detailed project blog[15] throughout, published articles[16] about the project in public arts magazines and presented the project within arts, media, research and education networks as opportunities arose.

The legacy of the project in hard terms includes the website with gallery, creative resources and documentation. Alternative versions of the mediascape sounds for the hilltop walk are available for public download and site-specific use at Sand Point, Worle School and Bristol's Millennium Square. Two documentary films made by young filmmakers with eShed are also available online.

Outline

The project with the schools began in September 2009 with an introductory day in which students and staff from the three schools worked together with Strata to explore the history and myths of Sand Point. Students started to interpret these and their own stories of the place creatively and to try out the technology with example music mapped into the school grounds.

The next stage was a field trip to the hilltop, with sketchbooks and cameras, looking for the locations of the stories, exploring the site as a group. The young people were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences of visiting the place, and to use these impressions in a music and percussion improvisation workshop with professional musicians.

A day of animation workshops introduced the students to 'boiling animation'. The challenge to animate a still drawing (in contrast to storyboarding a narrative sequence) was a different way of thinking for the elder students to grasp, encouraging focus on the moment rather than the passage of time. Reinforcing their learning, secondary students planned and led the afternoon session with primary students, who picked up the task quickly and easily, producing some beautiful and imaginative work.

After a period of experimental technical development behind the scenes, creative mentoring with secondary students and a mediascape workshop with primary, the participants were invited back to Sand Point - this

time with PDA and headphones - for the experiential walk. Feedback was collected by the video documentary team, staff photographers and by students completing a word-storm sheet on location at the end of their walk.

These prompts were revisited a month later when, having watched the online version of their walk, students were asked to complete the same word-storm from this new perspective and to compare their responses from the different experiences.
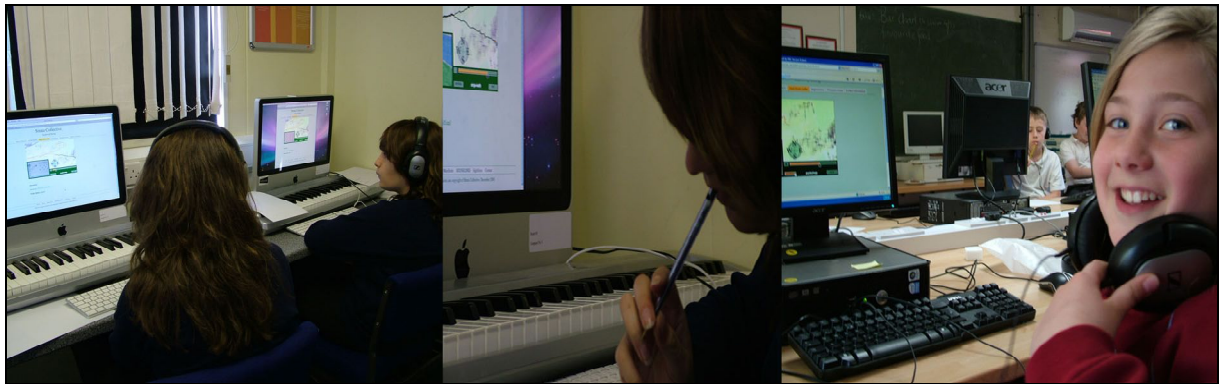

Figure 4. Experiencing the walks, in real time, with written reflection, in the classroom.

Notes: Played through the web gallery as sound with GPS trace and animation, each composition is unique to the original walk. Students then compared their word storm from the web view to their word storm at the hilltop, composing a short text that would be placed alongside their walk on the web gallery for the public to read.

There was, in fact, an intense cold, wet, storm during this return visit to the hilltop, during which the older students voiced comments ranging from 'this is the worst day of my life!' to 'this is the best thing I've ever done'. If our intention was to awaken and amplify the individual walker's attention to the experience of their relationship with place, then for the older students aged 14-16 (who, at that stage of teenage-hood, may experience all sorts of changing, contrasted and even paradoxical emotions and tensions with their sense of self and community) then that was surely what had happened – an amplified sense of relationship with place and surroundings – and all this entails! Perhaps not as we'd expected, but very real and maybe unforgettable as an experience of inhabitation.

'The inhabitant is rather one who participates from within in the very process of the world's continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture. These lines are typically winding and irregular, yet comprehensively entangled into a close-knit tissue.'[17]
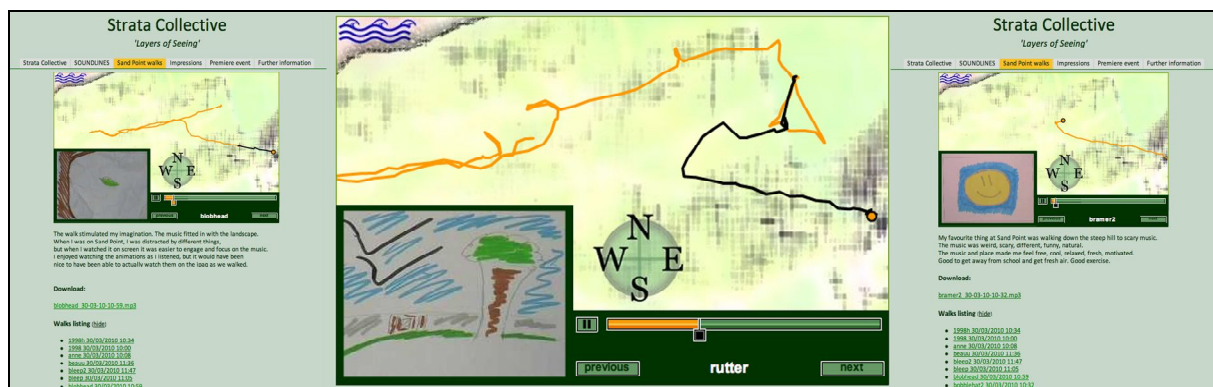

Figure 5. Soundlines Walks in the Online Gallery

Notes: Screen grabs showing three different walks, download options and text feedback from the walker. Time-based playback of audio (slider progressively turns orange from green), GPS trace (line of the route walked changes from orange to black) and animations triggered (relating to where on the map the trace/walker is at that moment).

In Soundlines much of the recognition for the project as a whole came through the Community event at which all stages of the process were brought together, represented, articulated and shared. The live experience of the mediascape remapped to the school grounds, alongside a strong focus on visual documentation creating an animated diary of the project, contributed to an opening out of experience. This was not a performance of a previous work, rather an invitation to join the creative imaginings of Sand Point, to explore an ongoing history-in-the-making of responses to this local landscape. One set of parents did just this, opening out maps of the Point from three different decades, looking for places they used to visit as children and expressing the desire to go there again – too much time passed since their last visit – and see how it is now.
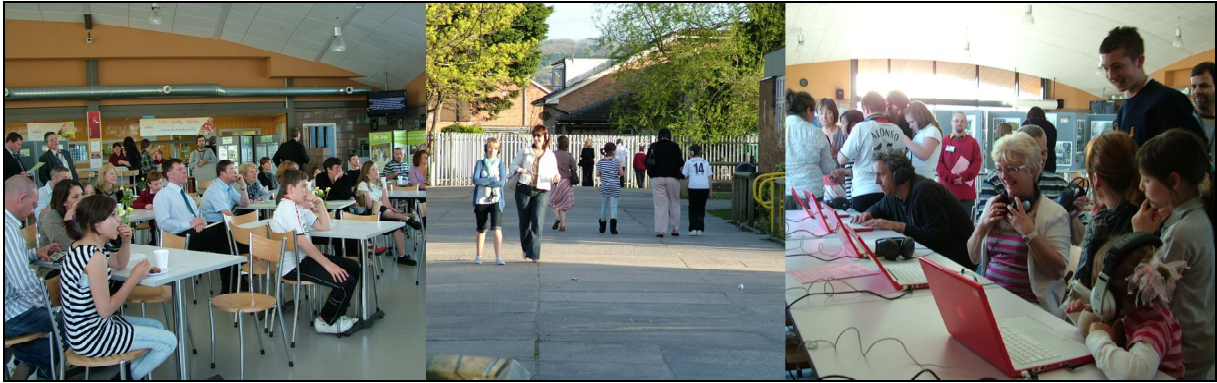

Figure 6. Soundlines Community Premiere

Notes: Participants and their family, friends, staff and public guests at Café Willow for the premiere event.

Launch of the documentary film, photo exhibition and web gallery, with displays and stalls on healthy eating, local walks and media opportunities for young people. Opportunity to experience the mediascape by walking in the school grounds, accompanied by the participants: Sand Point remapped to Worle School.

"All together I have really enjoyed this experience and would love to do it again. I really enjoyed mixing with older children from Worle and it made me feel calm and relaxed because they made me feel at home and now I can't wait to go to Worle. My two comparison sheets are very different but they both explain what a great time I have had in this project! They are different because in one I put it was rainy, and in the others I said it was really sunny. And in one I felt free and in the other I felt supported. I enjoyed the walk more than listening to the walk because the walk was adventurous." - Participant reflection.

Reflection

Soundlines was successful as a transition activity for the primary students and as a platform for the secondary students to develop mentoring and leadership skills. The primary students' visits to Worle school gave a structure to the project that was less apparent for the media diploma students, to whom this became an irregular intermission from other course work. Whilst the initial intention had been for a heavier weighting of younger students with a small group of mentor secondary students, time-tabling constraints led to several compromises throughout the six-months of project activity. The school was trialing the new media diploma and, whilst Soundlines dovetailed perfectly with three of the six modules, changes to this new curriculum alongside staff pressures meant that Soundlines was soon moved aside from the diploma schedule. The Arts Award, a national qualification run in partnership by Trinity College and Arts Council England, recognises individual development and leadership in the arts, its ethos closely aligned with that of Soundlines and Strata Collective. The secondary students, despite initial enthusiasm, were not keen to produce the documentation required for portfolio evidence. In retrospect, in discussion with the school's head of community arts (our main partner, without whom the project would not have been possible) we felt that the project may have been better placed within the English or History departments; bringing creative activities to students already adept in written skills, rather than asking media students to take on the additional documentation required for Awards, within their already heavily laden practical schedule.

A significant learning for the school was around consent and use of creative material. Worle is an established media college and Priory runs its own you tube channel, yet the use of pervasive media and subsequent broadcast in public, workshop and academic settings necessitated reconsideration and reworking of the school guidelines.

As a Collective, we had hoped that buy-in from the curriculum would have enabled students to make more of the opportunities for artist mentoring and be more engaged in the technical production. Despite the constraints on the project from working with students engaged in the preliminary year of GCSE exams, we were able to test out ideas around music and mapping, learn from the participants and develop a prototype system for collating the walks online. As we had anticipated from the start, the legacy of materials produced, as well as the rich learning for all involved, have proven invaluable to show how these multiple strands of creative activity, technical migration and interpretive excavation weave together. The films, and the concept, touch people who come across the project in a way that seems often to inspire and advent awareness of new possibilities. The creative response ripples out. Soundlines creates a platform for replication across other environments, themes and communities.

LIVING VOICES

Background

Collaboration

Living Voices came about partially in response to prior filmmaking work by the author in partnership with the South Wiltshire area Dementia Support Manager, service users (people living with dementia and their families or carers) and other arts organisations.

Video was successfully used to evaluate and subsequently advocate service provision, with a focus on benefits to the individual participants, for pilot arts projects with Dancing Through Life[18] and Singing for the Brain™[19]. Dancing Through Life, managed by Wiltshire Dancing, offered a series of ten weekly dance classes for older people (aged over eighty) at eight venues across Wiltshire, four of which were specifically targeted at people with dementia. Benefits for individual participants were noted to include increased mobility, pain reduction, flexibility, participation and reminiscence. Research conducted by Amanda Laffan, Research Psychologist for RICE (Research Institute for the Care of Older People), showed improved cognitive and depression levels in test scores following the dance sessions.

Inspiration

In a subsequent DVD commission for the Alzheimer's Society depicting the range of services available in South Wiltshire, we (Jackie Calderwood, this paper's author, as media artist and Julia Burton, Dementia Support Manager) visited people at home, at the fortnightly memory café, Singing For the Brain™groups and other day service provision. Working with people with memory loss, sometimes it can be difficult to elicit a spontaneous response for feedback much after the activity has concluded. One gentleman, interviewed at a particular group, had little comment about that activity; however when I met him later in the day at another venue, he and a colleague talked eloquently about the services and scrabble tournament they had just been engaged in. Towards the end of the interview, asked if there was anything else they would like to talk about, this gentleman interrupted his colleague's response (about giving his wife a break, providing him an opportunity to get out and meet others, and so forth) to say "Hang on, it's not very often that anyone asks *us* if we have anything else to say!" In reviewing the footage with Julia Burton, she commented that this statement is emblematic of the issues many people with dementia face – of a stereotypical expectation that there is not anything else that they *could* have to say, or any need to be heard.

The impetus of this statement, combined with my own research proposition that pervasive media can help to amplify a particular resonance of information, planted a seed. If movement in a landscape and engagement with new technologies can open the door for alternative modes of communication, then how might this celebrate the narratives of people with dementia at a personal level? How could these narratives be animated beyond the services people receive and beyond the more traditional form of the linear video or DVD? How could we best experience, as listeners, that 'something else to say', the living voice?

'Wisdom is walking in another person's moccasins' [20]

Project Structure

Intention

The idea for Living Voices was born, with the intention to invite people with dementia to share whatever stories, 'words of wisdom' or anecdotes they may wish to say to a subsequent public listener. Using trees

as the symbols or placeholders for people's experiences seemed a suitable way to give living, universal, yet totally individualised, form to the narratives.

Priority has been to make the audio dialogue easily portable across different locations, whilst having the structure to be specific to each place and time. Living Voices will map to different locations and can also be adapted as in interior installation using video or photography of trees as placeholders for the audio content.

Concurrently learning about use of metaphor, personal narrative and position in landscape as facilitated by Clean language, with expert trainer Wendy Sullivan of the Clean Change Company, I was keen to see what Clean could offer to the project. Could Clean be an effective method or methodology for arts practice (especially in relation to movement and space)? What might Clean language as an interview technique add to the project?

Figure 7. Recording interviews

Notes: Jackie Calderwood asks about experiences to share through the walk, Wendy Sullivan develops the metaphor of the tree and Julia Burton asks about experience of living with dementia. Video recordings are made for editorial reference, audio for use in the actual woodland walk.

Introducing Metaphor

An area of critique in some participatory arts practice and collaborative documentary[21] (as facilitated by the advent of easy access to authoring tools, online distribution, platforms such as YouTube video broadcasting) could be argued, that the remapping of user-generated-content is at the discretion of the artist or technologist, with insufficient attention to the original context of creation, or iconography[22]. Issues of integrity to original context apply to any editorial decision, and stem back to the way the material is initially recorded. In a community-orientated approach to video documentation, techniques such as open-ended questions, minimal set-up and direction, use of only existing lighting and facilities, a single sound and image recorder who is also engaged in asking questions, can all help to minimise external impact on the people and event witnessed. The camera/microphone and visitors can become, as far as possible, an unobtrusive part of the conversation. Using an unscripted, fluid and responsive approach, with no prior 'storyboard', allows for the participants to lead the direction of the content, which may reach territory that the recording 'visitors' (producer/facilitator) could not have envisaged themselves.

To what extent are we hearing the authentic living voice, or the editor's misplaced re-interpretation?

Mapping of narratives onto trees chosen at random could potentially become such a re-interpretation, over and above making the editorial decisions necessitated to make the audio flow for the audience.

Clean seemed to offer the potential to address this. If I could invite people to map their story qualitatively onto the attributes of their own imagined tree, then perhaps I could adhere to that integrity when allocating narratives to specific trees in any given context.

As the project began to take form, the use of metaphor changed shape. In describing the project to prospective participants, Julia Burton asked people, *if they were a tree - what kind of tree would they be?* Initial responses were really promising, far more spontaneous and revealing than we had anticipated. And so the tree became a metaphor for the individual rather than the specifics of the narrative shared.

Structure

Living Voices offers the opportunity to explore participation, reminiscence and movement in the form of walking as a mode of narrative engagement. The project is aimed at a cross-generational audience, with narratives specifically invited from people of a wide age-range (60's to 90's), people with different stages and forms of the disease. The intention was not so much to convey information about the disease itself, as to convey the inherent recognition that each individual is of course unique with their own experience, wisdom, story and imagination; all have something to contribute, insights to share, stories to listen to and learn from. We all see and experience life in different ways and interpret the world around us according to our own movement, interests and awareness. Living Voices has evoked positive and curious responses from everyone I have encountered – artists, technologists, social scientists, health providers and the general public. However, a funding bid for external costs was narrowly unsuccessful.

Figure 8: Recording Interviews

Notes: Tropical fruit trees climbed as a child. Cherry tree in blossom. Discussion on the appropriateness of offering advice.

The project is still in prototype stage, with tests in progress to determine appropriate technology. Keen to avoid the necessity to carry PDA's and to keep interaction by movement as the sole trigger for audio, the first prototypes have trialed short-range FM radio transmission with wireless headphones. With a separate transmitter and audio player located in each tree, the walker's headphones will pick up each new voice broadcasting as they move from tree to tree. Living Voices will be publicly launched in Wiltshire at the annual Memory Walk in September 2011 to coincide with Dementia Awareness Week.

The Living Voice: Recording Interviews

The following excerpt is included by way of illustration of the weaving together of personal anecdote, metaphor as symbolic modelling, physical experience of place and meta-comment. At this point, towards the end of the conversation, we are playing with a balance of Clean questioning (avoiding any 'imported' comment or interpretation) and some personal response to the metaphors used, mirroring the dialogue between the couple themselves.

Excerpt from a Conversation with D and H:

H: Sometimes you get the smell don't you with the fruits as well.

D: Well fruit trees are for all the senses aren't they, you get all the senses with the taste buds. Sight, smell, touch, the taste. Where we live we do get quite a lot of strong winds in the winter and breezes in the summer, so we actually do get lots of rustling, particularly when it's quiet., there is a rustling and it's more than a rustling really, it's all sorts of different sounds – but you've got to listen very carefully. And then you've got the birds in the trees as well, they add to it.

W: Petite?

H: Can't really say much more

W: Sweet?
H: Sweet. Don't like bitter cherries, not on my tree!

H: They're just a nice size, petite. Not like a great big apple.

D: Cherries come in pairs, don't they

W, to H: Is that important for you for your cherry tree that they come in pairs?

H: An extra one

D: One for me, one for you

W: Who would win if there was only one cherry?

H: He would let me have it

D: We wouldn't fight

H: No we wouldn't fight

D: There is a modern thing happening where, instead of planting ornamental trees around city centres and the parks and gardens, fruit trees are being planted so people can just collect or pick the fruit and I think that's fantastic – so simple, so sensible, the more of it the better.

W: Recaps, including earlier comments by D… 'don't waste a minute'…. 'live life to the full'.

Ja: I can imagine cherry and apple pie!

H: Trouble is for that you've got to have pastry and that's fattening – and then the dollop of double cream on the top!

D: Got to have all the trimmings haven't you!

Future Development

It is hoped to generate funding to pursue interest in touring the walk to other areas, rural and urban, with an alternative version available for interior installation and knowledge-sharing across health, arts and technology organisations. The material recorded to date and generated through the public walks, would ideally then form content for publication and further dissemination to raise awareness of the voices of people living with dementia; the contribution they have to offer. Inspired by the scarf-like 'wearables' (textiles with integrated electronics and audio speakers) created by Canadian artist-designer Emilie Grenier[23], future iterations may explore easy-to-wear textile-based 'headphones'. Wearables would add a tactile quality and could add visual response through use of photo or thermo-chromatic inks. Images printed with these inks appear and change colour with changing light or temperature, offering a visual communication medium to express the narratives: the walkers revealing and observing movement through changing imagery.

Reflection

Within the ten interviews recorded in March 2011 are many layers of rich experience – anecdotes of memory, unassuming richness presented as passing wisdom and through the metaphors of trees, valuable discussion on the challenges and remedies of living with dementia. Participants were generous and plentiful with their contributions. As anticipated, a process of reminiscence was common within the exchange – itself illuminating for the depth of information readily surfacing, in some cases personal and previously un-recounted within the caring context. Response to Clean facilitation varied. It would seem worthwhile to nurture the seeds sown with further studies, to explore the hypothesis that people with certain forms and stages of dementia respond more fluidly in metaphor. Meanwhile the tree as symbol, though not a strictly Clean approach in itself (rather would be to ask the client for their own symbol to develop), has certainly found a useful place within the dialogue exchanged in South Wiltshire.

As a methodology for pervasive media arts, the project only begins to scratch the surface in adopting the deep wisdom of the Clean approach. If attributes of a metaphor landscape can be spatialised to enhance network communication of disparate entities, then surely this approach could be applied explicitly to media located in the landscape. The challenge is how to develop this locating of narrative in a way that fully encompasses the freedom of the individual walker to explore, whilst equally maintaining agency of the person contributing the narrative and integrity to the context from which it came.

TWO PROJECTS, MANY WALKS

Concluding Discussion

Challenges

Funding is an ongoing issue for arts and other areas of social activity. Action research itself is problematic in that longevity and sustainability are prone to compromise against the drive for innovation, for something new. Maintaining flexibility to allow a project to be genuinely steered by the interests and direction of the

participants necessitates a certain trust in an as-yet uncharted process. Once this potentially complex process is complete, as with the legacy of Soundlines, it is much easier to explain the nature of the beast, the form the journey may take if replicated. Balancing the experimental with sufficient notation to reproduce, report to funders, advocate and evidence research, is delicate.

Potential

To begin again: considering the potential of pervasive media to encourage creative participation, agency and wellbeing.

On a practical level, multiple opportunities exist for facilitated contribution to iterative pervasive media work. As with Soundlines, the revisiting of places and ideas, sharing these across age groups and communities, encourages recognition of the participant's own contribution, position and authority. Both projects draw obvious parallels with health walk initiatives. On a subtler level, creativity may be experienced through the unique layering of media, personal experience of landscape and temporal journey. As business adviser and educationalist Sir Ken Robinson[24] advocates, when our creativity is awakened and we are in our 'element' there is a natural flow of what each one has to contribute. There is potential for a mutually rich common ground.

Political philosopher Michael Hardt [25] suggests that historically disparate realms of ecological common and social/economic common, when combined offer the potential of a shared currency of values which 'confounds the traditional measures of economic value and imposes instead the value of life as the only valid scale of evaluation. Indeed the divisions between the ecological and the social become blurred from this biopolitical standpoint.' Hardt's work continues to explore this currency, considering the potential transformation that affect and love as a form of political exchange could offer to society.

The potential of pervasive media to bridge the social and environmental is clear. To combine creative input and response with social narrative and experiential exploration (movement) in the environment would thus seem to contribute to multiple dimensions of wellbeing. Embracing technicity as another tool for human making, being, doing, gives a common platform that can, I propose, be generous in reciprocity to the extent that it encourages a sharing of individual experience through a common form.

As two pilot projects, each groundbreaking in their own way, I am excited by the idea of beginning again, to combine approaches used thus far. Geology and social history of the landscape inform artistic participation in Soundlines. Might horticulture, healthcare and brain science similarly inform a creative exploration of Living Voices? With two such projects combined, I would envisage a mobile and online database of personal and subjective narrative, reinforced by the social, environmental, historical and biopolitical context of lives lived, explored through choice and movement in the moment – *raising the planes of noetic consistency*, to use Stiegler's description of the holistic potential of art "…by such practices we provide access to what might be called joy… such practices, which are *therapeutic* and by which we take care for of ourselves and others, constitute *par excellence* the meaning of works of art and of spirit".[26]

Multiple modes of interaction, reflection and iteration offer the opportunity of assuming multiple positions. I would suggest that this encourages a sharing of multiple perspectives and an ability to walk, if temporarily, in another person's moccasins.

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[13] 'To begin again', used with reference to Charles Faulkner's keynote *Symbolic Patterns: How the fundamental distinctions of mind shape language and experience* at the International Clean Conference, London, October 2010. To begin again, to reiterate the significance of the pattern of 'one'.

[14] Strata Collective's Soundlines project was conceived in part as a pilot to explore connection between satellite navigation triggering pervasive media with ancient journey with imagined sightline and star-lit navigation, as inspired by the discovery of the Mendip Woman. http://www.stratacollective.org/sightlines.htm 01/01/11

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[18] Dance and movement action research project led by Wiltshire Dancing and RICE (Research Institute for The Care of the Elderly) with elder people in Wiltshire, 2008 http://www.wiltshiredancing.co.uk/assets/files/AnnualReport%2008-09.pdf Video documentation (in three parrts) at http://www.youtube.com/user/creativeecologywilts#p/a/u/2/NH-7a8MrOS0

[19] Singing for the Brain™ is an established and popular nationwide service for people living with dementia and their carers. Several groups are held weekly across the rural area of South Wiltshire and beyond. In 2009 Salisbury Distict Council supported a project to bring outreach musicians from Bournemouth

Symphony Orchestra to work with the Tisbury singers and the 'Unbelievable Doodlers Fortune' professional musicians group on a six-week project culminating in the joint performance event 'Don't Worry Be Happy'. http://www.youtube.com/user/growyourdreams#p/u/7/Jq6BZf7EQnU. Salisbury area Singing for the Brain™ groups worked together to rise to the challenge of the BBC 'Sing Hallelujah' with a combined performance of the 'Hallelujah Chorus' in December 2009.

[20] Traditional North American saying, often attributed as a Sioux or Cherokee prayer, used to indicate the value of the non-judgmental ability to learn through high-quality listening and empathic resonance with another's ife experience. Sometimes phrased as 'do not judge another until you have walked a mile in their moccasins', the saying can be found within contemporary health and wellbeing discourse, as in the following examples. Techniques for excellence: http://www.worldcongressonexcellence.com/assets/documents/how%20to%20use%20nlp%20to%20avoid%20the%20winners%20curse.pdf

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[21] Collaborative and interactive documentary forms pre-date development of the world wide web. However, the rise in low-cost access to cameras, editing tools and distribution platforms has exploded since the millennia, resulting in massive online publication and distribution. Such content may then be knowingly or unwittingly used as source material for other related or unrelated 'mash-up'. The first international symposium 'dedicated to the rapidly evolving field of interactive documentary' was held by the University of the West of England's Digital Cultures Research Centre, Bristol, in March 2011. http://i-docs.org

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