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“Music makes time audible, and its form and continuity sensible (Suzanne Langer,1953)”

## 1. Introduction

In this article we explore the temporal dimensions of a mobile interview apprehended through its acoustic qualities and note the intersection with its spatial dimension. The case discussed is taken from a larger study which investigated the everyday lives of men accessing an art and social care organisation for homeless young men in Manchester, England (Hughes, Roy and Manley, 2014). We hope to demonstrate the particular contribution of walking to psychosocial interview methods. In other papers we have engaged in a more detailed discussion about our motives for using mobile methods in a research context and we have also noted the range of historical and contemporary uses of walking, by artists, social scientists, cultural geographers, therapists and journalists (Roy et al. 2015; Roy, 2016; Roy and Froggett, 2016). There is a wider literature, amply referenced by Mark Shell in *Talking the Walk and Walking the Talk* (2015) that discusses the relationship between talk, speech and thought in society and culture. In this paper, we have taken particular inspiration here from Maggie O’Neill and Brian Roberts’ (2020) ethnographically rich extension of biographical methods through walking, especially with research subjects such as sex workers with whom a genuine two-way dialogue is not always easy to facilitate (Sinha and Back, 2014).

In line with most psychosocial research (for example Clarke, 2002; Clarke and Hoggett, 2009; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000/2020; Wengraf, 2000) we work with the assumption that neither interviewer nor interviewee are wholly transparent to themselves and that in a research interview they are engaged in a communicative exchange using words and other means. It is these ‘other means’ that come even more strongly to the fore when we begin to consider *both* the temporal/musical and the visual/spatial qualities of the interview. Although the purpose of this article is primarily to show how we have worked with the interview as an event in time we recognise the intersubjective co-constitution of time and space is co-constitutive and attend to rhythmicity of the mobile interview as it unfolds ‘somewhere’.

This can be appreciated both through the rhythms of bodies in motion and through variations in the musicality of speech. Musicality freights words with a layer of meaning that is conveyed through its presentational symbolisation, which Langer (1990 [1942]) refers to as the things that cannot be said and can only be shown. We have sought to understand what is happening in walking interviews at the level of the dyad or group (a group of three in this research) and what work walking together does *for* and *on* those who take part. We have asked how the data might be worked with in ways which preserve its “aliveness” and the vitality of participants’ exchange over time (Froggett & Hollway, 2010; Hollway and Froggett, 2013). We have become sensitised to the communicative musicality of the interview itself – the co-produced temporal (rhythmic) organisation of its tonal properties - a dimension of which the participants were unaware (see Wotton, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Musicality here pertains to the musical properties of the speech - a composite of timbre, tone, pitch, rhythm, tempo, pulse and phrasing. Rhythmicity (along with pulse and phrasing) is the acoustic quality of music that most clearly confers temporal flow. “Rhythm in music is the placement of sounds in time, in a regular and repeated pattern” <https://www.britannica.com/art/rhythm-music>. Tempo, by contrast, refers to how fast or slow it is. Temporality is the state of having a relationship to time <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/temporality>

When we first used walking methods, we mainly analysed transcripts, as words felt like solid ground in working with a new approach (Hughes et al 2014). As Vannanni & Vananni (2017, p.179) have observed, walk-along methods are still, too often, 'informed by textualism, cognitivism and representationalism'. We have increasingly become aware that a focus on the text can overwhelm other sensory dimensions and it was this in part that informed our exploration of other sensory registers in our work (for example map-making, Dake and Roy, 2018 and visual association, Froggett et al, 2015) which, as we describe below, we have increasingly used in combination with walking interviews. The forms of presentational symbolisation in these interviews are more varied and wide ranging than the discursive, embracing not only visual but kinaesthetic, olfactory, aural and haptic registers of experience none of which resolve adequately into verbal descriptions and which are nonetheless present. Here we consider how we might work with these sensory dimensions in a walking interview as it moves in time.

### *Communicative Musicality*

We were aware of musicality as an intentional communication strategy from earlier work which examined how a skilled youth worker could use the rhythms and cadences of rap to encourage reluctant young people make poetry with him, together turning 'half-formed notions' into ideas (Froggett et al 2007). Walking interviews offered us the possibility of working with a spontaneously emergent musicality allowing us access to a largely unconscious bodily attunement and dissonance not readily discernible through narrative content.

Theories of 'communicative musicality' offer a rich cross-disciplinary body of work that has drawn on brain science, semiotics, mathematics, biology, ethology, psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology and evolutionary theory. Although we cannot do justice to its complexity here, it has produced important insights regarding the relationship between music, time and language – specifically that "symbolisation is grounded in temporal cognition, and that the human conceptualisation of time is grounded in music" (Brandt, 2009, p.43). This is a core assumption that informs and is further supported by our work.

In this body of research, the principle focus has been on early vocal exchanges in the infant/parent couple. Stern (1985) has argued that mutual adaptation and belonging in the infant-mother pair emerges through musical engagement and attunement and hence on a sense of timing that is rooted in psychobiological processes (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009). Specifically, it is thought to derive from a brain and nervous system that senses and processes emotional experience in terms of tempo, rhythm and pulse as well as timbre, pitch, and other qualities of music (Turner & Iannides, 2009). Innate musicality and the possibility of being in time with another that it affords has been linked to the capacity for inter-subjective sympathy and the development of a social mind (Panksepp & Trevarthen, 2009).

Temporal and acoustic features of infant parent vocal interactions, foster a sympathetic co-ordination, enabling subjective feelings inside one subject's body to 'touch' and 'move' others. (Powers & Trevarthen, 2009, p. 212).

The innate musical/poetic capacities of infants develop in the shared intimacy of early parental care (Miall & Dissanayake, 2003), where inter-subjective time is first experienced. Musicality expressed

though sensitive timing regulates routines and expressive and responsive parental handling, imparting to the child a sense of psychological 'holding' (Winnicott, 1971). Gratier & Apter-Danon (2009, p.301) argue that when a mother has a confused perception of herself her vocal interaction with her baby loses vitality, becoming more rigid and repetitive. "In a sense, it loses its temporal 'flow'—mother and infant no longer seem able to share 'inner time', neither to consolidate their relationship nor to develop new pathways for shared experiences." Establishing inter-subjective time in the parent infant dyad has been identified as intrinsic to the development of a sociable self. Furthermore, musical rhythmicity establishes a link between sensorimotor co-ordination, itself an enactment of embodied temporal synergies, and the development of vocalisation and verbal language skills (Panksepp & Trevarthen, 2009).

Group analyst Linde Wotton (2012, p.49), who refers to communicative musicality in clinical work with groups of adults, captures ideas hinted at elsewhere in the literature on mobile methods but not expressed with the same clarity. She argues that the "social nature of the co-construction of experience is, in essence, musical".

The very idea of intersubjectivity depends on the human capacity to develop a sense of intersubjective time within which to construct joint meaning. That is to say, it is only by aligning ourselves alongside another—through being in time and in tune—that we might be able to make sense of what Mead (1934) calls the conversation of gesture and response. (Wotton, 2012, p.49).

It is the rhythmic nature of walking that evokes a rhythmically attuned, temporally sensitised attention to the world around us and within us, as well as to those we walk with. Walking amplifies musicality in the interview group through 'entrainment' (Clayton et al 2004), influencing the timing of verbal exchange (for example through pitch, pulse and phrasing). Entrainment "appears to involve the perceptual inference or abstraction of a regular periodic pulse or beat from a sequence of rhythmic events, and the intuitive or cognitive organisation of the timing of actions and sounds around the motivating pulse" (Cross & Morley, 2009, p.67). When walking side-by-side we unconsciously start to move in synchrony with those we walk with. Burkeman (2015) observes that mobile synchrony is satisfying and impossible to resist (it even happens in 100 metre sprints), conferring a sense of togetherness. Hence, our methodology explores mutual attunement and dissonance within the communicative and relational rhythms of a mobile research practice.

### **1.1 The Men's Room Walking Tours**

The Men's Room is an arts and social welfare organisation working with vulnerable young men in Manchester, England. The findings of the larger study we conducted there are documented elsewhere (see Hughes, Roy and Manley 2014, Roy et al 2015, Roy and Froggett, 2016). The study explored the survival strategies of homeless men in Manchester. It involved a residential with staff, volunteers and

young men, twelve months of participant observation (Spradley, 1980) and a visual matrix<sup>2</sup> with staff and volunteers, which allowed us to reconsider the work of the organisation creatively and associatively. (see Hughes et al, 2016; Roy et al, 2015; Roy and Manley, 2017). We also conducted 7 walking tour interviews. In each of them a young man was invited to lead a tour of city centre sites that he associated with his own survival, a theme that the Men's Room group had chosen. Participants identified starting points for the walk and at each stop we asked them to take a photograph and, if they felt comfortable, to tell a personal story related to the site. They were free to visit as few or as many sites as they wanted. The interviewers followed the principles of psychosocial narrative interviewing, asking open narrative seeking questions and using the phrasing of the interviewee wherever possible (Gunaratnam 2013; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000/2020; Wengraf, 2001). All tours were audio recorded and transcribed.<sup>3</sup>

Participants readily took the lead and all seemed to find their voice. Many of the routes and associated stories had been carefully thought about in advance but these altered as the interviews developed. Impressions, sensations, scenes, feelings and fragments of experience came spontaneously and these were not always crafted into a narrative form (Roy & Froggett, 2016). The mobile interview was providing a context in which unconscious and previously unarticulated aspects of experience could be enacted and elaborated. The scenes and settings (visual/spatial qualities), the kinaesthetic rhythms, and the fluctuating communicative capacity of the interview group worked on each other so that other stories and ways of telling them emerged.

Initially, we expected physical sites. However, imaginary or remembered sites were associated to places or lines of thought as we were led through settings from the young men's lives, moving between scenes in the world and scenes in the mind. We discovered the value of a scenic analysis<sup>4</sup> (Salling Olesen, 2012) that inserted the interviewee, and indeed the interviewers themselves, and the interaction between them, into the scenes that were being described and enacted. In the process, we became better sensitised to the relational synchronicities of the exchange. Drawing on depth hermeneutics (Lorenzer, 1977; 1986) we also appreciated dissonances (normally thought of as 'provocations') in deciphering latent meaning. Often in the interpretive process we could glimpse a dynamic 'in-between' – as well as implicit scenes that underlay the stories chosen for reasons only partially understood (Froggett and Hollway, 2010; Hollway and Froggett, 2013). We were increasingly working with expressions of mental processes that were not entirely intelligible either to the young men or the accompanying researchers. We tried to consider interviewees' motivations and situations

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<sup>2</sup> The visual matrix is a group based associative method for researching shared experience, stimulated by sensory material relevant to a research question. It can also be analysed for its musicality, offering a means of understanding aspects of group communication which remain unarticulated

<sup>3</sup> The research plans and methods for the project were reviewed and approved by the Psychology and Social Work Ethics Committee at the University of Central Lancashire. These are covered in detail in the research report (Hughes, et al 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Lorenzer (1986), associated with the depth hermeneutic tradition of research interpretation – largely in Germany and Scandinavia posits scenic experience is primary. The scene is produced in an embodied interaction between the subject and the cultural material it configures. It is a composite of cultural signifiers and tropes that mediate awareness and communication, and unconscious wishes and dispositions of individuals patterned by life experience. The subjective and cultural ensemble of the scene is indissoluble and yet inherently unstable because the subjective and the social never assimilate entirely to one another— there is always something elusive, unconscious or in excess of what can be grasped and expressed. It is the site of an encounter between the subject and a shared cultural world that finds symbolic expression in images or words. It also has an acoustic/performative aspect that has been less thoroughly and it is this that particularly concerns us in this case study.

in ways that were interpersonal, cultural, structural, and simultaneously "deeply embedded in subjectivity" (Frosh et al, 2004, p.42). However we were also cautious of what Merriman (2014, pp.175-177 & 179) has identified as a tendency to idealise and overstate the case for mobile methods - through claims that they bring researchers closer to "authentic experience". We engage further with this objection in our discussion.

## **2. Case Study Of A Psychosocial Mobile Interview With Lee**

If we had wanted a case to support an idealised account of mobile methods, Lee's would not have been our first choice. The interview had variations in harmony and dissonance and neither of the interviewers found it especially easy. However, such fluctuations impel us to consider the interview as a durational live event - all the more interesting for the contrary states of mind it enables.

The map below gives an indication of the interview route, and the time spent at each location. The early sections depict short walks and long periods spent in each place. However, here we focus on an interesting shift which arose during the 14 minute walk from the second to the third location that took us from one side of Manchester City Centre to the other.

Figure 1: MAP.

### **2.1 Scenic Analysis**

Our analysis unfolded in three phases: First, we concentrated on the transcript, reading it aloud to make it 'present' to ourselves, then working through it chunk-by-chunk. This helped to facilitate a scenic analysis which foregrounded spoken interactions and the omissions, contradictions and provocations within them. Second, we worked on a scenic composition – an attempt to capture aesthetic and affective qualities of the interview as a whole, especially its visual/spatial aspects. Third, we turned to the audio recording to attend to the temporal/kinetic qualities of the interview through its communicative musicality.

Throughout, we were mindful of depth hermeneutic protocol (Salling Olesen & Weber, 2012)<sup>5</sup>. This approach asks of any data: What was presented (substantive)? How was it presented (performative)? Why was it presented in this particular way (explanatory)? The first pass enabled us to thoroughly familiarise ourselves with the content and 'feel' of the interview through the verbal exchanges. We do not present this analysis here for lack of space and also because the scenic composition (written after this first phase) allows for a condensed rendering of the first pass analysis in which aesthetic and affective appreciation is foregrounded.

#### **2.1.1 Scenic Composition**

One of the challenges of a long walking interview that moves between sites is that it prompts shifts of mood, narrative voice, imaginative content and spatio-temporal awareness. There may be a series of site or time specific episodes within it, each with different interpretive possibilities. Yet, at the same

time, the interview as a co-construction coheres as a scene and needs to be considered not only as an event but as a flow. We therefore used scenic compositions (Froggett et al 2014) methodologically elaborated in previous studies. These are highly synthesized presentations of the interview as a whole which makes the researchers' own complex experiences available for interpretation. Clarke (2002; 2006) argues that a commitment to such reflexivity is defining feature of psychosocial research. Positioned between art and social science, the scenic composition makes use of aesthetic literary sensibilities to synthesise "experience near" accounts of data for interpretation.

The composition was written after the first phase and thus extended periods of immersion in the data. We had considered our own responses to significant turning points and 'provocations' and selected short data passages for in-depth analysis. These materials were then set aside and Ali (who had been one of the interviewers) re-constructed the scene imaginatively. In the scenic composition the aesthetic of the writing – in Ali's own idiom (Bollas 1989, 1992) – syncretistically captures the aesthetic of the scene through an embodied aesthetic attention that captures the gestalt rather than analytic detail (Ehrenzweig 1967). The composition brings to the surface some of Ali's own experiences and recollections and the ways in which he uses himself as an instrument of knowing. Hence, instead of attempting to 'bracket off' his own subjectivity (as in all quantitative and a good deal of qualitative analysis) this material is made available for interpretation. Ali's viewpoint as a researcher can be interpreted and challenged, and his disposition to construe a scene in particular ways questioned. The same substantive, performative and explanatory questions can be asked of the scenic composition as can be asked of the original transcript. Here we decided to use it as a summary presentation device that conveys the content and 'shape' of the interview as a whole - only to find that Ali had unconsciously attuned to its 'temporal flow'. Somewhat to his own surprise he had written the composition in poetic form.

### *Scenic Composition*

A sunny summer afternoon on Piccadilly Gardens

The sounds of children playing and people chatting

Lee has got a story to tell

He talks fast and clearly

He's lucid and articulate

An expert informant

"A city you could never starve in"

"When you're homeless there is a massive camaraderie"

"It's not everyone's left to themselves"

We move off and hear the noises of trams and traffic

The sharp scraping sound of steel wheels rubbing against steel tracks

Lee's voice is muffled as wind rushes past the microphone

We walk past the Probation building and the night club "Essential"

Lee knows every detail of this area

He notes what's familiar and what has changed

It's all laced with recollections

"This was my patch for seven years of needing to survive in Manchester"

Lee then tells a story that takes us back

Before he ever came here

We are in his mum and dad's house

When he was fifteen

Sat in his bedroom

"Did you ever watch Queer as Folk?"

"Nathan Maloney on the wall"

It's this wall, the one right in front of us

Lee notes the newly fitted steel railing

"That was my ideal. That was my dream"

Lee sounds boy-ish, excited

He relives his own enjoyment

Now we are moving

We hear, momentarily, the four-four beats of music from a bar on Canal Street, louder as a door opens, and then more muffled as it closes again

"The smell of fried chicken makes me gag"

Memories of acts of care driven by religious belief

Some wrapped-up with shaming and control; hard to digest

Others more selfless, accepting, and easier to swallow

The sounds of traffic again

The sharp scraping sounds of steel wheels against steel tracks

Then five long low clangs of the bell at the Town Hall

Which subdue our talk as we walk quietly side by side, then

"Lee, you know the camaraderie .... Did that ever go wrong? "

"Yep!"



As we near the end there's another story, or another side to the story  
It less positive, but feels more hopeful  
A security guard at the car park who offers small acts of care and kindness  
A dry place to sleep despite a leaky window  
And set of complex dependencies  
Acts of self-preservation  
Ambivalence

### *What Is Being Said?*

The scenic composition captures a series of themes which emerged in our initial analysis. We noted how the narrative in the early part of the interview is a Bildungsroman, a self-education coming of age story - an "ethical-historical-characterological" story of "developmental unity" containing its own implied resolution (Strawson 2004: 441).

Lee introduces three main sites in the interview: a patch of grass on Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, where two young men approached him and looked after him when he first became homeless, helping him find places to sleep, eat and get by; a lamp post on the corner of Canal Street where Lee sold sex; and a car park stairwell car park on the other side of town where he used to sleep and where a security guards came and chatted bringing coffee and practical advice. The scenic composition registers Lee's viewpoints on the formal and informal infrastructures of support for and within the homeless community in Manchester, including advice, selfless care-taking, 'camaraderie', but also 'shaming' acts of exploitation. The poem contains its own signifier of time passing (the clanging bell) that precedes the group walking in quiet companionship which leads to a new story emerging.

### *How Is It Being Said?*

Ali's poem is presented in five stanzas. Stanzas divide poems into a series of arranged lines, providing a pattern of meter and rhyme. Stanza in Italian means 'room' and each stanza in Ali's poem has both a temporal rhythmic and a spatial quality, providing a window onto a room in Lee's life as well as depicting different moments in the interview in terms of themes, stories, affects and their locations. Etymologically stanza links to Strophe (the Greek στροφή) which means turn or twist<sup>6</sup>. In Greek drama the strophe was the first part of a choral ode performed by the chorus as it moved from one side of the stage to the other<sup>7</sup>. In this poem the stanzas separate out moments in the narrative structure of the interview when thoughts, feelings and stories turn, bend or twist. The poem also refers to acts of care, some of which in Lee's account are deliberately twisted, or folded with shame.

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<sup>6</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica - <https://www.britannica.com/art/strophe> (accessed 7th October 2019)

<sup>7</sup> Meriam Webster Dictionary - <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strophe> (accessed 7th October 2019)

The sensory aspects of the poem include city sounds and scenes, the feel of the sun, a sense of what is around the interview and within it. It alludes to Lee's remembered scenes and through its own poetic meter evokes qualities of time, space *and* movement. However, it seems to us that the imagistic and spatial registers predominate providing only glimpses of temporal progression which calls for further analytic attention.

#### *Why Is It Said In This Particular Way?*

Ali had no conscious intention of depicting the interview in the form of a poem – it just came to him this way. It seemed that in attuning to the qualities of time, movement and speech the structure and rhythmical form of the poem expressed his sensitisation to the temporal characteristics of the interview.

Les Back (2017) recalls attending an event in 2004 at which three writers, including John Berger, each read a poem in turn, first in Russian, then in French and then in English. Back describes how "The rhythm of the poem somehow communicates its quality of feeling and emotion, regardless of whether we understand the words or not. The clocks are slowed down as we listen". He goes on to suggest "It occurs to me that all good poetry does this; it stops time." We would suggest that it stops real time by superimposing poetic time that is regulated through rhythm and meter.

Cross and Morley (2009, p.69) have highlighted the ambiguity of musical intentions in contrast to the propositional and referential qualities of speech arguing that "language and music are at complementary poles of a communicative continuum meeting somewhere near poetry". As will become clear below the musicality of the interview carried an ambiguity which belied the propositional content of Lee's original narrative and Ali's poem was able to convey this ambiguous quality.

#### *What is the piece doing?*

The structure of five stanzas register Ali's sense of Lee, his deliberately chosen sites, the feel and sounds of the city, Lee's memories attached to these places (those deliberately chosen and those that emerge along the way), the interview group and the act of walking together. These elements act on each other to highlight the vitality of the interview over time.

Figure 2: LINE OF THREE PHOTOS.

#### *2.2.2 Working With The Audio Recording of The Interview*

Our sensitisation to temporal aspects of the interview through the scenic composition demanded that we turned from the transcript to the original audio-recording. The first thing we noticed was that this gave us a rather different impression of the opening passage to the interview than was conveyed in our prior reading (aloud) of the transcript. It is reproduced here:

Lee: So, this, was my first most important element of learning how to survive in Manchester. I was seventeen, starving hungry, homeless, nowhere to sleep, sat on this patch of grass in Piccadilly gardens, erm, when, I met two other

young lads who were also homeless and who came across and started speaking to me. Obviously, they'd recognised from my attire or whatever, that I wasn't doing too well for myself at the time, erm, and for the next week, they sort of massively defended me, and they took me to all the places where I could get food. Erm, the, uh, at the time, I wasn't old enough to go into a night shelter, so, they showed me a spot where they slept which I'll take you to shortly and that's where I slept, as well, for my first week, erm, and it was one of those young lads who ultimately led me on to the major part of my survival in Manchester, was, they introduced me to selling sex in the village. And that's, pretty much, what got me through seven years of needing to survive Manchester so... this would be...

Jenny: This patch of grass?

Lee: Me, here, where that six p is (laughs) would be the most valuable part of my start to Manchester life.

In the first two minutes of the interview, Lee introduced a series of important themes, some of which are also reflected in the scenic composition. Our initial performative analysis based on the transcript was that this was a pre-designed, assured and accomplished account, most likely told before. It is the opening to a story of survival and redemption, delivered in hindsight and complete within itself. The interviewers appear to be seen as an audience rather than as part of a conversation.

However, on careful listening our attention shifted to the temporalities of the performance and associated affects. We became aware that what had seemed to be a seamless flow on the page was in fact divided into a series of phrases of quite uneven length, delivered in something of a monotone except for the upward inflection of the voice at the end of each phrase where one of the interviewers seemed to be encouraging and confirming with a carefully timed and spaced "yeah", as if falling into step with the story (even though everyone was standing still). The impression was of an attempt by Lee to establish tight control of the story, suggesting a degree of anxiety - intuited by the interviewers - who seemed to feel the need to offer verbal support to keep it going.

We also noted the limits of our own ability to listen to temporal and acoustic qualities of the exchange while bracketing off the verbal. We decided to make use of a small piece of free software already used in the context of infant-mother communicative musicality (Powers and Trevarthen 2009)<sup>8</sup>. This afforded a prosthetic listening device and helped us to visualise the acoustic qualities of the exchange. We produced a series of 10 PRAAT graphics for different moments of interest in the interview and we reproduce just one of these by way of illustration below.

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<sup>8</sup> PRAAT is computer software for speech analysis designed, by Paulk Boersma and David Weenink, University of Amsterdam. The version we used produces spectrograms of 10 second sections of speech. We looked for moments when something altered significantly in the tempo, pitch, pulse or phrasing which we took to be a change in the communicative musicality of the group. We produced a series of consecutive spectrographs and then listened to these sections carefully. Extracts reflected a prevailing pattern in that part of the interview, or an audible break in the prevailing pattern.

Figure 3: PRAAT spectrogram [1] of 10 second interview extract)

We were particularly struck by the pulses - the blue vertical lines in the top half of the image. In the early phase of this interview these are short and clipped and have a fairly regular pattern - they "bunch" after a relaxation. We found it difficult to discern this pulse pattern with free listening, but we had noticed how quickly Lee spoke, using a very short, clipped and punchy manner of speech, with each phrase ending in an assertive upward inflection. The communicative rhythms of this section also have parallels with what is said, because Lee uses declarative clauses throughout the first 10 minutes of the interview.

Subsequently, Ali noted how Lee "seems to hold onto his words" conveying an unconscious psychic tension in which he tries to keep hold of the narrative which is initially strongly propositional. Lee tries to set out a somewhat idealised account of his entry into street life in Manchester, the ways other young men look after him, how he is introduced to selling sex, his strategies around survival and his eventual exit from this life. He doesn't want Jenny and Ali's sympathy, nor does he want interruption. Hence the rhythm and tone of the speech pattern invites agreement but discourages conversational exchange or questions. We think that the communicative rhythms of the exchange moderate his own anxiety and deliver a confident performance (which is less convincing when the sound is analysed). Lee presents a story of camaraderie within the street homeless community in Manchester, of unconditional help and support from other young men, how he learned both survival and humanity through this community. He conveys how these experiences informed the values he still holds today. The software schooled us to 'hear' nuance in tempo - the relaxing and pulsing of phrasing in Lee's opening speech, illustrated on the graphic above as the bunching of the blue pulse lines. We began to appreciate how the rapid pulsing expressed a 'tightness' at the conclusion of each phrase - a form of constriction. The brief pauses then allowed the tightness to attenuate so that the performance might still appear accomplished. Meanwhile the "yeahs" of the interviewers, which we had interpreted as encouragement in the transcript now appeared as a bid to *get in* so that a conversation could be initiated.

The software improved the acuteness of our listening by providing a visual representation of small sections of the interview acoustic. We do not think that any software can supplant the attentive listening of the research analyst who has a human capacity to syncretistically combine musical, relational, visual and verbal qualities of the scene and turn the inner ear to its latent meaning. Nevertheless using PRAAT helped us to attend better to temporal-musical aspects of the conversation. We acknowledge that we are making an opportunistic use of the software to help compensate our own limitations but the graphics did help to illustrate the different elements of musicality we were attempting to grasp. By moving back and forth between the graphics, free listening and discussion— we were honing our own listening skills so supporting or confounding our impressions.

We also found the software useful in supporting or modifying our selection of interview sections for detailed analysis. We stated above that this selection is a craft – relying often on an intuitive sense of what is puzzling or significant. The software enabled us to identify moments when the musicality of communication falters or alters, rather than relying exclusively on what is said in the interview, or

where it is being said. Through working in this manner we noticed that the rhythm and tempo established at the outset of the interview is sustained through most of the first 25 minutes of a 45 minute interview. This begins as we walk onto Piccadilly Gardens in the centre of Manchester, where we stand and talk for about 18 minutes before walking to the northern end of Canal Street in the Gay Village, about 3-4 minutes walk from Piccadilly Gardens. Here we are stationary again for another 10 minutes.

We do not have scope within this article to trace the various twists in tempo and narrative of this long interview so below we focus on the transition from the first 25 minutes in which Lee is seemingly in control of his accomplished narrative of survival through the solidarity of his networks. Here, for the first time, there is an important change as he starts to talk about the TV series *Queer as Folk* set in Manchester and originally screened in 1999<sup>9</sup>. Lee and Jenny are suddenly involved in an intense rapid and excited exchange, in which they talk over each other, making it impossible to produce an entirely accurate written transcript. Led by changes in the rhythms, we listened to this section of the interview many times. We noted that Lee is no longer holding onto his words, that his tone is enthusiastic, excitable and younger than his years (in the scenic composition Ali uses the phrase 'boyish').

Lee: This railing bit wasn't here so you could sit on the edge of the wall". "[Did] You two ever watch Queer as Folk?

Jenny & Ali: Yeah

Lee: Nathan Maloney on the wall

Jenny: Yeah yeah yeah yeah

Lee: On the end of Canal Street that that was my ideal

Jenny: Yeah

Lee: You know eighteen nineteen-year-old cute, cute little boy

Jenny: I know

Lee: On the end of Canal Street Nathan Maloney

Jenny: Yeah yeah

Lee: That was my dream

Jenny: Yeah

Lee: If he can do it on TV, why can't I do it in real life? Queer as Folk came out in ninety-nine

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<sup>9</sup> *Queer as Folk*, superficially a realistic depiction of gay urban life in the 1990s, portrays gay male archetypes in its lead characters.

Jenny: Yeah  
Lee: And it was 2001 [when] I started pitching up on the end of the street  
Ali: Right  
Jenny: Bloody hell

Coming out to his parents was the crisis event which led to Lee becoming homeless in the first place as they would not accept it. At this point, he loses the previous somewhat 'ideological' narrative and is suddenly not holding onto his words. The interaction between Lee and Jenny is still lively and mutually engaged. At this point we begin a long walk. Jenny and Lee have been lost in a pleasurable recollection and it feels like a moment of emotional release. We note that the pace of the interaction slows down. After about 8 minutes, we hear the bells of the town hall referred to in the scenic composition, Jenny picks up a theme from earlier in the interview, essentially asking Lee if there is another way of viewing this.

Jenny: Yeah ... You know the camaraderie . and, the looking after each other thing?

Lee: Yep

Jenny: Did that ever go wrong?

Lee: Yep

[dot indicate pauses in seconds]

In his response the pauses between Lee's words become much more pronounced. For the first time it feels as if he isn't quite sure what he wants to say. A conversation has begun and we think that the mobile interview is doing some important work on the communicative and relational rhythms of the group, supporting a sense of intersubjective connection and allowing the difficult feelings to sit as the group walks side by side in a period of quiet accompaniment, after which a more reflective exchange opens up. Lee goes onto describe how, of all the people he met in seven years of street homelessness in Manchester, he is only now in touch with three and these are Facebook friends he contacts infrequently. He also begins to describe how friendships in the street homeless community were complicated

It's also ... , it's one of the other reasons ... why . those two lads at the very beginning .. could have ... come and spoke to me, is ... because ... it made me reliant on them ... and I then I went on to do the same thing ... [...] if you see ... someone .. who's . in need and you provide them with a sandwich and, 'here I've got some cans, here, have one of my cans', then they're sort of reliant on you ... so ... , then . they're sort of reliant on you ... so when they've got money you go there...

Lee explains how the informal network of support he had earlier described in rather idealised terms has a shadow side. He needed these relationships for friendship, and because they were necessary additions to the inadequacies of the formal crisis support agencies in the city. However, they also involved dependence on other homeless young people which brought their own complications and obligations (Hughes et al, 2014). For the first time he acknowledges that as well as well feeling cared for and connected to a community of homeless young men, he was often obligated, confused and sometimes isolated. He recounts a scam in which he stole credit cards from a man he sold sex to, through which he was able to stay in a hotel for a week. However, the scene he depicts is of waiting alone and fearful for the inevitable knock of police at the door.

### **3. Conclusion: Temporality, Communicative Musicality and Scenic Understanding**

In this paper we have drawn on research on communicative musicality to develop ways of working with the changing communicative rhythms of a mobile interview. We have been concerned with the interview's unconscious emotional content conveyed through affective expression and specifically its temporal aesthetic as expressed through its musical qualities. We have tried to show how analysis of the temporal qualities of the interview sensitises us to its fluctuating emotional tones, while attempting to avoid any over-claiming with regard to fellow feeling (Merriman, 2014). Although we do identify moments of empathic engagement, we discuss the mobile interview as a prolonged live event which is sometimes all the more interesting for the contrary states of mind it enables. A temporal analysis reveals the shifting affects which arise out of these tensions, registered in point and counter-point between conversational partners over time and through movement. As Wotton (2012) points out...

playing the same tune does not mean playing the same note as the rest of the group, any more than playing in time means playing at the same time – rather it permits choices about when to clash and when to resolve; when to play together and when to play singly (p. 56).

The interview includes moments of lively animation, silent reflection and quiet connection as well as episodes of dissonance and confusion expressed through the temporal properties of conversation - its phrasing, pulsing and rhythmicity.

If temporality is an inter-subjective creation it may be that the improvisational freedom of walking is helpful in realising the musicality of an exchange. We would suggest that it is in great part through the barely perceptible musicality of voices and bodies in conversation, that unconscious emotional dynamics find expression. This could well be the case in most dyadic or group-based interview situations and it certainly bears further exploration in qualitative interviews that do not involve walking. Attending to the musical expression in any one moment, and to its progression through time affords a sense of a relationship and narrative in development.

Our use of technology in the analysis remains strictly subordinate – a prosthetic to the listening ear of an interpreting researcher. We have adapted for our own purposes a tool which helped us discern small variations in speech, tempo, pulse, pitch and phrasing, and this allowed us to attend to the

interview in a new way. We have then extrapolated meaning derived from our own scenic understanding of a complex web of expressions and interactions enacted over the course of the walking tour. The software helped us identify the intervals (the temporal creative in-between spaces) and to perceive the moments when the inter-subjective time within the interview alters and falters 'carrying' its changing emotional tone. We consider intersubjective time which in experience and common expression is the sense of being 'in or out of tune' with one another to be dependent on the distinctive interplay of kinetic musical elements - effectively a form of co-produced spontaneous musical composition produced in a communicative exchange.

Lee, Jenny and Ali unconsciously keep time with each other in a 'composition' that begins with Lee's tightly controlled 'overture' punctuated by regular slightly discordant interviewer interventions. This early pattern is not a misjudgement of Jenny's so much as an attempt to find her 'part' in the interview. As we move through Lee's chosen sites Jenny and Lee share an excited and enjoyable 'recitative' where the structured musicality, and also the tension in the interview, break down. This helps to dispel the undertow of (shared) anxiety that Lee will not be able to hold onto the story he has set out to tell. It is sufficient to allow a relaxation in the exchange and the emergence of a revelatory turning point where in a well-judged moment of 'synchrony' Jenny opens the space for Lee to describe how sometimes things went wrong. At this point the group moves into 'harmonic mode' - the intervals lengthen, relaxing into a thoughtful 'slow movement'. The interviewers subdue their voices, allowing the themes to unfold towards an ambivalent and complex resolution which for all three parties feels more 'real'. Lee engages in a complex and critical recollection of his everyday life as a homeless young gay man, which involved the inadequacies of formal care, the complex relationships with other young men and small acts of care from unexpected strangers – personified by the actions of a security guard in the car park where he sometimes slept. He ends his story with a move to London where he eventually chooses to exit sex work.

In extending the temporal metaphor of musical composition in this way we offer a counterpoint to Ali's self-reflexive poetic composition which foregrounded through its 'rooms' (stanzas) the succession of spatially arranged scenes that the interview evoked. In each case we depict an intersubjective space that opens (usually unconsciously) between participants in an exchange (we also note, that, on other occasions it closes), or between the participants and the focal point of their attention. This provides a common object around which the conversation revolves that is the joint sensory creation of the group. This object has a content of which the parties are aware and which directly informs their talk – in this case the cityscape, soundscape and imagery delivered through Lee's stories. But it also has an aesthetic form of which they are largely unaware - a presentational symbolism (Langer, 1942; 1948) - which sustains or obstructs their interaction. This makes the exchange they are staging a theatre of allusion that can be thought of as affording backdrop, pattern, palette, texture, architecture; or, in musical terms leitmotif, tone, timbre, pitch, pulse and rhythm. These qualities govern the "feel" of predictability and surprise, synchrony and dissonance, denouement, resolution and so forth.

We have tried to show with this case study that it is not only through the spatial but through the musical/temporal presentational aesthetic of the interview that the emotions of the interview are elaborated. In fact they are closely intertwined. We have identified the interview's temporal aesthetic through the musicality of its conversation, but we have respected the spatial aesthetic which was scenically co-present with the temporal by presenting it through the imagery and stanzas of a poem. In doing so we have realised that working with spatiality and temporality produce quite different effects



and have posed ourselves a problem for future research. The implications for interviewing clearly bear on how we attune ourselves to the conversational partner who we 'move with' in time as well as space so as to avoid, in an excess of inquisitive enthusiasm, impinging on the emergent rhythms of the exchange.

Discussions of walking interviews often focus on the ways that participants face outwards towards the 'external' world at large, sharing the places and spaces they pass through. In this paper we are interested in the ways in which, more subtly, the interview develops a shared 'interiority' implicating moving bodies side by side, separately, together and in counterpoint. If this is allowed to unfold according to the immanent rhythms of the group in a willing mutual entrainment, it may yield in the end both more 'information' and closer and more empathic understanding.

The musical director and conductor of the Halle Orchestra conductor Maestro Mark Elder noted in conversation some time ago that the longer he works the more he realises that the less he does on the podium, other than keep time, the better the orchestra plays.<sup>10</sup> Attending to the temporal qualities of the walking interview is interesting because of the contrary states of mind they can sustain between conversational partners over time. In this respect *keeping time* may be the most important task of the mobile interviewer.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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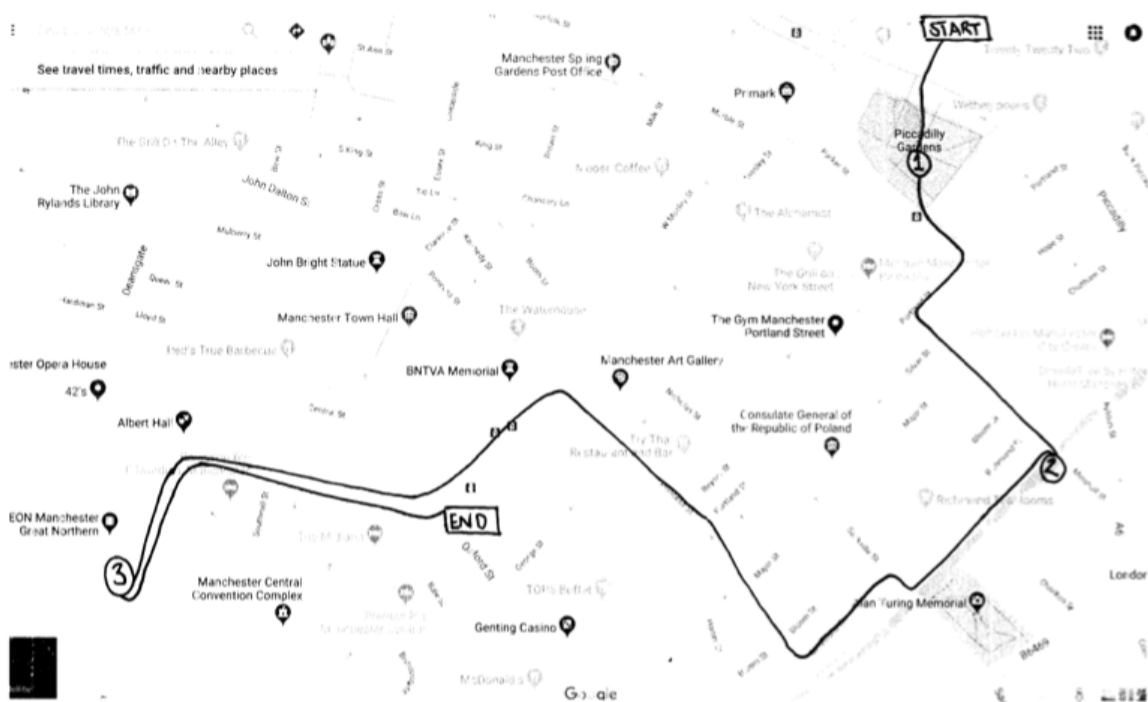
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**Image 1 - Map**



**Image 2 – Line of three photos**



Image 3 - first Praat image

