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Pace, rhythm, repetition: walking in art since the 1960s

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2016
Declaration

The following thesis has been composed by myself and the work contained within it is entirely my own. 10% of the material included in Chapter Three has been published as Ruth Burgon, ‘Trips, crossings, trudges: A reappraisal of Agnes Martin’s Gabriel’, Moving Image Review and Art Journal (MIRAJ) 4.1 & 2: Feminisms (December 2015): 62-76.

Ruth Amy Burgon, Edinburgh
Date:
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Abstract

In recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in the use of walking in artistic practice. Artists explore, map, narrate, draw, follow and procrastinate through the use of pedestrianism. This rise in an artistic output that uses the walking body has coincided with a burgeoning literature in this field; a literature that, I argue, has yet to find its feet, frequently repeating, and so depoliticising, the dominant narrative that casts walking as a strategy of resistance to the high-speed technological demands of late capitalism. Beyond its role as emancipatory gesture, I show, walking is enmeshed in histories of gender, labour, punishment, power and protest; something that a focus on the art of the 1960s and ‘70s can help to uncover.

Accordingly, this thesis seeks to place the recent rise of ‘walking art’ in a specific historical context, positing that the uses of walking by artists today find the key to their legitimation in moving image and performance work of the 1960s and ‘70s. Through chapters on the work of the Judson Dance Theater (1962-7) and Trisha Brown (early 1970s), Bruce Nauman’s studio films and videos (1967-9) and Agnes Martin’s only film Gabriel (1976), I argue that these artists used walking not only to deconstruct the mediums out of which they worked (dance, sculpture, painting), but also to negotiate the wider socio-political issues of the era, from protest marching and the moon landings to much more clandestine concerns such as surveillance and controlled viewership. These chapters reveal a walking body as supported by technology, subject to self-discipline, and negotiating a new relationship with the natural world. A final chapter on Janet Cardiff’s audio walks, which she first developed in the late 1990s, makes explicit a feminist problematic, as I ask where the female body resides in a long history of male walkers, and explore the broader question of how we write the history of ‘walking art’. Via Cardiff, I reflect on the place of the 1960s and ‘70s in our historical imagination today, arguing for a more uneasy reading of the art of these decades than we have previously been used to.
Acknowledgements

A member of Trisha Brown’s dance company once said of her that ‘she continually asked me to think and dance beyond my grasp. More often that not, and to my great surprise, I would find myself doing it.’ The same might be said about my principal supervisor, Tamara Trodd, with respect to my writing: throughout my PhD she has continually asked me to think, read and write beyond my grasp. More often than not, and to my great surprise, I have found myself doing it. This has been both a challenging and enriching process that has allowed me to produce a much more intellectually rigorous and, I hope, compelling thesis than I otherwise would have done. For this I am immensely grateful to Tamara. I also wish to thank my second supervisor, Glyn Davis, for his warm, steadfast support and keen editorial eye. He has done much more than a second supervisor is ever expected to do, and the thesis is better for it.

Further thanks go to Margaret Iversen, who examined my First Year Review, and gave helpful direction to my research at this early juncture. Throughout the PhD I have also had invaluable exchanges with Fiona Anderson, Lucy Askew, Neil Cox, Lara Demori, Vicky Horne, Kirsten Lloyd, Maeve O’Dwyer, Andrew Patrizio, Ian Rothwell, Catherine Spencer and others, which in many subtle ways have shaped the way I think about art and what it means to write about it.

I had generous financial support from the University of Edinburgh through the majority of the PhD in the form of a Principal’s Career Development Scholarship, without which I would not have been able to pursue this degree. I have also benefitted from my involvement with the ARTIST ROOMS Research Partnership, which, among many other things, has provided a platform for organising screenings of work by Bruce Nauman and Agnes Martin, allowing me to share and develop my thoughts on these artists’ work. I would also like to acknowledge the various institutions that have helped out with access to and information about artworks. These include: Frith Street Gallery (London), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Electronic Arts Intermix (New York) and Pace Gallery (New York).

Finally, I wish to thank my family – the Burgons and beyond – who instilled in me a love of walking, and Andrew Bretherick, who I met on a walk. They have all supported me along the way.

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Introduction

Two moments

In the most recent retrospective of Agnes Martin’s work (Tate Modern, London, 3 June – 11 October 2015) I was caught by a small ink drawing made by the artist in 1962. It is just over twenty centimetres square and largely formed of ruled black lines on off-white paper. Four of these lines mark the edges of the square, but imperfectly, not quite meeting at the corners, while across the surface of the paper about eighty vertical lines are drawn, densely packed into the frame. Two horizontal lines, each about a fifth from the top and bottom of the page respectively, bind these verticals together. Little freehand dashes run along the inside edge of the horizontal lines, almost as if Martin were counting off the gaps between the verticals. Martin gave this drawing the title Walking [Fig. 0.1/frontispiece].

It is an abstract drawing, but Martin’s title invites us to think of its vertical lines as a promenade across the page. Each line is a step, and like steps each has a distinctive character: each line has a slightly different thickness, each has a varied tone due to the pooling of the ink, and none of the lines quite reaches the edge, thus forming ripples or waves at the top and bottom of the paper. The drawing, one might say, has its own gently swaying gait. Martin’s modest drawing reminds us that walking is repetitious, rhythmic, incremental, but also asymmetrical. The walker is forever seeking balance, seeking symmetry, but never finding it, always having her weight on one foot or the other, just as the lines of the drawing vary in length and tone. Yet there is something curious about this ‘walk’: it is not clear whether it runs left to right or right to left across the page (or, indeed, top to bottom, if one reads it entirely differently). It is a walk without destination, strangely and stubbornly in motion without progressing: the vertical bars of the drawing trap our sight within the page, tracing left to right and back again.

Looking at Walking I cannot help also seeing a prepared loom, waiting to be woven, for the shuttle to flow back and forth between the taut warp. Or perhaps it is a map, with the strangely straight contour lines of a hill to be climbed. Or maybe I see the type bars of a typewriter, caught, as they are, between the keyed-in input and the printed output of the machine. Whichever way I look at it, it is an image of anticipation, and perhaps the destination of this walk is not yet clear because it is a walk not yet made, a tapestry not yet woven, a hill not yet climbed, a story not yet written.
A few years after Martin made this abstract walk, artists turned to the literal walking body as a means of making art. Without much thought of a history of flânerie, Dada excursion or Surrealist deambulation, artists trod lines in fields, made excursions to urban peripheries, followed strangers, paced in circles, asked for directions, made spaces that restricted gait, took their work for a walk, and wrote instructions for others to do the same. The late 1960s marked a moment at which walking played a core role in the development of performance and conceptual art. It is this period, from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, that is the primary focus of this thesis, as I explore the ways in which Western artists used the walking body to push at the limits of their practices. My focus on this period makes this a unique study on walking in art, since other such literature casts a much wider historical net, from the nineteenth-century flâneur to the present day psychogeographer. These older figures and tropes are precedents to which I refer, but on the whole, my thesis has a tighter historical focus, while at the same time seeking referents outside of the ‘walking canon’, enabling a more unexpected range of resonances and historical comparators to emerge, and complicating existing histories, as we shall see. Through concentration on one key decade or so, I seek to develop a new account of the way in which walking emerged to become a popular art-form in its own right in the present.

It is not by chance that my own interest in this period (‘60s/’70s) has emerged in parallel with a much more recent rise in the use of walking in artistic practice over the last fifteen to twenty years, which correspondingly forms a secondary, or ancillary focus in the thesis. This recent period has seen the emergence of the ‘walking artist’, who defines his or her practice through the act of walking. Much more aware of the longer history of artistic walking than their ‘60s counterparts, artists who walk now do so with a sense of legitimacy: walking has become a valid way of making art. In light of this new ‘return’ to walking in art, this thesis offers a timely critical study of the recent histories of these practices. It is structured around these two ‘moments’ – the late 1960s to mid-1970s, and the years since the late 1990s – with an emphasis on the earlier period. I investigate how and why artists working during these periods used the walking body to make art, using case studies of artworks by North American artists (American and Canadian), as understood in a wider Western context. At the core of the thesis is an enquiry into the relation between walking in art of the ‘60s and ‘70s and walking as it is used by artists today, asking how we might reframe the use of walking in the earlier
period in light of its re-emergence as a trope in recent art. Can such a re-emergence elicit the writing of a new history?

For many artists working today walking acts as a form of resistance to the demands of late capitalism. Paul Virilio sketches a picture of the world in which we are fixed into an environment that trains us to be sedentary: we choose the escalator over the stairs, and the airport travelator over walking.¹ We sit at desks, behind steering wheels, on trains, buses, and in elevators, limp-limbed and inactive. Yet, life is fast and unrelenting too. Our transportation systems keep us (though not our limbs) moving and our screens keep us constantly connected and also constantly mediated. The walking body has emerged in opposition to this dual trend towards bodily immobility and technological speed: people walk to remind themselves of their own embodiment, to slow down, to reconnect with the world around them and to free themselves from technological entrapment. As Francis Alÿs puts it: ‘Walking, in particular drifting, or strolling, is already – within the speed culture of our time – a kind of resistance. Paradoxically it’s also the last private space, safe from the phone or email. But it also happens to be a very immediate method for unfolding stories.’²

This has become one of the central ways in which the recent rise in the use of walking in artistic practice is theorised: in riposte to the frantic demands of the twenty-first century, artists start walking. As Lexi Lee Sullivan writes, ‘it is precisely in this digitised and high-speed moment of frantic productivity that walking has become an increasingly compelling strategy of resistance.’³ Indeed, framing walking in this way stretches throughout the recent literature both on walking as it has emerged in the history of art, and on walking in general, as will be discussed in more detail below. For Rebecca Solnit, as she writes in her oft-quoted history of walking, ‘the mind, like the feet, works at about three miles an hour. If this is so, then modern life is moving faster

than the speed of thought or thoughtfulness." For her, writing from a West Coast American perspective, walking is a means of challenging the expectations set up by cities that are increasingly built for travel by car rather than by foot.

Whilst understanding pedestrianism as a freeing act of resistance holds true for many artists, and is not by any means a standpoint I reject, it nevertheless can mask a host of other reasons that artists have turned to the slow-moving body as a means of making art. This critical foreclosure contributes to a mythologisation of the walking artist as an emancipated avant-garde figure and overlooks the ways in which walking is ensnared in multiple coexistent histories, of gender, labour, punishment, power and protest, alongside the more familiar urban and pastoral histories. In this thesis I aim to uncover these histories, using them to open up new readings of artworks that use walking, reaching beyond the usual emancipatory framework, which becomes increasingly depoliticised the more it is repeated. In part, I have written this thesis in order to address such shortcomings in the existing literature on walking and art. This also extends into addressing the literature’s survey-like approach to the subject, the fallout of which is a lack of critical depth or sustained analysis. While I have turned to this literature for an initial grounding, I have, in my research, consciously avoided the often tempting tendency towards a magpie collection of ‘walking artworks’ as is prevalent in the literature, choosing instead to single out key works and practices for focused analysis, using them as stimuli for discussion of the broader issues at stake. Accordingly, the thesis is structured around four in-depth case studies on the work of Trisha Brown, Bruce Nauman, Agnes Martin and Janet Cardiff, taking a chapter for each. The first three of these chapters are based in the earlier moment (1960s/’70s), while the last is based in the latter moment (1990s to present day), enabling me to address the historiographical issue of how artists using walking today frame and understand their practice in relation to its histories.

**Walking through the sixties**

The nature of walking – bodily, performative, in motion – means that a large part of what I look at in this thesis is based in performance and moving image work. However, one of my central interests throughout is what relationship these practices had, especially in the 1960s and ’70s, with more traditional mediums such as

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proscenium-based dance, pedestal-based sculpture, and frame-bound landscape painting. I investigate the extent to which medium-bound practices, such as these, are unbound or reconfigured by the use of the walking body. Francesco Careri argues that a marked shift away from medium-bound practices took place in the work of Richard Long, where walking facilitated the passage ‘from the object to its absence.’ For Careri, earlier avant-garde walking practices, such as Dada excursions, Surrealist deambulation and Situationist dérives ‘were made as an expansion of literature into the visual arts.’ Long’s use of walking, on the other hand, was ‘an integral part of a more general expansion of sculpture itself.’ *A Line Made by Walking* (1967) [Fig. 0.2] is a key example. This line marked in the grass by walking is ‘unmistakably the result of the action of a body’ but is also ‘an object, a something that is situated between sculpture, a performance and an architecture of the landscape.’ As Careri argues, using typically emancipatory language, in the 1960s walking took sculpture beyond itself, freeing the artist from the strictures of the specific medium.

Around the same time that Long made his trampled line in the grass, Robert Smithson took a walking tour around a New Jersey town (*A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey*, 1967), Michelangelo Pistoletto walked a huge ball of newspaper around the streets of Turin (*Walking Sculpture*, 1967), Steve Paxton created a dance that consisted entirely of walking (*Satisfyin Lover*, 1967 – see Chapter One), Bruce Nauman walked in circles around his studio (*Stamping in the Studio*, 1968 – see Chapter Two), Walter de Maria created a drawing as long as a walk (*One Mile Long Drawing*, 1968), Dennis Oppenheim created footprints through Manhattan (*Ground Mutations – Shoe Prints*, 1969), Vito Acconci followed strangers through the street (*Following Piece*, 1969), as did Yoko Ono (*Rape*, 1969 – see Chapter Four), and Nancy Holt photographed painted way markers on Dartmoor (*Trail Markers*, 1969). These artists turned to walking as if for the first time, using it as a means of radically reconfiguring the mediums out of which they worked – subverting traditional notions of sculptural monumentality (Smithson), rolling sculpture off its pedestal (Pistoletto), challenging the materiality of the art object (Long), extending the reach of a drawing (de Maria) or a painting (Holt). Walking became part of what Lucy Lippard called the dematerialisation of the art object,

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 125.
8 Ibid., 144.
as it collapsed into conceptual or performative practices that sought to challenge the structures and economics of the art institution. Rather than becoming a new medium in its own right, walking emerged in the late 1960s as a means by which to break apart old mediums, particularly sculpture, becoming a mechanism or tool that worked on the medium, coaxing out its constituent parts and forming new, seemingly freer, ways of making art (as will be discussed further in Chapter Two). As Dennis Oppenheim put it ‘I think that when artists began to see walking down a street as having an aesthetic or sculptural aspect, things began to open up a bit.’

While these preoccupations with medium remain a constant thread through the thesis, they were not the only concern of artists who turned to walking during the 1960s and ’70s. Indeed, it is important to remember that walking itself is a movement that is not inherently ‘natural’, but is conditioned by external factors, as Marcel Mauss demonstrates in his essay ‘Techniques of the Body’ (1934-5). After giving examples of swimming, diving and digging techniques that vary according to generation or cultural background, Mauss observes that ‘the same is true of every attitude of the body. Each society has its own special habits.’ He goes on to give examples of English and French military marching techniques, walking styles imitated by French women from American cinema, and his own personal experience of teachers chastising him as a child for walking with his hands open. ‘Thus, there exists an education in walking too’, he adds. What he shows is that seemingly natural bodily gestures – walking, swimming, diving, digging, marching, running and so on – are conditioned by such factors as culture, age, social standing, gender and nationality as they interact with institutions and ideologies. Of course such an approach has great value for this thesis, since I consider walking not as an ahistorical, ‘natural’ gesture, but as one that has a history differentiated by gender, culture and place. This enables me to draw out the socio-political implications of using walking as an artistic tool.

In light of this, I ask a series of questions, both spatial/perceptual and socio-political: How did the walker negotiate and perceive his or her relationship with place and space? What relationship did the use of walking have to other uses of the ‘everyday’

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11 Ibid., 80.
in art in the 1960s? How did gender and race affect the visibility of the urban (artist) walker? How did lone walking differ from collective walking? How did the artist’s use of walking compare to its uses in wider society? By approaching such questions throughout the thesis I explore the ways in which artists engaged with and challenged current artistic practices and the socio-political status quo. The late 1960s were momentous years for the mobilisation of the walking body, not only in art, but also for the wider populace, particularly in America. While artists traipsed, tramped and strode through streets, studios and fields, citizens marched through cities on protests and rallies, while astronauts stepped for the first time onto the surface of the moon. Rudolph Zallinger’s now iconic ‘March of Progress’ diagram [Fig. 0.3], which shows the evolution of man from early hominid, first appeared in 1965, in a Time-Life book by Francis Clark Howell entitled Early Man. Soon refuted for its false portrayal of evolution as a teleological process, this diagram tells us much about the zeitgeist of mid-1960s America: the linear arrangement and advancing footsteps of the figures imply forward progress and gradual improvement, the apotheosis of which was modern day man, primed to step onto the moon.\(^\text{12}\) The moonwalk (‘one small step for a man…’), which marked the end of the decade, was presented as the dramatic finale of man’s ‘forward march’, as will be discussed further in Chapter One.

At the time, as journalistic record attests, many felt that reaching the moon was a vain triumph and a misuse of public money that could have been better spent elsewhere, on social programmes to improve the lives of those on earth, for example. Indeed, Matthew Tribbe notes that ‘opposition was much more widespread among African Americans’, who felt both alienated by the all-white Apollo crews, and forgotten by a government who would rather spend money on the space race before placing funds into improving the lives of all American citizens, of whatever racial background.\(^\text{13}\) The way in which the Apollo missions polarised the American nation is symptomatic of an era of

\(^{12}\) Similar diagrams had appeared prior to Zallinger’s illustration, but his is the one that has entered popular iconography through its frequent reproduction. Stephen Jay Gould offered a salient critique of the ‘March of Progress’ diagram in 1990: ‘The march of progress is the canonical representation of evolution – the one picture immediately grasped and viscerally understood by all. […] The straitjacket of linear advance goes beyond iconography to the definition of evolution: the word itself becomes a synonym for progress. […] Life is a copiously branching bush, continually pruned by the grim reaper of extinction, not a ladder of predictable progress.’ Gould, Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History (London: Vintage, [1990] 2000), 31-2, 35.

a highly politicised populace, in which people discovered the collective impact of mass walking, as well as other forms of protest.

The late 1950s to the early 1970s saw the mobilisation of ordinary American citizens in support of civil rights, peace, women’s liberation, gay rights, and environmental concerns. In the early 1960s, starting in the American south, black student activists discovered the power of the sit-in against segregation, as they occupied public places (cafeterias, drugstores, shopping centres, libraries, galleries, churches, beaches) that did not admit black people.\(^{14}\) Collective physical bodily presence, that was crucially nonviolent, proved an effective way for ordinary people to disrupt the social fabric and thus stir the beginnings of change. This form of activism often involved putting one’s body on the line, as many participants were often violently treated, not only by dissenters, but also by the authorities, for their civil disobedience. Sit-ins evolved into marches (most famously, the Washington D.C. Civil Rights March in August 1963 at which Martin Luther King Jr. gave his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech) and the strength of collective marching as an instigator of political change was realised. Civil rights activists of the early 1960s set precedents for later activism, both in their models of nonviolent protest, and in that many of the key figures were students (who, as Terry H. Anderson notes, ‘had little to lose’ and ‘fewer concrete notions about what was possible and impossible, and they were more idealistic.’).\(^{15}\)

1968 is widely understood as the crest of this wave of social activism. The year that President Nixon came to office, and that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, 1968 marked a division between the activities of first wave activists, who largely focused on promoting civil rights and ending the Vietnam War, and those of second wave activists, whose concerns were much more diverse, though all adhered to a politics of the New Left, fighting for issues including women’s liberation, the environment, and gay rights.\(^{16}\) The baby-boomer generation of affluent university students and graduates formed a large part of this second wave, among them artists, as we will see in Chapter One. In the first six months of 1968 student protests erupted worldwide, most prominently in Paris, where they catalysed mass civil unrest and a general workers’

\(^{14}\) An early notable example of this is in 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina, where four black students started an impromptu sit-in at a Woolworth’s lunch counter that refused to serve them. Others began to follow their example, to great effect. See Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 43.


\(^{16}\) Ibid., xvii.
strike, almost toppling Charles de Gaulle’s government. The events of May 1968 in Paris emerged out of the activities of the Situationist International (SI), who, Simon Ford notes, had been ‘particularly impressed by the example of the August 1965 riots in the black areas of Watts in Los Angeles.’ The SI incited the actions of students at the University of Nanterre (west of Paris) in protests over poor student housing in December 1967. By the new year, this had escalated into calls for university reform, causing wider unrest, disruption of lectures and the need for police involvement. A number of students were threatened with expulsion, and were due to face a tribunal on 6 May 1968 at the Sorbonne, in central Paris. Three days before the tribunal, their fellow students rose to their defence, provoking riots in the streets, resulting in the closure of the Sorbonne. This was the beginning of a month of taking to the streets to fight the authorities: demands for university reform expanded into bids for total social revolution, as more and more people joined the cause.

Situationist rhetoric and politics were at the heart of May ’68, and in many ways this explosion of political turmoil came as the fulfilment of theories that the SI had been developing since the mid-1950s, as people occupied streets and buildings in ways that flouted authority, demanding fundamental change to class structure and wage labour as they did so. Central to these theories was the radical use of urban space, which the Situationists termed ‘psychogeography’. Through its use, the group, headed by Guy Debord, sought to re-imagine the city through the search for alternative or unfamiliar routes and uses and, as suggested by the prefix ‘psycho’, to explore the relationship between the psyche and the environment. In many ways Situationist psychogeography bore much resemblance to André Breton’s earlier Dada and Surrealist approaches to the city as a site for getting lost, finding ‘the marvellous’ and exploring unfrequented corners. One of the central techniques of Situationist psychogeography was dérive.

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19 For a detailed account of these events see ibid., 117-22. Ford also recounts how the events eventually subsided, with the authorities overcoming the protestors and taking back occupied spaces. He also notes that the mass exodus of Paris for the summer holidays probably played some part in the gradual petering out of strike actions. Ibid., 128.
20 Despite the similarities between the urban activities of Surrealists and Situationists, Debord derided Surrealist attempts at ‘deambulation’ in the countryside, citing a walk by Breton and company from Blois to Romorantin (outside Paris) that took place in 1924, asserting that ‘wandering in open country is naturally depressing, and the interventions of chance are poorer there than anywhere else.’ Guy Debord, ‘Theory
(drifting), a process of deliberate disorientation, defined as ‘a technique of rapid passage through various ambiences’. From a dérive point of view, wrote Debord, ‘cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry or exit from certain zones.’ Debord felt that the city could be mapped by ambience as one walked from one zone to the next. Psychogeography formed one part of the Situationists’ radically disruptive aims. By walking against the grain of the city, they used the dérive as a tool with which to undermine urban structure and the capitalist system it fuelled. Whilst, as I have noted above, the late 1960s saw the emergence of radical artistic walking practices that did not directly descend from Situationist psychogeography, nevertheless, the independent appearance of these forms occurred for similar reasons – these artists were concerned with embodiment, action and agency, seeking to challenge existing structures of authority. Each history is inscribed by the other, and, importantly, by the political climate of the era.

However, the French lineage of urban walkers (flâneur, Dada and Surrealist, Situationist), appears to have been little known amongst American conceptual and performance artists who turned to walking in the 1960s and ‘70s. Instead, I want to propose that a more direct – if little studied – influence on the way in which they imagined the walking body was the chronophotograph, a form dominated by the walking figure, both human and animal. Neglected by other histories of pedestrianism in the arts, this alternative root has a number of intriguing implications for the way in which walking took shape in artistic practices, particularly in America, which in turn colour the themes that emerge in my thesis – such as seriality, repetition, fragmentation, and working to dismantle and examine specific mediums and modes of visuality.

In the late nineteenth century, Eadweard Muybridge, an American photographer, and Étienne-Jules Marey, a French physician, independently found ways in which to take sequential photographs that recorded the movement of bodies through space, in what became known as chronophotographs. While Muybridge created frame-by-frame sequences using a series of twenty-four cameras [Fig. 0.4], Marey exposed multiple images onto a single plate, eventually arriving at what he termed ‘geometric chronophotography’ in which the moving figure appeared essentialised and abstracted of the Dérive’ in *Situationist International Anthology: Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), 63.

21 Ibid., 62.
22 Ibid.
as a series of closely spaced white lines and dots against a black background [Fig. 0.5]. These images, which laid the groundwork for the invention of cinema, used the walking body as a fundamental tool, as each photographer drew attention to the intricacies of the body in motion, breaking it down into its constituent parts. Marey’s photography had had a marked influence on an earlier generation of artists, who were seeking ways of painting bodies moving through space. The most well-known result of these experiments is perhaps Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending the Staircase* (1912), which exploited what Duchamp called the ‘simplified geometry’ of the human form represented by the chronophotograph.²³ For the later generation of artists the chronophotograph chimed with a rising interest in both seriality and performance, and came back into public consciousness thanks to a timely republication of Muybridge’s images. In 1955, New York-based publisher, Dover, released *The Human Figure in Motion* as part of their ‘Dover Pictorial Archive Series’. This inexpensive one-volume selection of plates from Muybridge’s eleven-volume *Human and Animal Locomotion* (1887) was specifically designed as a sourcebook for artists, and as such placed chronophotography at their fingertips.²⁴

In a 1967 article on Muybridge, Dan Graham opens with the assertion that ‘[t]oday’s “motion” picture is returning to its first appearance as a series of static, unrelated moments. Muybridge’s serial photographs are relevant to movie-makers such as Godard, Warhol, Bochner and Moskowitz.’²⁵ This revived interest in chronophotography in America not only had relevance to the avant-garde filmmakers whom Graham lists, but emerged particularly amid dancers and artists who were fascinated by how Muybridge had captured the moving body in a way that allowed for the exploration of repetition, rhythm and incremental change (among these artists were Sol LeWitt, Robert Rauschenberg, Simone Forti, Robert Morris and Steve Paxton). In particular, as Mel Bochner argues in an article also published in 1967, the chronophotograph was in tune with the ‘serial attitude’ of many artists working in the 1960s. As Bochner says, ‘Muybridge’s photographs are an instance of the serialisation of

time through the systematic subtraction of duration from event.  

Bochner emphasises that serial order in art is not a style, but a method or attitude that governed many practices from Carl Andre’s bricks to Andy Warhol’s soup cans.

The filmmaker Hollis Frampton narrates the story of Muybridge’s life in a 1973 article on the photographer, drawing particular attention to his ‘absorption in problems that have to do with what we call time.’ Frampton reflects upon the tension that has always existed in photography, between the sought-after static instant and the inevitable entropic effects of time. He suggests that what was remarkable in Muybridge was the way in which he did not conform to photographic philosophies that aimed to fix a singular moment in each shot, but rather cherished the implied temporality of the photographic image. Indeed, this interest in the way that chronophotography fractured, stilled and exposed previously imperceptible parcels of time, is what Walter Benjamin observed in his famous essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ (1935-9), when he wrote of the secrets of vision that the camera could reveal:

> Even if one has a general knowledge of the way people walk, one knows nothing of a person’s posture during the fractional second of a stride. [...] Here the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.

Close-ups and slow motion present much more than the naked eye can see, but Rosalind Krauss notes that Benjamin probably had in mind the work of Muybridge and Marey when he wrote this. She asks us to ponder what Benjamin might mean by an ‘unconscious optics’ – how can the optical field have an unconscious?  

What Benjamin refers to is not the unconscious of the optical field, but the viewer’s inability to distinguish everything that passes before his or her eyes in normal sight. When looking at a man walking, human sight alone cannot deconstruct the stages of his motion, but

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28 Ibid., 75-6. In 1975, Frampton made a lighthearted homage to Muybridge’s *Animal Locomotion* with the photographic work *Sixteen Studies for Vegetable Locomotion*.
with the use of a camera, these stages can be made clear, a process that greatly appealed to performers such as Paxton in the 1960s, as will be discussed in Chapter One.

Graham ends his article by observing that in one of Muybridge’s chronophotographic sequences there ‘is no central or climactic moment. The series is cut arbitrarily by the limit of the 24 photographs – by the sides of the page on which they are arranged for reproduction. It might begin or end at any point.’\textsuperscript{31} Here, the chronophotograph becomes a model for artistic practices that sought to flatten out the relation between parts and between art and life: the work of art is not some heightened object or moment, but an arbitrary snapshot plucked from the flow of everyday life, no more or less important than any other moment. As Graham says, in a chronophotograph, ‘things are separated from other things’: he stresses discontinuity, that time is broken into parts, not presented as one smooth continuous flow (called \textit{duree} by Henri Bergson).\textsuperscript{32} Such a sensibility will become apparent throughout the thesis, in the practices of the Judson Dance Theater in particular, and in Minimalist and structural practices more generally. Graham observes that the walker in a Muybridge chronophotograph ‘isn’t going anywhere. Her task isn’t completed – no work is done.’\textsuperscript{33} Indeed, Carrie Lambert-Beatty notes that ‘Graham does not emphasise the detailed representation of \textit{motion} that made Muybridge photos so exciting and so useful in the 1890s, but rather a quality of \textit{suspension} that seems to have been their attraction in the 1960s.’\textsuperscript{34} Ultimately Graham’s understanding of the chronophotograph is entirely at odds with its use in the nineteenth century, when it became a means by which to analyse the efficiency of bodily movement and thus maximise the productivity of factory workers, as will be discussed further in Chapter Two. For Graham, the chronophotograph perfectly illustrates the way in which walking represented a means of constant delay and procrastination, a way of seeming to do something without ever getting anything done.

Furthermore, there were other important implications of chronophotography for artists working in the ‘60s and ‘70s, as it revealed a kind of walking body that was technologically governed, measured, analysed, constrained and considered in relation to labour, efficiency and capital. While in current histories of aesthetic walking the \textit{flâneur} –

\textsuperscript{31} Graham ‘Muybridge Moments: From Here to There?’, 24.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Lambert-Beatty, \textit{Being Watched}, 114. Emphasis in original.
aloof, at leisure, and drifting – is often cast as the forebear of the walking artist, I would suggest that these artists of the ‘60s and ‘70s were grandchildren more of the chronophotographer than of the flâneur. There is a parallel history to be drawn here by letting the chronophotographer shuffle in alongside the flâneur, perhaps allowing us, in turn, to reconsider the place of the flâneur (as I will do in Chapter Four). As the chronophotograph and its cinematic legacies echo through the chapters, I alight upon different ways of thinking about walking: as well as where one walks or why one walks, I am concerned with the physical mechanics of the walking body, with its perceptual faculties and how these come together in a form of mobile embodiment.

**The nineties return to walking**

Though I focus on the ‘60s/’70s moment in three out of four of my chapters, this is necessarily framed by the moment from which I write, and the ‘return’ to walking in artistic practice that has taken place since the late 1990s. In fact, as I see it, the later moment has allowed me to historicise the earlier moment, framing it *in terms of walking* in a way that would not have been possible at the time. While artists in the 1960s walked as part of wider oeuvres, there are many examples of contemporary artists whose practices might be defined almost exclusively by walking. Indeed, as already outlined, in the 1960s artists often used walking to disrupt the conventions of particular mediums, but those who began to call themselves ‘walking artists’ from the late 1990s, often understood walking *as* their medium or at least as some kind of governing principle. One such artist, Francis Alÿs, writes: ‘Walking is not a medium, it’s an attitude. To walk is a very immediate and handy way of interacting and eventually interfering within a given context.’

Though Alÿs dismisses the idea of walking as medium, the very fact that he considers it in this context at all indicates that this has now become an issue for discussion, in a way that it was not for the previous generation of artists.

Alongside Alÿs, the other most prominent ‘walking artist’ working today is Janet Cardiff. Both artists’ practices came to maturity in the 1990s, and both produce work predominantly, though not exclusively, by walking. Cardiff creates site-specific audio

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35 Alÿs in Godfrey et al., *Francis Alÿs*, 41.

36 Janet Cardiff first came to prominence in the mid-1990s after her audio walks were noticed by the Canadian curator Kitty Scott, who told Bruce Ferguson about them. He then commissioned *Louisiana Walk* (1996) for the exhibition ‘Walking and Thinking and Walking’ at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, through which Cardiff attracted the attention of the international art world. Francis Alÿs trained as an architect before he moved into artistic practice in the late 1980s, and dropped architecture
and video walks in different cities around the world for participants to experience on an individual basis. Walking for her becomes a narrative tool, a way of weaving stories about cities, as will be discussed at length in Chapter Four. Like Cardiff, Alÿs also predominantly uses urban walking. Since, by definition, the walker is perpetually in motion and not yet at his destination, the action becomes ‘a kind of preliminary rehearsal’ in Alÿs’s practice, as Russell Ferguson has argued.37 Alÿs thus employs walking to explore what he sees as a ‘politics of rehearsal’ in his adopted home, Mexico City, the mechanics of rehearsal ‘recalling the Latin American scenario in which modernity is always delayed’ in an act of ‘constant postponement, the avoidance of the conclusion’.38 This is exemplified in the work Paradox of Praxis 1 (1997) subtitled ‘sometimes making something leads to nothing’, in which the artist pushes a large block of ice around the city as it melts. With maximum effort and minimum output, Alÿs’s futile gesture becomes a reflection of the city’s ‘politics of rehearsal’, in which copious promises and false starts abound in relation to modernising the urban infrastructure, without conclusive results.

As well as these internationally renowned ‘walking artists’, a raft of less well-known artists have adopted this designation, particularly in the U.K. and U.S.A.. While this thesis is primarily about the work of North American artists, these practices do not exist in isolation. Consequently, in the following pages, I outline a broad Western understanding of the field of ‘walking art’ as it has emerged since the late 1990s, with a focus primarily on Britain and America. Artists such as Tim Knowles, Jeremy Wood, Rachael Clewlow and Sarah Cullen in the U.K., and Teri Rueb and Angela Ellsworth in the U.S., all use walking in performances, urban tours, rural explorations, new ways of drawing and alternative ways of mapping space.39 One such artist, Phil Smith (of the U.K.-based group Wrights & Sites) has recently labelled the proliferation of such practices ‘the radical walking movement’ and dates the emergence of this movement to altogether in 1993, when, as he says he ‘got hooked very quickly by the new game, the art game’ and met a host of important figures in the art world, allowing his reputation to grow. Alÿs in Cuauhtémoc Medina et al., Francis Alÿs (London; New York: Phaidon, 2007), 11.

38 Alÿs in Godfrey et al., Francis Alÿs, 40. Alÿs has used the phrase ‘politics of rehearsal’ as the title to several projects.
the turn of the millennium.Karen O’Rourke notes that the ‘renewed interest in walking as an art form’ coincided with the emergence, from the mid-1990s, of ‘global networks, online databases, and new tools for location-based mapping’, resulting in a kind of ‘walking art’ that exploited these tools.\footnote{Phil Smith, \textit{Walking’s New Movement} (Axminster: Triarchy Press, 2015), 1.} Tim Knowles, for example, used these technologies in his various \textit{Windwalks} (2007-13), in which he and his participants walked guided by the wind, drawing lines on a digital map that traced their routes using global positioning satellites (GPS). Similarly, in the work \textit{Traverse Me} (2010) Jeremy Wood used GPS to draw a one-to-one scale map of the University of Warwick campus by tracing the lines of his drawing on foot, walking 238 miles over seventeen days.\footnote{O’Rourke, \textit{Walking and Mapping}, xvii.} Teri Rueb has been using GPS since 1999, when she created \textit{Traco}, a site-specific sound walk for a network of Canadian hiking trails: when the walker reached certain locations, as detected by the GPS unit, certain sound recordings would play.

Other walking practices deliberately shun these technologies: Rachael Clewlow manually tracks her own paths through meticulously kept handwritten notebooks in works such as \textit{Explorer} (2011); Sarah Cullen uses low-tech machines to make drawings of her walks in works like \textit{The City as Written by the City} (2005); participants in American artist Robert Wilson’s \textit{Walking} (2012) were asked to leave behind their phones and watches before undertaking a slow walk along Britain’s Norfolk coast; and Angela Ellsworth also asked her participants to relinquish their digital technologies to walk around the apparently ‘unwalkable’ streets of Phoenix, Arizona (2014). This abandonment of the digital is an attempt to embrace the analogue nature of walking, to ‘return’ to the body and a less technologically mediated connection with the world, in an echo of Lexi Lee Sullivan’s arguments, quoted earlier, ‘that walking has become an increasingly compelling strategy of resistance.’\footnote{See ibid., 136.}

Those who actively use walking in their practices now are acutely aware of the context in which they do so, as if placing themselves in a canon of artists, writers and philosophers who also walked. Indeed, part of the legitimisation of ‘art walking’ lies precisely in this process of tracing a lineage that affiliates it with walking practices of the past, whether through the rural wanderings of William Wordsworth, the London night walks of Charles Dickens, the Parisian strolls of the \textit{flâneur}, or the Situationist \textit{dérives} of

\footnote{Sullivan, \textit{Walking Sculpture}, 56.}
Debord. I want to suggest that it is this preoccupation with inheritance from writers, artists and philosophers who walked, that characterises much of the ‘walking art’ made in the last fifteen to twenty years, as artists look back into history in order to set up long structures of affiliation and continuity. These artists activate the popular metaphor that to walk is to follow in the footsteps of one’s forebears, a paradigm that some artists have turned into a structuring principle for their work. For example, British artist Simon Pope sought the memory of W.G. Sebald in *The Memorial Walks* (2007-8); Danish, New York-based artist Joachim Koester paced the route of Immanuel Kant’s daily walk in Königsberg in *The Kant Walks* (2003); British artist Tim Brennan used a monument of the explorer Ernest Shackleton as the stimulus for his London-based *Mercator Manoeuvre* (2005); and American artist Jan Estep mapped her search for the remains of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s hut in Skjolden, Norway in *Searching for Ludwig Wittgenstein* (2007). Even as the walking body moves forwards, these artists look backwards to a past that stretches back to the eighteenth century. This concern with lineage is also one of the key characteristics of a new brand of psychogeography that has emerged alongside the rise of ‘walking art’ since the 1990s.

The re-emergence of psychogeography, especially in Britain, was largely thanks to authors Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd, who both wrote, and continue to write, extensively about London’s layered histories. Sinclair’s interest in the practice came not from the Situationist concept of psychogeography as activism, but rather from the ‘Earth Mysteries’ school of thought. This arose from the republication in 1970 of Alfred Watkins’s *The Old Straight Track* (1925), which proposed a (dubious) theory of ancient alignments called ley lines, suggesting that significant sites, from the prehistoric to the Roman, were linked by mysterious lines that criss-crossed the British countryside. Sinclair’s contact with Watkins’s work led him to write *Lud Heat* (1975) in which he suggested that the Hawksmoor churches in London were all aligned to form a pattern of occult geometry. Sinclair did not use the term ‘psychogeography’ in his own work until the 1990s, and at first ascribed it only to the work of others. In his writing he continued, into the 1990s and 2000s, to show an interest in the historically layered nature of places and their associations with the biographies of figures of the past. This

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gave rise to a brand of psychogeography that, much more so than its Situationist forerunner, became a means of negotiating history and one’s inheritance of it.

In 2002 Sinclair said that psychogeography ought to be buried completely: ‘I think it needs 15 years to gain some new energy’. In *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography* (2015), Tina Richardson notes that since ‘we are now fast approaching the end of Sinclair’s fifteen-year embargo, perhaps this a salient moment to begin to discuss psychogeography again in a critical way and to take a serious look at the work being carried out in the field.’ Accordingly, her edited volume contests Sinclair’s particular brand of British psychogeography by offering many alternative models that emphasise the multifariousness and indefinability of present-day psychogeography, as practiced by writers, geographers, theorists and artists. Many of these practitioners see their work as descended from the Situationist mode of psychogeography, in that they understand walking as a subversion of urban space, in what Karen O’Rourke has termed ‘playful pedestrianism’ in her book *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (2013).

Richardson’s *Walking Inside Out* and O’Rourke’s *Walking and Mapping* are two of the most recent additions to a growing library on the practices of psychogeography and ‘art walking’. This literature is beginning to coalesce, with the emergence of books, exhibitions and conferences on the subject of walking in general terms, and ‘art walking’ more specifically. In this literature two main narratives of walking emerge: one in which walking offers a romantic escapism from twenty-first century speed and technology, and a re-connection with body and earth (Solnit, Gros), and another in which walking becomes a political tool, as the pedestrian explores urban peripheries,

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forgotten spaces and maps new geographies with his feet (Careri, O'Rourke, Richardson). Both these narratives share the sense that walking is a liberating or emancipatory technique or gesture.

As well as this literature, various institutional structures have appeared around those who self-identify as ‘walking artists’ or ‘psychogeographers’, both in the U.S. and the U.K.. The U.K.-based ‘Walking Artists Network’, for example, was inaugurated in 2007 to connect those who defined themselves as walking artists and ‘to ask how we might define walking art as a medium, and whether attempting a definition would be a fruitful method for generating discussion and debate.’ Other iterations of this trend might be New York’s ‘Conflux’ festival of psychogeography founded in 2003, the University of Sunderland’s W.A.L.K. (Walking, Art, Landskip, Knowledge) research group founded in 2011, the Scotland-based Deveron Arts Walking Institute founded in 2013, and the Arizona-based ‘Museum of Walking’ founded in 2014. In this resurgence, then, walking artists have warmly embraced the institutionalisation of their practices. The adoption of firm institutional language (‘institute’, ‘museum’) within these contexts perhaps seems at odds with the ephemeral performative practices they map, but might be seen as part of a structure that legitimises these practices ‘as art’ and makes space for collaboration between artists and art historians or curators. On the one hand, then, this process of institutionalisation has allowed for a more effective space for discussion and collaboration surrounding ‘art walking’, thus, on a more prosaic level, securing funding for its furtherance, while on the other hand such structures might seem to ossify the radical potential that walking once held for artists who used it in the 1960s.

One might couch such an institutionalisation in the terms famously laid out by Peter Bürger, when he argued that the neo-avant-garde (of the 1950s and ‘60s) institutionalised the avant-garde (of the 1910s and ‘20s) as art, thus negating its avant-gardist intentions to circumvent the institution and merge art with life. Likewise, one could argue that the institutionalisation of walking practices ‘as art’ in the 1990s-2010s negate the ‘original’ (1960s) intentions of using walking as a means of escape from the conventions of particular medium-confined artistic practices. If, as the founders of the

50 Hamish Fulton was one of the first artists to call himself a ‘walking artist’. He began to use walking as his primary mode of practice in 1973.
Walking Artists Network postulate, ‘walking art’ could now be considered as a medium in itself, is it therefore, like other mediums, governed by its own internal conventions and practices? One such convention might be the Situationist dérive, or variations on it. In its original iteration as theorised by Debord in the late 1950s, the dérive, as already noted, was proposed as a means of subverting expected behaviours in and uses of the bourgeois capitalist city. Yet as artists and writers repeat its forms in the present day, almost ad nauseam, the radical potential of this technique is at risk of being emptied of all criticality. We might ask, how can this ‘medium’, that is ‘walking art’, escape the nullification of its once politically radical practices?

While the radicalism of ‘art walking’ is certainly on trial in its repetition, I want to suggest that more ambivalent processes are at play in its 1990s re-emergence. In her art practice Carey Young directly re-performs canonical conceptual and performance pieces of the 1960s and ‘70s, several of which are examples of the use of walking. In *Lines Made by Walking* (2003), for example, Young reworks Richard Long’s 1967 *A Line Made by Walking* [Fig. 0.2] by pacing back and forth across a city-centre bridge, carving a line between crowds of drab commuters, resituating his rural walk in the urban context of systems of labour and capital.

In a series of photographed performances entitled *Body Techniques* (2007) Young continues this project, taking her title from Marcel Mauss’s essay ‘Techniques of the Body’, mentioned earlier. In Young’s performances, for which she always wears a business suit, the artist creates a strange clash between the body trained for office work, and that trained for manual labour, different ‘body techniques’ required by each. In *Body Techniques (after Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square [Square Dance], Bruce Nauman, 1967-8)* (2007), Young re-enacts Nauman’s repetitive filmed performance (which will be discussed in Chapter Two), but away from the confines of the studio, instead setting it in a desolate building site near the fast-developing cities of Dubai and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. In her re-performances, Young historicises the works she imitates, reiterating and affirming their place within the canon of neo-avant-garde art. Yet, at the same time, she seems to empty these gestures of their original radicalism. Julia Bryan-Wilson suggests that Young’s re-performance of Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s 1975 *Hartford Wash* in the *Body Techniques* series ‘rings somewhat hollow’, since the artist moves the site of the performance from the steps of a museum, to a set of steps on a construction site. In comparison with the original iteration, Bryan-Wilson argues,
'Young’s gesture seems little more than a formal exercise, emptied of its potent critique regarding the unrecognised work of museum support staff and the vital role of unpaid female labour, both public and domestic.' Likewise, one could see Young’s re-tracings of the steps of Long and Nauman as merely pale imitations of the originals: rather than existing to circumvent the art market, which was one of the aims of the original performances, Young embeds herself further into a corporate construct. However, at the same time, one could argue that in bringing these works into direct dialogue with twenty-first-century structures and sites of global commerce, she re-energises them. As I will argue in Chapter Two, in his studio exercises Nauman trains his body, placing it in dialogue with a kind of capitalist efficiency that requires routine and reliability from its workers. Performing Dance or Exercise in a suit with office towers looming behind her, Young places Nauman’s original body into the context of burgeoning international business, in which every individual is trained into productivity through systems of dispersed control. Thus, she brings Nauman’s original performance into sharp relief.

While one could characterise re-performances and repetitions in Bürger’s terms, seeing the ‘90s re-emergence of walking in art as an empty repetition of its avant-garde uses in the 1960s, Young’s performances suggest that much more nuanced processes may be at play. Also using the avant-garde (1910s-30s) and neo-avant-garde (1950s-60s) as his framework, Benjamin Buchloh coins the term ‘paradigm repetition’ as a means to chart art-historical recurrences. In this model, mapped through the emergence of the monochrome in the early twentieth century (Alexander Rodchenko) and its re-emergence mid-century (Yves Klein), a practice is reiterated by a younger generation in a way that is simultaneously an institutionalisation, fixing once-radical energies in a paradigm, and at the same time a reactivation or revising of those energies. Buchloh asks whether, contra Bürger, ‘it might not be precisely the process of repetition which constitutes the specific historical “meaning” and “authenticity” of the art production of the neo-avant-garde?’ Indeed, the tension between the institutionalisation of the radical potential of an avant-garde paradigm, and its reactivation, means that the paradigm

surges with contradictory, ambiguous energies in its second iteration (not in all cases, but in some).

However, Carey Young’s re-performances of 1960s works differ from Buchloh’s model of paradigm repetition in their self-awareness. Paradigm repetition is a structuring historical model that serves as a means of understanding how unconscious repetitions can occur in history, appearing as new on each iteration. While Buchloh argues that Klein and others ‘(re)discovered the strategy [of the monochrome] with equal enthusiasm and naiveté’ as their predecessors, Young does not turn to the walking body so naïvely, but deliberately repeats an historical trope. Her works manifest as both homages to past performances and critiques of them, as her footsteps between the commuters in Lines Made by Walking could be seen both as tribute to and as parody of those that Long made through the grass of a field in 1967. In other uses of walking in art of the last fifteen to twenty years, artists are likewise highly self-aware, as I have already noted, as they consciously follow in the footsteps of walkers of the past. While these artists do not all look back to the 1960s, as Young does, but inherit from a multiplicity of historical periods, they nevertheless return to walking in the full knowledge that it is indeed a return, and in doing so they embrace their place in a lineage, which in turn emerges as a willing institutionalisation of a trope.

Building upon and amplifying Buchloh’s model of paradigm repetition, Hal Foster also argues contra Bürger, emphasising the way in which the post-war neo-avant-garde reconsidered and reinstated the historical place of the pre-war avant-garde. While Foster’s argument resembles Buchloh’s in essentials, unlike Buchloh he highlights the way in which many neo-avant-garde artists of the 1960s who repeated early-twentieth-century avant-garde paradigms (such as collage, the readymade, the grid and so on) did so with self-awareness and a keen sense of the past they were repeating. In part, he says, this was thanks to the increased knowledge that young artists had about the history of art due to academic training, with the introduction of the master of fine arts degree in the U.S. in the late 1950s and the proliferation of museums of modern art at this time.

Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Two, Bruce Nauman (who completed his MFA at the University of California, Davis) was not only aware of the artistic practices of his immediate predecessors (Henry Moore, H.C. Westermann), but also of classical

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57 Foster, ‘Who’s Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?’, 5.
sculptural poses and techniques that dated much further back historically. Artists today are, likewise, increasingly knowledgeable about their forebears, perhaps partly due to the proliferation and naturalisation of the Fine Art or practice-led PhD over the last ten to twenty years.⁵⁸

For Hal Foster, this self-awareness means that the neo-avant-garde returns to paradigms of the past ‘to work them through to a reflexive practice – to turn the very limitations of these models into a critical consciousness of history, artistic and otherwise.’⁵⁹ In this construction, the re-emergence of walking in art in the late 1990s becomes the point at which walking comes into its own as a way of making art, and, perhaps more importantly for this thesis, the 1960s moment comes into focus itself, so that the 1990s return to walking allows for a critical reappraisal of its uses in the past. Indeed, without such a process this thesis would not be possible: the recent rise in interest in ‘art walking’ has allowed for the unified consideration of several potentially disparate artistic practices from the 1960s and ‘70s.

However, the preoccupation with inheritance that exists in current practices of ‘art walking’ complicates a model of repetition or recurrence in which a clear-cut first iteration (the 1960s) might be identified as the source of the second iteration (in the 1990s). Indeed, Buchloh points out that ‘Bürger’s historical scheme […] is marred by this one feature: the fiction of the origin as a moment of irretrievable plenitude and truth.’⁶⁰ The very multiplicity of the inherited moments of present day ‘art walking’ causes us to realise that there is no single moment of ‘genuine’ auratic originality residing in the 1960s, then emptily repeated in the 1990s. Rather, it is only in the 1990s that ‘walking artists’ become fully aware of the overlapping historical practices that have gone before. Indeed, in work such as that of Janet Cardiff, in which inheritance itself becomes a conscious object of scrutiny, walking gains critical potential, as I will show.

In contrast to the self-aware ‘walking artists’ of today, few of the artists using walking in the 1960s and ‘70s would have considered their use of it as a ‘repetition’ of

⁵⁹ Foster, ‘Who’s Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?’, 3.
⁶⁰ Buchloh, ‘The Primary Colours for the Second Time’, 42. Foster is also keen to complicate this flaw in Bürger’s argument, stressing that ‘historical and neo-avant-gardes are constituted […] as a continual process of protension and retention, a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstructed pasts – in short in a deferred action that throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition.’ Foster, ‘Who’s Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?’, 29. Emphasis in original.
any kind, despite the fact that Dadaists, Surrealists and Situationists had mapped forms of cultural walking before them. While artists were increasingly well-educated in the 1960s, as Foster notes, and recycled many art historical tropes in their work, walking, I would argue, was not approached in this way, making the use of it at this time more akin to Buchlohian paradigm repetition than to Foster’s model of conscious appropriation. Artists who used walking in the 1960s saw it as a new phenomenon, full of potential. Indeed, far from a repetition of past tropes, these artists used walking to break apart an artistic inheritance as it manifested in the form of the medium (painting, sculpture, etc.). Perhaps with the exception of Richard Long or Hamish Fulton, few of these artists considered their use of walking as the defining feature of their work, nor would any critic or art historian at the time have placed them all under the same banner due to their use of walking. Yet, the current moment allows me to do just this, making comparisons between the various different walking bodies that appear throughout the practices of this period, and exploiting the connections and contrasts that can only emerge out of such comparisons. In particular, the importance of embodiment and embodied perception in the work of Brown, Nauman and Martin will come to the fore in my analysis of their respective uses of walking, enabling me to propose certain interpretations of their work for the first time.

Four artists

This thesis is structured as four chapters: as noted, three chapters take the 1960s/’70s moment as their focus and one chapter attends to recent work made since the late 1990s. Each revolves around a work or set of works by a single artist: in Chapter One I investigate Trisha Brown’s Equipment Pieces, made in the early 1970s; in Chapter Two I look at Bruce Nauman’s filmed and videotaped studio works made during the last years of the 1960s; in Chapter Three I focus on Agnes Martin’s only film, Gabriel, made in 1976; and in Chapter Four, the final chapter, I focus on two of Janet Cardiff’s audio walks, one based in London and one in New York, made in 1999 and 2004 respectively. Where one might expect a thesis on walking to have a bipedal symmetry, there is instead a kind of ‘unbalanced balance’ to my chapters, which group into three and one in various ways: three on ‘60s/’70s, one on ’90s/’00s; three on women artists, one on a male artist; three on urban walking (often in New York), one on rural walking; three figures more usually labelled as ‘artists’, and one as a ‘dancer’, so that each chapter
in turn seems to play the ‘odd one out’. This structure, which, like a walker, is constantly seeking equilibrium, allows the content of each chapter to have a continuous interplay with that of its neighbours, as a subtle map of interconnections emerges between them. In the works under discussion, walking itself slips between motif and means of production and/or viewership, often operating in all these modes within a single artwork. In each artwork, the walker shifts too, so that the one who walks is variously the artist, the directed performer, the subject (of the film) or the viewer/participant.

The argument of each chapter is always rooted in the artwork, with a view to offering an original contribution towards the literature on each artist and set of works with which I engage. At the same time, I also seek to build up a set of arguments about walking itself as an artistic tool: each artistic practice serves to demonstrate very different, sometimes complementary, ways in which this activity has been used in performance and moving image work made since the late 1960s. While each chapter focuses on an individual artist, I am also able to use this approach as a springboard for a wider exploration of certain themes and issues that arise in a discussion of the walking body. Each chapter allows me to explore a different paradigm of walking, so that, in turn, I consider the urban walker, the efficient or productive labouring walker, the rural or Romantic walker and the female walker. I also consider different kinds of moving bodies in each chapter: the everyday body, the confined body, the rhythmic body and the haunted body. In turn, each chapter has a close relationship with a particular medium or art: dance, sculpture, painting and sound.

In terms of theoretical frameworks, current histories of walking often turn to Walter Benjamin’s writing of the 1930s on the flâneur, Guy Debord’s theorisation of the dérive in the 1950s and early ‘60s or Michel de Certeau’s essay ‘Walking in the City’ (1980). Benjamin looked to Charles Baudelaire’s flâneur, the Parisian dandy, the detached observer of modern life, ‘the perfect idler’ for whom ‘it becomes an immense source of enjoyment to establish his dwelling in the throng, in the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite.’ For Benjamin the flâneur was a figure specific to Baudelaire’s Paris, with its sedan chairs and miles of covered arcades, a world largely lost by the twentieth century. Benjamin wrote: ‘There was the pedestrian who would let himself be jostled by the crowd, but there was also the flâneur who demanded elbow room and was

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unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure.” I shall return to the frequently-problematic figure of the flâneur in Chapter Four.

In ‘Theory of the Dérive’ (1958), Debord outlined the key tenets of psychogeography as he saw them, in a technique that has been appropriated by many artists and walkers since, as we have seen. While Benjamin and Debord described walking strategies that were only open to those with enough free time available, the leisured classes, in ‘Walking in the City’ Certeau moved beyond a bourgeois conception of the urban occupant. He described the operations by which ‘place’ might be ‘spatialised’, as walkers function tactically in the interstices between the strategic organisation of the city, working against its infrastructure and urban planning, to weave their own paths into the urban fabric (this will be discussed further in Chapter One).

While these texts have remained extremely important way-markers in my own theorisation of walking, as will become clear, I have also turned to other, perhaps unexpected, sources to approach each of my four case studies. Throughout well-known critical texts, that are not about walking per se, references to the walking body and its practices often emerge. Such references, though frequently brief, can be rich and challenging, allowing for a reconfiguration of assumptions about why and how one might walk. In using these alternative theoretical texts, I seek to open out new narratives within the discourse on walking and art, which has become noticeably repetitive partly because of its reliance on a narrow set of theorists.

As we have seen, the emergence of walking as an artistic strategy in the 1960s is usually associated with the expansion of the sculptural field, epitomised by the work of Richard Long, and his seminal *A Line Made by Walking* (1967) [Fig. 0.2]. Yet rather than focusing on this sculptural association, which is fast becoming a recognised historical consensus, Chapter One opens the thesis by turning the spotlight on a more evanescent kind of walker, that found in dance, immediately questioning the assumption that Long’s work, and sculpture in general, is the ‘origin point’ for the use of walking in artistic practice in the 1960s. Indeed, by starting in this less expected place I hope to show not that ‘dance’ is the origin, but that the idea of a single origin point for the use of walking in art would always be a problematic notion. This chapter also brings to light the importance of women in the field, since narratives of walking in art are frequently occupied by a pantheon of men and place emphasis on a masculinist ideology of

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walking that is heroic, individualist and transgressive as Dee Heddon and Cathy Turner have argued.63

The chapter begins by outlining the ways in which walking was used by dancers associated with the New York-based Judson Dance Theater that was active from 1962 to '67 (notably, before Long’s Line). For Sally Banes, the use of everyday gestures in dance was democratic, suggesting accessibility and equality between dancer and audience, a feeling shared by the dancers themselves. Walking was seen by this group of dancers as a kind of baseline, movement stripped bare and taken to its minimum, a beginning from which to build up a new kind of dance. As a gestural equivalent to Cagean silence, walking became a means of making pure bodily movement visible.

In Trisha Brown’s post-Judson Equipment Pieces of the early 1970s, which are the central case studies of this chapter, this desire to reveal pure, unencumbered, bodily movement through walking became, as I will show, paradoxically entangled with the use of supplementary apparatus. In these works, dancers were rigged up to walk on unusual architectural planes: walls, roofs and water towers. I argue that in the Equipment Pieces, Brown intuitively displays a technological euphoria that was first seen in the work of New Vision photographers and filmmakers of the 1920s, re-enacting her own form of techno-enthusiasm, but this time through the prism of the space race (‘one small step’) and with a greater sense of ambivalence than her predecessors. Indeed, this ambivalence is expressed in Brown’s articulation of a human body that is caught somewhere between the flighty and the earthbound, simultaneously and paradoxically attempting to occupy both positions. Such an attempt inevitably places the body in a position of falling, throwing it into a vertigo-inducing tailspin. Paul Virilio has suggested that perspectival space is experienced as vertiginous: walking is a constant fall from one foot to the other that gives rise to a feeling of ‘falling into’ the horizon. This, I argue, is an experience that seems urgent and pressing in Brown’s dances, as they make visible a kind of walking in which visibility itself is governed by the relation of the body to the earth and its gravity. She creates works that simultaneously celebrate the new possibilities of weightlessness in space, whilst also affirming a weighty, earthbound body as a riposte to the threat imposed by such possibilities.

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The central case study of Chapter Two is a series of films and videos that Bruce Nauman made in the late 1960s, in which we see the artist performing various mundane and repetitive actions in his studio: stamping, jumping, playing the violin, bouncing balls, but mostly walking. The chapter begins by tracing connections between Nauman’s interest in everyday actions and his association with the Judson dancer Meredith Monk, allowing for a thread of continuity to be drawn through from Chapter One. However, of greater concern in this chapter is the complex relation that the studio works have with Nauman’s sculptural training. The artist turned to walking as a means of not making sculpture, part of his struggle with the notion of the artistic product, the ‘work’. I argue that the studio-based films and videos reflect the constant friction between confinement and escape that characterises the sculptural condition, necessarily informing the crucial dynamic of entrapment and control at play in Nauman’s oeuvre. Such a dynamic leads into an exploration of the extent to which the films and videos might be viewed as a form of penal imprisonment, the artist’s body akin to that of an exercising inmate. In *Discipline and Punish* (first published in English in 1977), Michel Foucault argues that the product of prison labour is not material outcome, but the disciplined ‘docile body’ of the inmate, primed for economic use upon his release. I argue that in his studio works, Nauman operates a strange prison, in which he is both inmate and guard, using exercise as a means of self-discipline, creating his own ‘docile body’ as the product of his artistic experiments. The films and videos, then, are rendered as by-product, where Nauman’s docile body is the product itself.

In the final part of this chapter I turn to Nauman’s early corridor works, in which he uses video to turn the tenets of Foucauldian docility upon the participant. In his corridors, I argue, Nauman distils systems of technocratic surveillance (CCTV) that began to emerge in the 1960s and ‘70s. The corridors reveal the way in which such systems pass over the role of disciplinarian to the subject herself, so that like Nauman in his films and videos, one becomes one’s own prison guard, thus rupturing the illusion of centralised control. In this chapter a different kind of walking body comes to light, governed much more by routine and habit, than by dérive and wandering. Nauman reveals a walking body that is industrial, efficient and mechanical.

In sharp contrast to this, Agnes Martin works from the familiar assumption that walking is emancipatory, and might be used as a means of slowing down and becoming absorbed in one’s embodiment in order to escape the shocks of modernity. Of all the
chapters, Chapter Three is that through which I engage most with these more traditional, romantic notions of the rural walker as a surveyor of the picturesque landscape. The central case study through which I explore these notions is Martin’s only completed film, *Gabriel* (1976), which features a young boy walking through the landscapes of the American southwest. The film has largely been marginalised in the literature on Martin, often seen as an anomaly next to her abstract paintings, and so in part this chapter aims to resituate the film within her oeuvre and alongside other experimental film of the era. I argue that where Martin’s paintings have been positioned between Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, we might think of *Gabriel* as existing between structural and lyrical film of the 1960s and ’70s.

In this chapter *Gabriel* acts as a focal point for an examination of the ways in which the walking body engages with the landscape, and with sight as a rhythmically embodied and temporal process. Using Henri Lefebvre’s writing on rhythm, I argue that the red-filtered shot near the beginning of the film constitutes a reference to sight as an embodied act, a notion central to theories of the picturesque. Lefebvre uses the term *cyclical* to describe rhythms that are natural, and *linear* to describe imposed mechanical temporalities. In her use of natural imagery, edited into repetitive sequences through ordered crosscutting, Martin, I argue, constructs a film that sits between the cyclical and the linear, but in an awkward manner that does not neatly reconcile their contradictions. Though Rosalind Krauss has dismissed *Gabriel* for its romantic allusions to nature, which risk foreclosing our understanding of Martin’s paintings as one-dimensional ‘analogues of nature’, I argue rather that the film poses the question of how one might look at the paintings as fields of quivering movement that echo bodily rhythms of breath, blood and nerves. Both film and paintings invite a manner of looking that goes beyond pure visuality to involve the whole *polyrhythmic* body. Through its engagement with the rhythms of embodiment and with a planar kind of pictorialism, I argue that *Gabriel* re-energises the well-worn tropes of viewing the picturesque landscape.

Taken together, the first three chapters explore the ways in which walking was used by artists in the 1960s and ‘70s as a tool to disaggregate or reconfigure the medium (dance, sculpture, painting). These chapters also richly demonstrate ways in which artists have challenged paradigms of walking. With her Equipment Pieces, Trisha Brown throws open, and moves beyond, the notion of walking as urban transgression (in a Situationist or Certeauian sense), while in *Gabriel* Martin reconfigures the model of the
heroic male Romantic wanderer, as her young walker explores rolling plains rather than
summiting a mountain. Both these female artists subtly contest paradigms of the male
walker, urban and rural. Following on from assertions made about Brown’s harnessed
dancers, the chapter on Bruce Nauman serves to challenge a different paradigm,
problematising the emancipatory rhetoric that, as explored above, permeates much
writing on walking. The notion that walking is always inevitably connected to freedom
and wellbeing comes under scrutiny, as I draw attention to a parallel history of walking
as a tool of punishment and control, tracing the way it was used in prison exercise yards
and tread wheels. The legacy of this history is a Foucauldian panoptic state in which the
pedestrian tracks her behaviour in the city, training her own body into submission.

Chapter Four sits slightly apart from the other three chapters and marks the
second ‘moment’ of the use of walking in art from the late 1990s onwards, enabling me
to address the central historiographical problem of the thesis: how to position the 1990s
‘repetition’ of walking as an artistic gesture in relation to its history. Janet Cardiff is
often labelled as a ‘walking artist’, a term that, as we have seen, has gained currency in
recent years, and she notes that she began to produce her audio walks ‘at a moment in
time when people have started to walk again, to get out of their cars and discover their
bodies and their senses.’ Like other ‘walking artists’ of this era, Cardiff demonstrates a
preoccupation with historical precedent, and while some are perhaps weighed down by
this inheritance, emptily repeating it, Cardiff’s complex engagement with it allows her to
offer a more radical model for the use of walking from the 1990s onwards. Accordingly,
I also use this chapter to reflect on the way in which we, as art historians, write histories
of walking as used in the art of previous generations. In addition, I reflect back on the
troubled history of walking in art of the 1960s and ‘70s that I have so far outlined, and
think about the position it holds in our historical imagination.

The chapter focuses on two of Cardiff’s audio walks: The Missing Voice (Case Study
B) (1999), which is based in London, and Her Long Black Hair (2004), based in New
York. Employing a form developed by Cardiff, these works use an audio soundtrack to
lead the participant through the city streets, following a disjointed narrative that echoes
and negotiates the history of the environments in which she walks. Reading these works
as a kind of peripatetic cinema, I draw a parallel between the screen and the street, in

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64 Cardiff in Miriam Schaub, ed., Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book (Vienna; New York: Thyssen-Bornemisza
Art Contemporary; Public Art Fund, 2005), 5.
particular drawing attention to the female experience of both. Historically women have existed on the city streets not as subjects in their own right, but as objects of the male gaze in a parallel with Laura Mulvey’s theorisation of the cinema screen as the site of woman’s to-be-looked-at-ness. This analogy between street and screen fuels my argument, as I suggest that the use of the disembodied ‘acousmatic’ voice in Cardiff’s work serves to deconstruct and undermine the primacy of the visual that governs both spheres (screen and street), thus frustrating the male gaze.

In turn, I show the way in which these works could be read in terms of Derridean hauntology, a system of inevitable, yet troubled, inheritance governed by ghosts. Hauntology, a term beloved of 1990s psychogeographers, elides into its homonym, ontology, and one slips from ‘being’ to ‘almost being’, so that to be haunted is to be. In Derrida’s model inheritance passes from the ghost of the Father to the Son, leaving little room, as critics have observed, for women to learn to be. Cardiff conjures an inheritance from particular ‘walkers’ of the past (Baudelaire, Kierkegaard etc.), yet they are all male. Her female characters remain nameless, indistinct and shadowy, their identities always merging and fracturing. The audio walks trace these women, trying to find their names and stories, placing the participant in their shoes. In this way, Cardiff inverts the usual hauntology of psychogeography, using not only her own voice to haunt, but also the echoes of female voices she finds along the way.

In their own ways, each of these chapters explores and challenges the easy assumptions that one might make about the walking body: for example, the idea that it offers an unmediated, emancipated and slow kind of embodiment. Indeed, Brown’s harnessed dances and Nauman’s entrapped studio works complicate the notion that the walking body is unbound and unmediated. And while, of all my sixties artists, Martin works most with these assumptions of natural emancipation rather than against them, she does so in a way that puts them to the test: her film takes on a structured and ordered rhythm that allows it to sit, somewhat uneasily, between the cyclical rhythms of nature and the body and the linear rhythms of technological structure. Indeed, Gabriel requires a certain amount of endurance in its viewer, as the rhythms of one’s daily life jar against those it offers. Watching it is certainly far from akin to the ease of taking a country stroll. Of all my case studies, Cardiff’s audio walks complicate our assumptions about the unmediated walking body the most: the participant is offered an intense
feeling of connection with her surroundings, yet this apparent connection is cinematic, illusory, artificial, consciously constructed and facilitated by the artist herself.

A model for the branching connections thus established between my chapters, and the many possible routes they support through the history of walking is provided in a work called *Caminhando (Walking)* (1963-4) [Fig. 0.6] by the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. This work begins with a Mobius strip, a three-dimensional structure with only one plane, a band in which front and back are one and the same, and one can trace one’s finger along every surface and never lose contact with it. In *Caminhando*, Clark made just such a strip out of paper, and then cut into it, moving her scissors along its length, their blades like legs walking a curving path, dividing it as they did so, round and round the infinite loop. As she cut the single twisted piece of paper, it opened out into manifold strips and paths, so that the singular indivisible structure became multifarious and interwoven, its networked paths all still attached to one another, but now as a maze, full of choices, rather than a labyrinth, which only offered one path. Clark’s gesture shows us just what walking can do, and how artists can use it to open out closed systems, question delimited lines of thought and offer new paths for us to take. This thesis takes its approach from Clark’s *Caminhando*, allowing walking not only to be its subject matter, but also to become a form of methodological approach.
Figure 0.1 Agnes Martin, *Walking*, 1962, ink on paper, 22.9 x 22.9cm, private collection.
Figure 0.2 Richard Long, *A Line Made by Walking*, 1967, photograph, 37.5 x 32.4cm, Tate, London.
Figure 0.3 Rudolph Zallinger, *March of Progress*, 1965, from Francis Clark Howell, *Early Man* (New York: Time-Life, 1965), detail of fold-out timeline.
Figure 0.4 Eadweard Muybridge, plate from *Animal Locomotion*, 1887.

Figure 0.5 Étienne-Jules Marey, Geometric chronophotograph of a walking figure, 1883.
Figure 0.6 Lygia Clark, *Caminhando (Walking)*, 1963-4, photographs of action undertaken with paper, glue and scissors, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Chapter One

Making walking visible: from Judson dance to Trisha Brown’s Equipment Pieces

Walking in Judson dance

In a lecture given in the mid-1970s, the dance critic Michael Kirby proposes a definition of dance as ‘moving in time to music’, adding that the movement should be ‘rhythmical’ with a ‘smooth energy flow’.

Yet he soon finds that his attempts at definition fall short when considering how many contemporary choreographers had abandoned the use of music in their work and begun to use everyday unadorned gestures, such as walking, with a rhythm and energy that directly corresponded to their use in everyday life. Such pedestrian approaches were pioneered by dancers including Steve Paxton, Lucinda Childs, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown during their association with the New York-based Judson Dance Theater, who performed at the Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square from 1962 until 1967.

By introducing ordinary actions into dance, not only were these dancers blurring the boundaries between dance movement and everyday movement, but also, as Kirby’s hesitant classification shows, they were complicating the very definition of dance itself.

As I noted in the introduction, even before walking became a way of reconfiguring sculpture in the late 1960s, it was at work on the structures and traditions of dance.

Kirby goes on to test his definition of dance against a performance of Steve Paxton’s *Satisfyin Lover* (1967) [Fig. 1.1] in which he took part. This dance consisted primarily of walking and stopping: ‘Steve was interested in the differences in the way people move and the way people stand. Is that dance?’ Kirby asks.

Central to Paxton’s choreography of the 1960s was his use of walking. As Judson’s main chronicler, Sally Banes, notes, walking ‘became the currency of Paxton’s populist stance’ as a movement.

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2 This chapter will not give a narrative account of Judson Dance Theater, as its foundation and progress have been well chronicled in several books and articles by Sally Banes and others. See, for example: Sally Banes, Democracy’s Body: Judson Dance Theater 1962-1964 (Epping: Bowker Publishing Company, 1983) and Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1980); or Ramsay Burt, Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces (London: Routledge, 2006) for a reading that challenges many of Banes’s assumptions.

3 Kirby in Livet, Contemporary Dance, 162.
that everyone performs on a daily basis. As art critic RoseLee Goldberg recently reflected, in downtown New York in the 1960s and ‘70s, ‘everyone could dance, everyone could walk. If you could walk, you could dance. The democracy of dance.’

Walking, Banes argues, became representative of the democracy that Paxton wished to embody in his dances – the audience could understand the movements being performed as part of a shared experience rather than governed by an hierarchical structure in which dancers were set apart from their audiences as paragons of the skilled and honed body. This kind of dance was political by its very nature: anyone, skilled or not, could bring their movements into the spotlight. Indeed, for Banes, this drive towards democracy lay at the heart of the rise of the ‘ordinary’ in 1960s culture, not only in dance but across a broad range of artistic practices from Happenings to Pop. She writes that the ordinary ‘stood for many things, but, given the political tenor of the period, it stood, above all, for the populist aims of accessibility and equality – for both artists and audiences.’

Banes notes that many of the Judson dancers were interested in finding ways of moving […] that would have meaning for the democratic majority, valuing the ordinary lives of ordinary people. This determination stemmed from egalitarian political principles. Thus for Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and several other choreographers of the time, simple actions such as walking became symbolically charged, revolutionary acts.

In this chapter I will focus on the role that walking played in New York dance practices of the 1960s and ‘70s. I begin by looking at the broad use of this gesture in Judson dance, and then attend to the post-Judson works of Trisha Brown in which walking played a crucial role. In particular, I shall explore the ways in which this latter set of works complicated the democratic claims that are often attached to the use of

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6 Sally Banes, *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1993), 122, also see 91. Elsewhere, Banes notes that, ironically, it was ballet that continued to draw the mass audience in the ‘dance boom’ of the 1970s and ‘80s, and thus somewhat negates her own argument. Sally Banes, ‘Gulliver’s Hamburger: Defamiliarization and the Ordinary in the 1960s Avant-Garde’, in *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything was Possible*, eds. Sally Banes and Mikhail Baryshnikov (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 19. Ramsay Burt notes that Banes’s emphasis on the democratic nature of Judson’s use of the ‘everyday’ is a tendency of her later writing. In her earlier writing, he notes, she argued that Judson represented a form of ‘pure dance’ that had modernist Greenbergian tendencies, thus seeing artistic production as independent from social and political factors. See Burt, *Judson Dance Theater*, 10.
walking in dance, resulting in an interpretation that reads against the grain of usual rhetoric by and about Judson. Where Banes celebrates the immediacy and democratic lack of hierarchy found in walking as dance, I will, perhaps unexpectedly, find in its uses a form of vertiginous and ambivalent ‘spectacle’, placing it in the wider context of technologically-supported and politically triumphant walks of the era. Indeed, in the context of dance, Banes’s democratic assessment of the use of walking appears much less viable during the period immediately following the Judson years, most noticeably in relation to Brown’s dances, which put pressure on notions of ‘equality’ between dancer and audience through the reintroduction of the skilled, virtuosic body. Where Rainer famously wrote in 1965, ‘NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe’, I see all these tendencies re-emerging in Brown’s work of the 1970s. Yet, I want to ask, does this mean that Brown’s dances of the 1970s are without a political edge? Might Brown’s use of walking still be said to operate critically, if not democratically? Indeed, Ramsay Burt argues that in stressing an affirmative view of avant-garde dance of the 1960s and ‘70s, Banes underestimates its critical tendencies: ‘Where these dancers said no to aspects of the mainstream dance of the day,’ he writes, ‘they were not affirming the values of a vibrant, rejuvenated society but criticising its failures and shortcomings.’ In my reading of the work of Trisha Brown, these tendencies – the affirmative and the critical – become two edges of the same sword, as I argue that her work cuts both ways, simultaneously embracing the socio-political and technological challenges of the era, whilst also vying with their implications.

In approaching these issues I explore the relationship between Brown’s so-called ‘Equipment Pieces’ and the city that she used as her stage, as she traversed streets, rooftops and walls, using harnesses and pulleys to do so. While such urban exploration might be characterised as a Certeauian tactic of sorts, as I later show, I will go on to

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9 Burt, *Judson Dance Theater*, 11. The other major contribution of Burt’s book, which I do not have space to do justice to here, is his analysis of the more expressionistic side of the activities of the Judson Dance Theater. Where the literature usually attends to formalist, pared-back dance by the likes of Paxton and Rainer, Burt devotes a whole chapter (88-115) to dances by David Gordon, Freddy Herko and Carolee Schneemann in which a more visceral, unruly, sexualised, camp, costumed, illusionistic body emerges (a famous example of some of these tendencies might be found in Schneemann’s *Meat Joy*, 1964). While such ‘drama’ might be seen as a return to the characteristics of traditional dance, Burt notes that this side of Judson Dance ‘also troubled and subverted the conventions and traditions of mainstream dance in order to explore new kinds of subject matter and experience.’ Ibid., 89.
suggest that Brown’s approach to the city through the harnessed body manifests a technological euphoria redolent of that shown by photographers and filmmakers of the early twentieth century. This revived moment of techno-enthusiasm took place in the context of late 1960s space exploration, in light of which, I will argue, Brown explored a body that, beyond democratic ordinariness, had a broader politics: that of the ordinary within the extraordinary, of the earthbound and the weightless, holding these binaries in fraught tension. Indeed, Brown uses walking to do more than just move dance beyond its own medium specificity. Hal Foster argued, in a 2005 revision of his earlier claims concerning Minimalism, that in Dan Flavin’s work ‘we see Minimalist anti-illusionism trumped as an expanded field of illusionism. That is to say, his work moves beyond the frame of painting and off the pedestal of sculpture into a realm less of specific objects than of pictorial space writ large.’\(^{10}\) In a similar way, one might argue that with her Equipment Pieces, while Brown moves away from the proscenium arch of the stage, she does so less in an embrace of the ordinary, and more in an embrace of the expanded field of the city and its architecture as a spectacular stage for her dance.

Yet before I leap into a discussion of Brown’s work of the 1970s, I first want to understand the context from which it came, by providing a thorough exploration of the various uses of walking in Judson dance (which is notably unavailable elsewhere in the literature). The value of such an exegesis lies not only in contrasting the Judson years with Brown’s later work, but also, within the wider context of the thesis, in providing a bedrock, in these early pages, for thinking about walking itself on a fundamental level, as a pared-back, ordinary gesture that is the most basic form of human travel.

Steve Paxton’s earliest use of walking in dance was in the work *Proxy* (1961), in which the action appeared alongside other everyday activities such as eating, drinking and sitting, yet *Satisfyin Lover* is perhaps his most well-known and uninterrupted use of walking. The piece was first performed by forty people in a space 200 feet long, though

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10 Hal Foster, ‘Six Paragraphs on Dan Flavin’, *Artforum* (February 2005): 161. This is a partial revision of Foster’s earlier, anti-illusionist stance on these matters. Minimalism, he argued in 1996, announced ‘a new interest in the body – […] not in the form of an anthropomorphic image or in the suggestion of an illusionist space of consciousness, but rather in the presence of its objects.’ Foster, ‘The Crux of Minimalism’ in *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1996), 43. Rosalind Krauss, too, observes the emergence of a revisionist reading of 1960s Minimalism in which it is given a certain spectacularity. Viewing Minimalist objects in the vast emptiness of a museum of the 1980s, Krauss sees them not as they were intended, as foils for ‘the subject of lived bodily experience’, but as awaiting ‘the dispersed subject awash with a maze of signs and simulacra of late 1980s postmodernism.’ Rosalind Krauss, ‘The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum’, *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 12. Krauss uses the word ‘spectacle’ in a pejorative sense, while I will propose a more ambivalent reading of the spectacle at play Brown’s dances.
Paxton suggests, at the end of the score, that both of these figures are flexible: ‘The number of people can vary from thirty to eighty-four, and the space can be as little as sixty-five feet or horizon to horizon for stationary audience.’ The dance comprises only three movements: walking, standing and sitting. As Paxton points out in the score, these three movements are what the dance is about, and the dancers should aim ‘to keep these elements clear and pure.’ The score sets out the activities of six groups of dancers labelled A to F. Essentially each performer walks from one side of the performance space to the other, all in the same direction, within ‘an imaginary track ten feet wide’. Some of the performers occasionally sit on the three chairs arranged at the centre of the space.

At this stage it is worth noting that Satisfyin Lover is accessible to a present-day audience through videos of re-performances, and through the score for the original performance. In fact, I approach all the dances discussed in this chapter through such inevitable mediation. While many of the dances have been restaged in museums during the last ten to fifteen years, giving rise to a scholarship that is preoccupied with the place of ‘re-performed’ avant-garde dance in the institution, we receive their original performances through the historical documents of text, photograph and film. In fact, Amelia Jones has written that even performances experienced live are viewed ‘through the memory screen, and they become documentary in their own right.’ Carrie Lambert-Beatty stresses that the subject of her 2008 book Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s is ‘Rainer’s 1960s performance as we now have it, her art as a matter of traces’. So, just as Lambert-Beatty does in her approach to Rainer, I do not want to see this mediated approach to performance as necessarily impoverished. Indeed, acknowledging the now technologically-bound reception of these once-live works will be fundamental to my approach, as technology and vision emerge as important themes.

11 All quotations in this paragraph: Paxton in Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 74.
12 See, for example, the College Art Association (CAA) Conference 2015 session ‘Dance in the Art Museum’ run by Jennie Goldstein and Amanda Jane Graham, which marks the general interest in this subject. For a specific analysis of the relationship between Brown and the museum see Susan Rosenberg, ‘Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art’, October, no. 104 (Spring 2012): 18-44. In 2005 a DVD of recordings of Brown’s early works (1966-79) was released, allowing a wider audience to gain access to them, and indeed, making them much more accessible than some of Brown’s later work made from the 1980s onwards.
in relation to the scrutinised visibility of the walking body, as well as to the sight of the walker herself.

Closely studying the score for *Satisfyin Lover*, one becomes aware of the precision that this work gives to seemingly simple tasks, with the exact number of steps and pauses that each performer should take marked out. Looking at the score alongside videos of subsequent performances of the dance, there is an odd tension between the carefully choreographed movements and the resulting dance, which appears casual and un-choreographed. This sense of informality is added to by the fact that Paxton, like many of the Judson choreographers, uses untrained dancers in this piece, who wear casual clothes rather than leotards or costumes and who do not hold themselves like dancers, but have imperfect posture and flatfooted gaits. This serves to blur the boundaries between audience and performer even more. For the critic Jill Johnston, writing on a 1968 performance, this use of ordinary people as well as everyday actions made *Satisfyin Lover* a celebration of the ordinary human body. She wrote of

> the incredible assortment of bodies, the any old bodies of our any old lives … walking one after the other across the gymnasium in their any old clothes. The fat, the skinny, the medium, the slouched and slumped, the straight and tall, the bowlegged and the knock-kneed, the awkward, the elegant, the coarse, the delicate, the pregnant, the virginal, the you name it, by implication every postural possibility in the postural spectrum, that’s you and me in all our ordinary everyday who cares postural splendour.\(^{15}\)

In subsequent reconstructions of the work (such as at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 2012) concerted efforts were made to cast a variety of bodies, ages and races. For Paxton’s contemporary, Yvonne Rainer, these reconstructions in some ways offered an enriched version of the original due to having such a wide variety of people involved.\(^{16}\) And in *Satisfyin Lover* it was not just the different types of body that became visible, but the different types of walk, the multitude of variations and idiosyncrasies: gait was revealed as a bodily signature.

The score for Rainer’s *Terrain* (1963) reveals a similar variety, and the numerous appearances of walking are described in the score as follows: ‘foot-over-foot squat walk’, ‘dribble walk’, ‘classic walk’, ‘splat walk-with-classic arms’, ‘stiff leg walk’, ‘walk –

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weight very forward’, ‘walk with determination’, ‘walk in circle’, ‘relevé waddle’, ‘bent-over walk’, ‘straight body walk’, ‘walk on all fours’, ‘shuffle’, ‘strut with torso bumps’, ‘forced arch walk with vague hands and head to side’, ‘walking side to side with vibrating arms and changing expressions’, ‘careful walk in circle’ and ‘promenade’. This catalogue of bipedalism demonstrates the range of attitudes and characters that exist within the single action. In this dance walking seems to be the glue between more complex sets of actions, since it intersperses a much more diverse and energetic score consisting of runs, crawls, jumps, somersaults and adaptations of traditional ballet steps (pliés, arabesques, chassés, pas de bourrées, and so on). Walking was frequently used in this way in Judson dance, yet in Paxton’s Satisfyin Lover walking is not the glue, but the substance. It is the ordinary action that comes under scrutiny, as he tells us:

It had to do with invisibility. The ordinary is, in a sense, un-visible, invisible, because it’s…ordinary. The senses tune it out. […] …what I thought was that one spends so much time in one’s body ignoring it, being with other focuses. And I was real interested to see, to examine and to question what was going on when one was doing this activity that was really setting one’s set most of the time. I might spend five or six hours a day working on my body and working on dance…. and yet all the rest of the time my body was just carrying on by itself and I became really interested to see what was happening on that level. I felt it was important.  

Paxton’s conception of walking as an invisible action drove his interest in revealing its intricacies. In Satisfyin Lover he instructed his dancers to take on an easy pace, ‘but not slow’. Such a pace would give the audience enough time to process each step, making the action visible to them. Rainer commented of Satisfyin Lover that it ‘was as though you had never seen ordinary people walk across a space. It was highly revelatory.’ The piece became a means by which to scrutinise the way the body moved, and by using the body’s most basic action this analysis went unclouded by superfluous gestures. Banes notes that many have admired Paxton’s ‘revelation of the body as physical machine’. By stripping movement back Paxton was able to show, as in a nineteenth-century chronophotograph, the way in which the limbs and joints interact,

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17 Score for Terrain in Rainer, Work 1961-73, 28-42. Terrain (1963) also included a ‘Walking Solo’ performed once each by William Davis, Steve Paxton and Judith Dunn.
19 Paxton in Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 74.
21 Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 57.
and do so with characteristic differences in the case of each individual. Indeed, Paxton had a direct interest in the chronophotography of Eadweard Muybridge and, as Lambert-Beatty notes, created parts of Proxy as a direct response to the work of the photographer.²² Like Muybridge’s photographs Proxy isolated an action and its serialised stages, as the dancers repeatedly walked past a curtain, their figures detached from the surrounding space by this plain flat backdrop.

Beyond Proxy, Lambert-Beatty stresses a wider chronophotographic tendency in Judson dance that, she suggests, emerged out of a desire to make movement more visible. Strategies such as ‘stretching [movement] out in slow motion or stilling it in virtual photographs or ready-made memory images’ were, she notes, ‘strikingly reminiscent of attempts nearly a century earlier to expose the motion of bodies in time.’²³ Such experiments can be observed in the work of Simone Forti, who acknowledged the direct influence of Muybridge on her work, or Yvonne Rainer, who owned books and articles about the chronophotographer, meaning that his influence was present, but slightly more obliquely so. Lambert-Beatty argues that in works such as Room Service (1963) and Parts of Some Sextets (1965), Rainer, in her use of multiple dancers doing a series of staggered movements, ‘imported Muybridgean stutter into the flow of live performance.’²⁴ In this way, these dances presented an understanding of time as itemised and abstracted, disrupting the continuity of the live performance with points of pause. The dance became a visualisation of the way in which Henri Bergson juxtaposed the fragmented and immobilised time made visible by the chronophotograph with his concept of ‘true’ time as durée, made homogenous by human consciousness.²⁵ Chronophotography thus disrupts a classical understanding of time as continuous flow, and instead spatialises it, that is, depicts it as a series of points on a line. This came to bear on the Judson dancers’ use of walking because of the way that the action itself was viewed as a means of spatialising time, into steps on a trajectory, so that movement and time were elided.

²² Lambert-Beatty, Being Watched, 62.
²³ Ibid., 107-8.
²⁴ Ibid., 112.
²⁵ See Anson Rabinbach, The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 110-11. Bergson took up Marey’s comparison of the horse in the chronophotograph with that depicted sculpturally on the Parthenon frieze. For Bergson, the Parthenon example fixed the attitude that suggested the duration of the movement, capturing the characteristic of galloping, filling up ‘a time of gallop’, as he put it. In contrast, chronophotography isolated any moment, spreading out the gait into successive stages, none of which captured the essence of the entire movement. Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (New York: Cosimo Classics, [1911] 2005), 361.
As I noted in the thesis introduction, chronophotographers used the walking body as a fundamental tool: the pages of Muybridge’s animal locomotion publications are filled with studies of the gaits of humans and animals, all recorded in greater prevalence than any other movement, as if walking is the base movement that comes before all others. Such an attitude was prominent, too, among dancers of the 1960s and ’70s. In 1972 the dancer and choreographer Laura Dean wrote that ‘all movement comes from walking’.26 She later qualified this thought, seeing its logic as ‘sophomoric’, adding ‘I would rather say that all movement comes from ___________.’27 There is something at stake in this blank, for where ‘walking’ can so readily be exchanged for a blank, might it not in itself be a blank? Yet walking as negation, as blank, can also become walking as baseline, as the point of origin. So as Dean says, all movement comes from walking, from this blank, this starting point. For the Judson dancers this was a central point of enquiry and continued to be so after the Judson years (1962-7), into the 1970s. This could be surmised, for example, from Simone Forti’s Crawling (1974) in which she clambers from a crawl to a standing position and slowly begins to take a step as if it is her very first, falling back down again like an unstable infant.28 ‘It intrigues me’, she writes, ‘that locomoting by shifting the point of support between left and right is so safe and easy.’29 Such a precarious, yet safe, means of movement seems to be, for Forti, the very first dance we learn.

Rainer discovered this too after one of her periods of hospitalisation in the mid-1960s, as she had to re-learn movements that one usually masters in childhood. She wrote to her brother: ‘I have had to do a lot of simple operations as though for the first time: sitting, standing, eating, walking […] I can still hardly walk up stairs.’30 These everyday movements were seen as the basis of all movement, the building blocks, and were explored as such in ‘accumulation dances’ by Trisha Brown and Lucinda Childs. In one such dance, Childs’s Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques (1976), each performer begins by walking, but as they cross the room their walk is augmented with a hop, a squat turn,

26 Dean in Livet, Contemporary Dance, 102. Laura Dean was not a central member of the Judson Dance Theater, but she had danced with them.
27 Ibid.
28 See Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 31-4. In this dance, as in many others, Forti also explored animal gait. Julia Bryan-Wilson calls the dancer ‘a serious student of gait’, pointing out that Forti’s aim is ‘not to perfect an imitation [of an animal] but to reframe and re-perceive the organisation of her own body’. Julia Bryan-Wilson, ‘Simone Forti Goes to the Zoo’, October, no. 152 (Spring 2015): 40.
a jump, and a cartwheel. These additions are then subtracted one at a time until the
dancer is just walking again and the dance ends. Walking here is like background noise
or a primed canvas, waiting for additions in order to build up a web of movement
empirically as the dancers make their way diagonally across the space. As the
movements are stripped away again, walking is always there, always present in the
background.

Using walking was also a means of paring the dance steps back to nought in order
to allow other aspects of the dance more room. Such was the case in Childs’s Calico
Mingling (1973) [Fig. 1.2], which uses four dancers. The only movement used is walking,
though admittedly of a more ‘dancey’ quality than that used by Paxton in Satisfyin Lover,
since the dancers hold themselves with a kind of poised muscular attentiveness. The
performers alternate between walking forwards and walking backwards, and the dance is
choreographed based on six-step phrases. The dancers walk lines and semi-circles in six
steps, and circles in twelve steps. The paths each dancer takes are repeated four times,
the first iteration beginning with all four dancers in a line facing one way, then, during
the second repeat, with them facing in the opposite direction, then, in the third repeat,
facing each other in pairs, and finally, in the fourth repeat, facing each other with the
pairs reversed. This results in a kind of mirroring or rotational symmetry as, in the final
two repeats, the dance appears to play back on itself. Childs uses walking, the simplest
movement, in order that the patterns and repetitions of the choreography might have a
chance of being perceived by the audience. As she notes, ‘[w]hile any configuration
tends to dissolve in the memory as others replace it, the deliberate simplicity of action
serves to counteract that process.’

By simplifying the action, Childs was able to complicate the structure of the dance, not so much in the individual phrases (line, semi-
circle, circle), but in their configurations, which reflect and interweave, so that the
dancers fold in on each other and then open out, and so that straight lines are
juxtaposed with curves and forward steps with backward. This patterning becomes even
more apparent in Babette Mangolte’s film of Calico Mingling being performed on the
Robert Moses Plaza at Fordham University (New York), filmed both from the level of
the dancers and from above [Fig. 1.3]. The plaza’s paving stones form a grid pattern,
light against dark, so that the dancers are mapped against a lattice-like structure as they
move, their strong elongated shadows stretching out beside each figure. The lines of the

plaza suggest warp and weft as Childs weaves paths with her mingling dancers, forming a loose textile or ‘calico’.

Childs noted that in using everyday gestures she did not seek to provoke everyday actions, ‘but [sought] rather [to] match that experience in the degree of exertion involved in doing them.’ In this way, there was an honesty in the gesture, which rather than appearing effortless, as it might in classical dance or ballet, was performed with the due amount of exertion. This reflects a modernist ‘truth to materials’ or medium specificity. Though the Judson dancers are usually labelled as ‘post-modern’, this is, as Banes notes, merely to denote their chronological position after ‘modern’ dancers such as Martha Graham, since many of their aesthetic concerns were arguably modernist.33

Just as Hal Foster argued that Minimalist sculpture sat on the crux between high modernist medium specificity and post-modernist concerns with audience reception, so did this kind of dance, as Lambert-Beatty points out.34 This is manifest in Calico Mingling, as movement is pared back and ‘honestly’ presented, so that, in turn, the relationships between the parts might be more readily apparent to the audience.

The relationship between post-modern dance and Minimalism was first posited by Rainer, and emerged from her interest in the use of the everyday in performance. In July 1962, at the first concert of dance held at the Judson Memorial Church, Rainer performed Ordinary Dance, which consisted of a series of ordinary movements that had no apparent connection with an established dance vocabulary. Like many of her peers Rainer sought to challenge conventions found in ballet and in modern dance as established by Graham and ‘other American matriarchs’, as she put it.35 ‘In traditional ballet no one ever walks as they walk in the street;’ Rainer observed in a recent interview, ‘in my early performances, I was criticised for doing this. What came to be known as reductivism and minimalism were simply a way of challenging all these notions of what constituted art.’36 In 1966 Rainer illustrated this in a now well-known chart, that shows not only the relationship, as the dancer saw it, between post-modern

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32 Childs in Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 134.
36 Ibid. Similarly, in 1979 Rainer wrote: ‘people said of me, “She walks as though she’s in the street!” […] if you walked as a dancer, you walked as though you were a queen, an aristocrat, a character – someone who was more than ordinary, more than human.’ Rainer in Banes, ‘Gulliver’s Hamburger’ in Banes and Baryshnikov, Reinventing Dance in the 1960s, 3.
dance and Minimalist sculpture, but also the relationship that both these arts held with past forms. Rainer was seeking to eliminate the phrasing and character found in ballet and much modern dance, just as Minimalist sculptors were seeking to minimise the role of the artist’s hand and figurative representation found in traditional sculpture. The chart first appeared in Gregory Battcock’s 1968 *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, followed by an accompanying text by Rainer.37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>Dances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. role of artist’s hand</td>
<td>eliminate or minimise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. hierarchical relationships of parts</td>
<td>Phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. texture</td>
<td>Development and climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. figure reference</td>
<td>Variation: rhythm, dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. illusionism</td>
<td>Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. complexity and detail</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. monumentality</td>
<td>Variety: phrases and the spatial field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. factory fabrication | substitute |
| 2. unitary forms, modules | energy equality and ‘found’ movement |
| 3. uninterrupted surface | equality of parts |
| 4. non-referential forms | Repetition or discrete events |
| 5. literalness | Neutral performance |
| 6. simplicity | Task or task-like activity |
| 7. human scale | Singular action, event or tone |

Rainer made frequent use of ‘found movement’ and ‘task-like activity’ in her dances of the 1960s, from lifting and carrying, to walking, running and negotiating constructed apparatuses. This was an approach she had gained from training with Ann Halprin in San Francisco in 1960 alongside Simone Forti, Trisha Brown and others.38 By ‘task’ Rainer meant as much her attitude towards the movement, as the movement itself. Task-like activities could be performed in a way that emphasised their repetitiveness and neutrality, so as to suggest a certain flatness or equality. ‘Task’, then, was used with the aim of creating a composition that had no hierarchical structure – one part of the dance was not more important than the next. In Rainer’s understanding the adoption of everyday activities was akin to the use of factory fabrication by Minimalist sculptors, and


38 Ann Halprin was known as Anna Halprin after 1972. Both names are found in the literature. Burt, *Judson Dance Theater*, 56.
the flatness or equality achieved in the structure of her dances was akin to a sculptural structure in which all parts or modules were equal.

*We Shall Run* (1963) [Fig. 1.4] was Rainer’s first dance made up entirely of a single everyday movement. The twelve performers, dressed in ordinary street clothes, jogged around the stage, in what Rainer described as ‘leaderless patterns’, for seven minutes to the sound of the Tuba Mirum from Hector Berlioz’s *Requiem* (1837). With such appropriation of the ordinary into the space of the stage Rainer sought to challenge the conventions of dramatic modern dance (a la Graham) by presenting an action that any member of the audience, rather than just a trained professional, could execute. This non-dramatic action, Rainer hoped, would create ‘an ironic interplay with the virtuosity and flamboyance of the music’. Just as Jill Johnston responded to the ‘any old bodies’ in Paxton’s *Satisfyin Lover*, for Sally Banes the juxtaposition of upright runners and dramatic music in *We Shall Run* made it a celebration of ‘the beauty of ordinariness’. Just like Paxton’s walkers, Rainer’s runners visually indexed the amount of energy taken to execute the task in hand, rather than making their movement seem balletically effortless. This dance reflected Rainer’s view that ‘virtuosic movement’ or ‘the display of the dancer’s specialised body’ was no longer necessary in dance: there should be an honest equation between the amount of effort movements took and the amount of effort they appeared to take. At the same time, however, the emphasis on presenting the body honestly – in all its tiredness – reveals one of the inherent contradictions in Judson ideals: eliminating hierarchy and structure in dance becomes an impossible exercise, since chronological structure will always be evident through the gradually tiring body.

This struggle between ordinariness and virtuosity, and the contradictions to which it gives rise, remained pertinent throughout the careers of many Judson dancers, as we shall see. Still conscious of this struggle in the late 1960s, Rainer wrote in the programme notes that accompanied the first full performance of *The Mind is a Muscle* (1968): ‘If my rage at the impoverishment of ideas, narcissism, and disguised sexual exhibitionism of most dancing can be considered puritan moralising, it is also true that I

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love the body – its actual weight, mass, and unenhanced physicality. Indeed, the title of *The Mind is a Muscle* stresses the relationship between consciousness and physicality, with the mind as an important part of the gesture of dance. As Ramsay Burt notes, earlier dance, epitomised by the work of Martha Graham, had no such continuity between mind and body, instead resting on a kind of Cartesian dualism in which, counter to the rationality of the mind, the body was primarily ‘emotional’ and, as such, was the perfect vessel for expressionistic dance. Burt emphasises that Rainer’s approach runs counter to the Cartesian *cogito*’s perceived emphasis on the mind as somehow ‘disembodied’ in a similar manner to the way in which Minimalist sculptors ‘considered the idea of composition as a relationship between parts to be an outmoded, European sensibility informed by Cartesian dualism.’ Like the sculptors, Rainer sought wholeness, ‘the indivisible and undissolvable whole’ described by Robert Morris. And just as Rainer placed importance on the physicality of her body, so Morris emphasised the phenomenological understanding of Minimalism, when he wrote that the object ‘is in some way more reflexive because one’s awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger’ due to its lack of internal relationships.

Rainer’s ideals were shared by many members of the Judson group, whose understanding of the task-like activity meant setting up a structure within which dancers could operate, thus eliminating choreographic decisions and leaving room (though restricted) for improvisation. In Brown’s *Rulegame 5* (1964) [Fig. 1.5], for example, five performers moved along seven parallel lines marked on the floor with tape. As they moved along the course the dancers adjusted their body heights from standing, on row one, to prone (on their stomachs), on row seven, also following the rule that they ‘may pass other performers parallel to themselves only if the relationship of high, middle and low is correct’. In order to obey these rules the performers had to speak to each other and make necessary adjustments. Working within such constraints was a means of structuring movement and language improvisation. This was a way of working that

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44 Rainer said that the title ‘spoke about the life of the dancer – a life of work, dedication, of the mind requiring the same kind of daily work and stimulation as the dancer’s muscle.’ Rainer in Wood, *The Mind is a Muscle*, 36.
46 Ibid., 80.
48 Ibid., 232.
developed out of Brown’s study of a Cagean use of instructions as a basis for composition. From the early 1950s John Cage composed music for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and several of the Judson dancers had, at one point or another, trained under Cunningham or taken occasional classes with him, including Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, David Gordon and Meredith Monk, among others. Here they picked up compositional techniques shared by Cage and Cunningham, though Rainer has noted that ‘Cunningham always said we were John’s children and not his.’ Their use of Cagean technique was cemented in 1960-1 when Brown, Rainer, Paxton, Forti and others attended choreography workshops run by Robert Dunn, who was not himself a choreographer, but was one of Cage’s musical composition students. Dunn taught Cage’s use of chance techniques and indeterminacy to this group of dancers, who began to adopt them in their own work. The Judson dancers used task-based activities and rules, as in Rulegame 5, much as Cage used dice throwing, the I-Ching and other chance-based structures to compose his scores.

In 1974 the composer Steve Reich wrote that ‘the Judson group was the dance equivalent to the music of John Cage (even more so, curiously, than Merce Cunningham – think of Paxton’s Satisfyin Lover, the walking piece, and Cage’s 4’33” [1952], the silent piece)’. In Reich’s comparison walking becomes the gestural equivalent of silence. It is a nothing action, Paxton’s invisible movement or Dean’s _________. Rainer too equates the walk with silence and erasure, writing that ‘each successive age defines and tries to demolish or break through the wall that its predecessor has devised. Thus Schoenberg’s twelve-tone row becomes Cage’s silence; De Kooning’s gesture becomes Rauschenberg’s erasure; Cunningham’s arabesque becomes Steve Paxton’s walk.’ Walking is thus a blank in a Cagean sense, more than just a blank as starting point or

50 Rainer in ‘Talking Dance: Yvonne Rainer and Sally Banes’, 00:07:17. This sense of an avant-garde lineage was not ever-present, but the dancers were aware of it, in some ways appropriating the subversive techniques of the art world in order to re-imagine the direction of dance, away from ballet and Martha Graham’s modernism. Rainer saw their use of everyday movement as ‘a slap in the face to the old order, and, as we were dimly aware, reached straight back to the surrealists via the expatriated Duchamp.’ Yvonne Rainer, ‘Looking Myself in the Mouth’ in John Cage, ed. Julia E. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 38.
52 Reich in Burt, Judson Dance Theater, 33.
baseline. Just as Cage drew his audience’s attention to the mass of fluctuations within silence, so Paxton found an equivalent degree of subtlety in walking: an erasure that contained interest. Cage’s legacy for the dancers lay partly in 4’33”, which gave them, and many others working in the arts, licence to frame any stretch of time, task or experience as an aesthetic object. In particular, for the dancers, it was the works that used walking which most closely met the nature of 4’33”: just as they pared down to the zero degree of movement, so Cage pared sound down as far as he could.

Yet we might legitimately ask why stillness in dance is not the equivalent to silence in music, a connection that Banes makes in Democracy’s Body. One example of this might be Douglas Dunn’s 101 (1974), in which he lay motionless at the centre of a maze built in his New York loft space. Just as Cage had discovered the impossibility of real silence, so Dunn discovered the impossibility of a motionless living body, as his lungs rose and fell and his heart continued to pump. Another example might be a dance by Deborah Hay cited by Rosalind Krauss in a 1977 essay: Hay stood still before the audience describing the movement of cells, organs and blood flow within her body in what Krauss calls ‘a kind of Brownian motion of the self’. However, these examples of ‘Cagean stillness’ do not, I suggest, put paid to the parallel possibility of ‘Cagean walking’.

Indeed, Carrie Lambert-Beatty questions Banes’s assumption that such a thing as Cagean stillness existed in Judson dance at all, arguing that in thinking of Cagean silence as a way in which to draw attention to ambient sound, it does not necessarily follow that Judson stillness would draw attention to ambient movement. Furthermore, she notes that often stillness in Judson meant quotation in the form of a pose taken from a photograph as a means of critiquing the image: in Flat (1964) Paxton posed in stances taken from sports photographs and in Duet Section (1963) Rainer and Brown took the poses of pinup girls. This ‘photolike stilling in Judson’ problematises the notion of a ‘Cagean stillness’ as being concerned with the present moment (as with Cagean silence), since quotations of photographs necessarily refer to a past moment. The Judson use of

54 Banes, Democracy’s Body, 8.
55 Krauss does not name the dance, and I have not come across it referenced elsewhere, except in relation to her citation of it. Rosalind Krauss, ‘Notes on the Index: Part 2’ in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1986), 210. I shall return to this phrase, a ‘Brownian motion of the self’, in Chapter Three for describing the kind of restlessness at play in the work of Agnes Martin.
56 See Lambert-Beatty, Being Watched, 48.
57 Ibid., 51.
walking, as an exploration of the present moment, is much more akin to Cagean silence than is Judson stillness. Indeed, even next to other everyday gestures performed in Judson dances (such as eating or making a phone call), walking is the most immediate, since these other gestures are, like the photographic poses, also quotations and imitations of something outwith the dance. Stillness was arguably understood by Judson dancers as antithetical to dance, freezing movement into image, whereas walking was conceived as continuous with it, the support of dance, as my earlier discussion shows.

Reflecting back on his work of the 1960s, Steve Paxton writes: ‘My inquiry was not so much about escaping the legacy of dance as discovering the source of it. Where was something pre-legacy, pre-cultural, pre-artistic? Where was ancient movement? In Judson thought, then, walking was conceived as origin, baseline, or blank, serving the purpose of making visible the intricacies of bodily gesture, bringing the unnoticed and the invisible to attention.

The city street

In Man Walking Down the Side of a Building (1970) Trisha Brown took up the Judson concern with the visibility of everyday gesture, giving the walking body a vertical stage on which to perform. Rigged up in mountain climbing equipment, Joseph Schlichter, Brown’s husband at the time, walked down the back wall of 80 Wooster Street, the SoHo building in which the couple then lived alongside many other artists. In photographs of the piece taken by Peter Moore [Fig. 1.6 and 1.7] and Caroline Goodden [Fig. 1.8], and in the film by Peter Muller, the harness and rigging are almost entirely out of view, and all we see is Schlichter in everyday dress with a taut rope in front of him, marking out the way, as he strides down the building as if he is walking down the street, each step careful, measured and distinct. Brown describes the work as follows:


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58 Paxton in ‘PASTforward Choreographers’ Statements’ in Banes and Baryshnikov, Reinventing Dance in the 1960s, 206.
59 Man Walking Down the Side of a Building was originally performed as part of a concert of ‘Dances in and Around 80 Wooster Street’ (18 April 1970), which also included Brown’s Leaning Duets [I] and Floor of the Forest. 80 Wooster Street, a former manufacturing warehouse, was home to George Maciunas’s first artists’ cooperative – ‘Fluxhouse Cooperative II’ – founded in 1967. The building provided homes, studios and exhibition/performance space to artists, poets, dancers, filmmakers and musicians, many of whom had heard about it through the Judson scene. Brown and Schlichter owned the seventh floor. Roslyn Bernstein and Shael Shapiro, Illegal Living: 80 Wooster Street and the Evolution of SoHo (New York: Jonas Mekas Foundation, 2010), 49, 128.
the bottom. All those soupy questions that arise in the process of selecting abstract movement according to the modern dance tradition – what, when, where and how – are solved in collaboration between choreographer and place. If you eliminate all those eccentric possibilities that the choreographic imagination can conjure up and just have a person walk down an aisle, then you see movement as activity.⁶⁰

What seems to have pleased Brown about the piece was its self-contained nature – what happened within the space of those seven stories was the dance. Choreography was structured not by pre-planned movement, but by task and duration, very much in the same way that composition in Cage’s 4’33” was structured not by a pre-written score but by the sounds that occurred within the allotted duration. Like Rulegame 5 this dance offered a set of parameters within which movement occurred, and Brown did not see this as restrictive, but as a liberation from ‘all those soupy questions’ with which the choreographer usually had to contend. Brown took the conceptual leap from the rule-based structure of Rulegame 5 to the physical structure of a building. She later reflected that ‘sculptural constructions and actual architecture used to imbue my work with an internal logic, natural and inevitable.’⁶¹ Indeed, in this way the work acted as a simplification of the choreographic process, which, by framing the walking body differently, vertically, made visible ‘movement as activity’. This work was not just an appropriation of an everyday gesture as an act of choreography, but a re-choreographing of that gesture, an analysis of how walking works as a movement. Brown isolated this gesture as a consciously performed act and thus continued the Judson project of analysing and laying bare the nature of bodily movement. Yet, while this work takes up these central aspirations of Judson walking, it also complicates them on several levels.

To begin with, there is a constant tension in Man Walking between the natural and the unnatural. The illusion of naturalistic walking is punctured by the slowness and slight buoyancy of Schlichter’s gait, and by the way in which the piece ends, as the walker swings free of the wall when he reaches the ground. In these moments of fracture we realise what it is that we are actually seeing, and Schlichter’s forward-facing stride becomes quite uncanny: we might be used to seeing abseilers traversing walls, presenting their backs to the ground, but seeing a man walking down a building face-

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⁶⁰ Brown in Livet, Contemporary Dance, 51.
forwards seems fundamentally counter-intuitive. It is in these moments of fracture, too, that we realise that this movement, despite its naturalistic appearance, is in fact highly virtuosic. The gravitational centre of the body is realigned, placing it in a position in which putting one foot in front of another becomes exceptionally challenging, as the walker attempts to hide the forces that are really at play on his body, pulling him away from the wall.\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Man Walking Down the Side of a Building} becomes more about hiding and controlling effort, than revealing it, about creating the illusion of horizontality on a vertical plane and resisting the effects of gravity rather than exposing them. Indeed, such attempts to disguise effort against gravity seem more in line with traditional notions of balletic lift than they do with Judson honesty to weight and exertion, giving rise to what critic Deborah Jowitt referred to as ‘a new kind of virtuosity’ when she saw Brown’s work in the early 1970s.\textsuperscript{63}

Brown’s walker seems to re-inscribe the importance of the skilled, trained body, where Judson dance had sought to destabilise such tropes. This split between the skilled and unskilled body, between dancer and audience in \textit{Man Walking}, complicates Sally Banes’s argument that walking is by its nature a democratic introduction into the dance vocabulary. Not only this, but while the Judson use of walking might have arisen out of a desire to reveal the essence of bodily gesture in its unencumbered form, to return to Rainer’s ‘unenhanced physicality’ or Paxton’s ‘ancient movement’ as it were, in Brown’s work a seeming paradox emerges, that in order to make walking visible in this way, one must supplement the body with equipment and rigging. The equipment might arguably be seen as a kind of Derridean \textit{parergon}, framing and making visible the simple physicality of the gesture. As Derrida writes, the \textit{parergon} is ‘neither work nor outside the work, neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work.’\textsuperscript{64}

Derrida draws attention to the fact that what often seems inessential is in fact vital: nothing is whole in itself, but must be supplemented. In \textit{Man Walking}, then, the equipment is not a minor part of the

\textsuperscript{62} This took a great deal of practice: Schlichter rehearsed the dance fifty or sixty times according to accounts in Bernstein and Shapiro, \textit{Illegal Living}, 99.


work, merely aiding the vertical walk, but is essential, perhaps even supplanting the importance of the body. Brown articulates a body in technological harness.

*Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* is part of a cycle of works that involved such corporeal supplements. Brown began to make these ‘Equipment Pieces’, as they came to be known, in the late 1960s, using various pieces of apparatus, such as ropes and pulleys, to enhance and challenge the body’s capabilities, mostly by altering its relationship to gravity. Like *Man Walking*, several of the Equipment Pieces presented the walking body on a vertical plane: in *Walking on the Wall* (1971) [Fig. 1.9-1.11] a set of seven harnessed dancers traversed the walls of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; in *Woman Walking Down a Ladder* (1973) [Fig. 1.12] Brown herself walked face-forward down the ladder of a rooftop water tower in downtown Manhattan; and in *Spiral* (1974) [Fig. 1.13] harnessed dancers walked in spirals down columns or trees with their bodies parallel to the ground.65 These works came in the wake of similar dances by Simone Forti, whom Brown had met at Ann Halprin’s summer dance workshop in California in 1960. In dances such as *See-Saw* (1960), *Hangers* (1961) and *Slant Board* (1961) Forti had used structural sculpture-like elements. While Forti’s ‘dance constructions’, as she termed them, were about the relation between body and object, Brown’s Equipment Pieces were born out of the desire to expand the choreographic arena beyond the ground. As Brown said: ‘I always feel sorry for the parts of the stage that aren’t being used. I have in the past felt sorry for the ceilings and the walls. It’s perfectly good space, why doesn’t anyone use it?’66 The rigging, then, acted as a kind of technological prosthetic enhancement, allowing Brown’s dancers to perform superhuman feats as though weightless.

Such anti-gravitational tendencies in Brown’s work pre-dated the Equipment Pieces by many years. Indeed, it is often noted that Brown spent her childhood in rural Aberdeen, Washington, running around and climbing trees, and a frequently cited ‘origin story’ accentuates the importance of flight in the dancer’s work: the story goes

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65 The categorisation of the Equipment Pieces varies throughout the literature. I am using that found in Teicher, *Trisha Brown*, which has the following works listed as part of the cycle of Equipment Pieces: *Ballet* (1968); *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970); *Floor of the Forest* (1970); *Leaning Duets I* (1970); *The Stream* (1970); *Walking on the Wall* (1971); *Leaning Duets II* (1971); *Rummage Sale and the Floor of the Forest* (1971); *Woman Walking Down a Ladder* (1973); and *Spiral* (1974).

66 Brown in Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 81. It is worth noting that Nauman’s solution to the same problem is also technological, though slightly less literal than Brown’s approach: he simulated the appearance of walking on the wall and ceiling simply by rotating his video camera by 90 or 180 degrees in works such as *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)* (1968), *Stamping in the Studio* (1968) and *Revolving Upside Down* (1969). See Chapter Two.
that during an exercise in Halprin’s dance workshop, Brown began by holding a broom in her hand and as she flung it out in front of her, her whole body followed its momentum, and for just a moment she was flying, parallel to the ground.67 This story, told variously by Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer, who witnessed the event, has become part of the ‘mythology’ of Trisha Brown, as an act in which the ordinary quickly became extraordinary, the mundane was made to fly.

Several dances of the 1960s demonstrate Brown’s interest in gravity, as she either succumbed to it, or attempted to resist it. In Lightfall (1963), performed at the Judson Dance Theater, Brown and Steve Paxton took turns to perch on and fall off each other’s backs; in La Chanteuse (1963) Brown adopted a precarious balletic fourth position and proceeded to fall over; in Falling Duet / (1968) she and a partner would alternately allow themselves to fall, while the other dancer would catch her or fall beneath her. Such experiments with falling were always balanced by a perennial love of flight. In Homemade (1966), for example, Brown had a projector strapped to her back, causing her own pre-recorded projected image to float above her head as she danced. This work made visible the painful paradox of the human desire for flight: the labouring, confined body below had to work in order to ‘lift’ the other above it, fulfilling this desire. From the balletic lift to Martha Graham’s ‘discovery’ of the floor, dancers have variously sought to deny or emphasise the effects of gravity upon the body. Brown’s playful and ambivalent relationship with this history of gravitational discovery injects her work with a unique tension that, I will argue, emerges as an exploration of the visibility and visuality of the earthbound body.

In the Equipment Pieces these concerns with weight and weightlessness took on a new urban and architectural resonance, as Brown began to engage with the place of the walking body in the city in her use of walls and rooftops as spaces of dance. Where Man Walking fractured the actions of the walking body, it also realigned the body’s relationship with urban structures. Brown reflects: ‘Perhaps living in SoHo, enveloped by those buildings, was somehow akin to growing up surrounded by the Pacific Northwest rain forest. I had a well-developed mind for looking up and imagining aerial worlds overhead. Plus, I’ve always wanted to fly!’68 Disobeying the laws of gravity in these works gave rise to flouting actual laws of urban use: Brown transgressed

67 As told by Simone Forti in Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 77. Yvonne Rainer’s version can be found in Rainer, ‘A Fond Memoir with Sundry Reflections on a Friend and her Art’ in Teicher, Trisha Brown, 47.
68 Brown in Yee, Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, 76.
architectural space, rigging up her dancers with climbing gear as if the city’s buildings were mountains to be explored from the exterior, not residences or offices to be obediently occupied from the interior.

Brown’s playful appropriation of urban spaces might possibly be seen as a kind of ‘tactic’ in the sense espoused by Michel de Certeau in his chapter on ‘Walking in the City’ in The Practice of Everyday Life (1980, translated into English 1984). Indeed, since Certeau is the dominant theorist of urban walking, it would be remiss not to consider Brown’s particular form of urban walking in light of his theoretical approach. ‘Walking in the City’ opens with an invocation of a rooftop view of Manhattan, looking down from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center to the ‘wave of verticals’ below.69

The modern city and its skyscrapers seem to throw the human body into a context that could not have existed before the twentieth century: up on the top floor of this building ‘[o]ne’s body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law […] An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below.’70 The skyscraper flings the body into the sky, while at the same time, from street level, enveloping it, drastically altering the perceptions of the scale of one’s body. Certeau’s emphasis is on the degree of knowledge of the street-dweller versus the voyeur on high: while those down below walk and write the text of the city without being able to read it, the voyeur, on the 110th floor, can read the city, know the city and its plans like the urban planner or cartographer. This strategic schematic view, while it reveals the entire city, nevertheless glosses over the myriad operations below. The city dweller at street level accordingly speaks the language of the city in the way that suits him, tactically, and often against the wider planned strategy of the whole. Such might be the category within which we place Brown’s dancers, as urban tacticians, freely negotiating the city’s structures.

Certeau’s essay, as should already be evident, is driven by two intertwining metaphors: one of text, and one of vision. In the metaphor of text, the strategist on the 110th floor is reader and also keeper of the linguistic lexicon, with the city entirely legible before him. The tactician, the walker, is writer or speaker, using the language of the city with his own stylistic turns of phrase, constructing ‘spatial stories’, but doing so without full knowledge of the whole lexicon. In the metaphor of vision, the strategist is cast as ‘a

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70 Ibid., 92.
solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.\textsuperscript{71} In contrast, the practitioners of the city street live ‘below the thresholds at which visibility begins’ and ‘make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms. [...] It is as though the practices organising a bustling city were characterised by their blindness.\textsuperscript{72} Though ‘blind’, Certeau’s urban walkers are not passive, but advance through the streets in a tactile manner (‘tact’ and ‘tactics’ both deriving from the Latin \textit{tangere}, to touch), through constant activity and a ‘kinaesthetic appropriation’ of space.\textsuperscript{73} The tactician operates by feeling the way, tactile knowledge being privileged over visual knowledge, as Certeau invokes in a footnote the image of Descartes’ blind man as ‘the guarantor of the knowledge of things and places against the illusions and deceptions of vision.’\textsuperscript{74}

Jeremy Ahearne notes that Certeau’s fascination with the multiplicity of tactical operations surfaced in his writings as a result of ‘the shifts symbolised by May ‘68’, which aggravated fault-lines in contemporary French society.\textsuperscript{75} Certeau felt that the alterity and plurality that emerged in tactical approaches could surely serve to shift the political status quo, as evidenced by the student uprisings of 1968. He conceived such a formation specifically in response to assertions made by Michel Foucault in \textit{Discipline and Punish} about the rise of surveillance society (which I shall discuss in detail in Chapter Two), writing that ‘[i]f it is true that the grid of “discipline” is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive [as Foucault suggests], it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it’.\textsuperscript{76} Foucault argues that, rather than through centralised power, surveillance operates from among the populace in a panoptic form of self-discipline: it is therefore \textit{within this populace}, among the walkers, that Certeau sees the potential for resistance.

Brown’s \textit{Roof Piece} (1971) [Fig. 1.14] might be viewed as a manifestation of this kind of politicised Certeauian tactics. In this piece, Brown dotted her crimson-clad dancers across the rooftops of the SoHo skyline, visibly occupying spaces not designed

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. Certeau here refers to a ‘fiction of knowledge’ since the complexity of the city can never be fully visible to the naked eye, despite the strategist’s desire for such panoptic sight.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 218, note 5.
\textsuperscript{76} Certeau, \textit{The Practice of Everyday Life}, xiv.
for pedestrian presence. Though Brown gained verbal permission from the buildings’ tenants for the staging of this work, it is worth noting that, legally, she was on rocky ground, since she did not acquire permits for the work from the City of New York, thus echoing the illegal occupancy by artists of many of the industrial loft spaces in SoHo during this period. The political tactics of Brown’s dances manifest as a re-appropriation of the architectural structures of the city and a subtle confrontation of its occupancy laws, something which I will discuss in greater depth later in the chapter.

The way in which Brown’s dance acts as a node of resistance to a system, rather than a means of overturning it, tallies with Certeau’s claims. Ahearne stresses that Certeau’s writings do not address ‘comprehensive social reform’, nor do they ‘claim to provide us in themselves with a self-sufficient framework for political action’, but ‘set out instead to contribute in a necessarily partial way to the opening out of new symbolic and conceptual spaces.’ Such a lack of a comprehensive framework is what leaves the tacticians ‘blind’, unable to cohere into a formation that can ultimately and irreversibly overcome the social order. Indeed, one of the inherent problems of Certeau’s binary description of urban operations is his placement of the pedestrian as ‘blind’. Though he privileges this position, such a characterisation is ambivalent, as Ahearne notes, part of a tightly defined design from which ‘[t]here is no way out’. Expanding upon this, Andrea Phillips has argued more forcefully that Certeau’s blind, invisible city walker is a representation robbed of the tools of re- or de-creation for an ethical purpose that in actual fact recreates the conditions of the original subjection. [...] The city walker, always and “indefinitely” other in Certeau’s design, needs to be given back more strategic subjectivity in order to be able to take his tricks and inventions above ground [...] to negotiate with the visual.

The metaphor of blindness suggests, as Phillips implies, that there is always a limit to the agency of the tactician, who can offer resistance to the social order, but can never completely overturn it. Tactics, then, are always singular points of defiance through which one might infiltrate strategic systems and thus incrementally alter them.

77 Although not technically an ‘Equipment Piece’, since it uses no equipment, Roof Piece is often grouped together with these works.
79 Ahearne, Michel de Certeau, 159.
80 Ibid., 178.
Given the problematics of Certeau’s binary structure it is worth noting that Ramsay Burt has argued that in *Roof Piece* Brown ‘proposed a third way of experiencing the city that cut ambiguously between Certeau’s two activities, being neither accessible to perspectival regulation nor rooted in everyday, ground-level experience.’\(^{82}\) Indeed, this assertion could be made more broadly of Brown’s Equipment Pieces, and seems more accurate than a characterisation of these works as a form of straightforward Certeauian tactics, since the dancers physically occupy a space between viewpoint on high, and man on the street. The ‘wall that prevents one from going further’ in Certeau’s text is transformed from barrier to part of the walkable city.\(^{83}\) In the process, the ‘blind’ tactician is given some of the strategist’s ability to *see* the ‘third way’ provides greater agency to the walker. Yet, to trouble this further, might not the *need* for the definition of a ‘third way’ to describe Brown’s practice in itself suggest that her dances move beyond a Certeauian model? Determinedly finding a place for Brown’s work within such a theorisation could perhaps close down other possible readings of the work, and while Certeau’s ideas offer a testing ground for the politics at play here, I propose that it could be more fruitful to break out of this binary theorisation completely, at first by thinking about other uses of the urban landscape by Brown’s contemporaries.

The city street was an important site for many other dancers of this generation: in *Street Dance* (1964), for example, Lucinda Childs used the street furniture (shop windows, signs, façades) as the structuring principle for a dance; while in *Street Action (M-Walk)* (May 1970) \(^{84}\) Yvonne Rainer walked a group of participants very slowly and visibly round a Manhattan block. Quite unlike Certeau’s description of a lithe, lone pedestrian with a free political agency, Rainer’s mobilised collective walked in a physically restricted manner around the lines laid out by the structure of the city. The work involved forty or so participants, huddled in a group and linking arms with heads bowed. They performed an interminably slow and gently swaying walk that took them round a block in SoHo, starting outside Rainer’s loft at 137 Greene Street.\(^{85}\) Their presence would have been felt in the surrounding streets, since the participants blocked traffic flow with their protracted pace, thus obstructing the efficiencies of the city.

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\(^{83}\) Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 98.

\(^{84}\) For Childs’s description of *Street Dance* see Livet, *Contemporary Dance*, 61. Also see Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 135, 146.

\(^{85}\) The route was: south down Greene Street, west on Prince, south down Wooster, east on Spring, and north up Greene. See Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched*, 234.
Where Walter Benjamin argued that the flâneur’s slow and purposeless walks were a riposte to capitalism’s cult of industriousness, Rainer’s slow walk sought to undermine a system that would support (however inadvertently) governmentally sanctioned war and killing, since *Street Action* was staged as a protest against both President Nixon’s proposal to invade Cambodia (30 April 1970) and the shootings at Kent State University (4 May 1970).  

This work was a telling departure for Rainer, as she had stated only two years earlier that ‘ideological issues have no bearing on the nature of the work, neither does the tenor of current political and social conditions have any bearing on its execution. [...] My connection to the world-in-crisis remains tenuous and remote.’ The physically demanding *Street Action* shows a dramatic shift in convictions, as Rainer turned her interest in bodily movement towards protest action. Locked into a tight formation of bodies, the participants moved at such a slow pace that it took them over an hour to complete what would normally be a five- to ten-minute walk. By the end of the hour the forty plus participants had been whittled to only five, according to Rainer. Lambert-Beatty argues that the almost unbearably restrictive conditions of *Street Action* imposed ‘a kind of minimal mortification’ on the participants, a small sacrifice of physical mobility as if in solidarity for victims of war and violence, ‘because people were killing and dying’, as one participant put it.

Rainer’s ‘slow, silent, procession’, Lambert-Beatty goes on to note, seems far removed from the fevered rhetoric and spectacularity of most political protest marches of the era, citing two examples of contemporaneous protests staged by New York University students in Greenwich Village, which were characterised by ‘blood and guts, salutes and screams, [...] high-pitched rhetoric and transparent symbols’. Indeed, the minimal nature of Rainer’s protest shares something with a contemporaneous dance by Ann Halprin performed on the west coast, in San Francisco. In Halprin’s *Blank Placard*

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86 On 30 April 1970 President Nixon announced, during a television address, that American troops would enter Cambodia. He claimed that it was ‘not an invasion’, but a necessary move in order to accelerate the American withdrawal from Vietnam, since Cambodia provided neutral territory for Vietnamese forces to set up a safe zone across the border, thus helping the American policy of handing Vietnam back to local combat troops. This reignited anti-war protests in America, one site of which was at Kent State University, Ohio on 4 May. At these demonstrations the Ohio National Guard fired at protesting students, shooting four dead and wounding nine others. See Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 349.


89 Ibid., 237.
Dance (1970) the participants held placards that were completely void of content, whilst walking ten feet apart from one another so that the grouping did not legally constitute a demonstration. Halprin commented: ‘My idea was that there were so many protests going on and this way each person watching us could just imagine whatever protest slogan they wanted on the placards.’\(^{(90)}\) Though Halprin staged the protest after her own run-in with the police, the dance was more a stylised comment on a climate of protest than a protest in itself, allowing space for projection, so that it could variously refer to the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the marches against the war in Vietnam, and so on.\(^{(91)}\) Though Rainer staged Street Action as a protest against specific events, these events were not outwardly referenced in any way: to the passer-by the work could have functioned very much like Blank Placard Dance, as a space for projection that exploited the very ‘blankness’ of the action of walking, so that Rainer’s constrained bodies represented a general sense of political restriction, as well as their specific and intended referents.

Within the socio-political context of the era Rainer’s Street Action and Halprin’s Blank Placard Dance may be quieter and less spectacular than many contemporaneous protests, but, importantly, they assert the physical presence of their participants, part of a belief in the power of collective walking as a form of civil action. These dances are symptomatic of an era in which there was an exhilarating sense of power felt in mass action against institutional and governing structures, and a sense of political agency emerging from collective walking bodies. While Lambert-Beatty stresses the circumspection and restraint of Rainer’s Street Action, her assessment of the dance is nevertheless as ‘a remarkable piece of political expression’, a marker of solidarity and quiet remembrance.\(^{(92)}\)

However, in contrast to Lambert-Beatty’s more optimistic reading of Rainer’s work, I would argue that both Street Action and Blank Placard Dance might equally be seen to present a fairly bleak picture of protest marching. Halprin’s ‘blanks’ could resonate as empty, unheard voices, suggesting that since governments frequently ignore the views of

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\(^{(90)}\) Halprin in Janice Ross, ‘Anna Halprin and the 1960s’ in Banes and Baryshnikov, Reinventing Dance in the 1960s, 37.

\(^{(91)}\) Blank Placard Dance was made following the arrest of Halprin and her dancers on the street outside her San Francisco studio. Several of them were wearing flesh-coloured leotards (thus appearing naked from a distance), and the group were dancing in what Halprin described as ‘a very agitated manner’, going on to note that the ‘police decided we must be freaking out on drugs and arrested us.’ Ross, ‘Anna Halprin and the 1960s’ in Banes and Baryshnikov, Reinventing Dance in the 1960s, 36.

\(^{(92)}\) Lambert-Beatty, Being Watched, 239.
the body politic, one might as well not speak at all. Simone Forti described her observations of political demonstrators, noting how the marchers would walk in circles and frequently change directions and speeds, ‘without which their energy would drop and their long vigil become languorous and ineffectual.’ Such was the case with Rainer’s dancers, who, in their slow, repetitive, single-direction march seemed drained of energy. Their heads bowed as if in mourning, the group obediently moved from the centre of the street to the sidewalk at police request, and their numbers gradually depleted as the walk went on, as if the participants were giving up. In its sombre tone and closed structure Street Action seems like a muted mirror image of the political rallies of the era, calling into question the very idea of their political efficacy. As such, it stands both as a protest against specific actions, and as a critique of protest marching itself.

While Brown’s Equipment Pieces are not as openly political as Rainer’s slow march, I want, now, to explore the way in which Rainer’s adoption of particular tropes in Street Action might come to bear on the work of Brown too, in ways that carry an implicit politics.

Cinematic spectacle

The ‘M-walk’, or ‘Metropolis-walk’ in Street Action (M-Walk) was an imitation of the gait of the factory workers in Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927). This straight-legged lockstep clearly had significance for Rainer, evidenced in its repeated use throughout her oeuvre: she had used it before as part of The Mind is a Muscle (1968), and would use it again in WAR (November 1970). Anton Kaes points out that the image of men shuffling to their day shift in Metropolis ‘must have resonated [at the time of the film’s original release] with memories of World War I, when men marched off to the front to be sacrificed to the war machine.’ In her recollection of this gait, Rainer likewise calls forth images of marching troops (another kind of walking body); the young Americans mobilised in the Southeast Asian conflict, against which she was specifically protesting.

93 Forti in Bryan-Wilson, ‘Simone Forti Goes to the Zoo’, 46.
94 Lambert-Beatty notes that ‘a policeman stopped the group for blocking traffic and the dancers refused to look up or stop swaying […]. The police eventually stood back as the walkers continued (moving, however, to the sidewalk).’ Being Watched, 239.
95 In The Mind is a Muscle, the ‘M-walk’ was performed as in Street Action, but the arms of the dancers hung by their sides. It appeared in a section called Horses, which was ‘all about travelling as a herd’, Rainer said. Rainer, Work 1961-73, 89.
In her use of the M-walk in \textit{WAR} Rainer made such connotations much more apparent, as the walkers cantilevered themselves from their swaying walk into prone positions, until they resembled bodies strewn on the battlefield.\footnote{Rainer said that this dance ‘was all about battlefields strewn with bodies, or masses of people.’ Rainer in Lambert-Beatty, \textit{Being Watched}, 239.}

In recalling this gait in particular, Rainer evokes the tired bodies of factory production, bodies that, later on in \textit{Metropolis}, come to fight against their incarceration, rising up against their masters and leaving behind their repetitive drab routine in a rush of fevered action. Rainer’s dancers, tellingly, do not imitate the factory workers in the latter state of mutiny, but take on the former state of oppression, poised to realise their amassed potential. Rainer thus revives a 1920s cinematic trope, seeking potential in the past for protest in the present, exploiting cinematic visibility to political ends.

In Rainer’s use of the M-walk, then, there is a conscious retrieval of a trope from early city cinema. Reflecting on Brown’s work in light of this, I also want to place her dances in this longer history of urban cinematic spectacle. For example, her dancers might be seen as stunt men and women, or ‘human flies’, traversing the façades of buildings. The ‘human fly’ was a type of daredevil, popular in the 1910s and ‘20s, who scaled architecture usually as a form of spectacular publicity stunt.\footnote{It is worth noting that in the score of \textit{Parts of Some Sextets} (1965) Rainer referred to her dancers, climbing up a stack of mattresses, as ‘human flies’. See Rainer, \textit{Work 1961-73}, 51-3.} Perhaps the most well-known manifestation of this figure in cinema is in Harold Lloyd’s 1923 slapstick comedy \textit{Safety Last!}, which largely consists of one long chase scene up the façade of a department store as Lloyd’s character, in a failed attempt at a publicity stunt for the store, clammers from ledge to ledge, while others run up and down inside the building.

Looking at photographs of Brown’s Equipment Pieces, performers and audiences alike are often grinning, perhaps a measure of the joy, absurdity and strange nervousness that underpins many of these acts, but also in an unwitting, but apt kinship with the comic slapstick stunts of 1920s cinema. In Brown’s dances I see the repetition not only of the imagery of such cinematic stunts, but also of the joyous abandon they might be seen to represent.

The 1910s and ‘20s saw a building boom in skyscrapers, and Steven Jacobs suggests that the human fly act manifested as a form of defiance against these architectural ‘emblems of capitalism, industrialisation, rationalisation, standardisation,
Though the concept of the human fly was quintessentially modern in both its association with skyscrapers and its involvement in advertising, the performance of ‘human fly’ stunts also expressed the potential alienation engendered by a growing city that seemed out of all proportion with the scale of the human body. The human fly performance, as Jacob Smith argues (echoing Jacobs’ assessment), ‘brought the gigantic skyscrapers springing up in American cities down to human scale’, adding that ‘the human fly worked to redefine the Skyscraper, measuring a gigantic industrial structure in terms of body technique. The “scaling” of the skyscraper by the human fly is thus a kind of measurement, recasting the building in human dimensions, […] a mapping of the body onto the city.’

While she was not defying skyscrapers, Brown was, like the human flies, laying claim to urban space that was in the process of undergoing change. The Equipment Pieces took place on the cusp of the downtown building boom, as the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan were beginning to rise. This era was marked by the opening of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in 1973-4, between which Philippe Petit famously wire-walked as soon as they were built, in another act of urban appropriation. These towers were part of the second wave of the high-rise, not the glamorous skyscrapers of the 1910s and ‘20s, but the functional, confident and arguably arrogant building projects of late modernism. Brown’s dances served as a means of capturing a neighbourhood, appropriating the architecture of the city as it stood at a single moment in time, and staking a claim over the buildings on which they took place. Indeed, the occupants of 80 Wooster Street, like many artists who had lived and worked in SoHo loft buildings since the 1960s, spent much time and energy campaigning for their legal right to reside in these buildings, since various state and city laws prohibited multiple occupancy (i.e. cooperative living), as well as mixed use of spaces. In 1961, New York zoning laws divided the city into residential, commercial and manufacturing districts, meaning that although it was legal for artists to work in buildings like 80

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101 Petit’s ‘appropriation’ of the towers was not only a symbolic act of defiance, but required him to flout the law on several counts. He stole into the towers on many occasions during the planning phase and then finally rigged up the wire through the night in a clandestine operation. What appealed to Petit was not only the walk itself, but the way that it had to be conducted like a bank robbery. See Philippe Petit, To Reach the Clouds: My High Wire Walk Between the Twin Towers (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).
Wooster Street (which was in a manufacturing district), it was illegal to live there, though certain exceptions to these laws existed. In 1969, the SoHo Artists Association was formed, with the aim of protecting the rights of the growing number of artists who lived and worked in the neighbourhood. In essence, they wanted the City Planning Commission to review their zoning laws and thus legitimise the conditions in which many artists had been living and working for years. These campaigns gained momentum through 1970, with emphasis placed on raising awareness and support among a wider public (through open studios, art festivals and magazine articles). Eventually, after much back and forth between the artists and the City, loft living was made legal in summer 1971, with further refinements to zoning laws, multiple dwelling laws and fire and safety regulations made over the next ten years. In light of this, Man Walking Down the Side of a Building seems a performative correlate for the occupancy struggles that many SoHo artists were going through at the time it was made, as the dancer affirms possession of the architecture, marking his territory with his footsteps.

Perhaps Brown’s most evident ‘appropriation’ of the neighbourhood is to be found in Roof Piece, which, as I noted earlier, made its dancers visible across the SoHo roofscape, from Prince Street and West Broadway to White Street and back [see Fig. 1.14]. Each dancer was within view of the next, so that movements could be communicated like semaphore or a visual game of ‘Chinese whispers’. Beginning at one end of the chain, the first dancer would make a gesture, which would then be replicated by the next and the next and so on down the line. Not only could this staging be seen as a dramatic cinematic stunt reminiscent of Harold Lloyd, but the staggering of the movement seems markedly chronophotographic, as the successive stages of each

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102 More specifically, ‘R’ (Residential) districts permitted residential and community facility (churches, libraries etc.) uses; ‘C’ (Commercial) districts permitted commercial, residential and community facility uses; and ‘M’ (Manufacturing) districts permitted manufacturing, warehouse and commercial uses. Exceptions to these conditions were negotiated by the Artist Tenants Association, which allowed for up to two loft spaces per building to be residential. Other sanitary and safety conditions also had to be met. In setting up his various artists’ cooperatives, of which 80 Wooster Street was the first, Maciunas interpreted these rules liberally, and often ended up in trouble with the law. Bernstein and Shapiro, Illegal Living, 55.

103 The complexities of this process are explored in ibid., 137-61. In winning this fight, artists actually took the first step towards the gentrification of the area. RoseLee Goldberg notes, for example, that the late 1970s in SoHo saw a sudden shift in real estate, and rents for lofts shifted from $200 to $2000 almost overnight, forcing artists to move out. Yee, Pioneers of the Downtown Scene, 91. This was in large part due to the changes in occupancy laws – since it became legal for artists to live in their loft studios from the early 1970s, those who leased out such spaces saw the opportunity to raise the rent, thus driving away those who could not afford it. Bernstein and Shapiro, Illegal Living, 158.
gesture were stretched out across the roofscape, as if the chronophotograph were extended over the city, each frame projected onto a rooftop, off into the distance.

Such photographically governed viewing also emerges in descriptions of the first performance of *Walking on the Wall* (1971) [Fig. 1.9-1.10]. The walkers had their sides to the floor and walked along parallel to it, rigged up in homemade harnesses that resembled small hammocks [Fig. 1.11], with ropes attached to trolley tracks that ran round the top of the wall. The critic Deborah Jowitt describes watching the first performance of *Walking on the Wall* as follows:

The illusion is uncanny. Their shirts are brown like the slings, for camouflage, and some of them are excellent wall-walkers (no falling hair, drooping head or legs betray them). For dizzying moments at a time, you seem to be in a tower looking down on the foreshortened bodies of people promenading endlessly on two intersecting white streets.\(^{104}\)

I see the ‘dizzying moments’ of perceptual shift that Jowitt describes here as reimagining the disorientating aerial viewpoints and *joie de vivre* of New Vision photographers of the 1920s such as Alexander Rodchenko and László Moholy-Nagy (see, for example, Moholy-Nagy, *7 a.m. (New Year’s Morning)*, c.1930 [Fig. 1.16] or Moholy-Nagy’s series of photographs capturing figures traversing the balconies of the Bauhaus building in Dessau [Fig. 1.17]).\(^{105}\) In the rapidly growing cities of the 1920s these photographers sought ways to capture the increasing verticality of urban experience, as well as the effects of technology upon the life of the city-dweller. Moholy-Nagy wrote enthusiastically of the ability of the lens to reveal ‘the view from below, from above, the oblique view’, giving us a visual capability that our eyes cannot, ‘tied as they are to the laws of association’.\(^{106}\) Indeed, as Paul Virilio points out, these New Vision photographers, ‘benefitting from their war experiences, “aerialise” their

\(^{104}\) Jowitt in Teicher, *Trisha Brown*, 307. Sally Banes offers a very similar description of watching this piece, writing that ‘one rarely has the sensation that the performers are executing supernatural feats, a la Batman. […] Instead, one has the distinct sensation that one is on a tall building, watching people walking back and forth on the sidewalk below. When they turn a corner on the walls, suddenly one feels as though one were positioned sideways, sticking one’s head out of a window, perhaps, and seeing a sideways image of an upright person below.’ Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 80-1.


\(^{106}\) László Moholy-Nagy, *Painting, Photography, Film* (London: Lund Humphries [1925-7] 1969), 7. Core to Moholy-Nagy’s writings on photography is the notion that photographic vision is superior to human vision, in that the former can apparently offer objective truth and, additionally, can extend the range of the human eye (through microscopic images, X-ray, astronomical techniques etc.).
pictures by climbing over the roofs and fire escapes of tall buildings’, similarly, I might add, to Brown’s dancers.\textsuperscript{107} Virilio goes on to argue, with a tone of warning not present in Moholy-Nagy’s writings, that, in the wake of such photography, ‘the aim of cinema will be to provoke an effect of vertigo in the voyeur-traveller, the end being sought now is to give him the impression of being projected into the image.’\textsuperscript{108} In this vision of cinema the viewer experiences a kind of optical dizziness provoked by the extreme angles of the shots on screen. Likewise, with \textit{Walking on the Wall}, it is not the suspended dancer who feels the effects of vertigo, but the floor-bound viewer, whose perspective shifts so that she, instead, is the one who feels air-borne.

In his film of \textit{Man Walking Down the Side of a Building}, Peter Muller films from the vantage point of a fire escape, seemingly about half way up, allowing him to point his lens \textit{down} upon the upturned faces of the watching crowd, and \textit{up} to the walking man, so that in every shot the architectural features form oblique angles with the filmic frame. This weave of high- and low-angled shots imitates (in all likelihood unwittingly) the composition of city symphony films such as Walter Ruttmann’s \textit{Berlin: Symphony of a Great City} (1927) or Dziga Vertov’s \textit{Man with a Movie Camera} (1929) in which aerial views and low-angled architectural shots are intercut.\textsuperscript{109} Likewise in their still photographs of \textit{Man Walking} Caroline Goodden and Peter Moore stress these plunging angles, recalling foreshortened architectural compositions by the likes of Moholy-Nagy and Rodchenko (see Rodchenko, \textit{Mosselprom Building}, 1926 [Fig. 1.18]).\textsuperscript{110} Of course, in order to capture Schlichter’s walk such angles were inevitable, but that is part of the mastery of Brown’s staging: the audience could not watch from across the street, since the walk took place on the back wall of the building, and the spectators were led into a back courtyard and thus pressed right up against the wall so that they had to crane their necks towards the upper storeys.\textsuperscript{111} As with \textit{Walking on the Wall}, live viewing of \textit{Man Walking} forced viewers to adopt dramatic cinematic angles. Our reception of the work now, via photographic

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{110} In \textit{Painting, Photography, Film}, Moholy-Nagy reproduces several of these low oblique-angle shots (57, 59, 60, 124, 128, 133), as well as several views from above (87, 93, 124, 128), all by different photographers.
\textsuperscript{111} Sally Sommer describes how the spectators we ‘led through a fire tunnel into a back courtyard’ to watch the piece. Sally Sommer, ‘Equipment Dance: Trisha Brown’, \textit{The Drama Review: TDR} 16, no. 3 (September 1972), 137. The site-specificity of this staging has been lost in all subsequent re-performances of the piece, which do not force viewers to adopt these oblique viewing angles.
and filmic record, throws these cinematic likenesses into sharp relief. Brown’s Equipment Pieces, I want to argue, induce in the audience a kind of ‘cinematic eye’ that transports what it sees into aerial shots, oblique angles and sweeping pans in a partial reprise of New Vision photography and the cinematography of city symphony films of the 1920s. Since this is not a conscious reprisal, one might characterise it in terms of Buchlohian paradigm repetition, which sees a trope repeat in historical cycles without direct conscious quotation (as discussed in my introduction). Buchloh argues that, in its repetition, an historical trope finally comes into focus, so that here, Brown’s reprisal acts as a reimagining of early twentieth-century wonderment at the city and its technologies. Yet, as Buchloh stresses, the repetition necessarily differs from its precursor, so that different inflections come out in each case. Indeed, as we shall see, Brown’s urban and technological enthusiasm is tempered by an equal amount of doubt and anxiety. This is in contrast to the unsullied optimism of the New Vision photographers.

Moholy-Nagy described the way in which big cities ‘have increased the capacity of our perceptual organs for simultaneous acoustical and optical activity.’ Using the example of Berliners walking across the Potsdamer Platz he recounted the multifarious impressions received, and the way in which the urban subject ‘can keep these different acoustical impressions separate from one another’, while ‘a provincial, recently found quite disorientated in this Platz, was so greatly confused by the number of impressions that he stood as though rooted to the spot before an oncoming tram.’

In Moholy-Nagy’s enthusiastic description, the attuned urbanite is in flow with the movement of the city, walking in step with it, while the ‘provincial’ is halted by his incapacity to process the abundance of stimuli, though nevertheless, it is implied, he will eventually learn how to accustom himself to the city, and will be enriched as a result. New Vision photographers aimed to capture the kind of urban walker described here: wide-eyed, optimistic and dizzy with the acrobatic possibilities of the city (notably unlike the aloof flâneur). In his photographs, and his planned but unrealised film Dynamic of the Metropolis (1921-2), Moholy-Nagy sought to distil the simultaneity he described here, celebrating the speed and verticality of the city. Likewise, Trisha Brown’s cinematic dances revel in an impression of downtown Manhattan as one of joyful dizziness and

112 Moholy-Nagy, Painting, Photography, Film, 43.
113 Ibid.
disorientation, but played out, as I will go on to show, with much more wariness than is found in New Vision imagery and rhetoric.

The joy in Brown’s work emerges from the feeling of emancipation the works promote: the dancers are free from the traditional spaces of dance, from the traditionally ‘poised’ body of the dancer (though not from a form of virtuosity), and from the ground. These dances propose a renegotiation of everyday actions and gravitational forces through the technological enhancement of the human body with ‘equipment’, which, of course, complicates any notion of absolute bodily freedom. In turn, they repurpose the city street, with a mischievous thrill in wilfully disobeying the logic of gravity and of prescribed urban use. As well as reinscribing the formal characteristics of 1920s New Vision photography, Brown also seems to reprise its technological and urban euphoria. Though importantly, as I have already suggested and will go on to argue more explicitly, her approach to technological advancement is far more ambiguous than that of her predecessors.

**Walking on the moon**

Brown’s embrace of the technologically enhanced body is not out of place in its era, and might arguably be seen as part of a wider renewal of optimism surrounding technology in the 1960s spurred on by the space race. The new forms of perception that emerged in the 1920s find an echo in the late 1960s: just as Vertov, Rodchenko and Moholy-Nagy began, through new technological means, to see the city from above in the earlier decade, the possibility of seeing the earth from space emerged in the 1960s, calling for an extreme shift in how one perceived the scale of the human body. As Susan Rosenberg has pointed out, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* was realised less than one year after Neil Armstrong’s televised moonwalk and ‘resonated with popular interest in the imagery of anti-gravity situations revealing the human body’s experience of its weight, spatial coordinates, and physical capabilities as contingent and unnatural.’\(^{114}\) Indeed, Joseph Schlichter’s buoyant gait takes on a quality that is not unlike that of the astronauts traversing the lunar surface.

Brown engaged more directly with the illusion of low-gravity movement in *Planes* (1968) [Fig. 1.19]. First performed at the State University of New York, this dance used a large pegboard-like structure, 18 feet long by 13 feet high, on which three dancers

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moved in slow motion, finding handholds and footholds to keep themselves on the wall. The piece also included a film by Jud Yalkut, projected onto the board and bodies. The film consisted of found footage of rockets launching, microscopic images and aerial shots of New York City. The dancers, dressed in all-in-one suits that were white on one side and black on the other, fluctuated from invisibility to visibility, as they either blended into the projected image (when the white side was foremost), or stuck out against it (when the black side was foremost). The changing scale of the footage caused audience members to reassess the scale of the dancers’ bodies continuously, as they appeared to shrink and grow depending upon the imagery shown.

The dancers in *Planes* are often read as free-falling skydivers, with such readings placing greater emphasis on the film’s aerial views of New York than on its other imagery. Yet when considered next to the shots of rockets launching, the slow-moving bodies of the dancers become those of weightless astronauts, orbiting the earth. Indeed, Sally Sommer writes that since ‘the quality of the movement always remain[s] the same, whether [the dancers are] upside down or passing and crawling over each other, the visual impression [is] one of weightlessness.’ The interchange of footage between aerial and astronautical causes a perpetual shift between reading the bodies as falling and floating. Yalkut saw *Planes* as ‘an exploration of the corollaries between psychic space and the psychical escape of consciousness beyond the earth’s biosphere.’ He conceived of the auditorium as a vertical tunnel, with the audience joining the dancers as they fell through space: ‘The city as centralised magnetic centre, whose momentum is perpendicular, becomes the escape valve for a continuous ascent, spanning the poetics of macro- and micro-cosm, culminating in the brief and rapid deceleration of re-entry.’ *Planes* presents an utterly dizzying relation between the human body and developing technologies, and one might see it as an echo, decades later, of the whirling technological and urban enthusiasm that characterises New Vision photography and city symphony films of the 1920s. At the same time, the way in which the bodies of the dancers are, at times, enveloped into the image, seems to suggest a tempering of such enthusiasm, a fear that technologies might engulf the human form.

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115 See, for example, Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 81.
118 Ibid.
Brown has said that ‘Man Walking Down the Side of a Building was like doing Planes but purifying the image. It had no rationale. It was completely art.’

Without the projections of aeronautical imagery seen in Planes, the connections between the dancer’s body and that of the astronaut are not readily apparent in Man Walking, but I want to suggest that these connotations are embedded in this dance, implied by the ‘lunar’ gait of the dancer. While Brown has always seen ‘pure movement’ as the central concern of her dance practice, in a 1986 interview she admitted that she ‘tried to make the body [...] a stick figure in the early ‘70s, but it’s impossible. I accept the inevitability of connotational spill-off. But I do not set up connotations. My orientation is very formal.’

Thus in Man Walking, despite its very formal aspirations, the ‘connotational spill-off’ necessarily contains those allusions to movement in low-gravity that were made more explicit in Planes.

In 1976 Brown was contacted by John Newbauer, the editor of the journal Astronautics and Aeronautics, who had come across a mention of her wall-walking experiments in a New York Times article. Newbauer suggested that Brown might be interested in a visit to NASA’s Langley Research Centre in Virginia to observe the zero gravity experiments that were taking place there.

Brown did not take him up on his invitation (perhaps for political reasons, not wanting to engage with this military complex), but her movement experiments shared more than she realised with those conducted by NASA. Indeed, one of the major preoccupations of the early U.S. spaceflight missions (such as Friendship 7, John Glenn’s orbit of the earth in 1962) was pure bodily movement and function, as scientists asked how the human body would cope with prolonged periods of weightlessness, and how one would move and function in low-gravity conditions. When Apollo 11 reached the moon in 1969, not only did Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong have to collect rock samples and take photographs, but they also had to make recorded observations about the ease of simple movements.

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121 Rosenberg, ‘Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art’, 30. Rosenberg notes that Newbauer ‘also included an article by Rudolf F. Hoelker and Nolan J. Braud, “Charting Apollo Flights”, showing a suited astronaut suspended at a ninety-degree angle to a gridded wall. Newbauer thought it “might help you with your new dancing ideas for walking on the wall.”’ NASA has a history of working with artists through the NASA Art Program (founded 1962), which included such artists as Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, as well as a host of other more conservative figurative painters such as Norman Rockwell. See James Dean and Ulrich Bertram, NASA/ART: 50 Years of Exploration (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2008).
such as walking, bending and reaching. Each astronaut had a checklist of tasks to complete on the moon’s surface printed on the sleeve of his left glove and Aldrin’s list included such seemingly simple instructions as ‘LEAN/REACH/WALK’, ‘BEST PACE/START/STOP’ and ‘FAST PACE/TRACTION/DUST’. Strangely reminiscent of short Judson dance scores, or of Brown’s text about her 1975 dance Locus, which exhorted the performance of mechanical ‘bending, straightening or rotating’, these lunar movement instructions likewise resulted in a heightened awareness of bodily weight and physicality.\(^{122}\) Unable to see their feet properly, both astronauts found they had to attend to their centres of gravity, especially with the large life-support systems they carried on their backs. Aldrin reported: ‘Got to be careful that you are leaning in the direction you want to go, otherwise you [feel] slightly inebriated. […] In other words, you have to cross your foot over to stay underneath where your centre-of-mass is.’\(^{123}\) Indeed, it seems that focusing on one’s balance was as important on the moon as it was for the performer of Brown’s Man Walking.

The importance of the ‘step’ in the moon landings should not go unremarked here. From the first bipedal steps that distinguished man from animal (which might be what Paxton had in mind when he referred to ‘ancient movement’), through to Armstrong’s ‘small step’, the rhetoric of the era cast the first moon landing as the culmination of an evolutionary trajectory. The ‘March of Progress’ illustration, discussed in the thesis introduction, that first appeared in 1965 [Fig. 0.3], (falsely) presented evolution as an inevitable forward march towards a single outcome. Space exploration was seen as the preordained next phase of humanity’s development, a perspective eloquently illustrated by the opening sequence of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), in which apes are seen waking up to their humanity, and thus taking the first step in the journey to space, the famous cut from bone to spaceship cementing the connection. In 1969 the moonwalk was seen as the dramatic realisation of this inescapable progress. In their understanding of walking as baseline, as ‘ancient’, the

\(^{122}\) Brown writes: ‘Mechanical body actions like bending, straightening or rotating would qualify as pure movement providing the context was neutral. I use pure movements, a kind of breakdown of the body’s capabilities.’ Brown, ‘Locus (1975)’ in André Lepecki, ed., Dance (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), 61.

Judson dancers, too, strangely echoed this teleological approach to walking as a marker of humanity’s progress from monkey to mechanised man, though without its accelerative imperative. On the night before the Apollo 11 lift-off in July 1969, aerospace engineer Wernher von Braun expressed it as follows:

What we will have attained when Neil Armstrong steps down upon the moon is a completely new step in the evolution of man. For the first time, life will leave its planetary cradle, and the ultimate destiny of man will no longer be confined to these familiar continents that we have known so long.124

As Armstrong was set to take the first step into the apparent freedom of another world, von Braun characterised the earth as a yoke from which man could finally be liberated, a rhetoric that had, in fact, had currency well before the first moon landing. Such views were intensely surprising to commentators such as Hannah Arendt, since, as she wrote in the late 1950s, the earth ‘for all we know, may be unique in the universe in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move and breathe without effort and without artifice’.125 Against the tide of unquestioning enthusiasm and American patriotism surrounding space flight in the U.S., Arendt called for a moment of pause. Woven through her writings on this subject is a thread of angst about the place of the human body in outer space. The idea that Einstein’s imagined ‘observer who is poised freely in space’ should be made a reality seemed almost absurd to Arendt, since such a ‘bodily observer […] must behave as though he were a mere child of abstraction and imagination’.

As she notes, for the astronaut ‘each actual physical encounter with his surroundings would spell immediate death’.127 The very vulnerability of the astronaut’s body in space is notably not part of the wider popular rhetoric surrounding space travel, but as Arendt’s anxious words attest, there were some who were thinking about space travel in terms of what it meant for human embodiment, which up until that moment had been inherently linked to earthbound conditions of atmosphere and gravity.

As breath and weight became more audible and visible in dance of the 1960s, dancers stressed that their practice was not just about the human body, but also about its relationship with its earthly habitat. Brown’s engagement with gravity and

124 Von Braun in Loudon Wainwright, ‘The Dawn of the Day Man Left his Planetary Cradle’, LIFE, 11 August 1969, n/p. Before working for the U.S. Space Program, von Braun worked on rocket development in Nazi Germany, where he was a member of the Nazi Party and SS.
126 Ibid., 538.
127 Ibid., 538.
weightlessness might be viewed as a way of coming to terms with a body put under pressure by the scope of scientific progress – a body that, as Arendt observes, is entirely vulnerable outside of the earth’s atmosphere. While the Equipment Pieces explore anti-gravitational movement and are, to some extent, susceptible to and complicit with the affirmative discourse surrounding space flight, they also seem to be wary of the threat such discourse poses, and are thus celebratory of the earthbound body. Indeed, Brown’s dancing bodies emerge as a riposte to the threat of low-gravity, or a re-evaluation of the body in relation to the alternative possibilities of scale and gravity presented by space travel. I want to argue, then, that there is an ambivalence in Brown’s work, that both revels in the fantastic allure of anti-gravitational technological possibilities – through the use of enabling ‘equipment’ and rapturous cinematic vision – and, against this, affirms the place of pure earthbound bodily movement.

This ambivalence, I suggest, asserts itself most strongly in the downward motion of the Equipment Pieces, as dancers walk down walls, down ladders and down trees. Unlike the human fly stunts, and the moon landing, there is no climactic point in Brown’s dances, no ‘summit’, despite the use of mountain climbing equipment. Indeed, the end of Man Walking Down the Side of a Building is decidedly anti-climactic, as Schlichter almost reaches the ground and bobs on his rope like a bungee jumper without much bounce. The piece becomes less heroic, and more comic, especially as the fire escape is just beside him (‘Why not just use the stairs?!’ Amanda Jane Graham asks). Rather than triumphantly scaling the building, Schlichter is a human fly descending, or an astronaut coming back to earth. Brown conjures a cinematic and technological euphoria, while at the same time negating it: her walker ‘falls’ back into the crowd from which he came, an ordinary earthbound body. The work is not a climb, but a vertigo-inducing slow motion fall. Mark Dorrian writes:

Vertigo is dizziness, and not at first sight connected to heights at all: it is etymologically linked to the Latin vertex – whirl, whirlpool, vortex – and to vertere to turn. But the Latin vertex also signifies the crown of the head – the point of growth outward from which the hair spirals – and by extension the top, summit or highest point of something. And hence vertical, as naming that which passes through the vertex, and also – I suppose – the implication of the vertical as an

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axis around which things turn.\textsuperscript{129}

In \textit{Spiral} [Fig. 1.13], Brown’s dancers enact just such a vortex, as each spirals their way down to the ground around a vertical axis. In some iterations of \textit{Spiral}, such as that recorded on film in 1975, the dancers circle round tree trunks rather than columns, tracing with their bodies the growth rings of trees that grow slowly and imperceptibly upwards as the dancers spin quickly downwards, in a giddy and temporally mismatched counterpoise.\textsuperscript{130} The dancers’ heads, by necessity, must move much faster than their feet as they trace their falling orbits: one can imagine that this centrifugal act causes blood to rush to the head, which, along with the dancers’ sidelong views of the world, might cause intense disorientation and visual confusion. Dorrian goes on to observe that right at the start of Alfred Hitchcock’s \textit{Vertigo} (1958) ‘the vortex is associated with the eye, and with a subject “without ground”, the eye fading away in the title sequence to an empty spiral.’\textsuperscript{131} This close intertwining of sight and vertigo (understood in terms of a subject without ground, a falling subject) is expressed by Virilio as a kind of inevitability, when he says that,

human vision depends on gravity, that is, on the fact that one does or does not fall. Horizontal movement, walking, is a way of falling from one foot onto the other, and, in the same way, the perspectival vision that we have of the horizon is linked to the fact that we fall into the horizon. […] We are beings of gravity. When it is said that we are terrestrials, this means that we are men and women of the earth’s gravity, not of the moon’s gravity or of any other planet’s gravity.\textsuperscript{132}

Virilio expands this thesis in his book \textit{Open Sky} (1997), suggesting that our understanding of a perception of the world as based on Quattrocento perspective should undergo ‘an exotic reorganisation’, brought on by technological developments.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129} Mark Dorrian, ‘The Aerial Image: Vertigo, Transparency and Miniaturization’, \textit{Parallax} 15, no. 4 (2009), 89.
\item \textsuperscript{130} The filmed performance took place at the American Dance Festival, Connecticut College, New London, CT, 18 July 1975.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Dorrian, ‘The Aerial Image’, 89-90.
\item \textsuperscript{132} Paul Virilio, ‘Gravitational Space’, \textit{ANY: Architecture New York}, no. 5 Lightness (April 1994): 38. This chimes with Laurie Anderson’s take on walking and falling: ‘You’re walking…and you don’t always realise it but you’re always falling. With each step…you fall. You fall forward a short way and then you catch yourself. Over and over…you are falling…and then you catch yourself. You keep falling and catching yourself falling. And this is how you are walking and falling at the same time.’ Laurie Anderson, ‘Words in Reverse (1987)’, in Jenn Joy, \textit{The Choreographic} (Cambridge Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2014), 47. Brown met Anderson in the late 1960s/early 1970s, and they first collaborated in 1983 on the work \textit{Set and Reset}.\end{itemize}
that have given us speed and flight.\textsuperscript{133} Noting that vertigo is ‘caused by looking at vertical lines converging on a point’, he asks ‘[m]ight the real-space perspective of the Italian Renaissance be an early form of vertigo arising from the visible horizon?’\textsuperscript{20,134} While this vertiginous understanding of perception was always already there, as Virilio argues, twentieth-century speed exposed it, since the body hurtling through space, epitomised by the parachutist, must focus and refocus his eyes as the ground opens up before him. The act of walking is not as headlong as that of parachute jumping, of course, yet in the statement quoted above Virilio suggests that walking, and the sight it gives rise to, is also governed by falling. Visibility, then, is always mobile, and always vertiginous. Sight is experienced physically, through movement, as a ‘falling into’, an experience that, I want to argue, is made urgently apparent by Brown’s dances. The kind of walking that Brown makes visible is one in which visibility itself is governed by the fall of each step, by the relation of the body to the ground, to the horizon, to the earth, and to gravity. The way in which we perceive the world is tied to our earthbound embodiment. For all her ‘defiance’ of gravity, this is the body that Trisha Brown presents: a terrestrial body that perceives the world by falling into it, again and again on each and every step.

Dorrian outlines a difference between an aerial view which accords an ‘impression of coherence’, and one in which a ‘vertiginous itemisation’ of the view occurs.\textsuperscript{135} The eye that scans the roofscape for individual bodies in \textit{Roof Piece}, or picks out Brown’s body walking down the ladder of a water tower, is one which, in a swift zoom into these points of interest, ‘itemises’ the skyline. The Equipment Pieces open up this space of vertiginous sight. Brown’s dances not only make the walking body visible, in the Cagean manner of earlier Judson dances, but also give a particular kind of sight to this body. All this, within an era that might itself be described as ‘vertiginous’, that was unstable and marked by rapid social, political and technological change.

\textsuperscript{133} Paul Virilio, \textit{Open Sky}, trans. Julie Rose (London; New York: Verso, 1997), 2. This corresponds with an understanding of linear perspective not as a universal truth, but, as Erwin Panofsky argued in the 1920s, as a convention that is historically specific to a certain phase of Western representation rooted in the Renaissance. See Erwin Panofsky, \textit{Perspective as Symbolic Form}, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, [1927] 1991), 34. Virilio’s arguments propose a new historical phase in which the conventions of static linear perspective are broken down due to contemporary concerns with visual perception in motion, resulting in a cinematic reorganisation of visuality.

\textsuperscript{134} Virilio, \textit{Open Sky}, 27.

\textsuperscript{135} Dorrian, ‘The Aerial Image’, 91.
Indeed, for Virilio, technological change is that which offers the greatest threat to our experience as earthbound beings. He argues, like Moholy-Nagy before him, that distances – high and low, near and far – have been contracted by the speed of travel and by telecommunication technologies. Unlike Moholy-Nagy, however, Virilio expresses doubt and fear at the prospect, since it puts geographical space at stake. He asks ‘how can we ignore the risk mankind runs of losing our own world?’ Indeed, he notes that we not only put the world on the line, but also our sense of our own place in it as ‘inhabitants of nature’, forgetting that ‘we also inhabit physical dimensions, the scale of space and the lengths of time of the life-size’. He argues that this cannot be resolved unless we also try to find the connection linking “space” and “effort”, the duration and extent of a physical fatigue that gives the world of tangible experience its measure, its “life-size” quality. The lack of effort involved in teletechnologies for hearing, seeing or acting at a distance obliterates all direction, the vastness of the earth’s horizon.

Unlike the digital technological enhancements so derided by Virilio for their promotion of the sedentary (from remote controls to travelators), the mechanical technological means used by Brown boldly challenge bodily inertia. In her Equipment Pieces, Brown, as I have argued, emphasises the body’s relation to its terrestrial environment, so finding the connection linking ‘space’ and ‘effort’, and thus offers a point of resistance to the body threatened by the inertia to which teletechnologies give rise. Brown’s Equipment Pieces emerge as politically engaged, not by evoking the ‘democracy’ of the everyday gesture of walking, but through their continuation of the Judson project to assert the physical presence of the human body, which thus emerges in reply to the threats placed on such physicality.

This chapter has brought a new set of socio-political comparisons to bear on the work of Trisha Brown, offering a reading of her work that holds a keen tension between the spectacular and everyday. Its arguments have revealed a walking body that appropriates urban space in ways that revel in both its ordinariness and its astronomical aspirations. This is a walker simultaneously liberated and confined. In harnessing her

136 For example, Moholy-Nagy emphasises the television’s role as ‘Far Seer’, capable of dissolving distances. He writes, with unwavering optimism, that ‘tomorrow we shall be able to look into the heart of our fellow-man, be everywhere and yet be alone.’ Moholy-Nagy, *Painting, Photography, Film*, 38.


138 Ibid., 59.

139 Ibid., 62.
walkers, Brown gave them preternatural abilities, whilst also restricting their movements, thus complicating the typical emancipatory rhetoric associated with urban pedestrianism (as found in Certeau’s theorisations, for example). In the next chapter this notion of a confined walker will come into greater focus, as I investigate a series of moving image works by Bruce Nauman, in which he walks in circles, as if imprisoned within the four walls of his studio.
Figure 1.2 Lucinda Childs, *Calico Mingling*, 1973, choreographic drawings.

Figure 1.3 Lucinda Childs, *Calico Mingling*, 1973, performance at Robert Moses Plaza, Fordham University, New York. Film still by Babette Mangolte.
Figure 1.4 Yvonne Rainer, *We Shall Run*, 1963, performance at Judson Memorial Church, New York. Performers left to right: Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Morris, Sally Gross, Joseph Schlichter, Tony Holder, Alex Hay. Photograph by Peter Moore.
Figure 1.5 Trisha Brown, *Rulegame 5*, 1964, performance at First New York Theatre Rally on 7 May 1965. Photograph by Peter Moore.
Figure 1.6 Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, 1970, performance by Joseph Schlichter at 80 Wooster Street, New York. Photograph by Peter Moore.
Figure 1.7 Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, 1970, audience at 80 Wooster Street, New York. Photograph by Peter Moore.
Figure 1.8 Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, 1970, performance by Joseph Schlichter at 80 Wooster Street, New York. Photograph by Caroline Goodden.
Figure 1.9 Trisha Brown, *Walking on the Wall*, 1971, performance at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph by Caroline Goodden.

Figure 1.10 Trisha Brown, *Walking on the Wall*, 1971, performance at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph by Paula Court.
Figure 1.11 Trisha Brown and Richard Nonas preparing the equipment for *Walking on the Wall*, 1971, at the Whitney Museum for American Art, New York. Photograph by Peter Moore.
Figure 1.12 Trisha Brown, *Woman Walking Down a Ladder*, 1973, performance by Trisha Brown at 130 Greene Street, New York. Photograph by Babette Mangolte.
**Figure 1.15** Yvonne Rainer, *Street Action (M-Walk)*, May 1970, New York. Performers on first row: Yvonne Rainer, Douglas Dunn, Sarah Rudner. Photographer unknown.
Figure 1.16 László Moholy-Nagy, *7 a.m. (New Year’s Morning)*, c.1930, gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 21.3cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 1.17 László Moholy-Nagy, *Bauhaus Balconies*, c.1926-8, gelatin silver print, 37.2 x 27.4cm, Collection of Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.
Figure 1.18 Alexander Rodchenko, *Mosselprom Building*, 1926, gelatin silver print, 29 x 23.3cm, private collection.
Figure 1.19 Trisha Brown, *Planes*, 1968, performed at the State University of New York by Trisha Brown, Michelle Stowell and Simone Forti, with a film by Jud Yalkut. Photograph by Wayne Hollingworth.
Chapter Two

Pacing the cell: walking and productivity in the work of Bruce Nauman

Pacing the studio

Let’s see, the earliest performance things that were filmed were things like you sit in the studio and what do you do? Well, it turned out that I was pacing around the studio a lot, so that was an activity that I did so I filmed that, just this pacing.¹

Between 1967 and 1969 Bruce Nauman made a set of film and video works of himself performing monotonous actions in his studio. He remembers telling a philosopher friend of his that he imagined him spending most of his days sitting at a desk, writing. When Nauman discovered that his friend actually did his thinking on long walks, in the manner of Socrates, Rousseau or Nietzsche, the artist realised that he too spent most of his days walking, not outdoors like the philosopher, but indoors, pacing back and forth between the studio walls, drinking coffee. So that is what he decided to film.² Whereas, in the previous chapter, I explored the way in which Trisha Brown negotiated a space for the walking body between freedom and entrapment, in this chapter Nauman’s enclosed pacing will serve as rich territory for the discussion of a walking body that is entirely confined.

The studio-based moving image works that Nauman produced fall into two groups: the first is a set of 16mm films, typically each around ten minutes in length (roughly the duration of a four hundred-foot film reel), made in San Francisco in a studio in Mill Valley that Nauman sublet from his former teacher William T. Wiley in the winter of 1967-8; the second is a set of videotapes, around sixty minutes each in length (the standard length of a videotape at the time), and made with a Portapak video camera in a studio in Southampton, New York over the next winter, 1968-9.³ In these films and tapes, all recorded in black and white, Nauman performs various mundane and repetitive actions: stamping, jumping, playing the violin, bouncing balls, but mostly

² Coosje van Bruggen, Bruce Nauman (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 226.
³ The house in Southampton was owned by Paul Waldman and Roy Lichtenstein. Waldman taught at Davis, University of California, after Nauman had left, but knew him and so offered him the house for the winter.
walking. In some cases Nauman explores the rhythms of walking, stamping out a set of changing tempos; in some he explores gait, shifting his weight from leg to leg in an exaggerated manner; and in every case his walking is more mechanical, each step broken down into its constituent parts; and in every case his walking is enclosed within the confines of taped lines, a corridor, or the studio itself. The two films that will form a central part of my analysis are: *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* [Fig. 2.1] and *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* [Fig. 2.2] (both 1967-8). And the key videotapes are: *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)* (1968) [Fig. 2.3]; *Walk with Contrapposto* (1968) [Fig. 2.5]; *Stamping in the Studio* (1968); and *Pacing Upside Down* (1969), with a focus here on the former two. As with most of Nauman’s work, the titles have a flat-footed literalism that share something with Conceptual and Minimalist works of the era, allowing us to imagine the nature of the activities involved even before viewing the works themselves. The films differ from the videotapes most notably in length, yet this is a distinction which Nauman did not readily stress since he wished both the film and video works to be played on loops, potentially going on forever with no beginning and no end.

While a large part of this chapter is dedicated to these films and videos, it also attends to several of the artist’s first corridor installations, which he began to produce in 1969, and which, rather than presenting a walking artist, invite the viewer to walk into their confines. The corridors developed naturally out of the earlier films and videos, with the narrow passage used in the video *Walk with Contrapposto* being the first such piece, displayed with the title *Performance Corridor* (1969) [Fig. 2.6]. An awareness of what follows in Nauman’s oeuvre allows the viewer to better make sense of the studio-based films and videos, which can come across as a mystifying set of mindlessly repetitive and banal works when viewed outside of such a context. In the later corridor pieces, Nauman created complex arrangements of narrow spaces, variously involving video recording and playback devices, intensely coloured light, padded walls and cage-like structures in order to create rigorously managed experiences that placed the participant in a condition of physical and sensorial confinement. In light of these confined corridor

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4 Here I omit *Playing a Note on the Violin While I Walk Around the Studio* and *BouncingTwo Balls Between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*, which complete the set of the four ‘Studio Films’ (1967-8).

5 Other video works from this period include: *Bouncing in the Corner No.1* and No.2; *Lip Sync*; and *Revolving Upside Down*. See van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 233.

installations, the studio-based films and videos take on a heightened tenor of strict enclosure.

It is no coincidence that the task-like actions with which Nauman occupies himself in these films and videos share much with the task-based dance discussed in Chapter One, even having the kind of Minimalist aesthetic explored by Yvonne Rainer in her writing on dance. Nauman had been interested in such actions from the time of making the first set of studio films in 1967, having an awareness of the activities of Merce Cunningham. He was attracted, as he said, to the way that Cunningham could ‘take any simple movement and make it into a dance, just by presenting it as a dance.’

For Nauman, though he was not a dancer, as he freely admitted, this approach to the framing of everyday movements became important because he recognised in it a sincerity that he could translate into his own work, in order, as he saw it, to be taken seriously. Indeed, viewing the studio works, Nauman’s constant deadpan expression and fixed concentration suggest just such a level of earnestness.

In the summer of 1968 Nauman met the dancer, choreographer and musician Meredith Monk, who introduced him to a fuller understanding of corporeal movement. Monk had worked with Ann Halprin in San Francisco, who, as noted in Chapter One, had also trained dancers such as Rainer and Trisha Brown, placing an emphasis on ordinary and task-like movement. In particular, Nauman felt that Monk’s input was that of a professional, where he had the naiveté of an amateur: her advice allowed him to identify whether his ideas ‘were things that have been done or done better or could stand a little more competence even.’

Having seen some of Nauman’s work, Monk helped the artist situate it in terms of bodily awareness, balance and dance. As Nauman said:

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Nauman in Sciarra, ‘Bruce Nauman, January, 1972’ in Kraynak, Please Pay Attention Please, 166. The full quotation contextualises Nauman’s attitude towards Cunningham’s work: ‘…I guess I thought of what I was doing sort of as dance because I was familiar with some of the things that Cunningham had done and some other dancers, where you can take any simple movement and make it into a dance, just by presenting it as a dance. I wasn’t a dancer, but I sort of thought if I took things that I didn’t know how to do, but I was serious enough about them, then they would be taken seriously, which sort of works if you pick the right things.’ Although it is not clear which, if any, Cunningham performances Nauman attended by the time he was producing the studio-based films and videos, it is clear that he was aware of developments in contemporary dance. Nauman later designed a set for Cunningham’s dance Tread (1970), having been invited to do so by Jasper Johns. It included ten industrial pedestal fans that alternated between blowing at the dancers and at the audience. See van Bruggen, Bruce Nauman, 240.

Nauman in Michele de Angelus, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, Please Pay Attention Please, 246. Monk also performed with Nauman on occasion in, for example, Performance Arena (1969) in which Judy Nauman, the artist’s then wife, also performed.
You do exercises, you have certain kinds of awarenesses that you don’t have if you read books. So the films and some of the pieces that I did after that for videotapes were specifically about doing exercises in balance. I thought of them as dance problems without being a dancer, being interested in the kinds of tension that arise when you try to balance and can’t. Or do something for a long time and get tired.  

We see Nauman beginning to explore these kinds of movements in one of the early films: in *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967-8), a barefooted Nauman moves slowly around the edge of a square outline taped to the floor of the studio, starting at the front right-hand corner and moving anti-clockwise. Performing an exaggerated swing of the hips on each step, he walks heel to toe so that his feet fall directly upon the taped line. On completion of the circuit he walks in reverse, toe to heel, switching direction on each round, of which there are four over the course of the ten-minute film. The fixed camera angle, which does not quite encompass the whole square, allows Nauman to pace in and out of shot, leaving the eye to rest on the setting, which is strewn with studio detritus, including a stool on the right and a mirror on the left, propped against the back wall. As he walks along the front and back edges of the square Nauman’s lower half is briefly reflected in this strategically placed mirror.

By methodically pacing out the confined space of the square in this work, Nauman seems to be stressing his seclusion, as the taped lines parallel the walls that surround him, and the mirror reflects the artist back upon the space. Indeed, the first critic to really engage with these films and videos, Coosje van Bruggen (in her 1988 book), argues that Nauman stresses ‘the artist’s isolation within the double entrapment of his studio and the frame.’  

It was an isolation that was felt all the more keenly after the collaborative approach that Nauman had taken during his time as a graduate student at the University of California, Davis. While there, he had fed off the ideas of others, working closely, for example, with his teacher William T. Wiley, who was only two or three years his senior."In 1967, having recently graduated, Nauman was left without this artistic support network, and found himself struggling to make work. ‘That’s the

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11 Nauman and Wiley’s most fruitful collaboration was a series of works they made in relation to a ‘slant step’; a strange, seemingly functionless, object they had bought in a junk shop. See Constance Lewallen et al., *A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2007), 32.
thing about going into the studio to experience the quiet,’ Nauman has said, ‘all that’s there is you, and you have to deal with that. Sometimes it’s pretty hard.’ As we watch the artist pacing his studio for hours at a time, this sense of isolation is palpable, as his footsteps echo around the empty space. In many of these works the studio setting itself is clearly visible, sparse debris discernible at the peripheries of Nauman’s performance space, suggestive of abandoned attempts at object making. In the studio films and videos Nauman seems to ask, then, what it means to be an artist, how it is that the artist fills his day, and to what level he is trapped in his studio, duty-bound to produce work. While van Bruggen’s interpretation of these works rests firmly within these parameters, more recent approaches have offered new ways in which to view them.

Like van Bruggen, André Lepecki stresses Nauman’s solitude in these films and videos, but suggests that rather than placing them within a social relation with other dance practices of the era (namely Judson), greater emphasis should be placed on the artist’s solipsistic masculinity in relation to a longer lineage of dance practices. For Lepecki, the excess of solitude figured in the studio works gives them a sombre and haunted mood. Shadowed by the spectre of choreography, these films and videos offer a spliced hauntological temporality in which the question of the influence of contemporary dance becomes far less relevant, since inheritance is governed by a cacophony of ghostly choreographic resonances rather than by an ordered chronological lineage. Lepecki argues that, as the story of the artist’s philosopher friend takes on heightened meaning, Nauman’s enclosed lone pacing ‘recasts his studio as a cranial space’ of ‘thought moving’.

Most recently, Janet Kraynak has noted the number of times that Nauman leaves the frame in these recordings, and thus has focused on the emptiness of the screen. For her, these ‘vacuous spaces in grey monochromatic hues […] enact a Cagean process of negation (that is, when something is taken away, other content materialises). Even when Nauman is on screen, the glazed and repetitive nature of his movements and the structuralist indifference of the camera (which Kraynak compares to that used for Michael Snow’s Wavelength, a film discussed briefly in Chapter Three of this thesis) provides a kind of ‘emptiness’, which places an emphasis on the mechanisms of

12 Nauman in van Bruggen, Bruce Nauman, 18.
13 I shall discuss ‘hauntology’ in greater depth in Chapter Four.
15 Janet Kraynak, Nauman Reiterated (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 169.
mediation. Kraynak characterises these ‘empty’ images of Nauman’s recordings as Deleuzian ‘time-images’ in their negation of narrative, drama and action, and in their over-provision of time. The durational and repetitive nature of the recordings displaces them from the documentary role they might play, so that the viewer can never grasp the present, nor, indeed, the presence of the artist.

Notably the readings of Lepecki and Kraynak place Nauman’s films and videos within the context of practices in which he is untrained – dance and filmmaking, contexts into which, admittedly, he placed himself – providing a rich framework for their understanding, but nevertheless offering an almost oblique look at the artist himself. The literature is curiously lacking in a focused reappraisal of the studio-based films and videos in relation to Nauman’s field of training, namely sculpture, which will accordingly be of key importance in this chapter. As a formative part of his development as an art student, sculpture imposed a burden of inheritance upon Nauman. Whilst he sought to free himself from it, the artist also allowed it to frame the way in which he understood processes of art production. Indeed, as I will show, the constant friction between confinement and escape that characterises the sculptural condition necessarily informs the crucial dynamic of entrapment and control at play in Nauman’s work. By attending to the artist’s particular relationship to, and dissatisfaction with, sculpture, the nuances of this aesthetic of entrapment begin to emerge.

Nauman’s stubborn refusal to produce material sculptural objects in the studio-based films and videos, arose precisely, I propose, out of the weight of sculpture on his consciousness, resulting in a constant struggle, not only in his relation to the medium, but also regarding the idea of artistic productivity itself. Walking, I argue, emerged at this moment in the artist’s career as a means of not making sculpture. Without any reference to Nauman’s practice, Anna Dezeuze dates the artistic practice of walking as a means of ‘not making’ back to the Dadaists’ uses of pedestrianism in the 1920s. Walking as ‘not making’, Dezeuze asserts, ‘would continue to operate as a generic and generative imperative against the production of objects’ in late twentieth century art. Nauman interrogates this use of walking in the studio works: his pacing derives from an unproductive Beckettian idleness, which is nonetheless inevitably productive (since it ends in the films and videos themselves), resulting in a paradoxical structure that I will

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interrogate later in the chapter. His tussle with the notion of the artistic product is apparent in the way in which he talks about these works:

I was an artist and I was in the studio then whatever it was I was doing in the studio must be art. And what I was in fact doing was drinking coffee and pacing the floor. It became a question then of how to structure those activities into being art, or some kind of cohesive unit that could be made available to people. At this point art became more of an activity and less of a product.17

Even as Nauman’s walking takes him towards the immaterial – ‘more of an activity’ – he nonetheless seeks to create something closer to the traditional art object – ‘a kind of cohesive unit’ – thus locking himself in a debate about making and not making. His pacing accordingly contains the inheritance of a material or sculptural practice as governed by the notion of the productive body, as I will show over the course of this chapter.

Of course the struggle with questions of immateriality in art of the 1960s was not Nauman’s alone, with many artists moving towards the dematerialisation of the art object, as Lucy Lippard famously termed it in her book, Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972.18 Lippard identified a ‘gradual deemphasis of sculptural concerns’ that took place in artistic practice in a brief six-year period, a move away from the artwork as a materially bound object in an attempt by artists to circumvent the art market and its institutions.19 Indeed, for many artists such a ‘move away’ was quite literal, and happened on two feet. In 1967, for example, two art students, Richard Long and Hamish Fulton, staged a group walk that would take them from the front entrance of St Martin’s School of Art in central London to ‘The Countryside’, as the poster proudly announced. This gaggle of idealistic young artists used the simple walk as a seemingly straightforward means of escape from the institution of the art school as the locus of material production. For Long, walking was a means of escape not only from the strictures of the institution, but also from a narrow definition of sculpture itself. He conceived of his A Ten Mile Walk, England (1968), for example, as ‘a sculpture which was invisible’, stretching out across the landscape in a challenge to the kind of sculpture

that was self-contained, welded and industrial, made by artists such as his teacher at St Martin’s, Anthony Caro.  

Despite all the conceptual and performative ‘escape attempts’ of artists, as she termed them, Lippard acknowledged in subsequent additions to her Six Years text, that such escapes were only temporary and the art institution would soon recapture even ephemeral traces of art as idea or as performance. Nevertheless, such practices played an important role in the interrogation of object-bound artistic outputs, and the use of performative gestures such as walking was central to this work. As I explained in the thesis introduction, Francesco Careri notes that Long’s practice marks a fundamental shift away from earlier uses of walking by artists, such as Surrealist deambulation and Situationist dérive, which ‘were made as an expansion of literature into the visual arts’. Long’s use of walking, by contrast, ‘is an integral part of a more general expansion of sculpture itself.’ So where the earlier uses of walking expanded the literary field, walking in the 1960s expanded the sculptural field. As Careri sees it, ‘through the path [i.e. through walking] different disciplines have produced their own “expansion of the field” for coming to terms with their own limits.’ However, Nauman’s practice, as we shall see, has a troubled relationship with such trends towards sculptural expansion, for where Long used walking to broaden the limits of his practice, Nauman used it to fold these limits back in on themselves. 

Nauman’s films and videos are, then, inevitably tied up with these debates about the material and the immaterial, making and not making, productivity and idleness, but his approach to these binaries is not clear-cut. He does not attempt to enact the straightforward ‘escape attempt’ suggested by Lippard’s text. In fact, with his work, these issues become snarled up the more that one approaches them, like a piece of string that only gets more tangled as one tries to unknot it. This chapter attends to the 

22 Ibid., 125. 
knotted relationships between three central concerns in Nauman’s work: walking, sculpture and productivity.

**Performing sculpture**

Walking is deeply embedded within sculptural viewing processes: where the viewer moves minimally (back and forth or side to side) to look at a painting, especially one governed by Renaissance perspective, she must fully perambulate to observe a sculpture, to appreciate its shifting registers and planes. As Alex Potts notes, it is walking around a sculpture that ‘makes its fixed shape and substance seem to come alive.’  

This relationship, between the moving body and the static object, came to a crisis point in the 1960s, with Minimalists such as Donald Judd and Robert Morris paring down the object to such a degree that the body/object relationship itself was on trial. Morris emphasised the unified geometric form or ‘gestalt, the indivisible and undissolvable whole’, which had no transcendent value beyond its literal material existence within the same space as the viewer. 

What became important, then, was the way in which the object functioned in ‘space, light and the viewer’s field of vision’ and heightened the viewer’s awareness of the relationship between her body and the object and, in addition, of her own process of perception. 

For Michael Fried such a literal relationship between viewer and object was tantamount to theatre, with the object existing not only in the same space, but also in the same time as the viewer. Rather than the eternal ‘presentness’ of Modernist sculpture by the likes of Anthony Caro (to use Fried’s championed example), the Minimalists, Fried argued, created work whose anthropomorphism and durational presence contaminated the specificity of sculpture as a medium.

Indeed, it seemed as if the walking viewer, so integral to the perception of the medium, had turned on sculpture, and become more, or at least as, important as the sculpture itself.

Nauman was well aware of the sculptural language of New York Minimalism: while still living on the West coast he accessed it through art magazines that published

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26 Ibid., 232.

the writings of Judd and Morris; and when he moved briefly to the East coast in 1968 he would have had a more immediate appreciation of Minimalist practice and exhibitions. While the artist’s cast objects of the mid-1960s were a deliberate response to and troubling of this hard-edged pared-down sculpture, as Nauman himself acknowledged, his studio films and videos offered an attempted performance of the Minimalist cube. As with the dance works considered in the previous chapter, Nauman’s walking might also be understood as a gestural minimalism, but where Judson walking is a baseline upon which to build, casting it as a gesture implying expansion, Nauman’s is rather a field of limitation expressed as entrapment, as he interminably paces back and forth within a confined space. As he walks and side-steps within the restricted geometries of the square or the line, in Walking in an Exaggerated Manner… Dance or Exercise, and Walk with Contrapposto, Nauman traces an invisible object, delineating its absence, thus drawing attention to his refusal to make objects. In mapping the Minimalist cube internally, within the confines of lines and walls, Nauman collapses the external relationship between body and object that is inherent to Minimalism, placing it under intense scrutiny.

Yet, in the display of these works, Nauman externalised this relationship once more, attending to the viewer’s interaction with the films and videos as objects. Though the films are projected, the videotapes are usually screened on bulky television monitors, which are like sculptural presences in themselves, black Minimalist cubes. An intimacy with the image of the artist’s body is complemented with one’s own bodily relationship to a sculptural object. As Nauman said, in a statement that seems redolent of the writings of Morris in particular: ‘The video monitor has an object presence in relation to the spectator’. Not only this, but Nauman’s conception of the films and videos as never-ending loops also lends them an air of sculptural timelessness. As he said,

My idea at the time was that the film should have no beginning and no end: one should be able to come in at any time and nothing would change. All the films were supposed to be like that, because they all dealt with ongoing activities. So did

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28 ‘Talking of his cast works made at Davis between 1964 and 1966 Nauman has said: ‘a certain amount of that had to do with my response to the Bob Morris and Don Judd stuff that was in the magazines.’ Nauman in de Angelus ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, Please Pay Attention Please, 226. Morris also undertook ‘sculptural’ performances, as seen in Untitled (Box for Standing) (1961).

almost all of the videotapes, only they were longer, they went on for an hour or so. There is much more a feeling of being able to come in or leave at any time.  

While this mode of ambulatory viewing has often been understood as problematic in much recent literature on the relative merits of cinema and gallery as viewing platforms, Nauman’s work deliberately invites the short attention span of the gallery-goer, since it casts the film or video as an ever-present object rather than as a linear or narrative construction to be seen from beginning to end. The viewer encounters the moving image as she might a sculpture, always there, to be looked at for the length of time she wishes, and still there when she stops looking. Through the performance and subsequent display of these works Nauman creates a layered mesh of body/object relationships, first between himself and the Minimalist geometries in which he performs, and then between the displayed film/video and the viewer, who encounters it in the gallery space as an object-like presence. The walking body, always already embedded into sculptural viewing processes, is further implicated in the studio works, folded into every layer of their creation and display. As the viewer watches Nauman walking within the lines of an invisible object, she too walks round a not-quite object, a sculptural presence that is, she comes to realise, only defined as such by her walking round it, towards it, away from it, in a process that serves to draw attention to the usual viewing processes of sculpture itself.

While Nauman’s sculptural understanding is clearly embedded within the Minimalist practices of his era, he also reaches back to traditional notions of sculpture as a materially bound practice. His turn to his body as material might equally be understood as a turn towards body as sculpture, seen most literally in works such as Feet of Clay (1967), a photograph in which Nauman’s feet are covered in clay in a dumb visual

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31 While some argue that the viewer of films in a gallery is active, alert, and free of the passivity and strictures of the cinema as read through apparatus theory, others question the logic of these assumptions. Erika Balsom, for example, writes: ‘The comparisons between the cinema hall and the gallery rest on a spurious mapping of passive/active binaries onto this architectural difference, as if to conflate physical stasis with regressive mystification and physical ambulation with clear-sighted, intellectual engagement.’ Erika Balsom, ‘Screening Rooms: The Movie Theater in/and the Gallery’, Public, no. 40 (Fall 2009): 31. Volker Pantenburg suggests that rather than placing emphasis on the viewer’s mobility or immobility, ‘attention’ should be the basis for a conceptual framework for considering the relative merits of gallery and cinema, because, he says, ‘it is positioned at the threshold between two economic fields: the economics of attention and the “real” economics of money…’ Volker Pantenburg, ‘1970 and Beyond: Experimental Cinema and Installation Art’, in Seven Dynamics: Mapping the Borders of Cinema, eds. Gertrud Koch et al. (Vienna: Synema Publikationen, 2012), 84-5. Interestingly, these debates were not live at the time Nauman was making the studio works, and only began to emerge in the 1990s, when video art proliferated.
illustration of the axiom, or his ten-minute film *Thighing* (1967), in which he manipulates the flesh of his thigh as if it is clay. This sculptural manipulation of the body was later echoed in the work of other artists including Vito Acconci in *Trademarks* (1970) in which the artist bit into his skin leaving firm tooth marks, or Eleanor Antin in *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972) for which Antin photographed her naked body over the period of 37 days of heavy dieting, ‘carving’ away eleven pounds.

Nauman also references this longer sculptural history of moulding and casting in the studio-based films and videos, not least in his performance of the defining pose of classical statuary in *Walk with Contrapposto*. In this work Nauman’s back view ripples into focus on the video monitor, a torso in a white t-shirt and a rear end in dark jeans. He is close to us, emerging suddenly through a veil of undulating scan lines. Hands clasped behind his neck, elbows by his ears, he walks slowly away from the camera. Every step is broken down to its essentials, with a decided pause between each movement. As he moves heel to toe, on each step he raises his hip as high as it will go, letting his torso curve as he does so. As he walks away, the space within which he moves becomes visible: a 200-foot long plywood corridor that is only twenty inches wide. When Nauman reaches the other end he turns carefully and begins to walk back towards us. Viewing his twisting form over the hour’s length of this video becomes an increasing frustration: his gait seems interminably slow; his arched postures are mannered, as he works not with his body but against it, contorting it into an artificial *contrapposto*; his face is never visible, always cropped slightly out of sight, meaning that we are denied any human connection with the artist; in all his walking he never reaches a destination, or any kind of apotheosis; and the high dark walls of the corridor loom large, filling the frame, trapping our line of sight within the pathway of the walking figure.

Nauman’s knowledge of and interest in the classical *contrapposto* pose came from a general art historical awareness, but might, I speculate, have been ignited by visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art when the artist moved from the West coast to New York state in 1968. A Roman copy of Polykleitos’s famous *Diadoumenos* (c.430 BC) is held at the Met (acquired in 1925), along with thousands of other classical statues. The *contrapposto* pose of course has its origins in Ancient Greek sculpture, the *Diadoumenos* being an oft-quoted example. The Italian term, translating as ‘set against’ or ‘counterpose’, began to be applied to these ancient sculptures in the Renaissance and implies that one part of the body turns in the opposite direction from another. The
Diadoumenus has his left foot slightly lifted from the ground, with a bent knee, so that the weight falls on the right leg. The line of the hips and the line of the shoulders tilt in opposite directions causing a slight twist in the torso. Renaissance artists particularly admired the relaxed naturalism that was achieved through contrapposto: past or future movement was implied through the lifted foot, and the twisted torso provided a balanced rhythm to the composition.

Where the legacy of Nauman’s immediate artistic inheritance has been well documented, his interest in a longer classical history has not been approached in the literature. Jo Applin has argued that Nauman’s work is ‘haunted’ by that of other sculptors, in the persons of his contemporary H.C. Westermann and his predecessor Henry Moore, in such sculptures as Westermann’s Ear (1967) and Henry Moore Bound to Fail (1967). The tangled and knotted nature of these sculptures, Applin argues, reflects the complexity of Nauman’s digestion of the legacies of Westermann and Moore. This is further complicated, I propose, by the addition of a classical sculptural inheritance.

When Rosalind Krauss asserts, in her writing on the fate of the medium, that ‘the medium is the memory’ in a reformulation of Marshall McLuhan’s famous aphorism, she is insisting ‘on the power of the medium to hold the efforts of the forebears of a specific genre in reserve for the present.’ Just as the memories of Westermann and Moore haunt Nauman’s practice, so too, I want to argue, does an ancient sculptural ghost in the guise of the contrapposto pose, which functions as the ‘memory’ of the medium of sculpture that Nauman is both abandoning and reinventing, both forgetting and remembering in Walk with Contrapposto. As he enacts the stilled step, Nauman plucks at something in Western cultural memory, recalling classical and neo-classical statues of the past. Nauman’s non-monumental video becomes a strange kind of monument to classical sculpture, and since such statuary is so often made for the purpose of memorial, Walk with Contrapposto, in a self-reflexive tangle, becomes a memorial for that which once memorialised.

But there is something else at play here too: while his work becomes familiar through its connections with classicism and the memorial, Nauman’s performance also supports a making strange of cultural memory. As he pauses in Walk with Contrapposto he resembles the familiar classical pose, but at the moment he steps out of it (the moment

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when sculptural stillness becomes movement), twisting his body into its own mirror image, we become aware of the unnaturality of the original pose, as Nauman seems to press against the idea that contrapposto contains the key to naturalism. As he walks up and down his corridor, we begin to see the physical contortions always already present in classical sculpture, the strangeness of the poses held, and indeed the affectation of ‘posing’ at all. Nauman’s performance might also be seen as a send up of classical sculpture, a mocking impression of its affectations. Familiar monuments of the past become uncanny. Whilst paying homage to cultural memory Nauman also undercuts it, alienating us from this classical inheritance. ‘Contrapposto’ can also translate as ‘antithesis’, a foundational method in Greek rhetoric in which arguments are formed upon oppositions: perhaps Nauman also conjures this meaning in his double-edged approach. In his performance of the contrapposto, a thwarted movement in which the body seems to turn against itself, we get a sense of Nauman’s love of ‘turning things inside out to see what they look like.’

Here it is worth taking one step back, to the objects that Nauman made in 1966, in the year before his production of the studio works, in order to understand the material practice out of which they came. Anne Wagner’s 2007 essay ‘Nauman’s Body of Sculpture’ focuses on this period, on the work that Nauman made in his first ‘professional’ studio after graduating from Davis; an old grocery store in San Francisco that he moved into in 1966. Wagner argues that it was in 1966, just as Nauman was beginning to establish himself as a professional artist, that he began to interrogate, attack, and split open his chosen medium, sculpture. Like so many other artists of his generation, before he could work in multiple mediums he had to destroy the specifics of a singular medium, and do so in a way that gave a nuanced account of the ‘old’ medium in its traditional sense. Wagner characterises the drawing Myself as a Marble Fountain (1967) as a tongue-in-cheek adoption of the classical sculptural form, where the artist’s body substitutes for the statue, but a statue undergoing a process of disintegration through ‘spewing out his inner waters’, vulgarised and liquidated from within.

Not only this, but the artist was beginning to break down the stuff of sculpture, the materials used in its construction. Davis was one of the first West-coast colleges to have a traditional foundry (set up by Professor Tio Giambruni in the 1960s), giving

metal casting a central place in the sculptural programme. This devotion to traditional techniques gave Nauman a sense of the ‘outmoded’ medium he sought to deconstruct. He played with the traditional processes of sculpture, but in a distinctly deskillled manner, producing objects that were not well-finished or coherent. As Wagner notes, it was with these careless objects that ‘a bygone practice of sculpture’, with its values of timelessness, meaning and craftsmanship, was ‘coolly trumped’ by Nauman.  

Wagner’s particular focus is on a group of works labelled ‘devices’, which ‘register the body in its absence’. Nauman’s *Device to Stand In* (1965-6) [Fig. 2.7] is a seemingly innocuous wedge-shaped thing containing a slot on the wider edge, inviting the viewer to place her feet within it. Wagner notes that the *Device* on the one hand ‘needs a human presence to seem complete’, but on the other ‘its integrity as a work means it should remain empty, so that the viewer will conjure a phantom figure to stand within the empty slot.’ And if one were to stand in the *Device*, pinned to the spot by its restrictiveness, the sculpture would be permitted to ‘feed itself on a body’s aliveness’, as the ‘frozen viewer plays Galatea in reverse.’ It is this sting, this jolt of realisation that one cannot escape, this irresolvable wrangle between the restive aliveness of the body, and sculpture as feeding off that aliveness that marks the sculptural condition, as Wagner’s analysis helps us to realise. What I want to take from Wagner’s discussion, then, is her characterisation of Nauman’s sculptural practice as deeply engaged with a body that sits in constant flux between life and death, between mobility and immobility, a body with ‘a fragile aliveness that cannot quite be quelled’, in a kind of eternal restlessness. Such sculptural tension has been characterised by Rosalind Krauss as follows:

One of the striking aspects of modern sculpture is the way in which it manifests its makers’ growing awareness that sculpture is a medium peculiarly located at the juncture between stillness and motion, time arrested and time passing. From this tension, which defines the very condition of sculpture, comes its enormous expressive power.  

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36 Ibid., 60.  
37 Ibid., 63.  
38 Ibid.  
39 Ibid., 63-4.  
40 Ibid., 69.  
Krauss’s description here is also curiously reminiscent of film, which is likewise ‘located at the juncture between stillness and motion’. This seems no coincidence, since this condition, shared by both sculpture and film, of restive tension between life and its waning, is exactly what defines Nauman’s studio-based films and videos. This restiveness is perhaps nowhere more evident than in *Stamping in the Studio*, in which the artist circles the studio for an hour without stopping, with a pace somewhere between a walk and a run, obsessively stamping out various changing rhythms with his feet. Nauman occasionally disappears off-screen, but the pumping sound of his footsteps is always audible, circling again and again in feverish repetition. Trapped in his cage-like studio in the films and videos Nauman’s energy is palpable, but at the same time we see it draining due to the durational and repetitive conditions of each piece (as he misses a beat, wobbles a leg, drops his arms, misses a mark).

Nauman’s performance bears comparison with Simone Forti’s dances based on the movements of animals in captivity, such as *Sleepwalkers/Zoo Mantras* (1968), for which Forti rigorously studied the gaits of various animals, with a particular awareness of how they were affected by the confined spaces in which they were housed. Julia Bryan-Wilson argues that, during her observations of animals in the Giardino Zoologico di Roma, Forti ‘was constantly aware that their movements were shaped not only by their state of captivity but also by their inner reserves of strength’. FORTI saw the movements of the caged animals as a coping mechanism, saying ‘I watched them salvage, in their cages, whatever they could of their consciousness.’ BRYAN-WILSON argues that Forti, alone in an unfamiliar city (Rome), took strength from getting to know these animals, and that their pacing, like hers, provided ‘a modicum of relief’, as Forti put it. Despite the sad relentlessness of captive animal pacing, Forti seems to see a redemptive quality in this type of movement. By contrast, Nauman paces without such a sense of redemption or relief, but rather tires his body in a frustrated repetitive and energetic game.

Such live tension is present in several other examples of Nauman’s performance works of this period. In the instruction pieces *Body as Sphere* and *Body as Cylinder* (both 1969), for example, Nauman instructs the performer to maintain the shape of a sphere or cylinder by concentrating on pressing the body into these impossible shapes in an

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43 Forti in ibid., 46.
44 Ibid.
approximation of the geometries of Minimalist sculpture. Wagner notes that in order to perform these actions one must pit immobility against utter bodily concentration, in an odd inversion of the cliché of Minimalism that it puts one in mind of one’s body. In these works the body exists in tension between the burning action of the muscles and their immobility. This feverish effort to maintain stillness aligns with both the feverish circling of the bounds seen in the studio works, and with an understanding of sculpture as a kind of tortuous burning entrapment.

This is part of the mythology of sculpture: agitated life as encased in the immobile. It surfaces in the sixteenth century in Michelangelo’s vision of his slaves breaking free of, or perhaps sinking into, their blocks of marble, or Benvenuto Cellini’s understanding of molten bronze as liquid life poured into the form of *Perseus and Medusa* (1545). These sculptures writhe with life even in their stillness. The spirit of Renaissance metal casting was present at Davis in the traditional training offered during Nauman’s time there, and while his response to this training was to create deliberately deskilled and poorly cast objects, he also, I would argue, took on the sensibility of casting as a life-giving process. This is seen in his so-called ‘light traps’ for Henry Moore of 1967, which suggest, in their glowing forms, molten metal being cast. These photographs, *Light Trap for Henry Moore, No.1* [Fig. 2.8] and No.2 (both 1967) were made using a torch and a long exposure, the light describing the outlines of two Moore-like figures, one sitting (No. 1) and one standing (No. 2). What these ‘traps’ suggest is a very particular kind of ‘life’, as trapped, preserved and caught in glowing stasis.

Nauman envisaged these works as ‘capsules’ to preserve Moore’s legacy for future generations at a time when this father figure of modern sculpture was deeply unfashionable amongst young artists. He notes that English sculptors in particular, such as Anthony Caro and William Tucker, ‘bad-mouthed Henry Moore’, considering his work ‘old-fashioned and oppressive’, and felt that ‘while it was probably true to a certain extent, they should really hang on to Henry Moore, because he really did some good work and they might need him again sometime’. Nauman’s attitude towards Moore is one of cautious contradiction: he does not seek to preserve him out of any fervent sense

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46 Cellini’s friend, Antonio Allegretti wrote of metal as ‘a hard and dense material holding within it that living spirit which infuses all created things and which alone gives them life, motion and sense. It cannot show its forces unless its hot and lively virtue is quickly freed where it lies encumbered.’ Allegretti in Cole, ‘Cellini’s Blood’, The Art Bulletin 81, no. 2 (June 1999): 222.
of loyalty, not being ‘particularly fond’ of Moore’s work, but out of a sense that dismissing him might be premature, while at the same time acknowledging, in making these storage capsules, that Moore’s moment is over for now and that he can be set aside. In a characteristically double-edged move Nauman’s tongue-in-cheek safeguarding of Moore is matched with an equal sincerity, rather like his signs, *The true artist is an amazing luminous fountain* (1966) and *The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths* (1967). On one level he genuinely believes these aphorisms, while on another he derides the notion that such things could ever be true.

For Nauman, then, a *trap* is a perennnially conflicted structure: it is not only a prison, but also a means of preservation for that which is in danger. He uses the inherent entrapped energy of the sculptural condition in order to create such traps as capsules, that not only preserve the legacy of Henry Moore, but also of the contrapposto, and of the very idea of art as the production of material objects: on the one hand he drives towards immateriality, but on the other preserves the unfashionable notion of the creation of art objects. In his traps and prisons he keeps these things out of harm’s way, like endangered, but also dangerous, caged creatures.

**Exercise as control**

In *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* [Fig. 2.2] Nauman, barefoot and clad in a dark T-shirt and jeans, begins by standing, feet together, facing away from the camera. He stands in the middle of the far edge of a small square, whose outline is taped to the floor. The mid-point of each edge of the square is also marked with tape. As the tick of a metronome begins, marking the half seconds, Nauman touches each toe to a corner of the square and back to the centre again: left, centre, right, centre, left, centre, and so on until he has completed sixty steps (taking a minute). He quickly swaps to the left hand edge of the square, facing outwards, and repeats the process. He then does the same for the front and right hand edges of the square, and then goes round again, this time in the opposite direction – front, left, back, right edges – and facing inwards, always with a fixed expression of concentration. When each permutation of the exercise has been completed, the film ends.

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Nauman encompasses a strange dichotomy in this work, which is half *dance*, half *exercise*. To dance is an aesthetic act, whereas to exercise is more functional, and contains the implication of training towards an outcome. The word ‘exercise’ connotes practice at school (the exercise book), the gym, the military parade ground, or, indeed, the prison yard. The display of another of the studio films, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* [Fig. 2.1], in a Nottingham police cell, as part of the 2008 exhibition ‘The Impossible Prison’, placed Nauman’s walking directly within a space of law enforcement. In this exhibition the artist’s walking became coloured by its context, drawing attention to the very condition of incarceration that characterises all the studio-based films and videos. I have so far argued that Nauman worked with his sculptural inheritance in terms of an aesthetic of confinement and entrapment, and now I wish to interrogate the implications of such an aesthetic, exploring the relationship between enforced exercise and productivity that the studio works negotiate.

Michel Foucault writes that exercise is ‘that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated.’ Nauman’s side-to-side stepping in *Dance or Exercise* has just such a repetitive tenor, his footsteps measured by the tick of the metronome that rules the soundtrack. Occasionally he misses his mark on the square, or loses track of his footing in relation to the metronome, getting out of sync or miscounting the sixty steps as he gets tired. He pushes to get his steps back on track, forcing his body into the regimen he has prescribed for himself. Exercise is discipline.

As he tracks the changes in approaches to the body within the penal system Foucault marks an historical shift that took place during the Enlightenment, away from explicit punishment of the body in practices of torture, to punishment through control of the body within the prison system. However, he argues that there remains ‘a trace of “torture” in the modern mechanisms of criminal justice – a trace that has not been entirely overcome, but which is enveloped, increasingly, by the non-corporeal nature of the penal system.’ But where torture was predicated upon spectacle and representation,

49 ‘The Impossible Prison’ was organised by Nottingham Contemporary, as part of a year of exhibitions and events held at various historical sites around the city, before the gallery moved to its new premises in 2009. Some of the other artists included in the exhibition were: Vito Acconci, Dan Graham, Mona Hatoum, Thomas Hirschhorn and Artur Zmijewski.


51 Ibid., 16.
that is, making a public example of the criminal using techniques that displayed the nature of his crime as ‘signs’ (a thief would have his hand cut off, for example), the prison hid the criminal from view, operating a system of correction and reform. Foucault writes:

The point of application of the penalty is not the representation, but the body, time, everyday gestures and activities; the soul, too, but in so far as it is the seat of habits. […] Exercises, not signs: time-tables, compulsory movements, regular activities, solitary meditation, work in common, silence, application, respect, good habits. And, ultimately, what one is trying to restore in this technique of correction is not so much the juridical subject […], but the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him.52

The prison system, then, unlike punishment by torture, aimed (and aims) to produce economically useful individuals through the regulation of their bodies, so that ex-convicts could operate productively within industrial society. Physical exercise and labour formed a central part of the organisational structure of the prison, used as a means to control the body of the inmate, and so, as it was understood in the early days of the prison system, to inculcate obedience in his soul.

In practice exercise could frequently mean walking, in chain gangs, in circles round the exercise yard, or on a treadmill [Fig. 2.9]. The treadmill, or tread-wheel, used in many English and some American prisons in the nineteenth century, looked something like a water wheel, with steps around its circumference that allowed the prisoner to turn it by walking. Each prisoner was segregated into a narrow compartment (about two feet wide) to prevent interaction with his fellow inmates. A contemporary (1862) account of one such wheel in Coldbath Fields prison in London reads:

All the men work with their backs toward the warder, supporting themselves by a hand-rail fixed to the boards at the back of each compartment, and they move their legs as if they were mounting a flight of stairs; but with this difference, that instead of their ascending, the steps pass from under them, and, as one of the officers remarked, it is this peculiarity which causes the labour to be so tiring, owing to the want of a firm tread.53

52 Ibid., 128-9.
While some tread-wheels were designed to pump water or grind grain, many were entirely unproductive, with inmates walking thousands of vertical feet in a day, simply ‘grinding the wind’ as they put it. One of the central problems of productive labour within prisons was that it took work away from those on the outside, leading to unemployment, and since the prime purpose of labour within the walls of the prison was not in fact material outcome, but discipline, it did not matter whether the tread-wheel milled grain or thin air. Foucault notes that these tread-wheels, though they provided no material product, ‘provided a disciplinary mechanism of the inmates’: the product, then, was what Foucault terms the ‘docile body’ of the inmate, that is, an obedient and economically useful body whose labour was likely to be productive in the wider world after release.

In a more recent video piece, Work (1994), Nauman appears on two stacked monitors, one inverted, jumping frantically up and down and repeating the word ‘work’. This piece becomes an index of its own status as an artwork, with Nauman’s expenditure of energy reflecting the title’s allusion to labour. Yet as the artist incessantly repeats ‘work, work, work’, the word becomes strange and increasingly meaningless the longer the video lasts. As with the prison tread-wheel, the input of effort does not equate in any way with the minimal output. The studio films and videos operate on similar terms, since the expenditure of energy through walking produces no end product, no artwork in the material sense of the term. These works, as noted earlier, are normally read in relation to their place in Nauman’s career: the recent graduate explores his place in the studio, and does so without the means to purchase sculptural materials to make object-based artworks. He creates these films, then, in order to explore what it means to be in the studio and make art. Yet the terms on which such a system operates are never fully explored in the literature: How do these works function as explorations of the productivity of artistic practice? How does Nauman translate the ‘poverty’ of the artist into a challenge to productivity itself? How does he negotiate his newly found freedom from the art school as a simultaneous entrapment? And, most of all for my purposes, Ibid., 307. The term ‘grinding the wind’ originated from the fact that these tread-wheels were often linked to large outdoor fans that provided the resistance necessary for rendering the exercise hard labour. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 242. Though the ‘docile body’ was the aim of such labour, Foucault goes on to show that this was not always the outcome, since many leaving prison were likely to return, as is still the case. Yet despite the failure of the prison to produce ‘corrected’ individuals consistently, Foucault sees its success as the society of surveillance it gave rise to, in which the prisoner, forever marked as such, is followed and traced by the law after release. See ibid., 277.
how does the artist use walking as a performative practice to undertake these operations?

While Nauman has no materials for the production of objects, he nevertheless forges a link between work, in the form of labour or bodily exertion, and artwork. This implies that bodily effort, or more precisely bodily training, is considered an output in itself, a step towards Foucault’s ‘docile body’. The artist reveals that the production of an object (however immaterial) always also produces a trained body. Carefully following the structured patterns of Dance or Exercise… and Walking in an Exaggerated Manner…, Nauman trains himself as the output of his own artistic experiments. I see parallels here with Vito Acconci’s Step Piece (1970) [Fig. 2.10], which the artist performed in his apartment every morning at 8 am for four months, stepping on and off an eighteen-inch stool ‘at a rate of thirty steps a minute; each morning, I continue the activity as long as I can do it without stopping.’

Over the course of the training, which notably resembles both the exercise of the prison tread-wheel and, in the documentation of the action, the chronophotograph, Acconci improves: in the month of April, for example, he starts with the ability to keep stepping for a duration of seven and a half minutes, and ends the month with a time of twenty-six minutes and ten seconds [Fig. 2.11]. Each time is meticulously recorded on a typed-up progress report, offering a veneer of administrative rigour to the task, redolent of the ‘aesthetic of administration’ that Benjamin Buchloh saw in much conceptual art of this era.

Acconci seems incarcerated within his own system; a system predicated on the kind of precisely mapped exercise that might be found in an institutional timetable. Through their rigorous regimes, both Acconci and Nauman demonstrate an almost masochistic control of the self. Nauman operates a strange prison, in which he is both inmate and guard, using exercise as a means of self-discipline. Foucault writes that in the prison system:

The training of behaviour by a full time-table, the acquisition of habits, the constraints of the body imply a very special relation between the individual who is punished and the individual who punishes him. It is a relation that not only renders the dimension of the spectacle useless: it excludes it.

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58 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 129.
As Nauman further closes the gap between punished and punisher, the very unspectacularity of such a closed system is bound into his films in their incessant banality and repetition. The artist operates a system of repetitive and regimented discipline upon himself. Indeed, his actions seem strangely apt in the decade in which America’s crime rate doubled, giving rise to an unprecedented growth in the prison population starting in the 1970s. Nauman’s exercise echoes many of the characteristics of state incarceration, operating as a form of solitary confinement, which is used in systems of correction as a means to ‘rearrange not only the complex of interest proper to homo oeconomicus, but also the imperatives of the moral subject’, as Foucault has it. The duration of exercise, too (we return and Nauman is still there, still pacing), seems to be a form of doing time, as if the artist has sentenced himself to ‘Time, the operator of punishment.’ In the absence of the institutional structures of the art school, it is as if Nauman creates his own form of self-appointed institution in an attempt to re-create the sense of the supervised structure he had lost. This deepens the usual reading of the films as the coping strategies of the recent graduate, who has lost the net of institutional support: the works record the disciplined structures that the artist had made for himself to operate within. It is important to note, then, that Nauman’s exercises are not only physically practised within a confined space, but also echo the historic functions of systems of confinement as producers of ‘docile bodies’. Foucault writes of the docile body as something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt [sic] body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit.

59 Criminologists Todd R. Clear and Natasha A. Frost mark the late 1960s as the turning point for America’s ‘social experiment’ in mass incarceration: the rise of the crime rate in the 1960s led to penal reform in the decades that followed, bringing in lengthy detention before trial, harsher and longer sentences, increased use of solitary confinement and so on, all giving rise to prison over-population and costing billions of dollars. Clear and Frost argue that this political enthusiasm for harsh punitive measures has finally begun to dissipate following the 2008 economic crisis and ensuing budgetary cuts. Emphasis is now placed on prevention over punishment. See Todd R. Clear and Natasha A. Frost, The Punishment Imperative: The Rise and Failure of Mass Incarceration in America (New York; London: New York University Press, 2014), 1-7, 28, 57.
60 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 122-3.
61 Ibid., 107.
62 Coincidently, the building in which the students at Davis had their studios was an ex-military barracks, though the structure of teaching was far from military. De Angelus, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, Please Pay Attention Please, 221.
63 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 135.
Such metaphors of material manipulation, of clay and of pliability, pepper Foucault’s text, and render the docile body itself a kind of sculptural output. We can feel the tightening of the tangled knot here: Nauman’s docile body is just as much sculptural product as it is an efficient machine.

This tangled web of allusions to processes of productivity is most noticeably at play in two of the video works: *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)* and *Walk With Contrapposto*. The former video overtly references Samuel Beckett, whose plays and novels Nauman first encountered in 1966-7. In *Slow Angle Walk* there is particular allusion to the eponymous characters of Beckett’s novels *Molloy* (1951) and *Watt* (1953) in the peculiar stiff-legged gait and pattern of movement that the artist adopts, which he describes as ‘a tedious and complicated process to gain even a yard.’ Hands clasped behind his back, Nauman keeps his legs straight, and balances on one foot for several seconds as the other leg sticks out behind him. To take a step, he swings his back leg to the front, keeping it straight all the while, holding it in front of him for a moment, and then falling onto it with a clunk, allowing the other leg to jut out behind him for the process to begin again. Molloy describes his own walking patterns at length, his attempts at negotiating the pain and stiffness in his legs, and the difficulty of having one leg shorter than the other. ‘But I couldn’t,’ Beckett writes in Molloy’s voice,

> What? Bend it. For how could I bend it when it was stiff? I was therefore compelled to work the same old leg as heretofore, in spite of its having become, at least as far as the pain was concerned, the worse of the two and the more in need of nursing.\(^{65}\)

Molloy finds that he is able to use the camber of the road to even out the length of his legs, so making his progress easier. Likewise, Nauman finds a solution to the problem of walking without bending one’s legs, swinging them through on each step. As he does so, his direction changes, the pattern adopted resembling, but not precisely replicating, that performed by Watt in Beckett’s novel:

> Watt’s way of advancing due east, for example, was to turn his bust as far as possible towards the north and at the same time to fling out his right leg as far as possible towards the south, and then to turn as far as possible towards the south and at the same time to fling out his left leg as far as possible towards the north,

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64 Nauman in Ingrid Schaffner, ‘Circling Oblivion / Bruce Nauman through Samuel Beckett’ in Morgan, *Bruce Nauman*, 167.
Nauman makes a deft approximation of Watt’s ‘funambulistic stagger’, changing direction on every step to form a pattern around the floor of the studio [Fig. 2.4]. Following Beckett’s long and tediously thorough descriptions of the gaits of his characters, Nauman also performs his own walk with monotonous precision. The everyday action becomes laboured and stilted: slow, circuitous progress is made, and nothing much seems to be achieved.

Unproductivity is figured on another level in *Walk with Contrapposto*, in which Nauman could be seen as guising a sexually ‘unproductive’ homosexual body, or at least destabilising binary gender distinctions. As he sashays stiltedly down the corridor in this work, he seems to perform another self, with his highly feminised, camp gait, shifting his hips like a model or drag act on a catwalk, with his hands held aloft as if to show off his figure. Judith Butler argues that gender identity is constituted through its performance as ‘corporeal stylisation’, encoded, partly, in the way in which we move. Nauman seems to explore a similar idea by performing the stereotypical tropes of an alternate gender or sexuality, studying the extent to which such movements connote these identities. Butler writes that drag ‘destabilises the very distinctions between the natural and the artificial, depth and surface, inner and outer through which discourse about gender almost always operates.’ Assumed connections between femaleness as an anatomical fact and as culturally performed are undermined by the drag performer and, as Butler stresses: ‘In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency.’ Thus, Nauman complicates gender categories, troubling or queering his heterosexual masculine identity. This guising of a body whose sexuality precludes biological heterosexual procreation has implications for the notion that an artist must ‘sire’ artworks, and continue his artistic bloodline, so to speak. In this work

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67 Ibid., 31.
68 Though it would distract from the trajectory of my argument here, it is worth noting that there are wider debates to be had about the place of Nauman’s ‘guising’ of homosexuality within the context of the era, with gay rights activism gaining momentum in the United States at the end of the 1960s. Indeed, the Stonewall riots happened mere months after *Walk with Contrapposto* was made.
70 Ibid., viii.
71 Ibid., 137. Emphasis in original.
Nauman seems to present his practice as the end of a lineage, aptly walking into the dead end of the corridor itself.

This emphasis on repetitive idleness in *Slow Angle Walk* and on unproductivity in *Walk with Contrapposto* is provided with a counterpoint in the way that Nauman essentialises his gait in both videos. Through the performance of a broken or split gait Nauman imitates the chronophotograph, ironically recalling its use as an instrument by which to find efficient bodily movement in the name of industrial and military progress. A key player in efficiency studies in the nineteenth century was American industrialist Frederick W. Taylor. Through what became known as Taylorism, he proposed ways in which the movements of the worker could be most efficiently performed to minimise loss of time and energy. As Anson Rabinbach notes, Taylor’s approach broke down into five broad stages:

(1) the division of all shop-floor tasks into their fundamental parts; (2) the analysis and design of each task to achieve maximum efficiency and ease of imitation; (3) the redesign of tools and machines as standardised models; (4) the linking of wages to output; and (5) rational coordination and administration of production.\(^72\)

This subdivided approach to factory production was part of a larger picture of increasing industrialisation, which was fueled by the manual work of millions. The more effectively each individual worked, the more productive and profitable the whole system, from the mining of coals and metals to the manufacture of goods. This was an area that interested the chronophotographer Étienne-Jules Marey, leading him to photograph the practices of various manual labourers using techniques that were in fact much more scientific than those developed by Taylor.\(^73\) Working closely with an engineer, Charles Fremont, Marey photographed sequences of blacksmiths and other tradesmen at work in order to study the minutiae of bodily movement and tool use. Such studies allowed better tools, as well as better means of using them, to be developed.

Studies in efficiency did not escape the realm of walking. In their 1898 book *Comment on marche: des divers modes de progression, de la supériorité du mode en flexion*, the authors Félix Regnault and Albert de Raoul, set out a means of walking ‘en flexion’, with


bent knees, a gait which, they proposed, prevented the oscillation of the body, allowing the walker to cover more ground, faster, with less fatigue, as well as being able to carry heavier loads. The authors observed this gait among those who walk a great deal: mountaineers, peasants, hunters, soldiers, as well as among Indians and tribespeople across the world. They sought the most efficient mode of locomotion on foot, proposing that the main application of their findings might be in the military, allowing armies to cover more ground carrying a greater amount. For Regnault and de Raoul the body was a system of muscles and joints that could be put to work at its highest capacity. They corroborated their observations with diagrams of various different gaits based on Marey’s chronophotographs, the photographer also having written the preface to Comment on marche. These practices are a clear manifestation of the production of ‘docile bodies’ in wider society. Indeed, Foucault repeatedly alludes to the techniques of military discipline in parallel to those of penal discipline, noting how military schools ‘recruit professional soldiers at the youngest possible age’ in order to drill them into docility, regarding each soldier’s body not only as mechanical in itself, but also as a part in a ‘multi-segmentary machine’, namely, the army.

Nauman’s stilted steps in Slow Angle Walk and Walk with Contrapposto become analogues for the various uses of chronophotography in studies of industrial and military efficiency. Yet, unlike in these industrial and military uses, Nauman’s walks have no results: no products made, no destinations reached. Furthermore, in Slow Angle Walk, his body resembles a mechanical toy: he pivots and swings his stiff legs from step to step, raising and holding each leg for a number of seconds only to fall onto it with a jolt. And the carefully drawn diagram that lays out his route in this work suggests an architectural plan or perhaps a production line, with arrows indicating direction of travel [Fig. 2.4]. Yet these allusions to mechanical productivity do not undercut the slowness and idleness of Slow Angle Walk, nor the dead end set-up of Walk with Contrapposto, but only heighten their inefficiencies, since Nauman’s gaits are in no way efficient: his mechanically chronophotographic body seems an ironically unproductive antidote to its historical counterparts, an escape from the ideology of progress. Indeed, Nauman just seems to be ‘grinding the wind’ and the idea that the only product of these videos is the artist’s own ‘docile body’ becomes all the more compelling.

75 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 158, 164.
In this reading the films and videos themselves might be seen as by-products of a process, a kind of dross that is skimmed off, like the scum on molten metal in the sculptural casting process. Indeed, Nauman always considered the filming process as a subsidiary necessity. As he said: ‘When I was living in San Francisco, I had several performance pieces which no museum or gallery was interested in presenting. I could have rented a hall, but I didn’t want to do it that way. So I made films of the pieces, the bouncing balls and others.’ It is clear here that the performing body was always Nauman’s central concern, with the act of recording being a kind of after-thought. Such an understanding of the studio works as by-products of a process of performance, I argue, makes sense of their intractability: they are difficult to watch precisely because they are not made to be watched, at least not from beginning to end in a single sitting.

Yet, just as the by-products of manufacture are often recuperated into the systems of capitalism as products in themselves, so too are the studio works. Though figuratively representing unproductive labour, the studio walks are not actually unproductive, since the activities resulted in artworks, the films and videos themselves, which gradually became operative within a capitalist system. This recuperation complicates a reading of the studio works that might see them as a means of circumventing the art market in a form of Marxist critique. Like the exercises of penal servitude analysed by Foucault, Nauman’s exercises produce above all the docile, disciplined body of the artist himself, with the films and videos as a kind of excess of this process, which, like many waste products within capitalism, are eventually recouped. Nauman’s films are not direct protests against capitalist efficiency, but rather reveal the systems by which the body is controlled and coerced into docility, and hence production.

Closed circuit walking

While many moving image works of the era, by artists such as Vito Acconci, Joan Jonas or Lynda Benglis, are long, repetitious and slow-paced like Nauman’s, his works distinguish themselves by the particular type of viewing they elicit. Like closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage, which is watched for behavioural differences in the

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77 For example, Marmite is a by-product of beer brewing.
78 An archival copy of Walk with Contrapposto costs up to $2900, for example (price charged by Electronic Arts Intermix: http://www.eai.org/titleOrderingFees.htm?id=517#terms).
surveilled subjects, which could in turn amount to criminal activity, Nauman’s works are
watched in a manner that attends only to occurrences outside the norm, that registers
minute differences within the endless cycles of sameness. As a viewer, one is drawn
towards an exhausting vigilance: since the artist traces repetitive patterns in the form of
rhythms and gaits, one becomes attuned to spotting slippages and mistakes, and all the
while struggles to remain alert to such things, since they are the only points of interest
offered.

Here I want to take a closer look at Nauman’s use of video, since, I believe, it lies
at the heart of the kind of walking subject that is presented in his work. Before he
worked with video, the artist’s ‘only real familiarity with it was seeing it in store windows
– you know, a camera on the sidewalk and you see pictures in the store window.’
79 This
was an early use of CCTV, and the artist’s awareness of it in this urban, pedestrian
context comes to bear on the way in which he used it in his work, as I will show.
Indeed, since video became more widely used in the late 1960s, both by artists and
increasingly by the state, in crime prevention, Nauman’s early adoption of the medium
marks his video work very specifically as a symptom of its era. I am led, then, to ask
what relationship exists between Nauman’s use of video and his interest in systems of
control and coercion. Why did these systems become so imperative for him at this
particular moment? In what ways were his explorations of them driven by socio-
historical conditions governed by concurrent developments in technology? Nauman
adopted video both for recording his performances in the studio, as we have seen, but
also for its use within his corridor pieces. In these works, I will argue, Nauman used
video to turn the logic of Foucauldian docility and productivity, with which he had
bound himself, upon the spectator.

The gallerist Leo Castelli purchased a Sony Portapak video camera in 1968 when
they first became commercially available in the U.S., then for around $2000, and lent it
out to artists including Richard Serra, Keith Sonnier and of course Bruce Nauman.80
The loan of this machine meant an intense period of video making for Nauman, a
chance to experiment with its capabilities beyond those of film. Video was easier to

79 Nauman in de Angelus, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, Please Pay
Attention Please, 245.
80 ‘Portapak’ was the term originally used by Sony to describe its portable video recorder and camera
equipment. The term became generic when other manufacturers (Panasonic, JVC, Shibden) began
producing similar equipment. Chris Meigh-Andrews, A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and
work with, since it did not require expensive processing like film, and allowed Nauman to watch instant feedback on the video monitor, which meant he could adjust his performance accordingly. Performances on film, by contrast, could only be seen once the footage had been processed. Where video could be recorded over, allowing for test-tapes and mistakes, use of film required meticulous planning and practising before recording so as not to waste film stock. Video equipment could easily be operated by a single individual (which in some ways highlights the reading of Nauman’s works as reflections on the isolation of the artist); an image could be achieved in low light levels without the need for extra lighting (particularly important when Nauman was making work in enclosed spaces, as in *Walk with Contrapposto*); synchronised sound was easy to achieve (something Nauman took advantage of in *Stamping in the Studio*).

But video also had its limitations: the image quality was grainy and low contrast; the soundtrack was often penetrated by a high-pitched whine caused by the automatic volume control; and, as Chris Meigh-Andrews notes,

> although the camera was equipped with a pause control, the cut between scenes was crude and often caused “unstable” edits between shots or sequences. Artists’ tapes from this period were subsequently most often continuous unedited recordings, the documentation of performances or presentations made “live” to camera with a simple ambient soundtrack.\(^81\)

For Nauman these limitations became part of the distinct aesthetic of the video works, whose crude amateurishness reflected the nature of their low-cost production and their one-man authorship.

Nauman also began to take advantage of the flexibility of the video camera to record at different orientations, recording *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)* on its side, *Stamping in the Studio* from a high angle and *Pacing Upside Down* from a high angle and upside down. To the present-day viewer these high camera angles suggest the appearance of CCTV footage, making oblique links between the medium of video and its use in surveillance. Indeed, Nauman was making these video works concurrently with the first installation of video surveillance in U.S. cities: from 1968 onwards CCTV was installed across public places, with increasing frequency into the 1970s and ‘80s.\(^82\) In *Stamping in the Studio* and *Pacing Upside Down* Nauman becomes the subject of his own

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\(^81\) Ibid., 149.

surveillance, with an impersonal eye viewing him from overhead. The fixed camera position, indifferent to Nauman’s location in the studio as he moves in and out of shot, particularly reflects the nature of surveillance footage. Nauman’s camera in *Stamping in the Studio* and *Pacing Upside Down* seems almost incidental, capturing actions in the studio that would seemingly take place whether they were filmed or not, looked down upon as the subject of another’s impersonal gaze in the manner of surveillance.

Rosalind Krauss has famously characterised video as an inherently narcissistic medium due to the closed circuit of its record and playback, with the performer trapped in ‘the prison of a collapsed present’ leaving no room for an external viewer. Yet it might be more apt in the case of Nauman to characterise this ‘prison of a collapsed present’ as a form of self-surveillance, for reasons we have seen, rather than through the implicitly eroticised narcissism that Krauss suggests. *Boomerang* (1974) by Richard Serra and Nancy Holt, or *Now* (1973) by Lynda Benglis, present, as Krauss shows, a closed, internal and libidinous relationship between artist and apparatus, or, perhaps more accurately, artist and self via apparatus. However, unlike the artists in these iterations of video art, in his works Nauman ignores the recording device. He seems almost indifferent to the presence of the camera, frequently leaving the space of the screen, as already noted. He performs for the camera in a sense that is entirely removed from its enclosed, reflexive, suffocating embrace as a tool for narcissism, instead only acknowledging it as a cold, disciplinary presence: it is the reason that he does not stop walking, but nothing more. As such, Nauman’s use of the video camera reflects the practice of internalising disciplinary structures, an historically specific reading of the work, considering the rise of CCTV in cities at this time. However, while Nauman’s practice complicates Krauss’s insights into video art, it does not entirely reject the narcissism inherent in the medium, since this aspect becomes vital to the way in which he uses video in his corridor works, as we shall see.

In the corridor installations that followed Nauman’s studio videos, the artist fully exploited the medium’s inherent characteristics, turning them upon whoever might walk between the narrow walls in a bid to control him or her. While the earliest corridor, *Performance Corridor* (1969), provided a restricted space for the participant, Nauman felt

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that it still offered too much latitude for individual performance. The introduction of video, then, allowed him to bind the participant's experience further, in a way that echoed the strictures imposed upon the artist's own body in the studio works.

In *Live-Taped Video Corridor* (1970) [Fig. 2.12], for example, the participant sees two stacked video monitors before her, at the end of a long passage. The bottom monitor shows a pre-recorded videotape of the empty corridor, while the top monitor shows a live image of the participant filmed by a camera mounted above the entrance to the corridor, facing down its length. This seemingly simple set-up has a disorientating effect upon the viewer as she walks towards the monitors. On the lower screen her presence within the corridor is denied, while the upper screen places her in a loop between voyeur and viewed: as she walks towards the monitor, her image becomes ever more distant, and she is alienated from it, watching her retreating back as if it belongs to someone else. Nauman notes, too, that he used a wide-angle lens for this work, 'so that you were removed from yourself, sort of doubly removed – [...] as you walked, because the wide-angle lens changed the rate that you [were] going away from the camera, [...] as you took a step, you took a double step with your own image.' While this work embodies the entrapment I have been emphasising throughout the chapter, it also promotes a splitting of subjectivity. The subject in *Live-Taped Video Corridor* will continue to walk towards her image – drawn on by narcissism – whilst knowing that she can never reach it; she will continue to look at her image, whilst feeling that it is the image of someone else that she surveys. There is a rift, then, a division of the self between the role of participant and the role of viewer, between the experience of walking through the space and *seeing oneself* walking through it as detached from lived experience. The corridor is activated by the walking body, which is then made strange to its owner, as it seems to be under the control of an unknown ‘other’ rather than that of the subject herself. Nauman observes:

I think that if you can control the situation physically, then you can have a certain amount of similarity [between different participants]. People are sufficiently

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84 ‘I think it was very hard for me to present it without any particular instructions, because I felt I didn't want people to make their own performance. I wanted to control the situation, and I felt that by giving something as simple and uninflected as that corridor, that I was allowing people a lot more latitude than I was used to. [...] At the same time, the idea of the dead-end corridor, which I hadn't thought of when I built the piece but I found out about when it was there – it really appealed to me.’ Nauman in de Angelus, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, *Please Pay Attention Please*, 258-9.

85 Ibid., 264.
similar so that you can have at least a similar kind of experience. But, certainly, the private thing can change the experience a great deal in some ways, and I don’t expect to be able to control that. But, on the other hand, I don’t like to leave things open so that people feel they are in a situation they can play games with.  

Unlike artists such as Allan Kaprow or Hélio Oiticica (to pick only two of many examples) who had been making playfully participatory pieces since the late 1950s, in which the subject could direct the course of his or her involvement within loosely defined boundaries, Nauman sought to narrow the field of possibility so that each participant would have a very specific and carefully managed encounter in which his or her behaviour was subtly manipulated. Peter Plagens has observed that, put in extreme terms, Nauman is ‘the lab scientist and we’re the rats.’ This is played out in works such as *Four Corner Piece* (1970-1) [Fig. 2.13], in which participants chase their own tails. The installation consists of a square construction with four television monitors and four television cameras, one of each installed at each corner, with the cameras pointing in an anti-clockwise direction and the monitors facing clockwise. Each camera is arranged to capture the image of the passing participant and relay it to the monitor positioned diagonally across from it. The participant moves anti-clockwise around the corridor and sees herself only briefly on each monitor in turn: no sooner is her image glimpsed than it has disappeared around the corner. In this piece the participant is perpetually denied the narcissistic satisfaction of a full view of herself, and as with *Live-Taped Video Corridor*, it is the search for this completion, an image of the self, that draws her on, that keeps her walking. Despite the repeated frustration of the piece, the participant nevertheless continues to move around the space, determined to beat the machine and align experience with perception, as Janet Kraynak notes.  

Such is the enclosed set-up of the system of *Four Corner Piece*, and other works like it, that Nauman can readily predetermine the behaviour of the participants. We become the subjects of his experiments, as we are placed under the same tests of endurance and frustrating repetition that the artist faced in his studio. Indeed, the corridor installations

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88 See Simon, *Bruce Nauman*, 244.
echo contemporary cognitive or behavioural psychology experiments that concerned themselves with the level to which individuals could be coerced into submission. One famous example is the Milgram experiment (1961) in which participants were asked to administer what they believed to be electric shocks to a subject when he or she answered a question wrong, and were revealed to be capable of choosing to administer what they thought were dangerously high doses under these conditions of authoritative instruction. Another example might be the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) in which participants, playing guards and inmates in a mock prison, so fully adopted their guises that the experiment had to be terminated prematurely. While both these experiments have subsequently been heavily criticised in part for their lack of relevance to real life situations, what the psychologists involved claimed to have revealed were the extreme levels to which institutional structures could manipulate the behaviours of individuals, not least in an attempt to come to terms with the atrocities that took place during the Second World War. Though the results of Nauman’s ‘experiments’ are not as extreme, since participation in them is always voluntary and doors are never literally locked, they nevertheless reveal the artist’s preoccupation with the degree to which carefully managed parameters can create specific experiences and forms of behaviour. I noted above that Nauman created a form of self-appointed institution in his studio-based films and videos. In the corridors this sense of institutional control is passed on to the participant: do we obey because of the codes of practice of the art institution? Are we afraid of revealing our lack of savoir-faire within the gallery? Or is something darker at work in our obedience to the parameters of the piece?

Kraynak characterises the experience of the corridors as a form of ‘dependent participation’: rather than offering a means of activating the body of the viewer, she

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90 Regarding the criticisms of these experiments see Cathy Faye, ‘American Social Psychology: Examining the Contours of the 1970s Crisis’, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 43, no. 2 (June 2012): 516-17. The fact that both psychologists and critical theorists were interested in questions of power and punishment at the same time suggests that these concerns were particularly pressing in the post-war era, as, in part, thinkers sought to understand the psychology that led to the Holocaust. Foucault does not reference the psychology experiments specifically, though they might serve to illustrate his arguments about the way in which control proliferates in society through the reproduction of ‘docility’. Much commentary on the experiments acknowledges this concurrence of ideas, and references Foucault’s work in relation to the power dynamics at play in the Milgram and Stanford Prison experiments. For two recent examples see Stephen Gibson, ‘Milgram’s Obedience Experiments: A Rhetorical Analysis’, *British Journal of Social Psychology* 52 (2013): 290-309, and S. Alexander Haslam and Stephen D. Reicher, ‘When Prisoners Take Over the Prison: A Social Psychology of Resistance’, *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 16, no. 2 (2012): 154-79.
argues, Nauman instead incarcerates the body, physically, but also through means of submission to the ‘laws’ of the artwork. In Double Steel Cage Piece (1974) [Fig. 2.14], which consists of a steel-mesh room set within a larger one, the participant enters through a door and traverses the corridor formed between the inner and outer cages, unable to get into the middle room. She is thus trapped between two walls, viewing other participants through the thick mesh, and so becomes subject to the confines of the work. For Kraynak, such tenets fundamentally ‘question one of the stakes upon which much progressive sculptural work of the sixties turned: namely, the possibility (and benefits) of direct experience.’

In a society in which interactivity is so often seen as a beneficial goal in its own right, Nauman’s corridors and installations, Kraynak attests, bear a ‘cautionary tale’ against ‘participation as a panacea’. Yet, I want to add that, more than this, the corridors and installations reveal a subject who cannot escape participation in capitalist society, who, like Nauman in the studio works, is locked within repetitive exercises that produce ‘docility’, and is therefore trapped within a system of contribution and production whether she seeks it or not. This is the lot of the contemporary subject: Nauman’s work seems prescient of the era in which we now live, in which every action by the individual becomes monetised and recuperated.

Krauss draws comparisons between Nauman’s corridors and the experience of walking through contemporary urban space. In particular, it is the introduction of video into the corridor pieces that changes the way in which these works operate: their (modernist) architectural aspect, she argues, lies in their adoption of the promenade, ‘archi-speak’ for the movement of bodies through the spaces of buildings (she gives the example of Frank Lloyd Wright’s spiral ramp at the Guggenheim Museum in New York). When cameras and video monitors are introduced, Krauss points out, the architectural dynamic shifts, placing the viewer/participant under surveillance in an echo of ‘office buildings or apartment complexes, within which televisual security measures are on constant alert.’

This shift, I would add, is a move from modernist to postmodernist architectural spaces, a move from the whole to the fragmented that also comes to reflect upon the subject that occupies such spaces. Surveillance fragments the subject, causes her to look over her shoulder, to guard herself against that ever-present feeling that she is being watched.

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91 Kraynak, Nauman Reiterated, 220.
92 Ibid., 229.
93 Krauss, Under Blue Cup, 118.
For Foucault, this subjective splitting has its origins in the societies of surveillance established in the nineteenth century. He analyses Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon as the ideal architectural form for the surveillance of multiple bodies, not only in prisons, but also in hospitals, asylums, workhouses and schools. The building comprises a ring divided into cells and a central tower, from which a single guard can survey every cell. Each cell occupies the entire width of the ring, with bars on the front and a window behind rendering the inside of the cell entirely visible – there are no shadows in which to hide. ‘Visibility is a trap’, Foucault writes, since each inmate is conscious of his permanent visibility, of the possibility of being watched, so that even when the guard is not looking at him, he checks his own behaviour, becoming his own disciplinarian.  

Foucault notes the impressive simplicity and efficiency of such a model:

there is a form of surveillance which requires very little in the way of expenditures. No need for arms, physical violence, or material restraints. Just an observing gaze that each individual feels weighing on him, and ends up internalising to the point that he is his own overseer: everyone in this way exercises surveillance over and against himself. An ingenious formula: a continuous form of power at practically no cost! 

This not only bears upon the architectural form of the Panopticon, but also on a society built upon its mechanisms. Foucault shows at length how European and American societies established a form of panopticism in the nineteenth century, so that power was no longer centralised upon a single individual (such as a monarch), but was dispersed throughout the population, among the machinery of the state, multi-centred and ubiquitous.

Though Foucault does not bring this model right up to date, one can begin to see how it is intensified by urban camera surveillance, the monitoring of Internet use, the state collection of personal data, and, most recently, voluntarily displaying one’s life for scrutiny through various social media platforms. Indeed, for Gilles Deleuze the operative systems of ‘disciplinary societies’ identified by Foucault (‘interiors’ in the form of prison, hospital, factory, school, family), are replaced, in the late twentieth century, by ‘societies of control’, which are much more nebulous and far more penetrating. In a society of control, Deleuze writes, ‘the corporation has replaced the factory, and the

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94 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200.  
95 Foucault in Farquharson, *The Impossible Prison*, 12.
corporation is a spirit, a gas. 96 The shift from discipline to control, from a capitalism of production and property in the nineteenth century, to one of services and stocks in the twentieth, can be mapped with machines: a move from the mechanical to the digital. Deleuze notes that such a shift towards the digital homogenises spaces in which discipline was once enclosed (prison, hospital, school), so that control becomes all-pervasive. He writes (with a striking prescience):

Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one’s apartment, one’s street, one’s neighbourhood, thanks to one’s (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person’s position – licit or illicit – and effects a universal modulation. 97

It is this system of technocratic surveillance that began to emerge in the 1960s and ‘70s that Nauman distils in his corridor pieces. Whilst in the real world, CCTV recording and playback is distanced, with the viewed and viewer physically separated, in his corridors Nauman places his participant in both positions within an enclosed and self-reflexive space. The type of walking subject he describes here is paranoid and alienated, in a heightened version of the urban walker who moves through a world of watchful cameras. By voluntarily entering into one of Nauman’s installations, only to be manipulated, the participant echoes her position in a society that she both willingly colludes in, and that inevitably controls her. Having internalised the presence of CCTV the modern subject is used to operating as her own disciplinarian, acting as both surveyed and surveyor, but Nauman literalises this form. The uncanniness of these pieces, then, arises not only from the fact of seeing one’s body in an unfamiliar way (from behind, walking away etc.), as I have already noted, but also from the shock of realisation that one is one’s own surveyor, one’s own prison guard, as Nauman is to himself in his films and videos. Nauman’s determination to ‘control the situation’ does not function, as one might expect, with the artist as the centralised overseer, but with the diffusion of that control into the subject herself. The corridors rupture the illusion of centralised control, and one is faced with the perversity of acting as one’s own disciplinarian.

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97 Ibid., 7.
As Foucault shows, control of the subject begins not with the mind, but with the exercised body, and this is vital to the operation of Nauman’s prison-like installations. With their narrow walls his corridors resemble the cubicles of the tread-wheel, and with the perpetual retreat of the participant’s walking body on the video monitor (as in Four Corner Piece) they also resemble the relentless perpetuity of ‘grinding the wind’. Nauman’s installations echo the penal system as mapped by Foucault and also distil the operations of a contemporary society of surveillance, as outlined by Deleuze. Through such a distillation Nauman reveals the processes of systems of control at play in society at large: his cage-like installations become insidious structures that snare their subjects. They resonate with the experience of the modern subject, whose every step is tracked, traced and tested, so that she herself monitors and drives her own ‘docility’ and productivity within a society that demands efficiency from each of its ‘participants’. One might add that such a subject is most likely bound to the structures of sedentary office culture, which in turn necessitates a need to exercise, so that an interdependent relationship between office and gym emerges as part of a system of self-disciplinary practice. Nauman’s work, then, in both its emphasis on the trained body as a ‘product’ created only for its own sake (which is surely the goal of the gym-goer) and its replication of cubicle-like spaces, also captures this ultimate sting in the tail, that even in our ‘down-time’ we remain tethered into a system of control that keeps us primed for the office cubicle.

Deleuze writes of the transformation from discipline to control in strikingly sculptural terms: ‘Enclosures [prisons, hospitals etc.] are molds, distinct castings, but controls are modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point.’ While Nauman’s use of the technology of surveillance echoes that which is operative within societies of control, his conflicted relationship with object-bound sculpture also comes to reflect Deleuze’s metaphor. In Nauman’s practice sculptural productivity becomes a by-word for a wider understanding of capitalist productivity: his sculpturally confined spaces echo a Foucauldian molded discipline, while his exploitation of technologies of surveillance reflect a Deleuzian ‘self-deforming cast’ in which control is...

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dispersed and divided like a fractured object. Nauman’s understanding of sculpture as the confinement of the body is thus interwoven with his reflexive use of control.

Where many artists working in the 1960s used walking as a means to escape the medium and its materiality, Nauman uses it to further complicate and tangle this relationship, performing walks that resist the dominant narrative of walking as emancipatory. Unlike the walker who ‘finds himself’ on a stroll, Nauman splits and obscures his own subjectivity and that of the viewer of his work. Whether through an energetic entrapment that dismantles the sculptural condition, or through a loop of record and playback in surveillance video, or an obsessive Beckettian repetition, Nauman walks in circles, not on a revelatory pilgrimage, but with a monotonous compulsive stride through which no end is visible and no higher plane of selfhood is to be found. For him walking is an action that is enclosed, introverted, obsessive, but above all critically engaged in a battle between idleness and productivity.

There is, as I suggested at the start, a knot that I have tightened in this chapter: the walking body in Nauman’s work is wrought into ‘docility’ like clay through the practice of walking as exercise; docility not only means obedience, meted out through the self-disciplinary structures of surveillance, but also economic productivity, the creation of things. It is true then, that, as Lippard reminds us, all attempts at escape are destined to remain only attempts, and the artist cannot simply walk away from the production of objects, nor can the subject in capitalism escape her economic role. Yet, in Nauman’s work, this is an entrapment that remains animate due to the artist’s awareness of his own prison. As Robert Smithson writes: ‘All legitimate art deals with limits. Fraudulent art feels that it has no limits.’100 The walker who acknowledges his limits, his entrapment, offers a resistant model in which the urgency of his work and his walk is felt through his perpetual restiveness.

Indeed, Nauman’s model of enclosed, restive walking perhaps seems more relevant in the present than do the emancipatory walks of his peers. Through the lens of today’s evidently panoptic society, Nauman’s work seems eerily prescient, resonating with apparatuses and structures of control that were only at their nascent stages in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In my first two chapters, I have deepened a picture of the art of the 1960s and ‘70s, presenting it in a light that is perhaps more uneasy than we are used to. Rather than suggesting that the art of this era offers avant-garde strategies or

100 Smithson in Lippard, Six Years, xx.
paradigms that might be recuperated by artists in the present, I have instead shown how this work offers warnings, explorations of technological threat or of conditions of incarceration and control which were then in their early stages, and seem at a fuller intensity today.

While the first two chapters have largely focused on the place of the urban walker, defining various subtle relationships between the walking body and restriction, the next chapter moves away from these trends, to look at the more traditional notion of the wanderer in the landscape. However, the sense of unease will still remain, as I tussle with the difficult viewing experience offered by Agnes Martin’s film *Gabriel* (1976), the focal point of the chapter. Filmed in various parts of the American Southwest, including Martin’s adopted home of New Mexico, *Gabriel* demonstrates Martin’s profound connection with the natural environment, and simultaneous struggle to represent it. While Nauman has lived and worked in rural New Mexico for the latter part of his career (1979 to the present day), this landscape has not affected the tone of his artistic output. For Martin, however, the same landscape offered a setting for *Gabriel*, and thus served as a means of exploring the relationship between the roaming eye of the walker and the scenery through which he moves.

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101 In interview, Michele de Angelus probes Nauman on this question, and he is resistant to the idea that his move to Pecos, New Mexico has in any way affected the kind of art that he makes. Nauman in de Angelus, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman, May 27 and 30, 1980’ in Kraynak, *Please Pay Attention Please*, 281-82, 289-94. In 1989 Nauman moved to Galisteo, New Mexico, making him and Agnes Martin neighbours (she lived in Galisteo 1977-1993): in one interview, Martin refers to him as ‘my best friend’, whilst also noting the significant differences between their respective artistic outputs. Chuck Smith and Agnes Martin, ‘Agnes Martin Interview’, 1997, https://vimeo.com/7127385, 00:04:35.
Figure 2.1 Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967-8, 16mm film, 10 minutes, still, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 2.2 Bruce Nauman, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967-8, 16mm film, 10 minutes, still, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 2.3 Bruce Nauman, *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)*, 1968, video, 60 minutes, still, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 2.4 Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Study for Slow Angle Walk)* also known as *Beckett Walk Diagram II*, 1968, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 21.6 x 27.9cm, artist’s private collection.
Figure 2.5 Bruce Nauman, *Walk with Contrapposto*, 1968, video, 60 minutes, still, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 2.7 Bruce Nauman, *Device to Stand In (Brass Floor Piece with Foot Slot)*, 1965-6, steel, brass-coloured lacquer, 21.9 x 68.9 x 44.3cm, current whereabouts unknown.
Figure 2.8 Bruce Nauman, *Light Trap for Henry Moore No.1*, 1967, photograph, 162.6 x 101.6cm, private collection.
Figure 2.9 Plate 22 from Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life* (1862).
Figure 2.10 Vito Acconci, *Step Piece*, 1970. Photographs by Kathy Dillon.

Vito Acconci

**STEP (STANDING OVEMBER)**

Apartment 60, 109 Christopher Street, New York City.

*BAK* each day; revised schedule: 1970; February, April, July.

**Project:** An 18-inch stool is set up in my apartment and used as a step. Each morning, during the designated months, I step up and down the stool at the rate of 10 steps a minute; each morning, the activity lasts as long as I can perform it without stopping.

**Progress Report:** daily record of performance time.

Second month (April 1970):

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Third series of performances: July 1970; *BAK* each day.

The public can see the activity performed, in my apartment any morning during the performance. Whenever I cannot be home, I will perform the activity wherever I happen to be.

Figure 2.11 Vito Acconci, *Step Piece*, 1970, typed record of performance, April 1970.
Figure 2.12 Bruce Nauman, *Live-Taped Video Corridor*, 1970, wallboard, video camera, two video monitors, videotape player, videotape, dimensions variable, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
Figure 2.13 Bruce Nauman, *Four Corner Piece*, 1970-1, wallboard, four video cameras, four video monitors, dimensions variable, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Figure 2.14 Bruce Nauman, *Double Steel Cage Piece*, 1974, steel, 213.4 x 411.5 x 502.9 cm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
Chapter Three

Nothing is immobile: rhythm and restlessness in Agnes Martin’s *Gabriel*

A marginalised film

More so than walking in the city, which is frequently driven by working necessity (a commute, a delivery, a purchase), rural walking has to do with the pleasure of viewing: one goes for a walk in the countryside to look at the scenery; one climbs a mountain to get a view. Where Bruce Nauman’s walks set up a restrictive space, as we saw, rural walking has historically promised a kind of freedom: to escape, to climb, to take in the landscape. In 1863 the American naturalist Henry David Thoreau wrote that ‘[w]hen we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall?’ As Rebecca Solnit observes, Thoreau’s assertion points to the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century the practice of walking in the landscape for pleasure had become entirely naturalised. Yet walking in nature in this way, as an aesthetic pursuit, first emerged in late eighteenth-century England with the activities of the Romantic poets, before which rural walking was largely functional. Indeed, the word ‘landscape’ is part of this cultural construct, referring not only to a physical area of land, but also to the human aestheticisation of that land, often manifested in painting or photography. Walking, landscape and vision, then, are all intertwined and share a particular cultural genealogy. In this chapter I want to unpack these connections, and their persistence in twentieth-century Western thought, in a discussion of a landscape film by the painter Agnes Martin. The film, *Gabriel* (1976), features a young boy exploring the natural world as he climbs a mountain. I want to ask how this film engages with, and unsettles, histories of walking in the landscape as a mode of looking.

The idea of ‘landscape’ as simultaneously *painted* land and *real* land contains contradictions: while a landscape painting is a static view, to walk in the landscape is to view it in motion. As one walks, one looks at the world, capturing it transiently,

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3 Ibid., 82.
unconsciously moving one’s gaze between the ground and the horizon, between the path of one’s feet and the trajectory of one’s journey. One’s vision is borne along by one’s legs, structured and ordered by the rhythm of the human gait. In this chapter, I seek to assess this mode of sight – contingent on walking – as it manifests in *Gabriel*, using the film as a focal point for an examination of the ways in which the walking body engages not only with the landscape, but also with sight as an embodied, temporal and rhythmic process. While the first part of the chapter places the film in context, I go on to argue that Martin sets up an embodied mode of vision in *Gabriel*, which is revealed particularly in the rhythmic construction of the film. Martin intertwines the rhythms of the natural world, of the body and of film into a coherent, but often difficult, viewing experience that, perhaps surprisingly, shares much with the way in which one views her paintings, as I will show.

Made over the summer of 1976 in the landscapes of the American Southwest, and first screened in 1977, the 78-minute *Gabriel* is Martin’s only film. Its solitary position in the painter’s oeuvre means that it has often been perceived as an awkward anomaly, surprisingly amateur and undeniably figurative alongside Martin’s rigorously executed abstract canvases. Yet, the artist was known for having a strict editorial approach to her own work, destroying paintings and film that did not represent her aspirations. While she did not, as she put it, ‘consider [her] movie making on the level with painting’, it nevertheless seems unlikely that she would have allowed *Gabriel* to survive had she not regarded it as an important part of her oeuvre. In this chapter, therefore, I take Martin’s film as a serious proposition in a way that critics to date have often found difficult. I seek to place the film within Martin’s larger body of work, offering a way of viewing it that is inextricable from an understanding of her paintings, as well as proposing a reading that looks at it within the wider context of the contemporary experimental film of the era.

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4 Martin’s gallerist, Arne Glimcher, reports the extent to which Martin doctored her output throughout her career. See Arne Glimcher, *Agnes Martin: Paintings, Writings, Remembrances* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2012), 11, 93. Martin also destroyed some film footage she had shot for what would have been her second film. It had the working title *Captivity* and was going to be about the Mongol Conquest of China. She began filming in the New Mexico Desert with Kabuki actors, but, as Glimcher notes, the project soon ‘became uncontrollable in its scale’ and Martin ‘stopped production on the movie abruptly’. Ibid., 89.

Martin made *Gabriel*, as she later commented, ‘in protest against commercial movies that are about destruction, deceit… they’ve sold out to the special effects. It’s just a series of physical shocks to go to the movies’.6 Indeed, she envisaged the film as a direct challenge to the mainstream, since she hoped to distribute it through commercial Hollywood channels and reach large audiences, which is perhaps why she made it feature length, unlike many other artists’ films of the era which were often shorter.7 Before making the film she stated that it was to be ‘about happiness and innocence. I’ve never seen a movie or read a story that was absolutely free of any misery. And so, I thought I would make one. The whole thing is about a little boy who has a day of freedom…in which he feels free.’8

*Gabriel* follows the journey of a young boy, the eponymous Gabriel, played by Peter Mayne, as he walks through the landscape. In the film, the light is clear and there is barely a cloud in the sky. Martin’s camera trails the footsteps of the boy, who appears to be about ten years old, as he walks from a shoreline to a hilltop along dusty riverside paths, through rocky evergreen forests and over scrubby land.9 We have the feeling of a long hot carefree day, a youthful exploration of nature. The camera captures both wide expansive vistas and close-ups of swaying flowers or the ebb of flowing water. I want to emphasise here though, that while the film has a contemplative air, it is not easy to watch: it is long, and at times boring, repetitive and irritatingly devoid of plot, though it has a simple narrative of sorts. The typical present-day viewer finds it hard to sit through without getting restless.10

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6 Martin in Mary Lance, *Agnes Martin: With my Back to the World*, documentary (Corrales: New Deal Films, 2001), 00:20:50. It is not possible to ascertain exactly which commercial films Martin had seen to lead her to say this, though comments in interviews suggest that she was familiar with some mainstream movies of the 1970s. Speaking of *Star Wars*, for example, Martin said: ‘You know something is wrong when a tin can gets the best actor of the year award!’ Harmony Hammond, ‘Meetings with Agnes Martin’ in *Agnes Martin: Works on Paper*, ed. Ann Chipman Brandauer (New Mexico: Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico, 1998), 36.


8 Martin in Gruen, ‘Agnes Martin’, 94.

9 In fact Peter Mayne was fourteen. Martin notes that he ‘was a little hippie boy that hadn’t had enough to eat, so he was way under size. He was really fourteen years old and he only took size eight or something like that.’ Agnes Martin and Susan Campbell, ‘Oral history interview with Agnes Martin’, Smithsonian Institution Archives of American Art (15 May 1989), 30.

10 I have viewed this film twice with an audience and have found this to be the case. The viewings were: 24 November 2010, screened by Tamara Trodd for her MSc module ‘Utopia Zones: Modernism and Abstraction’, University of Edinburgh; 20 January 2016, public screening organised by the ARTIST ROOMS Research Partnership, University of Edinburgh.
The film begins with a shot of a far away snow-capped mountain [Fig. 3.1] – a destination, we wonder? – cutting abruptly to the shoreline, the waves washing up on the sand, rhythmically. The shot changes, and we see the boy, his back to us, looking out to sea [Fig. 3.2]. The silence of the film so far is broken by a strain of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* (composed in 1741). We see Gabriel in a red-filtered shot, an intense crimson after the cool pastel shades of the previous image [Fig. 3.3]. The music stops abruptly. From here Gabriel begins his walk through scrubland, his path pulling our eyes through the landscape, drawing disparate shots together [Fig. 3.4]. He looks around, up at the sky, squinting into the sun, across the landscape, acknowledging his environment, being in it. He walks by the river and gradually Martin introduces close-up shots of water, integrating walking shot and water shot until gradually we have only water, flowing in abstract motion across the screen [Fig. 3.5]. Filling the screen, the water swirls, and bubbles and forms miniature waterfalls over rocks. We see it through branches and grasses as the camera squints its focus from foreground to background.

Gabriel traverses new terrain, rocky and forested. He negotiates slopes and rocks as the surroundings get more forested with evergreens. As he comes to a river again we enter another section of water shots, this time longer. When Gabriel appears again, he is walking across slightly wooded scrubland, and for a short while a strain from the *Goldberg Variations* re-enters. A long twenty-minute ‘abstract’ section begins, by which I mean that Gabriel does not appear, allowing space for the mind to wander, or indeed empty: such are the ways that the viewer deals with her own potential impatience with the slow-paced film. This ‘abstract’ section begins with more close-up shots of water, and then of pussy willow by the river with the camera fidgeting its focus from branch to water and back [Fig. 3.6]. This section alternates between water shots, and shots of wildflowers and we either relax into viewing repetition or become slightly exasperated by it – each flower is essentially the same, being buffeted to-and-fro in the wind, but each is different in shape, colour and stem structure [Fig. 3.7]. The abundance of flora filmed suggests an attentive eye, each flower carefully looked at for several seconds, ready to take its place in this floral pantheon, as the music returns again for a short while.

Gabriel re-enters the frame after over twenty minutes of absence. We had almost forgotten about him, so rapt (or perhaps exhausted) were we by the minute observations of flower and flow. We follow him through trees [Fig. 3.8], as the music
comes in again, which stops as he walks into a silver birch wood. Martin’s camera plays with the birch trunks in a steady handheld shot and the trunks appear to push and pull against the plane of the screen [Fig. 3.9]. During the last section of the film Gabriel’s walk is again intercut with sequences of flower and water shots. He walks across the vastness of the plains – the closeness of the flower shots is counterbalanced by these wide shots. The film ends with the final steps of the boy’s walk. He sits on a grassy knoll on high ground, and not at the summit of the snow-capped peak we saw at the start [Fig. 3.10]. He hugs his knees, looking out at the view, which, somewhat frustratingly, we are not shown. Martin cuts away to the very final shot, which is of a large craggy rock in the sea, the waves swelling over it and receding.

Recent approaches to Gabriel are hesitant about its status: Zoe Leonard writes, ‘[a]lthough the film, Gabriel, is completely and clearly a Martin work, it is an anomaly’, while Arne Glimcher sees it as ‘inextricable from the corpus of [Martin’s] oeuvre.’11 Douglas Crimp, on the other hand, is not so much concerned with the place of the film in relation to Martin’s paintings, but focuses on its amateurishness, stating that it has little discernable structure and that it ‘suggests just how difficult it is to make a successful landscape film.’12 Indeed, it is clear from the outset that Martin is not a filmmaker: the film’s near silence points to her inability to record ambient sound; at one point we see her hand flicking across the lens; several shots are out of focus, especially in the close-ups of flowers; at one point her shadow appears and disappears in shot. Crimp seems to suggest that where Martin’s years of practice in painting result in a level of skill that we should take seriously, her amateur approach to filmmaking means that this side of her output is easily dismissible. For Martin herself, such lack of material skill was not important, as she said:

The materialistic point of view is that there is technique and expertise in the making of something. But that is not so. And it's not how I work. If I'm going to make a movie about innocence and happiness, then I have to have in my mind – free of distraction – innocence and happiness. And then, into my mind will come everything that I need to do.13

13 Martin in Gruen, ‘Agnes Martin’, 94.
The critical and scholarly neglect of *Gabriel* arguably began with Rosalind Krauss’s famous dismissal of the film in her 1993 essay ‘The /Cloud/’. This dismissal stemmed from *Gabriel’s* status as landscape film. In particular, Krauss argued that the film legitimised a misleading interpretation of Martin’s paintings as figuratively based in landscape. Thus, the film poses what I will term the ‘nature problem’, which itself frequently manifests in Martin’s other work. On the one hand, critics often connect her paintings and drawings directly with nature, partly because the horizontal bands crossing the canvases suggest landscape formations, but also due to titles such as *Gray Stone II, The Dark River, White Flower, The Wave, Leaf in the Wind, Milk River*, from her 1960s painting period. Lawrence Alloway’s 1973 retrospective catalogue reinforced these connections, providing a precedent for subsequent critics. On the other hand, Martin herself was always at pains to mark her work as ‘anti-nature’. Throughout her writings there are frequent reminders that she did not intend her work to be seen as extrapolated from the physical environment: ‘this work is not about the world’. In fact, the paintings themselves speak against the ‘nature’ reading, being resolutely abstract: horizontal bands there may be, but these are frequently bound together by verticals in a grid formation that maps the canvas’s surface rather than suggesting depth and a ‘window on the world’. Critics are therefore presented with the problem of Martin’s seeming engagement with, but simultaneous refusal of nature, and are faced with the challenge of where to place her resolutely abstract work in relation to its own allusions to the natural world in its titling.

Martin replied to the observation that *Grey Geese Descending* (1985) contained no geese by saying, ‘I painted the emotions we have when we feel grey geese descending’. Thus, some critics have sought to solve the ‘nature problem’ by understanding the paintings as representations not of nature, but of the emotions to which it gives rise. Barbara Haskell, for example, has written that Martin captured

the elements of nature that modulated their form while remaining essentially the same. […] It was not a matter of representing nature, but of representing those sensations of exultation which nature commonly elicits – feelings of leaving the

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16 Ibid., 37.

ego behind and merging into a field of vision without objects, interruptions, or
daily cares.18

Haskell’s approach is perhaps the most popular way of resolving the seemingly
paradoxical stations of ‘nature’ and ‘anti-nature’ that Martin’s work sets up, since it
offers a neat reconciliation of these terms based on the words of the artist herself: ‘I
want people, when they look at my paintings, to have the same feelings they experience
when they look at landscape [...]. But it’s really about the feeling of beauty and freedom,
that you experience in landscape.’19 Despite their validity in relation to the paintings,
Haskell’s claims cannot be used to understand Gabriel, and, in fact, support the notion
that the film is an irregularity within Martin’s oeuvre, since, unlike the paintings, the film
depicts nature itself rather than an abstraction of the feelings it elicits.

Thus, the film is in danger of reinforcing a false reading of Martin’s paintings as
‘analogues of nature’.20 This is precisely what worries Krauss: the risk that the film might
be viewed as literalising what the paintings have been seen by some as only suggesting.
We see stones, rivers, flowers, waves and leaves all in quivering movement before the
lens, and where the paintings avoid illusionistic space, the film explores it, deepening the
visual frame through the use of the walking figure. Krauss writes,

It is not a work Martin herself gives any indication of wanting to bracket away
from the rest of her art. Yet it should be. For Gabriel constructs a reading of
Martin’s own work as crypto-landscape, a reading that, since it is produced by the
artist herself, tends to carry the weight of interpretative proof.21

Seen in this light, Gabriel can seem a betrayal of the paintings’ subtlety, a crude
translation of their allusions to beauty into natural literalism. Krauss’s criticism of
Gabriel also draws attention to its romanticism, evoking, as I have noted, the tradition of
rural walking beloved of the Romantic poets, for whom the landscape was both a source
of picturesque beauty and a means of opening up transcendent experiences. Krauss
likens the early shot of Gabriel looking out at the ocean to Caspar David Friedrich’s
Monk by the Sea (1809), connecting it with sublime romanticism. Gabriel seems to
represent the innocence of discovery, a solitary boy on a journey through nature; he is a
romantic wanderer, an inheritor of the sensibilities of Wordsworth and his

21 Ibid., 156.
contemporaries. The notion of being ‘lonely as a cloud’ is even suggested near the beginning of the film in a single five-second shot of a wispy altocumulus in a perfectly blue sky. Throughout the film we might think of the ‘sublime’ landscapes of American painters of the Hudson River School such as Thomas Cole or Frederic Edwin Church, painters who, their tiny figures dwarfed by mighty scenery, drew on a European Romantic sensibility and depicted the simple ‘log cabin’ lifestyle of which Thoreau wrote in books such as *Walden* (1854) and *Walking* (1863). All these aspects lend themselves to Krauss’s characterisation of the film as ‘romantic’. Yet, throughout Martin’s writings and interviews, we find evidence of the artist’s rejection of romanticism, and her desire to be categorised rather as a classicist, writing: ‘The classic is cool/ a classical period/ it is cool because it is impersonal/ the detached and impersonal/ If a person goes walking in the mountains that is not detached/ and impersonal, he’s just looking back’. Krauss notes that this is ‘an extraordinary condemnation of the trope at work in her own film’. It is this discrepancy that leads to further questions about Gabriel’s place within Martin’s oeuvre. Krauss’s observation also leads us to ask what relation Gabriel has with the tradition of walking in the landscape as inherited from the Romantics. Can the film be reconciled with the artist’s rejection of romanticism and her claim that her work is ‘anti-nature’? How does Martin explore the relation between walking and sight inherited from the tradition of picturesque landscape? How does she negotiate the pictorialism of the picturesque, that is, its presupposition that a landscape view is already a two-dimensional image? How should the film be understood in relation to the model of abstraction Martin’s paintings offer? In approaching these questions, I propose that it is misleading to understand the imagery of Martin’s film as key to its relationship with her paintings – such an approach results in a dismissal of the film as a one-dimensional appendage to an otherwise complex body of work. Instead, I shall argue that it is more fruitful to compare the temporal registers and the viewing processes that they respectively offer.

In order to develop these claims, I first want to examine the context in which Gabriel was received and consider the types of viewing processes that would have been

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expected by its audiences. *Gabriel* was first shown sometime during the opening months of 1977 at the Museum of Fine Arts, New Mexico, then at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia in April 1977, shortly followed by a May screening in New York at the Anthology Film Archives [Fig. 3.11], then based at 80 Wooster Street (where Trisha Brown had staged *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* seven years earlier). It was later screened at White Columns gallery in New York in 1982 (where Krauss saw it). In other words, it was on the circuit for avant-garde film rather than being seen in the mainstream cinema context that Martin had envisaged. It was screened and reviewed by filmmakers such as Jonas Mekas alongside contemporary structural and lyrical experimental film. Indeed, in her article, Krauss immediately draws connections between Martin as filmmaker and structural film. She asks, ‘If you were Agnes Martin, I thought, and you made a film, what film would it be? Zorns Lemma, I thought’. Krauss expands little on the reasons for her choice, which seems a surprising one, since Hollis Frampton’s structural film *Zorns Lemma* (1970) has such a fast-paced style, quite unlike Martin’s measured paintings. One would be less surprised if Krauss had cited a visually quieter film such as Larry Gottheim’s eleven-minute *Fog Line* (1970), which records the fog lifting over a field and like Martin’s paintings invites slow viewing, rewarding the attentive eye with a subtle unfolding of its secrets. *Zorns Lemma*, on the other hand, represents the dominant structural trend of 1970s experimental film, itself associated with Minimalism. Practitioners of structuralism and Minimalism shared the desire to rid their output of subjective expression. Annette Michelson notes that structural film ‘followed upon the advent of Minimalism in painting and sculpture, and shares with them the deployment of monochrome, of patterns of repetition, and the concern with the coherence of the compositional gestalt.’

According to critic P. Adams Sitney structural film had four main characteristics: ‘a fixed camera position (fixed frame from the viewer’s perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing (the immediate repetition of shots, exactly and without variation), and rephotography off of a screen’, although he noted that all four features are not always

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25 Ibid., 155.
present. Zorn’s Lemma satisfies the first two, with a rigid structure and a self-contained reflexive logic. The film analyses the structure of language through an initial reading of an eighteenth-century grammar lexicon, a detached presentation of the letters of the alphabet and subsequent images of urban signage, the words appearing in alphabetical order: baby, cabinet, daily, each…. Frampton uses the twenty-four-letter Latin alphabet, an allusion to the normal twenty-four frames per second running speed of film. As the film progresses, other images, such as fire, waves and grasses, filter into this alphabet, gradually substituting the letters. The film ends with two figures crossing a snow-covered landscape while an eleventh-century treatise is read in stilted tones.

Zorn’s Lemma, with its persistent forward motion based on the constructs of language, obeys its own internal logic, which is what can be said to govern both structural film and Martin’s paintings. To fill a six by six foot canvas methodically with the lines of a grid (as Martin does) can perhaps be seen as akin to setting up a fixed camera to zoom in on a single spot as Michael Snow did in his structural film Wavelength (1967). Both actions begin with a set of rules that cannot be affected by outside forces and are stubbornly followed to their end. In the case of Wavelength the camera continues on its course regardless of any extraneous action in the room. In her grid paintings, Martin described a process by which she gained an ‘inspiration’, a vision of the complete painting in her mind’s eye before she commenced work on it. She then followed its dictates to their logical conclusion to produce a grid, top to bottom, left to right. Neither filmmaker nor artist had complete control over the outcome once the parameters were set.

Yet Martin did not make a structural film. The structure of Gabriel, though carefully edited, is not based on the kind of internal logic or system that governs the

27 P. Adams Sitney, ed., Film Culture Reader (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 327. Other approaches to structuralism in film exist. For example, updating the terminology from ‘Structural’ to ‘Structural/Materialist’ in order to widen what he sees as a parochial definition, Peter Gidal writes that the ‘film must minimise the content in its overpowering, imagistically seductive sense, in an attempt to get through this miasmic area of “experience” and proceed with film as film.’ He emphasises that a Structural/Materialist film is ‘a record of its own making’, which ‘refers to shooting, editing and printing stages’, and notes that ‘viewing such a film is at once viewing a film and viewing the “coming into presence” of the film’. Peter Gidal, ‘Theory and definition of Structural/Materialist film’, in Structural Film Anthology, ed. Peter Gidal (London: British Film Institute, 1978), 2. Similarly, Stephen Heath defines the practice of Structural/Materialist film by ‘the presentation of a film’s process, “the presentation of the material construction of film”; process, construction are displayed reflexively […]’ Stephen Heath, ‘Repetition Time: Notes Around ‘Structural/Materialist Film’, in Questions of Cinema (London; Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), 165.
28 Frampton explains this structure in detail in Peter Gidal, ‘Interview with Hollis Frampton’ in Gidal, Structural Film Anthology, 65-6.
typical structural film. Compared to rigorously self-reflexive films such as *Zorns Lemma* and *Wavelength*, *Gabriel* may have looked weak for its reliance on narrative (of a sort), its quaintness, its romanticism. Indeed, with its use of typically ‘feminine’ tropes (flowers, childhood, nature), perhaps it is not surprising that the film struggled for recognition in the realm of the 1970s avant-garde, as work by other female artists often did. Susan Hiller notes that the 1970s art world was male-dominated, and favoured conceptualism or Minimalism in art and structuralism in film. Anything ‘sociological, psychological, personal was out’.\(^\text{29}\) In Carolee Schneemann’s famous performance work, *Interior Scroll* (1975), the ‘scroll’ that she pulled out of her vagina contained the story of her encounter with a structuralist filmmaker, who tells her that she’s charming, but her films, with all their ‘personal clutter’, ‘diaristic indulgence’ and ‘painterly mess’ are completely unwatchable.\(^\text{30}\) *Gabriel*, though completely unlike Schneemann’s diaristic work, would also have been ‘unwatchable’ for many viewers, jarring against its context, sitting uneasily alongside the structural film of the era.

The other dominant trend in 1970s experimental film was what Sitney identified as ‘lyrical’ film, represented by figures such as Jonas Mekas, Stan Brakhage and Marie Menken, among others. This tendency contained a degree of emotional expression or romanticism that was generally absent in structural film. In his influential book *Visionary Film* (1974), Sitney credits Brakhage with the development of the lyrical film and saw others such as Bruce Baillie as following his lead.\(^\text{31}\) Brakhage’s acclaimed *Dog Star Man* films (1961-4, a prelude and 4 parts) provide an intense viewing experience in which images are intercut, overlaid, re-tinted, collaged; the celluloid is scratched, drawn upon, and painted. In *Dog Star Man Part 2*, for instance, Brakhage cuts between abstract images (created directly on the celluloid), himself scrambling up a slope with the family dog, a baby, snowflakes, dappled light, water, tree branches. The repeated images and abstract forms build up a poetic rhythm that textures the film. What distinguishes Brakhage’s work from that of his structural film making contemporaries is the establishment of a first-person point of view. Sitney writes,


\(^{30}\) Carolee Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2002), 159-60. Though many assume that the ‘structuralist filmmaker’ in this story was Anthony McCall, with whom Schneemann lived for a time, the artist actually extrapolated the story from an exchange she had with Annette Michelson, whose students had had such a negative reaction to Schneemann’s films.

The images of the film are what he sees, filmed in such a way that we never forget his presence and we know how he is reacting to his vision. In the lyrical form there is no longer a hero; instead, the screen is filled with movement, and that movement, both of the camera and the editing, reverberates with the idea of a person looking. As viewers we see this mediator’s intense experience of seeing.\[^{32}\]

To some extent this describes _Gabriel_ since Martin constructs a film in which, at certain points, we see what the protagonist sees – flowers, water and views. Indeed, as if to emphasise the process of landscape viewing, the boy stops walking at several moments, just to look at the view. However, a key feature of Sitney’s definition of lyrical film is that we should know the protagonist’s reactions to what he or she sees – signalled by highly emotive swaying camerawork, re-tinting, cutting and over-painting, influenced in part by the gestural brushstrokes of Abstract Expressionist painting. Marie Menken’s _Lights_ (1964), for example, uses the camera as a ‘brush’, moving it at such a jittery pace that the Christmas lights and street lights she films daub colour across the screen. These techniques, used only very sparingly in _Gabriel_ (in the slight tremble of the handheld camera for example), are liberally applied in typical lyrical film.\[^{33}\] In _Gabriel_, although we often see what the walker sees, there is little or no implication of his reaction to these sights. The only exception to this might be the red-filtered shot early on in the film, to which I shall return at length later in the chapter.

Taking another example of lyrical film, Jonas Mekas’s 177-minute film _Walden: Diaries, Notes and Sketches_ (1969) also emulates a form of subjective, first-person shooting, mapping life in and around New York using sweeping, jittery, ‘home movie style’ shots. The film takes its name from Thoreau’s _Walden; or, Life in the Woods_ (1854), which records the author’s rural life at Walden Pond through the seasons of a single year. In using this title, Mekas connects the film not only with Thoreau’s belief in the importance of simple living in nature, but also with the author’s formative influence on certain conceptions of American sensibility and nationhood.\[^{34}\] These connections

\[^{32}\] Ibid., 160.


\[^{34}\] Mark W. Sullivan notes that by the late 1960s, Thoreau had reached the status of ‘national icon’ in the U.S.A., but exactly ‘what he represented to the “average American” would become increasingly unclear as the century neared its end.’ Mark W. Sullivan, _Picturing Thoreau: Henry David Thoreau in American Visual Culture_ (Lanham; Boulder; New York; London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 101. Thoreau’s legacy has been claimed to support such diverse causes as isolationism, the civil rights movement, environmentalism, and even, more recently, the Occupy Wall Street movement, each new cause drawing upon the parts of Thoreau’s philosophy that match its needs. While Thoreau’s legacy is a firm part of American culture
perhaps suggest that Mekas was seeking to root himself in his adopted American identity, while the content of the film also alludes to his Lithuanian past, which is explored more explicitly elsewhere in his oeuvre.\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Walden: Diaries, Notes and Sketches} presents small, everyday scenes, evoking nature in a nostalgic manner, alluding to Mekas’s youth in rural Lithuania and the loss of a pastoral idyll. His reaction to \textit{Gabriel}, after it was screened at Anthology Film Archives, also draws upon this nostalgia. He writes of it:

And then, suddenly, Agnes cuts to fantastically beautiful flowers. She keeps intercutting these beautiful sequences of blooming nature. Bill Moritz told me she worked very hard on her colours, in the laboratory. He said technicians laughed at her, they didn’t see any difference. But Agnes saw the difference. And the flowers look like those in no other film. Those are the flowers of the fields of my childhood. I’ve been looking for them all these years. And here they are again, in Agnes Martin’s film.\textsuperscript{36}

Despite his praise for its treatment of flowers, Mekas also says that \textit{Gabriel} ‘is no great cinema’, which suggests that it differs from the typical ‘lyrical’ film and these differences might well account for its marginalisation.\textsuperscript{37}

A comparison with Marie Menken’s \textit{Glimpse of the Garden} (1957) might enlighten us here. When Menken’s film, which also depicts nature, foliage and flowers, was screened at the Cinémathèque Française in the mid-1960s, Mekas reported that the audience ‘laughed and made funny noises’, and he asked with heavy irony, ‘[w]hy did she show flowers, and birds, and fountains? Nothing “dramatic,” nothing really for the grownups who, after all, are here to do big things!’\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Gabriel} might have been similarly dismissed for its lack of apparent gravity and courting of ‘emotion’. The ridicule attracted by \textit{Glimpse of the Garden} could have been due to its status as a landscape film. Scott MacDonald notes that ‘viewers have been trained, or have trained themselves, to feel that landscape is not a legitimate subject for even a ten-minute film experience’ and that this ‘provides us with a measure of how different our sensibilities are from those of art

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\textsuperscript{35} See, for example, Mekas’s film \textit{Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania} (1972).
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Jonas Mekas, ‘Notes on Some New Movies and Happiness’ in Sitney, \textit{Film Culture Reader}, 318.
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lovers of a previous century’ who were able to appreciate landscape painting.\textsuperscript{39} Although to many contemporary audiences, Menken’s rendition of her friend’s garden seemed naïve, her work was in fact greatly admired by lyrical filmmakers of the day, such as Mekas and Brakhage, for its ‘free swinging, swooping, handheld pans’ and its poetic visual rhythms.\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Gabriel} shares much of its natural imagery with \textit{Glimpse of the Garden}, but it lacks these swooping gestural shots that Brakhage so admired, favouring instead fixed view handheld shots and ordered crosscutting. This methodical editing means that \textit{Gabriel} cannot be categorised as a purely lyrical film, and indeed its less than rapturous reception suggests that it was not seen as such by enthusiasts of this form. It seems that \textit{Gabriel} was too structured for lyricism, yet too romantic for structuralism.

In her painting practice Martin forged a path between Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. She self-associated with her own generation, the Abstract Expressionists, yet was too restrained in her style to belong absolutely to their ranks. She exhibited with the Minimalists (the younger generation) despite producing work that betrayed the artist’s hand more than would the typical Minimalist, often industrially produced, art object.\textsuperscript{41} Martin belonged to neither camp, yet drew on both. So too with her film: the gestural camera work is much more muted than it might be in a film by Menken, Brakhage or Mekas; there are no sweeping shots or dramatic movements. Martin’s camerawork is precise and ordered, though handheld and therefore imperfect, like her hand-drawn grids. Her non-hierarchical editing creates a mesh of crosscutting that gives the film an overall tensile strength, which is at the same time delicate, in a way that might be compared to the gridded lines of her paintings. Martin carves a path between lyricism and structuralism in a way that can be compared with the careful steering in her wider work between Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. In the rest of the chapter I wish to explore how such a mode of visual ‘walking between’ functions in \textit{Gabriel} and is governed by the body of the viewer.

\textsuperscript{39} MacDonald, \textit{The Garden in the Machine}, 7.
\textsuperscript{41} Martin exhibited with the Minimalists in the show ‘Ten’ at the Dwan Gallery in New York in 1966, alongside Robert Smithson (by whom the exhibition was curated), Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Jo Baer, Robert Morris and Michael Steiner.
Embodied landscape viewing

As I have noted, *Gabriel* emerged from a Western tradition of walking in nature inherited from the eighteenth-century rambles of the Romantic poets. Despite Martin’s hesitant relationship with romanticism, she nevertheless drew upon this tradition in *Gabriel* and in particular on the notion of the ‘picturesque’, a word often used to describe images of landscape. This term was first associated exclusively with landscape in eighteenth-century England, and implied the likeness of the land to its painted counterpart. As Rosalind Krauss notes, the definition of the picturesque is ‘beautifully circular’, since to see its effects on the ground, one must already understand such effects in landscape painting and sketching, and thus view a real scene as if it were a two-dimensional picture. As Krauss puts it, the ‘priorness and repetition of pictures is necessary to the singularity of the picturesque, because for the beholder singularity depends on being recognised as such, a recognition made possible only by a prior example.’

This circularity continues, turning again on the physical ground itself, which could be landscaped according to the rules of the picturesque. For eighteenth-century landscape architects this meant composing (and imposing upon) the natural environment in order to create views that, like paintings, consisted of foreground, midground and background, with points of interest arranged pleasingly for the eye of the beholder. Writing in the 1970s, Robert Smithson observed that the picturesque was the synthesis of Edmund Burke’s notions of the beautiful (the ‘smoothness, gentle curves, and delicacy of nature’) and the sublime (the ‘terror, solitude, and vastness of nature’), so that any understanding of the term necessarily contained both a fear of nature and an attraction to it.

As with understandings of landscape more generally, one of the inherent tensions of the picturesque in the eighteenth century lay between the stasis of the composed and painted picture, and the mobile nature of experiencing landscape on foot. Was landscape to be understood as a series of static ‘painting-like’ vistas that the viewer would encounter one by one along a route, or should one rather look for a gradual

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unfolding of the scene, emerging fluidly before the walker’s eyes? While some eighteenth-century landscape gardeners favoured the former approach, seeking to create a series of little pictures for the walker at rest, for William Gilpin, the most influential theorist of the picturesque at the time, the movement of the viewer through the perceived landscape was essential, as it pertained to the temporal and spatial experience of the natural world.44 For Smithson, this latter approach remained the most relevant. He wrote:

The picturesque, far from being an inner movement of the mind, is based on real land; it precedes the mind in its material external existence. [...] A park can no longer be seen as “a thing-in-itself,” but rather as a process of ongoing relationships existing in a physical region – the park becomes a “thing-for-us.”45

By this, Smithson meant that a landscape, a park, only emerges in relation to the walker’s movement through it, which, for him, was the essence of the picturesque.

As Richard Serra reports, Smithson saw a ‘picturesque quality’ in Serra’s sculpture Shift (1970-2).46 This zig-zagging concrete wall, over 800 feet long in six stepped sections not more than five feet high, marks a path across a Canadian field. Each of its sections is embedded into the gently sloping ground, so that the bottom of each wall reveals the gradient, while the top of each is horizontal. Serra describes how, in the summer of 1970, he and Joan Jonas spent five days familiarising themselves with the site of the proposed sculpture:

We discovered that two people walking the distance of the field opposite one another, attempting to keep each other in view despite the curvature of the land, would mutually determine a topological definition of the space. The boundaries of the work became the maximum distance two people could occupy and still keep each other in view. The horizon of the work was established by the possibilities of maintaining this mutual viewpoint.47

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44 Gilpin wrote in 1794: ‘The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the pursuit of his object – the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view. We suppose the country to have been unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept constantly in an agreeable suspense. The love of novelty is the foundation of this pleasure. Every distant horizon promises something new; and with this pleasing expectation we follow nature through all her walks.’ William Gilpin, ‘Essay II: On Picturesque Travel’, in Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty: On Picturesque Travel: And on Sketching Landscape (London: R. Blamire, 1794), 47-8.


In this way Serra produced a sculpture whose size and form was established by the relationship between the sightlines of two walking bodies and by the lie of the land, with the positioning of each of the six walls determined by their relation with the horizon line from the walker’s perspective. Serra used Shift to reappraise the artistic approach to landscape: far from the ‘machinery of renaissance space’, as he put it, which ‘depends on measurements remaining fixed and immutable’, Shift embraced a transitive experience of landscape in which the steps of the walker ‘relate to a continually shifting horizon’ in a dialectic between step and land that was constantly ‘elevating, lowering, extending, foreshortening, contracting, compressing and turning’.48

Alistair Rider has discussed this work alongside Carl Andre’s Joint (1968), which, like Shift was situated outdoors in a field, and, more importantly, invited peripatetic interaction, as one both stepped over the hay bales of Andre’s work and walked along them, using the piece ‘as a slightly elevated walkway, running over the bare muddy earth into the woods’.49 Rider argues that, unlike Shift, whose form was mapped according to the gradations of the land, the parameters of Joint were its own extremities, which had no direct correlation with the sightlines implied by the landscape, but instead marked a path between two previously unconnected points.50 In comparison, Shift had an ‘absence of any fixed centre or clear focal point’.51 This lack of focal point, I would add, diffused the roving viewer’s focus across an expanse of land, allowing her to survey it with an exacting eye, steadily mapping the place as she moved.

While it is clear that Shift is about mobile viewing in the landscape, what exactly made it ‘picturesque’ for Smithson marks the starting point of an article by Yves-Alain Bois. Serra was mystified by Smithson’s assertion, but Bois argues that Serra’s rejection of the picturesque was due to its associations with the stasis and flatness of the picture plane, which might be considered a reductive understanding of the term. Instead, Bois emphasises the connections between Serra’s sculpture and that definition of the picturesque favoured by Smithson (and by landscape architects rather than landscape painters). This definition relies on the movement of the human body through the landscape, with implications of the steadily changing relationships between object, space and viewing subject, as expressed in terms of parallax, the apparent displacement of

48 Ibid., 267.
50 Ibid., 120. Rider points out that the length of Joint was in fact governed primarily by the availability of hay bales: Andre simply made the work as long as he could with the materials available.
51 Ibid.
objects due to the changing position of the observer.\(^5\) Thus, Bois argues, Serra reworked the picturesque in order to combat the *picture* in both its flatness and its stasis.

Serra's sculpture marks a point at which artists were radically reassessing the landscape tradition as static and pictorial. Enormous earthworks such as Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) or Michael Heizer's *Double Negative* (1969), or more ephemeral marks on the land such as Walter de Maria's chalked *One Mile Long Drawing* (1968), and, in England, Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), required not just a viewer, but a walker, either in the person of the artist, or in an external participant.\(^5\) Artists used such sculptural interventions on the ground to reveal the ways in which landscape in art had always, to some extent, been about a shifting relationship between body, sight and land. Hidden within theories of the picturesque are connections that land art made explicit: that the embodied eye unfolds the world before it as the viewer moves through space. Yet, artists made works that challenged such assumptions too, pressing at their limits. In the film *Swamp* (6 minutes, 1971), Nancy Holt films her view as she walks into a wetland full of tall reeds. Guided only by the view through the lens of the camera and by the voice of Smithson, her husband and collaborator on the film, Holt edges forwards, the vertical rushes brushing close against the lens and pulling in and out of focus. She has a partial visual sense of the space around her – ‘I can’t see anything’ we hear her say. This, along with Smithson’s instructions for her to ‘shoot into the density’ of the rushes and avoid showing the horizon, causes the film to become more about obstructing and obscuring vision than about opening it out. In many ways, this makes *Swamp* anti-picturesque, as the walking body closes down the possibilities of vision in the landscape. Yet, at the same time, it is still clearly a film about an embodied understanding of landscape. Indeed, Holt’s inability to see is what causes her to feel her own embodiment all the more urgently, as she struggles to find her way over uneven

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\(^{5}\) Bois gives an example of parallax taken from the writings of Julien David Leroy (1764), who describes a row of trees planted at a slight distance from an arcade. As you walk along, ‘the position of the trees with respect to these arcades will only seem to you to change very imperceptibly [...] the different spaces in the wall will seem successively to be blocked up by the trees with every step you take.’ Leroy in Bois, ‘A Picturesque Stroll around Clara-Clara’, 42.

\(^{5}\) Though Carl Andre’s concerns were less about sight, and more about marking *place*, in long low-lying outdoor works such as *Joint* (1968) or *Secant* (1977) Andre revealed a sensitivity for what it means to make marks on the land. In this respect, Alistair Rider notes a kinship between Andre’s work and that of Richard Long: ‘For both artists, what seems to have appealed was the thought of civilisations gradually modifying and working the landscape, so that the terrain becomes seemingly choreographed and attuned to the scale of the human who passes through it on foot.’ Rider, *Carl Andre: Things In Their Elements*, 116. Also see Alistair Rider, ‘The “Curve Over the Crest of the Hill”: Carl Andre and Richard Long’, in *Anglo-American Exchange in Post-War Sculpture, 1945-1975*, ed. Rebecca Peabody (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011), 133-47.
and wet ground by trusting on her other senses in order to construct a map of the space around her.

How do these issues come to bear on Agnes Martin’s approach to viewership in the landscape? At a surface level, that of seeing Gabriel as a straightforward presentation of a picturesque landscape, there is, of course, a danger in thinking about the film in terms that will lead us precisely down the path that Krauss so feared, that of reading the rest of Martin’s work as ‘crypto-landscape’. However, taking my cue from Bois’s approach to Serra, I want to suggest that the relevance of the picturesque for Gabriel lies not simply in the reproduction of pleasantly constructed landscape imagery – ‘picturesque’ as scenery – but in the evocation of ambulatory viewing in the film. Yet where Serra utterly rejects the pictorialism of the picturesque, embracing instead the importance it places on the moving spectator, Martin, I would argue, rejects neither trope, characteristically walking a line between two modes, as we have begun to see. She engages both with the pictorialism of the picturesque, and with the notion of the embodied viewer, yet, as will emerge, problematises a traditional understanding of both.

To begin to understand how, I want to analyse a single shot in Martin’s film that, I will argue, prioritises the embodied viewer.

Just under three minutes into Gabriel there is a shot of the boy sitting on a rock with his back to us, looking out at the ocean [Fig. 3.3]. Over this shot, which lasts for just over a minute, Martin places a deep red filter that infuses the whole screen, after which we return to the naturalistic colour palette of the beginning of the film, in shots of flowers, streams, and Gabriel walking. This red-filtered shot is the most incongruous minute of the film. It surprises us. It stands apart next to the lighter shades of the rest of the film and the restrained palette of Martin’s entire oeuvre as a painter. It is also marked out by being the first of only seven short sections in the film that has a soundtrack: a section of Bach’s Goldberg Variations comes in just before it begins. Within a film that, as I have already acknowledged, has been seen as out-of-step with Martin’s oeuvre, this red shot seems doubly strange: an anomaly within an anomaly. Martin offers no explanation for its presence, and it is noticeably never mentioned or reproduced in the relatively scant literature on the film. When both Krauss and Crimp describe the opening of the film they note that Gabriel looks out to sea, and Crimp, in a page-long description of the film’s content, even mentions that this is divided into a wide and a medium shot, but neither critic notes that the medium shot has a red filter.
Far from something to be ignored, however, this red-filtered shot provides what I see as a particularly important starting point for the mode of viewing proposed by Gabriel.\textsuperscript{54}

The coloured filter might be compared to those used in structural films such as Michael Snow’s *Wavelength* (1967), or in colour field flicker films by Paul Sharits such as *Ray Gun Virus* (1966) or *N:O:T:H:E:N:G* (1968), or even to Smithson’s use of the red filter in the museum sequence of his film, *Spiral Jetty* (1970). Yet, though the technique is somewhat structural, such direct influence seems unlikely considering Martin’s lack of such references in subsequent shots. Whatever the reason for its presence, the red-filtered shot is disruptive to the flow of the film, visually aggravating even, and quite at odds with the claims that Martin made for *Gabriel* as a film about ‘innocence and happiness’. What, then, are we to make of it?

The red of the shot is a blood red, and specifically, I would say, it is that red that one sees through the mottled veins of one’s eyelids when one closes them against the brightness of the sun in a long slow blink. The replication of this phenomenon in *Gabriel* suggests sight as a viscerally embodied act, and Martin’s recreation of this effect invites us, right from the outset, to view this film in a highly sensitised manner. The colour renders the image anti-naturalistic, since it is bathed in red, but at the same time the device roots the image in the viewer’s body. This recalls Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s characterisation of the visible as a fundamentally embodied experience in which subject and world are intertwined. His concept of ‘flesh’ expresses this ontology, capturing the notion of seeing and being seen, of touching and being touched, thus suggesting a kind of folding back or reversibility of being. In Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of vision, the seer’s place within the visual field governs experience: ‘he who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it’.\textsuperscript{55} Martin’s red shot, I want to propose, suggests this kind of envelopment, a visuality that is rooted in corporeality, in and of the world. Indeed, this shot immediately problematises a straightforward picturesque reading of the film because, while it proposes an embodied viewer, it does

\textsuperscript{54} In answer to an email query on the subject of the red shot I received this response from the Film Study Center at the Museum of Modern Art: ‘The red shot is indeed part of the film and not an error. It is in the negative as well, so our preservation officer believes it was very likely achieved using a filter.’ Email correspondence with Ashley Swinnerton, Film Study Center, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 04/12/2014.

not do so through spatial means (by presenting apparent relationships between objects as affected by parallax), but rather suggests an embodiment that is visceral and fleshy.

In her feminist re-reading of Merleau-Ponty’s text, Luce Irigaray concerns herself with its troubling gender neutrality, yet simultaneous reliance on feminine metaphors of envelopment. In particular, she interrogates the notion of ‘flesh’, asking where it comes from, and whether it might be read as implicitly ‘maternal, maternalising flesh’ with its association with reproduction and ‘the amniotic, placental tissue, which enveloped subject and things prior to birth’. She argues that Merleau-Ponty’s conception of vision as fleshly and enveloping is impossible without recourse to sexual difference, and that such an understanding of vision has its origins in the fluid of intrauterine beginnings. A gaze bathed in colour, for Irigaray, ‘imposes itself upon me as the reminder of what is most archaic in me, the fluid. Through which I (male or female) received life and was enveloped in my prenatal sojourn’. One might read Martin’s red shot in this way, as it reminds us that the visible ‘is never pure transparency but carries in it, with it, the opacity, the weight, the thickness of the flesh’. In addition, through its focus on the swelling ocean, the shot seems to place such fleshliness within the cycles of the tide, suggesting the female body as swayed by the moon. Irigaray’s updated conception of ‘flesh’ might allow us to read this red-filtered shot in Gabriel as a kind of intrauterine beginning to the film, offering pause for the contemplation of sight as a drawn-out experience of envelopment in the world, soliciting us into a somatic mode of viewing, as we register it on a physical level, preparing us to view the rest of the film at the level of the flesh.

However, this does not mean that the experience of watching Gabriel is entirely pleasurable, and while reading the red shot through Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray allows us to see it as a way of ‘sinking into’ the film, a purpose it certainly serves, these frameworks do not entirely capture the way in which this deep red utterly jars with subsequent shots. The shot remains surprising. This suggests that we could read it as a moment apart, lifted out of temporal flow, and indeed, the footage is in slow motion, the waves rolling heavily onto the beach and wind billowing slowly through the boy’s hair and shirt. Exactly what the red shot does to our viewing pattern in Gabriel is to


57 Ibid., 156. Emphasis in original.

58 Ibid., 175.
introduce an intense disquiet, a discomfort that jars with the first couple of minutes of the film. Such an incongruous and jarring shot might have torn the fabric of the film, but instead it transforms the way in which the viewer reads the rhythms of Gabriel.

Several film directors and editors have understood the ‘cut’ in film as a kind of blink, and in Gabriel such an assertion becomes strangely apt, as the crimson shot becomes a very long cut, a cut that is visible and opened out to reveal something within itself, decisively marking the transition from one part of the film to the next. For film editor Walter Murch, editing is a ‘kind of surgery’, a metaphor which aligns the cut with the body. Such an analogy could not be more visible than it is in the crimson-filtered shot: it is a cut that bleeds, is visceral, bodily. In the (slow) blink of an eye, this moment in Gabriel, I want to argue, provides a temporal shift that takes the viewer outside of her everyday experience of time and its passing, allowing her to forget the realities of actual measured time in favour of the times and rhythms of the film. Henri Lefebvre argues that it is only when rhythm is disrupted that it becomes noticeable. The red shot, a difficult and intense incongruity, becomes just such an irregularity, making one attuned to the rhythms of the rest of the film.

Rhythm and musical temporality

After a shot of a snowy mountain, Gabriel begins with the sea, with the white froth of the waves crawling up the beach and slowly receding. Each wave laps over the last, which withdraws beneath it. There is a known regularity to these waves. There is surety and comfort in their repetition. They recall times outside of measured time, holidays when one forgets what day it is. They are also the measure of deep breaths, breathing in as the wave comes in, and out as it recedes. Like the red-filtered shot, they deepen an embodied viewing of the film, in which embodiment is not understood in the

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59 Film director John Huston observed that one looks across the room at an object and then looks back again, it is not a smooth action, but one naturally blinks as one changes focus. He sees this as the ‘cut’. The blink, he says, ‘interrupts the apparent visual continuity of our perceptions: my head may move smoothly from one side of the room to the other, but in fact I am cutting the flow of visual images into significant bits, the better to juxtapose and compare those bits.’ Huston in Koral Ward, Augenblick: The Concept of the ‘Decisive Moment’ in 19th- and 20th-Century Western Philosophy (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 146.

60 Walter Murch, In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing (Sydney: Australian Film School, 1992), 44. I also explore these relations between film editing and the body in Chapter Four.

typically *spatial* terms of the roving picturesque viewer, but in terms of the body’s internal rhythms and processes.

Zoe Leonard has likened the hand-drawn lines of Agnes Martin’s paintings to watching the waves on the shore. Each line in the paintings, however carefully measured, is prone to imperfection, to the ripples of the weave of the canvas, to the slight gestural whisperings of Martin’s hand. ‘Each line remains singular’, writes Leonard. Likewise, with the waves, there is a steady repetitious presence as they stroke the shore. Yet each wave remains unique, resulting from conditions that are far-removed or hidden – ‘the action of the tides, the wind, the length of its fetch, a storm far away, the structure of the ocean floor. The wave movement we see on the surface is the end point of a complex set of variables, drawn from a logic both distant and deep.’ Henri Lefebvre describes waves in a similar manner, attending to the variations that occur in their formation, even within a repetitious cycle.

Waves come in succession: they take shape in the vicinity of the beach, the cliff, the banks. These waves have a rhythm, which depends on the season, the water and the winds, but also on the sea that carries them, that brings them […]. But look closely at each wave. It changes ceaselessly. As it approaches the shore, it takes the shock of the backwash; it carries numerous wavelets, right down to the tiny quivers that it orientates, but which do not always go in its direction. Waves and waveforms are characterised by frequency, amplitude and displaced energy.

Lefebvre’s description of watching the overlapping formation of the waves echoes the structure of *Gabriel* – the repetition with *difference* that occurs not only in the shot of the waves, but in the persistent shots of flowers, trees and water. I shall return to the way in which repetition functions *within* these sequences of shots, but first I want to note that Martin shapes the whole film upon repetition, using the sea as a framing device, both beginning and ending with shots of swelling waves. While the red-filtered shot connects the viewer to embodied sight, as I have argued, the opening shot of deep-breathing waves connects her to both the natural cycles of the sea and to the rhythms of her own body, in the process reworking an historically inherited sense of landscape viewing which places more emphasis on spatial relationships between elements than on such synchronised natural rhythms. Lefebvre gave primacy to such bodily rhythms (the ‘visceral and vital body’) in his development of a new discipline he termed *rhythmanalysis*.

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63 Ibid.
64 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 79.
Lefebvre’s theory of rhythms is, in his words, ‘founded on the experience and knowledge [connaissance] of the body’, not on the anatomical body but on the body as polyrhythmic and eurhythmic, that is on the way in which breathing, the heart, the nervous system, bodily movement (walking, running, dance), all function on distinct but harmonising rhythms. The body is a ‘bundle of rhythms, different but in tune’. Lefebvre emphasises that everyone ‘must appreciate rhythms by referring them to oneself, one’s heart or breathing, but also to one’s hours of work, of rest, of waking and of sleep.’ Gabriel contains different corporeal rhythms: the walker’s pace is set against the blood-pumping rhythms implied by the red shot, while the rhythms of nature (water, plants) might be understood as relating to the body in a more oblique manner. Rhythmanalysis might serve as a useful tool with which to unpack certain dynamics in the film, since it is through its rhythms, as I will argue, that Gabriel brings together both the pictorialism and the embodiment implied in definitions of the picturesque, and, in the process, unsettles and updates such definitions. However, understanding these rhythms as forming an inevitable Lefebvrean harmony or symphony is perhaps too easy an elision to make between theory and film, especially due to the often uncomfortable tedium of viewing Gabriel’s durational, repetitive sequences. Given this, I use Lefebvre’s terms with caution, testing their applicability to the film as I do so.

Lefebvre identifies two types of time: the linear and the cyclical. The cyclical is based in nature and the cosmos, encompassing the rhythms of days, nights, seasons, waves, tides and so on, while the linear is mechanical, based in human activity, social practice and the imposed structures of the work day and artificially demarcated parcels of time. Lefebvre aligns repetition with mechanical, linear time, and rhythm with natural, cyclical time. However, these types of time are not independent, the qualities of repetition and rhythm not exclusively attributable to the linear and the cyclical respectively, and the cyclical often governing the linear in the construction of clock time, for example. Clock time is based upon the amount of time it takes for the earth to rotate, but this time is used to structure the work day, and linear, mechanical activities.

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65 Ibid., 67. Emphasis in original.
66 Ibid., 20.
67 Ibid., 10.
68 Lefebvre notes that the linear favours decimal measurements, while the cyclical favours duodecimal: ‘the twelve months of the year, the twelve hours of the clock-face, the 360˚ of the circumference (a multiple of twelve), the twelve signs of the zodiac and even a dozen eggs or oysters’. Ibid., 90. Also see Stuart Elden, Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 196.
‘Time and space, the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions.’\(^6^9\) The co-existence of these two temporalities is also an intense struggle that Lefebvre refers to as ‘an antagonistic unity’ that is ‘sometimes compromise, sometimes disruption’.\(^7^0\)

In many ways one could read *Gabriel* in terms of natural, cyclical rhythms, from the flow of water in the river, to the waves breaking on the shore and the flowers open to the sunlight. Martin sets these rhythms against the *measure* of the human body, the walking pace of the young boy. Her attentive shots of flowers, trunks, rocks and water serve to show the varying rhythm of these things, and how this polyrhythmia in nature is in harmony with the body, is eurhythmic. Indeed, Martin’s shaky camerawork draws our attention to that thing that we are normally unaware of: the quivering of our own gaze as it moves in saccades to construct a picture of the world in the mind.\(^7^1\) Lefebvre describes a manner of looking at the world as a rhythm-analyst by first observing its surface, its mere appearance. ‘Do not be afraid to disturb this surface, to set its limpidity in motion. Be like the wind that shakes these trees’, he writes.\(^7^2\) One uses a penetrating gaze, so that each thing, living and non-living, is perceived separately within its own cycle of rhythms. For the rhythm-analyst, writes Lefebvre, nothing is immobile. He hears the wind, the rain, storms; but if he considers a stone, a wall, a trunk, he understands their slowness, their interminable rhythm. The object is not inert; time is not set aside for the subject. It is only slow in relation to our time, to our body, the measure of rhythms. An apparently immobile object, the forest, moves in multiple ways: the combined movements of the soil, the earth, the sun.\(^7^3\)

One might see *Gabriel* as operating in this manner, as the camera both presents the landscape as a whole (in views) and penetrates it, dividing it, through the use of cropping and close-ups, into distinct things – trees, flowers, water – that all operate on separate cycles and rhythms. Through its jostling rhythms *Gabriel* feels natural, as if it

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\(^6^9\) Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 8.

\(^7^0\) Ibid., 76.

\(^7^1\) David Eagleman writes: ‘Although you’re not generally aware of it, your eyes jump around about four times a second, in jerky movements called saccades. If you were to film this way, it wouldn’t take long to discover that this is no way to take a video: when you play it back, you’d find that your rapidly lurching video is nauseating to watch.’ David Eagleman, *The Brain; The Story of You* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2015), 51.

\(^7^2\) Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 80.

\(^7^3\) Ibid., 20. Emphasis in original.
were all filmed on one day, in one landscape with a path threading through it mapped out by Gabriel’s footsteps.

However, and this is important to note, Gabriel is not a direct reflection of natural, cyclical rhythms, for it is constructed, made of mechanical, linear film stock, and therefore contains something of the linearity of artificial rhythm. Such artificiality is more visible in another landscape film of the era, Nancy Holt’s Pine Barrens (1975). Like Martin’s film, Pine Barrens places emphasis on the body in the landscape, and like Gabriel had a mixed reception when it was first released.74 Yet Holt’s film is formally structured, edited (loosely) in three-minute segments, each of which corresponds to the length of a roll of film.75 In one of the walking sequences in Pine Barrens, all of which are filmed as handheld point-of-view shots (as in Holt and Smithson’s earlier film, Swamp), the glare of the sun bleaches out the frame on each step, testing the limits of the filmic apparatus. Many of the shots are filmed from moving vehicles, and some through visible circular lenses so that the viewer is constantly aware of the machine behind the image.

Similarly, one becomes aware of the mechanics of filmmaking in Gabriel when the camera shakes, when Martin’s shadow appears, when her finger darts across the lens, and, crucially, in the red-filtered shot, which renders vision anti-naturalistic. All these things reveal the artificiality behind the natural imagery shown. Indeed, the seemingly natural landscape in Gabriel was assembled from film taken over the course of about five months on several sites in the American Southwest including New Mexico (the artist’s home from 1968), California and Colorado, with Martin walking up five different rivers to secure the shots.76 Rather than storyboarding her film before shooting the footage, it seems Martin responded spontaneously to the natural world, filming what struck her, in the tradition of sketching in the landscape.77 This filmed sketchbook became the raw material for the sections of Gabriel that did not feature the boy and so Martin was able to edit together shots to create a continuous, logical vision of the landscape, every edit a conscious decision. In the flower sequences, for example, we feel as if we are in a

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74 Pine Barrens was rejected from the Flaherty documentary film festival on the basis of its form. See Alena J. Williams, Nancy Holt: Sightlines (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 28.
75 See Ibid.
76 See Lance, Agnes Martin: With my Back to the World, 00:22:00. The mountain in the opening shots of Gabriel appears to be Mount Herard (also known as Mount Seven) in the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Colorado. It is likely that most of the inland shots containing the young boy were filmed in and around this National Park, since Martin’s accounts of shooting the film suggest that she captured all these shots on one location.
77 Martin used 16mm film on an Aeroflex camera which she bought expressly for the purpose of making Gabriel. Princenthal, Agnes Martin, 199.
wildflower meadow, with these bright blooms on every side, and indeed that is the way Mekas responds to it (‘Those are the flowers of the fields of my childhood’). In fact these shots were collected over months, each set of flowers in a different location, and subsequently methodically assembled in the cutting room. Where Pine Barrens presents an evidently constructed depiction of the landscape as populated and cultivated by people, Gabriel’s construction is much more subliminal. The shuttling back and forth of similar shots creates a weave that sits beneath the surface, holding the film together.

Where Gabriel carves a path between the structural and the lyrical, as I have already argued, I want to suggest that it also walks between the cyclical and the linear. While Lefebvre stresses that these temporalities often meet antagonistically, he also sees their possible resolution in harmonious music: ‘the metronome supplies a linear tempo; but the linked series of intervals by octaves possesses a cyclical and rhythmical character.’ For him, a meeting of rhythms might be described in terms of harmony, symphony and temporal appropriation, as he writes that ‘[m]usic shows the appropriation of time, painting and sculpture that of space.’ Since musical tempos are often attributed to the rhythms of the body (heartbeat, pace), this harmony is deep-seated. However, there is no such easy resolution in Gabriel: it is not harmoniously ‘musical’, but remains an endurance to watch, and its natural subject often jars against its construction, maintaining a difficult, but fervently textured, meeting of rhythms.

Distinct themes in the film recede and return in waves: the boy, the water and the flowers, interwoven with other less frequent shots of the sea, the mountains, trees and plants (pussy willow, grasses, lilypads). If we are to see the film as ‘musical’, Gabriel’s structure is less like the harmonious classical symphonies that Lefebvre’s words imply and more like the repetitious arrangements to be found in the music of composers such as Steve Reich, La Monte Young and Philip Glass, who were working contemporaneously with Martin. Jonathan W. Bernard notes that in the work of ‘minimal’ composers, such as Reich, Young and Glass, use of repetition, combined with ‘a constant, uniform pulse and a busy, bustling, or “buzzing” character, seems calculated to evoke a sense of flatness, to deny that there is anything but surface to engage the

79 Lefebvre in Elden, Understanding Henri Lefebvre, 174.
80 These musicians emerged from the New York downtown scene, and in the late 1960s performed at 80 Wooster Street, where Gabriel was shown in 1977. See Roslyn Bernstein and Shael Shapiro, Illegal Living: 80 Wooster Street and the Evolution of SoHo (New York: Jonas Mekas Foundation, 2010), 98.
listener’s attention.\textsuperscript{81} This ‘flatness’, or lack of hierarchy, in some ways echoes the slow, pulse‐like rhythms of Gabriel. The measured pace of the boy, the quiet tremolo of the quivering flowers, the rushing flow of the river maintain a steady pulsing throughout Gabriel, so that no one point rises above another in importance.\textsuperscript{82} If we focus on a particular segment of the film we might see the interplay of all these steady rhythms: in a roughly three‐minute segment at about twenty‐two minutes in, we see the end of a sequence of shots of Gabriel walking through the landscape, followed by a nine‐shot sequence of the flowing river, and then a seven‐shot sequence of pussy willow before leading into an eleven‐shot sequence of white flowers. This segment takes us from river to plant through several shots that allow both of these things to overlap, as flowing water is viewed through the abstract patterns formed by the pussy willow. In some shots the willow is shown as a single branch bisecting the frame, and in some it forms a complex web of lines across the screen, the focus blinking between the branches and the water. A steady flow is maintained through this sequence, so that the viewer is led through a series of contrasting shots in a way that does not elevate one above another. Like the interwoven phrasing of a work such as Reich’s Music for 18 Musicians (1974–6), Martin’s editing creates a layered texture, which accumulates but, crucially, does not crescendo. Bernard makes a comparison between the ‘seemingly rigid constraints of grids’ that Martin sets up in her work and the methodical construction of Reich’s Music for 18 Musicians, ‘in which each of a series of eleven chords given in the relatively brief opening serves in turn as the basis of a section; this “composing out” accounts for almost the entire duration of the piece’.\textsuperscript{83} While Gabriel does not have quite such a methodical structure, meaning that it would be difficult to label the film as entirely ‘minimal’ in a way that has been applied to the music, it nevertheless sets up themes (walker, flowers, water), that emerge and re‐emerge in waves throughout. Such densely interlaced patterning becomes increasingly important in the long drawn‐out sections of flower shots in particular.

\textsuperscript{82} Tremolo is a musical term meaning ‘trembling effect’ and was used by Annette Michelson in the phrase ‘visual tremolo’ to describe Martin’s grid lines. Annette Michelson, ‘Agnes Martin: Recent Paintings’, Artforum 5, no. 5 (January 1967): 46.
The flower sequences are challenging to watch due to their superficial banality and their seeming endlessness. As Holland Cotter has noted, ‘the film is by no means a pure pleasure to watch’ and ‘its repetition of a few types of images…present a hardship for the media-saturated viewer.’ The film’s simple central narrative is Gabriel’s walk, yet this is undercut by the structure of the filming: the narrative is subverted by Martin’s refusal to offer us a conclusion to the walk: no summit, no view, only a rolling plateau on which the boy sits. The long ‘abstract’ sections in which the boy does not feature also intensify our thirst for narrative. Martin edits shot after shot of similar images, none of them building upon each other, each shot of equal status to the next. The repetition of eddying water, swaying flowers, trees and branches present the hardship to which Cotter refers. Yet, gradually, the viewer becomes attuned to it.

The repetition in Gabriel has a dual function, simultaneously filling and emptying out the viewing experience. Over and over the same thing appears on screen for long stretches of the film. Importantly, though, this repetition occurs with difference. In a sequence, difference begins to appear immediately, in that the second character differs from the first merely by being the second. So, as Lefebvre says, ‘not only does repetition not exclude differences […]; it produces them.’ Briony Fer sees such production of difference as occurring in Martin’s grids, arguing that the imposition of ‘strict limits on her format enabled her to increase the play of difference within it. Rather than constraining difference, repetition allows for maximum difference, exacerbating, even, the multiplication of variables.’ In Gabriel, then, Martin presents us with a profusion of flora, over forty different kinds, one after another, after another, and we become highly attuned to the subtle differences in form and movement between each flower. As with the grid paintings, the strict limits of the flower sequences allow Martin to emphasise the play of difference within sameness, reminding us that, as she once wrote, ‘[i]n nature there is no sameness anywhere. There are no two rocks alike, no days alike, no moments...

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84 Douglas Crimp calls them ‘banal’. Crimp ‘Back to the Turmoil’ in Cooke et al., Agnes Martin, 74.
86 Similarly, Glimcher describes Gabriel as ‘incredibly boring’, adding that ‘the beginning of the movie can be excruciating’, yet after twenty or thirty minutes one begins to engage with it as a sensory deprivation experiment in which one's perceptual systems begin to fire on their own, noting subtle nuances ‘because you’re so hungry for some activity’. Arne Glimcher and Frances Morris, ‘Agnes Martin: Arne Glimcher in conversation with Frances Morris’, 2011, 00:37:05.
87 Lefebvre, Rhythmanalysis, 7. Emphasis in original.
alike even forever.” Fer notes that memory plays an important role in Martin’s use of repetition, as, in the artist’s understanding, recollections ‘are generally more satisfying and enlightening than the original experience’. In other words, an experience repeated in thought is more powerful than its first iteration, and so, as Fer puts it, ‘repetition is understood as a means not of deadening but heightening experience.’

Indeed, the figure of the walker (Gabriel himself) offers a useful model by which to understand the way in which repetition functions in Martin’s work: one step after another becomes a model for seriality (famously termed ‘just one thing after another’ by Donald Judd) and repetition. Walking is usually a form of repetitive activity that is cumulative, in the sense that it moves the walker forward, gaining ground (though not in the case of Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, and other artists discussed in the previous chapters). It is a form of repetition that inevitably produces difference, projecting the body through new spaces on each step. Walking also produces incremental change on a physiological level: muscles are exercised, calories are burned off, energy levels are depleted. Repetition in walking is what produces change. Lack of repetition (of steps) can mean stasis.

Alongside this cumulative understanding of repetition in Gabriel, the recurring shots in the film also function as a means of abstracting its imagery. Often, the repetition of similar shots causes the viewer to cease to notice the content of the screen and instead concentrate more fully on the act of looking itself: focus, perspective, blinking, judgement of spatial depth, colour contrasts, and so on. The natural image becomes simply a support structure for a prolonged, emptying, abstracted mode of vision. Indeed, such a mode of viewing is somewhat akin to listening to instrumental music. If one considers the repeated flower shots musically, their repetition could be seen to reflect the phasing found in works by Steve Reich, such as It’s Gonna Rain (1965) or Piano Phase (1967), in which the same phrase is played on two taped loops or instruments, but at slightly different speeds, causing them to fall out of sync, so that variations occur within the moments of phase. Likewise, Martin’s flowers repeat, recede and return, forming patterns that echo the loops in Reich’s music. At the same time, a reading couched entirely in these terms might be undercut by Martin’s introduction of

90 Martin, Writings, 115.

91 Ibid., 94. Martin offers the example of Wordsworth’s daffodils, a surprisingly ‘romantic’ choice, noting that the poet’s recollection of the flowers is more vivid than might have been his first experience of them.
the baroque strains of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*. As always, she holds a tension between modes, between the pared-back and the exuberant, between the minimal and the romantic.

The Aria from the *Goldberg Variations* comes in at seven points during *Gabriel*, for two or three minutes each time. The film has no ambient sound, unlike Holt’s *Pine Barrens* for example, in which we hear the rustle of the leaves, the wind rushing past the vehicle window, the call of birds, alongside a soundtrack in which the residents of the Pine Barrens, known as ‘pineys’, reflect upon the landscape and their place in it. Holt’s soundtrack does not romanticise the landscape, but connects us to its documentary reality, not only through the use of ambient noises, but also through the voices that, although they speak fondly of their home, give one a sense of the difficulty of scratching a living in such an inhospitable place. At the same time Holt’s evidently constructed soundtrack (layering music, voice and ambient sound) reminds us that we are watching a carefully edited film. In *Gabriel* we do not hear the crash of the waves, the rustle of leaves in the breeze, nor the flow of the river. To an extent, this cuts us off from the reality of the natural world through which Gabriel walks. Unlike Holt, Martin does not seek to present a document of living in this landscape, but rather to show its beauty. *Gabriel* presents a detached and meditative view of the image of landscape, perhaps a reflection of Martin’s ‘detached and impersonal’ idea of classicism. When the audio track comes in, it breaks this silence, not with the sounds of the image we see before us, but with lyrical strains of music that romanticise and narrativise the image, in counterpoint to the narrative/abstract play of the visuals. The first instance of music comes in, as I have already noted, just before the red-filtered shot, ending when the next shot begins.

The second instance of music in the film, just under twenty minutes in, illustrates the narrativising role that the soundtrack can play, as the same visual sequence plays out twice, once with music and once without (00:19:12). Gabriel walks towards the camera in slow motion across scrubby ground while the music plays, his footsteps marking its beat. As he looks around, the joy and abundance of nature seem expressed in this upbeat allegro in a major key. He is then placed back at his starting point and walks towards the camera once again in a nearly identical shot, but this time in palpable

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92 The music comes in at 00:01:56, 00:19:12, 00:32:13, 00:45:51, 00:52:28, 01:02:35 and 01:15:48.
silence. It is as if the romanticism of the previous shot is stripped bare. Exploratory, meditative solitude has suddenly become the loneliness of a lost boy in a wood, and it seems that P. Adams Sitney might have been right when he said that ‘Gabriel looks like the last man on earth, just before the end of the world’.  

94 We blink and we are back to the idyll. Similarly, when Martin uses music over the ‘abstract’ sections of flowers, it is as if the silent flower shots briefly become lyricised. With the use of music Martin presents a quivering equilibrium between classical detachment and romantic engagement: a fine balance she holds throughout.

Through her use of musical rhythms, both literally (in her use of the Goldberg Variations) and in terms of musically constructed repetitive visuals that echo Minimalist phasing, Martin sets up rhythms that are, at times, ‘in tune’ with one’s own body, and at other times jar with it, creating a film that oscillates between relaxed viewing and difficult, durational viewing. I have so far shown the ways in which Martin disrupts the usual spatial understanding of embodiment found in definitions of the picturesque. I now seek to approach the second part of the definition, that which attends to the pictorial, and show the ways in which Martin also reconfigures an historical understanding of landscape imagery constructed as a ‘window on the world’, through both her film and her paintings.

**Viewing processes: film/paintings**

When people go to the ocean, they like to see it all day. … There’s nobody living who couldn’t stand all afternoon in front of a waterfall. It’s a simple experience, you become lighter and lighter in weight, you wouldn’t want anything else. Anyone who can sit on a stone in a field awhile can see my painting.

Here Martin elides viewing her paintings with the way in which one might approach nature through prolonged and receptive contact. Although she believes that everyone has the ability to stand all afternoon before a waterfall, such an experience would undoubtedly be demanding. It would require a kind of meditative concentration resulting in an emptying out of the mind, as the endlessly flowing waterfall became an abstracted field in much the same way that repeating a word over and over drains it of meaning. As I have already argued, Gabriel demands this mode of abstract, emptying

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viewing, especially during the sequences of flowers, water and grasses. It is this intractable mode of extended viewing, akin to musical listening, as required by *Gabriel*, that is shared between the film and the paintings, as I seek to show in this final section.

The pervading flower shots in *Gabriel* align the wildflowers in the wind with the tremolo of the handheld static camera, used throughout the film but somehow more in evidence here because of this mirroring of apparatus with nature. Like the quivering lines (‘visual tremolo’) of Martin’s grids the flower stems are buffeted yet at the same time remain obdurately rooted. The handheld camerawork, like the drawn grid lines, betrays the presence of the artist in a tenacious gesture. Harmony Hammond reports that, on one meeting with the artist, ‘Agnes described how she had no problem carrying the heavy camera equipment but when she began to shoot the wild flowers up close, her hands would begin this terrible shaking, and she couldn’t figure out why or what was happening.’ These quivering rhythms, of flower and shot, in turn form a counterpoint with the rhythms of the viewer’s body. These sequences are not about content, or about highlighting the emotions to which nature gives rise, but instead, through their incessant repetition, offer a driven focus on the processes of vision as corporeal.

This mode of abstract embodied vision is best illustrated by a three-minute series of shots of silver birch trees at around fifty minutes into the film [Fig. 3.9]. Densely packed into the frame, the trees are truncated, with neither bases nor upper branches visible. The drained natural palette and wavering vertical lines, mirrored by the unsteady handheld camerawork, inevitably remind us of paintings by Martin such as *Wood I* (1963) [Fig. 3.12] or *The Tree* (1964), in which hand-drawn pencil grids formed of dense parallel lines are rendered in muted colours. Beyond this formal parallel, however, there is a viewing process in evidence here, which, I want to argue, is similar to the experience of viewing not ‘nature’, but the paintings. The light plays over the white birch trunks and since all perspectival frames of reference, such as a receding line of tree bases along the ground, or a view ‘beyond’ to the landscape, have been removed, the vertical lines of the trunks jostle for space in the foreground in a push/pull against the flat plane of the screen.

When viewed close up, a painting such as *The Beach* (1964) [Fig. 3.13] reveals the lines of the grid, the pencil’s ripple over the weave of the canvas, the materiality of the thing. Taking a step back, the individual lines of the grid blur into one another to form a

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96 Hammond, ‘Meetings with Agnes Martin’, 36.
textured haze. From a greater distance still the painting closes itself off, no variation of surface can be detected, the canvas appears opaque, a coloured wall. In his account of viewing Martin’s Night Sea (1963) Jonathan D. Katz focuses on the oscillation that takes place between the white grid formed by the unpainted areas of the canvas and the blue painted ground. Grid and ground push and pull against each other, jostling for the front spot, just as the birch trees do in the film. Katz describes how, in the painting, ‘an unaccustomed vigilance about the adequacy of vision haunts our seeing; we peer closer in an effort to confirm one of the two polar options our eyes have offered’. Similarly, with the birch trees, we strain to confirm which of the trees stands where and are taken beyond the materiality of the trees and understand them in relation to the fluctuations of the landscape (the breeze, the light), and, importantly, the phenomenological experience of those changes, in a further iteration of the embodied viewing processes that Gabriel promotes. In addition, we are made aware of the illusion of the image, its existence on a flat plane (the screen), both in the cropping of the image and in Martin’s use of ‘blink-like’ cutting between similar shots. For viewers, this interwoven editing can become hypnotic, as the eye constantly searches for visual stability. The film image, like the paintings, wavers, and as viewers we are suspended in this perpetually unresolved in-between.

One shot in Holt’s Pine Barrens bears comparison with this birch tree sequence. Holt’s shot at first resembles Martin’s, showing densely packed pine tree trunks with neither their tops nor bases visible within the frame. Yet, differences emerge in the way in which the trunks are filmed: while Martin trains her camera upon the trees in an almost static handheld shot, Holt films from the window of a slow moving vehicle, allowing the tree trunks to pass from left to right across the screen. Holt’s shot reveals naturalistic depth and parallax: it is clear where each trunk sits spatially in relation to its neighbour and to the viewer, as the trunks move past the camera at different paces depending on their distance from it, the closest trunks passing the quickest, whilst those further away stay on screen for longer. One becomes captured by the way in which the planes shift in relation to one another to create spatial depth. While Holt’s shot penetrates the surface of the screen, Martin’s emphasises instead the flatness of this surface, disrupting spatial depth, so that it is impossible to tell where each birch trunk

97 Kasha Linville describes a similar way of viewing Martin’s paintings in her oft-quoted article ‘Agnes Martin: An Appreciation’, Artforum, no. 9 (June 1971): 72-3.
stands in relation to the others. Where light and shadow would usually provide the eye with information about where each tree sits spatially, the changeability of the light confounds visual stability and we have at once trees, abstracted vertical lines and screen or plane against which these lines press, leaving us with a system of viewing not dissimilar to those we encounter in Martin’s painted grids.

Looking at Gabriel, then, is not like looking directly at nature. Nor, indeed, is it like looking at an eighteenth-century landscape painting. These birch trees are viewed truncated, allowing Martin to produce a sense of abstract surface counterbalanced with a sense of depth and space, in a way that would not be possible if we encountered the trees in reality. Likewise in the sections of flowing water, in which the image oscillates between depth and surface, black and white, what we are offered is a patch of changing surface, not a whole river that flows and fills and is before us as part of a landscape. In fact, Martin’s whole landscape is cropped, and, as I noted earlier, she does not even offer us a view from the top of the hill at the end of the film. It is an abstracted vision, a screen that fluctuates between depth and surface. Viewing this film, I propose, far from being like viewing nature itself, is most like viewing Martin's paintings – the oscillations, the emptying out of narrative content, the shifting surfaces occur on both screen and canvas. This film does not, I have argued, close off our understanding of Martin’s paintings as one-dimensional ‘analogues of nature’, but rather poses the question of how one might look at them as fields in flux, highlighting minute changes through repetition, inviting a mode of viewing that involves not just the eyes, but the whole polyrhythmic body as the vessel of vision.

Thanks to the rhythmic revelations of the film, one might view the paintings in an awareness of the rhythmical oscillations of one’s own body, so that the quivering lines of the canvas reflect one’s constantly mobile, nervous, core. The realisation of the impossibility of a motionless body, and the ever-present fluctuations of aliveness, reflects the concurrent work of dancers such as Deborah Hay, who, as mentioned in Chapter One, performed a dance in which she stood still before the audience and described the movement of cells, organs and blood flow in what Rosalind Krauss called ‘a kind of Brownian motion of the self.’ Gabriel makes apparent the importance of this ever-quirving embodied self. At the core of both film and paintings is the realisation of the impossibility of stillness.

One cannot experience the fluctuations and nuances of Martin’s paintings without being a mobile, walking viewer, stepping towards and away from the visual field, allowing one’s body to be enveloped by it. This is quite unlike viewing a figurative landscape painting, which usually, due to its construction based on the laws of linear perspective, requires a completely static viewer rooted to a predefined spot. If one moves, the illusion of the painted space is broken. In contrast to this, Martin’s paintings invite us to move. Indeed, the artist chose the six by six foot format that became her hallmark precisely because ‘[i]t’s a size you can walk into.’

There are many paintings in her oeuvre that require a physically mobile viewer – the stepping back and forth described by Kasha Linville when viewing Tundra (1967), or perhaps the stepping between paintings described by Lynne Cooke in relation to Martin’s twelve-part series of paintings The Islands (1979) [Fig. 3.14]. This series, made only three years after Gabriel, invites the viewer to step from canvas to canvas, and also to ‘walk into’ the large bright visual field of each work and thus gain a sensation of buoyancy.

There are also paintings among Martin’s oeuvre that require the viewer to stand still and immerse herself. This is especially true of paintings dating from the mid-1970s onwards (the time at which Martin made Gabriel), such as Untitled #12 (1975) [Fig. 3.15] or Untitled #3 (1981), in which the grid is abandoned and horizontal or vertical bands of diluted dappled colour fill the large square canvases. Yet, even these paintings evoke motion, speaking to the internal rhythms of the body, that ‘Brownian motion of the self’, of nerves, blood flow, blinking and breathing. In these paintings the unevenly applied liquid paint catches and collects against the texture of the canvas causing subtle undulations of tone in the colour, speaking to the quivering internal movements of the body. Gabriel invites us to view these paintings with the same seemingly still rhythmic body that views the film. The oscillation in the paintings gives them an aliveness, a quality of breath. What I am suggesting, then, is that just as one might view the film as

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100 Martin quoted in Bryan Rosenberger, ‘A Sophisticated Economy of Means: Agnes Martin’s Materiality’ in Cooke et al., Agnes Martin, 105. Martin also said, ‘I just think it’s a good size because it’s as big as everybody, you know, you can just feel like stepping into it. It has to do with being the full size of the human body.’ Martin and Campbell, ‘Oral History Interview with Agnes Martin’, 17.

101 See Linville, ‘Agnes Martin: An Appreciation’, 72-3 and Cooke, ‘…in the classic tradition…’ in Cooke et al, Agnes Martin, 19, where Cooke writes that ‘…The Islands requires a dynamic roving from painting to painting. Rarely would [Martin] again feel the need to so physically engage the spectator.’

102 This viewing process was particularly effective in the display of these works at the 2015 Tate retrospective of Martin’s work. Unlike their usual display at the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), at the Tate these works were shown with a white dais around the edge of the room, which gave a visual lift to each painting as one walked up to it.
an uneasy meeting of cyclical and linear rhythms, such a rhythmic viewing process might also be applied to the paintings. One not only ‘walks into’ Martin’s paintings, but between them and through them, as the eye steps between each rectangle in the grids and each brushstroke in the colour washes. Viewing Martin’s paintings is a form of viewing repetition, but doing so through incremental change, gradually gaining ground in the way that the walker does.

Most current readings of Martin’s paintings take the phenomenological approach that I outlined earlier, placing emphasis on the transition between the material surface of the canvas and the opacity of the closed off plane as one draws back from the painting. Between these two is what has variously between described as a haze, a mist, an atmosphere.103 I seek to enrich these readings by placing a new emphasis on the difficulty of viewing this haze, whether it appears while viewing a grid painting, or in the perception of Martin’s veil-like colour washes. Such a difficulty arises from the promise of stillness that the paintings can never fulfil. Martin’s close friend, artist Richard Tuttle wrote: ‘Calm. Repose. Silence. Stability. These are things I come to expect from an Agnes Martin painting.’104 It is readings such as this that I am seeking to trouble, suggesting that the paintings are aligned instead with restlessness and instability. The haze between the material junctures of viewing is not an ethereal perfection, but a visual plane that is constantly in flux, refusing to fix itself perceptually, in fluctuations that both reflect and unsettle the constant internal rhythms of the body. Briony Fer has noted that Martin’s titles (Falling Leaves, Flower in the Wind, Falling Blue, Dark River…) ‘often invoke words which stand for natural things at an interval between movement and stillness, the substantial and the insubstantial’ so that ‘it is the intervals that count rather than the things themselves.’105 It is the moment of quaking between that counts, the moment of disturbance. The haze in Martin’s paintings is a gateway of constant disturbance and perceptual struggle through which the viewer must pass and pass again, in a difficult process that is perhaps akin to the jarring passage marked by the red shot in Gabriel, or the difficulty of repetition in the film.

103 Such readings find their pedigree in Krauss, “The /Cloud/” (1993), which draws on Linville, ‘Agnes Martin: An Appreciation’ (1971), and are prevalent in the recent collection of essays on Martin’s work (Cooke et al., Agnes Martin, 2011).
105 Fer, The Infinite Line, 63.
I am trying to describe a certain troubled agitation and friction that hides within Martin’s stillness. This might be further elucidated by another seemingly anomalous work of Martin’s, a toy-like sculpture called *The Wave* (1963) [Fig. 3.16]. Of the artist’s very few surviving sculptures, *The Wave* is the only one that might be described as kinetic. Resembling a handheld wooden ball maze, it consists of a wooden box, just over ten inches square, in which about seventy little grey balls sit at random points on a grooved gridded surface under a light blue perspex cover. Parallel grooves in the wooden surface run horizontally, while drawn pencil lines fill in the verticals of the grid. When *The Wave* is picked up the little balls wriggle and find new resting places, like particles in liquid motion. The work recalls not only the ‘Brownian motion’ of the body’s rhythms, but also, as its name suggests, the repetition and difference of waves, as they recede and return on the shoreline, always forming a slightly different pattern on each recurrence. Restlessness and its repetition are inescapable. Lines, flowers, waves in Martin’s work are like steps: the next iteration must always occur, or inertia will inevitably follow.

I have discussed here how the moving body of the viewer relates to Martin’s work, both paintings and film. Considering these embodied viewing processes in turn reconfigures the way in which one might think about the viewing processes of the walker in the landscape. *Gabriel* contains various landscape images that fulfil conventional notions of the picturesque, echoing, as noted in the opening section of the chapter, paintings of the Hudson River School. However, the principal picturesque view that we crave, that from the mountaintop, is never given. Beyond this, the film also contains sequences that employ a more modernist sense of the pictorial, in that they emphasise flatness and picture plane. When water, trees and plants entirely fill the frame they quickly become abstracted, retreating from the depth of the representational image: this is an intensely planar kind of pictorialism, without spatiality. Rather than comparing the content of *Gabriel* directly with that of a landscape painting, I have argued that we might compare the viewing process offered by Martin’s close-up, cropped, textured and abstracted landscape with a way of looking at her resolutely abstract paintings.

Through such close-up, abstracted shots *Gabriel* destabilises the first part of the traditional definition of the picturesque that places emphasis on pictorialism as a ‘window on the world’. The film also, as I have argued, problematises the second part of the definition of the picturesque: that is, the importance of the walker as a mobile viewer in the landscape. Yve-Alain Bois argues that Serra’s moving spectator perceives...
the effects of parallax, and hence operates under a particular reading of the picturesque that places emphasis on these effects. Martin, however, does not employ such spatial techniques. She films the young boy walking, whilst also showing static handheld shots of nature. Gabriel is never walking and looking at the same time (which would give rise to parallax), but stops to view, something we both see him doing and is implied in the static point-of-view shots. Yet, this does not imply a disembodied viewer, far from it. As we have seen, other methods are employed to suggest embodiment: the blood red shot that appears near the start the film, the constant vibration of the handheld image, the perceptual wavering of the birch tree shot. Where Bois argues that Serra uses parallax to explore a spatial and architectural embodiment, I have argued that Martin explores a visceral, internal embodiment through her use of the rhythms of breath, heartbeat and gait as they interact with the rhythms of nature. Martin troubles the tropes of the picturesque, revealing a way in which a pictorial and an embodied response to vision can both exist at once, since her walker experiences sight as polyrhythmically embodied.

Where does such a rhythmanalytical reading of Martin’s work lead us? What might viewing (both film and paintings) with a rhythmic body mean? One might argue that placing form over content when looking at Gabriel, seeing it as structured by musical rhythms and embodied viewing, offers only a formal aesthetic understanding of it, in a Kantian ‘free play of the cognitive powers’, a harmony within the mind and between mind and object. In order to counteract such a formalist reading, I want to ask what Lefebvre’s purpose is when looking at the world through a rhythmanalytical lens, and whether a similar purpose also plays out in Gabriel.

Lefebvre’s rhythmanalytical project makes up one part of his wider dialectical approach that comes out of his reading of Marx. For Lefebvre, especially in later works such as Rhythmanalysis, dialectics is a non-hierarchical triadic model, so that rather than the terms unfolding from one another, as ‘thesis-antithesis-synthesis’, the three terms interact all at once, as in a musical triad ‘melody-harmony-rhythm’. Most importantly, though this is never explicitly stated, the discipline of rhythmanalysis seems to emerge from Lefebvre’s development of the theory of alienation. Marx identifies four kinds of alienation within capitalism: alienation of the workers from the product they produce;

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alienation from the process of work; alienation from one’s own humanity; alienation of man from the community.\textsuperscript{107} The major project of Lefebvre’s *Critique of Everyday Life* (published in three volumes: 1947, 1961 and 1981) is to extend this economic understanding of the alienating processes of labour to look at alienation as a sociological process within everyday life. Among several examples, he outlines how one could consider football supporters alienated since they play sport via an intermediary, or how women might be alienated by housework or motherhood, or how drivers might be alienated by over-identification with their cars.\textsuperscript{108} In his work on rhythm Lefebvre argues that industrial capitalist society has alienated us from natural circadian rhythms. He writes:

Questions of profitability, yield, financial means, market, planning, tactics and strategy replace the old ‘rhythms’ imposed by the relations between man and nature. In this day and age, the ancient rhythms, cycles and regularities, all our ancestral representations of the cosmos and of human actions, are falling to pieces.\textsuperscript{109}

Lefebvre’s interest in rhythms arises from the way in which, as he sees it, ancient cyclical rhythms have been disrupted by the linear systems of industrialisation and commerce. The body is conditioned to fall into the rhythmic patterns required of it by society, convention, culture and production. For Lefebvre this process is a form of ‘breaking in’ or dressage (not dissimilar to that discussed in the previous chapter in relation to Bruce Nauman’s studio pacing). The body is taught new movements and behaviours through their repetition, and the natural thus gives way to the mechanical. Echoing Marcel Mauss’s arguments in ‘Techniques of the Body’ (1934-5), Lefebvre writes,

Gestures cannot be attributed to *nature*. Proof: they change according to societies, eras. Old films show that our way of walking has altered over the course of a century: once jauntier, a rhythm that cannot be explained by the capturing of images. […] everyday manners are not the same in the West as in Japan, or in Arab countries. These gestures, these manners, are acquired, are learned.\textsuperscript{110}

Such processes of rhythmic acculturation are not always smooth. Lefebvre contrasts the everyday lives of a young farmer and a young factory worker. While the farmer

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\textsuperscript{107} See Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 42.
\textsuperscript{108} Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 58, 504-6.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 468.
\textsuperscript{110} Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 38.
\end{flushleft}
experiences a sense of wholeness in his everyday life through its integration with the cosmic (the cyclical, seasons, harvests etc.), the factory worker is ‘caught up in fragmented linear time, the time of production and technology.’\textsuperscript{111} While the factory worker resists the linear through a rediscovery of the cyclical, within family life for example, the balance, Lefebvre reminds us, will be difficult and problematic. For Lefebvre processes of alienation are always in struggle with processes of disalienation, as if constantly binding and unbinding one another: ‘Leisure activities ‘disalienate’ from the effects of fragmented labour; however, when they are entertainments and distractions, they contain their own alienations.’\textsuperscript{112} This ongoing struggle between alienation and its opposite reflects the agitated arrhythmia of the body as it attempts to reconcile opposing temporal structures.

‘This state of affairs creates a need for rhythms’, writes Lefebvre, emphasising how the preponderance of the mechanical creates a thirst for the natural, for the cyclical.\textsuperscript{113} Indeed, this was a need to which Martin was attuned with Gabriel, when she said that she made it ‘in protest against commercial movies that are about destruction, deceit… they’ve sold out to the special effects. It’s just a series of physical shocks to go to the movies’.\textsuperscript{114} Interestingly, and probably unwittingly, Martin picks up on Walter Benjamin’s understanding of the experience of modernity as ‘a series of shocks and collisions’, found both on the city street and in the cinema, a place in which ‘perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle.’\textsuperscript{115} In particular, Martin draws attention to the fast-paced corporeal tempo offered by commercial movies, characterising the shock, not as visual, but as physical. When Martin states that she wishes to make a film set against all the commercial movies churned out by Hollywood, the result is a work that undermines the alienating corporeal rhythms of these films.

It would be easy to say that Gabriel drives against the ‘physical shocks’ of commercial linear time by reacquainting the body with cyclical time, but such an analogy is not quite right. Gabriel, as I have argued, does not deny mechanised time, but uses it in conjunction with the cyclical. It does not reproduce natural rhythms, but rather gives the viewer a way in which to unite the linear and cyclical, though not without the

\textsuperscript{111} Lefebvre, \textit{Critique of Everyday Life}, 344-5.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 502.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 807.
\textsuperscript{114} Martin in Lance, \textit{Agnes Martin: With my Back to the World}, 00:20:50.
antagonism that Lefebvre identified in such attempts at unity, for it remains true that the film is, as Holland Cotter put it, ‘by no means a pure pleasure to watch’. Lefebvre notes that in ‘industrial practice, where the linear repetitive tends to predominate, the struggle [to unite with cyclical rhythms] is intense.’

Watching *Gabriel*, one struggles to shift oneself out of the linear rhythms that one’s body has been trained to obey. One can never completely relax into a form of viewing contemplation, as the unexpected edits always pull one back. Martin succeeds in producing a film that is anti-commercial and anti-Hollywood *not* because of its content or any experience of restful ‘ease’ it offers, but because of the demands it places on us through its use of temporalities that require a rhythmically embodied response, that of the walker in the landscape meeting the linearity of film footage.

While *Gabriel* transforms the experience of the embodied walker into that of the embodied film viewer, in the next chapter I will explore the ways in which Janet Cardiff turns the film viewer into a walker, as she creates walks that, through their use of sound, offer something akin to cinematic viewing. Indeed, the final chapter will reveal the ways in which the cinematic forever haunts the walker, so that each step becomes a frame, driving the peripatetic gaze.

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116 Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 76.

117 ‘Peripatetic gaze’ is a term used by Giuliana Bruno, though she uses it largely to refer to the gaze of the flâneur, rather than in the broad sense I mean here. See Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1993), 50. Bruno’s work will be used at greater length in the next chapter.
Figure 3.1 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, opening shot, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 3.2 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 2 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.3 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 3 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 3.4 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 13 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.5 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 3.6 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 24 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.7 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 65 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 3.8 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 49 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.9 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 50 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 3.10 Agnes Martin, *Gabriel*, 1976, 16mm film, 78 minutes, still, about 77 minutes through the film, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.11 Jonas Mekas, advertisement for the screening of *Gabriel* that took place at Anthology Film Archives, appeared in *Soho Weekly News*, 12 May 1977.
Figure 3.12 Agnes Martin, *Wood I*, 1963, watercolour, ink, graphite on paper, 22.9 x 22.9cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 3.13 Agnes Martin, *The Beach*, 1964, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 190.5 x 190.5cm, Lannan Foundation (long-term loan to Dia Art Foundation, New York), entire painting and detail.
Figure 3.14 Agnes Martin, *The Islands*, 1979, acrylic and graphite pencil on linen, twelve parts, each 182.9 x 182.9 cm, shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
Figure 3.15 Agnes Martin, *Untitled #12*, 1975, acrylic, graphite and gesso on canvas, 183 x 183cm, Dia Art Foundation, New York.
Figure 3.16 Agnes Martin, *The Wave*, 1963, Plexiglas, beads and wood, 26.6 x 26.6cm, private collection.
Chapter Four

Walking forwards, looking back: Janet Cardiff’s audio walks

From the pastoral wanderings of Agnes Martin, I now turn to thinking about the importance of walking as support for urban spectacle. This chapter takes us away from the art of the 1960s and ‘70s to that of the 1990s and 2000s, and draws out, through an analysis of the work of the Canadian artist Janet Cardiff, many of the threads that have been running through the thesis so far: the role of technological mediation in relation to the walking body, the importance of walking in competing theorisations of cinema, the internalisation of certain pedestrian behaviours, the dynamics of social unease and constraint that haunt walking, and the question of who walks, and why.

The terrain of this chapter also shifts away from the small-scale avant-garde and experimental art practices of earlier generations to municipally-funded art as public institution (public ‘good’) in an institutional landscape that increasingly values contemporary art that elicits mass participation and enjoyment. I examine the way in which walking has emerged as an artistic practice in recent years as part of this wider upsurge of art-as-entertainment. With the rise of mega-museums and state-funded contemporary art, artist’s performative and participatory projects are often required to compete with commercial entertainment in order to sustain audience attention, a trend to which ‘walking art’ is not immune. As several examples given in the thesis introduction attest (Teri Rueb, Trace, 1999; Tim Knowles, Mass Windwalk, 2013; Robert Wilson, Walking, 2012) audiences are offered what could be construed as ‘experiences’, packaged as pleasurable and satisfying products. Many of Cardiff’s works arguably fall into this category, and in this chapter, I will consider the criticisms made of such a status, since ‘entertaining’ art is frequently considered to be implicitly uncritical, resulting in tensions in art historical approaches surrounding these practices.

Art historiographically, I explore the issue of artistic inheritance, a problematic which inherently lends itself to walking analogies – walking in another’s footsteps, following, metaphors of pursuit and trailblazing – and is central to histories of walking in art and to theorisations of the avant-garde and its retrieval. Such a focus on walking in relation to inheritance also allows crucial questions to emerge in relation to the status of women artists in canonical histories. In light of this, I consider ways in which legacies
are passed on, or not, to women from their forebears, specifically proposing a feminist reading of Cardiff’s work as it follows on from feminist film and performance works of the mid-1960s to early ‘80s. Walking, then, can be used to model and problematise inheritance, as the work of Cardiff demonstrates, which makes her practice a valuable case study for this matter of the incorporation of the artistic innovations of the ‘60s by artists of the ‘90s.

Finally, this chapter also marks a return to the surprising inextricability of walking and film, a dynamic that has surfaced at points throughout the thesis, highlighted in particular by the importance of the chronophotograph to artists who use walking.

Making walking audible

Walking is very calming. One step after another, one foot moving into the future and one in the past. Did you ever think about that? Our bodies are caught in the middle. The hard part is staying in the present. Really being here.¹

So says Janet Cardiff near the beginning of one of her audio walks, not only capturing the physicality of walking, but also considering its relationship with time, which is central to this set of works. For her audio walks the artist uses her own voice, played back on a Walkman, CD-player or iPod (depending on the era), to lead the headphone-wearing participant along a chosen route, weaving a disjointed, nonlinear narrative along the way. Her soft voice is interspersed with music, other voices and sound effects that sometimes replicate the ambient sound. The participant is led through various interior and exterior spaces, with Cardiff’s instructions and footsteps gently directing one’s progress. Her voice-over also includes observations, reflections and reminiscences, interlaced in the manner of a stream of consciousness that, as Cardiff puts it, echoes ‘the way our brain shifts attention’.² The walks can be short, five to ten minutes long, but some are closer to fifty minutes in length. Along with her husband and working partner, George Bures Miller, whose primary job is as editor of the audio tracks, Cardiff has made audio walks for the cities of Münster (Germany), San Francisco (U.S.A.), Rome (Italy), London (U.K.) and New York (U.S.A.), among other places.³ For the

¹ Janet Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 1, 00:03:16.
³ Cardiff notes that though she and Bures Miller collaborate on the walks, they go under her name because she ‘write[s] the scripts and conceptualise[s] the project, but George acts very much like a creative
purposes of this chapter I will be focusing on the last two of these, in a discussion of *The Missing Voice* (Case Study B) (1999, 37 minutes), which is based around London’s East End and *Her Long Black Hair* (2004, 46 minutes), which is based in Central Park in New York. In this chapter I will argue that these works mobilise the cinematic in order to critique the male-dominated history of urban walking, and to expose multiple experiences of female subjectivity on the city streets.

These works, as noted, take us away from the 1960s and ‘70s, and are part of the recent ‘return’ to the use of walking in art that I identified in the introduction as the historiographical crux of the thesis. Cardiff, like Trisha Brown and Bruce Nauman, explores the place of the walker in the city and is concerned with the body’s physicality, and like Agnes Martin, she is attentive to the walker’s perception of the space through which he or she moves. However, her work differs from that of her predecessors in her awareness of it as ‘walking art’. Unlike the works of Brown, Nauman and Martin that I have discussed, Cardiff’s audio walks did not emerge out of a single medium (dance, sculpture, painting), but rather as a distillation of ideas that were already at play in her multimedia practice. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Cardiff’s work would not have been possible without the performative and technological developments explored by the previous generation of artists. Indeed, the use of recorded sound as the basis for artworks was established in the 1960s and ‘70s. In Nauman’s *Six Sound Problems for Konrad Fischer* (1968), for example, the artist used reel-to-reel audiotape, installed with the tape ribbon stretched across the gallery space. The device played back sounds that correlated very much with his video work of this era: one heard footsteps, bouncing

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4 Both walks can take longer than their respective 37 and 46 minutes, as each is divided into several shorter audio tracks, between which the participant might pause. In *The Missing Voice* there is often a road to be crossed during the interval between tracks, with Cardiff ending the first track with the words ‘cross over when you can. I’ll meet you on the other side’ and the second track with ‘Press the pedestrian button. If you get across before I do, sit down on one of those marble benches. I’ll meet you there.’ Cardiff, *The Missing Voice* (Script) in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works Including Collaborations with George Bures Miller* (New York: P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 2002), 117-8.

5 Cardiff trained as a photographer and print-maker. She began to experiment with film and sound in the early 1980s, during her first collaborations with Bures Miller. Her first audio walk was *Forest Walk* (1991), which emerged out of her experimentation with various technologies during a residency at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada. Ibid., 15, 20.

6 While early examples of a concern with sound in art might be found in early-twentieth-century Dadaist poetry or Luigi Russolo’s Futurist instruments (known as intonarumori), the increased availability of inexpensive sound recording equipment in the ‘60s opened up the use of recorded sound in artistic practice during this era. See William Furlong, ‘Sound in Recent Art’ (1994) in *Sound*, ed. Caleb Kelly (London; Cambridge, Mass.: Whitechapel Gallery; MIT Press, 2011), 67-70.
balls, out-of-tune violin playing and so on. Brown also took a foray into the use of recorded sound with her work *Skymap* (1969) in which she used her voice to loosely describe a map of the U.S. to participants lying on the floor, exploiting the possibilities that sound holds for conjuring imagined spaces and images in the mind of the listener.\(^7\) However, while artists had used recorded sound before Cardiff, the use of portable sound was not technologically easy until the mid-1980s, when the first portable audio device, the Sony Walkman, was introduced to the popular market.\(^8\) Cardiff, then, pioneered the use of recorded sound in walking art.

However, what is perhaps more important than Cardiff’s inheritance of forms and media from the previous generation of artists, is her reliance on a participating subject who is immersed in a world that this earlier generation saw at its nascent stages, and, to some extent, warned against. As I have shown, Brown’s dances grappled with technological developments and what they meant for the human body; Nauman’s moving image and corridor works distilled the experience of a society of internalised discipline and self-correction; while Martin’s *Gabriel* revealed, and presented an alternative to, the alienating linear rhythms within which we live our lives. The 1960s and ‘70s saw the burgeoning of technological achievement in the space race, commercialism in the rise and rise of Hollywood, and state control in the early use of CCTV. We now emerge at a more intensified moment of such a system, immersed in technology, spectacle and control. At the same time, such a subject of this system is not only aware of its pervasive effects, but also, perversely, enjoys and encourages them, freely sharing personal information online for example. As we shall see, Cardiff’s work relies on the existence of just such a contemporary subject, who is technologically savvy and has an internalised sense of the tropes and rhythms of the Hollywood movie, of spectacle culture and of urban surveillance, the seeds of which were sown in the 1960s and ‘70s. Importantly, I do not wish to give the impression of a dynamic between the ‘60s/‘70s and the present that casts the former era as a ‘golden age’, and the latter as a marker of the failure of avant-garde radicalism. Indeed, as I have noted, the former era can be seen, in many ways, as prescient of the era in which we now live, and thus, as far from ‘golden’.

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7 Early performances of *Skymap* were live, with Brown reading out the text. Subsequent performances have used a recording of the dancer’s voice.

As will become clear, unlike her 1960s and ‘70s forebears, as a ‘walking artist’, Cardiff understands herself in a lineage of walkers, from Kierkegaard to Baudelaire, and steps through cities with an acute sense of those who have stepped there before. These traits are apparent in both The Missing Voice and Her Long Black Hair and a close analysis of these works will allow me to explore the ways in which walking emerges and re-emerges as a cultural strategy throughout history, revealing and deepening an understanding of the concerns I have outlined in the last few pages.

Commissioned by Artangel (a London-based arts organisation that facilitates the production of one-off site-specific projects by contemporary artists), The Missing Voice was originally available from 17 June to 27 November 1999 at Whitechapel Library [Fig. 4.1], from where one could pick up a discman and headphones, press ‘play’ whilst standing amongst the bookshelves, and begin the walk. With the renovation of the Whitechapel Gallery (completed in 2009), the library building became part of the gallery, and one can now start the walk by picking up an iPod and headphones at the gallery reception, or downloading the audio files from the Artangel website for use on one’s own mobile phone, iPod or MP3 player.

From the gallery the participant walks around London’s East End, following the recorded directions coming through the headphones.9 The walk begins inside: one stands in the Whitechapel Gallery, listening to the muffled sounds of a library that no longer exists. Cardiff begins in the crime section, picks up a book, and reads a passage: ‘She paused. She could hear nothing, but her straining eyes caught a movement in the gloom. Someone was approaching. A foot splashed in a puddle.’10 Already, the participant feels part of a chase, and continues apace with a keen sense of urgency. Cardiff instructs her listener through a turnstile and up a flight of stairs (features that were part of the library, and are not part of the gallery), out onto Whitechapel High Street. The sounds of the street double in the ears of the listener, as the real and the recorded overlap and intertwine, frequently causing confusion about where one ends and the other begins. ‘Try to follow the sound of my footsteps so that we can stay together’, Cardiff says, and the click of her heels is heard, measuring pace.11 Over the next thirty or forty minutes, the artist leads her listener through the back alleys to Brick

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9 I describe the walk starting in the gallery, as this is how I have experienced it myself.
11 Ibid.
Lane, along Fashion Street and across Commercial Street, into a church off Bishopsgate, and finally in the direction of Liverpool Street Station, where the walk ends [Fig. 4.2].

During *The Missing Voice* a narrative develops, coalescing around fractured references to a woman with red hair. Cardiff reads out newspaper headlines about a missing woman, then a body found in the Thames, then ‘Body identified’, presumably as that of the red-haired woman. The artist’s voice slips between registers, sometimes mediated through a portable recording device, sometimes beside the listener in a tone of straightforward instruction, whispered confession, or detached third person.\(^{12}\) The male voice of the detective on the case is heard occasionally, quoting sightings and apparent clues. Together with this cast of characters, the listener is on the trail of the missing woman, though her fate is never quite clear. However, the walk does not focus solely on this detective narrative, but rather flits between this plot, Cardiff’s personal memories, her observations about the environment, and her musings on the nature of the city and the kind of behaviour it elicits. The fractured aural landscape of the piece somewhat resembles switching between radio stations, an activity that Theodor Adorno referred to as ‘aural flânerie’, an apt association considering the peripatetic nature of Cardiff’s work.\(^{13}\) The walk and the narrative both end inconclusively, and the listener is left in Liverpool Street Station, staring down at ‘all these lives heading off in different directions’.\(^{14}\)

Cardiff’s audio walks are made distinctive by her use of binaural sound recording, which is created using a dummy head with multi-directional microphones for ears [Fig. 4.3]. During the production phase of each walk, the artist takes this head out on the walk route with her, allowing her to record sound that is spatially logical and accounts both for the movement of the listener through space and for the distance between the listener’s ears, and hence for his or her embodiment. When the recording is played back with the corresponding sounds in each headphone, the sound environment is reproduced in a *trompe l’oreille* effect with sounds appearing to emanate from different parts of the surrounding space, suggesting phenomena that are not really there, such as cars, bicycles and people walking past. Over these environmental sounds, Cardiff records her own and others’ voices, snippets of film dialogue, cinematic music, layering:

\(^{12}\) These are the four ‘registers’ identified by Kitty Scott in ‘I want you to walk with me’, in *Janet Cardiff: The Missing Voice (Case Study B)* (London: Artangel, 1999), 4.


many audio tracks. Cardiff’s metronomic steps, that are the motif of every audio walk, are created using the same pair of shoes every time, worn along the walk route as the artist records. As she says, ‘they have a particular sound, not too clicky and not flat. It’s got the right kind of heel. They’re getting very worn out.’ Just as the Judson dancers sought to make walking visible, Cardiff makes walking audible, revealing her own idiosyncratic gait and pace through the sound of her footsteps.

These steps are heard again in Her Long Black Hair, which was commissioned by New York City’s Public Art Fund and distributed from kiosks at the edge of Central Park (6th Avenue and Central Park South) from 17 June to 13 September 2004. The popularity of the walk gained it a second run from 16 June to 11 September 2005. However, as with The Missing Voice, the files for Her Long Black Hair are now available to download, so that one can undertake the walk at any time. Unlike The Missing Voice, this walk also includes a bundle of photographs provided along with the audio track. The five photographs comprise a crowded New York street scene taken in 1965 [Fig. 4.4]; a picture of a frozen lake, taken by Cardiff herself in Central Park [Fig. 4.5]; and three photographs of a black-haired woman in a red coat that Cardiff claims to have found in a flea market [Fig. 4.6-4.8]. The route takes the participant from the ‘Artists’ Gate’ off West 59th Street, along winding paths until one reaches Central Park Zoo, from where one snakes towards The Mall, then walks straight on until the Bethesda Fountain, and ends the walk just after the nearby Bow Bridge over the lake [Fig. 4.9]. As one walks, one is invited by Cardiff to pull out the photographs one by one: the woman in the red coat poses at various points around the park, locations that the artist says she has found only with a bit of detective work. Cardiff’s broken search for the black-haired woman is accompanied by diverse and often fleeting references to mythological, historical, philosophical, literary and musical figures such as Orpheus and Eurydice, Charles Baudelaire, Søren Kierkegaard and Nick Cave, among others, as well as her own personal reminiscences and thoughts.

Cardiff’s diverse personal and historical range of references in both Her Long Black Hair and The Missing Voice loosely derive from the environment through which she leads her listener. Indeed, the way in which she approaches urban space could be described as a kind of psychogeography, in that she picks up on the ambience of the places through

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16 When she invites the listener to take out photograph number four, Cardiff acknowledges, ‘took me a few hours to find where this was taken’. Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 5, 00:00:19.
which she moves, with a particular awareness of how the history of a place colours its character. David Pinder has placed *The Missing Voice* within the wider context of British psychogeography, in particular drawing connections between Cardiff’s walk and the London-based psychogeographical writings and projects of Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd, who have both set novels around the East End.\(^\text{17}\) Indeed, *The Missing Voice*, in its use of an indirect route from Whitechapel to Liverpool Street, engages the participant in an apparent ‘drift’ and also exploits several other psychogeographical tropes in its references to the complex historical layers that exist in the city. Pinder suggests that, like Sinclair, Cardiff uses urban walking as ‘a way of contacting the ghosts and levels of a city, the past and the future’, as Sinclair puts it.\(^\text{18}\)

Cardiff gives us broken, incomplete snippets of local history and culture: the multiculturalism of Brick Lane is alluded to with music and overheard conversations in foreign languages; she tells of a violinist who lived on Fashion Street (‘How can we walk over the footsteps and not remember?’ she asks); a sidelong reference to the effects of the Blitz on the area is made as the sound of explosions is heard; Cardiff enters a local church that has seen the worship of several generations of East Enders; and, without ever mentioning Jack the Ripper, she evokes an ambience of threat and a feeling that the city’s sinister stories still stalk its streets.\(^\text{19}\) Pinder writes: ‘It is the very condition of the city to be plural with a multiplicity of stories’, observing that the ‘echoes and whispers’ of *The Missing Voice* ‘filter into the present tense, reminders of previous steps that have been this way and of how lives and activities intertwine – and part – through these times and spaces.’\(^\text{20}\) Yet, as well as its insistence on recalling the past, *The Missing Voice* reminds us, again in a typically psychogeographical manner, that urban change is inevitable: walking past a construction-site, the artist wonders ‘if the workers ever think about themselves as the changers of the city; the men that cover up the old stories making room for new ones.’\(^\text{21}\) Experiencing *The Missing Voice* years on from its first creation, this psychogeographic palimpsest becomes ever more apparent as disparities between now

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\(^{17}\) In particular, Pinder makes analogies between *The Missing Voice* and a project that Sinclair undertook with artist Rachel Lichtenstein called *Rodinsky’s Room* (1999), in which the pair traced the footsteps of an East End recluse called David Rodinsky and published a book of their findings.


\(^{21}\) Cardiff, *The Missing Voice* (Script) in Christov-Bakargiev, Janet Cardiff, 118.
and then cause disjuncture as one hears the sounds of spaces, vehicles and people that are no longer there.

Pinder makes only passing reference to the gender politics at play in The Missing Voice, noting that the ‘gender implications of the noir-style plot and the fears and visions that it addresses […] are obviously not innocent or neutral’. The speed with which Pinder passes over this issue means that he skims over the gendered nature of psychogeography itself, the recent revival of which is, as Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner have observed, founded upon ‘the reiteration of a particular genealogy – or fraternity – which includes Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henry David Thoreau, André Breton and Guy Debord [which] generates an orthodoxy of walking, tending towards an implicitly masculinist ideology’ which the pair characterise as ‘individualist, heroic, epic and transgressive’. Yet, women’s experience of urban walking is central to the functioning of Cardiff’s audio pieces, and, given this, it is surprising that one cannot find a satisfactory (to my mind) feminist reading of the audio walks in the literature. Several commentators have suggested that Cardiff’s fragmented, partial and inconclusive narratives might echo the disjointed and multilingual expressions of the hysteric (Freud’s ‘Dora’ or Joseph Breuer’s ‘Anna O.’). As such, Cardiff’s work might be read, as Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev notes, as ‘an act of resistance to authoritarian, traditionally male, discourse. Appropriating the “hysteric’s” behaviour, traditionally associated with female folly, becomes an enriching and subversive form of thought.’ Such approaches premise themselves on the assumption that the hysteric is, as Hélène Cixous claimed, the repressed intellectual, the proto-feminist, ‘the indomitable, the

24 According to Freud, Dora found it difficult to construct a coherent narrative of her experiences, offering him muddled fragments. Freud reordered and structured these fragments and thus presented Dora with the conclusion that she was in love with not only her father, but also Herr K. (the husband of her father’s lover) and Freud himself. Breuer found aphonia (loss of voice) in several of his patients and in the case of Anna O. he noted not only fractured language, but also the multilingual nature of the subject’s speech, as she slipped from German into jumbled English, Italian, French and Yiddish (which she called ‘the woman’s German’). See Showalter ‘Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender’, in Hysteria Beyond Freud, ed. Sander L. Gilman et al. (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1993), 316.
poetic body … the true “mistress” of the Signifier’. Yet such an adoption of hysteria – historically understood as a pathological condition – can be problematic, since for many feminists Dora’s story in particular reinforces patriarchal structures by re-inscribing her marginal position in society. In suggesting that Cardiff takes on the phonic traits of the hysteric, then, there is a danger of theorising the female subject as always mad and forever disenfranchised. Yet it remains true that women are important in the audio walks, and if we are not to read their fractured stories as subversive through their echo of the hysterical female voice, then, my key question in this chapter is, how are we to read them?

Beyond these two distinctive readings of Cardiff’s work – the psychogeographical and the ‘hysterical’ feminist – commentators often note, more generally, that the audio walks offer an uncanny experience for the participant. They remark on the way in which her binaural sound environments can disorientate and unsettle, blurring the lines between reality and fiction: one hears vehicles, parades and pedestrians travelling past, and moves to make room for them, only to find that they are not there, often giving rise to mild paranoia or unease. The participant falls in and out of step with Cardiff, walking simultaneously as her and with her, so that the line between identities becomes indistinct (I shall return to this phenomenon). This sense of the uncanny also emerges when Cardiff points out seemingly transient things along the route (for example, a banana peel, a green car, a man with a tight collar, in The Missing Voice; a woman talking on a cell phone, a rough sleeper, an ice cream stand, in Her Long Black Hair), and when, or if, these things appear, apparently right on cue, a sudden and strange jolt of recognition is felt, as if the whole world has been stage-managed by Cardiff herself. Indeed, one might even see the city as a film set, with every passer-by as an extra in a mysterious and complex urban drama.

Indeed, here is where a third way of reading the audio walks emerges, with some commentators describing them as ‘physical cinema’. This reading tallies with certain

27 In particular Catherine Clément has rejected Cixous’s attempts at claiming Dora as a revolutionary character since historically, unlike Anna O. who became a writer, social worker and feminist leader, Dora never reached her intellectual potential, never found her voice, forever trapped within the patriarchal system against which she struggled. See Cixous and Clément’s exchange on this subject in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, The Newly Born Woman (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996), 154-7.
installation works by Cardiff that explicitly use the language of cinema.  

Miriam Schaub writes that, on the walks, ‘our surroundings seem to be recreated entirely out of sound and this acoustic animation of the material world captures our imagination. Our purview suddenly expands into a major cinematic event.’ In this sense everything one sees as one participates in an audio walk seems intentionally staged as part of the peripatetic ‘film’ one is moving through. As Cardiff puts it: ‘With the audio walks I want people to be inside the filmic experience and have the real physical world as the constantly changing visuals of the screen.’ While this makes the walks intensely engaging (Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev has described them as ‘perpetually engrossing, emotionally intense and seductive’), it is also the basis of much of the criticism they have received: in their resemblance to cinema, these works arguably submit to spectacle culture, thus taking away agency from the participant.

One experiences the audio walks over a set period of time and, despite the fractured nature of the narrative, the route itself is prescribed and linear, with the artist’s voice guiding each step. Claire Bishop writes that ‘Cardiff leaves no space for our own fantasy projection: we are at the sway of her instructions for as long as we wear the headphones. […] we are consumed by her sound to the point of invisibility, reduced to a disembodied ear.’ Cardiff’s work, Bishop points out, has been criticised ‘for its shameless manipulation of the viewer and for its uncritical compliance with spectacle: although the work seems to offer active participation, our experience inside it is one of powerless obedience.’ The nub of this criticism is in Cardiff’s supposed lack of criticality, for as we have seen, Nauman also coerces his participants into situations in which they are powerless to disobey, yet he does so in a

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28 *Paradise Institute* (2001), for example, comprises a screening room that makes the structure of cinema visible through exploiting its familiar tropes (velvet seats, a deep red carpet, architectural moulding framing the screen). Viewers sit on an apparent balcony: the stalls below are a model, constructed to look like a full-sized cinema (resembling an earlier work, *The Muriel Lake Incident*, 1999, a miniature cinema). Viewers wear headphones that not only play the soundtrack of the film, but also, binaurally, the coughs, whispers, popcorn munching, phone calls and comments of apparent fellow audience members. The work draws attention to both the physical and the social constructs of cinematic viewing. See Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff*, 150-9.


33 Ibid., 101. Cardiff responds to such criticisms with a certain bafflement about the fact that ‘in the film world it’s good to be entertaining, but in the art world there is a certain bias against art that’s too accessible. […] Some people are afraid that if it’s entertaining then somehow it can’t be serious enough to be real art.’ Cardiff in Egoyan, ‘Janet Cardiff’, 63. Indeed, she asserts that feeling held hostage by the audio walks is ‘part of the point of the pieces. Have fun! It’s very pleasurable to give up your power, to enter into something that you know is safe.’ Cardiff in Walsh and Enright, ‘Pleasure Principals’, n/p.
way that suggests a critique of wider systems of control in society. While one might enjoy the playful perversity of Nauman’s installations, it is not a mainstream form of entertainment, whereas Cardiff’s audio walks are enjoyable in the same way that going to the cinema is enjoyable, making critics immediately suspicious of the artist’s intentions.

I want to stress that these criticisms of Cardiff’s work rely, at their heart, on both a sceptical attitude towards pleasure, and on a particular understanding of the cinematic subject as a passive receptacle for ideology, a model that is grounded in apparatus theory, which was established in the 1970s by Jean-Louis Baudry. Baudry argued that just as the subject in Plato’s cave is bound and forced to look at the shadows on the wall, so is the cinematic subject: ‘Projection and reflection take place in a closed space and those who remain there, whether they know it or not (but they do not), find themselves chained, captured or captivated.’ Cut off from any communication with the outside world, the subject finds himself caught within an ideological apparatus, as a submissive and duped spectator. Baudry’s understanding of the subject of ideology formed part of a wider Marxist theorisation of spectacle society. This found its most well-known iteration in Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), which is written as a series of theses that present Western society as a culture in which individuals are unwittingly coerced into an ideology of alienated consumption by the proliferation of images, which appear ‘as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. [... ] The attitude which [spectacle] demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance’. For Baudry, then, the cinema functions by presenting images with which the spectator can identify, not only because of his or her ‘captivated’ situation, but also through the perspectival construction of the image, which places the spectator in a seemingly privileged and centralised position. The gaze of the viewer is thus made analogous with that of the camera. Baudry argued that the cinematic subject identifies with the ‘reality’ (and characters) on screen just as the child identifies with his own reflected image during Lacan’s ‘mirror stage’ (importantly, Baudry added, both are immobile, the child as yet unable to walk), so that subject and image are understood as a

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unified entity. This, Baudry asserted, explains ‘the “impression of reality” so often invoked in the connection with the cinema’, so that the subject is duped into believing that the movement on screen is real, which in turn serves its purpose in keeping the subject within the dominant ideology.36

For critics of Cardiff’s walks, the participant, though not physically immobile, is nevertheless a captive audience, coerced and controlled by the soundtrack that guides her and that also spectacularises her everyday surroundings. By this assessment, the walks offer no critique of dominant consumerist ideology, but perpetuate the subject’s position within it. As is clear, this critique relies heavily on theorisations of spectacle culture by the likes of Debord and Baudry. Recent critical writing has challenged Baudry’s very fixed understanding of cinematic spectatorship, which is now largely seen as out-dated, due, for the most part, to the existence of different theorisations of film viewership beyond the traditional ‘black box’ model.37 Baudry’s approach relies on the artifice of the cinematic apparatus remaining concealed. Once the apparatus is ‘broken’, and its artificiality is revealed, the ideological function of the cinema comes under scrutiny. In considering how Baudry’s model might have relevance to Cardiff’s audio walks, then, it immediately becomes apparent that though the audio walks are certainly cinematic, the artist does not present a unified cinematic apparatus, but instead a mélange of auditory fragments that map unpredictably and incoherently onto a series of shifting visuals found on the city street. In addition, the subject has control over the apparatus: the listener can choose when to start and stop the recording, and will frequently do so in order to compare soundtrack with reality, since the line between the two is indistinct. The way in which the apparatus functions is completely evident (especially as most participants will be familiar with the technology in use – the discman or the iPod), and the walker is fully aware that she is taking part in a highly constructed situation. This kind of participant, aware and in control, seems far removed from Baudry’s incarcerated cinematic subject who is part of a model, which – to reiterate –

37 Vance Kepley, for example, points out that apparatus theory ‘treats a particular type of film exhibition […] as though it were universal. / It does not ask, for example, about alternative ways of seeing movies: were open-air showings at amusement parks and fairgrounds not to be counted as cinema since spectators would doubtless have taken in other sights and sounds while watching movies? It does not ask about the social practices of audiences watching films in the classic situation of the darkened chamber: did/do spectators actually sit quietly in the dark? […] Finally (and importantly), it does not ask about the ways in which practices of film viewing changed over time and from society to society.’ Vance Kepley, ‘Whose Apparatus? Problems of Film Exhibition and History’, in Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies, eds. David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (Madison, Wisconsin; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 536.
implicitly underlies criticisms of Cardiff’s work as ‘spectacular’, by critics such as Bishop. Since Baudry’s approach seems inadequate, then, I want to propose that there might be other cinematic models that are better suited to understanding Cardiff’s work, and that lead us to new understandings of the work and the ways in which it intervenes in histories of walking in art.

Giuliana Bruno has presented a particularly compelling alternative to apparatus theory in which she argues for an historically rooted understanding of cinema that moves beyond considering the cinematic subject as motionless and enraptured. For Bruno a cinematic model based on Plato’s cave obscures many of the pleasures to which film-viewing gives rise: ‘Unable to account for a collective, nomadic, and historical dimension of reception, [theorists such as Baudry] have reached an impasse.’ In order to overcome this impasse, Bruno cites examples of film screenings in public places in late nineteenth-century Naples in which the audience would be on foot or in transit, as at large open-air screenings in public squares or at cinemas based in railway stations. Such examples demonstrate the way in which alternatives to ‘black box’ cinematic viewing are not new phenomena, but, along with the kind of ambulatory viewing that they promote, are embedded in the history of cinema. In particular Bruno focuses on Neapolitan cinemas built in public shopping arcades in order to draw an analogy between the film spectator and the progress, who both, she argues, share a way of loitering. ‘As perceptual modes,’ she writes, ‘flânerie and cinema share the montage of images, the spatio-temporal juxtaposition, the obscurant mode of production, and the “physiognomic” impact – the spectatorial reading of bodily signs.’ Indeed, if one returns to Walter Benjamin’s writings on the progress, one finds analogies between film viewing and urban spectatorship that draw on the rhythmic shock of both experiences, as noted in the previous chapter. Benjamin picks up on Baudelaire’s description of the progress as ‘a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness’, which suggests a perceptual mode linked to pre-cinematic optical technologies that alter one’s field of vision. As Marit Grøtta notes, ‘[f]or Benjamin, there seems to be a close relationship between Baudelaire’s reference to electricity and his reference to the kaleidoscope; electricity

39 Ibid., 38, 44.
40 Ibid., 48.
causes electrical shocks, just like the kaleidoscope causes “perceptual shocks.”

Benjamin goes on to describe how the subject conditioned by the shock of modernity and industrialisation is primed for the rhythms of the cinema screen. He writes: ‘That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film.’ The cinematic and industrial legacies of the chronophotographer allow us to consider the flâneur anew. In light of such analogies between the experience of both city and cinema, Bruno theorises a mobilised, peripatetic gaze as part of a ‘mobile apparatus’ and conceives of the modern subject as itinerant, and imbedded within the spaces and rhythms of the metropolis, arguing that ‘such a metropolitan body […] incarnates in film spectatorship.

It is just such an embodied and mobile metropolitan subject that Cardiff conjures in her audio walks. The cinematic subject with whom she engages belongs more, I suggest, to Bruno’s history of cinema as a mode inextricable from embodiment, public space and circulation, than it does to Baudry’s ideological apparatus that theorises a powerless and immobile subject. Indeed, once we update our understanding of the cinematic apparatus to the one proposed by Bruno, then our reading of Cardiff’s work changes considerably, in that the extent to which the participant in an audio walk is manipulated and ‘reduced to a disembodied ear’, as Bishop puts it, becomes much more ambiguous.

Cardiff declares: ‘I want the pieces to be disconcerting in several ways, so that the audience can’t just forget about their bodies for the duration of their involvement like we do in a film.’

In Her Long Black Hair the artist explicitly explores this bodily awareness through a series of six ‘experiments’ dispersed throughout the forty-six minutes of the walk. In the first of these experiments, Cardiff asks her listener to stop while she counts before continuing to walk again, ‘now everything will have

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44 Bruno, Streetwalking on a Ruined Map, 53, 56. Bruno cites Surrealist cinematic viewing as ‘an exemplary case’, describing how the Surrealists ‘who loved going to the arcade and to the movies, established a practice of film reception based on urban nomadism and transitory pleasure. Constantly wandering from theatre to theatre, continually entering and exiting from the film itself, they constructed an iterant montage of filmic experiences. This practice suggests dimensions of pleasure to be found in the cinematic apparatus that go beyond the motionless subject conventionally advocated as the prerequisite for cinematic pleasure. The Surrealists’ use of the cinematic space, their very fascination with the medium, epitomises its pleasure understood as a part of the mental space of the metropolis, its motion and transit.’ Ibid., 56.
45 Bishop, Installation Art, 100.
changed, the people we meet, the things we hear, not in a big way, but enough'; later, she instructs the participant to put a bit of saliva on his or her cheek, ‘see how long you can stand it there’; the next experiment is to walk backwards ‘like a video being rewound in slow motion’; in the next, Cardiff says ‘try not to think’, instructing a focus on sensory experience instead; the penultimate experiment is to ‘close your eyes, and keep walking forward slowly’; the final experiment ends the walk, ‘match your breathing to mine’, and the track ends on the sound of Cardiff’s slow breaths. The artist uses these experiments ‘to remind us that our bodies are physical shells in motion’, thus moving us away from the notion of being bound into a restrictive cinematic system that forces us to forget our own embodiment.

Mladen Dolar notes that, in its etymology, ‘listening is “always-already” incipient obedience; the moment one listens one has already started to obey’. Cardiff’s ‘experiments’ test the limits of the participants’ obedience to any potential apparatus of which he or she might be part. Of course Cardiff has no way of enforcing the very visibly unusual behaviour for which several of the experiments call. To disobey the instructions is to conform to society’s expectations of one’s behaviour in public, while to obey them is to disobey these expectations, undertaking these dérive-like activities, in a subtle subversion of normal urban practice. With these experiments Cardiff makes us aware of the level to which one normally, albeit unconsciously, obeys the implied instructions given by urban planning and societal norms as one walks around the city. Indeed, in response to the criticism that her works are manipulative, Cardiff notes that ‘almost everything in our society manipulates us – sidewalks, road signs’, and through her ‘experiments’ she draws attention to this state of affairs. The line between one’s agency and one’s obedience is perhaps less clear-cut than Bishop’s words, quoted above, would suggest. One does not just walk automatically, mindlessly following Cardiff’s instructions, but rather engages with one’s own body and its place within the urban

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47 Her Long Black Hair: track 1, 00:04:00; track 2, 00:08:20; track 2, 00:03:49; track 5, 00:04:51; track 6, 00:02:17; track 6, 00:08:49.

48 Cardiff in Schaub, The Walk Book, 34. These experiments might put one in mind of cinematic genres that aim to produce a physiological response in their viewers: horror, melodrama and pornography. These have been labelled ‘body genres’. See Linda Williams, ‘Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess’, Film Quarterly 44, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 2-13.

49 Dolar writes that ‘to obey, obedience, stems from the French obéir, which in turn stems from Latin ob-audire, derivative of audire, to hear; in German gehorsam, Gehorsam stem from hören; in many Slav languages słusati can mean both to listen and to obey; the same goes for Arabic and so on.’ Mladen Dolar, A Voice and Nothing More (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2006), 75-6.

environment. The audio walks, then, have a far more complex relationship with spectatorial and cinematic control than has often been argued.

This attention to the parallels between cinematic and urban obedience and control is most apparent in Cardiff’s exploration of female subjectivity both in the cinematic tropes she exploits and in her references to female behaviour on the street. Indeed, in the remainder of the chapter I will argue that it is precisely in invoking cinematic spectatorship and challenging it, that Cardiff exposes the gendered construct of urban walking.

The walking woman

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.*

Laura Mulvey’s oft-quoted words, written during the height of second-wave feminism, seek to deconstruct the nature of the cinematic gaze. Yet, while these words describe phenomena that take place on the *screen*, they could equally be describing the visual and social dynamics of the *street*, since the way in which woman is perceived in public as an object of the male gaze shares much with the way woman is constructed for the cinema screen. As Rebecca Solnit observes, ‘women’s walking is often construed as performance rather than transport, with the implication that women walk not to see but to be seen, not for their own experience but for that of their male audience’.

Indeed, at the same time that Mulvey was engaging theoretically with issues of the gendered gaze, several female artists were also turning to this subject, concerning themselves specifically with the politics of the female walker. In Yayoi Kusama’s *Walking Piece* (1966), Yoko Ono’s *Rape* (1969), Adrian Piper’s *Catalysis* (1970), Laurie Anderson’s *Object/Object/Objection/Objectivity* (1973) and Sophie Calle’s *Suite Vénitienne* (1980), women artists sought to subvert the status of the female walker as object of the male gaze, of pursuit and of attack by reconfiguring the expected behaviour of women on the street.

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Kusama and Piper heightened their own susceptibility to the gaze (their *to-be-looked-at-ness*), deliberately drawing attention to their presence in the public spaces of New York with bright traditional Japanese dress (Kusama in *Walking Piece*) or sloganed T-shirts and socially ‘unacceptable’ behaviour (Piper in *Catalysis*). Both artists also concerned themselves with the appearance of racial difference, with Piper highlighting her ‘otherness’ through the performance of various grotesque selves – smelly, fat, socially inappropriate – in public environments from streets to libraries, shops and public transport, so that she became doubly the target of staring eyes. Those who would stare at her for her sexual or racial difference were invited to stare at her for her incongruous performances.

Anderson and Calle, on the other hand, turned the gaze away from their own bodies. In *Object/Objection/Objectivity*, Anderson threw the male gaze back upon its originator, turning her camera upon any man who called out or wolf-whistled her in the street, photographing them and then displaying the photographs with the eyes blanked out, thus ridding the ‘gaze’ of its invasive power. In *Suite Vénitienne*, Calle also switched the gender binary, following a man from Paris to Venice, where she tailed him, photographing and documenting his every move, as if she were a private detective. All of these post-'60s film and performance works function by reconfiguring the role of the visual. Where some of these female artists stole back the male gaze, others deliberately heightened their susceptibility to it: in both cases the actions ricocheted the gaze between genders, complicating the simple binary in which man is always looking and woman always looked at.

In her 77-minute film *Rape*, Yoko Ono took a different approach to the visual. In the film the camera unrelentingly follows an unwitting young woman through the streets and parks of London, eventually cornering her in her sister’s apartment as she desperately tries to escape. While Anderson and Calle reversed the usual gender dynamic by turning their cameras and their footsteps against men through intrusive photography and careful documentation of urban movement, Ono staged a much more ambivalent drama, simultaneously drawing attention to, and perpetuating, the potentially aggressive nature of the male gaze in a film that, at points, makes for very uncomfortable watching. In the film, the cameraman, Nic Knowland, follows and films a Hungarian woman, Eva Majlata, who was not asked to take part and so has no idea
what is happening. Her agitation is heightened by the fact that she is in the country illegally, and so feels caught between her stalker and her inability to call the police. She speaks very little English and throughout the film occasionally asks the cameraman, in German or Italian, why he is making this film and why he will not leave her alone. She gets no answers. At the beginning she is polite, though mildly irritated, but soon her playful attempts to avoid the lens become real annoyance and exasperation. By the end she is angry and scared. As Joan Hawkins notes ‘the film does seem to illustrate Laura Mulvey’s argument that visual pleasure in the cinema derives, to some degree, from the victimisation of women’, but, she argues, ‘Rape goes far beyond the self-reflexive cinematic posture we are used to seeing.’ For Hawkins, the film stands not as a feminist subversion of the male gaze, as some critics have argued, but, in its exploitation of an unsuspecting woman, as a troubling ‘double violation, a double erasure of the female subject.’

This disturbing obliteration of the female subject in Rape comes about through a gaze – represented by the camera lens – that penetrates until the point of submission. This explicates the title of the film as a metaphorical ‘rape’, while suggesting the extent to which the gaze can sexualise and victimise its subject, both on the street, the locus of the film’s action, and on the screen, where it is projected. Rape plays upon a long history of the difficulty of lone urban walking for women, often victimised or stigmatised for walking in public without a male chaperone. Rebecca Solnit notes that the English language perpetuates a connection between the walking woman and her sexualisation, writing that ‘[a]mong the terms for prostitutes are streetwalkers, women of the streets, women on the town, and public women (and of course phrases such as public man, 

53 In interview, Ono notes that Majlata’s ‘sister was in on it, so when she calls her sister on the phone, her sister is just laughing at her and the girl doesn’t understand why.’ Scott MacDonald and Yoko Ono, ‘Yoko Ono: Ideas on Film: Interview/Scripts’, Film Quarterly 43, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 12.
55 Ibid., 133. One critic who has argued for a feminist reading of Rape is Jim Hoberman, who writes that the film ‘is the purest illustration of Laura Mulvey’s celebrated essay’, with a scenario that ‘strongly invites the audience to identify with the camera’s (unmistakably male) look and recognise this controlling gaze as its own.’ Hoberman in MacDonald and Ono, ‘Yoko Ono: Ideas on Film’, 17.
man about town, or man of the streets mean very different things than do their equivalents attached to women).[^57] The very title of Ono’s film, Rape, suggests that this connection between a woman in public and her sexualisation remained strongly intact in the late 1960s, and the action of the film itself perpetuates the fetishisation of the female face and body in cinema through the framing of Majlata’s features on the screen (her face often fills its entirety). The only response to this fetishisation of her features, for Majlata, seems to be to attempt to avoid the gaze of the lens, as she dodges the cameraman, covers her face, or hides in a corner. The all-pervasive gaze, it seems, causes her to fold into herself in a form of self-erasure.

The message of Ono’s film is not clear-cut. As filmmaker, Ono takes on the role of perpetrator, which might be a relief for her, so used is she to being chased and victimised herself (not only as a woman, but also as a Japanese expatriate, and as the wife of John Lennon). In the process of taking on this role, however, she disempowers another woman, over-identifying with the male role and re-performing male oppression. Through its complications and contradictions, Rape explores the power dynamics of the male gaze in a way that could be read on the one hand as an indictment of the invasion of women’s space and bodies, and on the other could be seen to perpetuate the very situation it highlights, subjecting its female protagonist to distressing maltreatment. Either way, what the film makes abundantly clear is that the gaze holds power: even though Majlata is never physically touched, she feels under threat from the relentlessness of the lens upon her, especially as it is present without explanation, the cameraman remaining almost entirely mute throughout. Ono captures the constant threat posed to the lone walking woman, something that is covertly present in Cardiff’s walks too. Yet, where Ono places her viewer in the subject position of the male oppressor, Cardiff places us in the position of the victim, the oppressed. In The Missing Voice, she tells us,

> I sometimes follow men late at night when I’m coming home from the tube station. I pick a man that’s going my way and then stay behind him. It makes me feel safer, going through the dark tunnels, to have someone near me. It’s like a guardian angel or a secret protector or something.^[58]

[^57]: Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 234. This is not just true of the English language: in Italian, for example, the term for prostitute or streetwalker is *passeggiatrice* and in French it is *peripatéticienne*, while the phrase *faire le trottoir* refers to soliciting male clients for business. See Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map*, 50, 342 n.43.

As she recalls these dynamics of pursuing and being pursued, Cardiff captures the strange urgency of what it is like to walk alone as a woman late at night in certain parts of certain cities, with the looming history of attacks and disappearances that walks with you. As noted, the East End of London, the site of The Missing Voice, comes with a history of attacks on women by Jack the Ripper. As well as her own fears, the fragmented story of the missing red-haired woman in The Missing Voice creates a double sense of unease, a sort of omen of the fate that could await a woman walking alone in dangerous parts of the city. However, unlike artists such as Kusama, Ono, Piper, Anderson and Calle, Cardiff does not consciously perform a feminist strategy in her work. Rather, as I will argue, Cardiff breaks down the gender binaries at play in urban space through a subtle interplay of audio and visual. Mladen Dolar writes that

There is a stark opposition between the visible and the audible: the visible world presents relative stability, permanence, distinctiveness, and a location at a distance; the audible presents fluidity, passing, a certain inchoate, amorphous character, a lack of distance. The voice is elusive, always changing, becoming, elapsing, with unclear contours, as opposed to the relative permanence, solidity and durability of the seen.59

While Rape asserts the place of the visual in relation to women’s position in public by pushing at the extremities of its use, in Her Long Black Hair Cardiff explores these issues of visuality and the gaze through her use of photography, which sits in counterpoint to the audio soundtrack. As I have described, the participant is given a bundle of photographs that he or she must peruse one by one at certain points during the walk. In many ways, these photographs could serve as visual anchors. Looking at one of the pictures of the black-haired woman, Cardiff muses: ‘It’s almost like you can feel her right in front of you, like she’s still here.’60 This sense of stability functions in opposition to the amorphous, inchoate quality of the audio. Yet, I want to stress that while photographs have been associated with realism, documentation and ‘truth’, they have also been seen to have a certain elusive, spiritual quality about them, and, in turn, an association with fakery or trickery. Cardiff tells us at one point in Her Long Black Hair that ‘Baudelaire was afraid of being photographed. He believed that every time the shutter opened and closed it took away a layer of his aura or his soul.’61 Though

60 Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 2, 00:00:22.
61 Ibid., 00:02:01.
somewhat of a misattribution on Cardiff’s part, this belief was in general circulation in
the mid-nineteenth century, held by Honoré de Balzac and Théophile Gautier among
others. While there is no evidence that Baudelaire harboured this fear himself, Marit
Grøtta has convincingly argued that it nevertheless influenced his poetry.\footnote{Grot\-ta, Baudelaire’s Media Aesthetics, 67-9.}

Baudelaire’s ‘fear’ of photography was in fact far more prosaic, and in his essay on
the Paris Salon of 1859 in a subsection entitled ‘The Modern Public and Photography’,
he expressed his concerns that photography would usurp the role of painting, at least
for a credulous and vain public whose belief that art should be ‘the exact reproduction
of nature’ made them see photography as the ‘absolute art’.\footnote{Charles Baudelaire, ‘The Salon of 1959’ in Selected Writings on Art and Artists, 295.} Rejecting these popular
assumptions, he went on to assert that photography should be used solely for
documentary purposes and not in aid of artistic expression, ‘the sphere of the intangible
and the imaginary’.\footnote{Ibid., 297.} While this remains a rather stern and intransigent view, for
Benjamin there was something more nuanced lying latent in Baudelaire’s writing, a sense
not necessarily of the threat photography posed to art, or even, for that matter, to the
soul, but rather to memory. Benjamin wrote that ‘[t]o Baudelaire, there was something
profoundly unnerving and terrifying about daguerreotypy; he speaks of the fascination it
exerted as “startling and cruel”.’\footnote{Benjamin, ‘On Some Motifs in Baudelaire’ in Illuminations, 188.} Benjamin felt that Baudelaire sensed the extent to
which photography could threaten involuntary memories, that is, a memory recalled without
conscious effort. While a voluntary memory is a conscious recollection of a specific
occurrence, without extraneous detail, an involuntary memory is a vivid recollection that
arises spontaneously due to some trigger of sensation, creating a fully formed and
contextualised sense of a past experience.\footnote{The term ‘involuntary memory’ was coined by Hermann Ebbinghaus in the 1880s. Marcel Proust’s tea-
soaked madeleine, in In Search of Lost Time (seven volumes published in French between 1913 and 1927), remains the quintessential example of a sensation-based trigger for this kind of recollection. John H.
Mace, ed., Involuntary Memory (Malden; Oxford; Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 1-3.} The photograph, giving too fixed and
empirical a sense of a specific moment in time would, Benjamin suggested, stymie this
involuntary and effortless flow of memory.

Cardiff’s photographs, however, arguably make room for involuntary memory
once more, since they float free of specific association with a singular identity, opening
up a space for projection. While the photographs in Sophie Calle’s Suite Vénitienne
present partial images (back-views, obscured views) of a known identity (a man called
Henri B.), Cardiff’s photographs present a clear image of a woman, but her identity is elusive. At one point on the walk, Cardiff has a conversation with a passer-by who thinks that the woman in the photographs looks like his mother, who left when he was a child. Though she is not, the images become an imaginative space onto which the passer-by projects his own memories. There is room for something similar to occur in the minds of the participants too, each of whom will bring different associations to the small stack of pictures which accompany the audio. Rather than offering a stable, fixed, truth-based sense of the visual, then, Cardiff’s photographs flirt with elusiveness and mystery, and take on some of the fluid quality of audio. In this way they serve to unsettle the power of the visual. In particular, the three photographs of the black-haired woman seem to hover between fulfilling and eluding the male gaze. Imagining that the photographs must have been taken by a man, Cardiff asks: ‘what happened after the camera clicked? Maybe she laughed. Maybe he went over and kissed her, put his fingers through her black hair, whispered in her ear’. She fills in the gaze of a man upon his lover, imagining her very appearance to be contingent upon this gaze.

At the moment that Cardiff wonders whether the photographer whispered in the ear of the black-haired woman, one hears a male voice whispering these words, from Baudelaire’s poem ‘La Chevelure’, closely and intimately into one’s right ear: ‘I shall plunge my head, adoring drunkenness, into this black ocean, where the other is imprisoned.’ There is a slightly unnerving quality to the way in which these words are murmured at the close proximity that is usually reserved for a lover: one’s personal space seems violated. The sensuality of the poem, which is about the black hair of Baudelaire’s mistress Jeanne Duval (who remains unnamed in Her Long Black Hair), is made immediately apparent in this mode of delivery. Cardiff then observes that Baudelaire’s mistress, like the photographs of the black-haired woman, is ‘an image now too, made from his words’. The poet’s words catch woman as image, and in quoting them, Cardiff alludes to the semiotic construction of poetry that reduces woman to ‘sign’, ‘made from his words’. Likewise, the woman in the photographs is now voiceless, reduced to image alone, hovering between presence and absence. While Cardiff is a voice without body, the black-haired woman is body/image without voice. Indeed, her

67 Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 2, 00:00:30.
68 Ibid., 00:00:50. ‘La Chevelure’ was published in Les Fleurs du Mal (1857).
69 Ibid., 00:00:58.
lack of voice might suggest that the photograph has indeed stripped away a layer of her soul, for one’s voice is one’s spirit, as we shall see.

The acousmatic voice

The kind of voice used by Janet Cardiff might be described as *acousmatic*, that is, it is a voice that is apparently sourceless and emanates from a body that is not visible.⁷⁰ Kaja Silverman notes how dominant cinema, by which she means classic Hollywood cinema at its height in the 1930s-'50s, habitually ‘anchors sound into an immediately visible source’, allowing the audience to be sutured into the story, concealing ‘the site of cinematic production’, hiding the parts in the illusion of the whole.⁷¹ A voice with an explicable source, then, is comfortable and ‘real’, and is therefore central to the functioning of cinematic spectacle: one must believe that the voice comes from the lips of the speaker on screen in order for the illusion to be maintained. Mary Ann Doane asks,

> how can the classical film allow the representation of a voice whose source is not simultaneously represented? As soon as the sound is detached from its source, no longer anchored by a represented body, its potential work as a signifier is revealed. There is always something uncanny about a voice which emanates from a source outside the frame.⁷²

A voice dislocated from image, a sound uncannily divorced from any discernable source, thus threatens the whole, occupying the space of a film soundtrack without film’s picture. As Mladen Dolar has written, ‘[t]he visible can establish the distance, the nature, and the source of the voice, and thus neutralise it. The acousmatic voice is so powerful because it cannot be neutralised with the framework of the visible, and it makes the visible itself redoubled and enigmatic.’⁷³ While I have already noted the ways in which Cardiff troubles a ‘black-box’ conception of cinema, might the use of the acousmatic female voice in the audio walks not be read as a further unbinding of the cinematic apparatus? And what might such a process mean for the place of the female walker in urban space?

In her monologue-like audio walks, Cardiff imitates something akin to the cinematic voice-over, a disembodied narration to the urban images that pass before the eyes of the participant. Both Silverman and Doane characterise the voice-over as a means of turning the body ‘inside out’ to represent thought rather than speech. Both critics have noted how the voice-over is usually the preserve of men in classical cinema, and the female voice is generally tied to its visible source, to the female body on screen. Within Hollywood cinema, Silverman asserts, woman is constructed as body, a construction that relies on the synchronisation of audio (voice) and visual (body). Such a characterisation affirms Laura Mulvey’s assertion, quoted earlier, that woman exists on screen primarily as the object of the male gaze. Indeed, one might note how the need for an embodied female voice extends beyond the screen: in the early days of BBC radio, for example, it was thought inappropriate to hire female announcers not only because of the lack of ‘gravity’ in their high-pitched voices, but also because of the disturbing nature of the disembodied female voice. To return to cinema, Silverman explains how, on the rare occasions female voice-off (voice heard from off screen) or voice-over is used, the bodily origin of the voice is always recoverable, just in the next room, or at the end of a telephone line. She takes an example of a female voice-over from the opening credits of the film *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), noting how this voice, though detached from a visible representation of the body, is not strictly disembodied, since its wordless heavy breathing is ‘thick with body’. The female voice in cinema is thus always identified with the ‘intractable materiality’ of the body.

Giuliana Bruno tells the tale of a Naples cinema inaugurated in 1901, in which screenings were preceded by another spectacle, that of the ‘anatomy lesson’, in which a wax reconstruction of the (usually female) human body would be steadily disembowelled by a ‘surgeon’ before a viewing public. Bruno notes that the shift from anatomy lesson to film screening ran smoothly, ‘as both forms of popular spectacle shared a fantasmatic ground. Their common terrain is a discourse of investigation and

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76 ‘Archive on 4: Spoken Like a Woman’, Radio, 19 July 2015, 00:33:28. It was also felt, according to a BBC report made in 1973, that women announcers would not be able to maintain proper impartiality towards their subject matter, and would thus betray their emotion through their voices by crying or laughing. The report went on to say that if a woman did not react emotionally in this way, she would not be a ‘proper’ woman anyway and so would not be worth employing! 00:15:40.
78 Ibid., 61.
the fragmentation of the body.” Taking her cue from Benjamin’s analogy between surgeon and cameraman, Bruno asserts that the cinematic gaze is thus intertwined with the anatomical gaze, as both carefully dissect and analyse, traversing and delving into space(s). Added to this, she argues that ‘cinema’s analytic genealogically descends, in a way, from a distinct anatomic fascination for the woman’s body’, elsewhere citing both the films of Georges Méliès and the chronophotographs of Eadweard Muybridge as early examples of the fetishisation and fragmentation of the female body on film. Further to Silverman’s assertions, then, Bruno’s arguments cast the anatomical examination of the female body as a strange kind of analogue for the cinematic apparatus, intensifying the connection between the two.

Silverman pinpoints several experimental (non-Hollywood) films, such as Yvonne Rainer’s A Film About a Woman Who… (1974), in which the classic model of the synchronised female voice is disrupted with female voice-over, unfinished sentences, lack of audio-visual synchronisation and disjointed narrative. The act of isolating or disentangling the aural from the visual breaks down the cinematic apparatus into sound and image (voice and body), and in turn undermines the traditional construction of woman as body in cinema. As Silverman suggests, the dislocated female voice acts as a threat to ‘the specular regime upon which dominant cinema relies’, putting the female character ‘beyond the reach of the male gaze (which stands in here for the cultural “camera”)’ and releasing ‘her voice from the signifying obligations which that gaze enforces.’ A segment of female voice-over in A Film About A Woman Who… reflects upon woman’s performance of gender for male eyes: ‘Then he thinks about her. His very gaze seemed to transform her into a performer, a realised fantasy of herself. Sometimes it was almost as if she were saying, “Look at me, look at me, a small price to

80 Bruno cites Benjamin’s assertion that the cameraman ‘penetrates deeply into [the] web’ of reality, just as the surgeon ‘diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient’s body.’ Benjamin in Bruno, Streetwalking on a Ruined Map, 271.
81 Bruno, Public Intimacy, 94. My emphasis. Bruno, Streetwalking on a Ruined Map, 64.
82 Silverman, The Acoustic Mirror, 165. Silverman also cites Bette Gordon’s film Empty Suitcases (1980) in this context. Rainer transitioned from dance into filmmaking in the mid-1970s, only returning to dance again in the 2000s. She said: ‘my burgeoning feminist consciousness was an important factor [in this transition]. An equally urgent stimulus was the encroaching physical changes in my aging body. But I can also attribute the change in medium, from moving body to moving image, to the emotional power of Hollywood and European art films seen from a very early age, plus the films of Maya Deren, Hollis Frampton, and Andy Warhol viewed in the early and late sixties.’ Rainer in Carol Armstrong and Catherine de Zegher, eds., Women Artists at the Millennium (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 5-6.
83 Silverman, The Acoustic Mirror, 164.
pay for my love in return”. He finds himself agreeing. This voice-over further complicates gender binaries by reporting the thoughts of a man, and while this man reflects on the role of the male gaze, the female voice that reports his thoughts is disembodied, frustrating the very gaze upon which he muses. To disembody the female voice, then, is to release woman from the space of the visual and from cinematic conventions that keep her there.

I want to argue that Cardiff extends this project in her work in her splitting of female voice from visible body, and soundtrack from image. In her audio walks, the artist divorces her ‘film soundtrack’ from an image that never even existed, dislocating the audio from any logical visual origin. Instead, and importantly for my argument, she marries the audio track to the unpredictable space of the city street, to unframed reality, which comes to stand in for a cinematic image. Indeed, this cinematic manner of viewing the city arguably arose as soon as cinema was invented, for as Mark W. Turner writes:

Urban modernity has most frequently been understood through vision – how we look at others, how others look at us, the dynamics of the gaze. Partly, this was due to new technologies that emerged in the nineteenth century that seemed to privilege vision over other sensory experiences – new media including the stereoscope, photography and then the cinema.85

Thus, Turner seems to suggest, the history of walking and looking in the modern city and the history of cinema are deeply connected. Being attuned, as any present day participant would be, to the languages and techniques of cinema, the walker experiences Cardiff’s soundtrack as cinematically interwoven with the images of the city street, yet with temporal jumps and disjunctures that arise from the differences in environment between the moment of the artist’s recording and the moment of the listener’s walk. The cinematically conditioned participant – the same who finds Gabriel so difficult to watch – comes to occupy the visual space implied by Cardiff’s soundtrack, and in turn to act within the cinematic field, as if being looked at. Silverman quotes an adolescent girl who talks about unconsciously performing her actions, even when alone. ‘What this female voice records’, Silverman writes, ‘is the internalisation of the specular and auditory regime upon which classic cinema relies, and which it helps to perpetuate

84 Rainer, A Film About a Woman Who…, 00:03:14.
within the larger cultural order. It is this internalisation of the specular regime within the context of late capitalist consumerism – in turn a reminder of the always-watched subject conjured by Nauman’s corridors – that also comes to play in Cardiff’s walks. Yet since the participant can never quite fathom which role she plays within the narrative (stalked, stalker, detective, onlooker, Cardiff herself), she occupies the specular space with a mismatched step, and a sense of disjointed subjectivity, that comes to match the fractured nature of the narrative technique. The artist asserts:

Just as our dreams sometimes infiltrate our waking reality, I think the walking pieces break down the barriers of what the listeners think of as their singular self. My surrogate body starts to infiltrate their consciousness while in reverse their remembered dreams, triggered by phrases and sounds, invade and add to the artwork.

In Cardiff’s whispered intimations, a kind of interiority is suggested: her confessional tone, resembling stream of consciousness, lends her walks the dreamlike quality to which she refers above. In film, this would be an interior monologue, of which Doane writes:

the voice and the body are represented simultaneously, but the voice, far from being an extension of that body, manifests its inner lining. The voice displays what is inaccessible to the image, what exceeds the visible: the “inner life” of the character. The voice here is the privileged mark of interiority, turning the body “inside-out.”

Cardiff’s voice, then, is taken from the artist herself and placed within another vessel, that is, within the mind of the participant. As one takes part in the audio walk, the artist’s voice seems to become one’s own, as she observes the surroundings, uttering thoughts that are already semi-present in one’s own mind, thus short-circuiting the usual relationship between voice and subject. Friedrich Kittler observes that ‘[w]hereas (according to Derrida) it is characteristic of so-called Man and his consciousness to hear himself speak and see himself write, media dissolve such feedback loops’, unsettling the relationship between thought and its manifestation. In Cardiff’s walks, then, the

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recording device comes to break the ‘feedback loop’ between the artist and her own voice, allowing the participant to plug into the system, so to speak, coming not only to share her voice, but also, apparently, her consciousness. Kittler observes ‘an unimaginable closeness of sound technology and self-awareness, a simulacrum of a feedback loop relaying sender and receiver. A song sings to a listening ear, telling it to sing. As if the music were originating from the brain itself, rather than emanating from stereo speakers or headphones.’ In Cardiff’s walks the artist’s voice seems, at points, to originate ‘from the brain itself’, as if from the participant rather than from an absent ‘other’, the artist. The technology itself, as well as the recorded voice, spooks the listener, at once within and without. The audio walks evoke this ghost-like vocal splicing: as Cardiff says ‘the walks make you think as if you were part of another person’.

As the thoughts of artist and walker merge, so too do their bodies. Though, of course, Cardiff’s voice is without visible body, it is nevertheless imbued with what Roland Barthes has called the ‘grain’ of the voice, that is ‘the body in the voice’. The artist’s breathing is audible and her voice is husky, with a light vocal fry. This crack or creak in the voice comes from the back of the throat, produced through a slack glottal closure, and in Cardiff’s recording this serves to remind us of the corporeal origin of the voice. This is heightened by the fact that we can hear evidence of the whole body in the sound of the artist’s footsteps. Yet, as Dolar writes, ‘the voice stands at a paradoxical and ambiguous topological spot, at the intersection of language and the body, but this intersection belongs to neither. […] The voice stems from the body, but is not its part’. Unlike the voice-over ‘thick with body’ in Kiss Me Deadly Cardiff’s audio trace is at once attached to and removed from her body, both emanating from her spatially specific recorded movements, and temporally set apart from them. Stepping out on each walk, Cardiff invites her listener to follow her stride pattern, so that artist and participant fall in step. The artist’s breathing is loud on the soundtrack, so that not only pure auto-affection, the operation of hearing oneself speak seems to reduce even the inward surface of one’s own body; in its phenomenal being it seems capable of dispensing with this exteriority within interiority, this interior space in which our experience or image of our own body is spread forth.’ Ibid., 79.

90 Kittler, Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, 36-7.
91 Cardiff in Christov-Bakargiev, Janet Cardiff, 17.
92 Roland Barthes, ‘The Grain of the Voice’, in Image-Music-Text (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 188. Barthes uses this terminology particularly in relation to the singing voice, but it has been applied by others to both singing and speech.
93 Dolar, A Voice and Nothing More, 73.
one’s footsteps, but also one’s intake of air, begins to fall in sync with the artist’s, until guider and guided are one. She notes how, as she recorded her voice, it ‘became someone else, a separate person hovering in front of me like a ghost.’ Yet, this ghost-voice, having been ripped from cinematic synchronisation, seeks it once more, finding a new body in the participant. Thus, I would argue, Cardiff radically upsets the classic Hollywood body, fragmenting and then reforming the subject’s whole (the voice and the body) in the same way that she fragments and reforms the cinematic whole (the sound and the image), to create an assemblage at once disjunctive and unified. It is as if by rearticulating the fractured cinematic apparatus Cardiff rearticulates the dismembered female body of the Neopolitan ‘anatomy lesson’.

Cardiff exploits the cinematic conditioning of the present day subject, capitalising in particular on a kind of cinematic embodiment inherited from viewing ‘in transit’, as a metropolitan ‘loiterer’ (as described by Bruno). This subject is not entrapped in the spectacle of Plato’s cave, but is rather a body that imitates the moving image in her own restless gait, and is an open and receptive part of the specular space through which she moves. By mapping her voice and body onto the participant, and onto the space of the city, Cardiff disrupts and reveals the specular regime of classic Hollywood cinema in which woman is constructed ‘as body’ for the visual gratification of the presumed male viewer. This in turn is a challenge to the place of woman on the city streets as a victim of the male gaze: lines are blurred between gazer and gazed-upon, contesting the usual binary politics of the city streets.

The haunting voice

I have so far shown that the acousmatic voice in Janet Cardiff’s audio walks works to destabilise binary gender positions in urban space. Such an effect, I now want to argue, realigns the usual gender bias of psychogeography, in particular, as a male-dominated arena. As explored in the thesis introduction, the 1990s resurgence of psychogeography and ‘art walking’ can be characterised, in part, by its preoccupation with inheritance. For certain practitioners, such an inheritance is understood as ghostly, with psychogeographers following in the footsteps of their predecessors. This has been termed ‘hauntology’, a word coined by Jacques Derrida and gradually adopted and

adapted by psychogeographers, musicians and theorists to express the way in which cultural inheritance could be understood as a process of haunting. 

Derrida theorises this logic of haunting in Spectres of Marx (1993), the publication of which coincided with the re-emergence of psychogeography in the 1990s. He begins with and returns repeatedly to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and to the protagonist’s pivotal encounter with the ghost of his father. Derrida quotes Paul Valéry, who writes: ‘And this one was Kant qui genuit Hegel, qui genuit Marx, qui genuit… Hamlet does not know what to do with all these skulls. But if he abandons them!... Will he cease to be himself?’ The jostling spectres of the past, a noisy lineage, become at once a burden and a necessity, vital in the very definition of self. The term ‘hauntology’ slips, even more so in the French, into ontology, the term it spooks, replacing ‘being’ with ‘almost being’ and ‘presence’ with ‘almost-absence.’ To be (half of Hamlet’s question) one must be haunted, or in the inverse, if one is haunted, one has a greater sense of being. Derrida writes: ‘To be, this word in which we earlier saw the word of the spirit, means, for the same reason, to inherit. All the questions on the subject of being or of what is to be (or not to be) are questions of inheritance.

For Derrida, it is the voice of the ghost, and not his body, that haunts. He writes: ‘since we do not see [the spectre] we cannot identify it in all its certainty, we must fall back on its voice. The one who says “I am thy Father’s Spirit” can only be taken at his word.’ The spectre’s identity lies in his voice, which exists independently of body or fixed appearance. Indeed, it is precisely the acousmatic voice that imparts this hauntological quality. Mladen Dolar writes that ‘[t]he acousmatic voice proper is the one which we cannot locate.’ For this reason it wrong-foots us: it is eerie to hear a voice that seems disengaged from its source and cannot be bound to a visual signifier. Indeed, along with Slavoj Žižek, Dolar argues that the voice is always, to some extent,

95 Simon Reynolds writes of the recent usage of the term ‘hauntology’ in relation to music: ‘Enter hauntology, a term that critic Mark Fisher and I started bandying around in 2005 to describe a loose network of mostly U.K. artists […]. All these groups explore a zone of British nostalgia linked to television programming of the sixties and seventies. Consummate scavengers, the hauntologists trawl through charity shops, street markets and jumble sales for delectable models of decaying culture-matter.’ Simon Reynolds, Retromania: Pop Culture’s Addiction to its Own Past (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 328.
97 Derrida, Spectres of Marx, 54.
98 Ibid., 7.
acousmatic, giving it a ‘spectral autonomy’. Before the invention of any kind of recording device, the disembodied voice would almost always have been understood as spectral or divine, and even once telephones, radios and phonographs gave such voices a more frequent place in everyday life, these technologies, especially when first invented, were often associated with spiritualism and the occult due to the way in which they allowed a presence to be apparently split across distances, and were thus seen as modes of psychic communion with the spirits of the dead.

Due to its emphasis on the disembodied voice, Derrida’s hauntological model speaks well to the layered speech and sounds of Cardiff’s audio walks, which might be interpreted as ‘the rumbling sound of ghosts chained to ghosts’. An idea that circulated in the nineteenth century was, that once a sound is made, though it diminishes, it never dies away completely, its vibrations continuing through the atoms in the air forever. Charles Babbage, inventor of the first mechanical computer, was a particular advocate of this idea, writing that ‘[t]he air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are forever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered.’ He proposed, then, that if one could somehow listen in on these sounds and magnify their volume, one could eavesdrop on the past. Cardiff plays at capturing and magnifying the historical voices of the city, reminding us of the palimpsestic nature of urban space, holding all its pasts in densely packed cacophony.

*Her Long Black Hair* becomes just such a means of reflecting upon the inheritance we gain from the voices of the past, as Cardiff recalls the words of Kierkegaard and Baudelaire, and tells the story of a slave, Harry Thomas, who, in 1850, walked across America to escape enslavement. These figures are linked by their walks. Kierkegaard was a known walker, as Cardiff tells us: ‘every day for many hours he would wander through the streets of Copenhagen.’ Baudelaire, too, was known for his love of...
walking, and is, of course, particularly famed for describing the Parisian figure of the *flâneur*, ‘the perfect idler, the passionate observer’ of urban bustle, in his essay ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ (1863). Although these historical figures were never in Central Park, the site of *Her Long Black Hair*, we seem to follow in their footsteps, as Cardiff quotes their words and tells fragments of their stories. These seemingly disparate figures are bound together by historical coincidence, beginning with the landscaping of Central Park by Frederick Law Olmsted in the mid nineteenth century. Cardiff says,

> The realisation of the park around the year 1858 is a keystone for the other elements of the script. It reaches from the Paris of 1857 when Baudelaire, the peripatetic poet with an irrational fear of photography, publishes *Les Fleurs du Mal* and wrote obsessive poems about his black-haired mistress […] as well as an American slave who walks across America while Central Park is being developed in order to escape enslavement.

At one point Cardiff quotes, but does not attribute, part of Abraham Lincoln’s annual message to congress, delivered in December 1862: ‘We cannot escape history. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honour or dishonour, to the latest generation.’ The presence of history, as a difficult and often burdensome inheritance is felt. Indeed, Harry Thomas’s story reminds us that the challenging history of slavery is still felt in America today, and, in Cardiff’s walk perhaps alludes to the fact that during the construction of Central Park in the 1850s, Seneca Village, a majority African-American settlement (of mostly freed slaves), was destroyed. Central Park emulates a Romantic notion of American natural beauty, of the kind celebrated by Henry David Thoreau, and yet its apparent ‘naturalness’ is entirely constructed, in that, as Cardiff notes, ‘Olmsted designed this park with the aesthetics of landscape painting in mind’, arranging each element (tree, water, rock) with the aim of producing vistas through the scenery (following the theories of the picturesque discussed in Chapter Three). The artist observes that during the building of the park, streams were put underground, human bones were uncovered and, though she does not state this

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108 Cardiff, *Her Long Black Hair*, track 3, 00:01:30.
explicitly (only implying it in her references to the story of the ex-slave), land was cleared through the forced eviction of African-Americans. Cardiff’s walk in the park reveals a dark and uncomfortable underbelly to the apparent innocence of nature: Central Park is full of ghosts.

Derrida asks: ‘What does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being followed by it, always, persecuted perhaps by the very chase we are leading? Here again what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back.’ In Her Long Black Hair the ghosts that the participant follows, and that follow her, are plural, and as she follows them, she imagines all past and future participants of this walk too, becoming herself part of a ghostly pantheon of walkers. The way in which the elements of Cardiff’s script coincide is not linear: while a thematic coincidence exists between the mysterious black-haired woman of Cardiff’s photographs and Baudelaire’s black-haired mistress, a temporal coincidence exists between the founding of Central Park, Baudelaire’s publication of Les Fleurs du Mal and the slave’s walk. Cardiff says: ‘In 1850 while Harry Thomas made his epic night-time journey across America, three months of walking, Baudelaire walked the streets of Paris. I like to imagine that at times their footsteps lined up as if they walked together.’ These elements collide in the way thoughts do, as Cardiff springs from one thing to the next without concern over their actual historical connections, with a kind of mismatched history that might be described as hauntological. Derrida tells us that no lineage can be singular, there is no ‘reassuring order of presents’ following on one from another, but a jostling of all times, a heterogeneity, in which ‘time is out of joint’, in the phrase from Hamlet that Derrida repeats. He refers to ‘the radical and necessary heterogeneity of an inheritance […] An inheritance that is never gathered together, it is never one with itself.’ It is a troubled inheritance, unsure, partial, mapped against a dispersing present, in which inheritors are almost in step with the spectres, almost, but not quite, belonging, almost affirmed, since, as Derrida again reminds us, ‘One never inherits without coming to terms with some spectre, and therefore with more than one spectre.’

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111 Derrida, Spectres of Marx, 10.
112 Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 3, 00:04:03.
113 Derrida, Spectres of Marx, 39.
114 Ibid., 16. Emphasis in original.
115 Ibid., 21.
Derrida shows us that hauntology, as a model of inheritance, is always full of this disquiet. It is an inherently uneasy model, yet what is perhaps most troubling about Derrida’s hauntology is that, despite its heterogeneity, the male line still dominates. As Derrida writes: ‘What manifests itself in the first place is a spectre, this first paternal character as powerful as it is unreal...’ When this ghost of the Father appears in Derrida’s text he can speak only to the Son, recreating tradition through the male line. Yet, as Margaret Whitford notes, when Derrida has been asked to state his position on feminism, ‘he sometimes produces a conception of sexual multiplicity.’ It is not, then, that Derrida deliberately seeks to create a closed-off model of inheritance, but that the focus on Marx, which of course is the driving force of Spectres of Marx, elicits an emphasis on what he terms ‘patrimonial logic’.

Nancy J. Holland asks how, in Derrida’s patrilineal hauntological formation, women can claim an inheritance from their predecessors. She tells of the way in which she has internalised ‘my father’s vision of the eternal, idealised Woman […] that I was meant to become for him.’ This woman is ‘not even my father’s mother […] but rather the ghost of the perfect image of the Imaginary female my grandmother, my great-grandmother once were for him/them. The ghost of a woman who never lived.’ The question that riddles her text is: ‘From whom, then, am I to learn to live, finally?’ As she echoes, but genders, Derrida’s opening plea in Spectres of Marx, ‘to learn to live finally’, Holland reveals the flaws of a patrilineal hauntological model. In Derrida’s model the male ghosts (Fathers and Sons) are named and they all once lived, but the spectral Woman that Holland conjures remains unnamed, missing, forever ghostly, and forever unobtainable. How can one, as a woman, inherit (that is ‘learn to live’) from such a shadow of patriarchally constructed ‘ideal’ Womanhood?

This struggle is apparent in Cardiff’s walks: all her named ‘ghosts’ are men, while any references to women remain shadowy, anonymous and ungraspable. In Her Long Black Hair Cardiff traces an ‘inheritance’ from Baudelaire, Kierkegaard, Olmsted,
Lincoln and Henry Thomas. The women she conjures remain more indistinct, like the mute Eurydice, who surfaces and resurfaces in this audio walk. Early on in the walk, Cardiff says: ‘we can’t look back. It’s one of the rules today. He wasn’t supposed to but he did’, in a reference to Orpheus’s inability to lead Eurydice out of the underworld without looking back at her.123 Later, a male voice asks: ‘Do you remember the story of Orpheus?’ and briefly tells it:

His lover Eurydice died from a snakebite, and he was so heartbroken that he journeyed to Hades, the underworld, to try to get her back. The gods agreed, but only on the condition that he never look back at her face until they had reached the light of day. Of course he has to look back.124

This is followed with snippets of Gluck’s opera, Orpheus and Eurydice (1762), which return throughout the walk. Eurydice, the vanishing nymph, becomes a proxy for all women, as Cardiff also recalls her own past selves (impulsive and naïve) and a strangely multiplied array of black-haired women.125 As well as the woman in the photographs, and Baudelaire’s mistress (who, as noted, remains unnamed in the walk), Cardiff also talks to the stranger who says that the woman in the photographs looks like his mother; and at other points Nick Cave’s song Black Hair (1997) washes in and out of the soundtrack, with the lyric ‘and all her mystery dwelt within her black hair’. The identities of these black-haired women begin to flow into one another, so that the boundaries between them become hard to define. A similar effect occurs in The Missing Voice with the red-haired woman, who could be the missing woman, but also reminds Cardiff of her own sister, and could, it is implied, also be the artist herself, wearing a red wig. Both women, red-haired and black-haired, are on the verge of disappearance, and the walks are about retracing their steps, searching for them. We take on the role of Orpheus in his quest for Eurydice, trying to find these women again, but without looking directly at them, lest they disappear completely. Just as the protagonist of Ono’s Rape folds into herself in order to erase her visibility and vulnerability to the gaze, Cardiff’s women also seem on the verge of vanishing.

123 Cardiff, Her Long Black Hair, track 1, 00:04:47.
124 Ibid., track 4, 00:02:48.
125 She recalls her own past visits to New York as a young woman, telling of one encounter with a businessman who asks her back to his hotel room to show her his vibrator bed: ‘He showed me his bed, then he walked me back to my hotel. That was all. I guess he was pretty disappointed. I can’t even believe how naïve I was.’ Ibid., track 1, 00:09:45.
Alongside her evocation of these shadow women, Cardiff herself professes ‘the urge to disappear’, and her love of spending a whole day without talking to anybody ‘except when I pay for a book or a cup of tea or something. It’s like you’re invisible.’126 It is as if the artist almost unconsciously performs a model of expected female behaviour based upon historical precedent, in part characterised by her wariness of walking in public space as a woman, and in part by a need to rebuff the gaze with invisibility. By contrasting the named and dominant male figures of her narratives with unnamed and shadowy female figures (herself and others), Cardiff reveals the way in which women are systematically excluded from hauntological models, thus exposing the patrilinearity of hauntology. The spectral presence of anonymous women and inherited female behaviour leaves us asking, as Holland does, how can women learn to live, finally? If women have learned to occupy the city street in a particular way, due to a particular, but shadowy, inheritance, how are we to deal with that inheritance today? How can women move beyond echoing the voice of Derrida’s paternal spectre, like Echo herself, doomed to repeat?127

Cardiff leaves us asking these questions that disrupt models of gendered viewing and challenge hauntological inheritance as a patrilineal construct. As with Ono’s Rape, one could readily see the audio walks as simply repeating the oppressed subject position that women have always occupied on the street. However, what Cardiff does is to displace a certain kind of urban female subjectivity – paranoid, uneasy, naïve, lacking in confidence – allowing anyone who undertakes an audio walk to experience it. While a re-performance of these tropes of female behaviour and victimhood could be seen as far from emancipatory, by dispersing their effects to her participants (potentially of all genders and backgrounds), Cardiff reveals the nuances of urban subjectivity as contingent on gender, history, and memory. Through her use of voice, both as a riposte to the gaze and for its spectral qualities, Cardiff not only traces histories, but troubles them. She inverts the hauntological space of psychogeography: where the psychogeographer is usually haunted by voices from the past, Cardiff uses her own voice to haunt, to inhabit urban spaces with new echoes, making new ghosts to haunt the future. By inserting her own voice into the hauntological lineage she interrupts its

126 Cardiff, The Missing Voice (Script) in Christov-Bakargiev, Janet Cardiff, 117.
127 In the story of Echo and Narcissus, the nymph Echo is cursed by Juno so that she can no longer use her own voice, but only repeat the last words spoken to her. As she becomes only an echoing voice, her body wastes away, until eventually her bones turn to stone.
flow, and short-circuits the system by becoming a ghost herself, haunting those who undertake her audio walks. Cardiff’s work remains inevitably hauntological itself, but, I suggest, proposes a feminist form of the practice that turns the hauntological model back upon itself.

To return to some of the questions I raised at the start of the thesis, Cardiff’s disrupted hauntology serves as a compelling way of thinking about the repetition of past tropes, in particular the return of walking in artistic practice today. In the thesis introduction, I speculated about whether artists who have used walking in recent years merely institutionalise the radicalism of its uses in the 1960s, and outlined various ways in which critics have modelled similar art historical repetitions. Peter Bürger argued that the repetition of an artistic trope institutionalised its original as art, implicitly depoliticising it in the process. In opposition to Bürger, Benjamin Buchloh laid out a form of paradigm repetition in which artists are naïve of the fact that they are repeating a trope at all, thus maintaining much of the vigour of the original iteration. Like Buchloh, Hal Foster argued that repetition serves as a means of realising the potential of the original, so that in its repetition a practice might come into full focus for the first time. Unlike Buchloh, however, Foster outlined ways in which artists repeat with full awareness of the practices of their predecessors.

These models, especially those of Buchloh and Foster, could certainly offer us some way in which to approach Cardiff’s work and the recent return to walking in art more generally, particularly during the moments at which they warn against understanding reiterations as having a single discernible precedent. While both critics set up a broad model in which there is one moment of origin and a second moment of repetition, Buchloh is wary of reading this precedent as ‘a moment of irretrievable plenitude and truth’. 128 Similarly, Foster is keen to emphasise ‘a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstructed pasts’ between tropes and their repetition, throwing over ‘any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition’. 129 As we have seen, such complexities are present in Cardiff’s work, but greatly intensified. While she is preoccupied with the past, it is not with one single historical moment, but with a multitude. Although her work, as I have noted, would not have been possible without

innovations in performance and sound art made in the 1960s and ‘70s, Cardiff does not look to a specific precedent from this era. Rather, she has a longer view into history, referencing a wide gamut of stories and histories from ancient myths to nineteenth-century urban strolls and twentieth-century popular music, as we have seen. The artist’s broad inheritance of myriad precedents from the history of artistic walking problematises my own provisional proposal that we might look at the last fifty years of this history as falling into ‘two moments’. Indeed, rather than this division, we see in Cardiff’s work a formation that, I have argued, can only be characterised as hauntological, albeit, importantly, a feminist form of hauntology, in which haunting becomes a two-way street.

While Bürger, Buchloh and Foster each propose a variety of models of trope repetition in art, what concerns them all is the danger of the institutionalisation of avant-garde art. What might this mean for walking? And how might hauntological inheritance resist such institutionalisation? When we say that an artistic trope is institutionalised when it recurs, we mean that such repetition begins to form a pattern, a structure, which, the more it is repeated, the more conformity is reached. An example might be found in Guy Debord’s instructions for taking a dérive: originally a record of his own radical practices, for psychogeographers and ‘walking artists’ today these texts have become a recipe to be followed. Despite the initially disruptive aims of the dérive, its repetition can become mindless, as one goes through the motions, but drained of the kind of discovery or disorder that one might hope for in such practices. Thus, conformity, or institutionalisation, flattens out meanings, sucks out vibrancy and neutralises political efficacy. An institutionalised action begins to operate somewhat autonomously and automatically, rather than in dialogue with the culture that bore it.

One could argue that with her municipally-funded artworks, Cardiff merely packages the radicalism of 1960s performance art for popular consumption, coercing the participant into a form of ‘uncritical compliance with spectacle’, to use Claire Bishop’s words quoted earlier. However, in this chapter I have argued instead that Cardiff uses walking in a way that retains much of its radicalism, not just from its uses in the ‘60s, but from throughout history, using a hauntological model of inheritance to create a cacophony of influences that battles against the dulling hand of institutionalisation. Far from encasing her subject in an unwitting compliance with the apparatus of spectacle, Cardiff makes the technical mechanisms with which she co-opt
her participants fully apparent, using them to reveal wider systems of urban obedience and control, as well as their historical contingency upon gender. Cardiff’s audio walks function as a successful ‘return’ to walking in artistic practice thanks to the artist’s trained consideration of the nature of historical repetition and inheritance. She recoups walking with an historiographical awareness, inheriting it as an avant-garde strategy along with all its complex, partial and haunting histories.
THE MISSING VOICE (CASE STUDY B)
AN AUDIO WALK BY
JANET CARDIFF

From Whitechapel Library,
77 Whitechapel High Street,
London E1

June 17 – November 27 1999

Whitechapel Library is next to Aldgate East
Tube Station. The work is free.

For library opening times call 0171 336 6803
http://www.innercity.demon.co.uk

Commissioned by Artangel
Supported by Bloomberg News

Presented with the support of the Arts Council
of England, Visiting Arts, The Canadian High
Commission, London and The Company of
Angels with the special help of William Palmer

Figure 4.1 Advert for Janet
Cardiff, The Missing Voice (Case Study
B), 1999, from Art Monthly 228
(July 1999): 12.
Figure 4.2 Janet Cardiff, map with various proposed routes for *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)*, 1999, audio walk, 37 minutes, East London, commissioned by Artangel, London. Actual route in blue (added by myself).
Figure 4.3 ‘Shirley’, Janet Cardiff’s homemade binaural sound recording head or ‘Kunstkopf’.
Figure 4.4 Janet Cardiff, photo no.1 from *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.

Figure 4.5 Janet Cardiff, photo no.2 from *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.
Figure 4.6 Janet Cardiff, photo no.3 from *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.

Figure 4.7 Janet Cardiff, photo no.4 from *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.
Figure 4.8 Janet Cardiff, photo no. 5 from *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.
Figure 4.9 Janet Cardiff, map for *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004, audio walk, 46 minutes, Central Park, New York, commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York.
Epilogue

When asked for a quote for an exhibition curated by Robert Storr, Bruce Nauman gave Saint Augustine’s famous aphorism, *solvitur ambulando* – ‘it is solved by walking’, often meaning it is solved through practice and experiment, rather than theory.¹ Nauman surely must have meant this with at least an ounce of irony, for while his artworks develop through practice, if they, and this thesis, reveal anything it is that by walking one does not reach solutions, but rather challenges and complicates notions of absolute arrival or completion. It would be inappropriate, then, to *conclude* here, in the sense of offering remarks that consider the multiple paths that thread through this thesis as all reaching the single same destination. Indeed, such an exercise would only serve to reconstruct the Mobius strip of Lygia Clark’s *Caminhando* [Fig. 0.6], so meticulously deconstructed to reveal an intricate web of routes. Instead, I wish these remarks to remain open-ended, suggesting not a summit or end point, but an ongoing walk.

In the 27-minute audio work *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* (1997), Tacita Dean records her attempts, with a friend, to locate Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in Utah, which she decided to visit following a rumour that it had risen from its submersion under the water of the Great Salt Lake. The work begins with the hesitant tones of Dean’s American companion, Greg – ‘So, where do we go?’ – before the pair turns to the directions faxed to them by Utah Arts Council [Fig. 5.1]. We hear the sound of their car trundling along a dirt track, and from their conversation we soon realise that we have joined them part way through their journey, and that they have already taken wrong turns and tried different routes. Gradually, they work through the instructions, often surprised when they succeed in finding the way-markers mentioned – cattle guards, trailers and sparse signs. As the pair nears the end of the written directions, the sense of anticipation builds: Dean gets her Super8 film ready to capture ‘the moment where we first see it’. As the audio continues, and the travellers describe the lake before them, we hear them wonder if the jetty could be underwater still, and doubt begins to enter their voices. Then, it seems, their car gets stuck, and they decide to walk the last part of the journey. Yet there is still hesitation as to whether they have indeed reached their destination. The piece ends with Dean’s words: ‘I’m not sure this is the *Spiral Jetty*.

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¹ Conversation with Robert Storr during a PhD workshop at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, November 2015.
While Dean genuinely made this journey, the work itself is scripted and uses cinematic Foley techniques, so that it becomes a merging of fact and fiction, as well as a form of film without an image, in many ways akin to Janet Cardiff’s audio walks. Unlike Cardiff, however, Dean is no ‘walking artist’, though this work is of course a record of a journey, by car and then on foot, as the artist follows the difficult directions provided. Dean wrote to J.G. Ballard telling him about her enterprise, enclosing a set of these instructions, about which Ballard wrote: ‘The directions are so complex that they seem designed to mislead anyone searching for the jetty. Tacita believes that the instructions were provided by Smithson himself. One could guess that Smithson, who was soon to die in a plane crash, was posthumously protecting his unique memorial.’ Following such guidelines, Dean could not be sure of her success. Indeed, her uncertainty about whether she genuinely reached her destination folds into the confusion that Smithson intended his Jetty to evoke. We are reminded of Smithson himself running along the boulders of this dizzying construction in the film Spiral Jetty, as human scale and pace are swallowed into the monumental coil of rock. As in Trisha Brown’s Spiral (1974), the vertiginous shape of the Spiral Jetty forms a dizzying vortex between extremes of gravity, time and scale. It might indeed be seen as the landing jetty for a time-machine, as Ballard goes on to speculate. Dean too is absorbed by the bewildering, hypnotic effect of Smithson’s earthwork, as she traces her journey in a confusion of voices and sounds, and ‘can never be sure that [she] found the risen or submerged jetty’. Her journey is never fulfilled, and as in a description of the walker by Tim Ingold, her ‘attention comes not from having arrived at a position but from being pulled away from it, from displacement’, an approach that has also governed this thesis.

Dean’s audio work stemmed from her deep admiration of Smithson and sense of kinship with him as an artist. She sees her relationship with his work as ‘an incredible excitement and attraction across time; a personal repartee with another’s way of thinking and energy communicated through their work.’

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3 Ibid.
6 Tacita Dean, Selected Writings (Paris; Göttingen: Arc/Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2003), n/p.
encapsulates the wider historiographical context of this thesis, its temporal structure residing precisely within the two ‘moments’ that I identified at the start, but also troubling and displacing them, in the way I proposed at the end of the last chapter. Working in the late 1990s, Dean looks back to a work made in 1970, one that she had only previously known ‘as a black and white slide projected on an art school wall.’

Dean’s historical distance allows the original work to become almost mythologised, as part of a practice that critically reflects on the construction of history through models of inheritance. While Dean treats the Jetty as the ‘unique memorial’ that Ballard sees it as, her inheritance from Smithson is not straightforward: her journey is inconclusive, her destination, perhaps, unreached. Unable to ‘localise the dead’, as Derrida would put it, Dean cannot ‘mourn’, placing her ability to inherit in question, forever at stake.

While *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* pays homage to a famous work of land art, it also disturbs the status of the 1960s and ‘70s as a ‘golden age’ of the experimental, both canonising and unsettling a work from this era. The journeying body fuels this relationship between past and present: Dean travels to find Smithson’s work, the miles and steps bestowing upon Jetty a deeper significance. Yet at the same time, once the destination is reached, or not reached, the result of such pilgrimage is unsure, the journey itself perhaps of more significance than the goal.

In considering works by Trisha Brown, Bruce Nauman and Agnes Martin through the lens of the revival of the walking body in art practice today, I have been able, in turn, to consider their practices anew, much as Dean re-approached Smithson’s work in *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty*. As I have shown, in the 1960s and ‘70s, a multiplicity of reasons for turning to the walking body emerged: artists not only used walking to ‘escape’ from the confines of their medium, but often to embroil themselves further in such confines; walking can simultaneously signify the mundane and the spectacular, the political and the personal, the blind and the seeing, the confident and the hesitant, the mediated and unmediated. While the rhetoric surrounding ‘walking art’ made over the last fifteen to twenty years is often one of physical, spiritual and political emancipation, the historical precedents I have explored reveal, rather, the constant tension in the walking body between freedom and entrapment, complicating a reading of walking in art as an always-emancipatory movement towards a single goal.

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7 Ibid.
Each of the first three chapters presented a particular model of the walking body, as proposed by artists in the 1960s and ‘70s, that we might find useful today: Brown tussled with body and sight as supported by technology; Nauman presented a body under surveillance, and the process of internalising society’s disciplinary structure; and Martin wrangled with the fraught boundary between nature and culture, and how the human body walks between them. In today’s society of technological governance, in which we have begun to bring about the collapse of the natural world (in what is now termed the Anthropocene), these seem like prescient models. The paranoid, ‘watched’ feeling that Cardiff conjures so well in her audio walks, giving each participant a heightened sense of their own experience of urban pedestrianism as overseen by technology, finds its seeds in the 1960s and ‘70s, as reflected in the case studies I have presented. I have given a much more ambivalent account of this era than is perhaps found in popular histories. The 1960s are frequently cast as years of utopian radicalism and unbridled optimism: while this thesis has explored the implications of such radical intentions, it has also investigated the ways in which they are matched with equal suspicion and anxiety, characteristics which seem prescient of the era in which we now live. While much ‘walking art’ of today attempts to recapture the the spirit of ‘60s and ‘70s experimental art, its frequent failure to do so (aptly, and critically, performed in Dean’s Trying to Find) is perhaps wrapped up in the fact that such radicalism was always already tempered with uncertainty. Through a trained focus on the walking body in art, I have obliquely suggested that in returning to and reconsidering particular periods in history, we necessarily rewrite them in anticipation of our own era, tracing new paths on the map as we do so.

Tim Ingold has written that ‘knowledge is grown along the myriad paths we take’ so that ‘it is by walking along from place to place, and not by building up from local particulars, that we come to know what we do.’ The pursuit of knowledge is a kind of walking: only in the traversal of multiple paths, the frustration of dead ends and false summits, and the tracing of limits, can the terrain be mapped. Let us say, then, not that ‘it is solved by walking’, but that it (one’s focus of research or interest) evolves through walking, that only by following many routes can a changing topography of knowledge be envisaged.

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Detailed directions:

1. Go to the Golden Spike National Historic Site (GSNHS), 30 miles west of Brigham City, Utah. The Spiral Jetty is 15.5 dirt-road miles southwest of the GSNHS.

To get there (from Salt Lake City) take I-80 north approximately 63 miles to the Corinne exit, just west of Brigham City, Utah. Exit and proceed 2.5 miles west, on State Highway 83, to Corinne. Proceed through Corinne, and drive another 17.7 miles west, still on highway 83, to Lampo Junction. Turn west off highway 83 at Lampo, and drive 7.7 miles up the east side of Promontory Pass to the GSNHS.

2. From the Visitor Center at the GSNHS, drive 5.6 miles west on the main dirt road running west from the Center. Remember to take the county dirt road...not the railroad grade.

3. Five point six miles will bring you to an intersection. From this vantage you can see the lake. And looking southwest, you can see the low foot hills that make up Rozel Point, 9.9 miles distant.

4. At this intersection the road forks: One road continues west and the other goes south. Take the south fork. Both forks are Box Elder County Class D (maintained) roads.

5. Immediately you cross a cattle guard. Call this cattle guard #1. Including this one, you will cross four cattle guards before you reach Rozel Point and the Spiral Jetty.

6. Drive 1.3 miles south. Here you will see a corral on the west side of the road. Here too, the road again forks. One fork continues south along the Promontory Mountains. This road leads to a locked gate. The other fork goes southwest toward the bottom of the valley and Rozel Point. Turn onto the southwest fork, just north of the corral. This is also a Box Elder County Class D road.

7. After you turn southwest, you will go 1.7 miles to cattle guard #2. Here, besides the cattle guard, you will find a fence but no gate.

8. Continue southeast 1.2 miles to cattle guard #3, a fence, a gate, and a sign on the gate which reads, "Promontory Ranch."

9. Another .50 miles will bring you to a fence but no cattle guard and no gate.

10. Continue 2.3 miles south/southwest to a combination

Figure 5.1 This and next page. Directions to Robert Smithson’s Spiral Jetty, 1970, faxed by Utah Arts Council to Tacita Dean and used for Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty, 1997, audio, 27 minutes, Frith Street Gallery, London.
fence, cattle guard #4, iron-pipe gate...and a sign declaring the property behind the fence to be that of the Rafter S Ranch. Here too, is a "No Trespassing" sign.

11. If you choose to continue south for another 2.3 miles, and around the east side of Rozel Point, you will see the Lake and a jetty (not the Spiral Jetty) left by oil drilling exploration in the 1950's. As you approach the Lake, you will see an abandoned, pink and white trailer (mostly white), an old army amphibious landing craft, an old Dodge truck...and other assorted trash.

The trailer is the key to finding the road to the Spiral Jetty. As you drive slowly past the trailer, turn immediately to the west, passing on the south side of the Dodge, and onto a two-track trail that contours above the oil-drilling debris below. This is not much of a road! In fact, at first glance it might not look to be a road at all. Go slow! The road is narrow; brush might scratch your vehicle, and the rocks, if not properly negotiated, could high center your vehicle.

12. Drive .6 miles west/northwest around Rozel Point and look toward the Lake. The Spiral Jetty should be in sight.

Maps of the area:
BLM 1:100,000 Surface Management maps - Available at the
BLM's State Office Public Room, 324 South State Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 phone: (801) 539-4001
(1) Tremonton
(2) Promontory

U.S. Geological Survey, 7.5 minute series - Available at the
U.S.G.S., Federal Building, 125 South State Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 phone: (801) 524-5622
(1) Golden Spike Monument Quadrangle
(2) Rozel quadrangle
(3) Rozel Point Quadrangle

For Additional Information:
Bureau Of Land Management
Salt Lake District
2370 South 2300 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119
phone: (801) 977-4300

Golden Spike National Historic Site
P. O. Box 897
Brigham City, Utah 84302
phone: (801) 471-2209
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