

‘Walking With’ : A Rhythmanalysis of London’s East End

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Abstract : In this paper, I will be looking at the practice of walking through the lens of rhythmanalysis. The method is brought to attention by Lefebvre’s last book *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) in which he suggests a way of interrelating space and time ; a phenomenological inquiry hinged on the concrete experience of lived life. My interest in the nuance of walking was initially evoked by the structural film *Fergus Walking* which was made by the film maker William Raban in 1978. I will explore the potential of using structural films in sensitising us to the temporalspatial relationship of things. The main body of the paper centres around two themes : Firstly I address the primacy of movement as a mode of engaging with the world. It is through ‘muscular consciousness’ (Bachelard 1964 : 11) that walking becomes a form of experiential knowing, feeling, connecting and protesting. Secondly, I examine the practices of walking in relation to the radical transformations of the Docklands’ landscape since the beginning of the 1980s. I propose that the contesting interests of different groups can be explored by analysing the rhythmic interactions of their activities. The transition and recomposition of an economy from locally based industrial activities to globalised financial services were manifested in the syncopation of regeneration rhythms to the living rhythms of the Docklands. The fast changing urban landscapes were negotiated through alternative ways of navigating the streets, hence engendering a different set of rhythms.

Keywords : Walking, roads, rhythmanalysis, structural film, Docklands.