Portsmyth - Old City, New Story

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Introduction: A Supernatural City

Portsmyth is an uncanny story devised by researchers at the University of Portsmouth to be played like a 'choose your own adventure' as participants walk the local streets, with multiple endings depending on their success or failure in mini fairground-style games. This hypermodern folktale recalls the true events of a gruesome assassination in 1628. A traumatised soldier stabbed the Duke of Buckingham who had led him into a botched battle, and was made a martyr. He is long forgotten now at the site where his body hung till completely decomposed, the grisly hero of a popular rebellion. We reanimate John Felton in a plot that pits him against Jolly Jack, the laughing sailor, a sinister automaton from the vintage amusement arcade. This mechanical matelot is planning to unleash a surge of undead seamen on the city, the 'Jackopalypse'.

First developed for a mobile app, and further drafted as an online story/game using Twine software (Habens 2023), *Portsmyth*'s final product is still emerging; and this article will explain the relationship between narrative content and technological form playing out in the streets of this in-between space where our group of psychogeographers have created a symbolic uprising, perhaps to bring personal or public benefits to a community marked by nautical traumas of the past. From Guildhall Walk to the Garrison Church or Clarence Pier, to help Jack out of the box or John down from the gallows; different routes decided by the toss of a coin, flick of a knife, catch of a fish, guess of a hangman's word, will dictate which character each player follows, one real, one imaginary; all ending up at the same seafront telescope in a dramatic encounter that draws on Carl Jung's 'rite of liberation' (1964: 156).

As well as a brief reflection on the Jungian concepts of archetypes and synchronicity involved in my creative process, demonstrated by extracts from the original *Portsmyth* script, this article reflects upon the plan to forge a new 'legend quest' to our city, its aims ranging from university student induction to the introduction of a commercial product linked to local

tourism. The article will explore our conscious attempt to invent folklore in academic collaboration, to 'recall the past in ways that are malleable to remaking, personalising, and fictionalising', described by Jeannie Banks Thomas (2015). I'll discuss how her theory of supernatural placemaking informs our storytelling gameplay and pilot testing of 'its ability to generate pleasure mixed with anxiety'. (2015: 367). But first, I will examine theories of the city as a mythical or representational space, the postmodern critical thinking of Henri Lefebvre (1994) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), underpinning our urban imaginings.

The City as Space or Place

People of Portsmouth, UK, like locals everywhere, know their own neighbourhood (Fratton, Southsea, North End, Eastney) intimately but may barely venture into the neighbouring streets to mingle on corners or squares; and the next town along (Southampton) might as well be a foreign land. Yet inhabitants of all those places have intricate knowledge of the same spaces, in map-like detail and with clear mental charts of their ways and by-ways, when it comes to mythical spaces such as Heaven and Valhalla, Narnia or Neverland (Tuan 1977: 87).

No matter where we hail from, we may recognise these realms 'filled with magic-religious entities, with deities malevolent or benevolent, male or female, linked to the earth or to the subterranean (the dead), and subject to the formalisms of rite and ritual', mapped out by LeFebvre in The Production of Space (1994: 321). He explores how folk are alienated, their land is reified and lived experience is circumscribed by a dialectic of nature and nurture through ideological processes of placemaking. 'Absolute space' may be consecrated at the cost of its original characteristics, impacting human hearths and homes which are soon 'populated by political forces'. (1994: 48)

An English seaside city with its evident liminality should have a thin veil between absolute and abstract spaces. As a naval centre, an international transport link on the south coast, it can seem a plain sibling between the likes of Brighton and Bournemouth. But our Supernatural Cities research group at the University of Portsmouth aims to put this town on the map of more uncanny resorts, celebrating its unfathomable depths, a site of haunting first footfalls and last steps on English soil over centuries, and rich source of strange storytelling today.

'Literary art draws attention to areas of experience that we may otherwise fail to notice,' explains geographer Tuan in his seminal work, Space and Place, reassuring us Portsmuthians that 'a natural feature may be inconspicuous and yet become a place of sufficient importance to attract tourists…' (1977: 61–62). Our writing project creates what he calls oriented mythical space, the way we order the forces of nature which 'imputes personality to space, thus transforming space in effect into place' (1997: 91). As keen publicists of Southsea seafront, though, we are also warned against such an assumption of 'the pre-existence of an objective, neutral, empty space' by Lefebvre's materialist critique. (1994: 36)

Ghostly echoes from garrisons and spooky traces in battlements are inscribed in this interdisciplinary research which offers untold stories, unimaginable scenarios for a new kind of visitor to our city. Historian of the mysterious, Karl Bell also sets the scene for this radical game in his book The Legend of Spring-Heeled Jack: 'Indulging in ideas of ghosts, demons or pranksters all represented a willingness to mark space'. He establishes our critical context in that representational place 'imbued with alternative, often subversive, readings to more official spatial orderings such as formal maps' (2012: 159).

Welcome to *Portsmyth*

This is a co-investigation into the power of storytelling to disturb familiar notions of space and common experiences of place. Our new narrative brings folkloric elements alongside historical events to disrupt favourite seaside haunts with a darker tourism. If we build a supernatural city, based on esoteric principles from psychoanalysis, and designed with 'eudaimonic' wellbeing aims (Habens 2018), will people come, or will the ghost town remain one?

Here, I describe our collective goal of turning Portsmouth (popularly perceived as football-based with the biggest council estates in the country) into another place: one where lessons of history are tangible, with stories that were huge in this neighbourhood and changed the political landscape but have long been 'ghosted'. And one where the lore of this locality, an alternate reality made of news and memories, dead dignitaries and minor deities, is layered into the immersive city plan.

61

Using the urban ghost walk as a template, the research team's approach could be styled as 'Mythogeography': 'a crossover between the drift and performance in a co-operative form of improvisation and devising'. Similar to the loose process described by the author of A Guide to Walking Sideways: A user's handbook for walking out on the spectacle (E-spectacle), our 'anti-team of collaborators' worked in a range of practice-led ways to construct 'an orrery of narratives and images, a fluid map of certain, limited thematic trajectories.' (2010: 141) Our collaboration so far, and with a wider group of participants and players in progress, is aiming to make this town visible by art and rite.

Originally conceived as a sort of 'promenade performance' that got bigger, we envisaged an app to make it more accessible. This would offer an interactive narrative told in local streets and public settings, in which the heroes and villains are a mix of real figures and fabled icons, and the staging posts of the story are plotted onto tourist-guide stop-off points, both famous and unfamiliar. We selected 'sites that can allow for some kind of transformation… locations where we hope to achieve a heightened or altered awareness' (Banks Thomas 2015: 593) as we try to create a supernatural legend quest consciously and through academic contrivance to resonate with a community. As Tuan concurs, '[m]ythical space is an intellectual construct.' (1977: 99)

The multiple outcome storylines lead along Pompey's campus and commercial streets, stopping where the original histories started, narrated by either Jolly Jack, the sinister 'laughing sailor' from the vintage amusement arcade, or John Felton, fabled assassin of the Duke of Buckingham from a bloody scene at a High Street inn.

The duke, George Villiers, was King Charles I's favourite courtier and rumoured lover, but despised by the general public. His story was, as it were, 'live tweeted' in hundreds of broadside ballads (or 'libels') of the day:

> 'In their lines, we meet again all the elements of Buckingham's libellous persona: the witch, the papist, the poisoner, the sexual predator, the monopolist of power, the perverter of justice, the social upstart, the seller of offices, the breaker of parliaments, the betrayer of the Protestant cause, the incompetent villain, the seducer and deceiver of kings.' (Bellany & McRae 2005: ii)

Many traditional ballads commemorate Felton's part; gentleman soldier, wounded at Buckingham's botched battle, who went to Portsmouth that day with a confession already written in his hatband, and strong personal and political motivation for the assassination. He

was arrested at the scene, and hung; then his body was left to the people who came to touch it, take pieces of his clothing, a pilgrimage for rebels and resistors in the run up to England's Civil War, until the last rotten parts dropped into the sea (Holstun 2002).

So grim a public spectacle, such as could not be seen (on these shores?) today, was invoked as our research collective set its first task; to find those places or personalities in Portsmouth which were macabre, with gory imagery and grotesque detail, or other uncanny content for this supernatural version of our city. Here we are in the most thrilling realms of representational space, where '…death must be both represented and rejected. Death too has a 'location', but that location lies below or above appropriated social space; death is relegated to the infinite realm so as to disenthrall.' (Lefebvre 1994: 35)

We drafted gameplay which would dictate which character each visitor follows; though all will end up at the same seafront telescope to see an uprising of rage and revenge from the Solent (a short stretch of sea between Southsea's shingle and the sandy Isle of Wight, only eleven minutes to cross by Hovercraft). This is what we call the 'Jackopalypse': an embodied return of the repressed, referencing popular horror tropes of resurrection, including undead war veterans of the 'wild hunt'. (Hutton 2017: 129)

Portsmyth attempts to revivify local history for a new generation. Theorist of uncanny locations, Banks Thomas explains how 'hypermodern creations often recall the past in ways that are malleable to remaking, personalizing, and fictionalising.' (2015: 560) We cover each of these three aspects in our creative process as a UoP team.

Inspired by a real-life case, researcher Dr Tom Sykes based his focal character, the Reverend Lightguide, on an exorcist recorded in city archives in the 1980s. (As narrator, his name is taken from the city's nautical motto, 'Heaven's Light, Our Guide'). Using local media news of a tower-block poltergeist he 'remade' the account to heighten the stakes of a citywide supernatural infestation. The character is loosely based on a Portsmouth-born vicar whose memoir, A Priest's Psychic Diary, is a rare book find! [1]

Then, our second protagonist, and possible perpetrator, is a real figure, long forgotten, whose grisly skeleton hung on public display near Portsmouth's 'saluting platform', in a small rebellion which lit a fuse for the Civil War. True ex-soldier and assassin John Felton was 'fictionalised' by author Dr Mandi Garrie as part of our collaboration.

And the third character is fantastical, friend or foe depending which way the game goes: Jolly Jack, that sat on Southsea's pier for over thirty years, scaring the locals and attracting tourists with his mechanical mirth. Coin-operated, risibly basic in construction, he's myth and meme, the *genius loci* as fairground attraction, but is now stored at the city museum. He cried out to be iconic in our alternate Pompey.

As soon as I started drafting Jack's voice, as part of the role-playing game script, his laughter told a sad story. Though this crude sailor evokes the archetypal clown, like penny-arcade automata of comic policemen or hysterical fortune tellers in other resorts, from our opening lines his voice seemed to resound with the angry or sorry ghosts of centuries' maritime mishaps. But the writing was 'personalised' in that some of my own feelings were expressed through his words, too.

The research collaboration is led by Dr Karl Bell of the Supernatural Cities group at UoP, with colleagues Dr Will Sutton and Dr Eilis Philips adding spoken and sung word to the 'choose your own' storylines. Our focus is on the ineffable, though the plot has explicit political content (Felton's was a significant prelude to the coming conflict) and implicit psychological analogy (Jack is a timeless channel for servicemen's accounts of their survival). Perhaps the 'Jackopalypse' as a haunting allegory can cover both grounds. There is strong evidence that 'otherworldly narratives excel at speaking to our anxieties, and they also contain cultural truths' (Banks Thomas 2015: 277).

The Supernatural genre and agenda of our storytelling invokes the wild hunt of folklore history, a 'Furious Army' of the dead, back on a rampage. 'The marching figures were identified variously as people who had suffered violent deaths, usually in battle or on the scaffold; or had died unbaptized…' as Ron Hutton describes (2017: 129). We have invited that army to the 'absolute space', a shoreline where local spirits, secular deities, may come and go tidally; the 'abstract space' of national border and naval order, an urban setting by the sea. Without their presence, perhaps it will never be significantly mapped. 'Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs and functional rhythms of personal and group life' (Tuan 1977: 178). This practice-led research project is designed to bring a fresh opportunity for community engagement, and a new experience of dark tourism to our home town.

***Portsmyth*: Play the game, save the city!**

In Guildhall Walk, near our university offices, co-investigators spotted the brass plaque of a mysterious detective agency. It was smeared with age and neglect, advertising the premises of long-gone 'Enigma Investigations'. It inspired the imaginary character who welcomes participants to this potential crime scene, in the local idiom:

> 'Oi oi! I'm Reverend Lightguide, the mush in charge of maintaining the balance of mythical energies here in Portsmouth. Problem is, all the sailors of old are threatening to rise out of the Solent and wreak the kind of havoc in this city only the Scummers[2] could dream of.' (Quotations in this section are from an original script by the UoP Supernatural Cities researchers.)

The threat is modern; our subtexts allow it to be seen as environmental disaster, easy to envisage at our polluted and crumbling coastline; or the return of repressed trauma personified as vengeful military ghosts, haunted themselves by mishandled naval manoeuvres and avoidable nautical accidents.

Lightguide explains, in voice-over and visual text that we planned to scroll on the game player's screen in our prototype app; 'See, these blokes ain't dead as such, they're trapped somewhere between life and death on account of the unjust ways they ended up in Davy Jones' locker[3].' His call to adventure may signal a new opportunity to settle old scores and resolve personal wars, too.

We conceived a retro coin-slot style for the look and feel of our gameplay, to suit the seaside setting, and devised amusement arcade sound effects to punctuate the spoken and sung story clues. If they win the first challenge, Lightguide's dialogue goes on: 'Cushty mush, you done well. I have a person of interest for you. Get yourself dayntain[4] for a word with John Felton, a slippery eel who snuffed the Duke of Buckingham with barely a blink. Ask him about a skate[5] with a vile cackle goes by the name of Jolly Jack'.

These players are sent to the site of the Greyhound Inn, the spot where this happened in 1628. Lieutenant Felton had served under the glamourous young general George Villiers, at his siege near La Rochelle in France. A scarred survivor of the battle, Felton was denied promotion by Buckingham. There are detailed historical records, and many songs and poems of the day, which detail his rebel heroism and the impact of his act on the King, Charles I, and society in ways which still feel topical today.[6] The *Portsmyth* team found the eye-witness

account of his mother in these archives, confirming our suspicion of PTSD when she said he was wracked with tremors, so we continued writing along those lines as he 'vowed to avenge all the marching lives dancing boy wasted'.

The simple game structure is based on a win/lose outcome and every time the player doesn't succeed in the penny arcade-style activities they turn against this anti-hero, though, and head in Jolly Jack's direction to secure his cause and support his case. If the player loses the first game, then instead of being sent to the historic inn in the High Street, they're directed to the city museum in Museum Road (left instead of straight ahead at Cambridge Junction).

Still packed with hyperlocal signs and nautical symbology, compare Lightguide's dialogue if you lose: 'Alright mate, I'll save you. Quick as you like get down the City Museum and talk to Jolly Jack – if you can squeeze a word in between his vile cackling. Jack's a skate himself, he knows the skate mentality. I'm normally against bribing witnesses but bring him this coin and he'll sing like a seagull'.

As the feared and revered spirit of Southsea seafront, one-time threshold guardian of Clarence Pier, Jolly Jack is a more familiar local figure than Felton. Any mention of him elicits fierce or fearful reactions from the general public. Many people have their own stories about this penny arcade anti-hero, now displayed in a picturesque local history museum:

The monster from a local myth

A sort of male Pandora's box

But I'm locked inside and paid to display amusement

Ex-bouncer of the bemusement arcade

I'm meant to mention John Felton, no?

With a yo ho ho; I knew him, yes

A ration of rum to his dead man's chest

On this route, players are persuaded that Jolly Jack is the good guy. He says, 'I've always had an issue with that Felton, we fought together in 1627, had a little scuffle in the main kerfuffle, wasn't just the French that got *les plumes* ruffled'. He raises the spectres of war veterans and

other 'cursed relics from naval lore. Ancient mariners ahoy me every summer eve, sight-seers from a time-slip sunset on the Pompey shore'.

Here is the most magical place in the city. 'This space, with its continual appeals to minor local deities… the lyrical space of legend and myth vies with the bureaucratic and political space to which nation states have been giving form since the seventeenth century' (LeFebvre 1994: 321). This is the site of popular revolt, of archetypal avengers.

Our own characters overlay the same metanarratives, underlining how all of popular culture seems to tend toward the dark side today: 'Antiquity's representations of space have collapsed: the Firmament, the celestial spheres. Its representational spaces, however, have survived: the realm of the dead, chthonian and telluric forces, the depths and the heights.' (LeFebvre 1994: 321). Our idea was to make this available as both site-specific and remote gameplay; so that the story could unfold in the scenes it was set, or on the settee for participants with limited mobility. The prototype app was therefore planned to work in both ways.

If the fishing game, down by the candy floss and penny falls, is won, the player has to convert to a Felton follower instantly. But if the game is lost, Jolly Jack escapes. The *Portsmyth* player will witness his 'rite of liberation', as well as a Freudian 'return of the repressed', at the unlucky coin toss. 'Hey ho and up I rises: and when I do, I bring all the undead mariners with me too. The drowned and shot, the starved or bitten, the sunk. I can raise them once I'm out of this cheapskate time-travelling trunk.'

Players on this route, will have – virtually or actually – a button in hand, snipped from Felton's uniform to jam the telescope slot and prevent the devastating surge. Players supporting Jolly Jack at this point, though, will have fallen for a story he's told them about trying to save a third brother, stuck in an antique sideshow directly across the water:

> 'Another Jack lives on the Isle of Wight and when we three triangulate it will heave-ho fate, so all the laughing tars who ever wheezed their last, with water in their eyes, tobacco in their tins, (lice in their bone combs), their rum still sealed in a barrel, lucky sovereigns still locked in a trunk, all sunk in the Solent: they will rise…'

Depending which way their game play goes, players are led into the Rock Gardens, near the Pyramids Centre, on Southsea Seafront by Luce or Lucy, the lady of the place, who both our

protagonists knew, in different ways, in their real/imaginary lifetimes in 17th Century Portsmouth:

> There are only two ways to know a girl if you're a sailor. Maybe she was introduced by your mother, mainly you wouldn't introduce her to your ma, though.

> And Jack knew this Pompey girl only by darkness, still heaven's light shone brightly, down at the point.

> John Felton knew her the other way. A figurehead that sits fore, not aft. The Madonna of Penitentiary Street[7], he crawled to her.

These characters, the dichotomous females we needed for the story, are also named for the light (*luce*) in the city's motto. They are sometimes the only women 'establishment figures' to be seen in the historic naval city: ship's figureheads.

Lefebvre says, 'Even today urban space appears in two lights: on the one hand it is replete with places which are holy or damned, devoted to the male principle or the female, rich in fantasies or phantasmagoria; on the other hand it is rational, state-dominated and bureaucratic' (1994: 231). Appearing to be on one side a pristine and on the other a peeling ship's figurehead, they offer the feminine principle for balanced storytelling. Lucy helps celebrate John Felton's win; he has righted a wrong, bravely fighting a prevailing force. Luce, her shadowy sister, is there for Jolly Jack, who also thinks he's won, as he wanted to lose, celebrating the courage of his rage. Together, they 'glug the bilge that should be sipped'.

In the current iteration, *Portsmyth* has two different endings. Jack has his way and opens the floodgates to all the rage and regrets our city has sunk below the Solent's surface; or John saves the day, smoothing the ruffled waves of vengeful servicemen and other long-lost seamen, to restore calm order at the port's mouth. The UoP researchers, following Banks Thomas' notion in the text referred to next, felt players would prefer their pleasure mixed with anxiety. In drafting *Portsmyth*'s ending, we thought more people would want to see than stop the Jackopalypse, most participants would be keen to view the uprising, the ancient 'Wild Hunt' of souls from local shores, than have the spectacle and satisfaction averted.

Workshopping the storyline and gameplay so far with local stakeholders has allowed its creators to identify new avenues to explore and areas to enhance. As fast as we could trial our putative app, new developments in game technology are offering state-of-the-art play in

more appealing formats. In terms of content, though, feedback from our focus group has suggested that the Jackopalypse should be averted this time, leaving the possibility of a sequel, and the threat of a second, greater surge, later.

Third Space On-Sea

Portsmyth is a third space between the port and the myths that exist in the true histories and real sites of our city. We can readily theorise it, in fact, pinpointing its locations exactly on campus maps; clearly identifying 'the material, mappable space (the real; what is seen and experienced)' as against the imagined 'second space' described in *Putting the Supernatural in Its Place; Folklore, the Hypermodern and the Ethereal* (Banks Thomas 2015: 578).

Our new story depends on both archival evidence (first space) and oral anecdote (second space) for the events it narrates. But the scene is set from the start in a 'third space… this attempt to collapse the binaries between first and second space (the space as it is both real and imagined).' And in a key principle of Edward Soja's postmodern geography it is even the case that 'third space is how we actually understand place; it's how we "practice" place. It is both objective and subjective, concrete and abstract, real and imagined, of the moment and historical' (Banks Thomas 2015: 580).

Our conjoining of actual history from city archives with living legends from its holiday scene was bound to conjure the magic of the 'third space', and a place where local knowledge could meet the uncanny, the imaginary personalities and unconscious knowing, stored like an out-of-order laughing sailor in the mausoleum. Bringing interactive game design to local history should offer novel opportunities for tourism. Our output aims to combine the appeal of the '*derivee*', that key technique practiced by the flaneur/se, with the focussed point of a 'ghost walk'. Adding 'choose your own' avenues, the specific drifting theorised by top proponents of psychogeography (Mock 2019), increases the thrill of our predestined pathways through historical locales on foot.

By defining our output as hypermodern folklore, which term 'recognizes the intermingling of folk, popular, consumer, and digital cultures' (Banks Thomas 2015: 348–349), we plan to offer ways round the route without walking, assisted by the latest developments in augmented reality, to increase the accessibility of our story game for a wider range of participants. Our third space will have 'kerb appeal' in any case if, as Banks Thomas

suggests, 'like some of our ancestors, we don't just run from scary things. We run to them as well - and some of us do this commonly' (321).

The paranormal aspect is attractive rather than off-putting; even, or especially, if the content of the performance or presentation might be disturbing. We're building on the appeal of urban horror experiences, of acceptable (because historicised) crime tours for the next generation of civic visitors, hopefully including annual floods of new undergraduates. It's their technical literacy that *Portsmyth* needs to aspire to, and we are glad to be based near the university's ground-breaking centre in CCi XR, with a motion capture studio to produce virtual reality content, where we are making inroads towards a really novel playable tale.

The supernatural city is a more resilient place than the real one; with nothing lost that can't revisit, nothing dead that can't rise again, nothing repressed that cannot bone-rattle from the closet.

Shadow City

In this section, I will reflect upon how certain aspects of the creative writing process can be seen as supernatural, and how they relate to the urban space, place or third space, as the scene of a new immersive tale for grim tourism, and our 'home turf'.

In a Jungian sense, the shadow appeared as soon as I started writing the voice of this archetypal tar, and the old seaman's laughter on cue seemed a metaphor for depression. During the University of Portsmouth's 'DarkFest', an Autumn term seminar series in 2019, I performed Jolly Jack's part in spoken word events at places of magical geography along the local coastline. Bringing the vintage sailor to life in contemporary poetic engagement with his creepy legend, I presented my practice-led research in heritage venues Southsea Castle and the Square Tower with placards and a puppet. It was a psychic conjunction with what Jung would call my animus, as well as my ancestors. (The sequence of spoken word is recorded on Alison Habens' YouTube channel).

In this 'personalised' creative process, I embodied him as the muse of a military city, mouthpiece for a seafaring community, and avatar for ex-servicemen. The performance spaces were historical gaols, ammo stores and shooting platforms; and my critical engagement with this terrifying experience is discussed using psychoanalytic and feminist literary theory below.

70

The process by which I spoke in character as Jolly Jack easily superimposes onto what Jung says about the archetypal shadow and how a person might encounter their own secret or supressed nature. This way of theorising the authorial act, almost as 'channelling', familiar to all sorts of writers, perhaps maps onto what Marie-Louise Von Franz, Jung's close collaborator, says in their co-edited book: 'When an individual makes an attempt to see his shadow he becomes aware (and often ashamed) of those qualities he denies in himself.' (1964: 174)

Creating the anti-heroes and villains of *Portsmyth* required each of its authors and orchestrators to draw upon the hidden sides of themselves, as well as the city. This is standard literary practice, in fact, but it also matches a more esoteric description of an arguably similar process: 'The shadow usually contains values that are needed by consciousness, but that exist in a form that makes it difficult to integrate them into one's life' (1964:178). Stories, especially if immersive, interactive, in situ, help to integrate shadowy reflections into real life. This would bring benefits recognized by Jungian psychoanalysis; 'If the shadow figure contains valuable, vital forces they ought to be assimilated into actual experience and not repressed.' (1964:183)

In *Portsmyth,* through its specific setting, particular plot points and characterisation, the important question of the city's shadow is raised. What sides of Pompey does it deny itself? How are these repressed traits different to any other (seaside) city? Though his is the rallying call, the collective narrative will go deeper than Jolly Jack's 'naval gazing'. His struggle to be jolly in a claustrophobic display case is relieved at the climax when he breaks out of the box. This scene changes the space, and sense of place, dramatically. It maps onto a Jungian model, in the 'rite of liberation' (1964: 156).

Hey; that's my fist through the screen, still smiling

Ho; that's my boot through the plywood floor

Up I stand, with rigging unravelling

Onto my feet in this dead-small berth

Slashing a portal, smashing a door

In this cubicle, coracle, scoring it open

Walking the plank on a moonlit pier

I must go down to the seas again

Joseph L. Henderson, also writing in the seminal manual Man and his Symbols, describes how ritual acts of initiation, containment, then liberation 'can make it possible for individuals, or whole groups of people, to unite the opposing forces within themselves and achieve an equilibrium in their lives' (Jung 1964:156).

Jungian psychology includes a key proposition that all men have a female side, known as the Anima, and all women have an inner man called the Animus; and working with Jolly Jack led me to this encounter with mine. Even when trailblazing Dr Von Franz was writing, in the early 1960s, it was not acceptable for ladies to let their masculine sides show and could certainly be problematic if she seemed 'possessed by the animus' at home or in the workplace. The term animosity attests to this. But the theory goes that: 'he too has a very positive and valuable side; (he too can build a bridge to the Self through his creative activity)' (Jung 1964: 203).

In contemporary critical thinking, this work would be described as autoethnographic. My technique of becoming obsessed with 'JJ' (Jolly Jack) and experiencing a creative transference with the Jungian animus tells only of immanent phenomena, personal coincidence he termed synchronicity. Yet it is tempting to take the offer of transformation promised, if the city's masculine identity, its macho agenda, could be rebalanced by a similar archetypal relationship with its 'inner woman'. Jung asks how this might work:

> … in practical terms? This positive function occurs when a man takes seriously the feelings, moods, expectations, and fantasies sent by his anima and when he fixes them in some form – for example, in writing, painting, sculpture, musical composition, or dancing. When he works at this patiently and slowly, other more deeply unconscious material wells up from the depths… (1964: 205)

Our *Portsmyth* project brings this positive meeting with the 'feminine side', through words, music and dancing. It acknowledges the constructedness of 'female nature', its social and historical contexts, and hegemonic functions, in engaging with this essentialist notion. We consciously crafted the female character Luce/Lucy to redress the gender imbalance of the story we'd drafted so far. Her part needed to fit both John and Jack's storyline, so her persona was two-faced.

But, in fact, the tradition of the Wild Hunt, *Wilde Jagd*, also known as the Herlathing or Hellequin's Army, an assembly of the human dead, was always associated with a female leader. Her name, variously, was Diana, Herodias, Holda or Lady Habonde; a divine or semi-divine heroine. (Her male counterpart in this long history of 'nocturnal spirit bands' is Odin, Wotan, Herla or Herne) (Hutton 2017: 125–131).

It's traditional for there to be a supernatural female helping or hindering the hero on his journey. Jolly Jack has the chance to confess to Luce, at the climax, 'I was fit to burst with undead seamen, my heart was full of unshed daemons, what were better out than in.' It should be useful to explore possible mental health analogies in the 'Jackopalypse', in the hope that offering a wider audience the cathartic experience would be welcome. Could the playfully spooky purge be a vehicle for positive transformation in reality?

For Jung, such creative gameplay can really make a difference. 'After a fantasy has been fixed in some specific form it must be examined both intellectually and ethically, with an evaluating feeling reaction. And it is essential to regard it as being absolutely real; there must be no lurking doubt that this is 'only a fantasy' (1964: 195). This is very different to Freud's conclusion in his essay 'Creative Writing and Daydreaming'. 'The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion – while separating it sharply from reality' (Burke 2006: 55).

And do we want 'more deeply unconscious material' welling up from the depths, as Jung puts it? This matter is what makes fantasy become reality, surely, the story of *Portsmyth*'s ghosts starting to influence the places it's based on. As the author of Mythogeography says,

> …it is at our peril that we fail to understand that in "ghost" we are talking not about some human past, but the inanimate present, the concrete locus that we cannot demolish intellectually, exorcise or fictionalise as horror stories…I am not referring to a gothic conceit, but rather to the continuing presence all about me of such places as are now no longer themselves, that are besides themselves…. (2010: 18)

Conclusion: You are now (or never) leaving the city

Portsmyth demonstrates originality in its story game design and mix of factual and fictitious characters; rigour in its historical research, with reflexive critical and creative practice; and significance in its contribution to a community's discourse around local politics, public health and personal wellbeing, potentially using state-of-the-art storytelling technology.

By underpinning our practice-led research with postmodern philosophies of space and place, including tenets from psychogeography and autoethnography, we have prepared the way to test its effects in public facing contexts. Our pilot study is designed to collect feedback from players about the potential benefits or pitfalls of their experience, and to generate a data set of audience reactions for future evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, to support funding bids for further game development.

Reverend Lightguide says, as he signs-off at the end of our detective story:

> I'd like to pick your brains about this epic Pompey odyssey. First off, do you see the city in a new light? What have you learned about the hidden folklore, the secret stories, the lesser known myths that lurk behind the evident and the everyday? And if you could pass a word of advice on to another plucky - or maybe even just downright foolhardy - soul embarking on this adventure in the future, what would it be? Take care and let heaven's light be your guide.

This paper is a call for collaborators from other seaside cities where laughing sailors could channel similar knowledge exchanges. A network might be developed to compare and contrast our investigations into the possibilities of local historical storytelling on supernatural themes.

There are limitations and ongoing challenges for the research project. Since the first draft of *Portsmyth*'s script, and pilot version of a game app, renovations have started at the city's coastal sea-defences due to environmental erosion. Large-scale reconstructions of the walls and promenade where our scenes are set meant that the site of the telescope, for the climax of the story, is no longer accessible to would-be game players. There is a similar coin-slot telescope nearby, so the walking route could simply be adjusted, but the longer-term developments will take a virtual direction too. The supernatural city is movable, its GPS points can be relocated, while its essential situation is preserved.

The guidance of 'Mythogeography', for similar co-creations to our collaboration, is that '[i]n stitching and weaving and interleaving these productions together, the facilitator

must take into account the blending of differences of velocity. The different productions will 'tell' their stories at different speed' (2010: 141). Lefebvre, in the Production of Space, agrees: 'The past leaves its traces; time has its own script' (1994: 37).

Our prototype app was devised by the 'Sailor Town' technicians https://porttowns.port.ac.uk/a-walk-through-sailortown/ to work along the same lines. However, the disruption to our interactive map from slow renovations on the coastal defences, plus fast emerging technology in the field of digital gameplay, meanS a rethink, so we can stay one step ahead of this narrative curve. New gaming platforms are developing at speed, and our retelling of old stories must respond with agility. In the race between form and content, in these streets, creative writing must be more innovative.

Consequently, I recorded game clues using motion capture facilities in the faculty of CCi at the University of Portsmouth, with VR avatars of Jolly Jack and Luce dancing a dystopian tango in the ship's graveyard, an Unreal Engine background that looks a lot like our real *Portsmyth*. In his chapter *Time in Experiential Space*, Tuan says 'Dancing, which is always accompanied by music or a beat of some kind, dramatically abrogates historical time and oriented space (1977: 128). This also invokes what LeFebvre describes as 'certain ludic spaces, devoted for their part to religious dances, music, and so on, [which] were always felt to be beneficent rather than baleful' (1994: 251). In the virtual ludic space of the internet, I'm also experimenting with Twine software as a way to tell the 'choose-your-own-adventure' story easily and freely online, but want to feature augmented reality assets in further game instalments, such as Holographic and CGI content, subject to a successful funding bid.

From the long-hanging martyrdom of John Felton to a moment of mechanical laughter from Jolly Jack; from the modern man-of-the-cloth, Reverend Lightguide, to the timeless loose ladies of the seaside; *Portsmyth*'s protagonists inhabit a third space, and invite participants to find out whether its creative, community uprising can bring any relief. Our next task is test whether people will play and what benefits the 'Jackopalypse' may offer them. The stakes must be high, the game great fun, the rewards unique for this to work as a fan-based or commercial proposition (or better still as a fund-raiser for local or veterans' charities).

Endnotes

[1] https://www.abebooks.co.uk/9780281035618/Priests-Psychic-Diary-Wellman-Jack-028103561X/plp

[2] Pompey's longstanding animosity with Southampton Football Club.

[3] Sailors' slang for the bottom of the ocean, where the drowned could be found.

[4] Legendary local pronunciation of 'downtown'

[5] Slang for a (no good) sailor.

[6] After cataloguing all the errors the Duke of Buckingham made in his mission to the Ile de Rhe, Sir John Oglander, deputy governor of the Isle of Wight and important early memoirist, wrote: 'A General should be a wise, grave, discreet, experienced man, not light, unsettled and to be led away with every man's opinion… On all informations he changed his opinions, so that divines, courtiers and buffoons, being his instruments, commanded all.' From A Royalist's Notebook – The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander of Nunwell B. 1585 D. 1655

[7] Known now as Penny Street, Old Portsmouth, but not remembered as a scene of public military punishment.

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