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# Walking as Ontological Shifter: Thoughts in the Key of Life

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WALKING AS ONTOLOGICAL SHIFTER  
THOUGHTS IN THE KEY OF LIFE

by

SILVINA CALDERARO

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2017

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

WALKING AS ONTOLOGICAL SHIFTER - THOUGHTS IN THE KEY OF LIFE

by

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With walking as ontological shifter I pursue an alternative to the dominant modernist episteme that offers either/or onto-epistemologies of opposition and their reifying engagements. I propose this type of walking is an intentional turning towards a set of radical positions that, as integrative aesthetic and therapeutic practice, brings multiplicity and synchronicity to experience and being in an expanded sociality. This practice facilitates the conditions of possibility for recurring points of contact between the interiority perceived as ‘body’ and the exteriority perceived as ‘world.’ While making evident the self’s at once incoherence with it-self, it opens to a space beyond the self, allowing for difference to seep in from a field of alterity. This movement is the radical turn towards an experiential discernment of the subjective as a pulsing, never fully fixed, relational intensity that re-enters the ‘human’ after decentering it.

Immersing the walker in ‘curated’ environments while making explicit a slowing down to a rate of coherence and synchronization allow internalization and integration of the above mentioned shifts. Walking becomes a medium for a new onto-epistemological organization where the non-linearity of space-time and affective forces with ontological capacities for transformation are held together. Because this medium encompasses the complex multiplicities that are time, movement, land and affective and cognitive processes, the results it yields are necessarily open and indeterminate. I look for these new entanglements to guide the materialities and immaterialities involved in this type of walking towards an acceptance of embodiment and temporality as diverse and open.

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“The task of life consists in making coexist all repetitions in a space where difference is distributed.”  
(Deleuze, 2002:16, my translation)

“How else can one write but of those things which one doesn’t know, or knows badly?”...“We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transform one into the other.”...“Perhaps writing has a relation to silence altogether more threatening than that which it is supposed to entertain with death.”  
(Deleuze, 1994:xi)

## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION

I was born to an Argentinean heterosexual couple that immigrated to New York at the start of the Cold War during what is now understood as the Great Acceleration Era<sup>1</sup>. They were fleeing a messy political scene and managed to get grants for master degrees in the US. The story is long and complicated but eventually my father got a job in Michigan, where my mother gave birth to me, their second child. The story continues as my father is transferred to Mexico City immediately thereafter, where I spent my first five years of life. My family then moved to Argentina in the early 1970s, where I would attend elementary and high school. Michigan gave me the cherished ‘natural-born-citizenship’ that I experienced as both promise and curse—a place name in my passport that gives me the right to be president by the constitutional connection of land and birthplace; and a blind, forced and lifelong attachment to Michigan, an unknown land that was the place of manufacture both of napalm B and agent orange, highly destructive chemicals used in the war in Vietnam. Mexico gave me a sense of life as difference,

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<sup>1</sup> The great acceleration (era, period) is a marker of what has been termed the Anthropocene (Crutzen, Stoermer, 2000)—where humans have presumably become a geomorphic force shaping the planet. The great acceleration is the period post-1950 when a set of 24 socio-economic and earth-system global indicators went off exponentially, creating irreversible “...human-induced changes to the carbon cycle and nitrogen cycle and in ocean acidification, global trade, and consumerism, as well as the rise of international forms of governance like the World Bank and the IMF” (Nixon, 2014:2). I follow Nixon and others in linking these changes to neoliberalism and its global economic implementations of inequality in resource extraction and distributions.

as resistance and persistence: a sense of the non-chronological, a taste for nonlinear connections at a quotidian level. Argentina gave me a troubled culture of hybridities and a practice of survival and handiness that might prove valuable if and when the First World's orderliness crumbles and collapses. It is with hindsight and courage that I understand my loving parents—their comings and goings, and the expanded contexts in which they made decisions—in a neoliberal straightjacket.

My non-ending sense of not belonging is due perhaps to this winding and recursive road of comings and goings which extends back in time to waves of immigration that follow no apparent logic—my ancestors actually staying in one particular place for a generation, making that place their home, only to leave it again in the following generation, eventually ending in Argentina. This trans-generational mesh of moving desires (although not all physically executed but carried on as a culture of not belonging) along with larger historical forces both material and immaterial, conscious and unconscious, inhabit me like ghosts as I move cautiously and humbly along in my thoughts and on this planet. The sense of not belonging is also perhaps due to the fact that I have rebelled since day one, due to some 'instinctual gut reaction,' from the straightjacket. Understanding forms of domination or molarity<sup>2</sup> (and morality)—be it physical, verbal, political or spiritual as it can be said to occur in certain economies, certain political regimes, certain religious practices, certain family structures, and certain discursive domains that shape and form subjectivities—has been the matter and motor of my life.

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<sup>2</sup> This refers to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of molarity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).



I find myself as of late recognizing the hybridity I have always been, peeling the layers of ‘purity’ that seem to have covered me from the nudity of my ‘brutal,’ ‘wild’ being by a well-intentioned education. Admitting this hybridity is not nudity and animality as the brutal irrational is a distorted understanding of both animals and that ‘special’ animal called human (which, as a species, has committed brutalities against its own on the basis of scarcity, morals (wrongly understood as ethics), and plain greed as manifestations of a ‘dis-integration’ from within as from without (Winnicott, 1945). Rather, hybridity, if anything, inhabits a liminal and fluid space-time where I can move at ease. It houses the ‘non-belonging’ within an expanse with permeable boundaries and engaged with potential movement. Growing up as a hybrid-in-the-closet, I did not always recognize my gut reactions and instincts as responses to affective forces and to the ghosts around me. I nonetheless learned to ‘read’ them and follow their aim towards the open with humbleness, curiosity and gratitude. This may be the reason why I never follow a straight path, because I do not foresee the path ahead of me nor the end port to which this path potentially leads. I concentrate on the open. On the other hand, from an exteriority of both human and non-human capacities, I am read as a privileged being. Plain and simple, I am perceived to be a white, female human body carrying US citizenship, acculturated as urban Argentinean, living in New York City (the epicenter of Western thought and capital). This privilege implicates me historically while traversing a haunted world. Whether handicap or vantage point, this implicated subjectivity that I am is fully disclosing as a way to enter long discussions of flows and dominations, open and closed systems, bodies and minds, originary technicities, and the limits of the human.

Possibly both handicapped *and* advantaged, I want to enter this discussion because here I find room to process the conditions of possibility for shifts to happen at deeper, more radical

levels, and perhaps as well to understand what would be a practice of de-centering the *anthropos* from this subjectivity that I embody. My thesis focuses on walking as such a practice, which is able to offer the conditions of possibility for shifts in thought and being. For the past five years I have adopted walking as part of my artistic practice. I have planned and led walks with others to better understand the changes these walkers and I go through when walking. I also have moved through a number of theoretical perspectives that have become part of my journey in understanding embodied movement, understanding walking as aesthetic medium. As well, I have better defined the environments where I believe these shifts are encouraged to happen. One thing I know for sure, is that shifts in thought and in ways of being only happen if walkers become aware that they are walking in the presence of affective forces, which include ghosts.

#### WALKING IN THE COMPANY OF GHOSTS

As already suggested, looking back into my childhood sheds some light as to why I embarked on this inquiry. Besides the migrations of generations of my family, there also is a memory of the quasi-ritualistic Sunday afternoon strolls with my family in Buenos Aires' grey streets that served as excuse for being together even as our family was actually falling apart as a unit—my father hospitalized for depression or already gone, escaped from the depression, self-exiled to New York, despite his always being there with and for us at a distance.

Walking in the city in those days was not a happy endeavor; inside the family there was lack as absence; outside of it was murder in numbers. Pivoting on those concrete streets were many forces—life, death and resistance—all countering each other in silence. Silence was the motto from the military in power who equated it to health; ordering the people to keep quiet—do not look, do not inquire, do not resist, do not live and you will be granted the gift of survival.

Judging was everywhere but nowhere and with it the sense that moving, being, becoming was as dangerous as breathing. Judging was underground and fatal, not just wounding and restrictive to any questioning spirit, but plainly deadly, no questions asked.

And so perhaps I developed this survival skill of always questioning in silence, in my head, the limits of everything, tracing the limits of these very closed, enclosing and foreclosing systems, always looking for and exploring the workings of the valves that kept the system in a sort of manageable equilibrium, the valves of escape that allow any ‘closed system’ to sustain without exploding, at least until it shifts and opens (or finds another enclosure). And then again, why and how would these shifts happen?

The invisible straightjacket worn by all in the big city would somehow lift its weight during the family’s vacations to the countryside. Perhaps this is where, regardless of the ages of any family member, we were all allowed to breathe and play a bit more outside the typical familial roles assigned to each by each and especially the roles of respectful citizens silently assigned by the conservative urban society of the time. This is where walking, the outdoors and play got assembled inside me as in these salvatory periods: I was allowed to be myself—a tomboyish yet very attractive girl nearing puberty at an early age; a thoughtful yet silent and awkward person who questioned many a ‘reasonable logic’ in her head; a believer of justice and equality beyond the human realm even when “ethical environmentalism” or “vibrant matter” were not phrases often heard about; an anarchist at heart without the readings; an intuitive knower of process philosophy via Jorge Luis Borges; a seeker.

And here I am, still seeking and searching for the conditions of possibility to make

straightjackets into life vests. To find ways to materially and immaterially transform the hefty and drowning weights of thought, habit and behavior into lighter, lifting and leaping ways of being and becoming. What are ways in which life and death dance, play and connect? How to move away from the normative, ubiquitous and constrictive understanding of life as opposed to death, of death as a totalizing limit to a neoliberal and univocal sense of life? Ultimately, I am looking for ways in which apparently closed systems shift to expose their openness, become hybrid themselves and engage with difference differently.

### WALKING AS PRACTICE

Accepting the imprint left in me by these early walks in ‘nature,’ I have come to embrace the range of effects that this activity produces in me—for long or short periods, alone or in the company of others. Walking seems to allow my thoughts, emotions and body to be in the same place at the same time. These ‘natural settings’ are the places where I find a diversity of greens and landscapes to play and feel better in my body, to escape a violence of sorts, to undo a dissociation that travels far and deep. Experiencing this kind of transformation, I decided to extend the possibility of such an experience to other people (for what is art, if not the willingness to communicate and bring about a change in people’s perceptions and emotions?).

I decided to turn these walks into a participatory project. I put out open calls or work with a particular group of people and craft specific walks, bringing them out to ‘natural settings’ for about three or four hours at a time. Here I sometimes give commands or physical exercises so that participants will shift their habitual ways of being and relating and so that they will slow down enough to capture more imperceptible cues in themselves and the environments we are walking in. During the walks, or sometime after, participants always relate a story of lingering

wellbeing. This is also observable in their way of walking and engaging with the environment—halfway through the walk, walkers seem more connected and energized than when they began. Having taken my childhood interest in walking and ‘nature’ to make it into this art project, I have found that other people also reorganize their sense of self and situatedness. These shifts in their relationship with themselves and the environment are therapeutic. This is a type of transformation that I want to call an ontological shift—that is, to re-think the ontologies of the human being and the environment; to re-think their relationship as therapeutic and as philosophical query.

Walking as ontological shifter revolves around the thesis that intentional<sup>3</sup> and aesthetic walking in ‘natural expanses’ brings about conditions of possibility for certain changes to occur to the walker’s subjectivity. In order to understand these transformations that I observe during the walks, my project engages with a number of contemporary theories to address questions such as: What are some of the characteristics of the spaces plainly called ‘natural’ that engage walkers differently? Can a person come to fully sense and embody an integration between these spaces and them? What are some particularities of walking and environments for these shifts to happen? What are instances of learning and which are instances of habit? And, where does consciousness reside in these processes? I attempt to address these questions by engaging with aspects of philosophy concerned with relational theories as a meta-structure on which to lean the neuroscientific theory of Reentry. The first framework gives me room to ponder questions of space and time as both concrete and abstract terms. The second theory, a relational theory, grants the possibility to engage the neuronal mesh of the human body in its expansion into the

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<sup>3</sup> By intentional walks I refer to this practice of willful participation in specifically crafted walks. I also want to distinguish them from other forms of artistic or therapeutic walks such as psychogeography and mindful walking.

environment. The theory allows me to trouble issues regarding transformation, change, continuity and difference, as well as inquire about learning and habit-formation processes.

### WALKING CHART

To aid in the reading of this thesis I now present and briefly describe the overarching themes that resonate with the walking project. They act as important theoretical anchors and are recurring landmarks in the landscape of the text. These themes are at once surrounded by an orbit of sub-themes which deal with time, entropy and knowledge. As much as they may seem unrelated now, it will become easier to understand their relevance as the reader moves along.

### RELATIONALITY

Immersed in an environment, the walker is constantly reassessing and reconceptualizing themselves and the world around them, as well as the assumed boundaries between themselves and the world. It is here that the perception and idea of ‘self’ as an enclosed organism, a body delimited by skin, can shift conceptually and phenomenologically, even if provisionally, to an expanded perception of beyond-embodiment that encompasses other beings. In this way intentional walking is an activating vehicle, a weaving movement leading to an embodiment where the softening and provisional dissolution of boundaries between subjects, subject-object, inside-outside tend toward an expanded, non-dualistic, interconnected experience. It is activating in the sense that people shift to re-organize their relationship to themselves and to the environment.

Intentional walking responds to and aims to counter the assumption that has constituted humans as superior beings separate and autonomous from the rest of existing beings. I believe

this assumption has engendered what are our deepest problems today: unsustainable economies, social inequalities, global climate change and the political systems that perpetuate these conditions. At stake here is the issue of relationality: what is to be included or left outside of the relational? How are these relationalities to be enacted as socialities? How to embody alternative ways of knowing, being and relating? In short, what is the affect and ethics of this relational mode?

I draw on relational theories whose lineages are broad and diverse. The concept of open systems has been addressed frequently by different disciplines in their attempts to break through thermodynamic's mechanical model of equilibrium, from biology and cybernetics to information theory, to complexity and chaos theories, to the many humanities engaged today in these discussions. The decentering of the human, the expansion of the concept of sociality and the positing of relational assemblages beyond preconceived notions of species, categories and kinds as further discussed by feminist, queer, new materialist and affect theories, are all provocative moves aiming to counter a failed humanism. These are all important positions for my thesis that I will be bringing in as I write. Key figures in understanding these turns have been Patricia Clough, Mark Hansen, Elizabeth Grosz, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Mae-Wan Ho and Tim Ingold; along with other contemporary scholars whose thought extends from theirs.

### REENTRY

By now I hope the reader is familiar with a recurrent back and forth movement of introspection and extrospection. With it I weave the foldings and unfoldings of life as a context in which walking develops as a practice. There is a shared emphasis in motion with the oscillatory, hybridizing movements between the open and the closed explored with relational

theories. I believe it is movement what at once integrates and differentiates, while reorganizing new and old elements. In other words, the ontological shift is made possible by and through movement.

Akin to these dynamics is the theory of Reentry that I borrow from neuroscience. A physiological description, reentry explains how neural connections that are distributed along the whole of the body are constantly changing paths while they connect input (old and new) from the outside. Reentry allows us to re-consider our insides and the outsides where we are situated. Gerald Edelman and Giulio Tononi, the researchers who coined the term in the 1980's, claim that it is in these constant and always new neural pathways that these processes can be said to build a conscious experience. Reentry is supported by the discovery, via new imaging technologies, that the routes that occur in neuronal connections are not re-tracings with fixed linearity but instead a changing set of paths, which follow new routes that incorporate difference and allow higher degrees of flexibility in their connections. Reentry is “the ongoing recursive interchange of parallel signals between reciprocally connected areas of the brain, an interchange that continually coordinates the activities of these areas’ maps to each other in space and time” (Edelman and Tononi, 2000:48). Progressively larger and more complex networks, differentiation, reciprocity and integration are key terms in these recurring re-considerations of who we are in relationship with the environment. Reentry is by definition relational, contextual and dependent on prior experience, and hence time based<sup>4</sup>.

For this thesis I use Reentry as a template—it serves both as a physical description of physiological neuronal movement and as a metaphorical proxy in the different layers of

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<sup>4</sup> The notions of plasticity (the ability for profound reorganization after damage to the brain) and aggregate (the combinations and interactions between specialized areas of the brain) are important as background here. See McIntosh, A.R (2000).



complexity with which I engage. Reentry thus becomes a paraphrasing choreographic tool to emulate the many iterations and recurrences of writing as a performative act. I utilize it to better describe a movement ‘from neurology to writing machine,’ (Ticineto Clough, 2000:386). Reentry is present already in the introduction, and in the conclusion by aggregating meta-sections in it. In the ongoing re-entering core topics of the thesis, it functions as a way to elaborate them from different perspectives.

#### DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

I follow Deleuze to draw out how difference is possible and available in life. Deleuze distinguishes repetition of all generalities and their particulars which are based on similarity, opposition, identity and equivalencies from repetition that is instead the way towards the universal in its singular manifestations. While generalities are doomed to the law and behavior, the second repetition is closer to the order of miracles; it elevates; it potentiates. Deleuze also claims that generalities function within an exchange economy whereas singularities function within a gift and theft economy. Deleuze builds up his argument to temporalize repetition as concept, repetition as memory, and repetition as death. Each instance of repetition is a specific temporality. The first encloses within the same, the second opens to potential, and the third order eventually moves beyond as it selects difference while producing the former two (it liberates by ending engagement with that which is repeated). (Deleuze, 2002; Ansell-Pearson, 1999)

#### SPACE-TIME AND ITS COMPLEXITIES

Walking as I understand it is recurrently entangled with two subthemes: time and entropy. Important in my research is a sense of time that is shifted when walking in certain environments

that up to now, and until further definition, I am calling ‘natural.’ There seems to be a particular rhythmicity that is attained after some time of walking in these expanses. A slower cadence emerges that allows the walker to synchronize with the process of reentry and with the affective as relational. Since reentry and the affective are processes that constantly and recurrently absorb and leak, passing the old into the new, synchronizing with these rhythmicities orients the walker towards becoming aware of these passings. These include the spatial (matter and the immaterial) and the temporal (the speeds and intensities with which all becomes entangled and implicative<sup>5</sup> of each other). Bringing these processes to the fore as they happen within ourselves and as they weave the insides and the outsides as we walk is crucial to increase the possibilities of an ontological shift occurring. In other words, this walking is a way of learning to live in and with indeterminacy. Although this might not all happen *in* consciousness, the forthcoming expectation of walking in ‘natural’ environments as ontological shifter lies in its presenting to the walker a different, slower temporality that, in and of itself, carries a potentiality that altogether differentiates walking from the speeds of big data found in some densely ‘wired’ environments. What if a ‘present’ was experienced as lasting longer in the presence of slow movement? Better said, what if the moments that cascade one upon each other, the present tenses as they move and roll out to the past, could be made to have a longer experience of durationality when activated by a slower movement? In a sense the question turns towards the instant when the virtual is actualized—how do different modes of accessing it affect the actual?

This research also revolves around walking as a line of flight from entropy which has already escaped the Second Law of Thermodynamics (the closed system in search for equilibrium) and as it has been reformulated by post-thermodynamic understandings. These

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<sup>5</sup> Meaning both implicating and implicated.

implied that equilibrium has always been a fallacy or a tendency, but never an achieved actuality that lasted longer than half a second<sup>6</sup>. As such, the entropic may be defined as the unit of measure of our ignorance (Ho, 1994)—that which closes systems for fear that the unknown, the non-knowable, and the indeterminate may enter and alter all pretense of stability.

### WALKING AS METHOD

Following anthropologist Tim Ingold I take walking as method. The themes and subthemes of my thesis posed the challenge of writing in a way that evokes the movements and transformations of this walking. In other words, writing of the interrelationship of contemporary philosophical thought about the ‘natural,’ the human and the non-human environment and walking as method, while being present in the transformation, led me to writing as a performative act. To think and produce a writing that moves from one theory to the next, one theme to the next as if walking, does not always happen in a straight narrative line. This thesis is a composition of looser prose, right-aligned poetic form, and superscripted notes—all interspersed with regular text in an attempt to capture the movements of thought processes and experience.

My interest in Ingold rests in his overall position with regard to anthropology. His somewhat Deleuzian framework—closer to a philosophy of life—goes beyond the human being to claim the co-enactment of humans and the environments with which humans live and interact. This reciprocity is observable in the relationships produced by different ways of walking in different landscapes, with different cultures (Ingold, 2004b). Ingold suggests that fields of lines cross and act upon each other composing meshes. For instance, in Western cultures lines

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<sup>6</sup> This half second refers to the half second of the affective that is lost from perception (or consciousness), as per Brian Massumi (*The Autonomy of Affect*, 2002).

implicate our experiences, learning and knowledge production in specifically sedentary and detached ways. Referring to these as “the groundlessness of modern society,” Ingold asserts a “reduction of pedestrian experience,” where “the surfaces you can walk on are those that remain untouched and unmarked by your presence.” Another consideration that I want to highlight is Ingold’s assertion that “...walking is a highly intelligent activity. This intelligence, however, is not located exclusively in the head but is distributed throughout the entire field of relations comprised by the presence of the human being in the inhabited world” (Ingold, 2004b:332). This distribution and reciprocity bring walking as method to a tightly bound, yet highly porous and constantly changing, dynamic bundle with the relational and with reentry.

## SECTION II

### ON OR ABOUT THE ONTOLOGY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

To rethink the ontology of the environment I follow the recent scholarly turn towards the inquiry of what some call vibrant matter (Bennett) and others call affect (Massumi, Clough and others). These are understandings of what lies beyond traditional categories of the living (the plant and the animal kingdoms) as sole capacities to be affected and to have an affective agency. I proceed from affect theory's distinction between 'affect'—pre-conscious, pre-verbal, felt, embodied processes—and 'emotion'—the conscious, verbal, felt, embodied processes. Going back to Spinoza via Deleuze and Massumi, Richard Ek (2010:426) gives a succinct definition, "Affect is a form of usually indirect and non-reflective thinking, its own kind of intelligence and consequently a capacity of interaction, a force of emergence. Affect is therefore a transpersonal capacity, a force in and between bodies. The body (not necessarily a human body) can both affect and be affected"; followed by "...affect is non-cognitive, pre-reflexive, pre-conscious and pre-human."

Living organisms along with the larger extent of organic and inorganic matter now form part of this expanded realm, where vibrancies and affect, beyond a human capacity to perceive them phenomenologically, are unmistakable forces. As recognition of these expanded affective realms grows, the boundaries and categorizations of what a 'species' stands for are being increasingly challenged in turn. New intra- and inter-species socialities are formed, and different takes on object relations are established. Accompanying this turn there is an increased interest in thresholds and flows. What constitutes life and matter in general is the focus of a range of disciplines in the humanities, from anthropology to bio-semiotics to new media, permeated with

quantum field theory and process philosophy. The late Karen Wendy Gilbert elaborated on materiality in terms of time in promising ways. She explains "...rather than time being located in a (spatialized) past or future, I am writing of time as rivers of different rates of flow. What happens (in terms of open systems) if one steps from a river moving at one mile per hour into one moving at ten miles per hour? And back again?" (Gilbert, 2007:85). She proposes, following Deleuze, Guattari and Margulis, that "...each of these life-forms is an ontic state that exists at its own rate of being," going on to add that "...in an economy of ontic rate, or rates of being, what matters is the different speeds of the linked parts, rather than their form or function." (Gilbert, 2007:88). These propositions have immense repercussions for my thesis, in that they ground the provisional accessing of different time zones during a walk.

This expanded sense of the liveliness of the world has crucial ramifications, given that dualisms have dominated Western thought as a very specific relationality centered on the human subject around which revolve live or inert objects from which to extract profits or to exploit. As such, it has left and still leaves a very heavy footprint in that it directly affects materially, currently and historically, how we relate to all that falls in the category 'other', whether other humans or other forms of being. This strict categorization effectively reduces all that is 'other' to a thing to be tamed and exploited, or, in the best humanist guise, to be utilized as a resource or for humanity's benefit and progress. All the while, it collapses differences, stranding them in what Deleuze calls 'the quadruple fetters of representation.' He defies Plato thusly, "Four fetters in which difference can only be thought of within identity, resemblance, analogy and opposition; *it is always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition, with a*

*perceived resemblance that difference comes to be object of representation.*” (Deleuze, 2002:213-214; my translation, his emphasis).

Shifting radically from this dominant episteme will perhaps grant a non-anthropocentric spin of participation rather than a dominating stance as we co-inhabit this planet in our human actualizations. What is to be included or left outside of the relational, and how these relationalities are enacted as socialities, becomes crucial. Donna Haraway (2003 and 2015) has described this new quality of cohabitation as ‘being-with’ and ‘building kin’<sup>7</sup>; Joanna Latimer (2013) speaks of it as ‘being alongside.’ These relationships with what lies “alongside’ the human acknowledge a distribution of sociality no longer uniquely characteristic of an intra-species of the human. Most importantly, they address a relationality based on reciprocity and respect for difference.

With regard to the dynamics with which these relationalities are enacted as socialities, I draw particularly on media scholar Mark Hansen’s proposal of a third relational alternative that addresses possible oscillations between closed and open systems (Hansen, 2009). His conceptualization of the ‘System-Environment Hybrid’ responds to his claim that “...the increased complexification of the environment makes operational closure, no matter how provisional and heterogeneous it may now actually be, all the more urgent,” followed by his call that “...what the injunction to adapt *does*, however, call on us to do, is to move—*in concert with the major player in neocybernetic theory*—beyond the polarization of open and closed systems and focus instead on the negotiation of multiple, diverse boundaries made necessary by the hypercomplexification of the environment,” (Hansen, 2009:114, his emphasis). In considering

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<sup>7</sup> The concept of ‘building kin’ also has a lineage of indigenous praxis that runs parallel—and is perhaps prior—to the one more readily available via academic discourses. Among many others, some references in this regard are Kim Tallbear (Eve Tuck, 2016) and Lewis Williams (2013).

provisional openings and closings, he follows moves to leave the autopoietic system of openings and closures and the many variables thereof, landing precisely at the place where current (technological) cognitive distribution alters or affects the object of cognition (and I would add, the cognizant subject along with it as they are fully implicated in the relationship). Hansen follows Gilbert Simondon's theory of 'individuation,' a process by which both the psychological and the social are never given in advance, nor are ever final in form. Individuation processes also respond to an initial state of radical potentiality in excess, never of absence. Hansen carefully weaves Simondon alongside Castoriadis, to arrive at his System-Environment Hybrids.

In work that intersects directly Varela's research in biology, Castoriadis demonstrates the necessity to move beyond not just the closure-openness binary; but more specifically the level-specificity of the operation of autonomy: whereas autonomy of the living requires organizational closure, autonomy of psychic and collective beings requires openness to alterity, which is to say willingness to embrace precisely that which motivates system change. And with his conception of individuation as a necessarily incomplete process involving a concrete individual and the "preindividual" environment, Simondon links this openness to alterity—this embrace of heteropoiesis—directly to the technical complexification of the environment: on Simondon's account, not only does the environment necessarily possess nontrivial agency in *every* process of individuation, but to the extent that this environmental agency carries the "energy" that opens the unexpected, it also plays the major role in all creative change (Hansen, 2009:126; his emphasis).

Hansen's take on the environment can well be expanded and applied to the other-than-human<sup>8</sup>.

Moving along the axis of open and closed, and the oscillatory movements between them, I want to highlight the characteristics shared by Hansen's 'System-Environment Hybrids' and the re-entrant process<sup>9</sup>. In the latter, the actual movements of physiological neural capacities involve pre-cognitive and cognitive re-distributions that ultimately settle into new ontological organizations.

These similarities of operational functions for the ontological re-distribution of difference and

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<sup>8</sup> I am using the term other-than-human to give space to what lies beyond the humanly organized and recognized and as a preliminary attempt at describing the environments I find most suited for the walking I propose.

<sup>9</sup> Re-entrant process refers to reentry as defined above.



alterity<sup>10</sup> underscore the importance of motion as the dynamic capacity that maximizes the conditions of possibility for ontological transformation.

#### THE RELATIONAL — THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT IS INCLUDED AND HOW

In terms of a re-distribution, what is most needed is an expansion of the specific closure known as Western thought and practices, which has shaped subjectivities and their implicating understanding of themselves. Beyond the requirement for provisional closure or its pretense to absolute presence/absence, a particular kind of relational affect that builds a sense of groundedness in place as ‘being-with,’ which the caring experience of time spent in space offers, needs to be explored. Whether we call it ‘meaning-making via symbolic mechanisms’ (play), interchange of ‘affect,’ ‘care,’ ‘love,’ whether it has passed to the cognitive level or remains as affective, ‘infra-empirical’ (Hansen, 2012) capacity, it is the kind of existential motivation that keeps the actuality called ‘human’ moving forward with a sense of aliveness and connectedness with what surrounds them. It is this actual time spent in a particular space as a precise function of access, of slowing down, that manifests as a distinct economy. Ultimately, all an economy is, is the organization of the quotidian into bodily expressions of habit by a lifetime of structural options and choices, by the means by which one gains access to the energies stored in different ‘rates of being’ (Gilbert, 2007), the circuits of value these engender (currently the normative circuitry called the market), or its alternatives thereof as other possible entanglements.

Play and imagination are practices that also draw us to hybrid places of individuality and sociality beyond the human, as object relations theories indicate<sup>11</sup>. In a similar oscillatory

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<sup>10</sup> I am here leaping from Hansen’s cognitive distribution to the ontological in order to stress their implicative nature.

<sup>11</sup> Of great influence to me have been pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott’s theories of transitional objects and object use as spatio-temporal ‘in-betweens’.

movement to neuronal reentry, play and imagination pull us in and out of the self-reflective as univocal instance of the conscious. As such, they are particular relational modes that move the human to an economy of affect based on gifting (Gilbert, 2007). Here the indeterminate, the trickster, the oscillatory, the important role played by differential ‘rates of being,’ (Gilbert, 2007) are modes of emergence<sup>12</sup> of generative, affirmative, affect because they provisionally straddle over divides via pleasure while engaging in non-linear timescales and non-individual specialities.

My hypothesis that walking maximizes the conditions of possibility for multilevel re-distribution and integration rests on the idea that embodied movement echoes conceptually and enacts and enhances physically, the neuronal connections as set out in reentry.

Walking as ontological shifter activates human subjectivities towards just these kinds of relationality—an aperture to the world that is reparative, informing and necessarily reciprocal. Reciprocity is key when thinking about the reparative and informing aspects put forth in this kind of walking as a healing and pedagogical practice.<sup>13</sup> Ingold declares that “Through walking [...] landscapes are woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape, in a process that is continuous and never-ending,” (Ingold, 2004b:333). Ingold is not alone in thinking in these terms, shared with others who also maintain the co-enactment of the human and the environment. For example, medicine, as per various Indigenous cosmologies that take it to be outright relational, is

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<sup>12</sup> “Simondon links emergence—which he defines as the passage to a higher level of individuation, one that encompasses the system and the (preindividual) environment—to a more encompassing recontextualization of individuation or, more exactly and more simply, to a (new) reindividuation of the (same) preindividual charge of reality,” (Hansen, 2009:134) This concept of emergence is very similar to my account of integration present in the ontological shift I claim happens with intentional walks in ‘nature.’

<sup>13</sup> I use the term ‘healing’ instead of ‘therapy’ because the former implicates a reciprocity that the latter lacks due to its imbrication in practices that connote authority. This is important to note because the distinction points to a similar asymmetry in art-making practices. This is, the paradigm of the artist/creator and viewer/passive observer versus more participatory, symmetrical and reciprocal ways of co-creating the aesthetic as process and experience. As well, pedagogy is key to walking as ontological shifter as a practice necessarily entwined with a process of embodied learning.

always inherently reciprocal. Indigenous scholars Tarrell Portman and Michael Garrett (2006:456-457) explain,

Traditional Native American views of healing and wellness emphasize the necessity of seeking harmony within oneself, with others, and with one's surroundings. An active relationship between the physical and spirit world is emphasized along with the importance of seeking harmony and balance in both. For many Native American people, wellness through spirituality is not a part of life; it *is* life. In the terminology of Native Americans, spirituality means "walking the path of Good Medicine" (living a good way of life) "in harmony and balance" (through the harmonious interaction of mind, body, spirit, and natural environment) "with all our relations" (with all living beings in the Circle of Life).

#### THE NON-HUMAN TERM AND THE RELATIONAL

If what I am claiming—that is, that walking can be a medium that activates an ontological shift—has as its objective an antidote to the presumption that human beings are separate from and greater than non-human beings, then there is another term to be more accurately defined. I choose to call this realm of being that is not human the 'other-than-human'<sup>14</sup>. Vitally critical in this relational proposition of expanded socialities is to delineate the environments in which intentional walking is to be practiced<sup>15</sup>. I contend a minimum of certain characteristics is intrinsically indispensable to maximize the conditions of possibility for an ontological shift to occur in the desired direction. These may be recognized to exist primarily in what are typically called 'natural or green' spaces<sup>16</sup>. Philosopher Brian Massumi coins the term

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<sup>14</sup> This term points to the non-technological, non-human environment. I have decided to use this term rather than 'non-human', as the latter is a definition *ex negativo* often used by relational theories that engage directly with the empirically technological. In this context 'other-than-human' has no value judgment or hierarchical standing attached to it; 'other-than-human' is a matter of excess and alterity.

<sup>15</sup> Below I describe this in more purposeful terms as a 'curation', where I select the elements of certain environments with a particular goal in mind.

<sup>16</sup> My recommending these spaces is different from a Romantic and dualistic notion of nature as detached salvific space and from concepts of landscape as the site of the sublime in that these concepts emerged within a Modernist anthropocentric teleology of transcendence, whereas I adopt a relational, non-anthropocentric and immanent stance.

‘naturing nature’ as a critique to a dominant system’s relationships to these expanses that end up “bifurcating once again into an opposition between a passive nature and active culture,” (Massumi, 2009:165). Of interest to me is that he describes the opposition as revealing the system’s self-reflexivity which, in its attempt to occlude the ‘other,’ provides a characterization of it as “...the inclusive-disjunctive intensity of an indeterminate, yet determinable, force of irruption...” (Massumi, 2009:165)<sup>17</sup>. Whereas for Massumi this process of ‘naturing’ is an ‘othering,’ a version of this “inclusive-disjunctive intensity of an indeterminate, yet determinable, force of irruption” is one combination of traits that closely describes the environments that best suit the kind of ontological shift I seek.

In an attempt to re-connect the ties that bind humans and other-than-human expanses co-enactively, I look further to understand both terms as active and, although not necessarily determinable<sup>18</sup> in human terms, accessible via a reciprocation of forces. In regard to the indeterminateness of these expanses, Deleuze exposes how Nietzsche discovers repetition in *Physis* itself beyond the realm of laws: “...a will that wills itself beyond all changes, a power against law, an interior of the earth that opposes the laws of the surface.” These “...lively depths [...] are inhabited by differences without negations” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988:28 and 395; my translation).

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Neither do I want to work within an oppositional frame of urban vs. natural spaces, as there are plenty of urban corners where these characteristics are encouraged and as many rural or so-called natural spaces where domestication and domination are the rule.

<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that the Massumian sense of “nature as naturing” emphasizes these relationships as holding an irreducible alterity, (Massumi, 2002:39) which is for me a source of creativity.

<sup>18</sup> Again it is interesting how language plays its role here. In looking at the etymology of the word ‘determine,’ from “mid-14c., “to come to an end,” also “to settle, decide” (late 14c.), from Old French *determiner* (12c.) or directly from Latin *determinare* “to enclose, bound, set limits to,” from *de-* “off”... + *terminare* “to mark the end or boundary,” from *terminus* “end, limit,” (Etymonline, [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=determine&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=determine&allowed_in_frame=0), accessed 07-15-2017), it is exciting to see how directly it draws attention to a human’s intended capacity to control (beyond its possible actual fulfillment), to put limits to, and even end, certain expanses that lie beyond our capacities to sense, perceive and cognize—as irreducible alterity.

For me, these fields ‘without negations’ manifest in expanses that

- have a majority of their surfaces, for the most part, unleveled and unpaved;
- hold and foster biodiversity, and in this sense consist of a multiplicity of rates of being (Gilbert, 2007);
- contain extremely little or no semiotic elements as human system of significations based in written language;
- consist of a ‘field of multiplicities’ (Ansell-Pearson, 1999:171) where mediated representations are substituted by direct signs<sup>19</sup> (Deleuze, 1994);
- are constituted by what Deleuze calls ‘nomadic distributions’ such that they are “objects of an essential encounter, not of a recognition” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988:420, my translation);
- absorb sound, partially or completely, especially the vibrations and reverberations of engines<sup>20</sup>;
- act as carbon sinks due to the presence of plants—cleansing the air of carbon dioxide and providing oxygen—a resonant factor if one considers breath as a liminal zone between inside and outside<sup>21</sup>;
- are deep time pools—in geological terms, they hold and make manifest a variety of profoundly different timescales than the habitual human timescale. This is resonant with Deleuze’s idea of the virtual in terms of a gigantic memory (Ansell-Pearson, 1999).

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<sup>19</sup> Signs, according to Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, are what occur within a system of asymmetries, of signals consisting of a disparate order of magnitudes. (Deleuze, 1994:23).

<sup>20</sup> By ‘engine’ I mean all combustion and electrically fueled machines whose byproduct is inevitably heat as waste. In this sense, natural/green spaces are anentropic spaces or spaces where entropy tends to a minimum.

<sup>21</sup> “...breath,” according to Donald Winnicott “...never decides whether it comes primarily from within or without,” (Winnicott, 1945:142).

The above-mentioned environments manifest in materialities with porous<sup>22</sup> boundaries and a range of flows beyond the ‘humanly’ organized. I prefer these for my walks from distinctly different, less porous environments with a density of glass, concrete and metal. The latter’s sharply reflective surfaces keep flows on either sides of their boundaries, with less intermingling and hybridizing. Excess energy (manifesting most commonly as light and its byproduct heat, sound, and information in the form of big data) bounces off from these harder surfaces in fast, sharp reverberations, with the effect of re-charging their environments with similar excessive energies and affective flows. Resembling the dynamics of self-enclosed, mirrored systems, Deleuze would characterize these reverberations as feeding forward more of the same. Despite the repetitive movements of reverberations, difference does not seep in since the inventory (in kinds of excess energies) is kept at a maximum of the humanly organized, or at a minimum of diversity. The ontic rates (Gilbert, 2007) of densely humanly populated environments, while circulating at high speeds, are modulated within a self-contained recursivity, resulting in affect maintaining its attributes even when escalating in intensity.

The above description is not meant to contrast ‘culture’ to ‘nature’ since these are not understood as opposites. I mainly aim at understanding what are the components of the expanses I claim maximize ontological shifts, and how they function as an ‘irreducible alterity’ (Massumi, 2002:39) beyond the human.

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<sup>22</sup> The etymology of porosity is via Latin to the Greek *poros*, literally a passage, a way, a journey. [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pore&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pore&allowed_in_frame=0) (accessed 7-4-2017). In any materiality, porosity allows the flow of different temporalities from diverse materials through the particular material concerned. Via its physical definition that establishes it to be a measure of the void existent in each materiality, porosity is the material’s capacity to allow the passage of a multiplicity of times. By extension, porosity is a function of sensing and of filtering. Tighter, less porous materials hold a less-diverse temporality as an effect of it having less cavities; resulting in more coherence with themselves, in its ability to stick together tightly with themselves without infiltrations.

This speculative explanation of these spaces ‘without negations’ with absorbing and reflective capacities as constituting environments that enhance walking as ontological shifter draws as well on studies of the effect of ‘nature’ on wellbeing. For example, a study shows that regular walking on a treadmill in interior, built spaces does not yield the same wellbeing aspects that walking in ‘nature’ does (Duvall, 2010). The importance of these environments in my model is also well supported by numerous other studies coming from the health, wellbeing, medical and educational research indicating that there is indeed a measurable beneficial effect that occurs when humans enter into a relationship with these types of environments on a regular basis (Haluzá, Schönbauer and Cervinka, 2014; Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S., 1989; Kaplan, S., 1992). These beneficial effects are mounted on the idea of reciprocity explained earlier. In the presence of a softer<sup>23</sup>, affirmative affect, the walker senses a wellbeing effect that is in turn transferred again onto the environment as a residual and reciprocal affective force. This co-enactment with the other-than-human in open loops that nurture reciprocal healing echoes the re-entric process in its positive iteration.

In any environment walking opens the walker to specific cues, materialities and immaterialities present in it. Because the other-than-human has such an important role and equal standing in the relationalities that I propose to be protagonist for these walks, walking in ‘curated’ environments is crucial. I select environments for their specific characteristics: density of trees, shrubs or other plants, non-leveled grounds and other organic and inorganic, other-than-humanly organized elements. In short, I choose environments where there is a maximum of these elements at hand, and I bring participants to immersive experiences in these environments where I invite

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<sup>23</sup> Soft is here meant as a yielding characteristic that emanates from slow transitions.

them to expand their perceptive apparatuses via opening exercises. The particular environments I orient these walks towards tend to what I have come to call ‘soft’ relational modes, where the synchronization with the available flows exert deep, sparse, grounded waves of affectivity. Their amplitude resembles those of sine waves, instead of peaking spikes or sharply angled waves. In the former the transitions are slow, whereas in the latter the transitions are sharp and fast, regardless of their crest factor<sup>24</sup>. Walking on these non-moving surfaces also exposes the walker to the ‘passings’ of the environment at the specific pace of the walk yet in the opposite direction of movement. Although this is a casual fact that we have ‘learned’ to incorporate as habitual, the ‘passing’ environment is due to have implications in the re-entric processes in synchrony with the walk. For example, walking in a forest has added temporal dimensions, the different ‘rates of being’ (Gilbert, 2007) of trees, soil, rocks, water and other numerous elements in their different durationalities, or timescales. Expanding materially and immaterially in their waves of influence, they elude our possibilities of apprehension and comprehension.

what are winds without trees? and what are trees without winds?  
where they begin and end escapes our discernment

The affective forces of the different ‘rates of being’ that co-habit in such environments act like bumper-ghosts to the walker who crosses them in a walk. They absorb, cushion and resonate with the walker’s ‘rate of being,’ at once reflecting and co-enacting, subsuming into an altogether different economy.

### LEARNING—TO BE WITH

Walking as a vehicle towards this new relational mode necessarily encompasses what is called learning. Here it is provocative to examine the connection, through what I call ‘linguaging

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<sup>24</sup> Crest factor indicates how extreme the peaks are in each wave form. Wikipedia, accessed 05-11-17



causalities,<sup>25</sup> between walking and learning in the etymology of ‘to learn.’ From the Old English *leornian*, itself from the Proto-Germanic *liznojan*, it connotes finding or following a track or path. It is also related to the Proto-Germanic and Old English for footstep, footprint, track and, in Old English, the sole of the foot (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=learn>, accessed 7 December 2016). Tracing the lineage of the word ‘learn’ is enlightening, as it points to an activity co-constituted by the interaction of land<sup>26</sup> and feet and to a deep relationship between ‘knowledge’ production and traveling a path on foot, a tracing both in the sense of looking for traces and leaving traces. I believe the link between learning and walking is grounded in this profound relationship of human movement and land as perceived, organized and elaborated through our bodies in time.

Signaled by the etymological connection between feet, land and the process called learning, walking is key to an understanding of learning as an embodied process<sup>27</sup>, that is, occurring as we co-enact experiential connections with what surrounds us. This embodied learning that is walking integrates physical movement, cognitive activity, emotional and affective processes with the other-than-human elements encountered in the walk, in constantly recurring and reorganizing ways (Bruner, 1990; Dewey, 1916; Edelman and Tononi, 2000; Thelen, 2005). Perhaps walking shares pedagogical capacities with Vygotsky’s ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky, 1978) in that it places the walker in circumstances where thresholds of comfort—analogueous to the limits of understanding—are continuously challenged,

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<sup>25</sup> Reading etymology in the context of the (phenomenological) roots of words—an experiential history of words with a generative power.

<sup>26</sup> What I propose is that the land includes both the material and the immaterial, both what can be consciously felt and that which lies beyond and beneath cognition. I rely on theories of affect as well as on indigenous knowledges and Tim Ingold’s understanding of land as field of relationships.

<sup>27</sup> I use embodiment to encompass spatial and temporal dimensions as occurring in the bodymind, as physical responses and as phenomenological and post-phenomenological processes. Embodiment in this sense encompasses cognitive, emotional and affective processes distributed along the whole body-as-organism.

where the familiar needs to be renegotiated in the presence of new physical and conceptual elements. Intentional walking in these environments brings the walker into slow and soft contact with unexpected non-semiotic elements, where changes in the external environment maximize changes in the internal landscape as different elements are encountered through movement *per se* in space (Ingold, 2004a; Scrimsher and Tudge, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Deleuze adds to the pedagogical process experienced not only with and through a human teacher but, by extension, via an encounter with ‘altering’ relationships. He asserts,

The movement of the swimmer does not resemble that of the wave; and precisely, the movements of the swimming teacher that we reproduce on sand are nothing in relation to the movements of the wave that we will only learn to avoid when we capture them in practice as signs. This is the reason why it is so difficult to explain the process of learning: there is a practical familiarity, innate or acquired, with signs that turns all education into a loving relation, as well as into a mortal one. We do not learn anything from those who tell us “do as I do.” Our only teachers are those who say “do alongside me,” and who instead of proposing gestures to be reproduced, know to emit signs susceptible to be developed in heterogeneity.” (Deleuze, 2002:52; my translation).

...

Walking as ontological shifter, in its capacity to provide a path beyond a dominant epistemological and ontological set of assumptions, offers a broader understanding of relationality as a reciprocal dynamic process based on respect. The word ‘respect’—whose lineage moves in a recursive looking back and looking again—points to the making and remaking of connections, as in reentry, which constitutes a continuous learning as a process of integration and co-enactment in a spirit of deference for difference<sup>28</sup>. This spirit of respect not only speaks of a learning that is an expanding of the terms of relationality into the future, it also

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<sup>28</sup> Be it amongst fellow humans or with other-than-human beings, in these newly forged relationalities.

points to the temporal dimension in the ‘looking back and again’ as instances within a present. This temporal aspect becomes crucial in the shaping of subjectivities whose ‘operational closures’ (Hansen, 2009) are capable of embracing and enduring non-linear, ontic rates as forces of affect. The re-entric aspect indicates both the condition of possibility to a crack unto difference and a subsuming towards a synchronicity of rates of being as a holding of difference.

...

I understand epistemic systems and their respective ontologies to be co-implicated, therefore I base the praxis of walking as ontological shifter on an onto-epistemological move. Here I want to come back to reentry, as it seems to be the process with which the dualisms that remain alive in Western’s onto-epistemologies may be bridged and integrated. For re-entric processes, metaphorically speaking, focus on the movement over the bridge instead of on the ports of entry and exit. In other words, the back and forth movements across and between are what allow for connections to be established into ever more elaborate degrees of complexity. Reminiscent of this movement, as well as of the affect of respect mentioned above, is Henri Bergson’s appeal to creative evolution. Philosopher Keith Ansell-Pearson states it succinctly when he declares that for Bergson “...evolution is not only a movement forward but equally a deviation and a turning back.” (Ansell-Pearson, 1999:46). He adds that “...each new element or piece requires a recasting of the whole,” (Ansell-Pearson, 1999:46) directing Bergson’s view of creative evolution to a resonant register with reentry. The latter provides a framework for considering this open oscillation in terms of learning, being and becoming as dynamic and interrelated—a foundational premise of walking as ontological shifter. Reentry thus situates the

practice of intentional walking at the precise juncture where experience, and its further elaboration, are at once highly integrated and highly differentiated. Reentry has the ability to explain in physical terms how difference is eventually integrated; integration is in synchronicity, differentiation is in the ontic rates keeping non-unified terms, yet enabling a ‘being along’ (Latimer, 2013).

I propose that this walking is an involution in the Bergsonian sense mentioned above—never happening within one single temporal dimension or in a straight line forward. It is also an exacerbation of the human that necessarily goes beyond it, as a way to think in duration how processes of internalization and integration occur. Walking is thus the activator for a passage between ‘inner time’ to the ‘time of things,’ (Ansell-Pearson, 1999) from an interiority of a felt ‘rate of being’ (Gilbert, 2007) to approaching an external ‘rate of being’ that in the accessing becomes internal. Following this assertion then is the idea that wholes are being recalculated on an ongoing basis in order to include the different parts that are interjected in them constantly. I also propose that establishing these relationships brings about a crack from which to sense deep time. I would now like to bring the reader’s attention to the first proposition, that walking is an exceeding of the human, which may be explored by troubling the ontology of the human.

### SECTION III

#### ON OR ABOUT THE ONTOLOGY OF THE HUMAN

Embodiment is the way in which humans inhere<sup>29</sup> in the world. The human body does not only require movement in order to stay alive and actualize us into animals, it also requires strategy. Walking can be said to be the juncture of traversing to procure and higher-order temporalizing processes to make procurement more efficient.

#### WALKING—WHAT IS IT?

Below I trace walking to the basics of what it entails as movement in space-time, which includes a brief detour into evolution.

Walking is the slowest mode of human locomotion that emerges after spending the first year of life tending towards it by various means of skeleto-muscular and intellectual development (Thelen, 2005). Physically, walking is best described by the dynamics of a double pendulum. The first pendulum motion begins when one leg leaves the ground and swings from the hip; the second pendulum motion occurs as the foot from the swinging leg lands on the heel and rocks forward to the toes, thrusting the body forward as the opposite leg swings from the hip in its turn. The thrusting forward motion of the body is an inverted pendulum, with the center of mass above the pivot point—the foot/land point of contact. In physics the inverted pendulum is understood to be an inherently unstable system whose upright position is achieved by continual acts of active balancing, which can include moving forward. Human walking can be understood

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<sup>29</sup> As a quality of being -in and -here, it is remarkable that ‘inhere’ has such presentness to it; but also in looking at the etymology of inherent, to "be closely connected with...", literally "adhere to, cling to," it is surprising that it is apparently not related to inheritance. [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=inhere](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=inhere) (accessed 3-24-2017)

as a balancing act that keeps us from falling, in which our upright stature is grounded downward in forward-moving waves. Walking is movement tending to equilibrium, composed of a specificity as particle in the grounding foot and a continuity as wave in the forward movement. These aspects of walking—the particle in space-time (the grounding down of the foot and the vertical uprightness of the body against gravity) and the wave movement in space-time (the continual thrusting forward within a discontinuous balance)—are necessarily co-constitutive, they would not be able to exist on their own.

Walking is not only this particular locomotive movement in space-time. Evolutionarily speaking, it is also a very specific locomotion that enabled early humans' expanded brain capacity as an effect of bipedalism, of uprightness. Despite the many existent theories about how and why humans came to be bipedal hominids, it is nonetheless accepted that due to its occurrence, humans freed their jaws and hands—apparently two important steps in the development of language and tool manufacture. Because of the above-mentioned material and immaterial characteristics, walking not only integrates these physical processes felt in the body with other processes felt as 'mind'—the cognitive with the emotional and affective (the conscious with the non-conscious)—it also brings to the fore the entangled characteristics of internal and external realms, of the human with the other-than-human. Walking also enables the symbolic—our meaning-making capacities and, by stretching these capacities a bit further, it integrates the individually political with the socially political.

For beyond the early stage when a child is held by the hand of an adult in order to learn how to balance and move forward, walking in later stages of life becomes a solo endeavor. It is

phenomenologically experienced as the labor and effort of an individual ‘body-as-organism’ traversing space while it acts as vehicle for a greater sociality, all at once. Even though walking is often practiced in a group setting, when walking one is made aware of the deep solitary nature of this act and also of its relational capacities. This aspect of being both individual and social (including the post-humanly social as characterized by the above rendition of expanded socialities) places walking at the core of the political—that space of negotiations between the personal and the public, the communal and the individuating, the inside and the outside. It also leaves walking at the center of existential experience, where all eventualities of life are inescapably faced in solitude.

While bipedal locomotion is one of the most salient common denominators for what constitutes the human, its particular enactment is very specific to each individual and to their cultural context (Ingold, 2004a). If walking is how we come to grasp, perceive and co-enact with the world around us, then walking as ontological shifter is becoming aware of this mutually constitutive mode of being, of the moving parts around us that affect us and are affected by us in turn. It is making present and accountable (in the sense of taking responsibility for) how, or anagrammatically speaking, who we are. This characteristic imports walking towards philosopher Jacques Derrida’s concept of ‘originary technicity.’ Originary technicity can be understood as the process where how and what we are is inseparable with what and how we come to know and be. This is where an epistemology and an ontology assemble and give shape to one another, becoming mutually inclusive and co-constitutive. Critical theorist Arthur Bradley synthesizes Derrida’s life-long inquiry in this regard as follows,

[...] Derrida puts his finger on a significant moment in Husserl’s essay ‘The Origin of Geometry’ where the latter acknowledges that it is only because Euclid

and the other early geometers *wrote down* their principles - in repeatable graphic form - that geometry ceased to be just a subjective idea in their own consciousness and was transformed into an objective, universal science. Now, if this is the case, then geometrical objects occupy a curious middle position between the ideal and the material, the transcendental and the factual. On the one hand, geometrical objects are obviously ideal: they transcend time and space in order to exist in exactly the same way for everyone across history. On the other hand, though, geometrical objects are also material: they must have been inscribed in a particular time and space in order to transcend anything in the first place. For Derrida, this aporetic or undecidable relation between the empirical and the transcendental - where the ideal *requires* the material in order to become itself in the first place - arguably represents the beginning of his career-long attempt to articulate the immanent relation between technics and thought. If writing makes possible the phenomenological reduction, and the reduction, in turn, is what gives access to the ideal, then this means that technics is already inside the ideal as its condition of possibility: writing, to put it another way, is *irreducible*. Such are the ‘origins’ of Derrida’s own version of originary technicity. (Bradley, 2011:96; his emphasis).

This passage clearly presents the larger issue of the inseparability of *physis* from *techne*. Yet Bradley’s reading remains short of Derrida’s more radical aim to move beyond those precise limits of traditional metaphysics, and to “de-limit” (Derrida, 1968) the empirical and the transcendental in their ontological quest for presence as limitation for being, inscribing writing—along with ‘originary technicity’—in *differance*. This is Derrida’s distinguishing parameter through which he passes his critical move towards deconstructing the subject and consciousness as self-present. In “Differance” (Derrida, 1968) Derrida points to the double sense of the word “differ,” which he highlights by swapping the second *e* for the *a* and thus promoting a sense of deferral, of temporalizing. Differance becomes the processes by which opposites are in constant entanglement, passing from one to the other iteratively. Derrida resorts to Nietzsche in order to ‘facilitate’ (Derrida, 1968) the emergence of the spatial and the temporalizing as irreducible ‘diaphoristic’ elements of *differance*. He notes,

Is it not the whole thought of Nietzsche a critique of philosophy as active indifference to difference, as a system of reduction or adiaphoristic repression?



Following the same logic—logic itself—this does not exclude the fact that philosophy lives *in* and *from* differance, that it thereby blinds itself to the *same*, which is not the identical. The same is precisely differance (with an *a*), as the diverted and equivocal passage from one difference to another, from one term of the opposition to the other. We could thus take up all the coupled oppositions on which philosophy is constructed, and from which our language lives, not in order to see opposition vanish but to see the emergence of a necessity such that one of the terms appears as the differance of the other, the other as “differed” within the systematic ordering of the same (e.g. the intelligible as differing from the sensible, as sensible differed; the concept as differed-differing intuition, life as differing-differed matter; mind as differed-differing life; culture as differed-differing nature; and all the terms designating what is other than *physis*—*technē*, *nomos*, society, freedom, history, spirit, etc.—as *physis* differed or *physis* differing: *physis in differance*). It is out of the unfolding of this “same” as differance that the sameness of difference and of repetition is presented in the eternal return. (Derrida, 1968:292).

Noting this ‘originary temporalizing’ embedded and co-constitutive of differentiation, I turned to walking as method—for its re-entric characteristics with which to traverse this ‘diaphoristic’ relationship that constantly refers beyond itself. In spite of my determination to immerse walkers in expanses that are other-than-humanly organized, I do not pretend that *physis* and *techne* are separate realms of our experiences and capacities for being and becoming. We are at once both as our functional capacities to organize (cognitively and pre-cognitively) the world around us are enmeshed in this inseparability. Despite the level of sophistication of tools and technologies, our ancestors once and already looked at stars to know where they were headed; they communicated about their findings in one way or another, orally and later in writing. There is a level of organization that exceeds the distinction of *physis* and *techne*, which now is more explicit in our technico-physiological capacities to grasp the world. I am particularly interested in pointing to this excess as that which is unknowable and unnamable, whatever its temporality and spatiality may be, as what must be included in the affective.

WALKING AS ORIGINARY TECHNICALITY

Derrida's concept of 'originary technicality' is imbricated in our mediation with the world; for example, it makes words the tools by which we establish a distance with it, while inscribing the world as world. This distancing *is* the mediation by which there is no need for co-presence, no need to 'touch' the object directly, to still communicate about it. This is the abstracting required of and available through language. Hence any language-based narrative that builds a sort of 'consciousness' is already a distancing. Because of the always already mediated characteristic of the human, language is a membrane that both connects and demarcates.

Language, regarded as tool, is good because it allows us to ask;  
and asking is necessary in any repetition. Repetition is the opening to difference.  
As in any indeterminacy, repetition is the tracing of a rhythm as it is being created, in its  
becoming. As with any indeterminacy, repetition only goes on and on forever as rhythm,  
clutching the different along the way.  
This repeated petition is a humbling act of vowing to the beyond that is the universe, inviting, in  
the asking, for a good roll of the dice. The shape and form of the dice, the shape and form of the  
rolling surface, are givens and coterminous with the temporal dimensions at play.  
Humans have very specific temporal dimensions at play, and one must not leave them  
unattended when intermingling energies. Important in certain difficult transitions is the idea of  
play—bringing about a safe place for playing and imagining.

However, given the importance accorded to affect and embodiment and their communicative capacities alongside verbal language, it becomes crucial to go beyond language. Here I follow critical thinkers who attempt to go beyond the cognitive into embodiment, and some others who push the matter further towards the de-centering of the *anthropos*, questioning the relationalities implicated in the circulations and distributions of affect. Mark Hansen at first brings Derrida's originary technicality to the body. He follows phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty's touch as the primal sense with which humans relate to the world and from which all other senses

emanate. Here skin is the medium, the membrane, which gives both a sense of interiority while in constant touch with an exteriority; it demarcates the interior space of the ‘body-as-organism’ while at once procuring and offering information to and from the outside ‘world,’ communicating with it—it is a port of reentry. The human ‘body-as-organism’ may be best described as manifesting a high degree of porosity, and doubly so since the semiotic and the embodied are both, intermittently and at once, out of synch with each other. There is an originary incoherence of registers; as sensing and filtering capacities do not coincide. Within the realm of the ‘body-as-organism,’ this a-synchronicity of the self with itself is the constant displacement that occurs in ‘body schema’ as the tracings of the sensuous with the perceptual are always lagging behind due to their operating within the irreducible time of affect—that which escapes our register. Hansen expresses this in full in his “Bodies in Code,” where he follows and expands Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the ‘body schema.’ He characterizes the latter as a complexity of “...intermodal, pre-experiential potentiality” and “...to exist, in a sense, beyond its actuality, in virtuality.” (Hansen, 2012:42). This incoherence in the temporal and spatial accounts—these porosities—are constitutive of our sensing and filtering as enclosing and leaking, as capacities and incapacities; they both allow some communication and foreclose other connections.

Whereas skin can be viewed as a port of reentry, embodiment <sup>(body as medium~body as gap)</sup> on its own is as well limited and limiting. Hansen will take up this insight and go further when he moves from embodiment to a worldly sensibility or world skin: “...we no longer confront the technical object as an exterior surrogate for consciousness or some other human faculty, but rather as part of a process in which technics operates directly on the sensibility underlying—and preceding—our corporeal reactivity and, ultimately, our conscious experience,” (Hansen, 2015a:117-118).

A clear connection can be drawn between this worldly sensibility and the ‘corporeal reactivity’ that occurs while walking, as processes of emergence of an altogether different conscious experience (Hansen, 2015b). Generative of semantic processes at large, walking is this particular movement that procures access to thought as embodied semantics and access to world as information. In other words, walking seems to be the main transitional means, the basal common denominator of any ‘originary technicity,’ the medium of passage between virtual and actual, precisely because of movement. Exploring biologist Mae-Wan Ho’s take on the co-existence of equilibrium and disequilibrium states within one same organism (Ho, 1994), I want to probe a new definition of walking as re-entric oscillations between the provisional states of equilibrium and disequilibrium that we are.

In that light, walking appears to have some certain specific characteristics in that it expands the ‘body-as-organism’ beyond the sense of ‘self.’ Breath and touch are principal ‘intra-actors’ (Barad, 2012) in the engagements of the walker’s physical, cognitive, emotional and affective faculties with a particular environment. Traversing an environment, the walker is constantly reassessing and reconceptualizing themselves and the world around, as well as the assumed boundaries between themselves and the world. It is here that the perception and idea of ‘self’ as an enclosed organism, a body delimited by skin, can shift (both phenomenologically and pre/post-phenomenologically (Hansen, 2015a), even if provisionally, to an expanded perception of beyond-embodiment that encompasses other beings.

Walking as ontological shifter facilitates the conditions of possibility for recurring points of contact between the interiority perceived as ‘body’ and the exteriority perceived as ‘world.’ It immerses the walker in a ‘curated’ environment while making explicit a slowing down to a rate

of coherence and synchronization that allow internalization and integration of the above mentioned shifts. This encompassing of other beings is an effect of synchronicity, as way to respond to Gilbert's question of how to pass from a river moving at a specific speed to another moving at a different speed (Gilbert, 2007:85). Accessing the particular rate of the other being happens first by synchronizing with it—the one entity catches up (whether by slowing down or speeding up) with the 'rates of being' of the surrounding entities, once at a similar speed it is able to move from one to the other and back. It is in this synchronization that one can claim an exteriorization,<sup>30</sup> 'an altogether different conscious experience' (Hansen, 2015b). Here the senses move along at the same rate as the surroundings, resonating with and absorbing the sedimented past and the virtual or actual as potential<sup>31</sup> as it is found distributed in the other-than-human environment. I am thinking in deep time terms here where, as stated above, rocks, strata and forests, among other elements, are specific actualizations of stored geological time and as such encountered as alterity in their different 'rates of being' (Gilbert, 2007). In this sense the relational comes to the fore in the many arrays in which humans are imbricated with the materialities and immaterialities of the world (plants, animals, minerals, energy and all such categories within the flux of life) and the ways in which we relate with, store and access them—all processes that necessarily implicate time and come to inform specific subjectivities and economies.

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<sup>30</sup> I am not here subscribing to the empirical understanding of exteriorizing humans' memory capacities onto other material bodies (tools and technology at large understood as prosthesis for the human body).

<sup>31</sup> The possible passings of potential are from the virtual for Deleuze and from the actual for Hansen.

## ACCESSING TIME

While there is all this potential in walking and other theoretical approaches to expand human consciousness beyond the bastion of subjective individuality as conquering parameter of space-time, we have to be weary of the illusions that certain measurements, uses, meanings and consumptions of time carry forward in their entanglements with empirical technologies and current dominant modes of production.

Because ultimately we can only sense, perceive and cognize from our embodied human actualities,<sup>32</sup> in thinking about the irreducibility of the elusive ½ second that frames affect (Massumi, 2002) and a human sense of time, always already what comes to mind is finitude—individual and collective finitude (such are the historical moments we are forced to face).

Dividing time, measuring and cutting it to manage it, to control it, seems to render a sense of elongation/duration, countering the intuition that cutting shortens time. Historically this has rendered different ways in which cultures engage with time—particular measurements, meanings, uses and consumptions. The logic that seems to have engendered and still guides Western capitalist consumer society would indicate that the smaller the unit of time, the faster the instant, the closer one is on the road to eternity. Current empirical technologies implicated and implicating big data flows are capable of deploying ever so minute units of time—nanoseconds and less—rendering the illusion of an infinite elongation/duration of time, an ultimate and certain attaining of the instantaneous—as in free engagements—and the myth of an ever increasing possibility for economic growth and expansion. Empirical technologies have brought upon us 21<sup>st</sup> century dwellers the expectation of instants where backgrounds are fully blended with their foregrounds in rapidly changing, fast and indeterminately moving sets of fluid affectivities.

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<sup>32</sup> For what is produced with the help of empirical technologies—today's big data environments—eventually ends at the cue line of the empirical facts to be interpreted.

Such a blur, a fog that prevents both finding pleasure in the present nor anticipating any  
 pleasurable future in its place.  
 A grim landscape if there is one. All peppered with angst and hate  
 ever so destitute forces—nothing vital.

This form of the instantaneous is a time that eludes memory; it lies under or before consciousness. Yet its register seems to exist before/below/behind the outwardly affective—it only wants to relate to itself, operates in a self-enclosed manner, does not re-distribute to the exterior as its return and echo are oriented inwardly. It seems to lack the ability to repeat. The ubiquitous use of such instants as the univocal and dominant platform for a time of relationality (a particular affect of relationality) reminds me of critical theorist Andre Lepecki's brilliant recalling of the etymology of *idiot* as he uses it to explain a normative subjectivity understood as a self-contained, autonomous and private individual who believes himself to be self-enclosed (Lepecki, 2013:304). This kind of instant—which tends to zero, or pretends a free ride—seems to operate within the contradictions encountered in the determinable landscape of oppositions. Here it remains caught between classical mechanics and quantum mechanics where gravitational forces do not necessarily correspond with nor are exceeded by electromagnetic forces—hence the instant is left to its own irreducibility. To understand instantaneity in this way remits to a flat and linear epistemology—an epistemology with idiotic causalities. Moreover, the instantaneous in the globalized economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has materialized in a tightly woven, dense matrix of impenetrability. Accessing this mesh of high speeds and low porosities is in an acceleration which can only be caught up through an acceleration of the same kind; nothing of different kind is allowed in and thus its repetitions do not produce difference in kind but instead fall within the four fetters of representation that Deleuze describes above: "...identity in the concept, opposition

in the predicate, analogy in judgment, and resemblance in perception,” (Deleuze, 2002:389, my translation).

It follows then that plainly performing a slower rhythm may somehow counter the manic cutting of the flow of time into smaller units. Pausing and slowing down offer an acknowledgement of finitude that may carry a sense of pleasure, and a sense of grief. Lag is always already present in the event gone by.

Whether we dance to the lag with a funeral march, with Sun Ra’s “Future,” or with Leonard Cohen’s version of a “Future” is, perhaps, a matter of choice, if one can still speak of choices and freedoms.

Yet, we have never had free lunches and should not expect them any longer.

Essential in a non-essentialist way,  
to invite in offering a leap to difference—  
some form of difference and the flight from it.  
There is pain, much pain, and a need to focus on transitions.  
If there is a sense of continuity, of flow, it needs rescue—it’s been shattered.

...

Stripped of the old-time concept of ‘consciousness’ by which we made ourselves special, what ways exist to aid in the current transitions? How to carry on with a much-needed shift to ‘being alongside’ (Latimer, 2013) seems crucial to de-centering the human while modulating a sense of the continuity of life. Here I follow psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott in his underscoring the importance of play in certain difficult transitions—offering play as a therapeutic way to imagining the possible co-enactments of ‘being with’ (Haraway, 2003 & 2015), as objects to relate with. It is important then to note that a sense of aliveness beyond a traditional concept of consciousness still lies in the differentiation of past from present and future—there where



pleasure and grief always go together. In an expanded, entwined becoming, a ‘subject’ playing with an ‘object’ is the site and process whereby their non-linear temporalities become entangled. Because with the lag of play, the sense of losing time in play, there is pleasure. And with the lag of play, of the moment of play gone by as what is just no longer available, comes the grieving. With both at play come the conditions of possibility for an aperture to difference. Because pleasure wants to remain forever and cannot, because there is always the lost moment, one is then able to grieve. Play is always at a juncture with grief. The movement between one moment and the other, where the lost half-second lags, is what cracks open to difference. It repeats the rhythmicity and is always already tending to the open, and hence indeterminate—hence the crack through which difference seeps in. In re-entering such moments through the rhythmicity of repetition, the lag is somewhat recognized and made synchronous with itself.

This tending towards self-synchronicity operates as well in the instantaneous, though this time the instant is closer to Whitehead’s idea of concrescence, where it becomes relational<sup>33</sup>. Embodying this lag of time, cannibalizing the lost half-second, a sense of play will first and foremost present to us a demystification of the autonomous. Walking in these environments is a vehicle *not* to restore any sense of autonomy but quite the contrary, to instill a sense of interconnectedness, of continuity, a sense that “we have never been” autonomous<sup>34</sup>, an attunement with the environment experienced in the body-semiotics as accomplishment of synchronicity with the diversity of co-inhabiting rates of being. Here is a rhythm that establishes

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<sup>33</sup> Hansen explains Whitehead’s concept thusly, “Actual entities or occasions are created through a process called “concrecence” in which they “prehend” everything that has been created up to that moment in the development of the universe...Concrecence is guided by a “subjective aim” that unifies the disparate elements prehend by the incipient actual entity; when the process of prehend is completed, the concrecence reaches satisfaction, at which point, the phase of “transition” occurs; in transition, the actual entity reenters the universe or, more precisely, is added to the multiplicity of the universe, making the latter a many + 1.” (Hansen, 2015a:13)

<sup>34</sup> I am here referencing and playing off of Bruno Latour’s “We have never been Modern.”

synchronicity with the aliveness of ‘green’ and its vastness of virtualities<sup>35</sup> despite its seemingly infinite nature, it is the vastly finite what confines its virtualities. And thus, we play and grieve, as in celebrate the mortalities of life, such transductions from the virtual to the actual, back-n-forth as in a rocking chair.

A critique of the pretense of the instantaneous as being enacted today in its flat epistemological field<sup>35</sup> is important in thinking about the hegemony of a sense of time that is no longer phenomenological but post-phenomenological (Hansen, 2015a) as it is crucially embedded in big data environments (Hansen, 2015a) and thus inaccessible at first to our perceptions, but whose power is nonetheless intermingled with ideology in that its mode of production stems from capital (Massumi; Clough). Bringing Ho back into the logic, she notes that any system can have both equilibrium and disequilibrium states within it yet what distinguishes living from non-living systems is their space-time structure or organization, asserting that “Perhaps what we really need, in order to understand the living system, is a *thermodynamics of organized complexity* which describes processes in terms of *stored* energy instead of *free* energy” (Ho, 1994:71). She explains “...the former can be precisely defined in terms of the spatial extent and temporal duration of storage” (Ho, 1994:154). She adds that “Stored energy is in the organization, which is what enables the living system to work so efficiently on a range of timescales (Ho, 1994:70). But if the temporal duration of energy storage for humans is in the domain of the metre-decades (Ho, 1994:70), is the instantaneous a possible form of access? The ontic rates of the ‘instantaneous’ as modes of accessing the stored potentialities of the virtual or the actual seem to be misleading—they pretend an economy of exchange based on free energy; they do not reflect a quantum time scale but a loosely put

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<sup>35</sup> One that has not yet escaped the representational in a Deleuzian sense (Deleuze, 2002:39). In this sense, this flat field, if anything, is one where only monoculture is practiced.

together concept of the ‘now,’ one with already highly unequally-distributed dis-equilibrium domains in it.

This critique is the platform for the walking praxis I propose, which stands on the availability of deep time offered by fields ‘without negations’ (Deleuze, 1988). Regardless of whether these environments are virtual pools of deep time (in a Deleuzian sense of the virtual as potential for difference) or whether their potential rests on this deep time having already been actualized (as in a Hansenian reading of potential), these environments’ retaining and releasing of time become the open, yet enveloping processes, the fields, through which to experience multiple, other-than-human temporalities. These fields of multiple co-existing ‘rates of being’ (Gilbert, 2007) go beyond a sense of the instantaneous phenomenologically perceived (and post-phenomenologically sensed) as pasts and futures with shallow depths and free exchanges. This praxis of walking engages a vital philosophy of time that pertains to the human and goes beyond the human; as a performativity of the humanimal and as such one with political economic implications.

## SECTION IV

### CONCLUSION

In thinking why walking as I propose it may be of relevance in this current moment, I conclude that walking is not only an appropriate method of learning and transformation but that, as Ingold asserts (Ingold, 2004b), walking is the grounding of an altogether different methodology. Despite its differing modes, walking as locomotion and way of being in relationship with a particular environment already points to the different ways in which information is acquired and processed as embodied knowledge. Walking as ontological shifter aims to expand this embodied understanding to include affective forces in both its human forms (whether in its limited neoliberal determinations or as already shifting subjectivities) and non-human forms. These are deeply interconnected, eventually going back to the human, affecting them in intense, complex and permanent ways.

If a crucial counter-anthropocentric turn needs to be actualized on the part of human beings, it cannot end at the cognitive level, nor where the emotional and the cognitive meet. I propose that walking—in its enhancing of re-entric processes—is a vehicle for what Massumi calls “...the edge of the virtual, where it leaks into actual...For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found” (Massumi, 2002:43). This paradoxical moment of dis-equilibrium, of constant reentry, allows for a disconnect that reconnects, an opening to the emergence of the new. Here it may linger at the moment when the virtual actualizes, then falls back into the virtual, and also is apprehended in immediate embodied form, without synchronous reflection. Massumi notes,

Affect holds a key to rethinking postmodern power after ideology. For although ideology is still very much with us, often in the most virulent of forms, it is no

longer encompassing. It no longer defines the global mode of functioning of power. It is now one mode of power in a larger field that is not defined, overall, by ideology. This makes it all the more pressing to connect ideology to its real conditions of emergence. For these are now manifest, mimed by men of power. One way of conceptualizing the non-ideological means by which ideology is produced might deploy the notions of *induction* and *transduction*—induction being the triggering of a qualification, of a containment, an actualization, and transduction being the transmission of an impulse of virtuality from one actualization to another, and across them all (what Guattari calls transversality). Transduction is the transmission of a force of potential that cannot but be felt, simultaneously doubling, enabling, and ultimately counteracting the limitative selections of apparatuses of actualization and implantation” (Massumi, 2002:42, his emphasis).

It is this account of the entanglement between the virtual and the actual, of induction and transduction that best explains a certain manner of walking—at once affective and reflective, embodied and beyond embodiment, held in place and taking flight. In particular as it intensifies and magnifies re-entric processes in their full physical form, while offering a symbolic template with which to re-enter the ‘human’ after its de-centering.

With walking as ontological shifter I am attempting to find an alternative to the modernist episteme that has been dominant for too long and has offered either/or onto-epistemologies of opposition or dialectical ways to engage with these that only reify the problem. I am proposing intentional walking as an integrative aesthetic practice that brings multiplicity and synchronicity to experience and being in an expanded sociality. Within the complex matrix of time and space, walking is available to us as medium for a new organization based on integration and transformation<sup>36</sup>. Because this medium of walking is comprised of the multiplicities that are time, movement, land and affective and cognitive processes, the results it yields are necessarily open

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<sup>36</sup> I am not proposing here that those who are mobility-disabled would not be able to experience these transformations, but only that walking is a medium that maximizes the conditions for such transformations to occur.

and indeterminate. This is not only due to its emphasis on the procedural, itself by definition constantly shifting, but also because the processes implicate materials and flows that are unpredictable, unfixable and immeasurable. These processes will guide the materialities and immaterialities involved in this type of walking towards an acceptance of embodiment and temporality as open.

Practicing walking for its re-organizational capacities is a move that punctures the closed system of the theoretical realm. This intentional turning towards a set of radical positions offers an alternative to the modernist criticality situated in the realm of the self-reflective. Instead, it activates reparative processes that incorporate and respect difference—it punctures the realm of the self-reflective with difference from without while opening it to a practice of the everyday largely distributed. Much as it happens in reentry, this practice grants the ability to consider the permeability and porosity of boundaries and the thresholds of boundaries themselves, exposing the flows with which these may be passed. These considerations of matter (both biotic and non-biotic) in its thresholds with the immaterial can bring to the relationship with other-than-human environments a sense of humbleness and non-anthropocentric elasticity to fruitfully contrast with the myriad ways brought about by the empirically technological in its current deployments. While walking integrates sensations of the non-linearity of space-time and affective forces, allowing for difference to seep in from a space beyond the self, it marks these selves' incoherence with them-selves. Here resides the radical move towards a new understanding of the subjective as a pulsing, never fully fixed, relational intensity.

SECTION VAFTERWORD

Walking as ontological shifter is a speculative hypothesis that proposes an aesthetics founded in a change of pace. This understanding of walking—as an experimental, relational and integrative practice—guides the walker toward the proposed ontological shift. This shift is made available when the walker’s onto-epistemic core expands to encompass difference in alterity, uncertainty and indeterminacy—through an epistemological shift, followed by an ontological shift which, in turn, elicits further epistemological shifts, leading to further ontological shifts in processes of opening and reciprocating recurrence, in eternal return. These shifts are also made available by a slowing down in order to synch with a ‘curated’ environment’s ‘rates of being’ (Gilbert, 2007). The embodiment on which it relies is the subject’s ever-increasing awareness of the entanglement of myriad materialities and immaterialities in space-time.

I Perhaps this thesis is a comparative hysteresis.<sup>37</sup> The terms to be compared are the different temporalities that affect who we are, as encountered in our very situated circumstances. Their histories not only shed light on their current states (which are actually fluxes and networks, and thus never static). Most importantly, these histories reveal how different materialities and immaterialities are able to absorb, hold and release a diversity of times, depending on their porosities. These terms are always in relationship to the human in an attempt to go beyond the human. What I mean by this is not only as these temporalities are the enveloping entanglements

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<sup>37</sup> Hysteresis is the dependence of the state of a system on its history. Its etymology is ambiguously explanatory as it is both a lagging and a coming short, a deficiency; also it means “that which comes later,” and in this sense it evinces a temporal deferral of empirical causalities.

where humans find themselves and where they conduct their daily activities. This going ‘beyond the human’ is mostly aimed to understand relationalities that deeply implicate the human yet are truly beyond us. For if any of these systems’ histories (as they provisionally remain ‘systems’ for ease of our own understanding) are necessarily held in ‘the stacks’ (Bratton, 2016) of memories that compose them, whether phenomenologically and empirically accessible or not, then the inventories and flows of affect, the ‘virtual pools’ (Ansell-Pearson, 1999) and their actualizations and transductions to individualities, the nodes and paths of connections, are necessarily implicated by and implicating our subjectivities.

II      Take entropy to be an increase in heat, followed by its dissipation. This process must always end in coldness. This is what dissipation means: heat is transferred and ends in non-flowing frigidity. The fall to zero temperatures comes faster than the dissipation process and there it remains, leaving entropy’s death threat not at the hottest but at the coldest end of the spectrum. Entropy is freezing to death, not death by heat.

Then there is the other process called consciousness. Perchance it began as a popular process when certain animals gathered around an accidental fire. Soon enough these animals learned how to build fires, precisely because it kept them warm and safe and wondering. Prometheus, bringing the promise of the new, is said to have birthed technology with his stealing fire from the gods. Since then, how to push technology towards superseding itself has remained one of this animal’s most prominent endeavors <sup>because of fire, due to fire, paying dues to fire</sup>. Where capital gets entangled many years later, it resolves in a very specific marketplace, a circulation where the always novel flows of data follow the hottest routes deriving from flow to flow within a cloud.



In this tightly bound relationship between consciousness and fire, turning our backs to the dark cold environment outside the fire circle became a habit of survival against the entropic dark and cold surroundings<sup>for what is a universe without a star? and what is a star but not a ball of fire? entropy and consciousness are bound together around it.</sup> The circle of consciousness became the closed system of significations and knowledge tightly bound with fire and technology; the outside of this circle demarcated the foreign, the unknown, the non-knowable, the non-conscious—that which cannot be signified. Entropy became entangled with the coldness of ignorance, or that which our backs, lacking the perceptive apparatuses to collect data, would not register nor pass on to conscious understanding. no passings, no connections, no excess, no residue. no repetition, no difference.

Entropy is the ignorance that stems from a self-enclosed flat onto-epistemology; one that comes from our inability not just to access different ‘rates of being’ (Gilbert, 2007) but to acknowledge the co-implicative order of these relationships. It is always accompanied by a univocal sense of consciousness. As such, this onto-epistemology only allows a univocal sense of time—the instantaneous. Based on an idea of time as circulation within an exchange economy where the just passed is constantly disappearing in the distance at a speed too fast to register—units smaller than half a second—the instant seems inexistent. Its moment is perceived as an engagement that is free of charge, or autonomous. The yields from such moments carry no consequences as nothing to connect with remains.

On the other hand, accessing these minute moments of time from an onto-epistemology that acknowledges multiple temporalities renders the instant legible as immediate moments. If still partially or totally unavailable for conscious register, the remote appears and disappears but intuitively remains: there is excess as residue, there are traces, there are ghosts. There is a knowledge (even if intuitive) that these circulations implicate other beings and thus are not free

of charge. There is space for reentry. Hansen claims "...that even if this force of alterity may not directly enter into the operation of (some) systems (to the extent that such operation can be isolated from their worldly interactions, which itself remains an open question), it certainly does inform their cognitive operations in the world," (Hansen, 2009:115). This renders a concept of consciousness that is neither static nor univocal; it is a concept of consciousness that expands to include the intuitive, the pre-linguistic and pre-individual, as layers that come to form part of the re-entric process.

### III (RE-ENTERING, YET AGAIN)

Immanence is to live in the present, perchance without consciousness of it, and to opt for its continuity.

How do we move from here? <sup>mess around with it</sup> Poke at the thresholds, bring in and take out <sup>breathe</sup>, reshuffle, recontextualize revisit reconsider. If I may, repeat this concept in as many ways as needed. If to write about it and think about it is to define thresholds by which to talk about it, then write about it as affirmative field; crack it open to immanent difference. If to write about it is to use certain characters from certain very peopled peoples, from peoples with very specific and historically situated subjectivities,<sup>38</sup> if this distance is necessary *in order to* talk about it and write about it, how to gain the necessary distance to let us know that we need to go back to ground zero? Or was it *from* ground zero? In any case, how to gain the distance that brings about an ethics?

The ethics of immanence is precisely the act of thinking and acting in the present, the ethics of a present pregnant with other temporalities. How to do it? Outside of consciousness, yet back to consciousness, back from consciousness, in this ever-cascading of instances of 'I,' without becoming schizophrenic, yet going out of consciousness while at it? If to write about it is several degrees removed from core immanence—this disjunction which is the time passed on a body-calling-itself-organism, this totality and multiplicity of mine as it traverses with the planet. <sup>The</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> (Ticineto Clough, 2000)

socialities it flows about with, those ways that bodies get to travel in, all those as fluidities in a mesh, of the flesh. Those temporalities. How does one move from here? While the fear of falling is dreamed and the fantasy of traveling in spacetime is lived profusely, fugitive lines of indeterminacy crash in. In the moment of the crash, of broken glasses, it is not easy to discern who is who—the subject I am leaving or the one I am living? Which brings us back to Hansen, in his assertion that potentiality lies in the present. In a recurrent now, in this ontology of solitudes, the crack is always felt as violent, ascertains Deleuze. It appears it is actualized when no one is around, even if exposed to myriad sensibilities. I recall that things never really touch<sup>39</sup>, we are always all flows. And yet, the mother pervades and the skin remains. It seems that thinking about species is thinking about the relationships of bodies giving birth to other bodies, about how bodies multiply and reproduce, even when the biomediated body of biopolitics has gained center stage. Living beings, so they say, move about fields of possibility that are indeed faster than those of inert matter. Yet on the other hand, the latter live longer. Perhaps what humans are, is these beings that learn to relate to objects first and foremost through the touch with the body from which they were born, or birthed—the touch of a mother. The first touch with the mother is crucial<sup>40</sup>—even as this is an ongoing process and at the expense of lacking distance of psychoanalytic perspectives: for better or for worse this is the primordial touchstone of the human subjectivity of the Capitalocene<sup>41</sup>. Then we modulate time (as time, as matter, as affect and as space). All technologies after all carry in them the terms of time, they always have and always will. Yet, what remains to be done with respect to modulation? Is measure capable of being measured?

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<sup>39</sup> (Barad, 2012).

<sup>40</sup> I am drawing on Winnicott and Hansen here, all works cited.

<sup>41</sup> Donna Haraway's adaptation of the concept of Anthropocene that pushes it towards an indication that the geological footprint imparted by humans on Earth is not evenly distributed in its causal genealogies but is instead mainly imbricated in and stemming from the culture that has as primary exchange practice one based on capital.

Reentry seems to be the process by which one is always coming back to the pattern—the patterns one learns, then learns to unlearn and dismantle; to re-mantle, again. With and in, difference. With the distance of time it is learned that measure is repetition with difference. How to move—to one; to the originary multiplicities one incarnates; to the times that have been interjected onto me because of genealogies and generations, of ancestors, of travelers and strangers—the manycolored, multifarious, ‘ethnicities’ that have transversed my ontologies, from as far as my mother can tell; knowing there must be another story that comes interjected via my sister, adopted at birth in a hospital in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1964. Therein another indigenous genealogy I had never thought about<sup>just interjected my trajectory of thought, wounded me in the heart, and left without a word, blessing me.</sup> Reentry.

Reentry is perchance coming back to the scene of death  
 To the scene of birth  
 To rebirthing  
 To rebirding  
 To re-verd-it again  
 To revert it fast forward  
 Revering it  
 Each time it repeats itself  
 For it gives me the chance to practice  
 Once more  
 The mooring  
 of repeated return

Répétez  
 Avec moi  
 Répétez

Let us give us the chance to practice  
 The field is here  
 One practices in the field that resonates the most  
 —certainly, as in desire.

therefore, immanence

Outside the walls of containment there is *khôra*<sup>42</sup>, the *corazón* (of cities), its outskirts. you handed me the courage into technology—the haptic, the sensorial, the originary, the temporal, time; you touched me in the *khôra*, the heart of the *polis*, in what surrounds it yet is not. Cities, long ago, held the shapes of hearts, fields formed along time by the concentration of hearths and flows of desire in high-density, enwalled areas. Cities are passages. Layers of time in condensed space and feeding forward. Cities, technologies and flow: there, where the closed and the open meet<sup>43</sup>. Places where to run to and run from. The *khôra* reminds me of the *mu no basho*<sup>44</sup> (Odin, 1998), the field of nothingness where it all is always beginning... And so we concluded certain economies of affect as we talked about lovers, mothers and the impossibility of consciousness. And I continue to consider how walking is the condition of possibility to go in and out of consciousness—forming, in-forming, com-forming, other-than-phenomenological subjectivities.

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<sup>42</sup> *khôra* is a Greek word with mysterious, meandering non-meanings. It is at once a space in between, that which is and is not, a holding container, the space between two rivers (as in Mesopotamia), what lies after the city proper, a receptacle and an interval. It denotes space and time and yet it doesn't. And I wonder if it can be pushed beyond Plato.

<sup>43</sup> *Urbs* is Latin for city as enwalled space and settlement, whereas *rus* stands for the open space of the land. The former is mother to the urban; the latter mothers the rural.

<sup>44</sup> Steve Odin compares Whitehead's process philosophy with Japanese philosophy where there is a "primacy accorded to "relational fields" over that of "substantial objects", as crucial turn for the development of an environmental ethics. *Mu* is Japanese for 'nothingness,' *basho* is Japanese for 'field, locus, matrix, place.'

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