# On the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (In)Tensions, and Response-Ability in Research

**SAGE**

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## Abstract

This article responds to agitations occurring in qualitative research related to the incompatability between methodologies and methods, the preponderance of methodocentrism, the pre-supposition of methods, a reliance on data modeled on knowability and visibility, the ongoing emplacement of settler futurity, and the dilemma of representation. Enmeshments between ontological thought and qualitative research methodologies have rigorously interrogated the logic of anthropocentrism in conventional humanist research methods and have provoked some scholars to suggest that we can do away with method. Rather than a refusal of methods, we propose that particular (in)tensions need to be immanent to whatever method is used. If the intent of inquiry is to create a different world, to ask what kinds of futures are imaginable, then (in)tensions need attend to the immersion, friction, strain, and quivering unease of doing research differently.

## Keywords

qualitative research, methodologies, new materialisms, methods of inquiry, walking methods, ethics

Walk as SLOWLY as you can.
FEEL the air against your SKIN as you MOVE.
Move with an irregular rhythm.

~

Walk DIAGONALLY through the city.
Cross the road. Cross a threshold.

~

Keep your eyes CLOSED while walking.
Change the length of your STRIDE.
Remove your shoes. Trust the earth.

~

Follow lines, smells, the color red.

This article responds to agitations that are occurring in qualitative research, particularly issues related to the incompatability between new empiricist methodologies and phenomenological uses of methods (St. Pierre, 2016a; Vagle & Hofsess, 2016), the preponderance of methodocentrism (Snaza & Weaver, 2015), the pre-supposition of methods (Manning, 2016), a reliance on data modeled on knowability and visibility (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013;

MacLure, 2013), the ongoing emplacement of settler futurity (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015), and the dilemma of representation (Lorimer, 2005; Thrift, 2007; Vannini, 2015). While enmeshments between ontological thought and qualitative research methodologies as shaped by affect theory (Springgay, 2016; Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017), new materialism (Blaise, Hamm, & Iorio, 2017; de Freitas & Curinga, 2015; Mazzei, 2016; Snaza, Sonu, Truman, & Zaliwska, 2016), the new empiricism (St. Pierre, 2016b), and posthumanism (Snaza & Weaver, 2015) have rigorously interrogated the logic of anthropocentrism in conventional humanist research methods, questions remain about concepts such as research design, methods, procedure, data, and analysis. We appear stuck, writes Elizabeth St. Pierre (2016a), between new empiricist theories as methodologies and traditional phenemenologically informed methods. And while scholars are eager to suggest that we can do away with method, this article will address some concerns we have with this proposition.

First, there is an assumption that methods are particular things, such as interviews, participant observation, or video

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ethnography. Yet, as we'll elaborate, methods themselves have been playfully interrogated and experimented with in ways that already resist representation (Thrift, 2007; Vannini, 2015). Second, although we agree with a radical empiricist understanding that posits thought as a form of inquiry, for us, as qualitative researchers who conduct large, multisite, durational research projects with others, including groups of students and teachers, artists and community members, but also nonhuman entities like rocks and bark, methods are significant and very much present in a research event. Thus, rather than a refusal of methods, the remaining sections of the article propose that particular (in)tensions need to be immanent to whatever method is used. If the intent of inquiry is to create a different world, to ask what kinds of futures are imaginable, then (in)tensions attend to the immersion, tension, friction, anxiety, strain, and quivering unease of doing research differently.

The article commences with a short review of arguments emerging in qualitative research, particularly around the viability of methods and data, within the turn to more onto-logically nuanced research. The problem, we contend, isn't the types of methods researchers use, or that new methods need to be invented. There is already an abundance of methods and experimental practices of doing research! We approach methods propositionally, speculatively, and experimentally and maintain that it is the *logic of procedure and extraction* that needs undoing. Research methods cannot be framed as a process of gathering data. Understood relationally, methods become "a distributed, immanent field of sensible processuality within which creative variations give rise to modifications and movements of thinking" (McCormack, 2013, p. 25). Research methods become a practice of being *inside* a research event. We attend to the *how* of research by thinking-with various walking projects from *WalkingLab* (www.walkinglab.org) and beyond. We use the idea of the walk score as a catalyst for movement. Influenced by the tradition of Fluxus event scores,[1] they enact what Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (2014), following Alfred North Whitehead (1978), call propositions. Propositions are different from research methods or a research design in that they are speculative and event oriented (Truman & Springgay, 2016). They are not intended as a set of directions nor rules that contain and control movement. Scores emphasize chance and improvisation. Justy Phillips (2015) writes that "scoring is a technique of eventing through lines of writing" (p. 133). Invoking a number of artists and thinkers that engage with propositions as scores, Phillips maintains that the score does not have set order of activation. The score events the middle and "is the mechanism which allows us all to become involved, to make our presence felt. Scores are process-oriented, not thing-oriented" (Halprin, cited in Phillips, 2015, p. 133).

The propositional form of the walk score invites us to "begin" in a speculative middle, where rather than the

"making-reasonable of experience" (Manning, 2016, p. 31), research "must be reinvented at every turn and thought must always leap" (p. 45). We need to shift from thinking about methods as processes of gathering data toward methods as a becoming entangled in relations. This requires a commitment to methods in which experience gives way to experimentation, where it "becomes a field of variations in which to experiment with the questions of how felt difference might register in thinking" (McCormack, 2013, p. 11). The question of movement is at the heart of this endeavor. Not a movement from one point to another, but rather a thinking-in-movement. Through examples from our many research projects, we'll discuss how research needs to be understood as speculative eventing, and how within the speculative middle, methods need to be (in)tension so that methods become attuned to ethicopolitical matters and concerns.

## Walk a familiar path repetitively
## Listen to what is no longer there

John Weaver and Nathan Snaza (2016) argue that traditional qualitative approaches to research fetishize methods, and in doing so maintain an understanding of methods as predetermined entities that exist separate from the research event. The givenness of method is exactly what Manning (2016) confronts when she states that method "is a static organization of preformed categories" (p. 31) an "apparatus of capture" (p. 32) which "stops potential on its way, cutting into the process before it has had a chance to fully engage with the complex relational fields that process itself calls forth" (pp. 33-34). If method is pre-given and known in advance, it also suggests that data, is an already pre-supposed entity that is waiting to be captured, extracted, and mined. Method, writes Maggie MacLure (2013) treats data as if it were an "inert and indifferent mass waiting to be in/formed and calibrated by our analytic acumen or our coding systems" (p. 660). Weaver and Snaza (2016) similarly state that methods that rely on processes of data gathering privilege sight and its concomitant certainty, truth, stability, and representation. As a move to unfurl methodocentrism and neo-positivism in qualitative research, Patti Lather and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2013) proposed a "post" conceptualization of research. They contend that researchers' prior training in qualitative methods might in fact "normalize our thinking and doing," where a research design that follows conventional protocols of questions, literature review, methods, data analysis, and representation assumes that the "human is superior to and separate from the material" (p. 630).

Writing about the politics of method, and in particular the effects of interpretive analysis on Māori-settler relations, Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins (2008) insist on strategically foregrounding material events over interpretation. Using what they call a "materialization reading," which gives a speculative account informed by "Maori recognition

. . . of the "shape" of the events" (p. 132), Jones and Jenkins argue that methods need to attend to their material effects.

St. Pierre (2016a, 2016b) draws attention to the gap between new empiricist methodologies and phenomenological uses of methods. She argues that while theoretical orientations, particularly those informed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and what is often now referred to as new materialisms, have greatly altered the landscape of qualitative research, too often researchers still design, implement, and gather data based on phenomenological understandings, or conventional empirical methods, which are incommensurable with immanent theories. In a "leap to application" (p. 111), researchers utilize ontological theories to analyze and code existing data collected using dominant phenomenological methods. St. Pierre (2016a) asserts that one can't deploy Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome to interviews collected through standard phenomenological methods, because "they are thought in different ontological arrangements" (p. 2). The resulting confusion is in part caused by the perpetual theory/practice divide. Privileging practice, she states, has resulted in normalizing methods and problematically assumes that the "how" of research is separate from the theory or thinking of research. We see evidence of this in the overuse of diffractive analysis on decades old data, or arts-based practices such as cutting, stitching, and collaging together transcripts in an attempt to "perform data differently." Neither diffraction nor collage are necessarily problematic, but iterated in these ways data remains as something that can be "abstracted from experience into a system of understanding that is decipherable precisely because its operations are muted by their having been taken out of their operational context" (Manning, 2016, p. 29). The idea that data is a "thing" that sits in the world and can be isolated and extricated by a method, but as separate from that method is impossible if as Karen Barad (2007) states "relata do not preceed relations" (p. 334).

The insular way in which data and methods are divorced from one another is also common to how theory and methods are conceptualized as detached. Addressing the enmeshment between theory and practice, St. Pierre (2016b) encourages researchers to *read and read and read* until its concepts overtake us and help us lay out a plane that enables lines of flight to what we have not yet been able to think and live" (p. 122, emphasis added). Her encouragement to read as a practice of pushing thought to its edge, to where thought thinks thought, is necessary and productive. Radical empiricism insists that thinking and experimenting are both material gestures and consequently reading is an encounter that brings "into being that which does not yet exist" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). According to Manning (2016) radical empiricism begins in the middle of a mess of relations not yet organized in terms like subject/object. "Neither the knower or the known can be situated in advance of the occasion's coming to be - both are immanent to the field's composition" (p. 30).

In the same way that methods cannot be known in advance and used as preestablished procedures, thought must also arrive in the middle and be immanent to the event itself. In the example of collage, collage then would not happen after the event of research as a way to creatively entangle data, but rather collage must become a thinking-making-doing, where collaging and thought exist simultaneously. This means that a researcher can't extract data from a research site using phenomenological methods and then make a collage out of that data. Such a model is based on a process of extraction. The collage isn't the issue, it's the idea that there is inert data that can be mined.

Counter to St. Pierre's (2016a, 2016b) arguments, Mark Vagle and Brooke Hofsess (2016) ask questions about the productivity of bridging phenomenology with post qualitative methodologies, insisting that a playful "putting together" of phenomenology and Deleuze and Guattarian concepts provoke a postreflectivity. However, our own new materialist and speculative conjectures about methodologies and methods are more in line with St. Pierre's convictions that reflexivity (humanist) and radical empiricism (more-than-human) are incommensurate. Reflexivity, even as an entangled practice, presupposes a subject and is founded on interpretive practices. For example, Margaret Somerville (2016) notes that while the crisis of language and representation has troubled qualitative researchers for decades, the focus on the materiality of language, that new materialism offers attends to data "that defies representation, data that commands attention precisely because it cannot be explained" (p. 1163). This is what MacLure (2013) calls data that "glows," where glowing speaks to the intensities and forces that cannot be interpreted or understood through conventional meaning making practices.

Standard approaches to qualitative research conceive of methodologies as the theoretical orientation of research, and methods are the procedures by which empirical materials are collected and interpreted. Although conventional qualitative methods, such as interviews, can be used on their own, more often researchers combine a number of approaches, including idiosyncratic experimental practices to generate both observed and ephemeral "data." For example, walking on its own can be a method of doing research such as long walks, dérive, and psychogeography. Or it can be merged with various other methods like photography and video, drawing, sensory methods, different mapping techniques, including GPS (Global Positioning System), and performance. Walking is distinguished as either an ordinary method, or an innovative strategy that utilizes new technologies.

But even amid innovation and experimentation there is a risk that methods are determined in advance of research and that they are intended to aid a researcher and/or participant in gathering some kind of evidence. Innovative or arts-based methods can also fall into a logic of proceduralism

that can be validated, codified, and represented. Walking is sometimes figured as one of these counter methods, but as Manning (2016) argues,

> Any ordering agenda that organizes from without is still active in the exclusion of processes too unintelligible within current understandings of knowledge to be recognized, let alone studied or valued. Despite its best intentions, method works as the safeguard against the ineffable. (p. 32)

In instrumentalizing walking as a method, there is the presumption that walking is going to do something specific before the event occurs, and that walking is uniquely situated to discover and gather data. The problem, we maintain, is that instead of attending to the ecologies of research, or what we prefer to call the thinking-making-doing of research, researchers fall into the trap of believing that creating *new* methods will offer different solutions. This, as Manning (2016) contends, cuts "into the process before it has had a chance to fully engage with the complex relational fields the process itself calls forth" (pp. 33-34). In taking up the question of how to do immanent research, it is no longer sufficient to engage with representation and interpretation (reflexivity). Rather, we must consider speculative eventing as a research practice that provokes an ethics that is accountable to a material world. We posit that methods are not the issue. Methods must be engaged with in the speculative middle and (in)tensions must be brought to bear on them. In what follows, we discuss these agitations.

**Follow a thought in the direction of the wind**
**CROSS (m)any lines**

Research begins in the middle. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the middle is where things grow, expand, and pick up speed. The middle is not an average nor a zone between the beginning and the end. The middle passes between things as a "transversal movement" (p. 25). In the middle, immanent modes of thinking-making-doing come from within the processes themselves, not from outside them. In the middle the speculative "what if" emerges as a catalyst for the event. The middle is a difficult place to be. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write that it's hard to see things clearly in the middle. That is the point. The middle can't be known in advance of research. You have to be "in it," situated and responsive. You are not there to report on what you find or what you seek, but to activate thought. To agitate it. The speculative middle "seeks to energize new modes of activity already in germ" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 87). In the speculative middle, "experience is not an object out there to be acted upon. Rather, it is a field of variation in which thinking is another variation" (McCormack, 2013, p. 9). The speculative middle shifts methods from a reporting

on the world to a way of being in the world that is open to experimentation and is (in)tension. Celia Lury (2012) names this approach "live methods" which she contends

> must be satisfied with an engagement with relations and with parts, with differentiation and be involved in making middles, in dividing without end(s), in mingling, bundling, and coming together. The objects of such methods—being live—are without unity, un-whole-some; put another way, they are partial and undivisible, distributed, and distributing. (p. 191)

Situated and partial knowledge of course has its antecedents in a long and pressing history of feminist research. Moreover, the affective, expressive, intra-active, and pre-cognitive underpinnings of what Lury calls "live methods" intersect with "new materialist" methodologies that insist on the way agency flows through relational networks and is mobilized through human and nonhuman intra-actions. This liveness is quite different from phenomenological understandings of "lived experience" that enfolds human subjectivity into the event. Rather, this liveness or incipient subjectivity of a sense-event remains open, incorporeal, and virtual, and exists in a time that is always past and always about to come, but never happening (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Research thought in this way, as an event of becoming, emphasizes doing rather than meaning making. The becoming incipient event of research, a becoming-intense, engenders a politics of imperceptibility and offers the potential for unraveling anthropocentric models of research.

What has become increasingly clear is that rather than trying to collect data or represent an objective reality (methods that privilege the human and treat data as existing phenomena), we need to think about inventive practices that "intervene, disturb, intensify or provoke a heightened sense of the potentiality of the present" (Sheller, 2014, p. 134). This requires a different orientation to methods.

**WALK backwards without looking over your SHOULDER.**
**Perform a sun DIAL.**

*The Walking Neighbourhood* directed by artist Lenine Bourke, and a featured *WalkingLab* project, is an interactive walking tour lead by children and/or youth that explores local communities on foot. The project has been enacted in more than eight different cities in Australia, Europe, and Asia. Each iteration begins with a series of propositions and problems that are then further attended to in workshops between the artists facilitating the project and the young people involved. Different methods are brought to bear on the workshops which activate the various ideas that surface. For example, propositions and problems in the project in Chiang Mai, Thailand, focused on the immediate neighborhood block that the young people lived within, the different

kinds of relations and encounters that were (im)possible, and how different ways of walking and moving in their neighborhood could enact different forms of responsibility. Methods included storytelling, walking, sound recordings, drawing, photography, and games. Although each of these examples is known, in the sense that we know what a photograph is, the methods themselves were not planned in advance of the research event. Lenine did not know before she and the other artists started working with the young people, what methods would be generative to the practice of working together. The methods emerged out of the collaboration between the artists and the young people and responded to the immanence of the event itself. Furthermore, the methods were not a means by which the young people collected data from their neighborhood. The methods were not used to extract a sense of what already existed in the neighborhood or the young people's personal experience of place. Instead the young people and the artists created minor public walking interventions that were not about recording or capturing their environment, but about activating problems and concepts in the midst of the event. Research methods create new concepts, new knowledges, and new practices of relating. This inventive and experimental process becomes a process of exhausting terminology and what is already known. The speculative middle and the problematizing altered the method of the walking tour. Typically walking tours impart information about a particular place. On a tour, you learn about the topology of a place, the history, or significant landmarks. Walking tours are both planned—as in the leader has information they wish to instruct participants about—or explorative—as in participants discover something new. Examples include the international movement called Jane's Walk, and food tours (Swan & Flowers, 2016), where walking tours become particular kinds of pedagogical practices.

Over weeks of eventing, *The Walking Neighbourhood* artists and the young people use various methods to problematize further problems and to creatively produce a response. The response is a series of youth lead walking tours. These performances are themselves speculative middles, contingent on entanglements between tour leaders and participant-audiences. The audience does not simply watch the tour. Rather, participant-audiences are invited to become attentive to, and to meaningfully respond within the event. Artist-researchers recognize there is a politics and ethics to how we come to know others. As performative experiments, the methods of the walking tours "probe speculative dimensions" (Van dooren, Kirksey, & Munster, 2016, p. 9). Artist-researchers don't describe research events but engage with the event as a speculative practice. This is similarly addressed in the project *Nightwalks With Teens*, a performance-based project where teens lead groups of strangers on a series of walks, in the dark (Springgay, 2013). In contrast with Jane's Walks, which impart information, or guided

hikes where participants are encouraged to become attuned to "nature," *Nightwalks*, whether performed in urban cities or rural areas of Canada, disrupts any pregiven assumption about how the walks can be consumed or experienced.

Other examples of speculative middles include Stephanie's multiyear project *The Pedagogical Impulse* (see www.thepedagogical.com) where artists worked on a diverse range of projects with students in K-12 schools and community centers (see Rotas & Springgay, 2014; Truman & Springgay, 2015; Zaliwska & Springgay, 2015). Although the focus of the projects was not specific to walking research, in many instances, walking methods were used as speculative practices.

In speculative middles, a practice is engendered "that puts relations at risk with other relations" or "in the presence of those who will bear their consequences" (p. 12). In a speculative middle, a

> charge passes through the body and lingers for a little while as an irritation, confusion, judgement, thrill, or musing. However it strikes us, its significance jumps. Its visceral force keys a search to make sense of it, to incorporate it into an order of meaning. But it lives first as an actual charge immanent to acts and scene—a relay. (Stewart, 2007, p. 39)

A speculative middle does not stop a researcher. It's a thrust, a future provocation for thinking-making-doing. As Manning (2016) writes, "in the midst, in the event, we know the object not in its fullness, in its ultimate form, but as an edging into experience" (p. 48). Speculative middles, through processes such as walking, reading, and writing, emerge as agitations and as affective force. Donna Haraway (2016) writes that "it matters what matters we use to think other matters with" (p. 12). In the speculative middle, which is not a place, but an event, (in)tensions, concerns, and gnawings continually emerge. As the agitations take shape, it is the (in)tensions that incite further action, which elicits additional propositions, and new speculative middles to emerge.

**Notice**
**the turn of the feet,**
**the lock of knee,**
**the shift of the hip**

(In)tensions arise in the speculative middle and alter the *how* of methods and the research event.

The prefix "in" can signify the negative of a concept, for instance, inattention and inexpensive. But "in" can also be used to express a toward or a within, in such words as insular, intake, inside, and intimacy. Jeffrey Cohen (2015) signals both abjection and inclusion, and is therefore "full of affect" (p. i). If conceived of as the opposite of the human, the prefix becomes enmeshed with nature, signifying the

nature-culture divide. But *in*, Cohen poses, is far more complex, and is also a "designation for excesses of scale (too vast or miniscule for familiarity); a separation within incorporation; negation belied by production; an antonym that fails" (p. i). (In)tensions are attuned to ethico-political concerns that emerge in each speculative middle. If methods are not predetermined in advance, and arise in a speculative middle, then they become ways of thinking about problems. Todd May (2005) writes that "solutions present themselves as stable identities whereas problems (at least the worthwhile ones) present themselves as 'open fields' or 'gaps' or 'ontological folds.' Problems are inexhaustible, while solutions are a particular form of exhaustion" (p. 85). To begin in the speculative middle means to let go of agendas and embrace "conditions to come" (Uncertain Commons, 2013, n.p.). In that regard, problems are always virtual while solutions are actual in the Deleuzian sense. To think in terms of problems—to problematize—rather than find solutions keeps a method (in)tension.

Deleuze's (1994) ontology is not concerned with what is (with discrete forms of identity as being) but as an approach to experimentation—a way of probing what *might* be. Deleuze's *might be* exists virtually in all instances but as a virtuality cannot be known until after it emerges. For Deleuze, whatever emerges as an event in turn has the ability to modify *virtual* potentials: a process which he calls *differentiation*. For Deleuze, the virtual "possesses a full reality by itself" it is "*real without being actual, differentiated without being differenciated, and complete without being entire*" (pp. 211, 214, emphasis in original). Although Deleuze was not a quantum theorist, and Barad (2015) does not seem to cite Deleuze, her recent journal article exemplifies the dynamism between the virtual actual when she states, "Virtuality is the materiality wandering/wonderings of nothingness; virtuality is the ongoing thought experiment that the world preforms with itself . . ." (p. 396). Or as Manning (2016) states, "[t]he virtual is never opposite to the actual—it is how the actual resonates beyond the limits of its actualization" (p. 29). For Manning, this operates as a "relational field of emergent experience" where there is no preestablished hierarchy and no preconstituted subject-positions, there are only "emergent relations" (p. 29). All relations, as and the events they constitute have virtual potential—what emerges in actuality *stirs* the virtual, and vice versa.

Deleuze's thought compels researchers to experiment with *problems* rather than seek *solutions*. Similarly, rather than political activism rectifying problems of the past, Elizabeth Grosz (2004) argues that it should be "augmented with those dreams of the future that make its projects endless, unattainable, ongoing experiments rather than solutions" (p. 14). As such, methods become an experimental site for *posing new questions as speculative middles (in) tensions*. Methods push us to ask questions differently, to

problematize problems, rather than collect data or seek solutions. In the speculative middle, problematizing is a mode of defamiliarization that ruptures taken-for-granted habits, tropes, and common assumptions about *how* methods perform (Truman & Springgay, 2016).

A few summers ago, Sarah set up a dark room in her basement. It was a time when many of our colleagues were experimenting with GoPro cameras and other wearable technologies as a way to record movement, and we wanted to reconsider more analogue approaches. We built several pinhole cameras out of coffee tins, shoe boxes, and a Chinese tea chest. Pinhole photography is a lensless process. In the case of a coffee tin, a small hole, or aperture, is punctured in the wall of the tin, allowing light to pass through onto photographic paper that is sealed inside. Once the paper is exposed to light, it needs to be processed in the dark room. Because they typically require long exposure times, pinhole cameras are usually mounted in one place for the duration of the shot. Moving the camera during the exposure time can produce ghostly gestures; a palpable affect of rhythm and light. We took our shoe box and coffee tin cameras on walks and their long exposure time forced us to pause, to attend to our thinking-in-movement. But the dark room chemicals are toxic so we have traded the analogue process for a pinhole mount on a DSLR camera. These digital pinhole pictures don't require long exposures, and as no photo paper is needed, we can record a series of images in a short amount of time. Wearing or holding the camera as we walk, the walking pinhole images become indistinct shadows of light and movement. They disorient perception of space and time. They evoke, what Kathleen Stewart (2007) calls ordinary affects through their quivering surfaces. Ordinary affects, she states, "provoke attention to the forces that come into view as habit or shock, resonance or impact. Something thrown itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable" (p. 1). The images, which undulate and animate assemblages of human and nonhuman encounters do not represent the walks but incite new modes of thought and different practices of relating. As a method, the pinholes set the event of thinking-making-doing in motion. They are a thinking-with practice.

If the idea is that methods are a way to pose problems differently, the pinholes became, for us, a way to think about how to wrestle with methods as affective ecologies. How do you work a method that is infused with movement and affect? How to think movement moving? Anthropologist Natasha Myers (2016) has similarly experimented with walking and photography to think-with plant sentience in an Oak Savannah in Toronto's High Park. Methods, she contends, are practices for cultivating "*modes of attention* that might help *tune in* to the deep time of these lands and the *naturalcultural happenings* shaping its present" (p. 2, emphasis in original). Modes of attention ask questions

about what matters to the land. To tune into is not the same as to capture, or to document. It is a bending and folding, or what Carla Hustak and Natasha Myers (2012) call "involutionary momentum." Involution, as opposed to evolution, is a relational movement, a coupling, or comingling. Involutionary readings, they write, "give way to livelier ontologies and intra-active worldings" (p. 105). (In)tensions tune into and attend to not knowing, asking "what modes of embodiment, attention, and imagination would we need to know this place well?" (Myers, 2016, p. 3). Thus, the issue isn't what methods are used such as walking or pinhole photography but the kinds of problematizing, or tuning into, that matter.

Our pinhole walks habitually take place on the Bruce Trail behind Sarah's house in Hamilton, Ontario. The Bruce Trail opened in 1967 and stretches from Niagara Falls to Tobermory. At almost 900 kilometers it is the oldest and longest marked hiking trail in Canada. It was created to draw attention to the geologic formation called the Niagara Escarpment, and stretches through Haudenosaunee territory. The escarpment is a horseshoe-shaped ridge of rock from Rochester, New York, through Lake Ontario to Hamilton, north to Tobermory, beneath Lake Huron, surfacing again on Manitoulin Island, where it then moves across Northern Michigan. It was shaped over 400 million years ago and is composed of sedimentary rock, which is under continual erosion as soft rocks underneath the limestone caprock are worn and weathered by streams. The gradual removal of soft rocks leaves a cliff or escarpment. It is this escarpment over which the infamous Niagara River plunges at Niagara Falls.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) is committed to improvement, maintenance, and/or protection of the trail. Based on humanist notions of stewardship and land care, the BTC is not only involved in the preservation of the biosphere but continues to purchase land to expand the "parks" rights and access to the trail. However, as Myers (2016) writes, conservationist practices "participate in an ongoing colonial project that has enforced the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands" (p. 3). Walking-with pinhole photography as a method, entangled with an (in) tension of problematizing what matters, demands we reimagine "land care." Conventional conservation practices see the need to preserve nature in a "natural" state. But as Leanne Simpson (2014) argues, learning comes through land. Rather than approaching care as a settler colonial act of maintenance and capitalism, imposed on from the outside, care becomes intimate and relational between all entities. Learning-with the land is important here. The ghostly images of trees, rocks, and human bodies in our pinhole photos reminds us of our continual entanglements and the conflicting understandings of the Bruce Trail. Our methods of *walking-with* insist that the land, the sediments of the escarpment that consist of rocks and Indigenous peoples,

stays with us in unrestrained fullness. Research methods that pre-determine what can exist, and as such what can be extracted, reproduce particular ontological certainties. Methods (in)tensions with themselves, as relational, unsettle givens, and attend to being otherwise.

**Walk with a friend who lives in another city**
**Walk on the same street, at the same time, but in your respective cities**
**Walk in companion**

Speculative middles escape order. They are in excess. Stewart (2007) writes that in the middle, it's the "fragments of experience left hanging" (p. 44) that are of most interest. As agitations proliferate, questions need to be asked to "cultivate the capacity of response-ability" (Haraway, 2016, p. 35). These questions don't require idealized or utopic solutions, rather they force us to engage with the world and to create conditions for ongoing provocations.

As part of *WalkingLab*, and one of the many projects executed for her doctoral dissertation, Sarah developed an in-school project in a secondary school in Cardiff, United Kingdom. The focus of the project was the relationship between walking or a thinking-in-movement, writing, and youth cultural production as emergent "literacy" practices. These are documented at www.sarahetruman.com. In much the same way that *The Walking Neighbourhood* emerged out of speculative middles, continuously problematizing problems, the in-school methods Sarah used materialized as a series of minor events. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature, Manning (2016) explores what she calls a minor gesture, a speculative middle infused with ecologies of practice. The minor, she writes "is a continual variation on experience" (p. 1) which "invents new forms of existence" (p. 2). Although the "major" tends to organize itself according to predetermined understandings of "value," the minor is a "force that courses through it, unmooring its structural integrity, problematizing its normative standards" (p. 1). The minor seen in this way is varied, open to flux, and indeterminate. Minor gestures are everywhere and happen all the time. It is through ongoing minor punctuations of events that new things occur and are inherently political. And because the minor occurs in the indeterminate phase of an event, the minor functions speculatively, and can reorient the direction of experience.

For example, many artists, writers, and qualitative researchers draw on the idea of a dérive to set thought in motion. A dérive is a walking strategy that originated with the Situationists International in the 1960s, in Paris. Although the dérive is often conceptualized as a playful experimental practice, the intent of the dérive was to move about the city, without a focused trajectory, but with an intensive consciousness of the environment. By not

walking as a means to get from one place to another, but by utilizing a form of drifting, walkers defamiliarized the habits associated with walking, movement, and embodied mapping. The idea was to drop usual "relations" and set out to explore "appealing" and "repelling" places as well as "switching stations" where there is an urge to change direction. Current approaches to the dérive take on many different forms, but are typically marked by an active awareness of place (Edensore, 2000; Richardson, 2015). The dérive is a method of psychogeography, which could be described as the study of the emotional and psychological responses to a particular environment.

Feminists have critiqued the dérive's tactics for producing a tourist gaze that perpetuates a separation between observer and observed (Massey, 2005; Richardson, 2015). This, we argue, further exploits the nature-culture divide and marks some bodies as inhuman or "out of place." Oriented as a heteropatriarchal practice, "an uncomfortable undercurrent of misogyny and neocolonialism lurks within much psychogeography and has since its inception" (Rose, 2015, p. 150). Some contemporary forms of the dérive play with its form as a means to counter this heteronormative logic. For example, artist Diane Borsto's Chinatown Foray leads groups of amateur mychologists on urban forays through a city's "Chinatown," identifying Asian mushrooms using a variety of guidebooks, many of which are North American. Identification practices include visual and other sensory modalities, and as such, the forays, while intended to be creative and experimental practices, result in further abjectification of particular bodies and spaces (Springgay, 2011). In this instance, walking and paying attention to things out of synch with habituated practices might actually reinforce power relations and reterritorialize bodies. What is at stake then, with the dérive as a method, is not a matter of form (e.g., a mushroom foray), but *a matter of (in)tension*.

The dérive was a propositional catalyst for some of the in-school walks, in Sarah's study, where students were encouraged to use defamiliarization to attend to what was present and absent. Students were encouraged to tune toward what matters, and what is excluded from mattering (Barad, 2007). In the speculative middle, different minor techniques problematized the dérive including mapping using literary devices, writing poems that examined the spatial politics of their walks to and from school, and writing exercises that activated rhythm in conjunction with movement. What these minor gestures opened up for the dérive was a place for different (in)tensions to matter. But a dérive inflected with minor gestures is infused with intimacy where knowledge of place is not something grasped from a distance but emerges through proximity; where proximity is not a voyage of discovery, but where one bears the consequences for the things that are not even known yet (Springgay, 2008).

Too often, researchers get fixated on experimental methods such as a dérive. However, when these creative practices are used to generate data that appear nonconventional, there is a tendency to see the creative method as a practice of deterritorialization. But being experimental in itself is not enough. On a dérive, for example, we need to ask the question, "what is being worked here?" Meaning, not just what are we paying attention to that we might not typically experience, but what response-abilities arise from such tending toward. Haraway (2016) urges researchers to act inside ongoing trouble and as such methods must exist in conflict frictionally (Springgay & Truman, 2016). Moreover, methods cannot assume to be "one size fits all." For instance, not all bodies move in a city in a similar way. Some bodies are already marked by particular inheritances. Sara Ahmed (2006) demonstrates how some spaces or places, such as the city street are barred from the experience of certain bodies, even as those spaces coproduce such bodies, particularly racialized bodies. She states,

> [t]he "matter" of race is very much about embodied reality; seeing oneself or being seen as white [or brown] or black or mixed does affect what one "can do," or even where one can go, which can be re-described in terms of *what is and is not within reach*. (p. 112)

Garnette Cadogan (2016) similarly writes, "Walking while black restricts the experience of walking, [and] renders inaccessible the classic Romantic experience of walking alone." In Sarah's in-school study, one student wrote a poem about the politics of surveillance she encounters on a daily basis, because she wears hijab. Her poem, which deploys the clichéd refrain of "walking on eggshells," is in effect an argument that psychogeography and the dérive are privileged practices. Liberal humanism presumes that psychogeography is an activity of paying attention to the corporeality of walking in space, casting off usual relations, to become more "enlivened" by walking and place. But race, gender, sexuality, and ability are not corporeal skins that are attuned into only at particular moments, such as on a dérive, nor can they be flung aside innocently. Writing about exceptionalism, in relation to queerness, Jasbir Puar (2007) states that transgression "relies on a normative notion of deviance, always defined in relation to normativity, often universalizing" (p. 23). The dérive, as an act of transgression, coheres and regulates bodies.

Methods are "non-innocent knottings" (Haraway, 2016, p. 29), and mobilize what Stacy Alaimo (2016) calls an ethics of inhabitation, which entangles the situatedness of corporeal knowledge, the movement of walking, and the larger geopolitical realm of White supremacy and nationalism. Methods, like the dérive, used blindly and without (in)tensions stifle "the very opening through which fragile new modes of existence can come to expression" (Manning, 2016, p. 9). The issue, as such, is not that we abandon methods, such as the

dérive, nor methods altogether, but that (in)tensions remain immanent to the speculative middle, which consequently alter the response-ability we have for the methods we use.

Another example of an (in)tension coupled with walking methods is addressed in a forthcoming project *The New Field*. This project uses the method of the long walk to walk the 900 kilometers of the Bruce Trail with various community groups and individuals, as a statement and protest, and will result in demanding that the Ontario and Federal Government put into legislature the "rights of nature." The (in)tensions inhered in this long walk project include questions about how landscapes, such as Provincial trails are mapped and produced, advocacy for Land and Indigenous sovereignty, and ethical political concerns for more-than-human ecologies that are not based on human-centric conservation practices of care.

## Walk (in)tension
## Practice an ethics of inhabitation

Despite the ubiquitous concerns in qualitative research about the role and place of methods, we are convinced that methods themselves are not the issue. Whether you practice more conventional methods such as interviews or experiment with mobile technologies is beside the point. Call them methods, or techniques (Manning & Massumi, 2014; Phillips, 2015), or whatever you want. Invent, experiment, queer them. Methods are necessary for thinking-making-doing. This of course requires the idea of a method becoming an ecology of practices that are generated in a research event.

Regardless of what methods are incorporated, they (a) cannot be predetermined and known in advance of the event of research; (b) should not be procedural, but rather emerge and proliferate from within the speculative middle, as propositions, minor gestures, and in movement; (c) should not be activities used for gathering or collecting data. Instead methods must agitate, problematize, and generate new modes of thinking-making-doing; and (d) methods require (in)tensions, which trouble and rouse ethical and political matterings.

Initiating a research event in the speculative middle and with (in)tensions might seem like a daunting proposition to graduate students and experienced researchers trained in conventional qualitative research. Yet, the kinds of post-methodologies that Lather and St. Pierre (2013) demand already proliferate in many different fields including education, human geography, visual arts and performance studies, and anthropology. Stephanie's work inside and outside of schools, with large groups of participants, or in small artist community settings, provides one such example. Sarah's master's thesis incorporating creative nonfiction as the research practice (Truman, 2013), and her PhD projects such as *Intra-Textual Entanglements* (www.sarahetruman.com; Truman, 2016), which invited participants to create and intervene with a Nietzsche text, are other examples of

speculative middles. These examples are funded by research grants and have gone through research ethics board approval. Rather than training students in conventional methods, through coursework, and then expecting or rather hoping that they find ways to speculatively invent, we need to develop alongside our students' experimental practices. This of course requires, as St. Pierre (2016b) suggests, reading and reading and reading to push thought to its edge, but this reading, we contend, must also be accompanied simultaneously with a thinking-making-doing.

In addition, we have begun to imagine methods moving frictionally across all aspects of a research event, from its inception, its execution, and its dissemination. In the final section of this article, we discuss the entanglement of methods with practices of documenting and mobilizing knowledge. Rather than conceive of methods entering into a research project only at the stage when a qualitative researcher is "in the field," methods permeate research in its entirety. They are "extensive and permanently unfinished," writes Haraway (2016), and require "the cultivation of viral response-abilities, carrying meanings and materials across kinds in order to infect processes and practices" (p. 114). Methods are contagious, they mutate, and infect each other, which as Haraway (2016) contends is a feminist practice of care. This care, we understand from her writing, is not a moralizing gesture, but one that puts bodily ethical and political obligations (in)tensions where they become accountable "to the specific materializations of which we are a part" (Barad, 2007, p. 91). This, Barad argues, requires research practices that are "attentive to, and responsive/responsible to, the specificity of material entanglements in their agential becoming" (p. 91).

Methods can be practices of generating research *and* methods for dispersing the research with different publics simultaneously. In what follows, we consider three aberrant examples. Aberrant means atypical, irregular, anomalous, and deviant and underscores the idea of ecologies of practice rather than models that can be replicated. The three aberrant examples we use to conclude this article stray and wander, unfolding frictional tensions that are capricious, indeterminate, and in constant variation. Characteristic, however, within these anomalous examples is the insistence that methods are generated both as a means to produce, create, and materialize knowledge *and* practices of dispersal, collective sharing, and activation of knowledge *at the same time*.

There are a number of ways we consider methods interwoven with research dissemination. One example is that walks themselves are methodologies. They are also methods of thinking-making-doing research, and they become events where knowledge is shared. *Stone Walks on the Bruce Trail: Queering the Trail* is a *WalkingLab* event that convened on the Chedoke to Iroquoia Heights loop trail, a 9-km section of the Radial Trail and Bruce Trails. The event brought together more than 70 walkers to think-with the

geologic force of this place. The 4-hour walk was punctured by 'pop up' lectures by geologists, activists, and indigenous scholars and activated by a local arts collective TH&B, who critically intervened with typical ways that walkers use these trails. Rather than approach research as an event of data gathering followed by analysis and dissemination, the walk becomes an event of research where the generation of research and its knowledge dissemination cannot be separated out.

Another iteration might be the creation of discursive events that are both sites to problematize research and a means to work with different publics around the knowledge flowing through the research event. For example, *WalkingLab* curated an event in collaboration with the University of New South Wales Art Gallery called *Live Art, Social and Community Engagement: Interrogating Methodologies of Practice*. This event was not intended to be a space for artist-researchers to report on, or describe previous research. Instead, panelists were provided a series of provocative questions, as methods, that shaped the conversations. While the panel discussions were happening, and during the afternoon breakout sessions, "Live Writers" used various methods or "writing machines" to further enter into the event. Their "live writing" was not intended to capture the speakers' words but to respond, engage, antagonize, and problematize the ideas, theories, concepts, and provocations put forth by the panelists and the small group discussions. Some writers used laptops and data projectors, another created a series of haikus, another wrote on the floor of the gallery space, which had been covered in cellophane paper, and yet another created a counter archive as an appendix of concepts, words, and agitations from the day. The *Live Art* event was open to the public and more than 80 people from the arts including practicing artists, curators, and scholars participated. The production of knowledge and the communication or sharing of said knowledge occurred in situ. Phillip Vannini (2015), writing about similar concerns emerging in more-than-representational methodologies, states that research needs to "enliven rather than report, to render rather than represent, to resonate rather than validate, to rupture and reimagine rather than faithfully describe, to generate possibilities of encounter rather than construct representative ideal types" (p. 15).

A third example, is the *WalkingLab* website. The website works in multiple ways including the aim to share research through open access models of "publication." From the outset, the research has sought ways to mobilize knowledge to vastly different audiences. So, while in some cases, for instance, the projects page, the website functions as a repository or an online archive, other methods built into the website are simultaneously research and dissemination oriented. Here, we point readers to the residency portion of the website. While each resident is "in" residence virtually with the *WalkingLab*, they simultaneously enact minor gestures to problematize different (in)tensions about walking research,

and by blogging about their methods and practices they share their thinking-making-doings with audiences.

In closing, we think-with Manning and Massumi's (2014) words of caution, that even inventive practices have the potential to become institutionalized "in accordance with established criteria, [which] would boil down to little more than grouping traditional disciplinary research methodologies under the same roof" (p. 88). Methods are multifarious and contagious, and exist throughout the duration of a research event propelling thinking-making-doing forward into the next speculative middle.

**Bring nothing but words**
**Walk from one BODY of water to another**

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

## Funding

## Note

1.   The international artist group called Fluxus created "scores" for live performances where the process of creating was privileged over completed works.

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