

## CHAPTER 3

### **On the Edges of Encounter: Walking, Liminality and the Act of Being Between**

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#### ABSTRACT

Using Tim Ingold's (2011) assertion that walking provides the opportunity for "mobilising all of our senses of smell and touch as well as vision" (42) this chapter presents a series of three case studies that explicate the role walking plays as an embodied, but deeply reflexive point of encounter. A series of walking case examples, drawn from the authors' collaborations, are used to argue a case for a walking method that takes account of the sensory, liminal, but ultimately uncertain encounters walking provokes. We outlay within this chapter what Anita Sinner et al (2006) have identified as a "localised and evolving methodology" (p. 1224) that positions walking as central to its conduct. The act of walking opened opportunities for encounters that otherwise would not have been possible, and in taking this cue from the case examples, we connect walking with the possibility of the liminal; of being on the threshold. We will position walking as that which is quintessentially in-between, a space of disruption and uncertainty, but from which might emerge a "topology for new tasks toward other places of thinking and putting to work" (Lather, 1997, p. 486).

We are not simply observers of this spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on stage with the other participants. (Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 1960, p. 2).

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to argue that walking provides a quintessential method for ethnography. In making this assertion, a series of case examples drawn from our own practice will be used to outline the foundations of a walking methodology that prefaces encounter and relationality as its driving features. We suggest that these features of walking provide for ethnography distinct possibility and will set out to make a case for how walking might be considered as ethnographic. The act of walking in this regard carries certain features that, when considered as methodological, offer scope for the (re)consideration of what counts as ethnography, and for how

ethnographies might proceed as deeply relational encounters.

As an example, for how we are positioning this approach to ethnography, a short section within the appendix to William Foote-Whyte's (1943/1955) seminal urban sociology, *Street Corner Society*, offers an insight into the effects walking might have on ethnographic practice. Upon reflecting on his practice as an ethnographer and the place that walking held as an opportunity for encounter, Foote-Whyte recalls one of his early experiences with his primary participant group, the Nortons:

At first, I concentrated on fitting into Cornerville, but a little later I had to face the question of how far I was to immerse myself in the life of the district. I bumped into that little problem one evening as I was walking down the street with the Nortons. Trying to enter into the spirit of the small talk, I cut loose with a string of obscenities and profanity. The walk came to a momentary halt as they all stopped to look at me in surprise. Doc shook his head and said: 'Bill, you're not supposed to talk like that. That doesn't sound like you' (Foote-Whyte, 1943/1955, p. 304).

Foote-Whyte's experience of testing ideas and experimenting with his ethnographic persona offers a telling insight into the role walking played within his ethnographic practice. In walking through Cornerville alongside his participants, Foote-Whyte was afforded insights into the logics that defined this site". Walking provided clues as to how the foundations of Cornerville's epistemological frames gave meaning to actions taken within the site, like the way one should speak, and the identity Foote-Whyte could assume as ethnographer. The staccato rhythm of Foote-Whyte's attempted slang and the abrupt halt to the walk upon his saying too much corresponded with the ebb and flow of his practice and insertion into the site. In finding his place in Cornerville, the act of walking paralleled his inquiry. Walking was not only a useful technique for physically getting around but presented also as metaphorically rich; a metonym for working the field. The stop-start nature of his walking yielded inconsistent progress as the terrain ahead was negotiated and as paths already trodden were (re)considered, all of which resulted in the mediated experience of the field both literally and figuratively.

It was also in this moment of walking, during this chance for better getting to know his participants and the space of Cornerville, that walking opened an opportunity for informality and experimentation. It was in this moment that Foote- Whyte could try on being something other and irreverently experiment with his persona as a means of fitting in. Even though his attempts to

use the slang he had heard didn't always work, Foote-Whyte learned something in these moments about who he was and his place as an outsider. Walking afforded this encounter; this wasn't a practice that could have been achieved during those more organised moments of his ethnography, or indeed planned in any rigorous sense. Walking opened a chance for something far more experimental, informal and ultimately valuable within those encounters he confronted.

A question provoked by Foote-Whyte's short account of walking with the Nortons might then ask: What does walking afford when applied in interpretivist ethnographic practice? This chapter will attempt a response to this question by exposing the affordances that walking might offer this form of research practice. In taking this approach, the discussion presented will seek to problematise what it is that constitutes ethnographic research in an effort to open for (re)consideration that which is indeed possible within the encounter between researcher and researched. We will argue that walking provides not only a useful technique for mediating shared experience within such practice, but that walking itself offers a useful metaphor for understanding the physical practice of 'doing' this form of research. Walking, as presented in this chapter, carries value as both a provocation for inquiry and as a figurative lens for conceptualising the ethnographic encounter as one of traversal.

By this we refer to ethnography as a fundamentally 'engaged' methodology, but one in which movement is central to the encounter. The movement of walking provides the 'stuff' of the inquiry by opening new terrains for exploration, and a chance for new modes of engagement between researcher and researched to emerge. Ethnography in these terms can be understood as principally interested in the understanding of other ways of being-in-the-world. We will argue, in extending this point, that walking subsequently comes to stand as a quintessential feature of ethnography and will make a case for why walking should be considered as more than just a functional capacity for getting around. We shall argue that walking is in fact ethnography in action.

It is somewhat remarkable to note, then, that walking has featured less prominently as it perhaps should have in the literature of ethnography. As with Foote-Whyte's example, walking is often relegated as the side-note, contained within the appendices of ethnographic reflection. Ingold and Vergunst (2008) note too that "it is all the more remarkable that social scientists have devoted so little attention to it" (p. 2). This, we think, is a peculiar lacuna. We seek to argue that walking

stands as an exemplary technique of ethnographic inquiry and that through the opportunity walking offers as an “embodied practice, performative act, as well as relational movement” (Yi’En, 2014, p. 212) the core features of ethnography are found. The remainder of this chapter will set out to argue this case by presenting an account of what a walking ethnography might entail.

## GAINING BEARINGS

To respond to the question that frames this chapter and to posit a case for a walking method, a series of three case studies are offered in the later sections as reference points for considering the role walking played within the research practices enacted by the authors. Each case example was drawn from a distinct project within which walking functioned as a central methodological technique. Without walking, those interactions had with encountered Others and the traversals of space engaged during these ethnographic moments would have proceeded very differently and produced alternate understandings. Perhaps most conspicuously, without walking different mediations of experience would have been broached. Walking is positioned in this sense as central to the very act of undertaking the research. Walking mediated the nature of the ethnography, and while we will not attempt to suggest that the research was constrained or pre-empted via this approach (that is, that it wasn’t ‘corrupted’ by this choice of technique according to some sense of methodological rigour), walking certainly did afford a specific insight into a set of experiences that became, by their nature, necessarily peripatetic.

In this regard, we are drawn to Anderson’s (2004) suggestion that walking exposes the “constitutive co-ingredience of people and place” (p. 254). As an emplaced activity, walking exposes the Self to the encountered Other and the terrain of the field. It requires of the walker a cognisance of space, but equally, a cognisance of the encounter. These encounters between researcher and researched are marked as moments of shared experience, with walking drawn as an act of parallel happenstance. The act of walking and the experience of traversing space together carry a social dimension of shared practice where “the movement of walking itself becomes a way of knowing” (Ingold and Vergunst, 2008, p. 5). Here, the social enactment of walking invokes an experience borne of the moment. Walking offers a connection, a first commonality that, as we shall argue later in this chapter, responds to the aporia that sits between the researcher and researched. Walking affords a shared sense of the experience of being

together in place, played-out as this is through the shared practice of traversal; traversal of the terrain of the field, and traversal of the terrain of experience.

Although walking might be taken as a ubiquitous form of movement, something that most human beings engage in, or as Ingold and Vergunst (2008) suggest as a practice undertaken as a “quintessential feature of what we take to be a human form of life” (p. 1), the mechanics of actually walking and engaging with Others across the terrain of the ethnographic field also provide a useful insight into the “sensorial aspects of our bodies” (Yi’En, 2014, p. 13). This in turn provides a platform from which a deep sense of the nature of that connection to the Other might be generated. Gathered as an affective encounter with the materialities of being together in place, walking opens for view the experience of being emplaced, and it is for this reason that we suggest that walking functions as not only a quintessential feature of being human, but also a quintessential feature of ethnography. To walk together is to know together, or as Yi’En (2014) suggests, walking “reorients the ethnographer’s gaze to the very specific components of life” (p. 215). Can there be any better definition of ethnography than that which situates the ethnographic enquiry as one of shared knowing, generated in place, together?

We will also suggest throughout this chapter that walking offers the possibility for new forms of knowledge. Walking allows for the traversing of interstitial spaces; spaces between fixed points of meaning where conventions and established ways of doing things might be challenged and subverted even if only momentarily. This is an important consideration for walking as method. The affordance walking offers finds voice in the (potential) irreverence the walk enables. Walking between places offers the opportunity for *parhessia* (of speaking openly), freed from the strictures that those places at each end of the walk prescribe. The case studies which follow will point to this opportunity for irreverence, at least in terms of the way we characterise this here; as an opportunity for openness and candor. In conjunction with the opportunities walking provides for relationality, we suggest that it is with the irreverence and possibility for speaking openly, or more fully, that an affordance for deeper knowing emerges.

We hope to suggest throughout this chapter that through traversing the interstitial spaces that are opened between points of fixed meaning and moving across the terrain of the field and the terrain of experience between Self and Other, that an opportunity for something ethnographically more genuine, spontaneous and experimental emerges. In this sense, we conjure Ingold’s (2011, p. 17)

suggestion that walking, and cognition are inseparable, and seek to argue that the sensory knowledge that walking avails provides for ethnography its most powerful potential. The case examples that follow will point to this; we will suggest that walking enables rich and meaningful accounts of experience to emerge.

## METHOD

The case studies detailed in the following section are drawn from separate projects, each individually conducted by the authors. The projects all drew on walking as method, and in their own ways provide an insight into the function walking plays within wider ethnographic inquiries. We suggest that the act of walking opened opportunities that otherwise would not have been possible, and in taking this approach, argue that walking carries with it the possibility for the exploration of the liminal.

In this sense, we see walking as an act of being positioned at the threshold. Liminality is activated through walking, of entering and progressing through a space of movement and uncertainty. In mobilising this assertion, we will derive theorisations of walking as that which occurs ‘in between’. Walking as liminal practice opens access to spaces prone to disruption and uncertainty, but from which might emerge a “topology for new tasks toward other places of thinking and putting to work, innovations leading to new forms” (Lather, 1997, p. 486). In walking together, the researcher and researched undertake a shared act of becoming, but importantly do so according to reformulations of the practices that mark more traditional, linear research practices. In a walking method, dialogue is framed as co-created; a discovery of new terrains that emerge from the encounter. This is a research practice that opens access to the terrain of the Other according to the encounters and opportunities for dialogue that walking-with provokes. The irreverent and disruptive possibility demonstrated in the following case examples highlights the possibilities that emerge from this formulation of a walking ethnography.

Each case example is offered as a vignette against which defining markers of a “localised and evolving methodology” (Sinner et al, 2006, p. 1224) is drawn. In presenting these cases, we seek to offer insight into the possibility walking offers for ethnography and the affordance it provides for “messy, uncertain [and] multivoiced” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 26) accounts from the field. To illustrate this focus, case one will explore the informality that attached to the liminal

spaces of the Bike Build Project, a behaviour remediation program convened in a large secondary school located in south-east Queensland, Australia. Of specific interest in this case study is the role that walking played in opening space for informality and candor. Away from the restrictions of the formal classroom, the Bike Build Project enabled new suites of behaviour and exchange between the participants and one of the authors, Tanya Pauli- Myler. More specifically, this case example will highlight how walking opened moments of experimental encounter and provoked a socially engaged and participatory research practice.

Case two will explore the pedagogical dynamics at work when walking a recognisable, but deeply mediated public site: the museum. As an affective site of encounter, walking mediated the experience of the museum through the insight it provided into the nature of becoming the subject. Using an exhibition at the Western Australia Maritime Museum as its basis, this case study details what it meant to view the exhibition and take part in its construction of history as deeply entwined with the act of walking the physical spaces it enclosed. In her recount of experiencing the space of the museum, Carly Smith identifies the museum according to its “pedagogical strategies” (Witcomb, 2015, p. 159) and highlights the function of the narrative of the exhibit and the ‘guidance’ that mediated her walk. The experience of walking this space was one deeply prescribed but equally open for disruption. The aporia between what was represented within this exhibition and her position as a viewing participant played-out for Smith as the “remaking of social relations” (Witcomb, 2015, p. 167). Social relations were negotiated as the museum space was engaged and traversed.

Case three explores the sensory experience of walking and the implications presented by the biometric mapping of the body. Using a performance presented by Andrew Hickey and convened as part of a walking symposium hosted at the University of Queensland in August 2015, Wired Walking, this case study problematises the quantification of the experience of walking and the ‘approximations’ of the body produced by measurements including heart rate, pace, topography and distance. Through reconsidering the representation of the biometrical body, a case for the experience of walking as something far more affective, corporeal but ultimately personal will be presented as counterpoint to the limitations offered by the biometric mapping of the body. The experience of walking enabled this realisation of embodiment as being something more than the charting of selected metrics.

These case examples are considered in terms of the role that walking afforded the ethnographic practice deployed in each situation and will be used as the basis for the articulation of a walking method in the subsequent discussion. Each of the case examples drew from different provocations. Accordingly, each case study is written with its own style: Pauli-Myler's accounts draw from material taken from her ethnographic diary, prepared from her experiences during the Bike Build Project. Smith's accounts of her experiences of the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the exhibition Portals: Pasts, Presents and Futures were prepared as free-writing reflections. Hickey's recollections of a workshop convened at the University of Queensland exploring the place of walking methodologies and biometrics are crafted as a narrative retelling of the session, compiled upon reflection. Each however draws on the experiences of walking as core to the ethnographic practice of each author, with the intention being to identify how walking came to be enacted as method.

## CASE EXAMPLES

### **The Bike Build Program (written by Tanya Pauli-Myler)**

The following entries are drawn from Pauli-Myler's ethnographic diary from the Bike Build Program. The program took place at a large public high school in south-east Queensland, Australia, through July-December 2015 and set out to provide an alternative learning option for a group of students who had been identified as 'at risk' of expulsion. Using a selection of old bicycles that were made available through an arrangement with the Queensland Police Service, the program sought to re-engage the participating boys through co-operative learning; the boys were given the brief to repair the bikes whilst working as a team. Although the program itself provided a number of significant research insights into the nature of formal and informal learning, it occurred that an unintended consequence of the project revolved around the way that mobility, and more specifically walking, enabled certain forms of interaction. In particular, it was during the experience of retrieving and storing the bikes from a central storage shed at the beginning and end of each session that insightful, surprising, candid and 'open' dialogues were broached. In walking with the boys during these informal moments an opportunity for rich interpersonal connection was provoked.

*Journal Entry – 29th July 2015: Gaining Familiarity*

Today we commenced the bike build program on campus. There are 8 boys who will undertake this as a component of the 'alternative' program they have been assigned to. The boys were all very enthusiastic about the opportunity to pull apart and rebuild the bikes that they had chosen for themselves.

The boys were joking and mucking about and are there to have fun. They were initially a bit suspicious of my presence but once I explained that we [the facilitators of the program including co-researcher and co-author of this chapter Andrew Hickey and school guidance counselors] weren't the police or teachers they warmed to us! At the end of the session a couple of the boys came over and shook our hands and said thanks, which I didn't expect and thought it was really good of them.

I spent quite a bit of time working on C's bike with him and had a good chat about how he became part of the bike build program. He told me it was because he was 'a bad kid'. When I pressed him further he told me he swears at teachers when he gets in trouble. There was something 'authentic' in the way we spoke, something less formal than interviews can sometimes be; more open and relaxed. I wondered whether he would have shared this with me if this were a formal interview, audio recorder propped up on the desk between us, and me staring at him searching for the sort of response that would make it straight to a paper. Perhaps this was what Clifford Geertz (1998) meant when he talked about 'deep hanging out', but either way, sitting with C working on his bike gave us a chance to talk, properly.

I think this will be a great project, not only from a research perspective but for the boys too.

*Journal Entry— 19th August 2015: Moving Around the Workshop*

It's now a few weeks into the bike build program and I think the boys almost fully trust me now. They are not only happy to talk to me about the program but also how they're doing in their lives, what school is to them, and how this program is allowing them to show another side of themselves.

One of the boys told me he actually would come to school early on Wednesdays just because he likes the program so much and he joked that one of the other boys came 'to get a feed'. It wouldn't surprise me if that was partly true though as the guidance officer said previously that it

was the best food some of the boys got all week!

Whilst working on the bikes I've had some very in-depth and insightful conversations with some of the boys. The affordance of movement in the workshop space allows for natural breaks in the conversation; perhaps in a more sedentary interview the conversation wouldn't be so 'organic', but here I have the chance to talk with the boys as we go about working on the bikes. These snippets might never be finished as I move to the next bike, but we always get back to the discussion at some point.

*Journal Entry– 2nd September 2015: Walking to The Shed*

As we finished the session today I walked with a few of the boys up to the shed where they keep their bikes, about 60 metres from the workshop where we build the bikes. I asked the boys if they had done any classes in the workshop before and they told me that, due to their behaviour, they weren't trusted to work with the tools (especially the sharp ones!). They were quite matter of fact about it and didn't seem concerned and actually almost laughed about it.

This was such an interesting moment. The walk to the shed, away from the formality of the sessions and the presence of the guidance counselors and other school staff gave me the chance for a different type of conversation. In that walk, I gained an insight that provided me with a greater sense of how the boys saw themselves and how they connected with school. The laughs and jokes about the sharp tools provided a denotative shield to our communication, but what we were really doing in this moment was sharing a bit of ourselves and what we each thought.

I noted that I hadn't witnessed the 'bad behaviour' that they told me they were always in trouble for. We talked about this and the boys shared with me what they thought was the lot they had in school. In using the walk as the prompt for the discussion, a dialogue emerged that gave me a much clearer sense of how the boys saw themselves.

*Journal Entry– 9th September 2015: D's Story*

Today I went to get a bike from the shed with one of the boy's 'D'. D had been suspended and absent for some of the previous weeks but was now back in the program. As we walked up to the shed where the bikes were stored I asked where he'd been. He gave me the whole story of how he was suspended due to fighting and, although he'd been back at school for three weeks, hadn't

been allowed back in the program until he'd proven that he could 'behave'. We talked about what he thought of all of this, and then talked about where he wants to be after school, and generally what he thought of school. As had been the case last week, walking opened a chance to talk and to talk openly. The walk made conversation easier. It allowed for natural breaks in the conversation that were then prompted by the rhythm of our short walk to the shed. Visual cues along the way, like the sight of school buildings in the distance, prompted points for discussion, and with the crossing of this space between the workshop and shed, stood as a moment of openness and shared experience. I felt honoured to have been part of this; to have had the boys share with me the things they did, and especially in D's case, to allow me this insight into what he thought.

### **The Western Australian Maritime Museum (Written by Carly Smith)**

This case example is based on Carly Smith's experience of an exhibition at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Fremantle, in late 2015. Portals: Pasts, Presents and Futures featured the works of 23 Western Australian artists who were invited to respond to the themes of maritime journeys, embarkation and destination. Smith attended this exhibition as part of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) conference, with curator and artist Lorraine Spencer Pichette performing the role of tour guide, and artists Beverley Iles, Denise V. Brown, Vanessa Wallace and Karin Wallace sharing the stories of their works. The 'lace boat' discussed within this reflection an installation piece actually made of glass but made to look like lace was created by Denise Pepper. Conjuring Tim Ingold's (2015) conceptualisation of the line, the author invokes her reflections of walking through the exhibition as a series of lines.

Permission has been granted by the Western Australia Maritime Museum and Lorraine Spencer Pichette to relay this account.

#### *Line #1 Together: Selected Highlights Tour*

The line I follow is set out by Lorraine and modified by the ebb, flow and settlement of the other tourists. We move en masse, directed to a series of specific artworks and their creators. Each presentation is an intricate coalescence of lines; something more of a meshwork, with intersecting threads of history, narrative, artistic practice and finally audience interpretation. So many ideas here! Stories. Responses to stories. New stories.

The tourists are enthralled, and the group ripples. My body responds in kind, bending an ear to better hear the artist's own words. Leaning closer to observe an historic or artistic detail then stepping back to relocate this detail in its proper place. Turning to whisper some furtive insight to my companion or listen to her own verbalised engagement.

I don't think too hard about my physical movements through the gallery. I'm happy to follow Lorraine's lead and to walk as one with the Others of my kind. Gentle. Communal. Herd-like. We share this experience of the tour and the exhibition. We see, feel and listen together, and the spaces between each of us seem not-so-far.

### *Line #2 Alone: Meandering*

Lorraine's tour has ended, and other displays beckon. I want time to myself, away from the shelter of the group, to walk my own path and experience the exhibition in quiet reflection. I meander. My footsteps traverse the gallery guided only by what catches my attention and what will afford me a physical distance from the Others in the group. I take my time with each additional artwork. Admiring form. Reading plaques. Observing details. Pulling disparate lines of history and experience together and constructing my own versions of these narratives.

Each work sits within a broader theme of the exhibition. I piece these together, one by one, slowly unfolding a sense of the human fabric of Fremantle. The artworks whisper of attachment to a place that I can only just begin to know. My own lines extend downward in response, into the earth, and radiate up into the air and out to the rolling seas. The gallery itself opens up to offer glimpses of the world outside.

### *Line #3 Immobile: Refractions*

I stand in the centre of the gallery beside a free-standing exhibit. This appears to be a lace boat something not-what-it-is, utterly dislocated and enshrined in a tall glass case. It is beautiful and unreachable. It seeks my touch, yet cruelly immobilises my hand. I'm vaguely angered by this betrayal and withdraw.

I look around from my vantage point beside the cabinet and can see most of the gallery. I see how our tour group, originally so cohesive, has dispersed. We are individuals again, walking our own lines and building our own inner meshworks. A security guard watches over us, relaxed into

his own stance near the doorway.

Although I can see a lot from here, my views are not uninterrupted. People and objects are refracted through glass, reflected in a myriad of bright surfaces, and generally obscured by stuff. I try to see around corners, to visually negotiate my way past these obstructions, but it's impossible. I take a photo of simply what I can see through the glass case and it suddenly occurs to me that these aren't obstructions at all. These aren't people and things that are in the way of a clean line. These things are lines. Refracted. Broken. Overlapping and colliding. Things-that-shouldn't-be- juxtaposed reform as new compositions.

My sense of hearing pushes more insistently to the surface, and I listen to snippets of other people's conversations. I feel the cool mechanical breath of the air conditioning and catch fleeting aromas of perfume, paint and glue. These add to the narrative of my own experiences in this space. I am connected-but-not. In between. One small node in an undulating web, not so much visible as sensed.

I'm still not walking, despite the urge to physically navigate the room. My own stasis changes things. Walking not walking. I'm forced headlong into the interstitial and ponder the curiosity of how this act of agency of ceasing to walk has simultaneously robbed me. How can I interact without motion? The world comes to me here, entirely out of my control. I watch, listen, smell and feel.

### **Biometric Walking (Written by Andrew Hickey)**

On the 7th August 2015, the symposium Wired Walking was held at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Brisbane. Convened by Dr Louise Phillips, and including academic researchers, performing artists, writers and community members, the symposium set out to explore approaches to walking-as-practice within and through the research, creative practice and everyday encounters its participants engaged. Andrew Hickey was one of these presenters, and using a peripatetic workshop that moved around the university campus in an effort to explore how the measurement of the body using devices such as GPS monitors comes to inflect the experience of walking, set out a consideration of the corporeal and affective dimensions of walking as practice. The following account provides a reflection on the core aspects of this workshop.

The heart-rate monitor that wirelessly connects to my GPS unit provides a visual read-out of what my body is in this moment. My GPS a sophisticated, state of the art machine as it happens enables charts that are manipulable in a series of ways. I can pull together charts that compare my heart rate with the topography of the terrain I have covered. I can gain definitively quantifiable accounts of how fast (or slow) I was moving at any point along the red-lined journey I took and can (if I so choose) compare these vital statistics against those of other equally GPS equipped walkers within my vicinity. Here is a representation of my body in motion, charting what physiologists might see as the ‘behavioural biometrics’ attributable to my motion, my walking through this space.

But this isn’t me; there are further, more complex, aspects to my bodily experience that this machine does not measure. I know how I walk, what it feels like to amble, or how to gather pace to make up time, or to move through a place rapidly. I know how my joints ache in different ways, and my feet and toes cramp-up after a day of walking. I know how it feels to have the sun stinging my neck, or the breeze pass through an inner-city block and the negotiations that are made when I confront other walkers, passing me by in other directions. This is an internal process that is intimate to me, but far harder to represent with any meaningful clarity.

And so, I look at this GPS-generated data about where I have been, and what the unit’s chest belt monitor suggests I was doing at that time. This is a representation, yes, but one incomplete; an approximation of what I knew it meant to be in that space. The bodily knowledge of walking the space and the ‘technologies of Self’, to clumsily apply Foucault’s (1988) notion, that I engaged to pass across and through the terrain sat within me, and not in this ‘data’. My GPS unit traced this path, but it couldn’t tell what the moment meant. It didn’t give, as much as my heart rate monitor might have tried, a record of the affect of the moment or how this journey provoked responses to this space in ways that were unique to my Self in the moment. More acutely, it certainly didn’t capture the sense of the encounter I had with others who shared my walk on that day, or the conversations we had and negotiations we underwent of where to go and how to traverse this space. My GPS could only provide an incomplete representation, charted as if it held some quantifiable value. An approximation of where I had been, but deeply incomplete in terms of what this all meant.

DISCUSSION

In the case examples detailed above, walking provided a distinct component of the ethnographic practice. These practices were simultaneously positioned as a part of, and a result from, the experience of engaging with the site and those Others encountered through the research process. Here, walking functioned as far more than an incidental (or coincidental) aspect of ethnographic practice: walking was fundamental a quintessential feature of the practice detailed in each example.

This poses a number of immediate methodological questions. What are the dynamics at work within this method and how does this realisation of the role of walking effect the practice of ethnography? Or more distinctly, is this an ethnography-of-walking, or walking-as-ethnography? We will seek in the remainder of this chapter to resolve some of these queries.

If considered in terms of an ethnography-of-walking according to the consideration of walking as both the physiologically mediated propulsion of the body and socially performed action occurring within closely defined realms of (acceptable) practice, then the identification of a focus of inquiry is made. In this sense an ethnography of walking would perceive the act of walking within its socially mediated contexts, and explore how walking as an action is performed, how the meanings that attach with this are symbolically and culturally mediated and indeed, how the physical performativity that marks the very act itself comes to gain social meaning. Walking in this regard is the focal point of an ethnographic enquiry; the object of study.

Ingold and Vergunst (2008) speculate on this by noting “ethnographic analysis of walking, we suggest can help us rethink what being social actually means” (p. 2). An ethnography-of-walking may indeed open for consideration the significance of walking as a necessarily social practice; a practice that “is a profoundly social activity: that in their timings, rhythms and inflections, the feet respond as much as does the voice to the presence of others” (p. 2). But ultimately, such a focus and such a positioning of walking as the object of an ethnographic gaze invests attention solely in the practice of walking as a socially mediated practice. This in itself would make for a worthy line of inquiry and might well open for view the different perspectives of the world that being on foot afford. Lynch (1960), for example, long ago identified these concerns in his account of the image of the city and the visual cues inhabitants used to negotiate crowded inner-city spaces. Speaking of the distinction of view between being in a car and on foot, he noted the alternative perspective that each mode of mobility provides and in doing so set about, albeit

tangentially, to specify an ethnography that sought some understanding of what these respective modes of traversal enabled.

An alternative view of walking, and the one we are most interested in here, might instead position walking-as-ethnography. Conjuring the sort of capacities the always-observant flâneur of Baudelaire (1964) and later Walter Benjamin (1983) embodies, the walking ethnographer takes the encounters from walking as the object of study with the interactions these encounters afford standing as the stuff of the ethnographic inquiry. Not only would this open for consideration the experiences of walking itself (as a socially mediated act), but also the methodological dynamics that are induced through ambulatory inquiry. In this sense, and as indicated in the case examples above, walking functions as a method for inquiring into the world and the experience that being situated (on foot) in-place and in-proximity to Others prescribes. We turn now to chart how we have come to view walking-as-ethnography and will step through some of the key elements of the case examples detailed above to illustrate this positioning of walking as a quintessential feature of ethnography.

### **Liminality and Being In-Between**

Perhaps the most prominent theme to emerge from this consideration of walking-as-ethnography is that of the access walking provides to those spaces in between. Walking reveals these liminal spaces and offers a means for traversing them. This is not to suggest that these spaces function solely at the level of the physical, and although the physical traversal of space that walking enabled stood as a core element of the case examples detailed above, this was not the only aspect of the inquiries that stood as significant.

The traversal of space afforded by walking is also metaphorical, in that it provides insight into the experience of Self and Other. In traversing the physical, the liminal spaces of experience in between Self and Other are also encountered. The first case study (Pauli-Myler) identifies how walking offered a chance to engage the experience of the Other through the dialogues that were broached through walking. Case studies two (Smith) and three (Hickey) similarly point toward the traversal of the distance between Self and Other within the liminal space walking provokes. In case two, the experience of realising the place of the Self in context with other Selves (and consequently other experiences) emerged in Smith's wandering through the museum, firstly as a guided participant, and later as a somewhat more free (but ultimately still 'guided') visitor. Case

three drew attention to the realisation of a Self, represented within the read-outs and charts rendered by Hickey's GPS. In this case, his experience of walking materialised incompletely through the metrics of GPS coordinates, heart-rate charts and topographical data. Although representing a view of the Self in place, these remained ultimately incomplete and unable to convey the nature of the experience of the traversal across space and of the encounter with Others.

An anthropological rendering of liminality might suggest the following:

all rites of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen), and aggregation. The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject is ambiguous; he [sic] passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; in the third phase the passage is consummated (Turner, 1987, p. 47).

The walking ethnographer also operates in such an in-between space, and this arguably is the essence of ethnographic practice. Ethnography in this sense is the practice of moving from the familiar to engage the lifeworld of the Other; a process of becoming invested with the unfamiliar. To emerge with some resolution (however incomplete) of the experience of the Other stands as the very purpose of the ethnographic endeavour. With walking comes the possibility to more readily traverse, physically, symbolically and metaphorically the space and the experience of the Other. The interstitial locations between points of familiarity that walking provokes opens the liminal as a fruitful place for inquiry and shared understanding. In this regard we see the act of walking as a provocation for more than the physical traversal of space alone; by engaging the experiential as also liminal, we align with what McNess, Arthur and Crossley (2015) note is an ability to cross boundaries and to ensure that the 'space between' functions as a productive environment of new knowledge and a space of new understandings. Through the act of walking, we suggest that the researcher-researched dichotomy is troubled as the researcher becomes both insider and outsider, friend and stranger, and participant and observer simultaneously.

### **Subjectivities in Motion**

A second theme we seek to draw attention to, as derived from the consideration of the case

examples, is that of motion, or more specifically, subjectivity as motion. Just as the researcher undertakes their work in the liminal space of the field, so too do the identities of both the researcher and researched find meaning according to the act of traversing the distance between.

The first case example demonstrates how the identities assumed by the Bike Build Program participants shifted as a result of physical mobility. Although this mobility takes two distinct forms in this example that of walking to the shed, and that of building the bikes both these forms of movement can be understood in terms of the agency the participants enacted. Walking enabled both traversal of space and traversal of experience and ultimately served as the entry point for Pauli-Myler to understand more fully the experience of the Other. Physical mobility enabled Pauli-Myler to engage with these young people in a way that de-emphasised traditional hierarchies and enriched the connections that were formed through different ways of being social. The researcher and the researched were united in the common progression (and procession) of the walk. The constraints encountered within the fixed location of the school were negated to some extent through this shared mobility, with the walk opening an opportunity for more irreverent, open and experimental dialogue, different to that expected in the end-points of the walk (the workshop and shed). Walking opened space for “correspondence” (Ingold, 2015, p. 15) and for the participants to express a sense of Self. Furthermore, it opened an opportunity for Pauli-Myler, as simultaneously researcher and participant, to learn and engage more fully with the participant students. As they spoke and walked, Pauli-Myler gained insight into their experience and the terrain of the school as it was encountered by the boys.

A similar process occurred for Smith. Smith also fulfilled the role of both observer and participant as she progressed through the museum tour, inculcated as she was with the co-experience of the museum in that moment with her fellow visitors. The interstitial space of the museum walks simultaneously configured her as spectator and participant engaged as she was in the co-creation of the historical narratives encountered through the tour. These interstitial spaces of the museum weren't so open for negotiation as she first expected, but even so the walk still afforded her an opportunity to configure her own sense of Self and meaning around what was encountered. Finally, her fixed positioning by the 'lace-boat' exhibit provided a bafflement where meanings weren't so fixed; these were liminal spaces where meaning could be détourned and configured accordingly.

In his example, Hickey came face to face with the representation of the Self within a series of charts and metrics. But this wasn't him; his experience of walking went far beyond the read-out, and while acknowledging the biometric account of Self that his GPS unit provided, there was much more to the experience than the charts indicated. The sensorial experience of the day, the anticipation of encountering Others and sharing discussion with fellow walkers of the terrain encountered showed his Self to be far more complex and fractured than the read-outs suggested. He negotiated a sense of Self as he progressed, with the walk requiring different responses at different points; the avoidance of the crowd, the negotiation of the pathway into somewhere unfamiliar, the encounter with a colleague. He performed his Self as the walk unfolded, responding as the path dictated and as his meanderings suggested. Importantly though, it was the absences of these aspects of his experience within the charts and biometrics that drew attention to them. When considered closely, the charts failed to fully account for the experience of the walk, which in turn led Hickey to contemplate what else was experienced. The charts (and their failings) provoked the inquiry into the embodied nature of the walk and the implications of the encounters it yielded.

Subjectivities in this sense were brought into stark focus as the walks prescribed. This is not to suggest that these walks provoked, or indeed crafted, these subjectivities, but that in the encounters the walks afforded, responses to (and of) the Self were mediated. In this regard walking functioned as concomitant to the discovery of the Self, with the walks provoking encounters with the Self just as much as they provoked encounters with Others and space.

## CONCLUSION

Walking provided a distinct component of the ethnographic practice highlighted in the case examples and simultaneously came to be positioned as a part of, a result from, a provocation for, and symptom of the ethnographic practice deployed in each case example. Ingold and Vergunst (2008) speculate that "walking, we suggest can help us rethink what being social actually means" (2), and it was with this that we sought to position walking as a central component of the method of ethnography.

But there is an important distinction to be made here between an ethnography-of- walking and walking-as-ethnography. We also sought to position within this chapter a case for walking as

ethnography where walking opened access to the focus of ethnographic inquiry the ‘stuff’ of the analysis. With this lies the basis of walking as ethnography and the opportunity walking offers for looking again and considering how encounters between researcher and researched might be mediated. Added to this was the affordance that walking enabled to not only conceptualise spaces traversed, but also the identities of Self and Other (as necessary components of the social dynamic that walking requires). It was through walking that opportunities were opened for dialogue and irreverent expression. Walking provided access to interstitial spaces that weren’t so fixed in meaning; spaces of détournement and reconfiguration by participants in-the-moment. This was important for understanding the activations of Self that walking enabled, and perhaps more significantly, how the irreverence of our discussions came to be configured as part of the encounters experienced. We agree with Ingold (2015) when he notes that “interaction is between; correspondence in between” (p. 154). It was with walking that the correspondence we each encountered came to be realised.

Walking as method is hence a process of traversal, of both the physical and liminal, the terrain of the space and the experience of the Other. Walking offers an opportunity to be in-place together, and to share an account of the experiences provoked by the moment. In this sense it functions as an interstitial incursion, implicated by an irreverence toward formality. Walking as method is hence by its nature experimental and open to the possibilities of the moment bound as this is to the shared uncovering of meaning that being emplaced requires. For the method we deployed in those case examples reported above, walking offered an opportunity to reconsider the formation of the Self at the same time it afforded a common ground to understand the place of the Other.

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