



Cosmic Drift: braiding Nicolás Núñez's contemplative tools with the Situationists' dérive.

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ABSTRACT

This practice-as-research investigation springs from the author's ongoing work of re-orientating their existing critical walking practices—which owe theoretical and methodological inheritance to the Situationist dérive—in a North American context. The following account explores engagements with two examples of 'braided' practice (Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019): first, a self-directed program of Nicolás Núñez's Anthropocosmic Theatre 'tools'—specifically contemplative running and slow walking—testing their effects outside of a studio space. Secondly, I describe a further braiding of Núñez's participatory tools with a site-responsive dérive-inspired practice. This attempt at hybridisation reveals an opportunity for the potential development and application of an enhanced critical-contemplative walking practice as a focused creative research methodology.

Introduction

As a recent migrant from Wales (UK) to Canada, I have found it increasingly important to develop my understanding of the historical and ongoing colonial processes which continue to shape North American lives. Reflecting on my own personal and cultural positionality has led me to engage in processes that call into question the Eurocentric assumptions

inherent in my performance studies training and walking-arts practices. Attempts by walking-artists to decolonize their practices in North America focus on learning '[their] own location, history, and place, as a settler group, on the territory in question' (Kovach, 2009, p. 112). Having recently arrived on a Student Visa, my attentions are drawn to a provocation offered by performance studies scholar

Ben Spatz, who suggests an approach which 'demands a reconsideration of the place and role of bodies—including white bodies—in [academic] spaces' (2019, p. 22). Echoing Jerzy Grotowski's call to investigate one's own ethno-cultural inheritances (Grotowski et al, 1987, p. 38-40), Spatz suggests researchers explore their embodied traditions and practices for methodologies with the potential to unsettle the detached, spectatorial techniques and anthropological drive inherent in performance studies discourse (Spatz, 2019, p. 14-22). Whilst my inherited Northern Irish Catholicism provides a rich set of ritual praxes that I have begun to explore as performance resources, the immediacy and focus of this PAR more closely follows calls for collaborative wayfinding between settler and non-settler methodologies and

worldview paradigms. Specifically, the approach of Cree artist Elwood Jimmy and settler scholar Vanessa Andreotti which models engagement in -

[a]ction-oriented commitments: investing time, energy, and resources in systemic harm interruption [...] developing a highly sensitive radar for unarticulated dissent [...] and for seemingly benevolent practices that unintentionally replicate oppressive relations. (Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019, p. 36)

This paper articulates some of the difficult, unavoidable, messy problems encountered while attempting to decolonize white bodies and their knowledges (Spatz, 2019 p. 9; Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019, pp. 38-39), with a specific focus on unsettling the author's Euro-centric walking methodologies through the hybridization of

critical and contemplative walking practices. After situating my settler methodology—a walking practice which owes theoretical and practical inheritance to the Situationist *dérive*—I analyse a short practice-as-research exploration of Nicolás Núñez's contemplative running and slow walking (Middleton, 2019a, p. 225), assessing their effectiveness as tools to unsettle perceptions of quotidian space.

Much of my work between 2008 and 2018 took place in city centres and other public spaces in the UK, and through a focus on street-based relationship building and playful critique, owes an inheritance to the *dérive*. The *dérive* is one of a set of tactics developed by the Marxist-inspired Situationist International (SI), an international cohort of social revolutionaries composed of avant-garde artists, intellectual and political theorists, and activists in Europe between 1957 and

72. Alongside a broader set of complementary tactics that 'looked to play, spontaneity, and festivity as necessities of daily life' (Sadler, 199, p. 44), the *dérive* provides a participatory framework that invites individual and collaborative exploration and reflection on urban space, which the SI viewed as the material representation and embodiment of the concentration of capitalist power (Debord, 1995, p. 125). My efforts to contemplatively unsettle my *dérive*-inspired walking-practices are an attempt at quietening intellectual and analytical thought whilst attempting to encourage mindful embodiment; allowing deep listening of the body in-situ to intuitively wayfind relationships with/in the environment; and to share—beyond a purely intellectual understanding—the difficult and existential labour of decolonising systems and spaces (Spatz, 2019; Chacon & Hopkins, 2021;

Instone, 2020). Serving as a starting point to explore and work through the 'degrees, levels, or layers of transmission and different kinds of decolonial and neo-colonial potential at play' (Spatz, 2019, p. 20) in the performance ecologies one encounters and absorbs, I argue that an approach which sets critical and contemplative methodologies into oscillation / dialogue has the potential to allow one to better serve community-focused creative practices within an academic research framework by radically altering relationship to space, time, and lifeforces.

Situating settler methodologies

As a newcomer to Canada, I have felt the need to 'unsettle' my own settler methodologies and practices. When I refer to 'settler methodologies', I follow Heather

Davis-Finch's reflections on how their Euro-centric positionality leads them to a sense of responsibility; to better understand the potentials of one's training and practices' complicity in the continuation of cultural colonization, with a view to disrupting those potentials and pathfinding towards renewed generative modes of encounter and practice (Davis-Finch, 2017, p. 70-71). In addition to Spatz's encouragement towards self-reflective praxis, there are calls from First Nation Canadian artists for collaborative wayfinding, such as that proposed by Elwood Jimmy & Vanessa Andreotti in their work *Towards Braiding* (2019). Central to the concept of Braiding is not the replacement or exoticisation of non-western ways of knowing, nor the abandonment or privileging of European paradigms.

Instead, braiding is premised on respecting the continued internal integrity of both [settler and indigenous] orientations, even as neither side is static or homogenous, and even as both sides might be transformed in the process of braiding. (Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019, p. 21-22)

A core principle in the commitment towards generative modes of encounter and practice between worldviews is the need for such endeavors to become “‘body memory” [...] a task of intellectual, embodied, and affective engagement’ (Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019, p. 35). For Fischlin and Nandorfy, the work of unsettling Eurocentric paradigms through the influence of indigenous ways of knowing is fundamental to the existential work of building community with others; ‘accepting this challenge involves

diversifying the sources of our stories and interpretation’, allowing oneself to understand ‘western forms of ignorance’, recalibrating notions of ‘human rights and dignity from land-based perspectives’ (2011, p. 26).

Challenging one’s settler worldview and methodologies in such a way ‘offer[s] a revisionary framework for examining how dominant western discourses on rights are rooted in capitalism and colonialism’ (Fischlin & Nandorfy, 2011, p. 26). Keeping in mind the guidance to develop sensitivity for ‘seemingly benevolent practices that unintentionally replicate oppressive relations’ (Jimmy & Andreotti, 2019, p. 36), the settler methodology that I seek to unsettle – the critical walking-practice of the *dérive* – is one that claims to interrogate the power of economic dominance over social space.

Encouraging 'playful-constructive behavior and awareness' of one's surroundings (Debord, 1958), the *dérive* was designed to allow one to 'gain first-hand insight and understanding of how power operates and organizes the body-politic in subtle ways' (Rose, 2015, p. 129). Strategies, methods, and tools to facilitate *dérive* include the suggestion of linguistic, visual, or other ludic interventions to encourage unorthodox movement and playful disruption of attentions; and the creation and sharing of games, scores, or other formal interventions to provide loose participatory structures with the aim of provoking mindfulness and raising questions (Rose, 2015, p. 152). The twinned and somewhat contradictory tasks of the *dérive* - engaging in a playful stroll *and* critical analysis - necessitates a continuous oscillation between two modes

of perception (Turner, 2015, p. 163). Facilitating an emergent journey built from subjective encounters with the route and the material and social relations one encounters, balancing tensions between the ludic and analytical 'is not a problem within the *dérive*, it is the work of it' (Smith, 2010, p. 105). As such, the experience of the *dérive* throws up a host of physical, emotional, and pedagogical reflections.

Alongside exhaustion and frequent anxiety, there has often been a sensation of profound relief: as if, by constructing loose and improvisatory situations that are other to those of organized labor or leisure, possibilities are expanded, other ways of being recollected, even temporarily realized. (Turner, 2015, p. 165)

The application of Eurocentric ontologies and situated knowledges to reorganise spaces of labor and leisure is potentially problematic in a Canadian context, especially considering the findings of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), published in 2015. The TRC cites The Doctrine of Discovery's key role in establishing the legal parameters under which much of the Americas and Australia were colonized (TRC, 46). A papal bull which allowed Europeans to conceive of the Americas as 'terra nullius'—or 'no mans land'—The Doctrine of Discovery allowed early settlers to frame First Nations communities as 'simply occupy[ing], rather than own[ing], the land', claiming that true ownership 'could come only with European-style agriculture' (TRC, 46). The colonization of Canada relied on violent and systematic

attempts to extinguish first-nation worldviews, communities, and spirituality (TRC, 55). A network of Residential Schools - actively supported by pre- and post-confederacy Canadian governmental bodies - forcibly removed indigenous children from their families as part of a 'civilizing mission' which 'rested on a belief of racial and cultural superiority' (TRC, 46). These attempts at forced assimilation fractured First Nation communities, culture, and knowledge transfer; 'a conscious policy of cultural genocide' (TRC, 55). In attempting to un-indigenise indigenous children, the Residential School System sought to rupture First Nation worldviews and knowledge systems rooted in coexistence and stewardship of the land and displace indigenous cultures in favour of a settler worldview that conceived land as unclaimed resource for value extraction. The legacy of *terra nullius*, and the

Treaties signed between The British Crown and many First Nations, remain contentious legal texts through which rights, stewardship of land, health, education, and calls for self-determinism are still negotiated.

The potential of my contemporary Eurocentric walking-arts practice to replicate uneven and oppressive relations towards lands and the beings that steward and inhabit them is underlined by Phil Smith, who expresses concern over the reduction of *dérive*-inspired practices to romanticized ‘dreamy trek[s]’, rendering them passive and uncritical (Murryfield, cited in Smith, 2010, p. 104). For Smith, the survival of *dérive*-indebted praxis as a generative force of embodied critique lies in practitioners’ responsibility to re-invigorate their practice ‘as a conceptual [...] toolkit’, ‘widening affordance[s] to add

and subtract from, according to practical and theoretical need’ (Smith, 2010, p. 120). My recent migration to North America means that - like many Settler / Canadian researchers - I have yet to encounter, develop and nurture the relationships that which would permit me to support, learn, or apply Indigenous ways of knowing to challenge and unsettle my embodied walking practices (Davis-Finch, 2017, p. 70). Following prompts to investigate one’s own cultural and vocational experience for structures to interrogate, I found myself returning to a practice I had recent experience of; one whose genesis can be viewed as a form of braiding - as sketched above by Jimmy & Andreotti - in that its development acknowledges and respects the internal integrity of settler and indigenous ways of knowing (Núñez Archive, 2022). As well as finding

compatibility with the *dérive* as a peripatetic practice, contemplative running - and the Anthropocosmic Theatre framework in which it is used as a core tool - claims a shift in perception 'in such a way that [participants] can acknowledge [their] co-responsibility with the rhythms of the universe [...] with all its social and political implications (Núñez, 2019b, p. 276). This description resonates with my desire to work towards methodologies that make palpable the 'complex expressions of interrelatedness with all aspects of being [...] a pluralist, diverse manifestation of a vast ecological interweaving of different lifeforms and environments interacting locally and globally' (Fischlin et al., 2011, p. 25).

Nicolás Núñez's Contemplative Running and Slow Walking.

For over forty years, Nicolás Núñez and the *Taller de Investigación Teatral* (Theatre

Research Workshop or TRW, Mexico) have engaged in a process of theatrical research, developing Anthropocosmic Theatre. Translated as 'the theatre of the human in the cosmos', Anthroponomic Theatre consists of participatory frameworks - called 'dynamics' (Middleton, 2019a) - which are offered as actor-training and as 'vehicles for personal [and] psychophysical development' (Middleton, 2019b, p. 149). Núñez's research has involved encounters with performance lineages including Grotowski's para-theatrical work, and an embodied reconnection with pre-Hispanic, Nahuatl performance structures (Piña, 1984, p. 354). Developed while working with Grotowski on Theatre of Sources in 1980 (Middleton, 2001, p. 52), a foundational tool for the TRW's work is contemplative running - also referred to as 'contemplative trotting'; another core tool is 'slow walking'.

Both activities are carried out as sustained, durational practices embedded into the longer sequences - the dynamics. Contemplative running is usually carried out for at least 20 minutes, and involves participants moving

... in a continuous and flowing running motion, travelling in an anticlockwise direction around the [workshop] space. The participants' main tasks are to release any unnecessary tensions from their bodies and to maintain an open awareness of their experience. (Morris, 2017, p. 170-171)

Participants are invited to a similar call-to-awareness through the tool of 'slow walking', in which one is asked to reduce one's pace to a slow-motion walk, moving in exaggerated steps involving maximum effort and activity in supporting leg muscles

(Morris, 2017, p. 169). Contemplative trotting and slow walking are not to be misunderstood as thinking-while-running or walking (akin to the *dérive*), or contemplating ideas during a walk or run. Rather, the practice should be read as 'contemplat[ive] in the sense of meditation, a total focus of the mind on the body, on the experience' (Middleton, 2001, p. 52); it entails the cultivation of a state of embodied focus that is markedly different from what one usually experiences in quotidian life. Middleton explains that

While [contemplative] running, you cannot think of running 'somewhere'; there is no goal to reach. This is one distinction between contemplative running and athletic running, and it is of essential importance. Participants do not think ahead of themselves any more

than they think of past events; they focus here and now—not running to, and not running for, just running. In this sense of 'goallessness', it is similar to other meditative practices, such as zazen, or Zen sitting, as analysed by Grimes: 'Zazen is not a preparation for anything, even enlightenment. There is no difference between practice and goal [...]. one's goal is to sit without goals'. (Middleton, 2001, p. 52)

To incubate a sense of goallessness, small cues are introduced to the walking/running to shift focus from the participants' analytical mind and help nurture a state of heightened embodied attention. Similar to the *dérive*'s suggestion of linguistic, visual, or other ludic interventions to unsettle habitual walking, Núñez invites participants to explore simple actions - lifting one's

arms in the air whilst running, moving backwards or with eyes closed, or shifting gear to slow walking - all with the purpose of intensifying and melding mental and physical energies. Echoing the *dérive*'s disruption of habitual movement towards extra-daily attentions, contemplative trotting and slow walking aim at turning running or walking from 'an act which in daily life is often unconscious and habitual' into an activity that is 'uncanny and immediate' (Morris, 2017, p. 169). During intensified movement through space, participants are asked to 'to keep [their] look open [...] without focusing', 'to feel that [they] are hanging by a thread which comes from the crown of [their] head and is tied to the stars, and to 'flow at [their] own pace in a constant 'here and now'' (Núñez, 2019b, p. 119). Playful, focused, and transformative, contemplative trotting loosens ones received notions of

boundaries and subjectivities (Morris, 2017, p. 172), whilst providing an additional participatory framework/tool which can be used to invigorate and refocus the *dérive*'s implicit yet 'all encompassing circle of embodied experience' (Rose, 2015, p. 147). Thus, my investigations into the potential braiding between the *dérive* and contemplative trotting initiate an inquiry of embodied overlap and oscillation - between the ludic and analytical, goallessness and specificity, meditative, cosmic, and quotidian. How might the unexpected rearrangements of such attentions produce affective disruptions and recalibrations of perception to allow generative insights into the ways that bodies, space, and place intertwine and constitute each other?

Practice-as-research investigation

To explore the potential of contemplative running's effects - and its compatibility with the *dérive* as a tool for perceptual re-orientation of everyday space - I engaged in a 4-week program of contemplative running in a studio setting, keeping written notes and reflections in a commonplace notebook. During the sessions of contemplative running I would gently switch to slow walking in order to help nurture focus and re-centre my attention. Overall, I undertook 200 minutes/3.3 hours of contemplative trotting between February and March 2022, using audio and video documentation during some of these sessions. Over this period, my sessions became increasingly sustained and focused, with my perception of time slipping through different shades of viscosity and lightness during the exercises. The effort of pulling focus from

the daily chatter of thought gave way to an oscillation between accepting and letting go of visual and linguistic memories, thoughts, and future projections. After c.100 accumulative minutes of walking and running over several sessions, a series of subtle movements started to seep out and disrupt my focus. After resisting these potential interruptions to the focus of my



Fig. 1 'Sitting in Massey', Guelph, 2022. Authors image.

contemplative sessions, I permitted myself to mark-make on a wall-mounted chalkboard in addition to the running exercises. These improvised marks supplied temporary scores that supported explorations of intuitive movement and feedback listening, further shaking me

loose of habitual, daily behaviors and linguistic thought patterns. After one longer session of solo-running/walking, I found myself sitting beneath the chalk boards mounted on the studio wall.

My recollection of performing this action is only of placing myself in the room where I felt I could comfortably rest. Reviewing the documentation video



Fig. 2 'Sitting in the Barn', Swansea, 2017. Authors image.

(Fig.1), I appear to rest in the sitting aspect of Zen Buddhism, or Zazen, described above as 'sitting without goals'. I have previous experience with Zen, regularly sitting with Zen Association Wales (UK) between the years 2015 and 2017. The placement and gestures of my body

echo a video-still from an Arts Council Wales (ACW) research project I undertook in 2017 which focused on play, memory, and place, and used the *dérive* as foundational methodology and practice.

After a strenuous period of devising and playing ball games in an athletics venue during the ACW project, I spontaneously sat, leaning against a wall framed by painted goal posts, and improvised a monologue addressing an ancestor: my younger brother Paul who passed away some years earlier (Fig.2). By giving in to the goaleanness of contemplative running, I found myself resurrecting, calling upon, referencing - spontaneously and intuitively - aspects of past experience and practice. In terms of exploring the layers of potential embodied knowledge and understandings, this session of studio practice revealed an

unexpected intermeshing of the past and present, highlighting the process as enduring over and through spatial-temporal boundaries, beyond a purely intellectual basis (Spatz, 2019, 20; Instone, 2020, 135). Upon leaving the studio session I held no desire or plan to further explore or embellish this encounter and intended to continue to use contemplative running 'not as a preparation for something else but as a task to be completed for its own sake' (Grimes, 2001, p. 275).

My contemplative practice continued to resonate whilst outside of the studio setting. A feeling of enrootment to the earth whilst walking - described by Morris after and during taking part in Núñez's practice (Morris, 2017, p. 177) - was present, as my feet spread wider and became more articulate during and after sessions. I felt a finer attunement to my

walking pace both immediately and days after my contemplative trotting sessions, my pace slowing during lapses in embodied attention. I found myself 'micro-trotting' - physically padding my feet on the spot - when thoughts wandered whilst waiting in queues or standing for longer periods of work, sometimes visualising and haptically recalling the sensations of the movements. These occasions of 'micro-trotting' were sometimes conscious attempts to become re-embodied, akin to a ludic intervention of the *dérive*; other times I would spontaneously and unconsciously begin padding the floor, akin to Jimmy & Andreotti's notion of 'body memory' (2019, p. 35). Alongside a re-tuned attention to my body in public, I recognized a shift in reception to my surroundings. In particular, the plant-life I passed while walking drew renewed attention; an acute sense of trees being in an active relationship with the

ground, supporting and supported by the soil beneath. My slower walking pace outdoors accentuated a palpable sense of the temporal nature of the tree's roots reaching down and grabbing the earth. I felt a tangible sense of connection with this effort to remain standing, and a sense of synergistic relationship between the tree roots, soil, my feet, and the ground. These reflections attune with Morris's assertion that 'in the practices of Núñez we can observe a disruption or dissolution of habitual and dualistic modes of relating to oneself, in relationship to others, and to one's environment, time and space' (2017, p. 178). The sensation also resonates with Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson's reflection that in Indigenous research paradigms 'there is no distinction made between relationships that are made with other people and those that are made with the environment' (Wilson, 2008, p.

87). How might these experiences of ecological relationality impact my perception in the types of spaces where the possibility of an infinite imaginarium of relationality may appear to be closed off, shut down, or otherwise discouraged? The answer to this question came by surprise in an unexpected space.

Ancestors on campus getting coffee

During my experiments with Núñez's contemplative tools, my habitual uses of studio and outdoor space became sites where histories, attentions, and visceral sensations of relation and symbiosis with the environment came in waves both during and after sessions, presenting themselves without force or over-intellectualisation. While waiting at a Starbucks located on the ground floor of

University of Guelph's McLaughlin Library I feel another of these waves.

I'm next in line to be served. I'm concentrating on the sensations in my feet; an expansive rootedness through and beyond the tiled concrete floors. A sensation, like the soft tension of a thread reaching beyond the ceiling of the café, draws my body upwards. The barista addresses me.

'Hello there!'

Ah, I'm up.

'Hello!'

'Hi there, how are you today?'

'Great, thanks, you?'

'All good, Thanks! Can I get a name, please?'

'Paul.'

My late brother's name falls out of my mouth. In fact, I would have to say I felt a 'bubbling' of Paul's name from my core,

through my torso, and out of my face. If one were to envision a water-cooler dispensing a cup of water, the bubbles that enter the clear plastic bottle to replace the volume of water dispensed is the most accurate visualisation I can offer to explain the sensation whilst standing at the coffee-shop till. Along with that sensation was a palpable sense of exchange; something that moved/bubbled through me was now becoming re-integrated with quotidian space, passing through other porous, animate processes. My bubbly reverie is visited upon by the barista.

'And what can I get for you today, Paul?'

I did not make an intellectual decision to turn this everyday situation into a task of improvised imposture. But here we are.

'Uhhh... Can - I - get - a... Mocha?'

'Sure... do you want whipped cream with that, Paul?'

My metabolism is at a stage where extra dairy products incur extra lengths at the swimming pool. 'Paul', however, has/had no such concerns and answers 'Yes' to whipped cream. Along with a full-fat dairy drink, 'Paul' opts for a full-meat muffin instead of Steve's habitual choice of a meat-free snack: a full-meat request from beyond the grave.

As I wait for my order to be completed, the implications of this small, subtle, unexpected intervention spontaneously percolate. In this depersonalised space of Starbucks, an 'aesthetically and behaviourally controlled and homogenous "themed" environment [...] of leisure and consumption where nothing unpredictable can occur' (Frank & Stevens, 2007, p. 3), I trace the embodied junctions my contemplative walking has

taken me through. I sense the shifts and trotted transference of mnemonic memories from a dusty athletic centre in South Wales, to the Massey Hall's Theatre Studio in Ontario, Canada; past/via soil-gripping roots, supporting, and supported by the critical mass of monosyllabic familial energy that is temporarily loosening - and problematizing - the habitual, transactional relationship with a Starbucks barista. While automated espresso machines fizz and gurgle, the thought of labour springs into my head; in particular, the deferred labour of the barista who is now embroiled in an ongoing, caffeinated remembrance ritual. Issues of post-dramatic theatre processes viewing and using the bodies and spaces beyond the proscenium arch as an open resource pour over my thoughts (Levin, 2014, p. 71-2). The majority of servers in Starbucks - as reflected on Guelph's

campus - are female (Starbucks U.S. Workforce Demographics 2021), and thus issues of male dominance and violation of/in public space become foregrounded in my mind. My syncretic gesture within the synthetic matrices of consumption sprung from an attempted braided hybridisation of processes that sought to disrupt embedded hierarchies; but am I subverting this space or just doubling down from a position of drifting white male embodiment?

'Mocha with whip for Paul...Paul!?'

Woops, I forgot that's 'me'! ...

'Cheers, Thank You!'

'Have a nice day!'

'You too!'

Reflection

This paper aimed to provide an account of the 'unsettling' of the author's settler

methodologies through the braiding of critical walking and contemplative running practices, and to assess the processes' potential to allow the researcher's body to conceive of and better serve site-focused critical creative practices within an academic research framework.

Following a self-directed program of contemplative running, I felt the attempted hybridisation with the *dérive* articulated a 'blending and overlapping' of what were - for me - two hitherto separate 'fields of artistry and knowledge in which affordances of embodiment itself [we]re foregrounded' (Spatz, 2019, p. 13). In attempting to unsettle and wayfind new approaches to critical-walking I found the immersion into Núñez's contemplative running a generative experience that reframed perceptions of relationships between body, memories, positionality to

environment and other beings in public space.

My heightened embodied attention - developed behind closed doors - continued to resonate outside of the studio, leading to generative reencounters of natural and social spaces. This transference of feeling illustrates a continuum of embodied experience which calls into question the limitations of the 'ontological divisions that structure both professional industries and scholarly disciplines' (Spatz, 2019, p. 9). My experiences of cosmic trotting unsettled my assumptions and conventions of *dérive*-centred practice, allowing me to sidestep the intellect and feel - in fleeting intervals - a visceral and renewed appreciation for what Lavery and Whitehead refer to as an 'ecology of place'; the experience of encountering where one inhabits with a renewed attention and sense of intimacy; and a

palpable sense of the responsibilities and reciprocities that exist between the animate, inanimate, human and non-human agents, past and present worldviews that surround one and constitute the world (Lavery & Whitehead, 2012, p. 155). Shawn Wilson's assertion that 'knowledge itself is held in relationships and connections formed with the environment that surrounds us' (2008, p. 87) prompts me to consider the use of critical-contemplative walking as a shared, communal investigation into perception, embodiment, and relationships in public space amongst willing collaborators and/or communities; how might the inclusion of other vernacular, local, somatic and/or ludic participatory frameworks widen the parameters, ethno-centric knowledges, and embodied affordances of such a practice as community focused/led

research methodology? And how might the exploration, scoring, and sharing of critical-contemplative walking practices help to bridge embodied knowledges and experiences of social space between participants, and gesture towards shared responsibility and stewardship of equitable ecologies of place?

The work of attempting to meld physical and mental energies to promote non-dualistic perception and critical reflection are replaced by another challenge; how does/can one accurately transfer or approximate such an experience to others? On the 1st of April 2022 a small group of participants gathered at McLaughlin Library and were invited to follow a short score; to give a name of an ancestor in place of their own while ordering at the same branch of Starbucks. The timing of this sharing

wasn't favourable to facilitate a session of contemplative running with participants, thus the score acted as an experiment to bridge my own walking/running exploration/experiences with a formal ludic invitation, providing a loose structure to encourage exploration and encounter of the site in an approximation of my experience of improvised coffee-shop imposture. I had reservations as to whether my invitation would feel incomplete or under-nourished; an attempt to render something highly spontaneous, personal, and expansive into something controlled, rough, and public. Despite my misgivings, feedback from participants indicated a range of experiences similar to 'Paul's' experience with the barista. The hidden complexities of the coffee queue's emotional ecology became palpable when participants afforded themselves the time to allow memories, thoughts, and

sensations to pass through them whilst ordering and waiting. Participants imagined what their ancestors might order from this store, what the social spaces and etiquettes those ancestors inhabited were like, and what other forms of sociability once inhabited the site where the library now stood. There were brief missteps towards the counter when participants heard their 'real' name being called out by the barista. Some of those present wondered whether their 'nom du jour' or given name evoked the most memories from fellow shoppers. A sense of emotional exchange amongst strangers through the habitual daily ritual of coffee consumption - oscillating between the past, present, and imagined identities - culminated in a collective story sharing and a collage of order stickers, showing the names of ancestors - and their orders - breaking up

the neat, predictable flow of the Starbucks's well-ordered lines (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Story sharing coffee order sticker collage, Guelph, 2022. Authors' image.

Conclusion

As experimentation with Nicolás Núñez's contemplative running revealed, playing

amongst the different layers of personal history, performance trainings, and social emplacement, requires one to remain open to accept surprises and ruptures as generative of new formations of practice and understandings of self-in/as-place. How might a prolonged immersion in a program of contemplative-critical trotting restructure one's experiences and perceptions of quotidian life spaces in the long-run (sic)? If the fleeting yet expansive senses of interconnection with persons and environment brought about through contemplative-critical walking amounts to feeling the world the right way up - a temporary recollection and realization of the expansive possibilities inherent in quotidian life (Turner 2015, p. 165) - how might one continue to authentically integrate this knowledge within one's life/research? In the ongoing - messy,

unfinishable, at times wrongfooted - genuine attempts at conciliation between cultures and worldviews, how might the subversive golessness of critical-contemplative praxis help one undertake and sustain their part of the vital and collective work necessary to realise and act upon our shared ecological responsibilities?

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