



Inviting movements in physiotherapy: An anthology of critical scholarship

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Chapter 9

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ABSTRACT:

This chapter proposes the need for redefined, transdisciplinary approaches to art and health education and research. We question physiotherapy education which continues to privilege biomedical knowledge and marginalises cultural, philosophical, and sociological perspectives. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, we propose a nomadic practice and advocate education, practice and research that creates lines of flight which break through the control of discipline, context or methodology, and consequent outcomes.

We explore how transdisciplinary education can use the creative approaches of art to create a counterculture that draws on aspects of new materialism to consider how art can offer opportunities to explore movement and non- interactions. We illuminate what this might make possible within physiotherapy and advocate moving towards a nomadic therapeutic practice that is becoming.

The chapter recognises how emerging transdisciplinary research can prioritise approaches that embrace the unexpected and highlight examples of the human and non-human as co-generators of knowledge. In advocating creative process as an alternative to territorialized physiotherapy practices enclosed within disciplinary criteria, we suggest communicable forms of knowledge in new, more productive forms.



CHAPTER 9

Art as a deterritorialising vehicle for a nomadic physiotherapy

SHIRLEY CHUBB AND CLAIR HEBRON

Introduction

The process of collaboration that led to this chapter has included four or more years of discussion, and the consequent development of awareness and association gained by considering, sharing, and applying our individual knowledge. Shirley is a visual artist, and Clair is a physiotherapist. We are both academics with experience in qualitative and post-research and are interested in how theory and discourse work across disciplinary boundaries to enable new modes of thinking and practice. Through this process, we have come to recognise points of convergence alongside points of dissonance, where the understanding of common theoretical territories has revealed different applications in our distinct disciplines. This process has become rhizomatic,¹ with an absence of implied hierarchy that has negated the sense of authority that can so often haunt *interdisciplinary* thinking. In contrast, lengthy discussions have evolved organically, moving between philosophical, sociological, and practical references, sharing imagery, links, and experiential examples leading to an enhanced awareness of the agency of truly *transdisciplinary*² thinking. Key to this process has been our common

interest in the implications of posthumanism. As Rosi Braidotti observes in her book *The posthuman*, "we need to learn to think differently about ourselves," to see what might be a "predicament as an opportunity" and to think "critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 10). Having come from two disciplines traditionally rooted in the awareness and representation of the body, we have sought to reconsider and recalibrate the body within the non-human. In being aware of the body, we simultaneously consider what that body is within, its socioeconomic and cultural environment and location and its physical status, awareness, and receptivity. We also decentre the body, by asking what non-human phenomena act upon it, and what renewed awareness might be made from this.

Within the chapter we provide an overview of pertinent elements of relevant discourse within physiotherapy and the arts. These outline how our perspective of shared thinking achieved a state of equilibrium and grew to challenge the contrasting stances that can be seen to distance creative practice and the health sciences. We suggest that by moving our perspective on these debates, we can reveal points of commonality, and the potential for synchronised forms of knowledge production that benefit from the interstitial, shared space of understanding enabled by the posthuman perspective. We then draw on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2009; 2020) and aspects of new materialism to consider the process of becoming a physiotherapist within higher education in the United Kingdom and consider what forces have evolved that block or potentially enable nomadic thinking in this learning environment. Additionally, we discuss how adopting a collaborative transdisciplinary approach to the liminal space between physiotherapy and creative practice, embraces ideas of nomadism, leading to a range of research, that from the outset adopted receptivity as a model for enquiry. We ask how the process of transdisciplinary collaboration can create lines of flight and prompt us to think otherwise. Our aim is to consider how transdisciplinarity can move us towards an otherwise physiotherapy, one which challenges accepted and authorised ways of thinking and doing. We share links to art, which for us exemplify alternative readings of the body as processes of collaboration with its own interiority and other human and nonhuman forces (Bennett, 2010, p. 21). We hope that your curiosity is piqued as you follow these links and take time to dwell on their alternative readings of what we

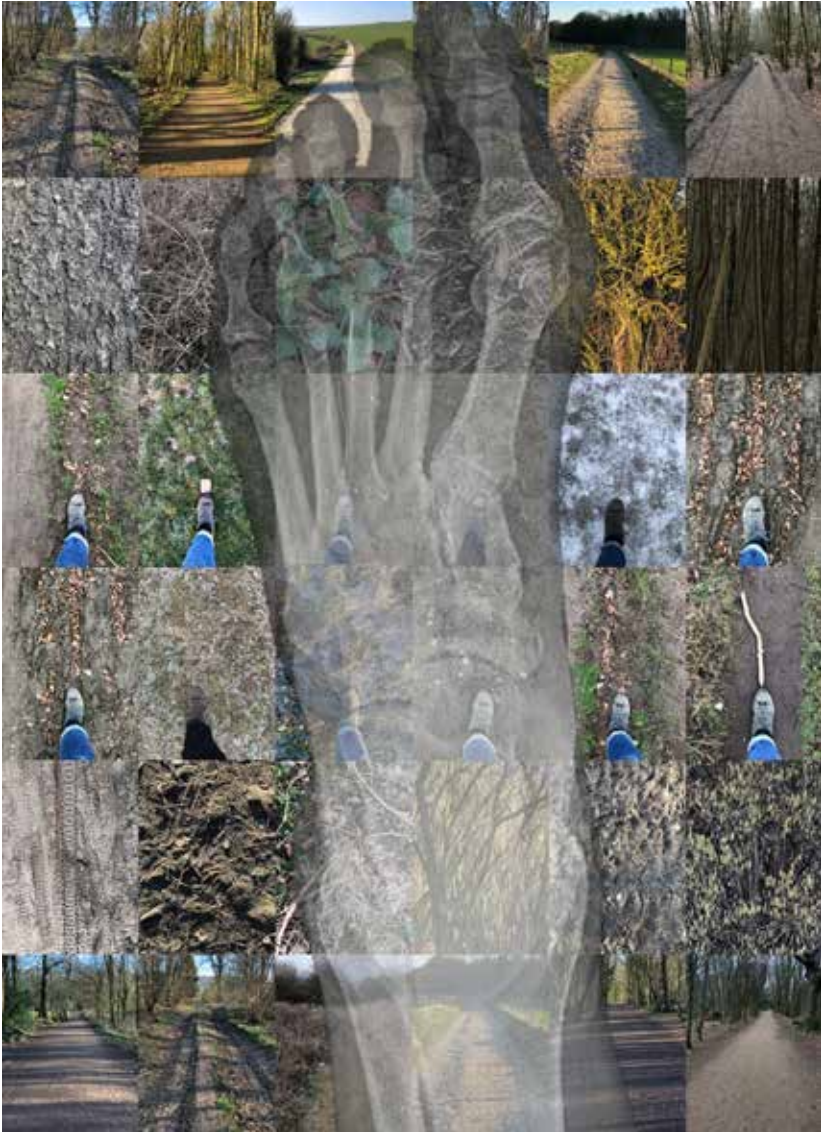


Figure 1. Shirley Chubb, *Metatarsal Walks 1* (2021), composite digital photograph.

think we understand about ourselves. Finally, we share how our involvement in initiating the Posthuman Walking Project (PWP)³ put these approaches into practice by reshaping methodological norms to accept findings with a sense of radical openness.

Physiotherapy in motion

Health and thus healthcare awareness has shifted in recent years as the these environments begin to perceive and encompass the human in relation to its non-human environment. Early medicine was focused on curing specific diseases, such as diphtheria and tuberculosis, whereas today this is overshadowed by preventing and managing “lifestyle diseases,” thus promoting the need to look beyond what the body is, and towards what a body does. Yet arguably the greatest burden to care comes from so called “medically unexplained conditions” with one such condition, low back pain, being the biggest cause of years lived with disability worldwide (GBD 2021 Low Back Pain Collaborators, 2023).

The recognition that rather than being static, definable, “closed” entities, health conditions may be in a state of flux as humans interact, respond and correspond with their environment, suggests the need for an equivalent recalibration in physiotherapy as a profession that recognises and is able to manage the complexities of contemporary society. Although there has been some movement in discourse with a focus on the biopsychosocial model, conceptualisation of this remains reductive and practice is predominantly biomedical (Nicholls & Gibson, 2010; Mescouto et al., 2022). Physiotherapists acknowledge the need to address psychosocial aspects, but question whether it is in their scope of practice (Singla et al., 2015; van Dijk et al., 2023; Zangoni & Thomson, 2017). So, while we argue about what are culturally “professionally permitted techniques” we lose sight of the person and their interactions with their environment (see Figure 1).

No wonder physiotherapists struggle to manage complexity and uncertainty and fail to fully acknowledge the structural barriers to health or see themselves as activists. We argue that for the profession to evolve, education, research, and practice need to be in flight, moving rhizomatically, making new connections that acknowledge, in Braidotti’s terms, a posthuman “becoming” by establishing relations “on at least three levels: to one’s self, to others and to the world” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 45).

We are entering what is sometimes termed the post-professional era (Nicholls, 2022, p. 178), which doesn't mean that the health professions will disappear, but that they will need to be responsive, creative, and innovative in order to decentre professional hegemony and meet the needs of the changing context in which they work. Deleuze and Guattari's (2020) concept of nomadism is a way of thinking and being that challenges traditional ideas of identity, subjectivity, and power (Braidotti, 2012). It triggers the potential for transdisciplinary teaching that creates lines of flight, prompting disruptive yet generative outcomes that break down assumed hierarchies of knowledge and power between "patient," "clinician," and "circumstance." This will require physiotherapists to be responsive and radically open to new becomings.

Becoming a physiotherapist

Discourse in physiotherapy education includes attention to professional identity formation and professional socialisation and refers to the process by which individuals learn values, attitudes, and behaviours associated with their profession (Lindquist et al., 2006). Identity theory adopts a sociological and psychological approach that seeks to explain the formation and development of individual characteristics. It posits that individuals develop a sense of self and identity through social interaction and the roles they occupy in society (Stets & Burke, 2000). Overall, identity theory seeks to explain how individuals come to define themselves and their place in the world. This discourse largely draws on concepts of identity from transcendental philosophy, whereby identity is conceived as a somewhat static system of thought, and contemporary discourse in physiotherapy continues to territorialise physiotherapy identity as something to be maintained (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 2021). However, research has shown that physiotherapists' identity is dynamic, ongoing, and influenced by a range of factors, including their personal experiences, values, and motives and the social and cultural context in which they practice (Hammond et al., 2016). In contrast, for artists, individual identity is the mode of expression, creating a unique creative space where identity formation is defined by the mode, skills, scale, or working/exhibiting context of their resulting practice.

A point of commonality for the authors⁴ is a shared interest in Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of traditional notions of fixed identity that emphasize stability, coherence, and individuality, arguing that these do not accurately

reflect the complex and dynamic nature of human existence. Instead, they propose a nomadic view of identity that is fluid, constantly changing, and shaped by external forces, emphasizing movement, multiplicity, and interconnectedness as a rhizomatic process where multiplicities have neither subject nor object (Deleuze & Guattari, 2020). Deleuze and Guattari suggest that individuals are continually being reformed through flows of forces, intensity, and desires. In this context, the nomadic subject is characterised by a willingness to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity, skills which are essential in contemporary physiotherapy practice and often the *modus operandi* of an artist's process of engagement with materials, display, and reception. However, in physiotherapy, current educational philosophy based in static concepts of identity is arguably problematic, manifesting identities handed down by educators to students who seek to conform and reproduce those that precede them. Indeed, learners may seek out a sense of preformed professional identity and the prescribed ways of practicing that it suggests.

Deleuze and Guattari (2020) reject hierarchy, and what they term:

The various forms of education or 'normalization' imposed upon an individual consist in making him or her change points of subjectification, always moving towards a higher, nobler one in closer conformity with the supposed ideal. Then from the point of subjectification issues a subject of enunciation, as a function of a mental reality determined by that point. Then from the subject of enunciation issues a subject of the statement, in other words, a subject bound to statements in conformity with a dominant reality. (p. 150)

Counter to looking for ways of *being* a physiotherapist we argue that physiotherapy educators, students and practitioners should consider what *becoming* a physiotherapist could look like, and how this might differ from the identity handed down to them. Thus, rather than trying to emulate educators and senior colleagues, this perspective challenges traditional ideas of identity based on categories such as class, race, gender, and for students, educators, and all physiotherapists instead emphasizes the importance of fluidity, adaptability, and diverse approaches for physiotherapy students, academics, and clinicians. Barad (2007) defines this as a process of "intra-activity," where "relations of exteriority, connectivity, and exclusion are reconfigured,"

creating "dynamic topological reconfigurings/entanglements/relationalities/(re)articulations of the world" (Barad, 2007, p. 141). Our suggestion is that a recalibration of the educational philosophy of physiotherapy to a model that embraces posthuman notions of identity and becoming could create an otherwise physiotherapy. It offers identity in motion, constantly changing and responsive to landscapes of care.⁵ This might better prepare physiotherapists for the challenge, complexity, and uncertainty involved in navigating contemporary practice (e.g., Costa et al., 2023; Roitenberg & Shoshana, 2021).

Art as a deterritorialising flow of forces to a becoming physiotherapy

We propose that adopting some of the uncertainty embraced in arts practice can be used as a catalyst for questioning physiotherapy identities and a means to challenge conventional thinking about who we are and how we define ourselves. Our suggestion reflects Deleuze and Guattari's (2020) view that

art is never an end in itself; it is only a tool for blazing life lines, in other words, all of those real becomings that are not produced only *in* art, and all of those active escapes that do not consist in fleeing *into* art, taking refuge in art, and all of those positive deterritorializations that never reterritorialize on art, but instead sweep it away with them toward the realms of the asignifying, asubjective, and faceless. (p. 219, emphasis in original)

We suggest that a physiotherapy otherwise would cast off the shackles of physical priorities and engage in becoming (immanently⁶), a process in motion. Considering how depictions of the body in art address evolving and increasingly conflicting notions of perfection and reality may be of significance here. Reflecting discourse surrounding the politics and theory of looking at, particularly, the female body (Berger, 2008; Butler, 1990; Laing & Wilson, 2020), contemporary art breaks moulds, seeks new paradigms, and challenges perceived skills and notions of value by embracing different realities and ways of investigating the physical and cultural body. The work of artists such as Jenny Saville (Contemporary Art Issue, 2022); Lucien Freud (2024); Mona Hatoum (n.d.); Ghada Amer (n.d.), and many more, encapsulate gendered, ageing, sociological bodies, that challenge unrealistic or

promoted “norms” through explorative visual representations of what it is to “be” within the world.

Key to this process of becoming, is the understanding of change and flux as an intrinsic part of the learning process, be that in terms of the development of material skills or the expression of conceptual thinking. The artist’s review of work considers what is successful, whilst also recognising that failure and its impact on consequent production is not finite, but rather a process of review where makers respond to the reply of materials or context in order to hone the particularity of any generated work. Within art practice failure is, whilst sometimes frustrating, not seen as negative; rather, it is an interstitial space where understanding between the maker and the materials creates a co-dependent bond. A space where, as Agnes Martin suggests:

There will be moving ahead and discoveries made every day.
There will be great disappointments and failures in trying to
express them. An artist is one that can fail and fail and still go
on. (Glimcher, 2015, p. 81).

This process of intra-action undertaken in what Arne Glimcher describes as Martin’s pursuit of “pure emotion” (Tate, 2015, 2:44), in turn reflects Sontag’s (1964) call for responses to creativity that are against interpretation. For artists, recognition and reflection enable the impulse to follow unexpected avenues of thinking and making, often suggested by the response of materials or the shifting circumstance of making (see Figure 2). These recalibrations manifest a rhizomatic approach to learning from and with the material process, be that actual, that is, in terms of manipulating matter; or circumstantial, responding to the circumstance or context underpinning a creative outcome.

The history of art, broadly speaking, includes adaptations and responses to the development of technologies that have enabled artists to investigate how “tools” (be they objects, technologies or materials) enable new questions and forms of communication. Artists quickly challenged how these technologies might be applied, recognising the disjunct between reality and software capable of creating virtual bodies that can reform, reshape and recontextualise themselves within created digital worlds, for instance, in the context of gaming. Artists such as Don Ritter (*Aesthetic Machinery*, n.d.) responded by calling for interactive uses where “the entire body—and not just the index finger—must be involved in the interactive and aesthetic experience”



Figure 2. Shirley Chubb, *Four Erosions and Four Feathers* (2021), composite digital photograph.

and how the social situation surrounding these experiences was also significant. (Ritter in Wilson, 2003, p. 739). In recent years, digital technologies have offered the opportunity to bridge disciplines, with artists such as Bill Viola (n.d.), Semiconductor (n.d.), Gary Hill (n.d.) and Charlotte Prodger (Tate, n.d.) responding to and transforming data to create liminal worlds that interpret bodies and the worlds they correspond with in new ways. In these hands, art becomes a multivalent phenomenon that questions its own reality and suggests a continuum that moves away from the individual, reflecting Haraway's (2016) sympoiesis as a process that recognises the interplay of "complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems" of "making with" and "worlding with" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58). With these examples in mind, we argue that the communicative potential of art in educational settings has a deterritorialising affect⁷ that could support the reframing of physiotherapy paradigms.

Transdisciplinary education

Adopting a transdisciplinary approach recognises the specific language of disciplines whilst allowing the possibility of reviewing shared phenomena from different positions. It relies on researchers and practitioners working with and learning from each other to reconsider subject specific assumptions

and values afresh (Burnard et al., 2022). Within an educational context this approach affords the possibility of identities of difference moving beyond the essentially hierarchical strata of arboreal restrictions (Doel, 1996). This approach also unblocks the potential of a rhizomatic approach to physiotherapy, where connections with different networks and new possibilities explore the entanglement of material and discursive realities and recognise the validity of human/nonhuman encounters. This was exemplified when we (the authors) visited a Magdalena Abakanowicz exhibition (Tate, 2023) at a key stage in developing our collaborative thinking. Abakanowicz used organic materials such as hemp, sisal, and horsehair to create large woven sculptures, understanding the fibre from which they were made as “the fibre from which all living organisms are built, the tissue of the plants, leaves and ourselves,” as awareness that began to resonate with the emerging Posthuman Walking Project (PWP). Growing up in a manor house deep in the Polish forest, Abakanowicz saw her work as articulating the “inexplicable forces” and “deep powers that dwelled in the foods and lakes that belonged to my parents,” and used materials to “create atmosphere or provoke emotion” (Coxon & Jacob, 2022, p. 72). This recognition of how the use of materials intrinsic to, and formed within, a site can communicate more than a record of place reveals the enhanced awareness that pluriversal thinking can offer. At a crucial stage in the development of our thinking, Abakanowicz’s insight illuminated the affect of art as a form of deterritorialization that can free repressive fixations by enabling flows of awareness that were not previously recognised as significant.

Thus, we advocate a transdisciplinary approach to education moving beyond disciplinary perspectives through a process of real-world investigations that are conscious, receptive, and open to non-human actants in the formation of identity. We suggest that exploring transdisciplinary or pluriversal educational views may help students and physiotherapists to embrace the complexity of a changing world and changing practice, as is evident within the visual arts, providing opportunities to think more nomadically.

Within visual and other creative practices, recent developments have seen significant shifts for many artists, whose practice has become a means to produce new knowledge through the physical manifestation of issues of cultural identity, site specificity, and community. Some outcomes have become less about product and more about the process of becoming that is

manifested through engaging with communities, contexts, or encounters, with Miwon Kwon (2004) recognising that an issue or debate can itself be the site of enquiry. In recent years this process has been reframed as socially engaged practice where, by taking collaborative or participatory approaches, persons or communities become the medium or material of co-creative activity which is itself the output. In this creative genre, for artists such as Assemble (n.d.), Rikrit Tiravanija (David Zwirner, n.d.-b), Francis Alys (David Zwirner, n.d.-a) and project art works (2025), the process of making is the artwork. We see the potential of these approaches in encouraging physiotherapists to consider whether their practice might also become less about product and more about the learning acquired from the process of encounter and consequent becoming.

We are not suggesting that physiotherapy students “do” art. Nor are the artists cited above suggested as examples of what “to do” in this transdisciplinary educational space. Instead, we consider how adopting the approach of generative disruption (Galvann, 2021), that they suggest, can inform transdisciplinary education and what it might offer to physiotherapy students. Art offers examples that disturb assumed or entrenched positions, and we acknowledge that this can create challenges for physiotherapy students, as can be seen in educational programmes that include creative methods within which some students questioned the relevance of art in becoming a physiotherapist (Caeiro et al 2014; Fougner & Kordahl, 2012), stating “we are supposed to become physiotherapists not artists” (Fougner & Kordahl, 2012, p. 17). In response, we propose that transdisciplinary approaches to physiotherapy education, where students and educators alike are obliged to engage with the discomfort of questioning their sense of self in relation to non-human actants, can be enabling, reflecting Haraway’s (2016) edict that

Staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings. (p. 1).

Deleuze and Guattari (2020) underpin the liminality implied by this approach by offering the notion of nomadic thinking. The nomadic state defines the agency of deterritorialised thinking that can exist between

primitive or “stateless” thought and civilised or “despotic” thought (Buchanan, 2010, p. 345).⁸ This definition creates space for creative thinking that is at the limit of freedom, existing outside established hierarchical categorisations, and in a state of perpetual flux. The concept comes with consequences as it functions virtually, at the limits, turning the nomadic thinker into what Deleuze and Guattari call a “war machine” (2020, pp. 409–92). On a direct collision course with the forms of institutionalised thought that one could associate with the state apparatus, nomadic thinking results in struggle and resistance, and comes with risk as there is no guarantee as to what will come from it (Adkins, 2015, p. 31). However, becoming comfortable with disruption might help physiotherapists to negotiate the uncertainties of clinical practice, including navigating structural drivers such as “guidelines” (Copeland, 2020); evidence-based practice and managing persons with “uncertain diagnoses”⁹ (Costa et al., 2023; Roitenberg & Shoshana, 2021). Instead, physiotherapy might develop a less static practice which, aligning with the approach of artists, is centred around disruption and uncertainty and is yet to become known.

We argue that education that includes thinking with different perspectives—in Deleuze and Guattari’s (2020) terms, other “machines,” can create a deterritorialising flow of different ideas between persons, enabling a counterculture that breaks free from the status quo into multivalent rhizomatic identities that benefit from being in a state of flow or motion (see Figure 3). This rhizomatic approach would allow physiotherapy practice to reflect changing sociocultural landscapes and “ceaselessly establish connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles” (2020, p. 6).

What then are the blocks to educational rhizomes? Driven by positivism and funding that preferentially supports research predicated on defined metrics that often reflect established paradigms,¹⁰ can lead to students pursuing grades over learning and educators designing systematised learning patterns and criteria as predefined, territorialised forms of education. Although not entirely liberated from the strictures of module patterns and credit-based learning, some visual art programs offer catalysts for exploring visual assemblages of health, emotion, community and the environment which could transform physiotherapy training to become more than medical. From within the canon, Nicholls and Gibson (2010) have explored how inter



Figure 3. Shirley Chubb, *Five Walks* (2021), composite digital photograph.

or transdisciplinary physiotherapy education can explore the body in new ways that move beyond humanistic and anthropocentric thinking. In Deleuze and Guattarian (2020) terms this offers physiotherapy students (machines) new lines of flight out of the institution to reimagine learning in new and productive ways. As Barad (2007) and Haraway (2016) suggest, this approach requires developing the ability or capacity to respond, to become responsible to the socio-political climate and ethical and moral dilemmas of practice.

In this transdisciplinary space learners and educators and persons with lived experience can collectively explore concepts, invent approaches, and create new assemblages¹¹ that demonstrate a range of analytic practices of thought, creativity and intervention that are immanent to a physiotherapy that is becoming. As framed by Braidotti (2019b) this reassessment of being is not about becoming anything, rather it celebrates approaches that are compassionate, interrelational and collective, providing a mode of thinking that permeates our work on the Posthuman Walking Project.

The Posthuman Walking Project

An ontology of immanence⁶ above has implications for research, reflecting St. Pierre's call for a resistance to the conventions of the academy in relation to research methodologies, calling for difference and recognising that "we don't have to understand everything to do something" (St. Pierre, 2023, p.24). Similarly, Lury (2020) recognises the problem space of co-constructed transdisciplinary methodologies as an opportunity to advance understandings of placemaking, boundaries of care, inequity and human/nonhuman interactions, where the not-knowing of art practice meets the conventions of physiotherapy.

In this critical context, as researchers we came to understand the value of actively exploring the potential of unanswered or unanticipated questions emerging from earlier research,¹² leading to formation of new approaches to enquiry in the Posthuman Walking Project (PWP). A collaboration of transdisciplinary academics and partners walking with persistent pain in five different countries, the PWP explores the assemblage and multiplicity of walking with pain in diverse landscapes. As part of the project, the authors and partner walker Fe Stevens, an artist with experience of living with persistent pain, undertook a sequence of walks in the South Downs, UK. Our initial rural walk took place in the summer of 2023 and lasted for

around an hour, moving up and down hill paths through enclosed and open terrain with occasional expansive views and encounters with flora, fauna and a wind turbine site. The walk generated a range of photographic images, mobile phone video, and audio data, as we, at times, simultaneously captured three different views of the same points of attention. Coming together to receive and respond to our environment, we came to recognise the landscape itself as the fourth partner in the encounter, shaping the non-human play of wind snatching at our conversation and drawing our attention to movement and stillness. Throughout the walk, the landscape provided multiple points of focus that contextualised and shaped our discussion, enabling comparison and the recall of shared experiences that levelled the relationship between researcher and partner walker into a wholly mutual experience. Ingold uses the coming together of copper and tin in the creation of bronze as a metaphor that chimed with our experience of landscape, suggesting that

if we enter into a relationship, does that not bring into existence something new that is neither you nor I, but into which we have [all] yielded something of our respective selves. (Ingold, 2015, p. 15–16).

From the outset the PWP has involved persons living with persistent pain as partner walkers who join with academics in discussing the nomadic nature of the project. Recognising the landscape as an active partner, rather than the surface where our encounters took place, manifests Jane Bennett's concept of noticing as a mechanism to free up our awareness of human and non-human relationships at any given point. In her book *Vibrant matter*, Bennett (2010, p. 4) recalls the impact of encountering apparently random items caught in a storm drain:

one large men's black plastic work glove
one dense mat of oak pollen
one unblemished dead rat
one white plastic bottle cap
one smooth stick of wood

This encounter is recognised as the prompt that shifts Bennett from seeing this apparent detritus as something to ignore, to conversely acknowledging it as "stuff that commanded attention in its own right, as existents in

excess of their association with human meanings” (Bennett, 2010, p. 4). They continue to observe that “in this assemblage, objects appeared as things, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them” (Bennett, 2010, p. 5).

In our first walks our awareness of the active agency of the landscape was heightened by our partner-walker, who narrated the role the landscape played in her recovery from a serious work-based injury eighteen years earlier. For Fe, the non-human entities embedded in and resulting from the landscape, were key to her gradual recovery. Shifting annual weather patterns, flora and fauna offered active points of engagement that enabled her to become a part of the landscape, rather than a self-aware entity walking on the land. As in Bennett’s exemplar above, she showed an acute awareness of detail alongside the sweeping grandeur of the South Downs, where the mundane was as significant as the spectacular.

We share with you here our early reflections of this walk, moving rhizomatically between Fe’s words (in italics) and our interpretations.

“While living with pain, I learnt a different way of walking, of enjoying nature. My appreciation of what I see is so different.” For Fe, walking built up slowly over time with frequent pauses, these pauses allowed her to connect with her environment and to notice, while walking she paused to watch the butterflies to ask herself questions about what they were doing as they emerged from the tree. Initially, these pauses were enforced by pain, but they seemed to offer something new and authentic, which she was keen to retain. *“When people stopped to talk to me that was the highlight of my day, conversely others commented or huffed when I got in their way.”* Fe further conveyed a changed sense of time and patience, of waiting for others to walk past, of taking time to say hello. *“I don’t need to rush to get past.”* This contrasted with Fe’s discussion of walking in urban environments; in the city centre, when enforced pauses due to crowds were not at a time chosen by her experience and response to pain, but as staccato pauses that jarred against the rhythm of her bodily movements.

The wind turbine loomed ahead and above with its throbbing blades: *“it feels like a heartbeat,”* she said putting her hand to her chest. *“Not everybody likes wind turbines, but for me they connect me with the wind. I notice their stillness and become aware of the lack of wind. It’s good that it’s windy today so you can feel it.”*



Figure 4. Fe Stevens, *Film #1*, Video Still 1, *Posthuman Walking Project* (2023), composite video.

She talked of the attention that pain demanded. As she walked her attention was drawn to many things, to the insects and the sound of the birds and the wind and movement of trees and grasses. An electricity box, the style and the design of the adjacent dog gate, the dew pond, teeming with different forms of life. Implicit in Fe's words and actions was that being alert to the jostling of people in the city, created an alertness to pain and a guarding that didn't allow free connection with her surroundings. She pointed out a protruding tree route in cheerful tones, there was no sense of threat of this as an obstacle or hazard. As the route inclined, she mentioned feeling her heart rate increasing, of being connected to her body. She remembered back to how much harder this once was, but conveyed a sense of this being alright, as it was part of taking one step at a time.

We saw few other persons during the walk, one in the distance passing without interaction and one with a small child (possibly a grandchild) passing in the other direction. We acknowledged him briefly but were absorbed in our task. Fe talked of never being alone on a walk; of never feeling lonely. She described talking both to herself and out loud as she walked, and of talking to the animals and insects alongside. "*Hello you,*" she said to a bee



Figure 5. Fe Stevens, *Film #1*, Video Still 2, *Posthuman Walking Project* (2023), composite video.

and a bloodsucker. “*Look there’s a green one and a red one on the same flower.*” “*I take things away with me,*” she said.

Later along the road verge she noted some twig like weeds, once green, now turned rust. “It makes me think of autumn . . . we’re not through summer yet.” “I’ll put them straight into a vase on the table and admire them, then at some point, I’ll use them to start the fire.” There was an openness to change in her dialogue. A sense of comfort in the moving of seasons and of one thing becoming another, from green to rust to flame.

What is evident in Fe’s account is that, for her, the landscape is central to the experience of walking. While walking she reflects on her experience of pain in relation to healthcare interactions, but fleetingly in relation to walking itself. The affect of the natural landscape created lines of flight and played a central role in helping her to navigate the changing cadence of her life. In her account the birds and insects were central to a nomadic sense of becoming. Less central but still dominant were the “inanimate objects,” the electricity box, the stile, the dew pond. For Fe, the wind turbine, had agency in and of itself in the sense that it connected her more deeply with the elements. Human interaction was peripheral, with fleeting encounters, never more than a glance or a “hello.” Yet there was companionship in nature.

Conversations with insects were detailed and full of wonder, and thus Fe never felt lonely or alone.

Concluding remarks

We have explored how art might act as a deterritorialising vehicle for a nomadic physiotherapy. By putting the posthuman concepts of Deleuze and Guattari and new materialist theory to work we propose that pluriversal education can deterritorialise static concepts of physiotherapy identity and create movement towards an otherwise physiotherapy, one which is constantly in motion, exploring new lines of flight, and continuously becoming. The increasingly apparent assemblage underpinning the PWP has manifested landscapes, partner walkers and researchers as equal, co-dependent collaborators. This indicates an emerging immanence where the possibility of a physiotherapy otherwise which moves rhizomatically away from the boundaries of tools, techniques, or clinic walls. An otherwise physiotherapy would be responsive and comfortable with uncertainty and complexity. It would move towards engagement with a world of human and nonhuman actors in which becoming can be realised.

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Notes

- 1 We use this term drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome as a network that connects any point to any other point and allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points.
- 2 Transdisciplinary scholarship transcends traditional boundaries and embraces pluriversal perspectives (i.e., those that represent different worldviews).
- 3 Funded by the Landscape Research Group (2024), the Posthuman Walking Project (n.d.) is a transdisciplinary collaboration of researchers from five countries exploring walking with pain in varied cultures and geographies.
- 4 One which prompted ongoing discussion and a widening process of debate and exchange that in itself prompted further co-created avenues of research.
- 5 Milligan and Wiles (2010, p. 736) suggest that in "The complex social, embodied and organizational spatialities that emerge from and through relationships of care, landscapes of care open up spaces that enable us to unpack how differing bodies of geographical work might be thought of in relationship to each other."
- 6 St. Pierre (2019, p. 4) suggests that "In an ontology of immanence one becomes less interested in what is and more interested in what might be and what is coming into being."
- 7 Here we adopt Deleuze and Guattari's (2020) definition of affect as "an ability for a body to affect and be affected." (2020, xv)
- 8 For more on deterritorialization see Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti Oedipus* (2009).
- 9 In cases of uncertain diagnoses, providing an accurate explanation for the person's condition is not possible.
- 10 Such as the National Student Survey, an annual UK survey that gathers student opinion on courses.

- 11 Deleuze and Guattari (2020) present the idea of the assemblage as a dynamic and fluid configuration of interconnected components that come together to form a developmental whole.
- 12 For example, the Wellcome Trust funded Significant Walks, (n.d.) project, whilst defining an innovative synthesised approach to simultaneously gathering and adapting qualitative and quantitative data, subsequently led to questions as to how to move beyond embodiment to capture human/nonhuman interactions.

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