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DISABILITY, ILLNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A (POST)QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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CERTIFICAN: Que D. JAVIER MONFORTE ALARCÓN ha trabajado bajo nuestra dirección en el Departamento de Educación Física y Deportiva de la Universitat de València, habiendo obtenido y estudiado personalmente el material de su tesis doctoral titulada 'DISABILITY, ILLNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A (POST)QUALITATIVE RESEARCH'. Dicho estudio ha sido terminado en el día 16 de Julio de 2019, con todo aprovechamiento, habiendo revisado los que suscriben la presente tesis doctoral y estando conforme con su presentación para ser juzgada.

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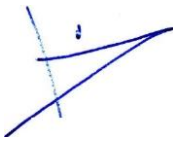

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Esta tesis está dedicada a tu mujer y a tus hijos.

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ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis is an assemblage of papers addressing 1) disability, illness and physical activity; and 2) (post)qualitative inquiry. The thesis tackles the case of Patrick, a man living with poor prognostic cancer and paraplegia. Overall, it examines in-depth how narrative and material forces acted by shaping Patrick's struggle of becoming, and which role physical activity played in his life post-diagnosis. Data was obtained from life-story interviews, participant-produced images in different formats and object interviews, as well as three years of informal interactions with Patrick. The selection of data collection techniques was subjected to ethical considerations meant to preserve Patrick's wellbeing. Alongside and stimulated by this empirical interest, theoretical ideas are discussed as related to the case and as part of broader debates in the field of sport, exercise and health. The research project derived in four articles. **Article 1** explores the stories and storytelling experience of Patrick. Visual research methods were rigorously applied in order to delve into Patrick's narrative. Visual and verbal data were analysed using a dialogical narrative analysis. The initial results illuminate how Patrick reconstructed his narrative self post-diagnosis in dialogue with Xenophon's Anabasis. A second phase of analysis showed the ways in which Anabasis acted as an allegorical narrative map of how to cope with cancer and paraplegia. Against this, the paper accounts how Anabasis modulated Patrick's physical activity (non) participation over time. Key innovations of this article are related to the use of visual metaphors and narrative dialogism in exercise psychology, and to new understandings of narrative mapping. **Article 2** offers some ruminations about the newness of new materialism, a philosophy on the rise that emphasizes the materiality of the world without demeaning or ignoring the lessons learned from poststructuralism, nor reinscribing essentialism. Besides discussing whether new materialism is new, I explore how this question relates to different issues, namely knowledge translation and partisan positions. Moreover, I provide a set of recommendations for newcomers to begin thinking with 'the

new', if they wish. I connect the above to how I was rethinking my research project and practices incorporating the 'ontological turn', and how I started to redresses the material gap of Article 1 without giving up my interest in narrative. Guided by a dualparadigmatic framework that combines narrative dialogism and new materialism, **Article 3** focuses on three material↔semiotic environments in which Patrick used to do exercise: the hospital gym, the personal gym, and the adapted gym. These environments are considered embedded subcases within the overall holistic case. The findings of this study bring into light how stories and material elements altogether led Patrick to tell and live restitution, rather than another story of rehabilitation. On this basis, an expanded conceptualization or 'deterriorialisation' of the concept 'restitution' is suggested. Specifically, restitution is reconceived as an assemblage of material and semiotic components that work together to shape the process of recovery from illness and disability. **Article 4** accounts Patrick's process of becoming en-wheeled. Drawing on posthumanist disability studies, the article looks at Patrick's struggle to become one with the wheelchair within the restitution assemblage. Patrick's enwheelment is associated with humanist understandings of disability and in/dependence, which emplot the wheelchair not as a part of the body-self, but rather as something to detach from trough ableist rehabilitation. The empirical findings are contrasted with existing literature to build a typology of enwheelment, which is extensible to other cyborgification processes. Taken together, the articles add new, alternative insights that compliment and enrich the existing literature in disability studies, rehabilitation sciences, (post)qualitative health research and physical activity. Qualitative generalisations are offered throughout, and two key contributions of the thesis are highlighted: the combination of different ontologies, and the development of the understanding of restitution. Practical implications and recommendations to professionals are also provided. Finally, some future directions arising from this work are mentioned.

RESUMEN

Esta tesis está compuesta por un conjunto de artículos sobre 1) discapacidad, enfermedad y actividad física; y 2) investigación (post)cualitativa. La tesis aborda el caso de Patrick, un hombre con cáncer de mal pronóstico y paraplejia. Examina cómo diversos dispositivos narrativos y materiales configuraron el devenir de Patrick tras el diagnóstico, y profundiza en el papel que jugó la actividad física a través del tiempo y el espacio. Los datos se obtuvieron a partir de entrevistas biográficas, imágenes en diversos formatos y entrevistas con objetos, así como tres años de correspondencia y encuentros informales con Patrick. El uso de técnicas de recogida de datos estuvo sujeta a consideraciones éticas con el fin de preservar el bienestar de Patrick. En línea con estos intereses empíricos, se discuten ideas teóricas relacionadas con el caso y con debates más amplios en el campo del deporte, el ejercicio y la salud. El proyecto de investigación ha derivado en cuatro artículos. El **Artículo 1** aborda las historias y la experiencia narrativa de Patrick. Para ello, se aplicaron métodos visuales. Los datos visuales y verbales se analizaron mediante un análisis dialógico narrativo. Los resultados iniciales muestran como, tras el diagnóstico, Patrick rehízo su identidad narrativa en diálogo con Anábasis, un clásico griego escrito por Jenofonte. Una segunda fase de análisis permitió recrear y apreciar la forma en que Anábasis funcionó como un mapa narrativo alegórico que orientó a Patrick en su viaje narrativo. El análisis muestra cómo Anábasis moduló la (no)participación de Patrick en actividades físicas a través del tiempo. El estudio presenta una serie de innovaciones relacionadas con el uso de metáforas visuales, el análisis dialógico narrativo y nuevas formas de entender qué son, cómo funcionan y para qué sirven los mapas narrativos. El **Artículo 2** ofrece algunas reflexiones sobre la novedad del nuevo materialismo, una línea de pensamiento que recupera el interés por la materialidad sin rechazar o ignorar las tesis del postestructuralismo, ni reincidir en postulados esencialistas. Además de cuestionar si el nuevo materialismo es nuevo, exploro como esta cuestión conecta con diferentes asuntos, en

particular la traducción de conocimiento y los posicionamientos dogmáticos. Asimismo, planteo una serie de recomendaciones para quien decida empezar a pensar con 'lo nuevo'. Relaciono todo lo anterior con la manera en que repensé mi proyecto y mis prácticas de investigación al incorporar el 'giro ontológico', y con cómo empecé a rectificar el vacío material del Artículo 1 sin renunciar a mi interés en la narrativa. A partir de un marco que combina el dialogismo narrativo y el nuevo materialismo, el **Artículo 3** focaliza la atención en tres ambientes material↔semióticos en los que Patrick solía hacer ejercicio: el gimnasio de un hospital, un gimnasio personal y un gimnasio adaptado. Estos ambientes son subcasos dentro del caso global de estudio. Los resultados del artículo revelan la manera en que los elementos materiales y semióticos de los ambientes operaron de manera conjunta e inseparable para generar restitución. A partir de los resultados, se sugiere una expansión o 'deterritorialización' de la noción 'restitución', que se convierte en un 'ensamblaje' donde la narrativa es un componente importante pero no exclusivo. El **Artículo 4** da cuenta de la compleja relación entre Patrick y su silla de ruedas. Desde el marco de los estudios posthumanistas de la discapacidad, el artículo atiende la lucha de Patrick por romper su vínculo con la silla dentro del ensamblaje de restitución. Este proceso se asocia con una concepción humanista de la discapacidad y la in/dependencia, la cual no proyecta la silla de ruedas como parte del cuerpo/yo, sino como una carga de la que deshacerse a través de una rehabilitación de corte capacitista. Los resultados empíricos se contrastan con la literatura e informan el planteamiento de una tipología sobre las modalidades relacionales entre personas y sillas de ruedas, extensible a otros procesos de ciborgificación. En conjunto, los artículos añaden conocimiento novedoso que complementa y expande el corpus de conocimiento de los estudios sobre discapacidad, las ciencias de la rehabilitación, y la investigación (post)cualitativa en el campo de la actividad física y la salud. Se detallan las generalizaciones cualitativas de los estudios y se subrayan dos contribuciones clave de la tesis: la combinación de diferentes ontologías, y el desarrollo de una comprensión más completa y sofisticada de la restitución. Asimismo, se plantean implicaciones prácticas y

recomendaciones para profesionales. Finalmente, se sugieren algunas futuras líneas de investigación y se anticipan algunos estudios derivados de la tesis.

RESUMEN EXTENDIDO

En esta tesis se presenta un estudio de caso intrínseco (Hodge y Sharp, 2016) ramificado en cuatro artículos. Los cuatro artículos están interconectados, pero pueden leerse de manera independiente, y se presentan cronológicamente según su orden de elaboración y publicación, lo que permite apreciar la evolución global del proyecto de tesis.

El estudio de caso gira en torno a Patrick, un hombre con un tumor localizado en la espina dorsal que originó una paraplegia. Patrick es el protagonista humano de la investigación. El Artículo 1 se ocupa de explorar los significados que confiere a la enfermedad, la discapacidad y la actividad física, así como las historias que cuenta para reconstruir su identidad y relacionarse con su cuerpo. Sin embargo, Patrick no es el único participante del estudio de caso. Más adelante, en los Artículos 3 y 4, los actores no-humanos se añaden a la lista de participantes. Los protagonistas no-humanos del artículo 3 son tres gimnasios, y en el artículo 4 una silla de ruedas. En línea con Latour (2005), llamamos actores a estos elementos porque actúan: hacen cosas, alteran situaciones y producen efectos. Con todo, estos actores no se observan con independencia de Patrick. Al contrario, se abordan como agentes que interactúan con él y co-producen su realidad. La agencia está distribuida simétricamente entre actores humanos y no-humanos y emerge a través de su interacción. [1]

Este 'giro ontológico' (Feely, 2016; Zembylas, 2017), que sitúa la materialidad a la misma altura que los significados, responde a la incorporación del nuevo materialismo en el proyecto de tesis. Precisamente, desplazamiento hacia la

[1] En la ontología relacional del nuevo materialismo, tiene más sentido utilizar el concepto 'intra-acción' propuesto por Karen Barad (2007, véase https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0SnstJoEec para una introducción accesible al concepto). Esta autora sostiene que el término intra-acción difiere del término inter-acción, el cual asume que agentes individuales existen previa e independiente a su relación. En cambio, el término intra-acción reconoce que los diferentes agentes que se relacionan no preceden la relación, sino que emergen de ella. Hecha esta aclaración, prefiero utilizar la noción convencional de interacción por razones de claridad y foco.

materialidad se aborda en el Artículo 2. A partir de este ensayo, la tesis tomó un rumbo diferente al inicial, aunque vinculado al mismo a través de un diálogo entre el dialogismo narrativo, empleado en el Artículo 1, y el nuevo materialismo, introducido en el Artículo 2.

El diseño del proyecto en el que se enmarca esta tesis no fue premeditado, sino emergente. El proceso de elaboración de los artículos puede describirse como una aventura onto-epistemológica. La detallo, sirviéndome de un tono confesional, en el apartado de introducción.

Como he mencionado ya, el trabajo dedicado a la tesis ha cristalizado (entre otros productos menos tangibles) en cuatro artículos. De acuerdo con las exigencias del doctorado, se resumen de forma extensa en lo que viene a continuación.

Artículo 1

El primer artículo se titula 'The Anabasis of Patrick: Travelling an allegorical narrative map of illness and disability' y está publicado en un número especial de la revista *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, dedicado a las innovaciones en la investigación sobre discapacidad, deporte y psicología del ejercicio (véase Martin Ginis y Smith, 2018). El propósito general de este artículo es examinar la relación entre Patrick y las historias a través de las cuales ha vivido y vive su proceso de enfermedad y discapacidad.

Para recoger los datos se realizaron varias foto-entrevistas (Bates et al., 2017). Patrick seleccionó una serie de imágenes, la mayoría de las cuales eran metáforas visuales. Estas se utilizaron en varias entrevistas en profundidad, con el fin de facilitar a Patrick el proceso de reconstrucción narrativa. Los datos verbales y visuales se analizaron utilizando un análisis dialógico narrativo (Frank, 2012).

Patrick contó su historia de enfermedad y discapacidad en diálogo con Anábasis. Anábasis es una crónica militar escrita en el siglo cinco a.C. por Jenofonte, discípulo de Sócrates. El libro describe cómo un ejército griego lucha por regresar a la patria tras una revuelta contra el rey de Persia. Tras el

diagnóstico, Anábasis se convirtió en un mapa narrativo para afrontar la nueva situación en la que se sentía 'perdido en una tierra hostil'.

Los mapas narrativos funcionan como un mecanismo cultural que sirve como guía a las personas enfermas para transitar en un mundo desconocido al que son lanzadas tras el diagnóstico. Proporcionan así una vista global y preliminar de lo que hay y de lo que les espera en ese mundo, y conducen a las personas hacia unas actividades, conductas y expectativas, al tiempo que las alejan de otras. Tras haber identificado que Anábasis fue un mapa narrativo esencial para Patrick, la siguiente fase del análisis consistió en averiguar cómo y por qué. Para ello, se adaptaron las preguntas dialógicas que propone Frank (2012) al caso de interés.

La clave para que Anábasis funcionase como mapa narrativo es su línea argumental básica, que coincide con la restitución. De acuerdo con Frank (2013), la restitución expresa lo siguiente: 'ayer estaba sano, hoy estoy enfermo, pero mañana volveré a estar sano'. En el caso de la lesión medular, se traduce en: 'Ayer podía caminar, hoy la parte inferior de mi cuerpo está paralizada, pero en el futuro volveré a caminar'.

Aunque son muy distintas, la historia de restitución narrada por Patrick y la historia narrada por Jenofonte presentan analogías. Ambas están estructuradas por una trama argumental alegórica que permite establecer paralelismos entre ambas. Las dos narran una lucha heroica para superar la adversidad y volver al punto de partida. Anábasis plantea un viaje de vuelta a Grecia, y la restitución plantea un viaje de vuelta a la salud. Mientras que Anábasis es una batalla por el regreso a la patria, la restitución representa una lucha para volver a un estado de salud previo al diagnóstico. Las analogías narrativas entre lo que sucede en el libro y lo que le sucede a Patrick posibilitaron que este se comparase con los soldados del relato y que, de hecho, empezara a vivir su propia Anábasis en el contexto narrativo de la restitución.

De ahí que en este artículo llamemos 'La Anábasis de Patrick' a su proceso de reconstrucción biográfica en diálogo con Anábasis. La Anábasis de Patrick se produjo en tres etapas: volver a caminar de nuevo, quemar etapas de la

Anábasis, y sobrevivir al cáncer. Estas etapas no son necesariamente lineales ni representativas de lo que realmente sucedió, pero son respetuosas con la forma en que Patrick estructuró su historia y resultan útiles para arrojar luz sobre su experiencia narrativa.

Los resultados obtenidos ilustran cómo Anábasis afectaba las posibilidades de pensamiento y acción de Patrick. Esto se hace visible en la práctica de actividad física. En los seis años posteriores al diagnóstico, Anábasis motivó a Patrick para hacer ejercicio físico. En sus palabras, volver a caminar era 'el principal motivo para seguir luchando', y el 'ejercicio físico era el medio para ganar la batalla'. Anábasis confirió al ejercicio físico significados vinculados a las nociones de lucha y regreso propios de la trama básica de restitución. La batalla contra la lesión duró seis años. Patrick se entregó en cuerpo y alma al ejercicio físico. Sin embargo, las recidivas tumorales y las operaciones para extirpar el tumor empeoraron la paraplejia hasta hacer desaparecer la posibilidad de volver a caminar. Dado que el ejercicio estaba únicamente ligado con la restitución, Patrick dejó de hacer ejercicio. Como él mismo expresaba, el abandono de la actividad física supuso 'quemar una etapa de la Anábasis, del regreso'. Desde entonces, Patrick centra sus esfuerzos en sobrevivir al cáncer. Anábasis sigue inspirando esa lucha.

El artículo ofrece dos contribuciones clave. La primera es teórica. Historias como Anábasis que no se circunscriben clara y directamente con enfermedad o la discapacidad, y que no están protagonizadas por personas enfermas también pueden servir como mapas narrativos de enfermedad y discapacidad. Este hallazgo cuestiona el consenso establecido en la literatura (e.g., Kleiber i Hutchinson, 1999; Sparkes, 2009; Sparkes, Pérez-Samaniego y Smith, 2012) según el cual las personas con enfermedad o discapacidad obtienen su mapa narrativo a partir de otras personas que, previamente, han recorrido el territorio de la enfermedad o la discapacidad. Es decir, que han pasado por pruebas diagnósticas, han sido ingresados en un hospital, han tomado medicamentos, han superado la enfermedad, por ejemplo. El artículo presenta una excepción

al mostrar que las personas también pueden utilizar 'mapas narrativos alegóricos'.

La segunda es metodológica. El artículo adopta un tipo de análisis poco empleado hasta la fecha: el análisis dialógico narrativo. Esta perspectiva resulta adecuada para examinar en profundidad cómo las personas construyen su historia de vida en diálogo con otras historias. Dar respuesta a preguntas dialógicas es una forma de arrojar luz sobre las consecuencias -a menudo positivas y a menudo peligrosas- de inspirarse en una historia o una línea argumental para dar sentido a la experiencia e imaginar el futuro.

La tercera es metodológica, aunque también guarda relación con la forma de representar los resultados (Sparkes, 2002). Por un lado, las metáforas visuales se revelan especialmente adecuadas para estimular la narración de historias en el contexto de la entrevista cualitativa. Por otro lado, son capaces de representar experiencias corporeizadas de forma sugerente, accesible y efectiva. De este modo, pueden facilitar la divulgación de conocimiento basado en la evidencia y servir como recurso pedagógico.

Artículo 2

El segundo artículo se titula 'What is new in new materialism for a newcomer?' y está publicado en la revista *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*. Este artículo analiza la novedad del nuevo materialismo, una perspectiva plural que recupera el interés por la materialidad, abandona el esencialismo, rompe con dualismos clásicos como cultura-naturaleza, mente-materia u objeto-sujeto y enfatiza la horizontalidad de las relaciones entre entes orgánicos (humanos y no humanos) e inorgánicos (Feely, 2016, 2019; Fox y Alldred, 2017). En los últimos años, el nuevo materialismo ha ganado adeptos en diversos campos de conocimiento, incluido el deporte, la actividad física y la salud (Fullagar, 2017; Giardina, 2017; Markula, 2019). Simultáneamente, ha sido cuestionado por diversos motivos, entre los que destaca la desconfianza hacia el calificativo 'nuevo' (Devellennes y Dillet, 2018). El objetivo principal de este artículo es esclarecer si el nuevo materialismo es realmente nuevo.

Circunstancialmente, hago servir el foco de estudio para entender mi propia situación como recién llegado a un campo de estudios atravesado por múltiples debates intelectuales, y a un contexto académico influido por una racionalidad neoliberal que limita las oportunidades de desarrollar nuevas formas de ser, devenir, pensar y producir conocimiento.

Para empezar, trazo una caracterización breve y concisa del nuevo materialismo. Por ejemplo, señalo que la perspectiva monista del nuevo materialismo sitúa a las personas y a todos los elementos que las rodean en un mismo plano ontológico. En consecuencia, el nuevo materialismo plantea considerar a los humanos una parte inseparable del ambiente, y abordar las cosas no por lo que son (esencia), sino por lo que hacen (agencia). En este sentido, cabe destacar que el nuevo materialismo critica la concepción humanista de la agencia (entendida como la capacidad de una persona de ejercer su voluntad) y la redefine como la capacidad de realizar acciones, producir efectos y alterar situaciones. Desde este punto de vista, también los objetos, los espacios y las ideas tienen agencia. Esto no significa que la agencia sea un atributo. La agencia es una capacidad emergente, que surge en la interacción contingente entre diversos elementos. Al interactuar, los elementos forman lo que Deleuze y Guattari (1987) denominan ensamblajes (en inglés, assemblages). Los ensamblajes son un conjunto de agentes humanos y no-humanos que forman un todo, operan de manera conjunta, multidireccional, y se afectan mutuamente (Feely, 2019). De este modo, el análisis en el nuevo materialismo desplaza su foco desde los agentes humanos hacia los ensamblajes.

Una vez explicados los rasgos básicos del nuevo materialismo, abordo las principales razones por las cuales se cuestiona si es genuinamente nuevo. A partir de esta exposición, abogo por adoptar una postura receptiva pero sospechosa hacia la etiqueta ‘nuevo’. En este sentido, sostengo que el lenguaje inaccesible y los posicionamientos completamente a favor o en contra del nuevo materialismo constituyen dos problemas clave que perjudican su credibilidad.

Tras estas reflexiones, se sugieren formas para pensar con 'lo nuevo' del nuevo materialismo, para integrarlo productivamente en la práctica investigadora. En concreto, hago explícito cómo la vertiente material↔semiótica del nuevo materialismo empezó a ejercer una influencia importante en mi investigación sobre el caso de Patrick. Contactar con la teoría material↔semiótica me hizo notar que al centrarme en las historias estaba olvidado la materialidad, pero también que las historias están entrelazadas de un modo inseparable con el mundo material, hasta el punto que 'no existen diferencias importantes entre las historias y la materialidad' (Law, 2000, p. 2).

El artículo concluye señalando que el nuevo materialismo ha nacido y crece en un contexto académico y social neoliberal que es susceptible de condenarlo o pervertirlo. En esta línea, se plantan varias maniobras para resistir el ensamblaje neoliberal, y se invita a los investigadores en deporte, ejercicio y salud a tomar parte en ambientes colectivos que generen y den cabida a nuevas condiciones de pensamiento.

Artículo 3

El tercer artículo se titula "Travelling material↔semiotic environments of disability, rehabilitation and physical activity" y está publicado en la revista *Qualitative Health Research*.

Para empezar, este artículo propone un marco teórico que amalgama el dialogismo narrativo y el nuevo materialismo, las dos perspectivas que sustentan los artículos 1 y 2 de la tesis, respectivamente. La intención al combinar estas perspectivas es doble. Por una parte, introducir el interés por la materialidad en el estudio de caso sin por ello renunciar al interés por las historias. Por otra parte, abordar los ambientes en los que Patrick hizo ejercicio durante su proceso de rehabilitación sin tratarlos como un mero telón de fondo de la acción humana.

Para acoplar las citadas perspectivas se realizan cinco ajustes. Como muestra, el primero de ellos consiste en modificar la concepción antropocéntrica y logocéntrica (esto es, restringida a los humanos y las palabras) que la tradición

dialógica tiene respecto a la voz. Para ello, la voz se desacopla del sujeto humanista y se observa como parte de ensamblajes formados por agentes humanos y no-humanos, transgrediendo así la noción tradicional de individuo. Desde esta concepción posthumanista de la voz, la afirmación de que el diálogo sólo puede crearse entre humanos deja de tener sentido. Uno no tiene que ser un ser humano para dialogar. De este modo, puede estudiarse el diálogo entre humanos y ambientes y ambientes y otros ambientes. El resto de puntos hacen referencia al abandono del esencialismo (Feely, 2016); la extensión del principio dialógico de 'no finalización' (Frank, 2010) para incluir a los no-humanos a través de la filosofía del devenir (Deleuze); el énfasis en la visión de las historias como 'compañeras material-semióticas' (Frank, 2010); y la sustitución de procedimientos metodológicos rígidos por un 'movimiento de pensamiento' que cristaliza en la creación y utilización de nuevos conceptos útiles para abordar el fenómeno de interés (Feely, 2019; Lenz Taguchi y St. Pierre, 2017). A partir de lo anterior, el andamiaje teórico propuesto se concreta en el concepto 'ambientes material↔semioticos'.

Los ambientes material↔semióticos funcionan como ensamblajes formados por elementos narrativos y materiales cuyo estatus ontológico es equivalente. De hecho, la flecha doble que une la expresión material↔semiótico expresa que los actores materiales y los discursivos están situados en el mismo plano ontológico, esto es, se influyen mutuamente y operan simultáneamente. De este modo, el dualismo que concierne a los humanos y el ambiente se deshace.[2] Los humanos y los ambientes forman un todo: un ensamblaje. El concepto 'ensamblaje' de Deleuze y Guattari (1987) guía el análisis de tres ambientes material↔semióticos en los que Patrick realizaba actividad física. Estos son:

[2] Utilizo el verbo 'deshacer' a propósito, con el fin de enfatizar que la separación de los humanos y el ambiente no es una 'verdad' ajena a nuestra imagen de pensamiento, sino una cuestión performativa. Nosotros 'hacemos' esa separación, pero no nos damos cuenta, dado que la imagen de pensamiento que la subyace es hegemónica. El trabajo de Fox y Alldred (2016) acerca de nuestra concepción del ambiente es un referente para pensar sobre esta cuestión.

el gimnasio del hospital, el gimnasio personal y el gimnasio adaptado. Dichos ambientes son subcasos dentro del caso general de estudio (Yin, 2012).

En primer lugar, se analiza cada uno de los tres ambientes por separado. En este análisis, se describen los elementos clave de cada ambiente y cómo interactúan entre sí. En este punto, la restitución vuelve a cobrar un papel clave. Esta vez, se destaca la capacidad de los gimnasios para producir restitución en diálogo con las historias y los equipamientos que resuenan (o vibran, como sugiere Bennett, 2010) dentro de ellos.

En segundo lugar, se analiza el ensamblaje más amplio que conforman estos tres entornos. Este refleja la idea de ejercicio-es-restitución que plantean Papathomas, Willams y Smith (2015). El análisis sugiere que el ejercicio-es-restitución transita de gimnasio en gimnasio a través de historias materializadas en objetos, prácticas corporales y recuerdos concretos. Se utiliza como ejemplo ilustrativo el andador, que confiere una presencia tangible a la restitución en los tres ambientes.

Las lentes teóricas que se utilizan en este artículo permiten observar que la restitución no es un fenómeno únicamente narrativo, sino también material. En definitiva, la restitución no es meramente una trama narrativa; más bien es un ensamblaje de objetos, ambientes, historias y prácticas que interactúan para movilizar una determinada modalidad de rehabilitación –en este caso normativa, ligada al paradigma biomédico. Esta expansión teórica afecta indirectamente a otras formas de contar y vivir la enfermedad, como la búsqueda o el caos (Frank, 2013). Para concluir, se sugieren diversas implicaciones relacionadas con el potencial generativo de los ambientes que resultan especialmente útiles para el ámbito de la rehabilitación activa.

Artículo 4

El cuarto artículo se titula ‘‘It’s not a part of me, but it is what it is’: The struggle of becoming en-wheeled after spinal cord injury’ y se encuentra en proceso de revisión en la revista *Disabilty and Rehabilitation*. Este artículo aborda la relación entre Patrick y su silla de ruedas, desde que empezó a

utilizarla hasta el presente. Para aproximarse a esta relación, se adopta una perspectiva poshumanista. En relación con la discapacidad, esta perspectiva cuestiona la concepción humanista clásica del ser humano, reconsidera nuestras relaciones con los no-humanos y enfatiza el potencial afirmativo de la diferencia y la interdependencia (Goodley, Lawthom y Runswick-Cole, 2014). Una de las tesis fundamentales del poshumanismo es que las características definitorias de la condición humana (p.e., agencia, subjetividad, identidad) no son el origen o la causa de procesos sociomateriales, sino sus efectos contingentes (Andrews y Duff, 2019). Otra es la 'condición posthumana' (Braidotti, 2013). En este sentido, el posthumanismo acoge las teorías cyborg que están teniendo una influencia creciente en los estudios sobre discapacidad. Dentro de un diseño posthumanista, la silla de ruedas y Patrick conforman una entidad relacional que funciona como un todo: un ensamblaje cyborg: el participante de este estudio. Por definición, un ensamblaje es un proceso infinito, por lo que en realidad el participante del estudio no es una entidad, sino un proceso.[3] En el caso de Patrick, el proceso de ensamblaje del cuerpo humano y la silla de ruedas se produjo dentro de un ensamblaje más amplio: la restitución. Como se indica en los artículos anteriores, la restitución afectaba profundamente la vida, el pensamiento y las expectativas de Patrick.

En este aspecto particular, la restitución proyectó la silla de ruedas como una barrera o impedimento y la suprimió de la perspectiva de futuro de Patrick. La 'esperanza concreta' (Smith y Sparkes, 2005) de Patrick era volver a caminar y 'romper el ensamblaje' (Gibson et al., 2017) que formaba con la silla de ruedas. Para ello, Patrick se encomendó a un largo proceso de rehabilitación

[3] Jackson and Mazzei (2012) sugieren que 'un ensamblaje no es una cosa –es el *proceso* de hacer y deshacer la cosa' (p. 1, énfasis original). De difícil traducción al castellano, el concepto 'enwheelment' da nombre al ensamblaje cuerpo humano-silla de ruedas. Aunque este denominador (al igual que la idea de 'becoming en-wheeled') tiene una gran presencia en el artículo, en este resumen lo omito a fin de evitar anglicismos.

capacitista.[4] Utilizamos el adjetivo 'capacitista' para resaltar que el objetivo de la rehabilitación era recuperar la supuesta condición esencial humana de normalidad que promueve el ideal humanista (Braidotti, 2013).

Con todo, la imposibilidad de recuperar la movilidad de las piernas llevó a Patrick a admitir a regañadientes su dependencia respecto a la silla, esto es, su condición posthumana. A pesar de asumir la presencia constante de la silla en su vida, Patrick no la acepta como parte de su cuerpo y su identidad, y sigue considerándola una carencia, en lugar de una posibilidad. En suma, existe una tensión onto-epistemológica entre la relación inherente con la silla (cyborg) y la visión de esa relación como algo negativo e incapacitante.[5]

El devenir de Patrick con la silla está vinculado a una racionalidad humanista, que entiende la discapacidad como una carencia y exalta la independencia, la autonomía y el mantenimiento de atributos humanos supuestamente esenciales. La rehabilitación debía servir para restituir aquello 'esencial' que se perdió debido a la lesión medular, o, dicho de otra forma, para quitar lo que 'sobra' (la silla).

En este sentido, el caso de Patrick contrasta con otros casos de personas con discapacidad que viven su condición posthumana de forma afirmativa y acaban aceptando la silla de ruedas como 'parte de mi' (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego, Smith & Goodley, 2019).[6] Una segunda fase de análisis en la que estos casos

[4] El término capacitismo (*ableism*) hace referencia al conjunto de creencias, discursos y prácticas que 1) equiparan cierto tipo de sujeto y de cuerpo a una supuesta condición esencial humana de normalidad, 2) sitúan la discapacidad como una condición devaluante e inadecuada del ser humano, y 3) establecen una jerarquía según la cual las personas con discapacidad son naturalmente inferiores a las personas sin discapacidad. El capacitismo conecta con el enfoque biomédico al plantear que la discapacidad es inherentemente negativa y que, por ende, debe ser rehabilitada o curada (para una caracterización pormenorizada del capacitismo véase Toboso, 2017).

[5] Es por esta tensión que utilizamos la expresión 'struggle of becoming en-wheeled'.

[6] No es mi intención finalizar a Patrick. Su historia no ha terminado. Si bien los datos recogidos durante la investigación indican que la silla de ruedas no formaba parte de él, el proceso de ciborgificación sigue su curso. Puede que Patrick cambie su relación con la silla. Puede que acabe integrándola como parte de él. Mi análisis es necesariamiente

se contrastan con el caso de Patrick da lugar a una tipología que enfrenta las nociones humanismo y poshumanismo en relación con el proceso de ensamblaje cyborg. Estos son dos polos de un contínuo en el que se pueden producir múltiples 'modalidades relacionales' entre la silla y la persona (Winance, 2019). Además, este continuo dedicado exclusivamente a la silla de ruedas puede coexistir con otros continuos e iluminar formas de vivir otros procesos de ciborgificación. Por ejemplo, la vivencia negativa de la silla de ruedas en la historia de Patrick contrasta con la vivencia de las prótesis vertebrales como 'parte de mí'. En este caso, se debe a que las prótesis facilitaban a Patrick volver a ser como antes, lo cual armoniza con la restitución y, por ende, con una racionalidad humanista. Asimismo, una misma persona puede situarse en diferentes lugares en diferentes contínuos. Por ejemplo, una persona puede rechazar tecnologías ciborg que suponen cambios importantes en su vida y generalmente constituyen símbolos de incapacidad en una sociedad capacitista (p.e., silla de ruedas) pero aceptar como parte de sí mismo otras tecnologías triviales, menos obvias o 'normalizadas', como las gafas (Howe, 2011; Norman y Moola, 2011).

Se sugiere que las personas cuya conexión con la silla de ruedas no es pasajera se beneficiarían de establecer una relación afirmativa (no-trágica), comunicativa y diádica con la misma –y que la restitución es una barrera para ese fin. Hacerlo, es decir, incorporar tecnologías como la silla de ruedas en la forma de ser y actuar de una persona, requiere tiempo. El proceso de adaptación es complejo. La tipología mencionada anteriormente se presenta como un recurso para orientarse en esta complejidad. El artículo no sólo describe cómo es la tipología, sino también cómo funciona y cómo puede ser de utilidad para las personas con discapacidad, los profesionales de la salud y los académicos. Finalmente, se propone utilizar la tipología para examinar otros procesos de ciborgificación que pueden tener como protagonistas

parcial; el resultado de 'cortes agenciales' basados en mi conocimiento situado y las herramientas teóricas que utilizo para pensar (Lupton, 2019).

personas con otras discapacidades (p.e., parálisis cerebral), otras tecnologías asistivas (p.e., audífono) y otros ambientes en los que se ensamblan (p.e., contexto deportivo).

En conjunto, esta tesis ofrece diversas y variadas aportaciones empíricas, teóricas, metodológicas y prácticas que, en su conjunto y desde mi apreciación personal, pueden sintetizarse en dos contribuciones clave. La primera contribución clave de la tesis es que desarrolla nuestra comprensión sobre qué es y cómo funciona la restitución. Esta es la primera investigación que reforma y expande este concepto. El Artículo 1 muestra que, atendiendo a su línea argumental, historias que no están estructuradas por la narrativa de restitución pueden funcionar como historias de restitución. El estudio 3 y 4 demuestran que la restitución no es un fenómeno narrativo, sino un ensamblaje en el que elementos materiales y narrativos operan de forma inseparable. Esta reconceptualización es clave, puesto que la restitución predomina en las políticas, prácticas y vivencias de la salud y la discapacidad en el mundo occidental. Por una parte, entender qué es y cómo opera es necesario para articularla de forma adecuada, y, por otra parte, es necesario para poder problematizarla y abrir otras vías que permitan ayudar a las personas con problemas de salud no solo a recuperarse funcionalmente, sino también a llevar una vida vivible y relacionarse con sus cuerpos, con los demás y con su ambiente de forma afirmativa y sostenible.

La segunda aportación principal de la tesis, relacionada con la primera, es la puesta en diálogo de paradigmas con fundamentos ontológicos diferentes: el dialogismo narrativo y nuevo materialismo. Esta combinación ha permitido inyectar una visión materialista a la restitución. Pero esta visión no se limita a la restitución, sino que también puede trasladarse a otras formas de contar y vivir la enfermedad, la discapacidad y la actividad física, como el 'caos' o la 'redención progresiva' (Frank, 2013; Papathomas, Williams y Smith, 2015). Cualquier narrativa se convierte en un ensamblaje en el que la narrativa está presente, pero no de forma exclusiva. Una implicación que se desprende de

esta visión es que no solo se necesita trabajar para ampliar el repertorio de narrativas, sino también de elementos materiales. Esto no solo se refiere a la necesidad obvia de invertir en más y mejores recursos materiales como equipamientos e instalaciones. Más bien, hace referencia a la importancia de promover interacciones material↔semióticas beneficiosas. Esto no es un trabajo estático, sino procesual, y lo que funciona para unos no lo hará para otros. A través del concepto de ensamblaje, la tesis proporciona orientación para *pensar cómo y por qué* mejorar estas interacciones. Mi esperanza es que estas aportaciones, u otras que los lectores y lectoras encuentren, resuenen e impacten de manera positiva en diferentes ámbitos académicos, personales y sociales.

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INTRODUCTION: SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT

This dissertation presents four papers structured in chronological order of elaboration, showing the evolution of a full project. It gravitates around Patrick, my encounters with him and the stories he generously shared with me. It is an intrinsic case study (Hodge & Sharp, 2016) that examines in-depth his process of illness and disability, and more concretely, the role that physical activity played throughout this process.

Furthermore, the dissertation is an articulation of research paradigms. Through a transdisciplinar approach, it explores how narrative dialogism (Frank, 2005), new materialism (Fox & Alldred, 2017), and the combination of both (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego & Smith, 2019) establish new itineraries to understand the case of Patrick and help understand further cases. Moreover, it engages with posthuman disability studies, a disruptive line of thought that is gradually attracting interest and gaining some measure of acceptance in literature (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014; Andrews & Duff, 2019).

Methodologically, the thesis utilises data-prompted interviews in order to access and give access to Patrick's stories in a democratic, suggestive and respectful manner. The sources of data used to stimulate discussion during interviews include images, text and objects, being images source (Kwasnicka et al., 2015). Likewise, the thesis incorporates telephone and online interviews, since participant observation was deemed too intrusive (Smith & Sparkes, 2014). The dissertation also experiments with antimethodology (Nordstrom, 2018), the creation of concepts, and the use of such concepts as method (Lenz Taguchi & St. Pierre, 2017). In the light of the foregoing, it adds to the emerging qualitative literature on pluralism by showing how different ontologies, concepts, methodological strategies and forms of analysis can be combined within the same research project (Clarke, Caddick & Frost, 2016).

Beyond the contributions that are directly associated with the case study, this thesis tackles a debate that had taken place, are taking place and will take place in the community of (post)qualitative research in sport, exercise and health. Namely, in Article 2 I retake a disciplinal identity and adopt the standpoint of the newcomer to discuss the newness of new materialism in our scholarly community. The arguments raised here were inspired by curious reading, thought-provoking encounters, conversations with my supervisors and other colleagues, and most importantly, the case of Patrick. Following this essay, in articles 2 and 3 I engage with debates on post/humanism and in/dependence that concern the broader realm of social sciences and disability studies as well. On a personal level, the dissertation has helped me to experiment, think and learn to think again. It is, in Foucault's (1980, p. 47) terms, a 'thesis-experience', in which the author goes through a series of contingencies that challenge and transform him.

At the beginning of the project, and throughout its development, there was neither a set course nor a destination to arrive to –besides finishing the PhD! Originally, the thesis started when I became 'caught up' (Frank, 2010) in Patrick's story. It went on with an interest in visual methods as a powerful technique to collect qualitative data (Monforte, Úbeda-Colomer y Pérez-Samaniego, 2016; Monforte et al., 2017). Since then, it became an open journey. I advanced without knowing what will happen next and what I was going to find. Partly, this is a characteristic of case studies:

> …you cannot 'proceduralise' life history work. This is because the intensely 'idiosyncreatic personal dynamics' of the method. We say 'there is not a predestined way of proceeding in life history interviews or analyses' –they are serendipitous, emergent and even opportunistic. Inevitably life story work is as variable as life histories themselves and the capacity to respond variously and intuitively is the key to best practice (Goodson, 2017, p. 8)

But it went beyond that. In line with the postqualitative spirit, I wanted it to remain unstable. Lather (2007) theorises about this research disposition, which

she labelled 'getting lost'; getting lost in data, encounters and reads that are not anticipated in the research design, but rather come by surprise during the process. Through getting lost, I was allowed to make emerge territories during the journey.

This way, the research process had the capacity to wonder me. According to McLure (2013), wonder is a fascination that resides and radiates in data, or rather in the entangled relation of data-and-researcher. It is a cognitive passion that keeps the researcher suspended between the known and the unknown. As an active agent of the 'research assemblage' (Fox & Alldred, 2017), wonder deconstructs the notions of expert and authority and refutes a knowledge that is static, definitive and dominated by the researcher. In this sense, this is not a conventional research.

In what some call 'conventional qualitative research' (Brinkmann, 2017), researchers show a predisposition and attitude to control what happens in the research process. By doing so, they aim to achieve a dominion not only of the 'object' of inquiry, but also of the explanation of how this dominion has been achieved. The research report tends to be judged in terms of this control, which very often is confused with rigour and trustworthiness (Smith, 2009). My predisposition in this thesis is at odds with this way to work. I have not pretended to exercise control over the research. Rather, I have moved with it, as part of it. Drawing on Foucault, Rabinow and Rose (2003) call this 'movement of thought'. Equally echoing Foucault and the tentative nature of his writings (which Foucault himself recognises), Amigot (2005, p. 1) suggested that 'in its own movement, to think is to stretch and tighten conventions, to break them in order to contemplate them from the other side'.

The questions asked in this dissertation are difficult to address if thought remains static. The answers that I have given to these questions are neither categorical nor unequivocal; they are situated and modest answers that, inevitably, generate more questions. In this sense, the thesis works as an 'organic body that grows up with its virtues and flaws' (Fernández Mallo, 2017, no page). As the research evolved, 'wonder' shifted my thought and

located me in a better position to make the next question, more intricate than the former. The idea of 'heuristic paradox' is appropriate to explain this process. The heuristic paradox works as follows: you think you 'get it' (Frank, 2010), but you don't; you discover the fissures and contradictions, and these serve you to understand more things. As Asensi (2014, no page) asserted, 'you don't get anything from clarity. It is darkness which move us to knowledge'.

This process is slow. As Brinkmann (2015, p. 166) stated, 'imaginative and penetrating research demands time and patience'. This arises a problem, because this PhD have been done under the temporal parameters of the neoliberal university and the audit culture, which imposes a high rate of productivity in temporal frames increasingly tight (Cannella y Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Denzin y Giardina, 2017; Enright, Alfrey y Rynne, 2017; Sparkes, 2007, 2013). As my colleagues from Indocentia[8] explained, the neoliberal university 'sets up a relationship with knowledge that is disembodied, instrumental, accelerated and governed by the short term' (Fernández-Savater, 2016). This short-termism is at odds with the crafting nature of (post)qualitative research, and constitute a peril to its very existence (Brickmann, 2015).

> In an academic environment where scholars are expected to juggle multiple responsibilities while satisfying amplified expectations for continued employment and tenure, a life history project that requires sustained attention over several months, if not years, may not be feasible. (Lanford et al., 2019, p. 2)

The normative tempos of the neoliberal university hinder time and space to 'wonder'. A constant and increasing pace must be kept: results and productivity are commanded; no stops, no blanks are tolerated. 'It is indeed the

[8] Currently inactive, Indocentia is a diverse collective of scholars that undertake activist actions against the neoliberal model of university in Valencia. I have had the pleasure to belong the collective during a few months, just until it eventually dissolved. Ironically enough, the reason of this situation is the impossibility of holding on both the activist life with the academic life.

hiperactivity which is paralising thought, reflection', argued the members of Indocentia. In this context, the intellectual and political concerns of researchers, not to mention their freedom to 'move their thought', might be neglected at the expense of the need of publishing articles and accumulating merits to survive in academy. This logic of 'publish or perish' situates scholars in a threatening situation. According to Guthrie et al. (2017), mental health challenges are present in up to 50% of early career researchers and students. Risks may be even higher for those doing qualitative research, according to Clark and Sousa (2018). To face these threats, I have resorted to some collective and 'individual' strategies. The collective ones are related to the people I have worked with during this research. First, my peers and I have constructed a 'collective story' (Richardson, 1990) that has helped us to 'hold our own' (Frank, 2010) all through our respective doctoral journey (Monforte et al., 2017). Second, the relationship with my mentors Víctor, Pepe and Brett has been central –this comes as no surprise for mentorship is a key practice to survive in the neoliberal university (Enright, Rynne y Alfrey, 2017). In particular, Victor's mentorship has been determinant to navigate the case study. His previous experience with the case study of David, a man living with cancer (Sparkes et al, 2012), worked for me as a narrative map of ethics in research. That is, the stories he told me about the ethical dilemmas he encountered while researching David's experiences provided me orientation, information and advice regarding my own decisions and actions in the case study of Patrick. Importantly, these stories helped me to develop the intimate and trust-based relationship with Patrick, which has encouraged me to keep pursuing this research.

Regarding self-care, I tried to articulate 'lazy' practices that challenge neoliberal productivity, which include reading fiction and poetry, taking walks, watching films and writing not-for-publication. According to Gildersleeve (2018),

> The neoliberal imperative of modern academia cares little for such practice, fearful it slows down the processes of production. Academia cannot quantify

> nor valorize some of these practices, because they do not contribute to processes of production in ready-made ways. These practices are lazy.

Generally, laziness carries a pejorative connotation. Contrariwise, Gildersleeve (2018) made a case for recognizing and valorising the generative potential of laziness as a political stance. The laziness he stands for is 'congruent with the ontologically driven foundations of postqualitative inquiry that can confront the neoliberal imperative, which colonizes postqualitative researchers into economic-becomings' (p. 694). Like wonder, laziness reclaims and respect the craft and creative nature of the processes of knowledge production (Demuth, 2015); it favours reflexive and critical thought and appreciates the enjoyment of working with ideas and concepts that emerge from our passions and curiosity. Likewise, it allows experimenting and stop feeling guilty for taking time to think (see Article 2). Harari (2019) made a similar point:

> You need to experiment with unproductive paths, to explore dead ends, to make space for doubts and boredom, and to allow little seeds of insight to slowly grow and blossom. If you cannot afford to waste time – you will never find the truth. (p. 221)

As Brinkmann (2015) warned, if academics stop taking time to experiment, they will end up reproducing 'McDonaldization', a way of doing academia characterized by efficiency, calculability, control and predictability. However, if they forget –intentionally or not– about metrics, there are risks of being ruled offside and forced to apply for a job in the genuine McDonalds. This was the case of one of my closest colleagues after finishing his PhD.

In this situation, like many other early-career academics, I feel –I am– at a crossroads. These days, I am worried about my employment prospects. Yet, I think I know what I have to do to get a job (although certainly this does not entirely depend on me). I have had excellent mentors that thought me how to be strategic while preserving a decent amount of integrity. But sometimes I prefer letting go the strategic view, all of it, despite the possible consequences.

Sometimes, I read beyond the topic when I am busy, I begin new projects when the current one is not finished yet, I reject convenient collaborations, and spend hours polishing a paragraph even when I know that I am not going to use it for a paper. At times, when I have to do urgent paperwork or meet a deadline, I call Patrick and we talk on the phone for hours, and I feel good for talking with him, and guilty for not optimising my time and get the work done, which is horrible and real and what it is, unless we change it. By contrast, once in a while I just feel glad to participate in academia, to have the chance to fill reports, apply for funding and push myself to meet a deadline. It comes in waves.

The contradictions, longings and fragile balances that I have pointed out in this introduction have been engendered during the course of the PhD and now constitute me as a researcher and subject. Indeed, it could be said that I am also a product of the thesis, and that the thesis has become part of me.

I am here, in the text, becoming, and the text is here, where I speak from.

As such, the dissertation can also be viewed as a coming-of-age story, a story of becoming an academic through and with many other stories, including those that Patrick told me in the research context.

All that being said, it would be an imposture to inflate the significance of this dissertation or to romanticise it, especially in relation to the life story of Patrick, but also with respect to the thousands of good research stories available in literature. With few exceptions, a PhD thesis is an incomplete and imperfect product that the doctoral student needs to write to be able to do better research in the future. The present thesis is not one of the aforementioned exceptions; it is a modest work, a commencement. Still, I hope that it matters to someone and can find the appropriate context to circulate and generate action. In the end, this is what all of us, researchers and storytellers, hope.

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ARTICLE I

Javier Monforte, Víctor Pérez-Samaniego and José Devís-Devís (2018). The Anabasis of Patrick: Travelling an allegorical narrative map of illness and disability. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 37, 235-243, DOI: 10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.10.005

Stories surge up out of nowhere, and if they feel compelling, you follow them. You let them unfold inside you and see where they are going to lead.

PAUL AUSTER, *Interview*, 2013

Abstract

Objectives: This paper examines the stories of Patrick, a man living with cancer and a spinal cord injury.

Design: An intrinsic case study was used to address Patrick's experiences. The design of the study is underpinned by narrative dialogism.

Method: Photo-elicitation interviews were conducted. Visual and verbal data were analysed using a dialogical narrative analysis.

Results: Patrick aligned his experiences with a story titled Anabasis to organize and express them. Although Anabasis is not a story about illness, it provides Patrick with an allegorical narrative map of how to live with disability and survive illness. Within 'The Anabasis of Patrick', the analysis identified three stages: walking back again, 'skipping stages of Anabasis' and surviving cancer. Throughout the course of his illness, Anabasis shapes how Patrick thinks and feels about his body and exercise, affecting his health behavior. A selection of images provided and discussed by Patrick illustrates the process of re-construction of his narrative self, and evokes the effects that Anabasis has on and for him.

Conclusions: The study illuminates the key role narrative and storytelling hold regarding the (non)participation in exercise by people living with serious health problems. It also shows how visual metaphors represent embodied experiences in an effective, aesthetic and accessible manner, enhancing the knowledge dissemination process. To conclude, practical implications for exercise psychology and generalisations from the research are highlighted.

Keywords: Narrative map, Metaphors, Visual methods, Spinal cord injury, Cancer

Introduction

According to Frank (2013), illness constitutes ‘a loss of destination and map that had previously guided the ill person's life’ (p. 1). Underlying this statement is the conception of the human being as a narrative subject whose self is fundamentally built, known and expressed through stories. Frank (2013) argued that individuals with a serious illness (including people with a disability) are at risk of narrative wreckage. With this metaphor, he invokes the illness call for stories: ‘stories have to repair the damage that illness has done to the ill person's sense of where she is in life, and where she may be going. Stories are a way of redrawing maps and finding new destinations' (p.53). As Frank (2012) put it, stories help people hold their own: to sustain the value of one's self and identity in response to illness.

Closely related to the use of stories to reconstruct people's sense of self is the notion of narrative mapping. Originally stated by Pollner and Stein (1996), the concept of ‘narrative map’ stood for pre-representations that newcomers in an unfamiliar world get from stories told by those who have already-been-there. For instance, these authors discuss the way in which the personal narratives from experienced members of Alcoholics Anonymous (or ‘drunkalogues’) serve as maps for newer members to the organization. They find that via narrative mapping ‘drunkalogue’ stories actively help newcomers to articulate their own version of the practices, problems and course of action of alcoholic rehabilitation. Since this seminal work, different studies from the exercise and health sciences have shown how diverse individuals and populations selectively, imaginatively and artfully (re)create and use certain stories as narrative maps to understand and shape their narrative journeys (Kleiber & Hutchinson, 1999; Partington et al., 2005; Phoenix & Sparkes, 2007; Sparkes, Perez-Samaniego, & Smith, 2012). From these examples, we have learned how narrative plots or story lines help people drawing analogies between stories. As Perrine (1998, p. 41) wrote, a plot ‘bears about the same relationship to a story that a map does to a journey’. That is, to travel illness we need of stories (a map), and to travel a story we need a map (a plot). Therefore, narrative maps

are born from genuine inner necessities and fulfil essential functions, having a very real influence on people's lives.

Notwithstanding their ubiquity and significance, health psychology literature has rarely focused on the concept of narrative mapping in the study of disability and/or life-threatening illness. Significant exceptions are found in Kleiber and Hutchinson (1999) and Sparkes et al. (2012), which respectively explored how Christopher Reeve's and Lance Armstrong's published autobiographies served as narrative maps for people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) and cancer. Framing these stories, and the vast majority of stories that people tell to give meaning to their experiences of illness and disability, is what Frank (2013) calls restitution narrative. The plot of restitution has the basic storyline of 'Yesterday I was healthy, today I'm sick, but tomorrow I'll be healthy again' (Frank, 2013, p. 77). In disability this has been translated to 'yesterday I was able-bodied, today I'm disabled, but tomorrow I'll be able-bodied again' (Smith & Sparkes, 2005, p. 1096). Within this plot, both illness and disability are regarded as life interruptions that must be overcome to return to a time when life was 'normal'. In western societies, restitution is the dominant plotline that people are expected to draw on as a movement toward cure or recovery, and it constitutes the overarching template on which to map personal stories of illness and disability (Papathomas, 2016). Frequently, exercise plays a central role in restitution stories, becoming the principal means by which one attempts to return to his/her former, healthy and able body. Papathomas, Williams, and Smith (2015) revealed that restitution narrative typically acts both as a key motivator to engage in recovery-centric types of exercise and as a restraint to engage with any other conceptions of exercise. Likewise, Williams, Smith, and Papathomas (2014) stated that restitution narrative can operate either as a barrier or as a benefit or facilitator of exercise participation in people with SCI. For instance, restitution is perceived as a benefit of participating in exercise as it can evoke strong feelings about the former self. Contrariwise, restitution narrative might prevent long-term exercise participation when recovery is not possible. Restitution based narrative maps are easily found in the cultural

repertoire of stories of people with serious illness and disability, shaping the goal, meanings and lived experiences of exercise. Against this backdrop, this article examines the emergence, stages and consequences of Patrick's (a pseudonym) narrative mapping, thereby illuminating his experiences after being diagnosed with cancer that resulted in a SCI. The questions that guide this study are: How does narrative mapping act upon the re-construction of Patrick's narrative self? How does it work on and for him along the course of his health condition?

Method

Narrative dialogism

Narrative inquiry can be described as a qualitative approach focused on the stories people tell about their lives and experiences. The narrative inquiry addressed in this study embraces a relativist ontology (i.e., reality is multiple, created, and mind-dependent) and a constructivist epistemology (i.e., knowledge is constructed and subjective). The general assumption of this philosophical standpoint is that people re-construct identities through the stories they tell, the stories they have access to, and the stories they feel part of in the current situation (Smith, 2010). However, if we follow Smith and Sparkes (2008), there are five different ways of framing identity that coexist within narrative: psychosocial, inter-subjective, storied resource, dialogical and performative. In this paper, we adopt a dialogical perspective (Frank, 2005, 2010). For the purpose of this study, two principles of narrative dialogism are particularly worth mentioning. First, human beings are conceived as inherently relational individuals (Frank, 2005). This means that individuals are not self-sufficient, but fundamentally connected, and exist in relation to real or imagined others. As Smith et al. (2009: 344) stated, the idea of dialogue involves ‘giving up the belief of self-sufficiency’ insofar as people realize themselves with others they share stories with. As Frank (2005) indicated, people's self-stories are always structured under the influence of other stories,

so individuals need other stories in order to tell their own. In this light, narrative identity becomes a relational process constructed with others via storytelling. Second, stories are viewed as forms of action or 'actors' in the making of selves. Stories are actors because they do things; they animate people's lives and make a difference in their experiences.

Accordingly, narrative dialogism focuses on how stories work on and for people, for example, by motivating specific behaviours, shaping people's emotional responses, directing them towards certain areas and activities and away from others and ultimately, by allowing individuals to shape their identities (Caddick & Smith, 2017; Smith, 2013, 2016; Sparkes, 2015).

The participant

Patrick is a 45-year-old man. He is married and has two children. Until nine years ago, he had a steady job as a mechanic in a transportation company. Up to that point, he was not keen on exercise, and he sarcastically remarked: 'only cowards run'.

In 2008, aged 37, Patrick was diagnosed with chordoma, a rare tumour that develops from notochordal embryonic remnants. This type of cancer is aggressive, locally invasive, and has a poor prognosis. According to the most comprehensive population-based study, the median overall survival for people with chordoma is nearly 6 years (McMaster et al., 2001), yet more recent studies presented at the Third International Chordoma Research Workshop indicates that it has risen to 9 years due to recent medical advances. At the time the research began, Patrick had been living with chordoma for 8 years. He underwent surgery on 6 occasions due to tumorous recurrence. The purpose of the surgery was to remove as much of the tumour as possible without causing irreparable damage. Nevertheless, the surgical procedures resulted in paraplegia. Nowadays, multiple titanium implants replace the bone structure damaged. Patrick has suffered and is still suffering from severe spasticity – despite treatment with usual antispasmodics–, neuropathic pain, and other secondary health issues such as urinary tract infections, anxiety and feelings of

abandonment. Overall, the transition into the world of illness and disability has had severe detrimental consequences on his life:

> Man, it has been seven years already, seven years, calculate, man, the amount of MRIs (magnetic resonance images), the number of operations I've been through … every three months I have a MRI, then every three months you're watching out, hanging by a thread you know, you're as if it were, as if you had the sword of Damocles always on, waiting to see when it's going to fall on you, you know? And it is, it is fucking hard, of course.

Ethical and methodological considerations

This study pertains to a broader project on the psychosocial aspects of disability and exercise adults' experience which received approval by the Ethics Committee of Research on Humans from Universitat de València. Javier (first author) met Patrick for the first time in an adapted gym where he worked as a volunteer and became interested in Patrick's personal story straightaway. At that time, he started to write a reflective diary of his initial thoughts and reflections, which included the possibility to develop an intrinsic case study with Patrick (Hodge & Sharp, 2016). In due course, he decided to invite Patrick to take part in a research project. Once Patrick expressed his willingness to participate, several specific concerns emerged for ethical discussion. For instance, telling stories about certain aspects of one's experiences about illness can be unsettling or harmful emotionally and psychologically, as well as for semantic reasons. This was very much so in Patrick's case because he had had scarce opportunities to share his story:

> For me this [the interview process] is the chance to tell part of my life because well, I've been through all this basically by myself, without telling anybody, and telling you, well, it's also a way to vent something very personal, and it has helped me value myself, all that I have done.

Accordingly, Javier felt responsible of being the addressee whose presence would enable Patrick to tell his story (Frank, 2010). As part of the reflexive process of this research, he approached trustworthy and sensitive 'critical

friends' to help him address ethical issues, as well as analyse and provide insights to Patrick's case (Smith & McGannon, 2017). In turn, we viewed Patrick's involvement in the study as an opportunity for him to express and gain understanding about his ongoing experiences. Against this backdrop, we were particularly concerned with finding respectful and effective ways of accessing and representing Patrick's narrative journey. Following Lahman et al. (2011) 'cultural responsive relational ethics', we bore in mind a set of basic aspirational principles to behave ethically responsive (sensitively accommodating the participant's needs), relational (enhancing care and mutual respect) and reflexive (critically reconsidering the ongoing research process and our own role in it). Specifically, these authors highlighted the responsibility researchers have to create environments that encourage vulnerable people to participate genuinely in the research, expressing their personal stories in alternative modes of data collection that facilitate their inclusion in the research process. Consequently, we approached this intrinsic case study supported by visual research methods (VRM). These refer to qualitative procedures that use visual materials to access and represent different levels of experience.

The use of VRM is suitable for this study because it enhances the narrative's capacity to open up different ways of knowing about and being with another person. Indeed, VRM are coherent with the dialogical narrative approach, insofar as they stimulate storytelling and blur the clear division of labour between researcher and participant. As Lorenz (2011) argued employing visual and narrative methods creates understandings that are 'apprehended collaboratively' by those who are ill and those who choose to bear witness to–and take part in–their stories' (p. 273).

We specifically used photo-elicitation, which involves the participant's sharing and discussing images during the interview process with the aim to explore the meanings attached to them (Orr & Phoenix, 2015). Exercise and health psychology literature acknowledges multiple benefits and advantages of this method, which include, but are not limited to, its potential to address ethically-

sensitive topics, assist communication and facilitate rapport building (Bates et al., 2017). Our visual research is inspired by some qualitative studies that have used photo-elicitation to stimulate enriched storytelling on health-related (Balmer, Griffiths, & Dunn, 2015; Burles & Thomas, 2014; Fritz & Lysack, 2014; Tishelman et al., 2016) and exercise experiences (Hardcastle, McNamara, & Tritton, 2015; Orr & Phoenix, 2015).

Data collection

After a number of visits, conversations and general interactions with Patrick, Javier carried out two photo-elicitation interviews, which constitute the source of data for this paper. There is a range of variations on the method, so that several decisions had to be considered in the study design. Key in our design was Patrick's involvement in all the decision-making process, and in particular, in the selection of visual materials.

The process of photo-elicitation was conducted as follows. We began inviting Patrick to provide images about how he had lived his life throughout the course of his illness. To inform and assist this procedure, we provided him with basic guidelines and examples of different alternatives by which he could produce or obtain visual materials. For instance, he was told about the possibility to either produce images himself (e.g. auto-photography), or obtain them from other sources (e.g. the internet). We also suggested he gather approximately 10–15 images. Nevertheless, we emphasized that he could fulfil the task however he chose. Furthermore, Javier discussed with Patrick the best way to respect his desires for confidentiality and representation, as well as the ethical requirements associated with taking pictures, in case he decided to use a camera (Bates et al., 2017).

Hereafter, Patrick took about a month to choose the visual material he wanted to share with us. Meanwhile, Javier telephoned him on several occasions to ensure he was not encountering any problems, as well as to avoid potential dropout. The contact by telephone was especially important, as Patrick was frequently in the hospital, indisposed, or not able to commit time for meetings.

After the guidelines were provided, Patrick downloaded 28 images from Google, aggregated a title to each one, and sent them via e-mail to Javier. These images formed the foundation for two narrative-inducing interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to make available a flexible structure that would facilitate Patrick to tell his stories in his own way and in his own terms. Both interviews were conducted face-toface in Patrick's home, as per his preference. Before starting each of the interviews, Patrick was reminded of his right to choose not to answer delicate questions and to abandon the interview at any time. Following initial open-ended questions addressing the research topic, the images selected by Patrick were displayed on a laptop and became the focus of the interview. Patrick was first asked to explain the theme of each image, and second, to expound on why the image connected to his experience. Intentionally, Patrick put more emphasis on a smaller group of images – the ones included in this paper. These images, in Patrick's words "showed the most important things: the resistance, the fight, the discipline …", and thus he dedicated more time to speak about them.

Throughout the interviews, Javier acted as an active listener, which involved being attentive, responsive and curious, and showing this to Patrick through his positive attitude and receptive body language (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Following active listening, curiosity-driven questions such as 'tell me more about this image' or 'tell me a story that may be related to this image', were utilized throughout the process to delve into Patrick's experiences. Having commented on all the images, he was eventually encouraged to bind together the disparate episodes of his illness into a whole story (Freeman, 2010). Both interviews lasted about 2 h each and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Fieldnotes were recorded both in situ and later that day to describe the setting and perceptions of the interviews.

Data analysis

The data collected were analysed through dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), whose overarching concern is the mutual constitution of stories and the people

who tell them (Frank, 2010). The purpose of DNA is to examine the type of story told, what is told in the story, how it is told, and what happens as a result of telling that story. To do so, it does not prescribe a step-by-step approach in which the analyst must follow a set list of stringent procedures; instead, it functions as a heuristic guide and method of questioning to spur imagination. Drawing on Frank's ideas (2010, 2012), Smith (2016) affirmed that the open nature and flexibility of DNA encourages movement of thought throughout the analytical process. Movement of thought may also be stimulated by working with several dialogical questions. In our analysis, we decided which dialogical questions were most relevant to understand the data, and iteratively and cyclically revised both the questions and the understanding of the data (Frank, 2010). Moving back and forth through analysis and interpretations can lead to new ways of seeing in the process. Namely, it allowed us to travel through Patrick's narrative journey without the restrictions of a prescribed analytical route.

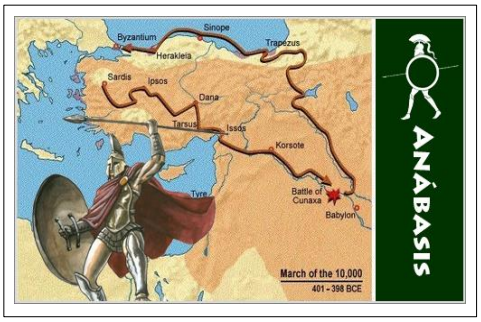

Fig. 1. A book of pure resistance.

> Anabasis is a reference, man! The translation is the return or the comeback … to try to lead a life as normal as possible, man. Why would I not be able to return again? To Greece or to my normal life?.

Our DNA process commenced by immersing ourselves in the data –reading and rereading it in order to get a general sense of the stories Patrick shared. Conceptual comments and notes were then made on the transcripts, keeping in

mind the images alongside the context of its associated interview fragment in order to avoid a misguided interpretation of what images should be telling (Balmer et al., 2015). As Frank (2012) suggested, we continued asking resource questions such as 'what narrative resources does Patrick draw on to shape his illness and disability experiences?' and 'what narrative type shapes how his story is told?'.

By asking such questions we observed that one particular story, Anabasis (Xenophon, 1972), seemed crucial to Patrick's own story. Patrick elicited Anabasis through one of the images he selected and commented (Fig. 1). This image displays a soldier and a map representing a round trip: the Persian expedition. This is the journey told in the IV century BC by Xenophon, disciple of Socrates, in which he relates his experiences as a soldier under Cyrus the Great in his attempt to snatch the empire of Persia from his brother. When Cyrus is killed abruptly, the campaign is interrupted and the large army decomposes and loses its direction. As a result, the remainder of the army had to fight the entire retreat back to Greece through endless miles of hostile territory and unexpected attacks by the enemies that cropped up at every turn. During the journey back home, most of the troops died or were wounded. Still, the calamities and the perilous return are lived as a success when the warriors know their homeland near.

Patrick learned of Anabasis soon after being diagnosed, when the managers of the transport company he used to work for were asked to read it due to its relationship with leadership. Since he wanted to be cognizant of what his managers were learning, he bought the book and read it. At that time, he found it of no special relevance to him. Yet, when he was diagnosed cancer, Anabasis erupted as a source for making sense of his new health condition.

> I read it just before I got sick, in the same year. Therefore, it was fresh in my mind that, well, in some way, this book motivated me for a while to, I don't know, to see, in some way, that these guys had experienced something extreme, right? And that it was useful for them, damn it, and then it turns out that I fall ill after a few months. And, come on, this … this is extreme, isn't

> it? And, well then, in some way, reading their story I thought, "Why should I be less?

Even though Anabasis is not a tale about illness, the diagnosis triggered its latent ability to allegorically function, in (Sparkes et al., 2012, p. 477) words, as a 'compass indicating the direction that his illness journey could, and should, take'. Henceforth, Anabasis began doing its work as an actor in the life of Patrick by providing him with an allegorical narrative map that influenced how he defined his illness and his disability over time, and act accordingly. Since its emergence during the interview, Patrick recalled Anabasis time and time again when making reference to different aspects of his illness journey. In the light of the foregoing, we asked ourselves what Anabasis offered Patrick as an allegorical narrative map of how to live with cancer and SCI. After reading Xenophon's book, we firstly understood that Patrick stablished an allegory between the loss of Cyrus in the middle of Anabasis and his own loss in the middle of his life. As Neimeyer (2001) wrote, 'like a novel that loses a central character in the middle chapters, the life story disrupted by loss must be reorganised, rewritten, to find a new strand of continuity that bridges the past with the future in an intelligible fashion' (263–264). Then, drawing on Frank's typology of illness narratives, it became evident how Patrick was drawn towards the restitution narrative described in the introduction. Within this narrative type, different dimensions such as metaphors, verb tenses and forms of gender performances are bound with Anabasis. For instance, war metaphors are prominent in restitution, the most common of those being associated with a fight to make a comeback (Sparkes & Smith, 2004). Likewise, restitution supports and is supported by the characteristics and ideals of heroic and military masculinity, including a fighting spirit and the power of thought necessary to shape one's life course, and followed to successfully complete the treatment regimens and beat illness (Sparkes et al., 2012). Given these analogical features, Patrick established a strong parallelism between the return to Greece and his return to health:

> The goal in Anabasis: to survive and to make others survive. My goal: survive and try make the life of the people who live with me as good as possible. Well, here you have a parallelism between my illness, my life, the book and myself.

In this way, Patrick thought about and dealt with his illness with Anabasis, allowing his own thoughts to adopt the story's logic, tensions, temporality, and rhetorical expressions. In short, Patrick worked with Anabasis to tell a story he can call his own (Frank, 2010).

Following these interpretations, Anabasis turned out to be a deductive tool to ask more complex dialogical questions that helped us to clarify how this tale affected and continues to affect Patrick's life. According to suggestions from specialized literature (Frank, 2010, 2012; Smith, 2016), four kinds of dialogical questions were timely in order to advance in the analysis: identity questions (e.g. how does Anabasis give Patrick a sense of who he is and would become?); body questions (e.g. how is Patrick's body shaping the story?); questions about what is at stake (e.g. how Patrick holds his own in the act of telling his story?); and function questions (e.g. how might Anabasis be positive and dangerous for Patrick?). Grounded in these questions, our understanding of Patrick's narrative mapping evolved progressively over several drafts in which we revisited transcripts and records, and reconsidered former interpretations in the light of theory and new analytic comments. Finally, we reviewed and discussed our final draft to ensure it both honoured Patrick's story and avoided claiming to speak the last word about who he is and who he might become during the ongoing illness process (Frank, 2010).

Results and discussion: the Anabasis of Patrick

Anabasis is part of Patrick's illness process, and makes available a way of telling and living it. Allegorically, Anabasis is Patrick's journey through illness. Hence, we call ‘The Anabasis of Patrick’ to Patrick's process of re-constructing his narrative identity and selfhood in dialogue with Anabasis. Although Patrick did not tell us his narrative journey in chronological order,

we reconstructed the basic plotline in sequential order to better appreciate the effects throughout the course of his illness process. As a result, we have structured 'The Anabasis of Patrick' in three stages: walking back again, 'skipping stages of Anabasis' and surviving cancer. While DNA is neither about capturing stages per se, nor does assume a linear sequence of stages, this structure ethically respects Patrick, who claimed that his journey has stages and a designed endpoint.

First stage: walking back again

Early after being diagnosed, Patrick regarded changes in his body that resulted from the SCI as something temporal, developing a concrete hope for walking back again. This type of hope expresses and reflects a desire for what Charmaz (1987) termed 'restored self', an identity level in which people following SCI expect to regain their former bodies. When concrete hope dominates, individuals are expected to fight and battle disability. For Patrick, walking again meant "to go back to a life as normal as possible", and constituted "the main reason to keep fighting". In his story, fighting acquired the form of working out. When describing his desire to walk again and use physical exercise to fight it, he said:

> After the first operation, when I went to rehabilitation for two months, I refused to sit in the wheelchair. Man, I used a walker, dragging my legs! You know? The doctor said to me, 'Man, use the wheelchair!!' and so. No, I do not want to, man. I want to walk again, you know?" The ambulance left me at the threshold of the hospital door, well, in, let's say where the gym was, and I went inside, thud, thud, thud, dragging my legs as I could, uh, dude. Anyway, trying my best to be able to walk again, that was my goal.

During this stage, his involvement in exercising simultaneously rested on and generated a restitution narrative. As such, Patrick told us about his SCI experiences using an 'exercise is restitution' narrative that is guided by the belief that embodied breakdowns should be fixed via physical exercise. Importantly, Patrick's 'exercise is restitution' story was told out of, through, and by a disciplined and dominating body (Frank, 1991; 2013).

As (Sparkes, 2015, p. 32) synthesized, a disciplined and dominating body 'defines itself by force, seeks to make its performances predictable though following specific regimes of control, is dissociated from itself, ceases to feel pain as its own, and is able to both punish and absorb punishment'. It is also noteworthy that this body type tends to be male in the form of a warrior, as the characters of Anabasis. Patrick explained his acute selfdisciplined exercise regime this way:

> The only thing I did all those years was get up in the morning, eat breakfast and go exercise until almost lunchtime, man … I lay on that table, man. On that table. So, I would not crush my prostheses too much; I always worked in an inclined way, and I would do 300 push-ups a day, in a series of 50 … 50, urgh, urgh, urgh! Man, I tell you, no wheelchair, …to my top, you know, …trying to reverse the situation.

The point for Patrick was that with enough physical effort, his SCI could be beaten and he would walk again. It is also well expressed in the Fig. 2 that Patrick himself entitled 'top effort' and interpreted as follows:

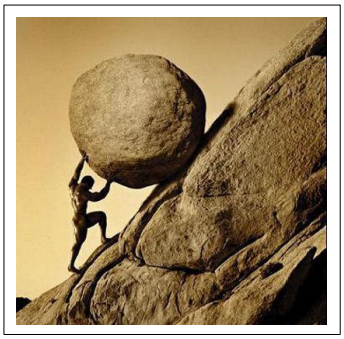

Fig. 2. Top effort.

The stone is the effort … in a situation where you cannot give up. Because otherwise the stone would crush you. In my case, the stone was … the wheelchair that I did not want to use.

According to Frank (2013), restitution narrative also views the body as a broken machine that becomes 'it' to be fixed. Fig. 3 represents the fixing that Patrick's body needs to walk again. He believed that recovery and return to normalcy result from a conjunction between hard work and medical specialist's knowledge and skills. In this light, clinicians become key actors in the restitution process. In Patrick words: 'My doctors would be my generals, man, and I will follow them until my return to Greece'. In the following image, there is an implicit call to rely on his "generals" magic wand which, in combination with his effort, would constitute the magic of making him walk again:

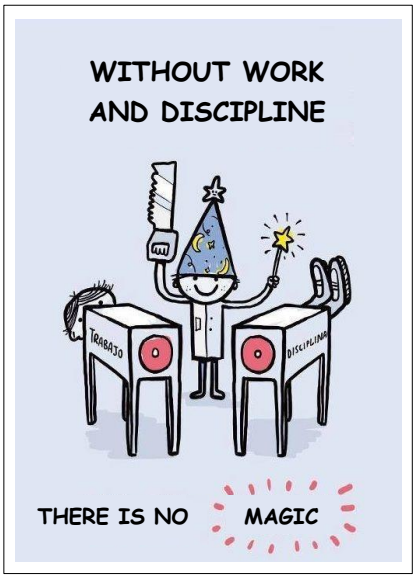

Fig. 3. Discipline and magic.

> For me the magic was to walk again. And that magic would come by what I did, by my discipline, every morning in that room [a gym enabled in a room of his house] and working out to the limit to walk again … Exercise is essential because it is somehow a form of discipline too, right?.

In his fight for coming back, Patrick frequently referred to feelings of loneliness and isolation. This feeling is displayed in the Fig. 4:

Fig. 4. Back walking again.

It is a dark picture, a little sad, but still wrapped in that sadness that is the disease, in the center there is a man walking, which is me…it appears to bea simple thing because it is a man walking, but for me it was very important. Even in the midst of darkness, man, I shone on the road because I kept walking…I did not care about my illness, all I wanted to do was to walk again.

Patrick's feeling of loneliness is not surprising when considering it in terms embodiment, given that disciplined bodies uphold monadic relationships with others. This means that bodies may be among others, but not with them (Frank, 2013). Although family and friends help hold Patrick together and he perceives their support, living in the fight against illness himself, he felt detached from them. Similarly, in its self-relatedness, the disciplined body is dissociated from itself. For Patrick, cancer symbolises a kind of monster invading the body, which becomes a battlefield, as he expressed in the Fig. 5

Fig. 5. Fighting alone against the wolf.

> … you are fighting, alone, against that beast that you have there … family, friends, everyone supports you, but the reality is that you are living is that fight, you know, against that wolf that is the disease.

Fig. 6. Music for recovering.

> All this sacrifice of exercise, listening to music that made me …, that made me remember my resistance and my strength (…). That music, turned up full blast in my head, made me disconnect from the pain and from my body, man.

In addition to working out regardless of his intense pain, Patrick refused to take medication to mitigate it. He also held a stoic disposition when facing delicate situations such as surgical procedures:

> Nothing intimidates me, man. Not in the slightest. I am convinced this is my way back and that I have to follow it. That's the battle, man. That moment I enter an operation room, I have to go into this calmly because I am going to tackle a strong battle.

This 'fighter attitude' towards pain is linked to what Sparkes and Smith (2008) referred to as hidden pain, and suggest that Patrick's story is an enactment of cultural norms of masculinity, which are connected to the "notion of the archetypical hero who overrides needs and limitations to fight or push onward towards victory over his body despite pain, fatigue and hardship" (Sparkes et al., 2012, p. 475). This soldier mindset helped Patrick maintain his exercise

program and hide the things like pain that could prevent him from doing it. Nevertheless, as Omish (1998) noted, hiding pain means overlooking a valuable source of information; 'it's like clipping the wires in your fire alarm because the noise bothers you. The noise goes away but the fire rages on'.

Second stage: "Skipping stages of Anabasis"

Six years after Patrick was first hospitalized, his efforts to walk again failed. Simply put, the 'exercise is restitution' narrative no longer worked. As Frank (2013) reminded us, lives do not always follow the storyline we might have preferred. To a great extent the actual body gives its stories their particular shape and direction, so nobody is free to materialize a self-story without taking into account his or her body. The decline of Patrick's body kept him from continuing to tell stories about walking again.

Here, Papathomas et al. (2015) question about the limits of 'exercise is restitution' narrative is significant and timely: 'If the motivation to exercise is predominately inspired by the goal of recovery, then what happens when recovery is not forthcoming?' (p. 5). The answer, for Patrick, is that he did lose all incentive for exercise and its implications in his fight to make a comeback. Thus, Patrick was forced to reshape his storyline to reflect his current circumstances, and in turn, to embrace a 'new normality' in terms of restructuring the map and accepting that life would never be quite the same (Balmer et al., 2015; Henshall, Greenfield, & Gale, 2017). As Patrick himself acknowledged: "when one comes back from an extreme situation he is never the same again". Patrick's transition to a 'new normality' was uttered in two epiphanies.

Epiphanies, as indicated by Denzin (1989), are turning points or sudden realizations of meaning that work as narrative resources to reveal the disjunctive between what is expected and what is happening.

The first epiphany was to accept that he would not walk again and the second one was that he had to skip a stage of his Anabasis in order to focus on survival. Both epiphanies were made evident in the following comment:

> My normal life now, sure. Well, within my limits that are caused by the wheelchair, and I am convinced I won't get rid of it anymore because of the circumstances …, I slowly realised that my normal situation was the wheelchair now. Here, I would like to make two important points. If someone is screwed by the same disease as me and has to decide, for example, what he should worry about. What would worry you more - the wheelchair or staying alive? You know? That's when I choose the path of survival. And the wheelchair, well, it limits me, it fucks me up because I know that there are a number of things I won't be able to do. But, damn it, if I have to be concerned about something, I prefer being worried about my life than about the wheelchair, right? (…) That is a way of skipping the stages, you know? (…) Now I am skipping the stages of Anabasis, the stages toward the return.

Giving up the idea of walking again provoked an exercise drop out, since the impairment will remain chronic despite doing exercise. For Patrick, that meant skipping the first stage. Nonetheless, illness experience continued to express itself within restitution parameters, and Anabasis continued to frame Patrick's story. As Frank (2013, p. 54) explained:

> The old map may now be less useful, but it has hardly been carbonized. Disease happens in a life that already has a story, and this story goes on, changed by the illness but also affecting how the illness story is formed.

The 'new normal' carries along and incorporates restitution and the former narrative map. Patrick still fights, yet now for something that for him is bigger than walking again, that is, staying alive. Then after, Patrick ceases to tell an 'exercise is restitution' story and swaps it for a 'struggle to survive' story in which SCI is accepted in the quest for a new destination.

Third stage: surviving cancer

By the time Patrick took part in this study, his unique battle was set in a trench (Fig. 7), as he explained:

Fig. 7. In the trench.

Unfortunately, my disease is still keeping me in the trenches after seven years. Seven years of trenches is hard, huh. Seven years of trenches and struggle … my gosh! That's nuts! In the end, well (…) I keep a rifle ready, I do not give up. That's also a symbol. I mean, I keep fighting, for something else though.

Although becoming a cancer survivor may imply a denouement, Patrick's storytelling conveys several embodied uncertainties. He said: "What is going to happen? Because I have no idea. Not even the doctors know". Rather than feeling like he has beaten chordoma, he views it instead as an ongoing process over which neither he himself nor his doctors had much control. This loss of control is the main problem for a disciplined body, and caused his gravest crisis (Frank, 2013). Therefore, 'to achieve normality, albeit a changing one, may reflect a need to construct order and control amid the uncertainty of cancer' (Henshall et al., 2017, p. 3). Precisely, order and control are addressed through storytelling. Patrick tells stories to discover order in a place of contingency.

At present, Patrick attempts to find the story that fits. The fitting story, according to Frank (2011, p. 159), 'is that in which people discover what their values are, as they traverse this strange terrain where previous benchmarks seem to have little use in guiding action'. For Frank (2004, p. 160), a story that

fits also 'suggests what is just and justified as a consequence of what has preceded it, as in a fitting ending'. As Mattingly (1998) pointed out:

> When a story is told, if that storytelling is successful, it creates in the listener a hope that some endings (generally the endings the hero also cares about) will transpire … We hope for certain endings; others we dread. We act in order to bring certain endings about, to realise certain futures, and to avoid others. (p. 93)

People who draw upon restitution are expected to fight illness in a heroic manner even if they do not actually restore the body-self to what it used to be in the past. As Bakhtin (1984: 52) said, 'the ideal typical actor cannot cease to be himself'; he is 'destined to live out a story with a pre-scripted ending' (Phoenix & Sparkes, 2007, p. 14). One possible implication of this is the person being locked into an inherently limiting single story that reduces the opportunities to live by alternative stories.

Patrick himself recognizes that he is not capable of having the ending to his Anabasis as he wished: "The circumstances do not let me get out of the Anabasis, fuck! I am continuously on the road. So, I never finish the story".

The teller of restitution stories looks for certainty - for a clear end. Hence, being "continuously on the road" travelling through a never-ending story is not coherent with a narrative of restitution. At this stage in (Frank (2013), p. 94) words 'there is no other story to fall back on'; Anabasis leads Patrick to linger in the trench for an undetermined and uncertain amount of time.

Patrick's story shows that, functioning as a dominant narrative, restitution draws him in with centripetal force (Bakhtin, 1981). The consequences this has on Patrick are conveyed visually in the trench metaphor. This single visual metaphor is particularly significant as it represents the effect of being caught up in Anabasis. At its simplest, this effect can be described as a body-narrative tension that concerns the progression of the disease and the fight to make a comeback. The body advances in one direction toward the future –it is declining–, and quite the opposite, the restitution narrative pulls it backward into the past.

The result of this tension makes a satisfactory alignment between the body experiences and the story being told utterly impossible. As (Freeman, 2010, p. 6) warned, 'we can become prisoners of our own stories, locked in a world of our own narrative designs, and this sometimes precludes the very possibility of being here, now'. In this sense, Patrick also associated his getting locked in Anabasis and the lack of a narrative fit with 'the marmot's film'. He referred to the 1993 cult film 'Groundhog Day', in which Phil Connors, the main character, is stuck reliving the same day over and over again. Like Phil, Patrick felt trapped in time, always living the same story. For (Barthes (1974), p. 16), those people, like Patrick, 'who fail to reread are obliged to read the same story everywhere'. Contrariwise, rereading liberates us from repetition and allows us to tell other stories that, in this case, can recast the imagining of body and illness. From a narrative perspective, rereading means reading life through other stories, different from the collection of the familiar ones of our repertoire. Rereading is complicated, though. As Sparkes (1998) notes, there are a number of interrelated narrative and corporeal stumbling blocks that hinder people's ability to reread their stories. In spite of the tensions generated, if we follow Frank (2013) thesis, the persistence and immanence of his elective affinities towards restitution narrative would appear, in this case, to be the most important barrier for Patrick to construct and live alternative narrative maps to the one provided by Anabasis.

Provisional endings

The Anabasis of Patrick illuminates the experience of a man living with SCI and poor prognostic cancer, and offers new evidence and nuances about key elements affecting psychological health and exercise.

The study echoes and extends on previous research by examining issues such as body/self relatedness, motivation, masculinity, hope, metaphors and pain (e.g. Papathomas et al., 2015; Sparkes & Smith, 2004, 2008; Sparkes, 2015). Furthermore, it presents valuable insight into the whole trajectory of an illness across time, revealing the effects derived from identifiable events and turning

points. Overall, the findings demonstrate the importance narratives and storytelling have on the well-being of people living with serious illness and disability, as well as highlight the role that exercise might play during delicate stages of life.

Against this backdrop, our article comprises three relevant novelties in the field of illness, disability, and qualitative research in exercise psychology. Firstly, the specific physiognomy of Anabasis and its function as an allegorical narrative map of illness expands the notion of narrative mapping. In contrast to former studies stating that 'narrative maps of illness … are to be conveyed by, and learned from those who have traversed the territory of illness' (Sparkes, 2009, p. 114), Anabasis is not connected to illness whatsoever. In this sense, at first sight it may seem that the plot and information in Anabasis is not useful as a narrative map of illness. However, we have described and interpreted how Patrick himself actively, artfully and effectively elicited, recreated and used Anabasis as an allegorical resource for traversing illness. Hence, this study shows that allegorical narrative maps may operate in similar ways as other more straightforward stories related to illness.

The second innovation is connected to the use of VMR to collaboratively delve into issues related to exercise, illness and disability. Besides addressing ethical concerns, introducing images into the interview process yielded a shared space to tell and listen to experiences that might have remained hidden or seen as unimportant. More uniquely, visual metaphors have helped to give a tangible and evident form to Patrick's allegorical narrative mapping. Visual metaphors have the potential to facilitate our understanding, and attract and hold our imagination. Hence, it seems that they constitute a potent tool for knowledge elicitation and translation.

Thirdly, we have expanded upon the literature in narrative, exercise and health psychology by offering an empirical application of narrative dialogism. With rare but significant exceptions (e.g. Caddick & Smith, 2017; Smith, 2013; Sparkes, 2015), this approach has been little used to study relationships between exercise, disability and illness. However, it can be very useful to

understand people's stories in different and enriching ways. DNA has allowed us to explore the intricate connection between the story told by Patrick and the embodied effects of telling his story. Core to this relation has been the re-construction of his self through inner dialogue with Anabasis, whose performative capacities as an actor in this process were revealed.

Following these key developments, our study addresses the positive and dangerous work that restitution narrative might bring about in relation to exercise and psychological well-being. In this article, we have shown that while restitution may be inspirational for certain stages of illness, it may also lock the storyteller into one pattern of response, thereby guiding the illness down a course in personally limiting ways. For Sparkes et al. (2012), this is particularly so when 'this 'locking in' reduces people's access to other narratives available within the cultural repertoire that may work to provide very different experiences of, and ways to respond to, life threatening illness over time' (p. 485). Likewise, we are also left wondering about the work that other stories alternative to Anabasis might do in narratively mapping Patrick's experiences.

With the aforementioned in mind, 'The Anabasis of Patrick' highlights important considerations for practitioners such as exercise psychologists, physiotherapists, rehabilitation workers, disability support staff, and other relevant health care professionals. A source of knowledge for these professionals are the stories through which a client express what motivates him or her to become physically active after illness or disability, and what do they expect from participation. Being cognizant of which narrative template is operating beyond a story and recognising the dangers associated with it will assist a practitioner in ensuring such dangers do not materialize (Papathomas et al., 2015). An important practical usage relating to the above consideration is that different kinds of inspirational stories can be elicited to expand the number of potential narrative resources that are allowed to act for clients. As Smith, Tomasone, Latimer-Cheung, and Martin Gins (2015) recommended, evidence-based stories can be used to share knowledge effectively and move

people with illness and disability toward behaviour change. For example, alternative stories can make visible a range of exercise opportunities beyond recovery-centred exercise, which may be psychosocially fulfilling and supportive of exercise maintenance over time. These stories not only can be obtained from people living with serious health conditions, as done in this article. Likewise, they can be created, combined, shared or discussed in order to teach about exercise in engaging and generative ways. To increase possibilities of making the intervention effective, stories can furthermore be expressed in popular visual narrative formats such as memes (Hadley, 2016) and digital short films or videos (Smith et al., 2015). In addition to being more accessible and captivating, visual narrative formats also facilitate exercise promotion initiatives, as they can be easily disseminated through online spaces, including social media platforms.

Finally, taking into account different types of generalizability in qualitative research (see Smith, 2018), generalizations can be made from this paper. First, analytical generalisation is displayed by offering new conceptual tools (e.g. allegorical narrative mapping) that can make sense and be valuable in other studies with different contexts and participants. Second, case-to-case generalizations can be reached when exercise and health care professionals reading this article transfer the findings to their own praxis, for example, in the ways that we have suggested above. Relatedly, naturalistic generalizations might emerge if the article resonates with the reader's personal experiences. As Smith (2017) pointed out, this last kind of generalizations not only depend on the qualitative report, but also on the audience that read it and either support or reject the results as generalizable to them. Just as not all stories engage all people (Frank, 2010), not all readers will find themselves engaged in this article. We acknowledge that uncertainty, but like any qualitative researcher, we hope that readers will find our research valuable to support people in their quest for helpful narrative maps to reach their destination, wherever that may be.

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ARTICLE 2

Javier Monforte (2018) What is new in new materialism for a newcomer?, Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 10:3, 378-390, DOI: 10.1080/2159676X.2018.1428678

Some encounter with the world jolts us and demands our attention. It sets our curiosity to work; sends us to the library to read hoping to find others intrigued by the same problem; intrudes in our conversations with colleagues ("Have you ever wondered about —?"); saturates that liminal space–time between sleeping and waking; and, eventually, re-orients our seeing, re-orients our thinking, re-orients being, so that orthodox distinctions fail, normalized boundaries dissolve, and things that are not supposed to relate connect and surge into new intensities.

ST. PIERRE, JACKSON AND MAZZEI, *Article*, 2016

Abstract

Having recently emerged as an intellectual project, new materialism (NM) is extending to different fields, including sport, exercise and health studies. However, it is still unclear why and how NM is new, which can jeopardise its potential impact in academia and society. The aim of this paper is to discuss the newness of NM and to explore how it plays out in relation to different issues, such as knowledge translation and partisan positions. At the same time, NM is used as a way of understanding my own positionality as a newcomer who is becoming an academic within a field having manifold intellectual debates while being shaped by a neoliberal rationality. Reasons as to why NM has to be more concerned about accessibility are provided, and a case for a receptive yet suspicious attitude towards the label 'new' is made. Several key points that might help newcomers start thinking with the 'new' are also highlighted. Next, an example of NM in action is presented. This section illuminates what NM brings to my research practice and, more specifically, how I re-created a concept that worked and is still working for me in my research on exercise and disability. The article closes by offering strategies to resist the neoliberal academic assemblage and inviting sport and exercise researchers to partake in collective environments that support the developing of new ways of thinking and becoming.

Keywords: new materialism, ontological turn, post-qualitative inquiry, post-humanism, early-career academics

Introduction

It is a winter's evening in Valencia and I am sitting in a coffee bar with Professor Ginsberg (a pseudonym), a leading international qualitative researcher in the field of sport, exercise and health. I am a novice researcher: my doctoral journey has just begun. I am a bundle of nerves. There is a bottle of beer and a glass of wine on our table. I spin my empty bottle, jittering. I talk fervently about Fullagar's and Giardina's work in a recent edition of *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*. He nods graciously. Time goes fast. At the back of the coffee bar a woman laughs. I look at her, then I look through the window. It is cloudy and chilly outside; the leaves of the trees move slightly in the wind. In the middle of that place, Professor Ginsberg leans towards me. 'What troubles me about new materialism is the label new' –he says–. 'There is actually nothing new, right?'

It is still unclear how and why new materialism (NM) is new and, thereby, it provokes suspicion. With the sudden advent of the new materialist turn in the sport and exercise studies, addressing this issue becomes relevant and timely. For NM to have repercussion, the 'new' question requires further discussion and cross-fertilization. The purpose of the present essay is therefore to fill that gap by addressing Professor Ginsberg's question. Indirectly, this essay is also a testimony on how a newcomer struggles to find their place and carve out a niche framed within a) a field living a contested present, with numerous debates taking place and new and experimental developments asking for attention (Giardina, 2017); and b) a climate produced by an audit culture, a neoliberal agenda and a neoconservative backlash against non-positivist research (Sparkes, 2013).

In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the central tenets of NM. This is the first step to approach the research question, given that, according to Lenz Taguchi, (2014), the 'new' in NM can be mainly found the ontological and conceptual shifts that characterise it. Next, I consider how the contested

newness of NM plays out in relation to several adjacent problems. I focus specifically on the obscure language of the available accounts about 'the new', as well as on partisan positions that might endanger the possibilities that NM could bring to our field and people's lives. Following that are some personal ruminations on how to possibly think, work and experiment with the new materialist turn. From this, I move on to concretize this way of thinking as part of my engagement in a research project. In this section, I provide a specific example that will make more explicit what kind of heuristic tools NM brought to me and how I used these for my research. This is a 'messy example', one that does 'not seek a comfortable, transcendant end-point but leave us in the uncomfortable realities of doing engaged qualitative research' (Pillow, 2003, 193). The article closes by offering some possibilities to deterritorialize the neoliberal academic assemblage.

NM: A Very Short Introduction

Over the past 20 years, NM has become an umbrella term used to represent a range of theoretical perspectives that share the re-turn to a focus on matter. Although the body of knowledge associated with this shorthand term is wide-ranging, most versions of new materialist thought share several sensibilities and basic assumptions.

The most characterizing feature of NM is a firm stand against the transcendental and humanist (dualist) traditions that dominates modern natural science as well as most postmodern cultural theories. New materialist scholars immersed in social sciences and humanities have turned to this line of thought partly because of their dissatisfaction with, and loss of trust in, postmodernism. To be precise, they challenge these paradigms due to their anthropocentric and logocentric focus (Kuby, 2017), as well as for associated shortcomings such as: discounting the material world that people inhabit, being unable to engage productively rather than critically with science and technology, and overlooking the significance of embodied experiences like pain and pleasure (Feely, 2016).

Set against this Hekman (2010) proposed that NM is an attempt 'to do what the postmoderns claim but fail to do: to deconstruct the language/reality dichotomy' (p.3). Moreover, it is a 'new settlement' (p. 7), rather than a revival of the 'old' historical, Marxist-inspired materialism. As argued by St. Pierre (2016), the new materialist turn is not an alteration or extension of 'the given' but a rethinking from the ground up. That is, the 'new' does not come by criticising the old nor by improving it, but rather by radically questioning all the barriers that supported its logic.

Discussing the NM critique to dualist logic, Brinkmann (2017) indicated that postmodern approaches live off the same modernist separation of matter and meaning as traditional qualitative research, and simply focuses on the latter. Whilst modernism understands matter as either a static, inert and fixed presence (essentialism), or a mere backdrop for human agents (anthropocentrism), postmodernism views it as relatively passive and culturally constructed by linguistic, discursive and cultural practices (social constructionist essentialism). To overcome this dualist thought, NM supports a philosophy of immanence and a 'flat' or 'monist' perspective, reopening the issue of matter, that, from this viewpoint, 'does not refer to an inherent, fixed property of abstract, independently existing objects', but rather 'to phenomena in their ongoing materialization' (Barad, 2007: 151). Such ontological displacement infers that the material world is not separate from the cultural world. That is to say, matter and meaning cannot be understood as independent from each other. Instead, the new materialist ontology dissolves categorical (binary and hierarchical) distinctions, thereby promoting a ''posthuman' and ecological sociological perspective that cuts across the divide between nature and human culture and sees humans as entirely integral to the 'environment'' (Fox and Alldred, 2016: 2).

Given this ontological standpoint in which matter matters differently, NM presents itself as an alternative to both realist positivism and social constructionism. Still, poststructuralist insights are often apparent in new materialist approaches. Advocates for NM do not leave behind the lessons

learned from poststructuralism, but rather say 'yes, and' to this paradigm and others, traversing them all (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 89). To sum up, Davies (2016) claimed that NM presents 'new concepts and new ways of thinking-doing our research, which do not run against poststructuralist philosophy, but with it, at the same time bringing new emphases and new priorities' (p. 13). One of the most important of these new priorities is readdressing materiality without returning to essentialism. [1]

To fulfil this purpose, new materialist scholars draw upon two synchronized moves. The former involves a shift from essentialism to emergent, immanent relationality. Contrary to the view that entities have essential attributes and ontological integrity that precede their relations, it stands out that all entities emerge from these relations. As stated by Law (2004), 'realities...are produced, and have a life, in relations' (p.59). This relational ontology leads new materialist scholars to assert that matter is to be studied not in terms of what it is (i.e. essence), but in terms of what it does, that is, in terms of its capacities to act and affect (i.e. agency) (Fox and Alldred, 2017). Starting from this, the latter move consists of acknowledging that not only humans but also non-humans (both organic and inorganic) have agentic and performative capacities. The notion of matter as passive and inert, requiring external (human) agency to do anything, is firmly abandoned. Instead, non-humans (for instance, a machine or a room) are considered active participants –'actors', or 'actants' in Latour's (2005) terms– in the world's becoming as they too 'perform actions, produce effects and alter situations' (Bennett, 2004: 355). [2]

Overall, action and agency are deemed emergent products: the temporary result of forces that do something to each other simultaneously. As Snaza et al. (2016: xvii) summarize, 'there is no longer a knowing (human) subject who acts and a passive (nonhuman) object that is acted upon: everything is entangled'. Consequently, the research conducted under the rubric 'NM' would not focus on discursive statements nor individual bodies, but rather on actor-networks, entanglements or assemblages of relations between bodies, things, ideas and social formations that affect each other. In NM all these elements are studied

symmetrically, while other lines of thought might be less inclined to fully accept such radical symmetry (Aagard & Matthiesen, 2016). [3]

In sport and exercise, Giardina (2016, 2017) provided various comments and orientations to conduct this kind of symmetrical research. Before that, the works of Markula (2014), Roy (2014), Thorpe (2014), van Ingen (2016) and Weedon (2015), to name a few, used new materialist theories to understand phenomena taking place in different sporting activities such as dancing, surfing, boxing and playing golf. Fullagar (2017) considered all these studies in her discussion on the potential implications of engaging with NM for future research in the field, and announced a book edited by Newman, Thorpe, and Andrews (forthcoming) that engages specifically with matter/materialism, subjectivity, and sport/physical culture. In summary, NM has called the attention of various scholars working with sport and exercise, and their work insinuates that this line of thought is here to stay, at least for the time being. However, to support the maintenance and development of NM in the field over a long period of time, we need to take a step back (or further) and put our critical attention on what is presumably 'new', considering its problems and perils in order to avoid them.

Thinking About 'The New'

A small but significant number of scholars of the new materialist persuasion have expressed concerns about the term 'new'. For instance, St. Pierre et al. (2016: 104) posed the following queries: 'What counts as 'new'? Who decides? And how new does your work have to be to be considered new? How do new scholars even know if their work is new?' In reflecting on these questions, they adhered to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) description of resistance to the orthodox, whose central premise is that existing thoughts are unlikely to help us think about the new. They encourage readers to think the unthought by means of the 'incommensurable' rhizomatic image of thought that founds much of the 'new' work. Lenz Taguchi (2013) further discussed the new materialist account in relation to this image of thought. Meanwhile,

van der Tuin (2011) explored Barad's (2007) notion of quantum leap as a possible 'model' for understanding how NM is 'new'. Drawing on the keynote for the 'What's New about New Materialisms?' conference, Barad (2014: 168) scrutinised the concept of diffraction to claim that 'there is nothing that is new; there is nothing that is not new'. Further, Massumi (2010) indicated that, by definition, the 'new cannot be described, having not yet arrived' (p. 3).

Against this backdrop, 'the new' seems more complex than it looks. When reading the above accounts, I struggle to 'get it' and articulate what it is that is 'new'. Everything floats, everything is spinning, everything is open and undefined. The 'new' both attracts and repels me; it seduces me with the promise of the unexplored and the evasive and obscure prose irritates me. In short, I feel simultaneously disenchanted and enthused towards it. In this situation, I asked myself further questions concerning the term 'new' and what it (does not) generates. For instance, is NM genuinely new? Do we need it? Do we have the responsibility, as part of our jobs, to listen, engage, and try to comprehend 'the new'? Is the epithet 'new' determinant for researchers to harness the potentialities offered by NM? Could our field(s) of inquiry get by without NM? Why it is difficult to see 'the new'? To which audiences is it (un)comprehensible and what does it involve? For me, these questions remit to two intertwined issues: knowledge translation and partisan positions.

Knowledge Translation

For some social scientists in any field, as Professor Ginsberg's question exemplifies, it may be hard to see 'the new' and, thus it is easy to mistrust NM. St. Pierre et al. (2016) explained that we might not see 'the new' because it lies outside the dominant discourses we use to see and think. Therefore, since 'the new can't easily be recognised' (St. Pierre, 2015: 84), the use of alien language appropriate to new materialist literacy is not always adequate to divulge what is 'new', given that it hides what it wants to reveal. As Greene (2013: 749) put it, NM unfamiliar language constitutes 'a substantial roadblock to

understanding' for the reader, who is ultimately the future of NM. This problem affects the impact of academia and the broader society.

In terms of academic impact, the 'new' language might be counterproductive when the reader is a newcomer on the threshold of an uncharted tradition whose ideas, labels and vocabularies are unknown. While I myself have experienced the productive nature of avoiding understanding too quickly (Ulmer, 1985) and getting lost and confused (van Ingen, 2016; Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; Leather, 2012), I find it fair and reasonable to acknowledge that being too lost and confused might originate aversion to NM. While accessible scholarship can be generative of new academic opportunities and becomings, inaccessible scholarship might close these down. Let me provide a case in point. One of my PhD colleges I share an office with confessed to me: 'I don't even see that the ontological turn which you are referring to is happening in our field, dude. All that is alien to me, it's a dark forest, and I have no will to bump into it. I'm not sure if NM can be useful for people's lives'. The problem of that is not that my colleague does not want to practice NM; the problem is that he perceives NM as something unconceivable, impenetrable and, ultimately, useless. Newcomers need to conceive, or at least become familiar with NM so that, on this basis, they can genuinely decide to take it on board, or leave it to float in the river of not-for-me (Frank, 2010).

In terms of social impact, it is noteworthy that NM scholars cannot only have conversations amongst themselves, but also need to engage with their critics and doubters, as well as those who are unfamiliar to or unaware of (post)qualitative research and debates around, such as policy makers, sporting organisations, health professionals and so on. This concern raises the issue of generalizability in (post)qualitative research and, more specifically, of the generative potential of research (see Smith, 2017). To facilitate generativity, researchers have to speak and write accessibly, rendering their findings valuable and applicable. The 'new' language, however, is problematic for engaging with outsiders of NM and risks to ostracise them. Accordingly –even though making 'the new' recognisable may be problematic as the language of

present, major, dominant discourses does not work after the ontological turn and can generate ontological confusion (St. Pierre, 2015)–, putting the often abstract ideas of new materialism (e.g. the idea of 'the new') into our grills of intelligibility is decisive to facilitate wider impact and dissemination of the paradigm. Certainly, this critique is not germane to NM only but rather to higher education in general and, during the last decades, to postmodern, poststructuralist and cultural studies in particular. As Eisner (2001) argued, any new theory must have more to do with an effort to inform than with novelty.

Whether we want to use NM as a tool to inform policy development and implementation, reach different audiences and apply what we learn in practice to help people live liveable lives, we may deterritorialize (i.e. generalize or de-specify) NM, opening up possibilities for more accessible research. Otherwise, insights from NM will stay in the materiality of books, computer screens and papers, staying away from the materiality of policy-makers corridors, sport and rehabilitation centres and classroomsamong other environments. Sharing this concern, Patton (2007) reminded that new materialist research call 'for connection with forces outside the text' (p. IX). That is to say, for research that matters in the public sphere. As Denzin (2017: 9) set out, social scientists 'are no longer called to just interpret the world, which was the mandate of traditional qualitative inquiry. Today, we are called to change the world'. Such statement guide the agenda for a new critical inquiry in the audit cultures of global neoliberalism. Žižek (2012), however, cautioned against the dangers of getting caught in a pragmatic preudo-activist pressure (i.e. there's no time for philosophical debates, let's do something!). In an interview for Big Think, he said, 'In the twentieth century, we may have tried to change the world too quickly; the time is to interpret it again, to start thinking' differently. Such a view does not mean giving up social change, but rather that social change can also be affirmed through reinterpreting the social matters one is hoping to change. In accordance with that, NM might work as a sensitizing approach (toward matteriality) that reveals sites for activist work.

Partisan Positions

Even when NM becomes familiar and welcomed, remaining suspicious about the label 'new' is not misguided. With that regard, Professor Ginsberg drew my attention to the arrogance and self-importance of announcing oneself as 'new' without due consideration to other traditions. He also invoked Atkinson and Housley (2003) who argued that 'novelty is often a reflection of amnesia rather than of genuine invention' (p. xiv). After all, materiality has been an important concern in sport and exercise for years (see Chamberlain and Lyons, 2016). What then is 'new' if researchers have for a long time attended to the material? This kind of suspicion towards the epithet 'new' instigates conversations and further debates. These debates are healthy and a sign of effervescence. Conversely, the problem arises when partisan positions are adopted, leading to opinionated discussions in which each position advocates one view over another in a way that involves little deliberation and dialogue. Two paradigmatic examples of polarized positions towards the 'new' would be the 'for' and 'against' positions.

The 'for' position is based on two related mantras. The first one is 'innovate or die', and it has become an imperative in the neoliberal context in which we live (Jeanes, 2006). In this context, academia changes rapidly and perpetually, and innovations are understood to be a consequence of progress and excellence. The other principle, following from the first, is 'newer the better' and involves taking up or practicing NM simply because it is 'new'. This view is problematic as the new is not 'all what is in fashion, but rather what... is not already contained in the... given [structures] that govern what we can think' (Rajchman, 2008: 89). As Sparkes (2002) reminded us years ago, a noncritical adoption of 'the new' might lead to one orthodoxy being replaced by another. If this were the case, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of resisting the orthodox would not only be an imposture, but also a way to some scholars to improve their careers, a mechanism of distinction, or even a form of intellectual snobbism. Namely, by using the NM label, researchers can show that they have get over 'conventional qualitative research' and let others know that they are

not. In contrast, the 'against' stance rejects NM, precisely because it alleges being new. As an example, Edenheim (2016: 300) closes her article claiming that NM is a field 'driven by a somewhat unsettling repetition of new words (not least the word 'new' itself) and with an innate incapacity to question anything'. Furthermore, as Denzin (1996) illustrates, detractors of the proliferation of new forms of inquiry have already brought in a verdict: 'The old better than the new can do the work of sociology. So forget all this experimental stuff' (p. 525). This view constitutes a major constraint for new materialist research, since 'heightened curiosity and accompanying experimentation' are vital conditions for 'new inquiry' (St. Pierre et al., 2016: 102, original emphasis).

From my viewpoint, both the 'for' and 'against' positions are narrow-minded and limit dialogue because each refuses to acknowledge the contribution that both conventional qualitative and postqualitative research can have on our understanding. In other words, the 'for' and 'against' positions are adopted to 'discredit the work carried on by those on the 'other road' just so that we can justify our own methodological approach and thus our own survival in a climate of economic meltdown' (Horn, 2011: 299). Moreover, these positions contribute to creating and maintaining a threatening environment for junior researchers to work in, potentially negatively affecting their opportunities to contribute to their fields of inquiry. With all the above in mind, I stand for a receptive but critical attitude towards 'the new', which considers NM a worthwhile cultural theory to think with, among many other alternatives available.

Thinking With 'The New'

As evidenced previously in two articles from this journal (Fullagar, 2017, Giardina, 2017), NM is an exciting and multifarious approach with the potential to push our field in new, imaginative and thought-provoking ways. NM exposes fresh possibilities to explore different areas of knowledge and to produce knowledge differently -beyond conventional and comfortable ways of

inquiry. That being said, I agree with Ahmed's viewpoint (2008: 36) that to 'deposit our hope in the category of "the new"' is fatuous and poisonous for social science research and for our field. We do not have to completely accept new materialist positions in order to learn something from them. As recommended by Brinkmann (2017), the task at hand should not be for all of us to become new materialists, but rather to rethink our research practices and discuss key concepts considering the new materialist turn. On this basis, I turn to share some key points to those newcomers that, like me, wish to think and experiment with NM cautiously, yet fearlessly. Before that, it is worth noting that there are multiple elements running through NM the analysis of which goes beyond the realm of this article. Therefore, in sticking to the idea of the 'new' in NM, I will focus on a few ideas while necessarily overlooking others. Moreover, I am still devising my own way of thinking with the 'new'. Consequently, my suggestions are provisional and can only be interpreted as a partial expression of ongoing ruminations.

At the outset, I must mention St. Pierre's (2015) suggestion of shifting the focus from methodology to onto-epistemology. In commenting the problems of a methods-driven approach, she argued that the very idea of this method forces one into a prescribed order of thought that is unlikely to help us think the new. Supporting this view, Giardina (2017) proposed that (post)qualitative scholars should think of themselves as 'philosophers of inquiry' who invent inquiry in doing, rather than researchers who reduce inquiry to merely the technical execution of particular methods. New materialist approaches can help us in this venture as they are, by definition, 'fully enamoured with the new, the something not yet thought of' (Greene, 2013: 753, emphasis original). Consistent with the idea of the new as-yet-unthought, Koro-Ljungberg (2015) called for 'methodologies without methodology', in which data is thought for how it moves. In fluid methodological spaces, he argued, 'methods and research approaches melt, transform, circumvent, infiltrate, appear and disappear' (p.86). Likewise, Nordstrom (2017) made a case for antimethodology,

> a middle space that is created between reterritorializing forces (e.g., conventional qualitative inquiry) and deterritorializing forces (e.g., poststructural and posthuman theories that throw positivist and interpretivist theories that ground conventional qualitative inquiry into radical doubt (p.1).

What for me describes the style of new materialist antimethodology is a double predisposition to not knowing and slowing down. First, allowing ourselves to not know and not understand is the best chance we have to embrace 'new imagined (virtual) possible realities' (Lenz Taguchi, 2013: 713). As pointed out by Fullagar (2017: 2),

> Living with the ambiguity, uncertainty and the partiality of knowledge can be incredibly productive for thinking beyond the conventional approaches that have defined individual and social problems in often one-dimensional ways.

Not only can this predisposition cause the 'new' to emerge, but it also entails a more modest attitude towards research. As physicist Richard Feynman's expressed in an interview: 'I don't feel frightened by not knowing things: I think it's much more interesting'. Second, new materialist antimethodology demands pauses, silences and breathing. There is no way to just make 'the quick turn to ontology' (Giardina, 2016: 470). This does not concur with the principles of NM and is ultimately unproductive. As stated by Ulmer (2017), NM is a 'Slow Ontology' approach that embraces a gradual way of learning and being scholarly. This approach does not value productivity according to the normative parameters of the neoliberal university, which set up a disembodied, instrumental, accelerated relationship with research. Instead, it leaves room for disruption, wonder and dalliance; it unfolds a meaningful space for thought to move in all directions (i.e. rhizomatic root-system). Simply put, it allows for research that 'is not unproductive, but is differently productive' (p. 201).

NM In Action

As commented in the above section, NM gives me food for thought and offers virtual opportunities in my research to 'do something different from the beginning' (St. Pierre, 2011: 623). Deluzeian authors have suggested that one way of doing something different in our research practice is to mutate, re-generate and create concepts and labels that work for us (Jeanes, 2006; Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; St. Pierre et al., 2016). This creative process resonates with the antimethology of Michel Foucault, as summarised by Rabinow and Rose (1994: xv)

> It would be a movement of thought that invents, makes use of, and modifies conceptual tools as they are set into a relation with specific practices and problems that they themselves help to form in new ways.

In the same fashion, Jeanes (2006) points out that 'the real "new" is the creation of new concepts: new ways of thinking, new ways of thinking about real problems' (p. 133, emphasis original). New concepts, therefore, refer to 'experimental tools that are born out of the tensions between the empirical world' and 'philosophical thought' (Gane, 2009: 87).

The 'real problem' I face in my empirical research is a set of encounters with Patrick, a man living with cancer and spinal cord injury (SCI). The main purpose of my ongoing PhD project is to study the role exercise plays in shaping Patrick's experience. The research design was originally grounded in the narrative tradition in exercise and disability (Papathomas, 2016). More concretely, I adopted an integrated narrative approach as the broad underpinning methodology (see Williams, 2017). In the first report (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego & Devís-Devís, 2017), visual methods (see Phoenix & Rich, 2016) and dialogical narrative analysis (See Smith, 2016) were utilised to explore the stories of Patrick. One of the key findings of this study is that, during a period, Patrick drew on 'exercise is restitution' narrative to tell his SCI story. 'Exercise is restitution' narrative projects a storyline of hope for

recovery following SCI through engaging in disciplined regimes of exercise (Papathomas, Williams & Smith, 2015).

The analysis of the initial interviews showed three different environments in which Patrick engaged in strict regimes of exercise to walk again –a hospital, his home and an adapted gym. I realised that these environments had a primary role in the shaping of Patrick's disability experience and wellbeing. In a following interview, I focused on those environments, and discussed with Patrick how he interacted with the people, the things and the stories fashioning such unique environments. In the subsequent analysis, it became clear that, when taking exercise, Patrick's body in its fleshy reality existed as part of a specific environment that affected its capacities, that is, the things it could and could not do, such as walking. Throughout this process, I also appreciated that the materiality of some tools I was using for data collection (e.g., images, temporal graphs, collages, documents, and other artifacts) was being key to their meaning and how Patrick and I related to them. These tools, in turn, were participants in the study; they facilitated the emergence of some stories and shaped how they were told and received. All these research events moved me to consider different styles of seeing and thinking when approaching data. My 'contextual responsiveness' (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015: 85) was twofold. First, I flattened the relations between humans and non-human elements in the stories, reading them horizontally rather than vertically (i.e., in a non-hierarchical fashion). Second, I started reading diffractively (i.e. reading multiple data source together and reading different theorists alongside one another).

Throughout this process of becoming, I got troubled thoughts because of Hein's (2016) points on the impossibility of combining certain philosophies (i.e. incommensurability) and St. Pierre's (2015) parallel caution against the danger of ontological incoherence, which materialises when posthumanist concepts are inserted into an otherwise humanist qualitative project. If 'using a concept from one ontology in another just doesn't work' (p.87), is it possible to re-invent 'old' concepts? What if I create a new concept that does not match with my ontological stance? What is my ontological stance again? This

'clumsy ontoepistemological dance' (Lennon, 2017: 5) was affected by an encounter with a philosopher and physical education scholar –at that time, the only person in my circle who knew something about NM. His words worked to pull out my thought using the argument that, "Purity of thought (i.e. fundamentalism) may determine decisions, inhibit practical connections, and restrict creativity. NM can also become a normalized boundary in which certain things are not supposed to relate; it might ultimately repeat the same (i.e. territorialize), instead of creating the conditions for something new to arise". In Deleuzian terms, his words deterritorialized the specification produced by the 'ontological incoherence' argument (i.e. X concept only relates to X ontology), in turn generalizing the capacities of my project (i.e. flexibility to aggregate conceptual relations) (Fox & Alldred, 2017). While aware that not everything goes, I was now convinced that thinking differently is partly a matter of finding a place of freedom. From that place, I started experimenting to creatively intervene into the humanist assumptions of the project (Ulmer, 2017)

My consequential 'analytical surprise' (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015: 85) was a conceptual shifting. That is, a concept I was using mutated to another, the first concept partly remaining within the new one, as in a wave-like motion (Barad, 2007). My objective here is not to make a case for the utilisation of a particular concept per se; instead I use this example to illuminate what NM brings to my research and make visible some points mentioned in the previous sections. The former concept I am referring to is Gubrium and Holstein's (2008) 'narrative environment'. This concept denotes both the physical and socio-cultural environments that support and value specific stories, while inhibiting or excluding others. In the realm of exercise and disability, Perrier, Smith and Latimer-Cheung (2013) applied that concept in order to examine how a unique narrative environment motivated individuals with SCI to engage in leisure time physical activity. I was attracted towards this article and am still; it is still a referent for my research. At the same time, parallel readings on NM helped me understand that, while acknowledging materiality, the concept of narrative

environment only works within an interpretative paradigm (i.e. ontological relativism and epistemological social constructionism) which assume that the source of embodied meaning only lies within the human, autonomous subject (Fullagar, 2017). At variance with that view, NM pushed my thinking beyond human experience to suggest that 'meaning-making takes place on a two-way track' (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 110). From this decentred standpoint, the environment is not separate from humans, but part of the human experience. It is not a mere backdrop for their deeds and meanings, but an assemblage of human and non-human entities, affects, things and cultural practices. To be able to see this, wrote Hultman and Taguchi (2010), we need to think of a 'relational field of immanence' (p. 530) where 'there is no longer any differentiation between humans and their "environment": the entirety of the natural and social world is the environment, with nothing beyond it' (Fox & Alldred, 2017: 3). In the light of the foregoing, recasting the concept of narrative environment according to a relational field of immanence implies that the material and narrative dimensions of environments are of the same importance and co-constitutive. Therefore, in my research context, narrative environments are better thought as 'material-semiotic' environments.

The emphasis on the 'material-semiotic' character of reality is central to NM. Through this notion, Donna Haraway (2004) argued that all existence is a complex combination of the material dimension and semiotic forces; the former creates and gives form to the latter, and vice versa. Consistent with Haraway, Frank (2010: 43) made a case for stories as 'material-semiotic companions' that shape and are shaped by human beings in their 'progressive coevolution'. Stories, as agential, affect our ways of thinking and being, configuring the process of human subjectivation. Simply put, stories 'breathe'; they perform vital functions. Frank also quoted John Law (2000) to expose his materialist approach to narrative:

> Stories not only work with objects; stories take the form of objects, which are known as materialized stories. Thus we get to Law's law (italics in the original): "There is no important difference between stories and materials."

> Stories are made up of signs –their semiotic being– and they are material not only as they do things (…) but also in their capacity to take the material forms that Law specifies: machines, bodies, and buildings.

As I see it, Frank is giving a new materialist intonation to narrative. However, he found no need to thematise his narrative approach in this manner. Likewise, Haraway didn't describe herself her work as new materialist, because NM is inspired, amongst others, in her work. But now there is a conceptual box with a label: NM. As suggested by Koro-Ljungberg (2015), labels matter. They serve as epistemological markers, ontological reference points and guides for practice. For example, the label 'material-semiotic environment' fulfils different functions in my ongoing analysis of the three environments in which Patrick did exercise post-SCI. First, it assists me in overturning the priority and privilege accorded to the semiotic dimension of stories, in turn tackling the materiality embedded with them (without returning to essentialism). More specifically, it allows me to bring materiality back and keep my interest on the shape-shifting capacity of stories. Second, it helps to remind me that the primary human and non-human actors of 'exercise is restitution narrative' (e.g. health professionals, adapted machines) are both co-operatively responsible for Patrick's storied process of disability. Third, the NM label allows me to extend the dialogical approach adopted in the first report (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego & Devís-Devís, 2017) when considering that Patrick does not only dialogue with other people and the stories that connect him with them, but also dialogue with the material context and objects being materialised in these stories.[4] Lastly, it brings to the fore the need for 'fostering social and natural interactions that enhance environmental (and in the process, human) potentiality' (Fox & Alldred, 2016: 287).

In the same way that the label material-semiotic helps me 'doing something different', the 'new' label also makes its work: it serves to make identifiable a particular approach to how materiality is theorised and investigated. All the same, I still question if 'new' is the most appropriate label. Being a newcomer

to academia, am I the right person to answer this question? Is there a right person to determine it? In my precarious positioning both as an insider and an outsider of NM, I ultimately adhere to St Pierre et al. (2016) assertion: 'the descriptor "new" does not necessarily announce something new but serves as an alert that we are determined to try to think differently' (p. 100).

Conclusion: Becoming Academic in the Neoliberal Academic Assemblage

In the context of a neoliberal university that shapes what is thinkable, it is essential that early-careers academics take a breath to construct 'new imaginaries and concepts for political belonging beyond the catastrophic imaginaries of late liberal rule' (Evans & Reid, 2014, p. xii). An ongoing mentorship of experienced scholars who are willing to decelerate, begin again and (re)think collaboratively is critical to continue this task. As generally advocated in a recent special issue of Sport, Education and Society on being and becoming an academic in the neoliberal university, supervisors and colleagues are an essential source of support for newcomers to hold their own in the precarious work of the contemporary early-career academic.

However, from a new materialist point of view, the transformation does not only depend on the actions of discrete researchers as agentic beings, but takes place in an assemblage where 'human intentions [are] always in competition and confederation with many other strivings' (Bennett, 2010: 32). Aligned with this principle, Brooks et al. (2017: 4) consider the neoliberal academy as 'a grouping of people, buildings, ideas, practices, policies, processes, ambitions, desires, fears, books, computers, coffee cups, and so on' where each of this elements can make a difference and change the course of events. Novice and seasoned researchers are obviously important elements of the neoliberal university assemblage, but they cannot be separated from the material-semiotic environments in which they exist. To disturb the homeostasis of the neoliberal milieu, these agents can, for example, co-participate in the conformation of collective environments that support and value the emergence of new ways of

thinking and being together. In this regard, I have found the ongoing collective story of the PhD students conforming the 'Physical Activity, Education and Society' research unit to which I belong (X et al., 2017) a living example of how an institutional place can be transformed and transformative. Naturally, other environments from outside institutional domains can also help us change academia, alter our fields of inquiry and become differently as students and emerging scholars. Even traditional environments can be spaces of fracture. After all, this paper was been triggered in a bar, while an empty bottle of beer was spinning amongst my edgy fingers.

Notes

1. Feely (2016) provides an excellent new materialist discussion on essentialism in disability studies. He focuses on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) anti-essentialist ontology of assemblage.

2. A fragment of the short story 'Where I'm calling from' by Raymond Carver helped me understand Bennett's idea: 'He sat down at one end of the sofa, and she sat down at the other end. But it was a small sofa, and they were still sitting close to each other'.

3. For a useful introduction to postphenomenology as an alternative to the flat ontology of NM, see Aagard (2017). He presents the radical symmetry of NM as a pitfall, insofar as the breakdown of distinctions between humans, non-humans and signs 'ultimately leaves unexplored the differences between such elements of practice' (p. 9). Though closely aligned with material-semiotic versions of NM, such as Haraway's nature-cultures and Latour's actor network theory, postphenomenology reinstates human beings at the forefront, albeit in a renewed, posthumanist sense. 'While not going so far as to claim that technologies have any agency in themselves, this approach insists that agency is distributed across human beings and technologies' (p. 9). This means a distinction, but not a separation, between human and non-human entities.

4. The dialogical narrative approach focus on the mutual constitution of stories and the people who tell them. This perspective understands people as inherently relational, and storytelling as part of a dialogue between two or more voices (Frank, 2010). Originally formulated by Mazzei (2013), the concept of Voice without Organs allow us to think dialogue differently, that is, decoupled from its humanist subject. According to this new

materialist concept, voice is part of the 'assemblage … of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual' (p. 734).

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ARTICLE 3

Javier Monforte, Víctor Pérez-Samaniego and Brett Smith (2019). Traveling Material↔ Semiotic Environments of Disability, Rehabilitation, and Physical Activity. Qualitative Health Research. DOI: 1049732318820520.

How can we simultaneously appropriate discourse and matter in ways that capture the material and immaterial realities of disability?

GOODLEY et al., *Article*, 2019

Abstract

In this article, we apply narrative dialogism and new materialism to health research. We examine how material↔semiotic environments (MSEs) affect the rehabilitation process of Patrick, a man who exercised with the aim to recover from spinal cord injury. The MSEs are considered embedded subcases within the overall holistic case of Patrick. Three MSEs were identified: the hospital gym, the personal gym, and the adapted gym. These are examined using the analytical lens of assemblages. First, the mutually affecting components of each MSE are described. Second, a larger environmental assemblage is identified, which is termed exercise-is-restitution assemblage. This composite assemblage illuminates the associations between the three MSEs, and reveals how restitution resonated across time and space. The article contributes to the literature by reconceptualizing restitution. It highlights the importance of the materiality of health-related narratives, and it reveals the potential of MSE for transforming rehabilitation and improving exercise promotion and maintenance.

Keywords: exercise, gym, spinal cord injury, narrative dialogism, new materialism, qualitative, assemblage analysis, europe

Introduction

Exercise is important in the rehabilitation process of people with disabilities due to its associated health benefits. For example, evidence-based knowledge indicates that exercise helps to prevent secondary health conditions and improves the overall health status, well-being and quality of life in this population (Martin Ginis, Jörgensen, & Stapleton, 2012; Smith et al., 2018). On this basis, research has been conducted from different disciplines and philosophies in the hope of informing exercise promotion and maintenance.

Recently, disability and exercise scholars have turned to interpretative forms of research via the use of narrative inquiry, a tradition of qualitative inquiry that focuses on people's stories as they unfold over time. From a narrative perspective, stories constitute a key means by which disabled people[1] know and understand the world, make sense of their experiences and give meaning to their lives. Furthermore, stories have the capacity to do things; they can shape what we think, how we behave, and what we imagine as possible, desirable and best avoiding. Therefore, narrative inquiry can offer insights into human lives, including the ways in which stories shape understandings of disability and motivate exercise behaviors (Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

One dimension of interest within narrative inquiry is the narrative environment (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). This term denotes the physical and socio-cultural environments that support and value specific stories while inhibiting or marginalizing others. From a rehabilitation perspective, research has addressed specific narrative environments such as the gym, the blue gym, the adapted gym, or the rehabilitation center (Caddick, Smith, & Phoenix, 2015; Carless, Peacock, McKenna, & Cooke, 2013; Pérez-Samaniego, López-Cañada, & Monforte, 2017; Perrier, Smith, & Latimer-Cheung, 2013; Richardson, Smith, & Papathomas, 2017). This work has revealed useful knowledge for rehabilitation services. Especially pertinent for exercise promotion, it has highlighted that disability narratives act by motivating and facilitating individuals to access particular exercise environments, or turning them away from these.

However, just like most research on physical activity, exercise and disability—be in qualitative or quantitative—narratively informed work usually considers material environments as a mere backdrop to the human social action or, as Aagaard and Matthiesen (2016) put it, "neutral bearers of meanings, symbols of underlying social mechanisms" (p. 35). That is because narrative inquiry, like many other ways of doing research, lives off a separation of matter and meaning, and focuses on the latter (Barad, 2007).[2] Given this unilateral focus on linguistic meaning,[3] a narrative approach alone fails to engage with the material realities of rehabilitation.

Against this backdrop of neglect, we advocate for a broader approach to understanding disability and exercise in which narrative and material orders of existence coalesce. To facilitate this, we offer a specific example of how narrative and materiality were connected as part of our engagements in a case study on rehabilitation environments, exercise, and disability.

Assembling Narrative and Materiality: Material↔Semiotic Environments

In the last few years, the idea of ontological pluralism has gained considerable attention (Frost & Nolas, 2011). This idea consists of integrating two or more paradigms in a single study, so that each paradigm articulates something that the other misses. Hybrid paradigms are useful for avoiding purism, diversifying understandings of the phenomena under study, and capturing its multidimensionality. Attempting to obtain a better understanding of rehabilitation environments, the present article introduces a dual paradigmatic framework that pulls together narrative dialogism and new materialism.

Narrative dialogism (ND) addresses the ways in which personal and cultural realities are constructed, enabled, and constrained in relation to other people through dialogues. This perspective understands people as inherently relational beings, and storytelling as part of a dialogue between two or more voices. As Frank (2005) put it, following the dialogical thoughts of Mikhail Bakhtin, "no one person's voice is ever even his or her own; no one existence is ever

clearly bounded. Instead, each voice is always permeated with the voices of others" (p. 968). The primary concerns of ND can be synthesized in the question: How does a storyteller represents life in the form of a story, and which multiple voices can be heard in his or her voice? (Frank, 2012).

New materialism (NM) refers to a range of theoretical perspectives that emphasize the materiality of the world and everything within it. This approach abandons the poststructuralist focus upon language, but retains its potential to avoid simplistic essentialist ideas of the human body, which accept impairment as a brute fact (Feely, 2016). Core tenets of NM include an emphasis on ontology over epistemology; a monist ontological stance that challenges natural/cultural, human/nonhuman and—perhaps most significantly for this article—human/environment dichotomies; an interest on events, rather than structures or systemic explanations; a rejection of the philosophy of representation; and an understanding of agency that no longer privileges human action (see Fox & Alldred, 2018b).

In this article, we view new materialism as a creative extension of narrative dialogism. We suggest reading our combined account as a polyphonic form of philosophy (Bakhtin, 1984): an assemblage of forms of thinking. Although the ontologies of each paradigm differ fundamentally, this does not mean that they cannot productively supplement each another. We believe that an alliance between the arguments and aspirations of dialogical and new materialist thinkers (rather than their particular onto-epistemological stances) can help us give a materially sensitive attention to narrative, and see matter as a "site of narrativity" (Iovino & Oppermann, 2012, p. 451). To perform this amalgamation coherently, however, several adjustments and expansions to these two approaches are required.

First, an adjustment to Bakhtin's conception of voice is needed, given that it privileges the speaking subject and their stories at the expense of matter. NM takes a critical stance toward such "anthropocentric" and "logocentric" focus and proposes thinking through a more-than-human orientation (Fullagar, 2017; Kuby, 2017). This way, Mazzei (2013) introduces the notion of "Voice

without Organs" in which voice is decoupled from its humanist subject and invoked as part of the "assemblage . . . of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual" (p. 734). Under this modified conception of voice, any claim that "dialogue can be only created between people" (Smith, Allen-Collinson, Phoenix, Brown, & Sparkes, 2009, p. 344) is challenged. One does not have to be a human being to dialogue because agency is understood not as consciously exerting one's will, but rather as making some difference to a state of affairs (Latour, 2005). Thus, dialogue still matters, albeit in a renewed, posthumanist sense.

Second, the coupling of ND with that of NM rejects asking essentialist questions and focuses instead on what Gilles Deleuze terms actual and virtual capacities (Feely, 2016). The implication of this emphasis is that bodies, things and stories are to be studied not in terms of what they are, but in terms of their capacities to act and affect—the things they can and cannot do as actors in relation to other actors. As stated by Law and Mol (2008), an actor is any entity that makes a traceable difference to the other entities with which it is connected. As such, actors' capacities for doing and becoming are relational and contextual. What can stories, bodies and things presently do, and what could they potentially do in a different context? What context-dependent capacities enable stories and matter to do what they do? Such questions lead us to map plausible realities, which are assumed to be mangles of materiality, inclusive of both human and nonhuman actors (Gildersleeve, 2018).

Third, and related to the above points, a common belief of ND and NM is that reality is a constant process of becoming, and thus research should not finalize when presenting its outcomes. In ND, to finalize means saying the last world about who a person is, and who he or she would become. This deterministic practice would finish the dialogue, as dialogue "depends on perpetual openness to the other's capacity to become someone other than whoever she or he already is" (Frank, 2005, p. 967, original emphasis). Given that NM also understands matter as agentic and always changing, it too lets us consider matter's capacity to become someone other through dialogue. Then, for

example, when talking about the human body, we talk about a perpetually becoming-body in a dynamic relationship with its material environment. Such understanding avoids essentialism by affirming that all bodies differ from each other and are in a process of constant change and becoming, always differing from its younger self (Feely, 2016).

Fourth, in the seminal reference for ND Frank (2010) drew inspiration from Donna Haraway and John Law—the precursors of material-semiotic versions of NM—to articulate a dialogical account. Engaging with their ideas, Frank recognized that objects and stories live in the same ontological plane, and rendered stories as "material-semiotic companions." For him, the material dimension creates and shapes the semiotic dimension, and vice versa:

> Stories are made up of signs—their semiotic being—and they are material not only as they do things . . . but also in their capacity to take material forms [. . .]. Stories capacity for symbiosis becomes literal shape-shifting: stories not only work with objects; stories take the form of objects, which are known as materialized stories (p. 43).

Despite retaining the emphasis on stories and dialogue, Frank's view undoes the materiality/narrative binary, and retains the two elements without privileging either. This entanglement of the material and the semiotic in the stories implies that "materiality matters not as an add-on to language, not as a matter of language, but because the material can never be separate from language" (Fullagar, 2017, p. 253). To make this explicit, Kuby (2017) wrote material↔semiotic with a double arrow, pointing out the mutually constitutive nature of things and stories. One is not more important than the other, nor comes before the other; neither can be articulated in the absence of the other.

Finally, both ND and NM avoid using rigid methods that prescribe a set of predetermined and linear instructions to follow. Instead, ND and NM open up fluid methodological spaces in which "methods and research approaches melt, transform, circumvent, infiltrate, appear and disappear" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015, p. 86). According to Rabinow and Rose (2003), traveling the fluid space

between ND and NM "would be a movement of thought that invents, makes use of, and modifies conceptual tools as they are set into a relation with specific practices and problems that they themselves help to form in new ways" (p. xv). Thus, research from our integrative research paradigm would begin with a concept instead of a preexisting method to follow. Concepts operate as experimental tools that create orientations for thinking and (re)orient research practices. It is in that way that concepts or "acts of thought" operate themselves as methods drawn from the problem at hand (Lenz Taguchi & St. Pierre, 2017). Emerging from the assemblage of ND and NM described above, this article develops the analytical notion of "material↔semiotic environment" (MSE). This concept reflects the productive tension between those paradigms and the practices and problems of our research project, of which we give details later. The basic theoretical premise for the creation of this concept is that bodies and stories cannot be isolated from the environments and objects to which they relate. That is, environment is not separate from humans, but part of the human experience (Fox & Alldred, 2016; Srnicek, 2007). Given this "flat ontology," there is no subject and no object in a MSE, in the same way that no single element within a MSE possesses agency, since agency is relational and horizontally distributed. Therefore, matter draws its agentic power from its relation to dialogues and narratives that, at the same time, configure human relations to materiality.

Goals and Procedure

The project on which this article is based sets out to examine the case of Patrick, a man living with chordoma since 2008. Chordoma is a poor prognostic cancer diagnosed in one in one million people per year. About half of all chordomas form in the sacrum, 30% form in the skull base, and 20% form in the bones of the mobile spine (Stacchiotti, Sommer, & Chordoma Global Consensus Group, 2015). Patrick's chordoma was located in the thoracic spine. Due to the location of the tumor, chordoma can result in spinal cord injury (SCI). Furthermore, it is usually not possible to achieve a wide

resection of the tumor without causing serious side effects, including damage to the nervous system. Despite this, surgery is recommended as the main treatment for chordoma. Patrick's spinal tumor was first surgically intervened in January 2009. His spine was damaged, and two vertebrae had to be removed, being replaced with metal implants. Throughout the years, he underwent surgery on six occasions due to tumorous recurrence, which aggravated the SCI. Additional inorganic materials had to be implanted to protect and stabilize vertebrae. A palliative surgery was performed in February 2013. The last clinical report to which we had access, dated April 2016, indicates a Grade D in the ASIA impairment scale (AIS).

Given the disruptive influence of SCI onset and progression, Patrick was faced with having to re-map his life, and make the changes that had occurred intelligible. One way this happened was through storytelling. Patrick's storytelling experience was addressed in the first study of our project (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego, & Devís-Devís, 2018). Our dialogical narrative analysis revealed how a war book provided him with an allegorical narrative map of how to live with SCI and survive cancer. This analysis helped us to understand Patrick's process of rehabilitation and the significance of the role exercise played out across time. However, it overlooked materiality. Owing to our "habits of seeing" and our "anthropocentric gaze" (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010), we saw Patrick as independent and detached from its environment and put him and his stories above other matter involved in the case. More recently, as newcomers to NM (Monforte, 2018), we started to see that as problematic and sought to incorporate the materiality of exercise-based rehabilitation in our project.

Patrick took exercise intermittently throughout 6 years, until he eventually dropped out in 2016. Especially relevant for this article, Patrick exercised in three different MSEs. He called them the hospital gym, the personal gym, and the adapted gym. In visualizing our project as a whole, we view these environments as embedded subcases within the overall holistic case (Yin, 2012). Hence, the case of study in the present article is not Patrick nor his

stories, but the three MSE in which he used to do exercise. The purpose of this study is to examine (a) how these MSE shaped Patrick's rehabilitation process, and (b) how a kind of exercise engagement and participation emerged as the concretization of material and semiotic dynamics.

Prior to data collection, the research obtained the approval of the Ethics Committee of Research on Humans from the University of València. Written consent was taken from Patrick from the beginning of the project, although informed consent to use data over time and within different academic contexts—including this article—has been ongoing. At the onset, data was obtained integrating different data collection techniques, resulting in a rich and eclectic data set. Life-history interviews, object interviews and participant-produced images in different formats (Internet images, collage, photographs) were utilized.[4] Moreover, Javier spent four months working as a volunteer in the adapted gym, where he first met Patrick. He also conducted participant observation in further environments, including Patrick's house and the hospital in which he has been treated since diagnosis. The oscillation between interviews and participant observation was deemed a proper approach for it enables the researcher to have "an ear for meaning and an eye for materiality" (Aagaard & Matthiesen, 2016, p. 41). However, Patrick's health state worsened, which altered the course of the research. This scenario demanded an ethical and procedural shift (Morse, 2007).

In dialogue with Patrick, it was resolved that conducting additional formal interviews was not appropriate. Javier reduced the visits in-person to minimize interference. This, however, did not signify the end of the research, but rather a search for less intrusive ways of interaction. At this stage, it was emphasized to Patrick that he could decide over his involvement and abandon the research at any stage. Following further conversations, Javier and Patrick agreed to engage in informal interviews via telephone and WhatsApp that would serve to sustain a supportive relationship and to keep collecting data in a sustainable way.

According to Mealer and Jones (2014), telephone interviews are a valuable method of gathering information on sensitive topics. In this study, telephone interviews extended access to Patrick, and enhanced the rapport and trust that was built previously in person. In addition, they offered greater flexibility for rescheduling, and gave Patrick greater control over the conversations. Instant messaging provided Patrick with a comfortable and friendly way to communicate that did not affect too greatly on his time and fitted around everyday's life. This was especially important, since he frequently spent days resting on the bed due to fatigue or intense physical pain. To ensure a nonhierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participant, Javier was involved in a reciprocal sharing of his personal stories. Given the sincere rapport built throughout the research, Patrick started to contact Javier by own initiative to share new stories, images and personal thoughts. This continued happening on a weekly basis during almost 2 years. Reflective field-notes were used to document the evolving nature of research and personal thoughts of the dilemmas and challenges that Javier had along the way. Likewise, Víctor and Brett became involved in the project as supportive but "critical friends" that acted as both an ethical and a conceptual sounding board to encourage further thinking in relation to the data and writing.

The concept of MSE was both the object of analysis and the activating methodological force for the inquiry. The analysis involved thinking about MSE in terms of assemblages, and then thinking how these assemblages shaped what was at stake for Patrick in different MSE. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) described assemblages as networks of heterogeneous elements that come together temporarily and work as a whole to produce something. In disability studies, Feely (2016) offered an accessible account of this conceptual tool. Drawing on this author, the perspective that assemblage brings to analyzing MSE can be summarized in three interrelated points.

First, assemblages should not be understood as seamless totalities or closed systems. Any assemblage is made up of smaller assemblages and is part of larger ones. Second, assemblages can have relationships of interiority (between

component parts) and potential for relationships of exteriority (with other assemblages). Finally, it is always possible to remove a component from one assemblage and plug it into another. Therefore, assemblages are fluid and continually in flux, as relations join or leave. They are constantly moving and becoming. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call these movements flows, and suggested that an assemblage "necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously" (p. 25).

Consistent with these conceptual underpinnings, data were treated not as means to obtain subjective, transparent representations of Patrick's life, but as means to explore how he was situated within particular environmental assemblages. In analyzing data, we did not establish one element (such as narrative) as transcendent and determinant, and follow (in a linear fashion) how it shaped or created the other elements. Rather, we saw the components of the MSEs as distributed symmetrically and mutually affecting (Feely, 2016). This means that all the actors in a MSE (stories, machines, human beings, buildings etc.) are part of the same assemblage, and that any of them should be privileged. With these analytical issues in mind, we now move to present the findings of the study regarding the three MSEs in which Patrick used to do exercise, and the larger environmental assemblage that these conformed.

Results

The Hospital Gym

The hospital gym was a rehabilitation setting within a public hospital that offered recovery-centric types of exercise. These served as a way to maximize physiological and neurological capacity, and to restore the newly impaired body close to its former, preinjured state. While other environments at the hospital, such as the examination room, prescribe medical science, the hospital gym prescribes exercise as the chief means by which a person can recover from SCI. Patrick described the hospital gym as containing the "basic machinery" such as "parallel bars, to be able to walk again," and "cages to put tackles that were used to start moving the muscles that I had lost" (Figure 1). He said,

The equipment we had there got my hopes up because . . . having an incomplete injury, it was necessary for me. For example, the parallel bars . . . were necessary to reinforce or remind all my nerves and my leg muscles that I needed those parallel bars to hold on to them, man, to not fall to the ground. And that was a lifesaver that I got. I laid on them with my arms, and at the same time they made my legs work again. Parallel bars for me, both them and the wall bars (Figure 2), which made my quadriceps work out, for example, because I got up from my wheelchair, grabbing the wall bars with my hands for the quadriceps to work, doing squats, for example. For me those were essential devices, man, because I was truly strong in my upper body, and they prevented me from falling to the ground. Somehow, those devices in the gym made me feel safe, because they made me feel that I was not going to fall to the ground; and at the same time those devices heartened me, 'cause I thought I was doing the exercises correctly and I was strengthening the muscularity I had lost during the hospitalization time.

Figure 1. The tackle's grabbers.

Figure 2. The wall bars at the hospital gym.

The attendance of doctors on a daily basis was also a key component of this MSE. "They come down to take an interest in how people are doing and so and forth. Well, they talk to you and, fuck, somehow they empower you, man. Somehow they are encouraging you to carry on." Patrick viewed doctors as an authority to follow. As he put it, "the doctors were my generals" (Monforte et al., 2018). On one hand, medical authority was shaped through symbolic interactions and historically constructed positions that were worked out during those interaction. On the other hand, it was actively produced and sustained by the material presence and practices of the doctors. This is consistent with Aagaard and Matthiesen (2016), who stated that authority is not only produced through narrative, but also through material objects and embodied being.

As consistent with previous research (Hammell, 2007; Williams, Smith, & Papathomas, 2014), sharing the environment with peers provided a sense of realization about what could be achieved with SCI, as well as the opportunity for incidental learning to occur from people with similar impairments. Patrick rendered the hospital gym as an "encounter point" with peers and, related, with information that allowed to "connecting with what was happening to us." In this MSE, Patrick simultaneously found a collective story (an "us") to which subscribe (Richardson, 1990), and other stories that floated in the river of not-for-him (Frank, 2010).

The boundary between the stories to think with and those best avoiding was a matter of motivational differences or horizons of understanding, as dialogical theory suggests (Smith et al., 2009). However, it also was matter of the material limitations and possibilities of living with either complete or incomplete SCI.

> There were people with incomplete injuries, and they already know that, unfortunately, they will never get back into walking again. So they were realistic in some way and they were not even looking forward to walking again. But there were some other peers who had an incomplete injury and, well, somehow they still had the eagerness of walking again.

The "incomplete injury" of his peers moved Patrick to focus on restoration via exercise. Importantly, it was their actual SCI—that is, the materiality of their bodies—what counted for Patrick to emplot his own injury and to think about the virtual capacities of his body. When we view the human body as an assemblage, Patrick's spine is entangled with other spines. The SCI of other bodies plug into Patrick's own body, indicating the direction that his rehabilitation journey could, and should, take.

The Personal Gym

Patrick talked about the "personal gym" to refer to a small room attached to the dining room of his detached house. Patrick himself transformed the room into a gym; he purchased exercise machines and reorganized the space to fit everything. In an object interview conducted in his house, Patrick showed and described one by one all of these machines, including a Smith machine (Figure 3) and two bars attached to the wall, through which he "stood up from the chair and work my quadriceps and calf muscles." Patrick said that he had all what he needed in the room, except parallel bars, which for him were "fundamental." In the absence of them, he used a walker. "That (Figure 4) was the second walker I had, 'cause I burst the first one by walking so much."

Figure 3. The Smith machine.

Figure 4. The walker.

The material properties of the room influenced Patrick's orientation to exercise. For instance, the room's door help Patrick to isolate himself in its own exercise performance[5]: "I used to close the door and isolate myself. Note that my injury was incomplete and that in some way I was pretty autonomous." Meanwhile, a music amplifier helped Patrick to put the world behind him when working out:

> I bought that amplifier there below to put the music on and, you know, disconnect from the planet, man (Figure 5). I focused only on music and exercise, all the rest didn't matter to me [. . .] music channeled, let's say . . . well, the pain that I could have, or the suffering, because when you have a spinal cord injury, just standing produces a neuropathic pain in your legs, or produces discomfort.

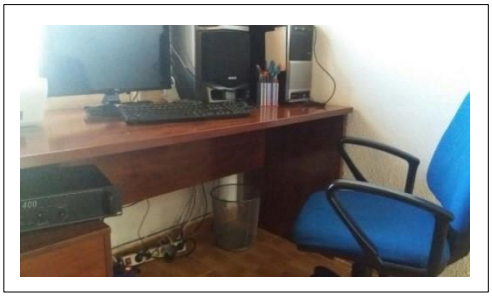

Figure 5. The music amplifier.

Besides illustrating how the music amplifier assisted him in leading a secluded exercise routine, Patrick's comment also points out the key role of music in dissociating him from pain. Simply put, the music amplifier amplified his capacity to "fight the pain." A further component of the MSE that helped Patrick in this "fight" was the air conditioner: "here [at the room] in winter . . . and I, given the operations and the injury . . . the cold affects me a lot. I needed heating to exercise." When Patrick started exercising in the room, pain was more acute: "I started doing maybe five push-ups, you know? And those little push-ups that I started doing caused me a lot of pain during the first months." As time passed, Patrick learned how to adapt his body practices to decrease pain levels. For instance, he used a static bike (Figure 6) for 5 to 10 min at the beginning of every session "to warm up the muscles of my legs, so that the exercises I was going to do with them would not hurt much." Due to his discipline and constancy, Patrick improved fitness that permitted him to increase the intensity and repetitions of the rehab exercises. He perceived this as a sign of progress and recuperation.

Figure 6. The static bike.

The Adapted Gym

The adapted gym (Figure 7) was a space dedicated to the improvement of physical fitness in a controlled space with adapted equipment, health and safety legislations, and qualified practitioners. That gym was thought for and by people with disabilities, and followed a person-centered approach (Gzil et al., 2007) whereby users' self-determined motivation in setting their own goals was respected. Within the same building, the gym shared space with rooms of occupational therapy, speech therapy, physiotherapy, as well as a hair salon and a bar. Sandwiched between those facilities and the gym stood a spacious corridor to march with a walker, or go by tricycle or handbike. Despite not having sophisticated machinery, the design of the environment and the adaptations in the equipment offered multiple benefits for users with different performance levels. For instance, what Sparkes, Brighton, and Inckle (2018) called low-level and less obvious cyborg technology, like velcros and rubber bands, helped to increase, maintain, or improve user's capacities for activity and participation, or reduce task demand. Among all the devices available in the adapted gym, Patrick highlighted a transitional standing and walking frame[6] that allowed him to get around the corridor of the gym.

> At the adapted gym, I was able to walk twice or three times around . . . with the walking frame, of course. Very carefully, slowly. Maybe you remember that, going round the corridors of the gym. Therefore, man, I realized again that I was walking again.

Figure 7. The adapted gym.

In a Delouzian terminology, the walking frame shaped the virtual capacities of Patrick's body, as well as the emplotment of its possible becomings. Just as narratives enable imagination, the frame allowed Patrick to imagine himself regaining the capacity to walk again in the future. That is, to become what he used to be, which is able-bodied. This promise of strengthening and maintaining the body for a functional recovery helped maintain Patrick's motivation for exercise participation.

Alongside this, the materiality of the adapted gym also offered great possibilities to make new friends and interact with peers. A case in point is that the disposition of the handbikes anchored to a large table (Figure 8) enabled and encouraged positive social interactions. The proximity between each handbike invited to chat with the person in front and aside. In this sense, the gym was a socializing space, in contrast with the personal gym, where Patrick was secluded.

Figure 8. The anchored handbikes.

The Exercise-Is-Restitution Assemblage

The material-semiotic actors and situated practices involved in the three environments in which Patrick did exercise were collectively responsible for, and collaboratively supporting the use of exercise as a form of restitution. Frank (2013)referred to restitution as a narrative template adopted

by many of ill and disabled people throughout the Western culture. Restitution involves the goal of recovering from SCI, and hold the basic developmental storyline "Yesterday I was able-bodied, today I'm disabled, but tomorrow I'll be able-bodied again" (Smith & Sparkes, 2005, p. 1096). This emplotment called upon Patrick to be motivated to exercise to walk again.

The voice of restitution echoed in the three MSEs in which Patrick exercised, and assembled them. Altogether, they constitute a composite assemblage: the exercise-is-restitution assemblage. This assemblage, which we discuss below, exposes the dialogical capacity of voices to join in a whole, without each sacrificing its distinctiveness (Frank, 2010). Furthermore, it serves as an example of how voice is productively bound to an "agentic assemblage" (Mazzei & Jackson, 2018). With this in mind, the exercise-is-restitution assemblage helps us to trace the dialogue between each MSE to find out how they coproduced restitution and materialized past, present, and future.

The dialogue between assemblages is produced through flows of affect.[7] Deleuze called "affect" to something that affects or is affected. Affects are forces that connect matter to other matter relationally within assemblages, and produce the capacities of the assembled relations. For instance, Fox and Alldred (2018a) think of memory as a key affective element that might connect different MSE existing on different temporal and spatial scales. For them, "it is partly the memories that individuals bring to events that link these events across time and space, in the process producing both social continuities and change" (p. 6). Despite that past experiences in a MSE are not materially present within current MSE, memories of past experiences had a virtual presence via reminiscences of earlier events, along with other virtual affects such as expectations, imaginations and fantasies. A series of actions, gestures, and ways of relating to others within the adapted gym reminded Patrick of the hospital gym. This resonance with his prior experiences might be one reason why Patrick was drawn to the adapted gym as a MSE for engaging in exercise. Notwithstanding, as Frank (2010) argued, stories remain resonant even when they are not consciously remembered. They continue performing; they

continue vibrating, just as strings or parts of strings in a guitar might resonate when other strings are sounded (i.e., string resonance).

Mirroring Bennett's (2010) notion of "vibrant matter," here we understand resonance as the prolongation of a story by the vibration of matter. That is, stories resonate because environments resemble and reassemble past events. In viewing resonance as something materially produced in a MSE, and as an entanglement of past and present matter in an assemblage, we also echo Barad (2007), who inspires an understanding of stories as "actual physical arrangements" that dialogue with other matter. Simply put, as things entangled with other things. Stories are "not apart from, but a part of, matter" (Kumm & Berbary, 2018, p. 74).

The above considerations can be understood empirically with an example from the case study. The restitution stories which Patrick dialogued with at the hospital gym acquired a universal significance and coherence within the exercise-is-restitution assemblage. As Frank (2010) explained, new stories echo the older stories, with those echoes affecting the present story. Echoes of past encounters with human (e.g., peers, doctors) and nonhuman (e.g., walker, parallel bars) actors at the hospital gym were materialized in concrete objects at the adapted gym. For instance, the walking frame gave the restitution story a tangible presence across MSEs. Then, in the exercise event of walking-with-the-walker, restitution resonated. Stories that matter traveled from one MSE to another, producing the capacities for Patrick to continue becoming-with-restitution.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) discuss how assemblages both enable and constrain flows, allowing affects to travel in certain directions and not others. In the case of study, flows of affect worked toward the territorialization of the exercise-is-restitution assemblage, increasing its internal stability. "Territorialization" is a process of specification that tends to shift bodies into habit and repetition. Relatedly, "reterritorialization" refers to the ways in which continuity, sameness, and boundaries are maintained within an assemblage (Feely, 2016; Fox & Alldred, 2018a). These processes are evident

in the exercise-is-restitution assemblage. In the same way, we can appreciate how affects traveling from the hospital gym and the personal gym seemed to shape the potentialities of the adapted gym. This limits new possibilities for Patrick to become differently through exercise, that is, to depart from the territory of restitution (i.e., deterritorialization). In particular, we are thinking of the broad range of exercise opportunities beyond recovery-centered exercise, which may be psychosocially fulfilling and supportive of exercise maintenance over time. While the three MSEs enabled exercise-is-restitution, they restricted or stifled other ways of understanding and enacting exercise, such as exercise as a form of progressive redemption (i.e., growth in adversity; Papathomas, Williams, & Smith, 2015).

While this article illustrates some of the currently realized or actual capacities of the three MSE, we are left wondering about their possible but not realized virtual capacities. For example, if Patrick had access to other practices and encounters within any of the three MSEs, he might have continued exercise engagement with the goal of enjoyment or social interaction. What other possible, but not realized virtual capacities could the MSE have been brought to light? Likewise, we ask ourselves how other MSEs might have worked in shaping Patrick's rehabilitation process, enabling and disabling different processes of becoming. Answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this article and will be dealt with in our future work.

Conclusion and Directions

In this study, we explored how different environments operated as active agencies to coproduce a type of exercise participation shaped by restitution. In light of the results, the present article extends exercise and health science literature by revealing that restitution is far more than a narrative template. While restitution has been defined and considered as a narrative, we argue that it takes place on a "two-way track"—to borrow a phrase from Dolphijn and van der Tuin (2012, p. 110). This means that restitution is a material-semiotic phenomenon that takes place in environmental assemblages, or what we have

termed MSEs. As illuminated in the analysis, restitution is no longer a story of Patrick, or of his experience, but an assemblage of material and semiotic forces. This new (and potentially richer) way of thinking about restitution cuts through narrative/materiality dualism, and points out that material forces are equally at play in constituting people's process of becoming-with-restitution.

Up to now, restitution narrative has been a prominent knowledge tool in the research agenda of disability and rehabilitation. Several studies in this field highlighted that restitution narrative is key to understand disabled people's health behavior, identities, exercise motivation, and body-self relationships, which has essential implications for future theory-driven interventions (e.g., Monforte et al., 2018; Papathomas et al., 2015; Perrier et al., 2013; Smith & Sparkes, 2005; Sparkes, 1998; Williams et al., 2014). While we find that lessons learned about restitution extremely valuable, the traditional focus on narrative territorializes the concept, and narrows its capacities. In contrast, deterritorializing restitution expands and reshapes the potentialities of such concept, opening up possibilities for aggregate conceptual relations and obtaining new knowledge. We call on other disability and exercise science scholars to consider how their "tried and trusted" ideas, like self-determination theory, might benefit from deterritorializing.

Besides addressing the virtual potentialities of restitution, this study opens extensive venues for understanding exercise engagement, as well as for promoting alternative ways of thinking about rehabilitation through a more-than-human lens. In particular, we have put in conversation two paradigms that, in tandem, show great potential for examining how environments—as agentic assemblages—have important consequences for the ways in which disabled people live and tell their rehabilitation process. Likewise, we have developed the idea of MSE both as a matter of inquiry and as a conceptual tool. Although we have applied this idea in our empirical research, we are also curious about its creative capacities in rehabilitation and exercise sciences, as well as its possibilities in related areas of research. At least, MSE acts as a sensitizing idea that can orientate us toward relevant aspects of rehabilitation.

Thinking with MSE might help us to imagine rehabilitation and exercise differently, and to experiment with the human and nonhuman resources at hand to improve exercise experience in rehabilitation.

With regard to practical opportunities, disabled people may be more likely to sustain and enrich participation if practitioners (e.g., physiotherapists, disability support staff) are able to enhance the evocative capacities of the MSEs in which they work, that is to say, its capacities to resonate stories and embodied practices that matter over time. Through spatial experimentation and storytelling, rehabilitation workers and other health professionals are in a position to help to create, maintain or facilitate enabling MSEs, which open up new associations, practices, and becomings (Gibson, King, Teachman, Mistry, & Hamdani, 2017). For instance, professionals can narratively and materially "ambush" people in rehabilitation environments by optimizing the material-semiotic resources they have access to, thereby expanding the number of agents that are allowed to act for them in positive ways (Smith, 2013).

Taking into account the agentic character of objects and locations in rehabilitation, professionals can furthermore experiment by intervene in the physical relationships between objects and bodies. For example, they can purposively alter the material qualities of facilities and equipment, as well as change its position and its orientation within a particular space. This will affect user's participation in unexpected ways, some of which might disrupt health-related behaviors, and promote new, more positive ones. This strategy can associate with the telling of counterstories, that is, the stories that offer resistance to dominant narratives (Phoenix & Smith, 2011). Effective counterstories perform themselves into the material world, and might challenge the often-unrealistic opportunities that restitution offers regarding exercise participation. Attempts of deterritorialization in this direction represent fruitful avenues for future practice and investigation.

Given the possibilities of qualitative research to be generalizable in, for example, naturalistic, transferable, analytical, or intersectional ways (Carminati, 2018; Smith, 2018), further research is necessary to evaluate the

generalizability of our findings and to illuminate how SCI—and other impairments—are enacted across different MSEs, including hospitals, conventional, adapted and blue gyms, parks, private houses, and any other exercise setting where adjustment to an injury may take place. Moreover, due attention should be given to how disability narratives that motivate specific types of exercise participation are entangled with other motivation technologies such as equipment, machines and assistive technologies of mobility. Equally, given that Patrick largely conformed to restitution, researchers may wish to explore the materiality of other disability narratives, such as quest, chaos, or emergent (see Frank, 2013; Smith, 2013). Throughout such investigations, we suggest engaging with paradigms, theories and concepts that allow accounting for the material and the semiotic dimensions of disability, rehabilitation, and physical activity altogether.

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Notes

1. Like Gibson, King, Teachman, Mistry, and Hamdani (2017), we use the term "disabled people" as opposed to "people with disabilities" to emphasize that persons are disabled by sociomaterial barriers in the environment, and not solely by their bodily impairments. This position still retains a reductive environment/person distinction that we critically discuss in the article, in line with these authors.

2. Opening a discussion on the "dematerialization" of the world into linguistic and social constructions, Barad (2007) alleged that

> language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every "thing"—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation . . . Language matters. Discourse matters.

> Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that doesn't seem to matter anymore is matter (p.132).

3. The hegemonic status of language has been named pantextualism, linguistic idealism, or semiotic reductionism.

4. Life-story interviews are qualitative research methods that provide a space for the participants to tell the story of their life in the way that they choose to tell it. Photo-interviews and object interviews utilize visual material or material objects in an interview setting to stimulate storytelling. See Atkinson (1998), Glegg (2018) and Chamberlain and Lyons (2016) to learn about what these forms of interviewing are, which benefits and uses they have, and the key practical stages and ethical assurances involved in each.

5. It is noteworthy that, in the previous dialogical analysis of Patrick's narrative mapping, we found that his body was monadic in its other-relatedness, and dissociated in its self-relatedness (Monforte, Pérez-Samaniego, & Devís-Devís, 2018).

6. This walking frame looked like those that can be found at the website: https://www.secondstepinc.com/

7. The ontological turn, and more specifically NM, has recalibrated a number of concepts such as "agency," "difference," or "affects." This "new" vocabulary can lead to confusions, so it is important to elucidate how a concept is different (Monforte, 2018). From a posthumanist framework, the notion of "affect" is distinguished from "emotion." Affects are not just feelings or emotions but forces influencing a body's modes of existence. See Zembylas (2017) for a concise explanation of the distinction between affect and emotion.

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ARTICLE 4

Javier Monforte, Brett Smith and Víctor Pérez-Samaniego (submitted). 'Its not a part of me, but it is what it is': The struggle of becoming en-wheeled after spinal cord injury.

The story is not in the words, it's in the struggle

PAUL AUSTER, *The New York Trilogy*, 1987.

Abstract

Purpose: Many people who experience spinal cord injury become long-term wheelchair users. This article addresses the process of becoming en-wheeled through the case example of a disabled man called Patrick.

Design: An intrinsic case study informed by posthumanist developments was used. Within this design, Patrick and his manual wheelchair were the entangled participants of the inquiry.

Methods: Interviews and fieldwork observation with Patrick were conducted. Qualitative data were analysed using the posthumanist notion of 'assemblages'.

Results: The results illuminate Patrick's struggle of negotiating a new embodied selfhood that includes the wheelchair. Patrick engaged in ableist rehabilitation after spinal cord injury to recuperate the capacity to walk and break his connection with the wheelchair. After extensive treatment of his body, he reluctantly assumed his cyborg or posthuman condition.

Conclusion: The analysis resulted in a modest typology based in the notions of humanist and posthumanist enwheelment. In building a typology, the paper offers a useful tool for addressing enwheelment plus other cyborgification processes. We advocate for its acceptance into the disability studies and rehabilitation practice repertoire.

Keywords: Assistive technology; wheelchair use; cyborgification; humanism; posthuman disability studies; assemblages; connectivity

Introduction

Worldwide, ~2.5 million people live with spinal cord injury (SCI), with more than 130,000 new injuries reported each year. SCI results in the impairment of the communication between the brain and the rest of the body. This impairment affects several body functions, including the capacity to walk. As a result, many individuals living with SCI require the use of a wheelchair to move. Not surprisingly, this 'implement technology' [1] alters the way new users experience the world around them, and changes their relations with their bodies and the bodies of others. Wheelchairs matter because they shape people's journey through life, where and how far they can go, and whom they could go with. Therefore, addressing the evolving meanings and roles of wheelchair use throughout the life of a person is important to understand the complexities of living with SCI and disability in society. However, the relationship between disabled people and their wheelchairs has received very little *focussed* attention in disability studies.

One notable exception is the work of Winance [2-4], who explored the mutual shaping of disabled people and their wheelchairs through the processes of material and emotional adjustment. Another exception is the work of Papadimitriou [5], who used the term 'en-wheeled' to refer to individuals with new SCI learning how to use and live through their wheelchairs. Becoming en-wheeled is a process of accepting the wheelchair as an extension and integral part of one's body and its habitual actions. In this sense, long-term wheelchair users epitomise what Haraway described as cyborgs or human–machine hybrids [6].

According to Sparkes *et al.* [7], the process of becoming en-wheeled is a key aspect of cyborgification for people post-SCI. Briefly, cyborgification denotes the coupling of human and technology. As Howe [8] argued, cyborg bodies can be situated along a continuum from those that require very little technological aid to those who benefit greatly from technology. Likewise, Norman and Moola [9] noted that cyborgs range from the apparently trivial, such as corrective eyewear, to more anxiety-inducing forms, such as

restorative prosthetics. Whatever is the case, the metaphor of the cyborg problematizes the supposedly clear boundary between human body and assistive technology. As part of this concern, theories of the posthuman or cyborg have reconsidered the question of agency.

From a humanist perspective, "agency is an innate characteristic of the essentialist, intentional free subject" [10, p.733]. In contrast, posthumanism views agency as "enacted, generated in, with, and through interactions and entanglements of people with technologies as part of more-than-human worlds" [11, no page]. Underpinning this viewpoint are two core arguments. First, not only is agency attributed to humans, but also to non-humans and matter. Matter has agentic capacity, that is to say, the ability to animate, to act, to generate reactions. In practice, this implies that "one has to suppress his or her humanist assumption that human beings act and material objects are simply used" [12, p. 114]. Second, agency is horizontally distributed and relational. Agency is not restricted to a bounded subject**,** but exists in relational networks or assemblages of human and non-human actors that operate together as a whole. For example, a human body comes together with a wheelchair in order to configure a human-nonhuman assemblage that works as a functional entity. Within this intimate assemblage, there is no clear distinction between the individual and the wheelchair. As Pickering [12, p. 26] noted, "the human actors are still there but now inextricably entangled with the nonhuman".

To express the interplay of human and nonhuman agency, Pickering uses the metaphor 'dance of agency' in which both elements are "mangled in practice" (p. 23). Importantly, the elements participating in this 'dance' do not possess agency in and of themselves, but are mutually and emergently constitutive of one another. As Freeman [14] puts it, "human and nonhuman entities co-construct dynamic and influential networks of associations". Thus, a person living with SCI *becomes* in an emergent relation with the wheelchair in the human body-wheelchair assemblage. Both *become together* by virtue of being connected. This means that not just the components in the assemblage act, but the assemblage itself acts. Bennett [15] named this 'agentic assemblage'.

As agentic, assemblages are always evolving to include broader network connections with other assemblages. Given this interconnectedness, it is impossible to conceptualize the human body–wheelchair assemblage as consisting only of these two elements [16, 17]. Therefore, addressing the basic human body–wheelchair assemblage requires also considering the relations with other affecting elements and broader assemblages. However, as Brownlie and Spandler [18] warned, these relations are extensive, so we have to be selective. In this regard, researchers make what Barad [19] termed 'agential cuts' in deciding what to *focus on* and how to present their arguments. As Lupton put it (11, no page), "they engage in creative imaginings in attempting to map the entanglements, assemblages… and becomings that are represented in research participants' words and practices'".

In this article, we enact an agential cut in order to focus on the human body-wheelchair assemblage along with its key relations with other assemblages and elements. We do this empirically by documenting and discussing the process of becoming en-wheeld of Patrick, a man living with cancer and SCI. As Hicks [20] would suggest, the story of their connection falls into the category of 'agency histories' rather than 'life histories'; that is because the stories of people are entangled with those of the agencies they share their life with.

Method

This article is grounded on a three-year project designed to travel Patrick's journey through illness and disability. Patrick is a white, 46-year-old man diagnosed with chordoma, a poor prognostic cancer that is aggressive and locally invasive [21]. Given that his chordoma is located at the thoracic spine, it caused damage in the spinal cord. Over a span of six years, he had six surgeries in order to remove the tumour. Each new surgery provoked further harm in his spine.

Javier first met Patrick in an adapted gym where the former was a volunteer, and invited him to participate in a series of recorded interviews that would explore his experience of illness and disability. In accordance with ethical

requirements, Patrick gave informed consent to voluntarily participate in the project and was fully aware of his ability to withdraw at any stage without reprisal. Throughout the project, three data-prompted interviews were conducted [22]. The personalized prompts included images, objects and text, which served to stimulate discussion in the interview setting. The interviews were loosely structured, and Patrick was encouraged to share stories about his experiences in his own words and according to his own relevancies. The interviewer invited Patrick to reflect upon key events, and to discuss his connection with different 'disability artifacts' [23]. To do so, detail-oriented, elaboration and clarification probes were used [24]. Probes included 'could you tell me more about that (experience; photograph; object)?' 'Can you give me an example?' 'How did that affected your life?' 'Could you explain that further?' All the interviews were conducted at Patrick's home and totalled six hours. Concurrently with these interviews, participant observation and informal interviews via telephone and instant messaging were conducted.

Given the multi-layered nature of the research, supportive but 'critical friends' were also involved in the elaboration of the present article. The role of the critical friends was to stimulate reflexivity and alternative views, examine matters like theoretical preferences, and ask provocative questions regarding data and writing [25]. As part of our critical dialogue, we identified the process of becoming en-wheeled as a 'worthy topic' [26]. In concrete, we considered that examining enwheelment is relevant and sociologically interesting because this process illuminates the role of material artifacts in social practice and their shaping of the disability experience.

The data were analysed using narrative analysis that was sensitized by a 'more-than-human' perspective [27]. That is to say, while narrative research is case-centred and focuses on humans and the meanings they construct as the primary source of data, we incorporated attention to materiality through the analysis, thus shifting the focus from Patrick and his stories to include a consideration of non-human entities. Accordingly, we used the notion of assemblage as the key analytical reference. In doing this, we do not just examine the combination

of elements comprising the assemblage, but also the process resulting from the different ways those elements interact [28]; such process is the process of becoming en-wheeled.

Restitution assemblage

> The doctor said to me, 'Man, use the wheelchair!' and so. No, I do not want to, man. I want to walk again, you know?

Patrick's process of becoming en-wheeled was framed by restitution. Although 'restitution' has been defined as a dominant narrative that structure illness and disability stories [29, Reference removed for double blind review 1], it can also be seen as an agentic assemblage made up of narrative *and* material components [Reference removed for double blind review 2]. This assemblage includes smaller assemblages made of stories, interactions, medical and rehabilitation procedures, bodies, objects, buildings and fluids that work together to produce specific practices of becoming. In the case of Patrick, these practices were oriented to turn the 'I can no longer walk' of his injured embodiment into 'I can walk again'.

Given his focus on walking again, Patrick refused to dialogue with the wheelchair. However, that Patrick neglected the possibility of incorporating it in his way of being did not prevent him to develop a positive and productive cyborg identity in relation to other technologies. For instance, he accepted and celebrated massive inorganic materials (i.e. prosthesis) inside of him, which allowed him to function on a daily basis (Figure 1). Indeed, he viewed this 'metalwork' as a *"medical piece of art"* and part of the *"magic"* he needed to return to his former life as able-bodied.

Figure 1. The prosthesis

Patrick: The photo is awesome. In the middle you can see all the machinery (...) Fourteen screws there… it's a worthwhile image.
Javier: Did you see yourself recognised in the image?
Patrick: Of course, I knew it was me. I knew it was me, man.

The prosthesis, which Butryn [1] catalogued as 'self technologies', were compatible with the restitution assemblage, as they had the ability to normalise the body. In contrast, the wheelchair reminded Patrick of the impossibility of walking again, that is, of recovering his 'normal' life prior to SCI. In this sense, using the wheelchair was incompatible with restitution. At the same time, though, the wheelchair was a constitutive part of restitution, playing an active role in the shaping of Patrick's experience of SCI. Specifically, it worked as a looking glass that forced comparisons between past, present and future [32]. The wheelchair threatened the temporal orientation of restitution, as well as its designed endpoint (i.e. walking again). With the restitution narrative operating, Patrick's anticipations of the future, or material imaginings [33], omitted the wheelchair. In restitution terms, the acknowledgement of Patrick-wheelchair would represent the acceptance of a defeat.

Ableist rehabilitation

Patrick regarded the wheelchair as a problem to overcome or eliminate through engaging in ableist rehabilitation. By ableist rehabilitation we refer to those conceptions and practices aiming to restore the 'normal' life and body that ableism uphold as leitmotifs of successful citizenry. Patrick's rehabilitation represented a fight to return to health or to normalcy, rather than a process of becoming newly abled. He equated recuperating what was lacking (the capacity to walk) with better rehabilitation outcomes, fitting the ableist logic that favour legitimated and standardized bodies (those that can stand) whilst discriminates against others (e.g. wheelchair users). As a strategy to maintain the narrative of progression to functional recovery, he tried to replace the wheelchair with a walker.

> I used a walker, dragging my legs! The ambulance left me at the threshold of the hospital door, well, in, let's say where the hospital gym was, and I went inside, thud, thud, thud, dragging my legs as I could, uh, dude. Anyway, trying my best to be able to walk again, that was my goal.

Walking (or dragging the legs) with the walker was a form of passing as an 'able body'. Disability passing refers to the way people conceal social markers of impairment (such as the wheelchair) to pass as 'normal' [34]. By avoid using the wheelchair to go into the hospital gym, Patrick sought to pass as someone whose 'liberation' from the wheelchair was a question of *"patience, time, and hard work in the gym".* Over time, he worked out compulsively in different environments as a means to discard the wheelchair and approximate independent functioning [Reference removed for double blind review 2]. The following comment on the exercise routine that Patrick followed in the personal gym is illustrative of how he lived enwheelment as an individual problem to overcome and correct through will power.

> For me the magic was to walk again. And that magic would come by what I did, by my discipline, every morning [in the gym] and working out to the limit to walk again (…) I would do 300 push-ups a day, in a series of 50… 50,

> urgh, urgh, urgh! Man, I tell you, no wheelchair, …to my top, you know, …trying to reverse the situation.

'It's not a part of me... but it is what it is'

Patrick was adamant in clarifying that the wheelchair was not, and will not become, a part of him. He viewed the wheelchair as an instrument that provided him a provisional solution to his bodily 'lack' or *"a temporary means of transport".* When asked about the reasons why he refused the wheelchair to be a companion all over his disability journey, he said:

> My rejection of the wheelchair was given by the limitations that I understood it was going to produce if I stayed confined to it. Well, for example, I loved walking through the mountain or walking through the mountain with my kids. And the wheelchair was going to prevent me from doing that. Therefore, the chair was an obstacle to what I liked to do until that time. So I escaped from the chair because I wanted to do that again. Because I didn't want to stay confined to the chair again, given the physical limitations that it would produce in me.

Underlying this comment is the notion of the wheelchair as an obstacle to accomplish restitution, as well as Patrick's assumption that his situation regarding wheelchair use depended on his intentionality and free will. Through the years, Patrick rejected the wheelchair "*because I was completely sure that I was going to walk again*". However, the possibility of "*escaping*" from the wheelchair did not last forever. The last (palliative) surgery, along with several conversations with doctors, convinced Patrick that standing up and walk will be unviable for him: "*Now the tumour pinches the spine and does not let me walk again, so I begin to assimilate the idea… that this is going to be definitive, long-term, man. Well, this is a big shock*". This 'shock' represented a bodily awareness and the subsequent assimilation of SCI, which led to a focus on recovering from cancer and a reluctant acceptance of having become en-wheeled:

> I am convinced I won't get rid of it anymore because of the circumstances …, I slowly realised that my normal situation was the wheelchair now (…) the wheelchair, well, it limits me, it fucks me up because I know that there are a number of things I won't be able to do (…) but it is what it is.

Patrick resignedly assumed that he depended on the wheelchair then on. To paraphrase Peers and Eales [35, p. 112], the wheelchair ended up being a necessary solution to which Patrick became "*uncomfortably* dependent upon".

Humanist and posthumanist enwheelment

For most people with SCI, wheelchairs are not a choice, but a consequence of living with disability. Wheelchair users become tangled in the human-wheelchair assemblage (i.e. they become en-wheeled) notwithstanding their hopes and expectations. Enwheelment, we argue, is a reality that proceeds regardless of whether persons with SCI attend to it, or how they choose to make sense of it. As we put forward earlier in the introduction, enwheelment is underpinned by a posthuman ontology, which is faithful to the reciprocal and distributed nature of agency. Hence, people with SCI are already cyborgs [6, 36, 37] and epitomize the posthuman condition where cyborg connections are neither good nor bad, but unavoidably present (Goodley *et al*. 2014, Nicholls *et al*. 2016). Still, as Winance [4] argued, there are different ways of being entangled. Some of these align with posthumanism, others do not. In this sense, cyborgification is also about defining the status that the wheelchair can acquire in the assemblage, as we will see in what follows.

When the experience of enwheelment harmonises with its posthuman ontology, becoming en-wheeled constitutes a positive and meaningful process for wheelchair users. People whose experience of enwheelment line up with posthumanism emphasize that the wheelchair 'becomes part of them' [3,4,7,40,41,42]. That is, they become en-wheeled *with* the wheelchair. They establish and reaffirm a communicative relationship with the wheelchair, developing a positive cyborg identity. Mirroring Frank's idea of disability as a

quest for developing a new self in meaningful ways, these peoples' process of becoming en-wheelment is affirmative (non-tragic) [29].

However, not every wheelchair user lives a posthumanist enwheelment. This seems a contradiction in its own terms, since enwheelment *is* inherently posthuman. Patrick's case allow us to explore this contradiction, as he became en-wheeled *against* the wheelchair. Adapting Frank's [43] theorisation of the body problems in action to human–non-human assemblages, our findings revealed that his relationship with the wheelchair was monadic in nature. That is, Patrick did not related to the wheelchair, but rather pushed it away, using it as a negative reference; he lived among it, but not *with* it. In terms of Patrick's embodied experience, the wheelchair was felt in the flesh as not a part of him, but apart from him.

Against this backdrop, we interpret that Patrick lived a *humanist enwheelment.* From a humanist lenses, wheelchair users become known and know themselves in terms of what they are not (abled) and cannot do (e.g. walk). They are "lacking subjects who might (if luck holds out) be made better through ableist rehabilitation" [44]. Notably, the humanist logic assumes that human beings participate in a common essence. That is, they possess a set of essential attributes that secure a human status. For example, walking is part of normal species functioning for humans. This essentialism generates an epistemic violence against disabled people, excluding them from full human status [16, 38]. To be humans, they need to fight against impairment and recuperate their essential capacities (e.g. the capacity to walk). Straus' argument on the upright posture evokes this essentialist notion of a species norm: 'Upright posture characterizes the human species. Nevertheless, each individual has to struggle in order to make it really his own. Man has to become what he is' [45, p. 534]. What all of this speaks to in the context of this paper is that the restitution assemblage channels the humanist process of fighting to recuperate the innate set of attributes or characteristics of the essential human that have been troubled by impairment. This is why, despite its emphasis on self-containment, independence and sovereignty, humanism celebrates those

human-non human assemblages as compatible with the archetypal, able-bodied human. An instance of this is Patrick's acceptance of his massive prosthesis as a part-of-me, in contrast of his rejection of the wheelchair.

Against these empirical backdrop, we activated a second phase of analysis that was abductive. Tavory and Timmermans [46, p. 5] suggest that abductive analyses involve a 'creative inferential process' that allows to amplify, develop and deepen our findings through dialogue with previous literature on enwheelment, as well as conceptual accounts addressing humanism and posthumanism. In this way, the analysis leads to new theoretical insights or models. In our case, reading the case of Patrick alongside other cases [e.g., 3, 4, 5, 7, 40, 41, 42] enabled us to develop a modest typology based on the notions of humanist and posthumanist enwheelment. This typology constitutes a theoretical generalisation [47] that illustrates how the human body-wheelchair assemblage is enabled and constrained by the resources available to think, live and feel enwheelment. Each type of enwheelment reflects people's resources or lack of them, and explains how the available range of resources limits people. For example, those like Patrick who engage in humanist enwheelment are limited in imagining anything that could affirm or valorise wheelchair dependency. Importantly, the typology we sketch allows acknowledging the posthuman nature of enwheelment, while at the same time appreciating how individuals give sense and map to their process of becoming en-wheeled in concert with humanist or posthumanist conceptions of agency, disability and the human. As with all typologies, boundaries are blurry, so humanist and posthumanist enwheelment can be arrayed along one continuum (Figure 2), which have its own vitality [48]. Within this continuum, multiple 'relational modalities' (ways of connecting to or disconnecting from the wheelchair) are possible [4]. These relational modalities characterise 'ways of being together' that define what the person in/with/far away from the chair is, but they do not correspond to types of users. Over time, a person can move across the continumm without following a predetermined order. This way, the typology presented respects the idea that the human body-wheelchair

assemblage is a temporary, fluid and mobile connection that is adjusted and modified over time depending on its connections with other agents and agentic assemblages [39].

Figure 2. Humanist/Posthumanist enwheelment

Further emphasising this vitality, the typology is not meant to be hierarchical or evaluative. Quite the reverse, we purposely intended to avoid any dichotomist, prescriptive or moral temptation to cause a rift between good or preferable posthumanist enwheelment, in contrast to a wrong or bad humanist one. In this vein, here we did not seek to condemn rehabilitation practices focused on restitution, which makes significant strides in helping people hold their own [48] and, under certain conditions, help them to restore their body close to its former, pre-injured state. That said, it can be argued that developing a positive relationship with the wheelchair is important and necessary for disabled people in terms of flourishing and living a good life in the long run. When disabled bodies need wheelchairs, they may need to move away from the rigidity and narrowness of humanism and engage with posthumanism, which means exploring new modes of being cyborg through interfacing *affirmatively* with the technologies to which they depend upon. Developing a beneficial relation with the wheelchair, however, is not straightforward. As Papadimitriou [5] pointed out, becoming en-wheeled involves a constant challenge of negotiating, reorganizing and reconfiguring one's way of being and doing. In this sense, it is also worth noting that flourishing *with* the

wheelchair is not only about meaning and about accomplishment, but also includes hardships, limitation, and failure in the process [49]. Accordingly, people living with impairments may need to take their time to incorporate the wheelchair [2, 3], and perhaps acknowledging that becoming one with the wheelchair straightaway post-SCI may be as unrealistic as quickly returning to their former, able body.

Conclusions

This paper has engaged with posthuman disability studies to provide understanding about the process of becoming en-wheeled. Concretely, it has explored a cyborg assemblage comprised by a man living with SCI and his manual wheelchair. The article has offered insights into the ways in which the process of becoming en-wheeled might be lived within the restitution assemblage. The Patrick-wheelchair coupling is just a small part of the networks of humans and non-humans that form the restitution assemblage. However, focussing on this intimate assemblage have helped us to understand with more depth one of the many ways restitution is materialized, and not just drawn as a story a person draws on to shape experiences. For example, we have showed how restitution emplotted the wheelchair as a barrier to independence and mobilised practices of ableist rehabilitation to break the cyborg assemblage formed between Patrick and his wheelchair. Here, it is noteworthy that the use we have made of the notion 'restitution'. Instead of applying restitution as simply a narrative resource, we have articulated it as a more-than-human concept that helped us addressing both the narrative and material forces that made up the realities of live for Patrick [Reference removed for double blind review 2].

The analysis indicated that Patrick's process of becoming en-wheeled was developed negatively (against the wheelchair), rather than affirmatively (with the wheelchair). The restitution assemblage was underpinned by a broader humanist logic that disregarded connectivity and, as such, enwheelment. In contrast to much of the previous literature on the process of becoming en-

wheeled, Patrick's process was not oriented to fit himself and the wheelchair together, but rather to divorce from the wheelchair and recuperate the normative capacities of the able-bodied human (i.e. walking) that humanism regards as essential. Deepening on this issue, our examination derived in a typology that addresses the ways humanist and posthumanist ideals shape the process of becoming en-wheeled. We already explained what this typology is, but it remains an important question: "What does this typology do; for whom is it useful, to do what?" [50, p. 48]. Our intention is that it could help those who experience enwheelment and those who accompany them, mostly practitioners, such as physiotherapists, rehabilitation workers, SCI support staff, and other relevant health professionals, as well as disability scholars.

First, the typology may prove useful for wheelchair users to know, name and critically reflect on how a type of enwheelment is affecting their lives, as well as to educate them towards the potentialities of other ways of being and doing through enwheelment. For example, a disabled person whose only reason to exercise is avoiding the wheelchair may be prompted to do exercise as a means to "feel the wheelchair" [3] if they are made aware of the ableist nature of humanist enwheelment. Second, using the enwheelment typology as a guide or reference can facilitate practitioners recognising the potentials and perils in certain assemblages and helping clients to incorporate assistive technologies in ways that support flourishing. In this sense, the typology may sensitise practitioners on their approach to rehabilitation practice, including what is valued and discouraged, which in turn influences clients' "feeling of dependency" [3]. Taking into account the posthumanist nature of enwheelment, rehabilitation practice becomes not a relationship of assistance between an active practitioner and a passive rehabilitation receiver, but rather a collective attention to the relationships –the connections– that develop between the person, the wheelchair, and the surrounding assemblages –such as restitution. The typology we have suggested allows the nature or these relationships to be quickly identified amidst the messy, complexity that characterizes each varied personal process of becoming en-wheeled. Health

professionals should be mindful of such nature to avoid ableism and help people with disabilities flourish. Finally, the typology might be useful for disability scholars willing to examine enwheelment and, more broadly, different modes of cyborgification or human-non human assemblages involving different contexts (e.g. sport), populations (e.g. elderly people), impairments (e.g. cerebral palsy) and disability artifacts (e.g. assistive listening devices). This is not though to impose the typology suggested here onto people or their research. Nor is it an attempt to equip readers with a one-size-fits-all typology. Rather than aspiring to offer the final word on enwheelment, the typology stands as a heuristic effort conceived not only for the purposes of potentially illuminating an intricate phenomenon, but also for encouraging dialogue. Indeed, we hope that others develop it, critically engage with it, and create alternatives in order to develop more nuanced understandings of enwheelment and cyborgification.

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CONCLUSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

This thesis has presented an intrinsic case study grounded on the life of Patrick and some of his material↔semiotic companions, including three environments and his manual wheelchair. Concurrently, it has engaged in theory-building. Narrative, visual and observational data collected over a three-year period were plugged into three main perspectives: narrative dialogism, new materialism and, connected to the second, posthumanist disability studies. Overall, the thesis offers different empirical, theoretical, methodological and analytical developments. In the following paragraphs, I will underline which I think are its two general and most remarkable contributions. This is a personal view and I do not want to finalise reading; readers may consider that other contributions are more relevant or interesting, which from a qualitative point of view is not a problem as such.

To me, the first key development of this thesis is the enhancement of how we understand what it means to become-with-restitution. Thus far, this is the first research that has thoroughly reformulated and extended the very concept of restitution. This 'conceptual movement' (Davies, 2016, p. 125) has been done from different onto-epistemological angles. From a narrative standpoint, we have showed how the plotline of a war story called Anabasis shaped a restitution story. This points out how non health-related stories can turn into restitution through the process of allegorical narrative mapping. Such conclusion is invitational: it appeals us to take more and more diverse stories in consideration when it comes to the shaping of realities of illness and disability. From the point of view of visual research, we have showed that images and, more concretely, visual metaphors, are useful artifacts to tell and share stories about people who fight to get back the old self and body. That is, restitution do have a visual expression. Finally, we adopted a posthuman stance, where human capacities are considered relational and distributed across assemblages of diverse actors, forces and affects. From this lens, we have significantly reconceptualised restitution as an assemblage of stories,

interactions, medical and rehabilitation procedures, bodies, objects, buildings and fluids, among other. By definition, this assemblage motivates specific practices of becoming that are oriented to restore the ill and disabled person to their former self. What is gained through thinking of illness and disability narratives in terms of assemblages is that assemblages allow us to attend both the material and narrative dimensions of peoples' stories. Here, previous narrative foundations are not rejected, but rather reworked and extended in more-than-human terms. All these points might be read as generalisations (Smith, 2018) that may spread to different ways of telling and living illness and disability such as quest, chaos, emergent or progressive redemption (Frank, 2013; Smith, 2013; Papathomas, Willams & Smith, 2015).

Relating to the above development, the second general contribution of this thesis has been bringing ontologically different paradigms together. Namely, narrative dialogism and new materialism have been meticulously put together in order to develop a 'meta-paradigm' for the project (Smith, 2019). This approach helps avoiding a problematic onto-epistemological practice: to split the world into meaningless matter on the one hand and matterless meaning on the other. To some, as Wiltshire (2014) noted, sitting paradigms together might be seen as somewhat unorthodox and raise concerns for coherence and compatibility. These are legitimate concerns that I have kept in mind during the doctoral process. I find the discussions around paradigm incommensurability fascinating, and I have found a space to enter the debate. I also have found the space to test if escaping orthodox thinking is liberating and useful for generating valuable knowledge. After this dissertation, I do think it is. The kind of slippage or bricolage I have enacted has the potential to add rich and nuanced layers of insight and open up alternative ways of doing and thinking about/with research. Of course, this does not mean that conventional or mono-ontological/methodological work is not as valuable as pluralist research. It just means that, if taking informed, principled, and disciplined decisions, doing pluralist research can be fruitful.

Additional conclusions, ideas and advancements are worth nothing. In what follows below, I compile a list of highlights in the form of bullet points. For reasons of clarity, these are divided in five sections that correspond with the four articles of the dissertation.

Article 1

- The Anabasis of Patrick shows rather than tells that narratives are actors that have the capacity to shape the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of those who are caught up in them.

- Illness and disability might be traversed with the guidance of inspirational stories that are not circumscribed to illness or disability. We name these stories allegorical narrative maps.

- Allegorical narrative maps might be powerful providers of exercise motivation and engagement. In the context of impairment, restitution-related maps can act as powerful motivators of exercise. However, when functional recovery is not forthcoming, they may lead to abandonment. When that happens, illness might help upholding or re-signifying restitution.

- Dialogical narrative analysis remains an under-used form of analysis within narrative research compared to thematic or structural narrative analysis, for example. However, it may lead to novel understandings of how stories dialogue, and how inner dialogue affects people's sense of self and body problems.

- Incorporating visual metaphors to qualitative research might increase access to embodied experiences, and potentially enhances knowledge translation and dissemination.

Article 2

- New materialism has begun to make an impact on sport, exercise and health. This anti-essentialist philosophy of science makes matter 'matter' without returning to essentialism and, thus, reinforcing structures of inequity.

- The newness of new materialism has been questioned. Partly, this is because some 'post' scholars use a dense academic language and adopt a non-problematic position toward the 'new' by, for example, failing to acknowledge indigenous ontologies.

- In order to support the development of new materialism, a receptive but critical attitude towards the label 'new' is suggested. To interrupt its exclusionary tendency, it is important to render ideas accessible for those who have not extensively studied new materialist theories.

- Thinking with new materialism could prove useful for disrupting habits of thought and research conventions that have been deemed both ethically and ontologically problematic. These include, but are not limited to, anthropocentrism, logocentrism and binary thinking.

- Neoliberalism could either condemn or pervert new materialism. It is essential to participate in collective environments that challenge the neoliberal academic assemblage and help generate innovative and useful ideas.

Article 3

- Despite their ontological incongruities, narrative dialogism and new materialism can combine to address the material and semiotic forces that make up reality.

- The notion of material↔semiotic environments captures the key tenets of both philosophies, pointing out the mutually constitutive nature of things and stories. This concept brings something new to the table, namely an opportunity to expand our understanding of the dynamic between narrative and material environments.

- Environments are active participants in humans' becomings. They are agentic assemblages that dialogue with one another through flows of affect. Affects are forces that link matter to other matter relationally within environments and produce the capacities of the assembled relations. Our work shows how affects can connect environments that exist on different temporal and spatial scales.

- Mirroring the new materialist notion of vibrant matter, we reconceptualise resonance as 'the prolongation of a story by the vibration of matter'. In other words, resonance denotes the entanglement of past and present matter in an assemblage. This idea help appreciate how and why stories travel across environments.

- The insights provided in the article allow thinking about disability, rehabilitation and physical activity through a more-than-human lens.

Article 4

- 'Enwheelment' is a concept denoting the entanglement or assemblage of a human body and a wheelchair, and thus the distribution of embodiment; the process of becoming en-wheeled entails the dissolution of boundaries between the human and the nonhuman.

- There are different ways of being entangled, and the wheelchair can acquire different status, including 'part of me' and 'not part of me'. The restitution assemblage emplots the wheelchair as an obstacle to

fluid being-in-the-world. Within the restitution assemblage, wheelchairs occupy a paradoxical position; the wheelchair is an essential element to territorialise the assemblage, but the logic of restitution demands breaking the human-wheelchair connection (i.e., deterritorialisation).

- Ableist rehabilitation might foster detachment of individuals from the wheelchair. This is related with classic, humanist understandings of disability that view the human-wheelchair assemblage as something inherently negative and disabling.

- We offer a typology based on the notions of humanist and posthumanist enwheelment. Such typology could potentially be used to explore a whole range of cyborgification processes. Thus, it stands as a useful resource for future sociological work.

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IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of the PhD, a number of friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances asked me what my dissertation was about. After hearing my answer, some made further questions: 'So what is the point of your research?', 'Why do we have to care about that?' 'What can we do with that information?' 'Can you use it to make concrete suggestions on what to do?', 'Does this kind of studies impact practice?', and 'How can your conclusions be applied to a real-world setting?' At first, I must admit, these inquisitive questions bothered me. I felt they were disapproving the form of research I was conducting. Still, as the thesis evolved, I came to realise that giving satisfactory (yet not definitive) answers to 'so what' questions was vital if I wanted to make the thesis relevant and useful to multiple audiences. On the one hand, we should remain critical to the increased requirement for qualitative researchers to demonstrate the 'impact' of their work (see e.g., Gibson, 2016; Sparkes, 2013), but on the other hand we must hold ourselves accountable of making explicit how our research might contribute to enhance people's lives.

In the articles 1, 3 and 4 we have already outlined a set of possible practical implications for healthcare workers, health psychologists and sociologists, policy-makers, staff within disability organizations, activists and others that come into contact or are interested in supporting people experiencing illness or disability. However, it seems pertinent to briefly reflect on the nature of these implications, as well as to synthesise and add some key insights that may be particularly useful for physical activity-related professionals (e.g., physicians, physical activity-session facilitators) who wish to change, develop and improve their service and their own practice.

Most of the implications for improving practice arise from the theoretical insights generated. This might be viewed with reticence, since it is often believed that theory is just related to academic endeavours, and not to physical activity and active rehabilitation everyday life practice. Contrary to this view, McPherson, Gibson and Lelége (2015) argued that theory 'can do more than

frame empirical research, helping us question and better understand what we are doing and why, and how things could be otherwise' (p. 10). In fact, I believe that theory is not distinct from practice, and it does not appear in a pre-determined sequence. As Deleuze and Foucault (1972/1977) contended, 'theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice' (p. 208). Given this, the theoretical insights delivered in this dissertation do have the capacity to prompt professionals to think about, question and actually change their current practice.

In this dissertation, theory shows itself in different forms and dimensions. Perhaps the conceptual dimension is the most significant. A number of sensitising concepts have been introduced, including 'humanist and posthumanist enwheelment', 'allegorical narrative mapping' and 'material↔semiotic environments'. Furthermore, concepts such as 'resonance' and 'restitution' have been given new meanings. The latter concept is central it this thesis, as noted in the previous section; it is its key topic, and channels most of its empirical and conceptual developments of the research. But restitution also demands attention in practical settings.

Restitution matters for physical-activity related professionals who work with ill or disabled people because exercise is very often inserted in between the 'today I'm sick' and the 'tomorrow I'll be healthy and/or able to walk again'. When engaging with restitution, ill or disabled people become 'investors' who expect a return for the time, efforts and energy they spend working out. Physical activity-related professionals play a significant role in feeding and working to fulfill this expectation, or rather challenging it and constructing new ones.

The insights provided in this thesis can aid professionals to find alternative strategies to turning their clients' investments in the desired outcomes. All the same, they also work to question and debate whether using a return to 'normal' (independent) functions as *the* barometer of recovery is necessarily optimal. In this sense, it has been argued -in this thesis but also in previous research (e.g., Papathomas, Williams & Smith, 2015)- that problematising and trascend

exercise-is-restitution can be very productive, especially when the possibility of outright functional restoration is unattainable. If professionals do not putting on the critical hats, exercise-is-restitution might have negative consequences for their clients, some of them tangible, such as drop out, and some others less tangible, such as psychological distress.

However, challenging the normative assumptions exercise-is-restitution does not mean criminalising the expectations, preferences and values of clients, nor prescribing or imposing an alternative. The task of professionals (and of researchers) is not telling people who they *have* to become. Rather than simply refuting or correcting exercise-is-restitution, professionals should understand how it operates, and what its actual and virtual consequences are. That is the reason why this dissertation have practical value, and that is why professionals can benefit by engaging, for example, with our original understanding of restitution as an assemblage.

The notion of 'restitution assemblage' is a curious oxymoron. Restitution is about a designed product (recovery), but the very idea of 'assemblage' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) posits recovery not as an end point or product, but rather as an unfinished and continuous process of making and breaking connections. The contradiction is showed in action in Article 4 when we argue that, although wheelchair was a constitutive part of restitution, Patrick worked to remove it from his life so that restitution could be completed. What this paradox shows is that people *depend* on the wheelchair to tell their restitution stories and dispose of this dependency. Ironically enough, the only way to achieve the 'independence' that restitution reclaims (i.e., self-sufficiency) is through material↔semiotic dependencies. That is why professionals that want to help people achieving restitution can benefit from paying attention to assemblages, rather than on individual bodies. As we showed, they can contribute to fulfil restitution through enabling connections between people, technologies and environments –namely those connections that turn ill and disabled people into 'competent normal subjects' (Moser, 2006).

But assemblages are not solely useful for tracing dependencies. This would be overlooking the political nature of this image of thought, which is at odds with restitution. Engaging with assemblages (and more broadly with posthumanist) leads us to celebrate illness and disability dependencies and live meaningfully with them, rather than eliminate and reduce them to align with the human species-norms. In this sense, the idea of 'restitution assemblage' is inherently critical *and* generative. Through using assemblages to rethink the notion of restitution, we are already challenging the normative assumptions about when someone is healthy and sick or able bodied or disabled, and thus the role of professionals.

After the posthuman turn, disability is reimagined not as a deficit to repair but a possibility for developing new and meaningful becomings within assemblages, yet without necessarily renouncing to accomplish functional recovery. Here, professionals are interpellated to orientate assemblages to enhance human capacities beyond existing norms, in contrast with the humanist, essentialist, ableist and normalizing tendencies of the biomedical approach that informs restitution. In other words, the task of professionals becomes supporting and facilitating flourishing, that is, helping people to live well way by enhancing the quality of connections and dependencies within and between assemblages.

This is an open and particularised approach insofar as it recognises, first, that there is no designed product in flourishing but an endless process of becoming, and second, that enabling outcomes cannot be known *a priori* but must be determined *in situ*. Given that, I cannot provide in this section decontextualized top-down principles or blueprints for success. To paraphrase St. Pierre (2016), 'What I've written is never prescriptive either for me or for others—at most it's instrumental and tentative' (p. 105). Instead of receipts, what I can modestly offer is some understanding of how (restitution) assemblages *might* work so that professionals can be in better disposition to direct or shape it toward enabling aims.

Understanding an intricate and abstract (i.e., rhizomatic) assemblage such as restitution is a complex task which might seem overwhelming. A useful way of grasping how this kind of assemblage might work is by observing the smaller assemblages that compose it, such as body/narrative (Article 1), body/MSE (Article 3) or body/technology (Article 4).

A good point of departure is to identify which particular animate and inanimate elements are cast as key actors in the restitution assemblage. These can be, for example: wheelchairs, medical staff, stories, hospital gyms, pills, hope, professionals themselves, MRI machines, parallel bars, sweat and music. Remember that the importance of each element does not lie in its essence but in its interactions with other elements and the elements affect each other. Then, it is important to understand the role that key actors play (not what they are, but which are their effects –what they do *and what else could they do* –always in relation to other actors), as well as how people evaluate these actors, e.g., wheelchair is bad, prosthesis are good; walker is ambivalent. The effects of the assemblage itself, as well as the effects of people's evaluations of the assemblage *on* the assemblage (which are often made in a storied form) can be positive and negative in different ways and in different moments (Gibson, 2016). In this sense, Gibson (2014) reminded that 'assemblages are not stable or closed systems, but rather temporary connections that continually come together and then break apart, forming different assemblages with other elements that produce different effects' (p. 1329). This means that the knowledge we can gain about assemblages will always be outdated. That said, arrangements can coalesce into relatively stable systems. Over time, 'flows of affect' travel in certain directions and not others. Remember that we call 'reterritorialisation' to the ways in which continuity, sameness, borders and boundaries are maintained within an assemblage. So what we are really doing in the proposed examination is to identify the reterritorialising forces that act to maintain the borders of an assemblage.

This is a basic way of exploring an assemblage[9], but it is accessible (at least as accessible as it can be) and might be useful to arrive to a general conclusion about whether an assemblage is being enabling or disabling. Against this conclusion, professionals have two options: either to support and maintain the assemblage (i.e., reterritorialise it), or to challenge and change it (i.e., deterritorialise it)[10].

Imagine a professional who works in an adapted gym. He or she has a new client called X[11]. X was injured in an accident and spent some time in the hospital. He has been doing active rehabilitation in the specialist rehabilitation setting of the hospital until last week, when decided to join the adapted gym. The professional learn about X and his previous experience through the stories she tells, and notes that the narrative she is drawing on is a good material↔semiotic companion; it has positive effects on her, and can lead to healing. Emulating the former MSE –the hospital gym– could be helpful to sustain this enabling narrative across space and time. This can entail, for example, using similar machines and practices, adapting old stories to the new environment and promoting interactions with peers with which his story can resonate.

Another new client, Y, tells a story that is being harmful for her. Y is 'caught up' in that story and she cannot contemplate any alternative. This single story is emplotting Y as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what he is becoming. After listening her story and spend some time thinking *with* and *about* it (Frank, 2013), the professional resolves that it can be positive to challenge it and deterritorialise the assemblage that is shaping what Y can and

[9] Feely (2016, 2019) provided a more focused account on how to analyse the material↔semiotic dynamics of an assemblage, in which I have partially inspired.

[10] We can make minor or major changes, or we can try to break the assemblage if we consider that it is being toxic for one or several of its component parts (I like to imagine this with the metaphor of a couple. Sometimes, when the relationship is being disabling, breaking out and looking for different connections is the best solution.

[11] I do not wish to ascribe a gender to the clients, so I have chosen to continually change their gender throughout the text.

cannot become (the assemblage that is *finalising* her). The new environment can be an opportunity to disrupt the existing narrative, as narratives are context-dependent and entangled with the material world. The professional can facilitate creative assemblages by playing with the distribution, orientation and material properties of things. This may bring new becomings and can invite alternative kinds of physical activity participation.

But Y is not the only client in the gym, and the spatial configurations that work for her might not work for X at the moment, as well as for other clients. To put an example, a MSE that solely resonates restitution would invite and support people who exercise to avoid the wheelchair, but exclude people who feel the need of having a closer relationship with the wheelchair. For this reason, inclusive (plural) MSEs where a variety of stories and feelings can resonate have to be promoted.

The pluralistic openness of the adapted gym helped Z to feel that his restitution story was recognised, and at the same time, it helped him to transform his narrative design. Z has been a member of the gym since last year. Before that, he used to do exercise by his own in his house, where he was alone and any story was told that challenged restitution. Isolate environments may isolate bodies and reterritorialise storytelling (i.e., reinforce the telling of a single story). In contrast, collective environments, such as the adapted gym, appear convenient to facilitate the circulation of diverse storylines and connect with others –other humans but also non-humans, including different machines and body connections. Thanks to interacting with other peers and including new kinds of body/machine practices, Z was able to gradually change the way he thought, felt and engaged with his wheelchair. By doing 'wheelies', she started to evaluate his relationship with her wheelchair differently, and now she 'feels' it as an extension and integral part of her lived body. At present, Z is involved in an exercise-as-progressive redemption assemblage, which allows him to enjoy being active without the pressure to 'success' in any particular way but his own.

Nonetheless, participating in a collective environment neither does guarantee affirmative connections, nor necessarily expands people's possibilities of engaging with other kinds of physical activity participation. Many stumbling blocks (material and narrative) may restrict this. For example, when people are engaged in the restitution assemblage, their bodies become monadic; the body closes upon itself and, due to this closeness, it cannot become *with* some other people (e.g., peers) and artifacts (e.g., wheelchairs).

Against these constraints, professionals should find further ways of promoting life-affirming and dignity-enhancing connections among the clients. To find new strategies, and perhaps more importantly, to know why and how to apply them in context, it is vital to develop 'phronesis', a practical wisdom through which professionals are able to consider which actions might lead to a good life (Kinsella & Pitman, 2014). It might be a good idea to have a physical activity adviser in the gym to assist professionals in learning to see the potentials in certain assemblages, while becoming sensitive and respond to the harms imposed by the social devaluation of some dependencies[12]. In either the case, professionals would need to be mindful that while changing or 'deterritorialising' an assemblage is possible, the process is fraught with dangers, for unintended consequences are likely. Interventions need to be tentative, continually observed and altered as needed. Uncertainty, humility, doubt in one's expertise, and risking failure are inherent to this process of tinkering that involves a continual questioning of what to do, what is best within each context. Hopefully, this uncertain dissertation will orientate professionals in this uncertain process.

[12] To be explicit, here I am advocating for the inclusion of (post)qualitative researchers or sport sociologists in physical-activity related settings to improve the services. Thus far, I have not seen any job like that. Some work have to be done to convince managers of the adequacy of this figure. Frank's (2011) essay about the role of a philosopher in a hospital can give us some arguments.

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Like any research product, this dissertation is not without limitations. Typically, scholars allude to the methodological approach used to discuss the limitations of their empirical studies. If I were to follow this trend, I would have to refer to the case-study approach. The unique, idiosyncratic nature of the information provided in case studies is very often highlighted as a limitation, weakness or disadvantage of the approach. Perhaps more firmly, many scholars state that they cannot reliably generalize from the findings/implications of a case study.

> 'It's just a case study,' they lament, 'so we can't take it seriously to frame policy or practice!' (Hodge & Sharp, 2016, p. 66).

This is a misunderstanding about the worth of the case-study approach in particular (Flyvbjerg, 2006) and qualitative research in general (Smith, 2018). The reality is that case studies have their own scholarly rigour, key rationale and potential capacities. The case-study approach is used when the researcher want to develop an in-depth, holistic understanding of a particular person, assemblage, community, project, policy, institution or system. This emphasis in depth is *both* the limitation and the strength of case studies (see Flyvbjerg, 2006 for detail). But certainly, any research approach has always weaknesses. Whereas in a case study the pursuit of depth is usually accompanied by some sacrifice of breadth, a survey study using a large sample of people, for example, is not sufficient to understand in depth the significance of the phenomenon under study.

In a word, you cannot have it all.

Surely, there is always more that could be said about the topics we have studied here. Likewise, there are methodological strategies and forms of representation in exercise, health and illness studies that could have been used, such as vignettes (Allen-Collinson, Owton & Crust, 2016). There are further questions that I would have liked to ask Patrick, and having 'been there' as a participant observer in the action during more time would have generated interesting

additional data. There are also absent voices: his close family, peers, doctors and so on.[13] In addition, the dissertation presents an ethical gap. The case of Patrick raised a number of ethical issues for me as researcher, some of which have been noted by others involved with terminally ill and disabled people (e.g., Seymour & Ingleton, 2005; Smith, 2008). Given the emphasis on other aspects of research in the thesis (e.g., conceptual), in the case study we have only accounted major ethical concerns, and some dilemmas we faced are mentioned in passing and barely discussed.

But, ultimately, this dissertation is what it is, and simply lament about its shortcomings is not going to be productive. Instead, what can be generative is to point out what lines of research can be undertaken in the future to fill the gaps of previous research, while advancing towards new paths. Hence, below I provide a selective list of the studies that I am already taking and I will take up post-PhD, which will serve to address a set of fruitful topics that escape the scope of the thesis.

In the first place, Brett and I are about to finish an article aiming to promote a fruitful dialogue between conventional qualitative research and postqualitative research in sport, exercise and health. This dialogue is not an option but a requirement if we hope to resist neoconservative politics of research that marginalise any kind of qualitative research, avoid an internal paradigm war, and flourish as a plural, auto/critical and democratic community. The paper will be used in the future conferences as a prompt to stimulate discussion about 'conventional' and 'post' versions of qualitative research in the field of sport and exercise.

Another potential area of expansion is to further examine enwheelment and cyborgification processes. I am currently working on this topic within the iHuman institute at The University of Sheffield, as part of a three-month research visit. Alongside Dan (Goodley), Víctor, and Brett, I am writing an article about positive dependencies between human bodies and wheelchairs,

[13] That said, Bathkin would remind us that these voices are part of Patrick's story. What interested us was to see how Patrick incorporated these voices in his life.

following the debate on in/dependence that is taking place in the realm of posthuman disability studies. A preliminary version of this paper has been presented in The International Conference on Educational, Cultural, and Disability Studies 2019 (Monforte et al., 2019)

Ethics matters beyond the often minimalist, mandatory codes and statements of ethical committees. As I mentioned in the introduction, the stories that Víctor told me about his experiences researching the case of David provided me what we can call a narrative map of ethics in research. Víctor and I are interested in exploring this issue, which meets our interest in how stories dialogue and become narrative maps for traversing delicate territories of research.

Following conversations with Professor Nick Fox, I will work as well in a paper introducing New Materialist research to a Spanish-speaking context. To do so, I will draw upon the body of work developed by Fox and Alldred over the last years (e.g., 2016, 2017).

I am also preparing one application for a postdoctoral grant. It is linked to fieldwork that I have carried on alongside this thesis, as part of a nationwide project funded by the Spanish Government (DEP2015-69692-P), which have resulted in some quantitative publications so far (e.g., Úbeda-Colomer, Monforte & Devís-Devís, 2019; Úbeda-Colomer, Monforte, Martin-Ginis et al., in press). The proposal has three interrelated goals:

1. To analyse the role that physical activity played in the life, experiences and narrative trajectories of 30 disabled individuals, and to present evidence-based recommendations on physical activity for disabled people, organisations, and health care professionals.
2. To explore strategies of knowledge translation to disseminate research-based knowledge so that it can be accessible and meaningful to different publics.

3. To explore strategies of knowledge translation to disseminate the theoretical and analytical advances generated to the academic community.

Importantly, this project will give continuity to my work on disability and physical activity. In it, I will 'remain attentive to the material, affective and non-human forces that shape and affect the stories people tell' (Feely, 2019, p. 1). Importantly, the postdoctoral project will attend intersectionality. This means that it will address the interconnections and contradictions between disability, gender, age, class and so on that are key to developing complex understandings of the lives of disabled people across the life course (Goodley, 2016). Different kinds of studies will be carried on:

- *Mixed-methods studies.* For instance, we will address the influence of socio-economical factors on physical activity participation both from a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Other topics might be: ageing and physical activity; experiences of disablism in physical activity settings; and physical activity and pain, among other general topics.
- *Methodological papers*. For example, we will explore the impact of using two interviewers in our qualitative data collection process (see Monforte & Úbeda-Colomer, 2019 for an introduction to this work)
- *Analytical innovations*. For example, we will draw upon Sparkes, Perez-Samaniego and Smith (2012) to further explore how social comparison and narrative mapping can provide a combined framework to understand how disabled people deal with impairment through physical activity.
- *Creative analytical practices*. Some data demand the use of sensual scholarship (Sparkes, 2017) and creative analytical practices (Richardson, 2000). For instance, we will use poetic representations to show how important is for disabled people to do exercise. The

poems will be fully grounded in the content of the research data. We believe that this genre is appropriate to condensate all the rich data we have collected and provide information that will be highly attractive and sharable to larger audiences outside academia. A little taste:

Exercise is my life.
It makes my day worthwhile.
In fact, it's the reason I wake up.
Listen to me
Carefully
If I couldn't do exercise
I would
Metaphorically,
AND LITERALLY
DIE!

Finally, but by no means least, I will be involved in the board of the new *International Society of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* (Twitter @QRSEsoc). This is a big honor and responsibility. I hope to live up the expectations and contribute with my modest but passionate viewpoint.

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APPENDIX 1. First page of published papers

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN SPORT, EXERCISE AND HEALTH, 2018
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What is new in new materialism for a newcomer?

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ABSTRACT

Having recently emerged as an intellectual project, new materialism (NM) is extending to different fields, including sport, exercise and health studies. However, it is still unclear why and how NM is new, which can jeopardise its potential impact in academia and society. The aim of this paper is to discuss the newness of NM and to explore how it plays out in relation to different issues, such as knowledge translation and partisan positions. At the same time, NM is used as a way of understanding my own positionality as a newcomer who is becoming an academic within a field having manifold intellectual debates while being shaped by a neoliberal rationality. Reasons as to why NM has to be more concerned about accessibility are provided, and a case for a receptive yet suspicious attitude towards the label 'new' is made. Several key points that might help newcomers start thinking with the 'new' are also highlighted. Next, an example of NM in action is presented. This section illuminates what NM brings to my research practice and, more specifically, how I re-created a concept that worked and is still working for me in my research on exercise and disability. The article closes by offering strategies to resist the neoliberal academic assemblage and inviting sport and exercise researchers to partake in collective environments that support the developing of new ways of thinking and becoming.

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New materialism; ontological turn; post-qualitative inquiry; post-humanism; early career academics

Introduction

It is a winter's evening in XXX and I am sitting in a coffee bar with Professor Ginsberg (a pseudonym), a leading international qualitative researcher in the field of sport, exercise and health. I am a novice researcher: my doctoral journey has just begun. I am a bundle of nerves. There is a bottle of beer and a glass of wine on our table. I spin my empty bottle, jittering. I talk fervently about Fullagar's and Giardina's work in a recent edition of *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*. He nods graciously. Time goes fast. At the back of the coffee bar a woman laughs. I look at her, then I look through the window. It is cloudy and chilly outside; the leaves of the trees move slightly in the wind. In the middle of that place, Professor Ginsberg leans towards me. 'What troubles me about new materialism is the label *new*' – he says – 'There is actually nothing new, right?'

It is still unclear how and why new materialism (NM) is *new* and, thereby, it provokes suspicion. With the sudden advent of the new materialist turn in the sport and exercise studies, addressing this issue becomes relevant and timely. For NM to have repercussion, the 'new' question requires further discussion and cross-fertilisation. The purpose of the present essay is therefore to fill that

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Research Article

Traveling Material↔Semiotic Environments of Disability, Rehabilitation, and Physical Activity

Qualitative Health Research
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SAGE

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Abstract

In this article, we apply narrative dialogism and new materialism to health research. We examine how material↔semiotic environments (MSEs) affect the rehabilitation process of Patrick, a man who exercised with the aim to recover from spinal cord injury. The MSEs are considered embedded subcases within the overall holistic case of Patrick. Three MSEs were identified: the hospital gym, the personal gym, and the adapted gym. These are examined using the analytical lens of assemblages. First, the mutually affecting components of each MSE are described. Second, a larger environmental assemblage is identified, which is termed exercise-is-restitution assemblage. This composite assemblage illuminates the associations between the three MSEs, and reveals how restitution resonated across time and space. The article contributes to the literature by reconceptualizing restitution. It highlights the importance of the materiality of health-related narratives, and it reveals the potential of MSE for transforming rehabilitation and improving exercise promotion and maintenance.

Keywords

exercise; gym; spinal cord injury; narrative dialogism; new materialism; qualitative; assemblage analysis; europe

Introduction

Exercise is important in the rehabilitation process of people with disabilities due to its associated health benefits. For example, evidence-based knowledge indicates that exercise helps to prevent secondary health conditions and improves the overall health status, well-being and quality of life in this population (Martin Ginis, Jörgensen, & Stapleton, 2012; Smith et al., 2018). On this basis, research has been conducted from different disciplines and philosophies in the hope of informing exercise promotion and maintenance.

Recently, disability and exercise scholars have turned to interpretative forms of research via the use of narrative inquiry, a tradition of qualitative inquiry that focuses on people's stories as they unfold over time. From a narrative perspective, stories constitute a key means by which disabled people[1] know and understand the world, make sense of their experiences and give meaning to their lives. Furthermore, stories have the capacity to do things; they can shape what we think, how we behave, and what we imagine as possible, desirable and best avoiding. Therefore, narrative inquiry can offer insights into human lives, including the ways in which stories shape understandings of disability and motivate exercise behaviors (Smith & Sparkes, 2008).

One dimension of interest within narrative inquiry is the narrative environment (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). This term denotes the physical and socio-cultural environments that support and value specific stories while inhibiting or marginalizing others. From a rehabilitation perspective, research has addressed specific narrative environments such as the gym, the blue gym, the adapted gym, or the rehabilitation center (Caddick, Smith, & Phoenix, 2015; Carless, Peacock, McKenna, & Cooke, 2013; Pérez-Samaniego, López-Cañada, & Monforte, 2017; Perrier, Smith, & Latimer-Cheung, 2013; Richardson, Smith, & Papathomas, 2017). This work has revealed useful knowledge for rehabilitation services. Especially pertinent for exercise promotion, it has highlighted that disability narratives act by motivating and facilitating individuals to access particular exercise environments, or turning them away from these.

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The Anabasis of Patrick: Travelling an allegorical narrative map of illness and disability

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This paper examines the stories of Patrick, a man living with cancer and a spinal cord injury.
Design: An intrinsic case study was used to address Patrick's experiences. The design of the study is underpinned by narrative dialogism.
Method: Photo-elicitation interviews were conducted. Visual and verbal data were analysed using a dialogical narrative analysis.
Results: Patrick aligned his experiences with a story titled Anabasis to organize and express them. Although Anabasis is not a story about illness, it provides Patrick with an allegorical narrative map of how to live with disability and survive illness. Within 'The Anabasis of Patrick', the analysis identified three stages: walking back again, 'skipping stages of Anabasis' and surviving cancer. Throughout the course of his illness, Anabasis shapes how Patrick thinks and feels about his body and exercise, affecting his health behavior. A selection of images provided and discussed by Patrick illustrates the process of re-construction of his narrative self, and evokes the effects that Anabasis has *on* and *for* him.
Conclusions: The study illuminates the key role narrative and storytelling hold regarding the (non)participation in exercise by people living with serious health problems. It also shows how visual metaphors represent embodied experiences in an effective, aesthetic and accessible manner, enhancing the knowledge dissemination process. To conclude, practical implications for exercise psychology and generalisations from the research are highlighted.

1. Introduction

According to Frank (2013), illness constitutes 'a loss of destination and map that had previously guided the ill person's life' (p. 1). Underlying this statement is the conception of the human being as a narrative subject whose self is fundamentally built, known and expressed through stories. Frank (2013) argued that individuals with a serious illness (including people with a disability) are at risk of *narrative wreckage*. With this metaphor, he invokes the illness call for stories: 'stories have to repair the damage that illness has done to the ill person's sense of where she is in life, and where she may be going. Stories are a way of redrawing maps and finding new destinations' (p.53). As Frank (2012) put it, stories help people hold their own: to sustain the value of one's self and identity in response to illness.

Closely related to the use of stories to reconstruct people's sense of self is the notion of narrative mapping. Originally stated by Pollner and Stein (1996), the concept of 'narrative map' stood for pre-representations that newcomers in an unfamiliar world get from stories told by those who have already-been-there. For instance, these authors discuss the way in which the personal narratives from experienced members of Alcoholics Anonymous (or 'drunkalogues') serve as maps for newer members to the organization. They find that via narrative mapping 'drunkalogue' stories actively help newcomers to articulate their own version of the practices, problems and course of action of alcoholic rehabilitation. Since this seminal work, different studies from the exercise and health sciences have shown how diverse individuals and populations selectively, imaginatively and artfully (re)create and use certain stories as narrative maps to understand and shape their narrative journeys (Kleiber & Hutchinson, 1999; Partington et al., 2005; Phoenix & Sparkes, 2007; Sparkes, Perez-Samaniego, & Smith, 2012). From these examples we have learned how narrative plots or story lines help people drawing analogies between stories. As Perrine (1998, p. 41) wrote, a plot 'bears about the same relationship to a story that a map does to a journey'. That is, to travel illness we need of stories t (a map), and to travel a story we need a map (a plot). Therefore, narrative maps are born from genuine inner necessities and fulfil essential functions,

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APPENDIX 2. Informed consent

Con esta carta de consentimiento se le informa a la persona entrevistada que la participación en este estudio es totalmente libre y voluntaria, pudiéndose abandonar en cualquier momento sin dar mayor explicación. Asimismo, se le notifica que la entrevista a la que se somete únicamente será utilizada para la elaboración de un trabajo universitario, correspondiente al Máster Universitario en Investigación e Intervención en Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte de la Universidad de Valencia, así como en posibles documentos derivados (comunicaciones o artículos académicos) con propósitos científicos, educativos o culturales.

La información que se recoja de la entrevista será confidencial –únicamente el propio entrevistador tendrá acceso a dicha información– y no se usará para ningún otro propósito fuera de la investigación. Las respuestas, por tanto, serán anónimas. Una vez transcrita la entrevista, se le entregará al entrevistado antes de terminar el estudio, con la finalidad de que realice las correcciones oportunas y ofrezca el aprobado a la transcripción. En los informes finales, las menciones a las personas, en caso de realizarse, se harán recurriendo a pseudónimos y, si fuera necesario, cambiando algunas características personales o alterando fechas o lugares para evitar su identificación.

Muestro mi acuerdo en participar en esta entrevista; he recibido copia de este impreso y he tenido la oportunidad de leerlo.

Firma:

Valencia, a de de